



# ST. STEPHEN THIS WEEK

## St. Stephen Lutheran Church Newsletter



Didn't manage to snag any eclipse photos, but these backyard plants were eager to pose as Wednesday's storms approached. Like flowers, pots have their own personalities.

## CATCHING UP

*By Pastor Tom*

- The Sunday after Easter was typical with "low" attendance, but a face was here that we hadn't seen in a while. Jim Sampson was here, and he came to the OWLs lunch Tuesday, too. He expressed to me that he's looking forward to getting more physically involved at St. Stephen.
- The finance manager next door at Faith Presbyterian is partnering with St. Stephen to help us set up our QuickBooks for Non-Profit Organizations. Lori, our office manager, is also doing online training. Valerie, from Faith, didn't want to charge us for her time but finally agreed to let us give her a thank-you gift card to her favorite restaurants as a sign of appreciation for her expertise and extra consultation.
- The Pride Interfaith Service is at 6 p.m. April 17 at United Church on Mahan Drive. This will be the first time for us to gather since before COVID.



# IN PRAISE OF OUR ROUND WORLD

*In case you didn't read it in Friday's newspaper, or didn't open the email from church earlier this week, here's an excerpt from Stephanie Leitch's fresh take on our recent solar eclipse.*

## Why watch the eclipse? Sun and shadow show how science works

By Stephanie Leitch and DeWayne Carver

Tallahassee Democrat, April 5, 2024

What can an eclipse tell us? As Americans gather in the path of the solar eclipse on April 8, let us consider why an earlier generation of stargazers traced the movement of a celestial body into the earth's shadow. To 16th-century observers, the most useful eclipses were lunar ones. According to a cosmographic text of 1524, the lesson from this ephemeral lunar event was geared towards visual learners:

"If the earth were square, the shadow of a square would also appear in a lunar eclipse."

These words accompany a visual proof that demonstrates, by a process of elimination of geometric shapes *not* observed during the eclipse, that the earth is a globe. When the moon moves into the shadow of the earth, the shape cast onto the moon is round. For this simple insight told visually, we can credit Peter Apian, a mathematician who made his own observations seem so easy to replicate that we might well call him the father of popular astronomy.

... Apian's work showed us how to use natural, observable phenomena, like eclipses, to solve real-world problems, like finding your exact location on earth. The fact that we can accurately predict an eclipse, whether lunar or solar, is proof that we live in a world where observable, measurable data can be used to make repeatable predictions.

During the few moments of totality, when the moon completely obscures the sun from our sight, we can feel the cool absence of heat and witness the solar corona. When we hear the hush of the birds and see stars pop out in daytime, our senses intuit that something real is happening — and that we can trust our senses.

Witnessing an eclipse is your first-hand, unfiltered-through-YouTube, existential confirmation of the world we live in. Surely that is worth taking a few minutes to watch?



*Besides being a member of St. Stephen, Stephanie is an associate professor of art history at Florida State University and author of the upcoming *The Art of Observation and Early Modern Media: Training a Visual Eye* (Cambridge University Press, May 2024).*

## 'I'M STILL HERE': EXCERPT FROM PASTOR TOM'S SERMON

... "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, God who is faithful and just will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

It is language we use at our Confession and Forgiveness. It speaks directly to our ability to admit (and accept) that we are not perfect. And if no human is perfect, then no community is perfect. And if no community is perfect, then neither can any nation be perfect. It's not really hard to follow the dots.

So the good news is, while it feels like Jesus is way over there and people are way over here, separated and locked out, the good news is ... Jesus enters and says, "Peace be with you. I'm still here. I'm able to come to you even when you think you're locked away in fear." His scars prove God's love. If you need to touch them, Jesus offers himself to you....



# FUN ACTIVITIES COMING UP THIS MONTH



- **Friday, April 19-Sunday, April 21:** St. Stephen/St. George camping trip. For details, ask Colin Hackley ([colin@colinhackley.com](mailto:colin@colinhackley.com)) or Mark Greeley ([markhoffmangreeley@gmail.com](mailto:markhoffmangreeley@gmail.com)).

- **Tuesday, April 23:** Tallahassee Swing Band Tuesday Night Dance, 7:30 p.m., American Legion on Lake Ella.



- **Saturday, April 27:** Potluck luncheon at Nathan Basford's house, 11:30 a.m. "The great outdoors lunch!" Nathan lives about an hour west of Tallahassee, near Greenwood. (Actually, he's closer to Two Egg. Love that name.) His address is 6476 Blue Springs Road. He refers to his home as Shady Pines, and this event sounds delightful. Last night, we asked Nathan about it. "I had been speaking with Pastor and told him how lonely and sad I have been with the passing of Don," Nathan explained. "He spoke to some of the folks at St. Stephen and they came up with this potluck idea. I have areas here at Shady Pines for us to enjoy the outside and fellowship. I'm furnishing the paper products, beverages and hopefully a beautiful day. Can't promise!" Nathan has brought so much joy to so many at St. Stephen. Let's hope a good number of us can make it to Shady Pines on the 27<sup>th</sup>!"



- **Sunday, April 28:** Potluck after church, celebrating Earth Day and April birthdays.

## BEFORE YOU GO...

- There will not be a newsletter next week.



- If you have an anniversary, birthday, special memory or special St. Stephen person or program you'd like to honor, celebrate by sponsoring the altar flowers for our service. Sign up on the flower chart, out by the nametags, or ask Lori to sign you up. Include the \$40 with your regular offering. And then take the flowers home!

## COMING UP

### Today:

**Noon** - Al-Anon meets in fellowship hall (FH)

**7 p.m.** - AA meets in FH

### This Friday:

**9:30 a.m.** - TOPS meets in FH

### This Saturday:

**10 a.m.** - Sew for Hope meets in FH

### This Sunday:

**9 a.m.** - Book study

**10 a.m.** - Worship, Third Sunday of Easter

**4 p.m.** - Congolese Christian worship in FH



### Monday, April 15:

**5 p.m.** - TIMA meets in FH

**7 p.m.** - TIMA meets in FH

### Wednesday, April 17:

**10 a.m.** - Friendship Star Quilting meets in FH

**5 p.m.** - TIMA meets in FH



## UPCOMING BIRTHDAYS



Beth Alexander - 04/11  
Rudy Hehn - 04/12  
Donna Schiffer - 04/13  
Erik Robinson - 04/14  
Elizabeth Halvorson - 04/15  
Cassandra White - 04/16  
Colton Allen - 04/17  
Terri Schmitt - 04/17  
Tyler Notley - 04/18  
Russell Reardon - 04/26  
Colleen Holdcraft - 04/29  
Julia Bonfanti - 05/03  
Emily Jennings - 05/07  
Eva Mustian - 05/08  
Claire Claussen - 05/09



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

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

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The Rev. Tom Holdcraft, Pastor

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