



ST. STEPHEN THIS WEEK

St. Stephen Lutheran Church Newsletter



What do you say – is this springy enough for you? This is what the first week of April looks like in Oxford, Mississippi, where Jake Hartung this week attended a conference of landscape managers from Southeast universities. He says this is a Yoshino cherry tree. But you knew that, right? (Photo by Jake)

THERE'S GOOD NEWS IN OUR LATEST FINANCIAL SNAPSHOT

By Pastor Tom



In my effort last month to keep everyone updated on our financials, I forgot to include two important platforms for giving to St. Stephen: Venmo and Vanco. Venmo is the newest way to give, and we receive its totals a day after the month ends. Vanco is an automatic gift-giving platform that comes directly to St. Stephen but isn't included on the weekly counter's reports. Therefore I have good news, and a couple of corrections for our January and February collections.

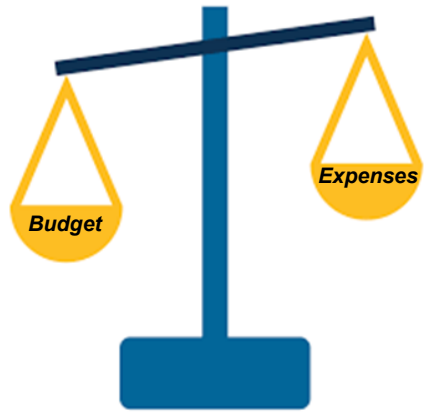
- **JANUARY** – Total income: \$19,894. Total expenses: \$19,876. So income was ABOVE expenses by \$18 (NOT below by \$6,142 as reported earlier). Big difference!
- **FEBRUARY** – Total income: \$15,908. Total expenses: \$18,222. So income was below expenses by \$2,314 (NOT below by \$11,896 as reported earlier).
- **MARCH** – Total income: \$24,856. Budgeted expenses: \$21,684. So income was ABOVE expenses by \$3,172.

The trend for the first quarter of the year is hugely encouraging. So far, collections exceed expenses by \$876. Thank God for your faithful giving!

SANCTUARY DOLLARS

By Pastor Tom

The repair and renovation of the sanctuary is officially complete! Good people of St. Stephen, without one another we couldn't have accomplished it. The total cost was \$192,413. That's below the estimate because some projected work on the foundation wasn't needed, nor was an electrical job. We raised \$206,449 for the project, leaving us \$14,036 in the black!



So what's the plan for the remaining money? Collections for new chairs have slowed. So far we have roughly half of the necessary \$8,054, so we could use part of the \$14,036 to pay that off. Some hope to use the surplus to put new glass in the oval window at the back of the sanctuary and replace the protective glass on the exterior of the stained glass in front. Whatever happens, your dollars will go toward the sanctuary – since that's where you intended them to go.

THANKS, PAUL (NOW, WHO'S THE NEXT PAUL?)

By Pastor Tom

Special thanks to Paul van der Mark and Jonas Holdcraft for their work and commitment in livestreaming our services to Facebook Live. Paul has been doing this work since the very beginning (two years and two months!) and is taking a well-deserved break. His last Sunday behind the camera is Easter. Please join me in giving him a huge "Thank you!" for sharing his time and talents in service to the church!



Paul's departure, of course, opens up an opportunity for someone else to develop or polish their livestreaming skills, while also taking some of the weight off Jonas' shoulders. Are you interested? Does this

feel like a ministry God has in mind for you? Please pray about it, then speak with me.

By the way, you'll see a change in our livestreaming after Easter. We'll continue to livestream and record the service on our Facebook page, but we'll no longer use PowerPoint during the service. We'll strictly have audio and video of the worship. Those who wish to have a bulletin may print it out when it's emailed a few days before worship.

ISABEL AND 'A CONCERT FOR PEACE'

Isabel Barton, our former cantor, got to sing onstage with the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra last Saturday (April 2) with the Duquesne University Voices of Spirit in "A Concert for Peace." Here's the link to access the program free for the next month or so: <https://www.psofrontrow.org/videos/concert-for-peace>. Says her dad, Karl: "The choir enters around 42:15 and again around 1:02:45, but the whole program was excellent, and the Ukrainian national anthem is at 1:32:20."



YOU, TOO, COULD BE AN ACOLYTE OR...

There's always someone at church who inspires us to say, "How would we get along without X?" Certainly one of our X's now is Beth Alexander. Acolyte, crucifer, assisting minister, lector, Altar Guilder, Church Council member – she can do it all! But she doesn't want to do it all by herself. She could use a new batch of volunteers. Maybe even you.

Now that we're moving away from stripped-down COVID liturgies, we can use new acolytes. Someone has to light those candles and extinguish them every Sunday. Often it's a role that our younger members fill, but older acolytes are equally welcome.



Crucifer is another role. That's the person who holds the cross aloft and leads the procession to the front of the sanctuary. This job requires muscle, because the cross is quite top-heavy. Sound like something for you?

A young person who wanted to ease into the role might team up with a parent at first. Maybe you?

Some people have been acolyte and crucifer simultaneously, as Beth was last Sunday. Sometimes, we've had the cup minister also serve as acolyte and crucifer. Yes, we can always use more cup ministers, too, and assisting ministers. And we've barely even mentioned the Altar Guild – which, over the years, has been a great way for newer members to get involved. And new leaders to shine.

