



# ST. STEPHEN THIS WEEK

## St. Stephen Lutheran Church Newsletter



## AN EASTER TO REMEMBER

For the second year in a row, most St. Stephen members and friends worshipped via Facebook rather than in person – and it was a joyous service.

A sea of Easter lilies amid the Altar Guild’s impeccable handiwork. Katharine Gossman’s magnificent organ. Tom Buchanan’s incomparable trumpet. Isabel Barton’s flawless leadership in song. (Her dad and his flute weren’t there, alas.)

You never would’ve guessed that Pastor Tom had just completed the liturgical marathon known as Holy Week. Behind the altar, in the pulpit, he always seems inspired and refreshed, as if there’s nowhere else in the world he’d rather be. Witness this profoundly personal line from his sermon, when he removed his glasses, lowered his notes and said, “It occurred to me that when we do come back [to worship] in a large group again, I may just stand in front of you, break down and cry. Tears of joy! Yes! But tears just the same.”

This Easter we also gained two new members, Chris Gossman (right) and Greta Langley. Welcome! (We’re still trying to get an unmasked photo of them, in case you haven’t quite matched their names and faces yet.)



Thanks, as always, to IT superman Paul van der Mark for making our online worship possible. His camera got more of a workout this time. He had to keep up with a liturgical dance performed by Rita Ford and Colleen Holdcraft to a musical Lord’s Prayer. “Beautiful,” said the Facebook commenters. “Graceful.” “Powerful.” Simply elegant. Same height, same quiet reverence, our two dancers helped to make Easter 2021 truly memorable.



## THE POWER OF AN EMPTY TOMB: EXCERPT FROM PASTOR TOM'S EASTER SERMON

“... ‘Who will roll away the stone for us?’ The stone of the tomb ... yes. Also, the stone of grief. The stone of loss and hopelessness. Who will roll it away?”

“You do not need to be told about being kept behind a stone. Pandemic, economic insecurity, racial injustice, trials of police brutality, death, stress, and emptiness. They are all impossible stones to roll away by ourselves. The simple fact that we haven’t been able to come and worship live together for over a year is dizzying and painful....

“‘Who will roll away the stone for us?’ the women in Mark asked. And we ask the question, too. How will we find hope this Easter in the story from Mark that ends with an empty tomb? The first consideration from us is to allow ourselves to see that empty is good. In fact, for Mark, empty at the feet of Jesus is everything. Admittance to emptiness drives us to fall at Jesus’ feet and beg healing, help, strength, food and a place to follow Him.



“But Mark is terribly honest: If we believe that we are complete, that our lives are exactly how they should be, FULL in every way, then this day, Easter, and this message, the empty tomb, is not for us....”

## UPDATES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

By Pastor Tom (*typed on his phone in the car pickup line, waiting for Jonas’ school to let out Wednesday*)

- Last week we told you that a member who had donated \$10,000 to our building project was facing hard times and had to rescind the donation. This week, another person let me know that they’d contribute the \$10,000 that we paid back – in addition to the pledge they’d already made!!!
- On Easter Sunday, we had the most people we’ve had at in-person worship since the pandemic struck – 24 people, including Katharine and me. We elected to go a bit above our usual limit because all adults were fully or at least partly vaccinated. Plus, six were in the Holdcraft bubble. (We found out that was too many for the pastor to hand-deliver communion during one hymn! ☺)
- Now that the blooms have fallen, David Butler is on a pruning mission to thin out our azaleas and make them even healthier next year. The front ones look like they’ve been sheep-sheared!
- David did a beautiful landscape design at the front walkway to the church, too.