If you have an interest in any of these opportunities, speak with Pastor Tom or Beth, our worship coordinator. She'll coach you as much or as little as you like. Contact her at 850-702-4471 or bethalex411@gmail.com.



THE AMARYLLIS CHOIR

That's what Sharon Simmons says these beautiful flowers in her yard remind her of – a lovely springtime floral choral group.

'GOD'S POWER AT WORK': EXCERPT FROM SUNDAY'S SERMON

"We look back at our lives and find God's hand guiding us through difficult times. It is what Isaiah proclaimed to the captive Hebrew people while being dispersed in Babylon. The prophet boasted of God's power at work once again in doing the same kind of deliverance God did for the people enslaved in Egypt. Through the work of God in Isaiah, people remembered and then heard about God doing a new thing. This time there wouldn't be a crossing of the Red Sea nor 40 years of wandering in the wilderness, but that didn't mean it would be easy. It didn't mean the people would not be afraid; returning home can be scary. It meant God was about to deliver a rescue and restore salvation...."



HAIKU CORNER

By Lex Lutheran

COMING TOGETHER

More and more chairs fill
our sanctuary as we
tip toe toward Easter.

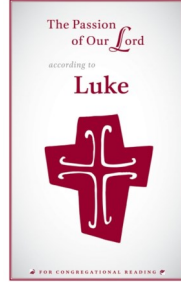


RIGHT AROUND THE CORNER





Pray for Pastor Tom.
Coming up: the marathon
known as Holy Week.

THE PASSION ACCORDING TO LUKE

Palm Sunday readings.
I get to be the Witness.
Three lines. Wish me luck.



MORE MIDWEEK UPDATES

- The OWLs' next luncheon is set for 11:30 a.m. Tuesday (April 12) at Café De Martin, at the far end of the Esposito's plaza (2743 Capital Circle NE, Suite 100). Parking right in front of the restaurant is nearly impossible, so plan on parking down by Esposito's. Let Margaret Bowers know if you're coming, so the restaurant can have our tables ready. Her contact info is ambowersfl@gmail.com and 407-921-8671.

- Let Pastor Tom know if you want to take part in the new Sunday-morning book study beginning April 24. The first book will be "Dear Church," by Lenny Duncan, formerly incarcerated, formerly homeless, formerly unchurched, now a black preacher in the ultra-white ELCA. The group will meet from 9 to 9:30 a.m. or so. Pastor Tom can order a book for you.
- There's an Alzheimer's conference for families and professionals from 8:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday. Speakers will discuss elder law, the benefits of music and cognitive stimulation, how to prepare for crisis and collaborating with first responders, and managing responsive behaviors. You may attend in person at the FSU College of Medicine or take part via Zoom. To pay the \$20 registration fee, or just to find out more, [visit bit.ly/alzconf2022](http://bit.ly/alzconf2022).
- Last week we told you about a fundraiser for Lutheran Social Services of North Florida. They've met the criteria now, so we all need to remember to get food from the Sonny's on Timberlane Road on April 27 – and say out loud while ordering, "I support LSSNF!" Questions? Call or text Dottie Hinkle, executive director, at 850-241-6434.

- Reminder: The annual camping trip is coming up fast – April 22-24 at St. George Island State Park. Questions? Get in touch with Mark Greeley (markhoffmangreeley@gmail.com) or Colin Hackley (colin@typestyle.net).

- Have any classified ads you'd like to place in the newsletter, free? You know – items you'd like to give away or sell, items you'd like to acquire, that sort of thing. If so, send them to Lori. Her contact info is below.
 - Do you have an anniversary, birthday or special memory you'd like to honor? Celebrate the occasion by sponsoring the flowers for our service. Sign up on the 2022 Flower Chart in the narthex. The cost is \$35, which you can place in the offering plate.
- Have anything to add to a future newsletter? Email Lori at sslc@ststephenlutherantally.com or call 850-385-2728.



UPCOMING BIRTHDAYS

Vicki Guttenplan - 04/07
Beth Alexander - 04/11
Elizabeth Halvorson - 04/15
Cassandra White - 04/16
Terri Schmitt - 04/17
Tyler Notley -- 04/18
Russell Reardon - 04/26
Sarah Bacani - 04/29
Colleen Holdcraft - 04/29

UPCOMING DATES

This Sunday:

10 a.m. - Worship, Sunday of the Passion/Palm Sunday

Wednesday, April 13:

7 p.m. - Choir practice

Thursday, April 14:

7 p.m. - Worship with communion, Maundy Thursday

Friday, April 15:

7 p.m. - Worship, Good Friday

Sunday, April 17:

9:30 a.m. - Easter Egg Hunt

10 a.m. - Worship with communion, Easter Sunday



If you have news or photos to share,
please send them to Lori at
sslc@ststephenlutherantally.com.

Don't forget our Facebook page:
<https://www.facebook.com/ststephentallahassee>.

St. Stephen Lutheran Church, ELCA
2198 N. Meridian Road | Tallahassee, FL 32303

The Rev. Tom Holdcraft, Pastor

*Edited by Lex Lutheran. Designed by Lori Zengel, office manager, sslc@ststephenlutherantally.com.
Website: <http://www.ststephenlutherantally.com/>*

If you no longer want to receive this newsletter, please [unsubscribe](#). To unsubscribe please reply with "UNSUBSCRIBE" as the subject line.