## BIBLE STUDY DOESN'T FIT YOUR SCHEDULE?

For those who'd like to take part in the weekly Bible study but have a schedule conflict, here's a link to the recorded meeting: [https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/rFLiz-cNVrC0c0Pr7b2\\_WDnmkH6bYnDmYJK6xBaLiZ3TEcFLVCNRq0XOFxsXNTx8Z.18a-Np6AVi30zCKK](https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/rFLiz-cNVrC0c0Pr7b2_WDnmkH6bYnDmYJK6xBaLiZ3TEcFLVCNRq0XOFxsXNTx8Z.18a-Np6AVi30zCKK)

Access code: **f7rmAa0@**



## CONGREGATIONAL PICNIC

*It's an old-fashioned picnic  
"COVID STYLE"*

St. Stephen Lutheran Church Lawn  
On Sunday, April 11, at 11:30 a.m.

There is plenty of space for all to spread out for social distancing and still enjoy each other's company.

Everyone will bring their own food, drinks, blankets, chairs, masks and friends!

All are invited! Join us for distance-fellowship and loads of fun!

RSVP: Margaret:  
407-921-8671 or  
[ambowersfl@gmail.com](mailto:ambowersfl@gmail.com)



## FREE Facebook Live Workshop



Adult Day Services for Floridians with Dementia and their Family Caregivers: What to Know and Ask



Charlotte Mather-Taylor, MBA  
Executive Director  
Area Agency on Aging of  
Broward County



Darlene Brown-Ponder, R.N.  
B.S., CDP  
President  
Tender Loving Care  
Adult Day Health Center



Jocelyne Fliger, MSW  
CEO/President  
Elder Care Services, Inc.

### KEY TOPICS:

- Overview of Florida's Network of Adult Day Services
- In-Home and Community Day Care Programs for Floridians with Dementia
- Strategies in Seeking Adult Day Services for Older Adults with Dementia
- Innovations in Delivery of Adult Day Services
- Caregiver Skills Training and Support
- Caregiving Resources

## Join us

THURSDAY  
April 8, 2021

7pm - 8:15pm  
Eastern Time

[@facebook.com/SupportACTS2](https://www.facebook.com/SupportACTS2)

TO REGISTER & RECEIVE  
YOUR FREE WORKSHOP  
MATERIALS:

Please e-mail Tomeka Norton-Brown  
at [tnnorton@fsu.edu](mailto:tnnorton@fsu.edu) (for mail and  
in-person distribution)

1-866-778-2724  
[tnnorton@fsu.edu](mailto:tnnorton@fsu.edu)  
[www.ACTS2Project.org](http://www.ACTS2Project.org)



## MISC.

- One way in which online worship excels is in its option to post comments during the liturgy – sort of like whispering to your neighbor without bothering the people around you. This was one of my favorites during Holy Week, written by Caroline Collins: “I know we’re supposed to be silent now, but maybe typing doesn’t count. The profound sadness of Maundy Thursday hit me more than usual at the end this time, watching the altar being stripped bare while listening to the cantor’s words. Anyone else?” Yes, me too.
- If you dedicated an Easter Lily you can come by the church to pick it up. They are in the courtyard near the tangerine tree.
- Want to provide altar flowers? For a donation of \$35, you’ll also get an invitation to be among the handful of people who worship in person with Pastor Tom in the sanctuary. Afterward, the flowers are yours to keep. See Lori’s contact information below.
- Have anything to add to a future newsletter? Email Lori at [sslc@ststephenlutherantally.com](mailto:sslc@ststephenlutherantally.com) or call 850-385-2728.



## UPCOMING BIRTHDAYS

- Beth Alexander - 04/11
- Elizabeth Halvorson - 04/15
- Ursula Morgan - 04/15
- Cassandra White - 04/16
- Terri Schmitt - 04/17
- Tyler Notley - 04/18
- Simon Kennell - 04/20
- Colleen Holdcraft - 04/29
- Sarah Bacani - 04/29

## UPCOMING DATES

### This Sunday:

10 a.m. - Worship (online), Second Sunday of Easter

11:30 a.m. - Congregational picnic

### Wednesday, April 14:

Noon - Bible study



If you have news or photos to share, please send them to Lori at [ststephentallahassee@embarqmail.com](mailto:ststephentallahassee@embarqmail.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](mailto: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.