

April 21, 2022



ST. STEPHEN THIS WEEK

St. Stephen Lutheran Church Newsletter



ALLELUIA!

Welcome to Easter 2022. Not for several years had so many of us gathered in this sacred space to proclaim, “He is risen! He is risen, indeed!” Look at all those dressed-up Lutherans, the stained glass, the elegant new lights – and the cross, lighting our way in an Easter procession once more.

Pastor Tom, energized by the turnout, thanked standout musicians Katharine Gossman, Karl Barton and Tom Buchanan; the recently resurrected choir; the Altar Guild members who decorated so painstakingly; and the faithful gentlemen who brought the service to our online worshippers, Paul van der Mark and Jonas Holdcraft. Sunday was Paul’s last day in that role, and he received an ovation from a thankful congregation. .

The children serenaded us with music from tambourines, ukuleles and more. The pastor slipped an excerpt from “The Velveteen Rabbit” into his sermon, with the assistance of Stephanie Leitch, Sharon Simmons and Graham Reece. Then, midway through the liturgy, familiar dancers Rita Ford and Colleen Holdcraft were joined by new dancers Violet and Ceilia Greeley in a graceful “Our Father” presentation.



Before the liturgy, Easter eggs were pursued relentlessly by St. Stephen’s latest batch of hunters, including Ceilia, Violet and Graham Reece (*pictured here*).

Usher/photographer Colin Hackley reports that Sunday’s official attendance was 83 – and, best he could tell, 15 of those people were visitors. Thanks be to God for bringing us safely through the darkest days of this pandemic and for walking with us still. (*Photos by Colin Hackley*)



DAY TRIP, ANYONE?

By Mark Greeley

Can you picture anything better than spending a day splitting time between the shade of swaying pine trees around a campfire and a sugar-sand beach, all with your closest St. Stephen friends? The annual St. Stephen camping trip is **THIS WEEKEND** at St. George Island State Park. And while all the campsites are full, we'd love to have visitors come down for the day on Saturday to enjoy some time with us.



We should be able to park some extra cars for day-trippers. And if you feel so inclined and want to stay for chili and a worship service on Saturday night, just let Colin or me know so we have enough.

Weather looks to be about perfect, but if you come I do suggest you plan for sun, rain and mosquito repellent, if the bugs like you. Call or email with questions: 513-328-0966, markhoffmangreeley@gmail.com

GRABBING A BITE

*Bryon Ehlmann writes:
"Barbara and I were surprised when these two little creatures visited us at our bird feeder early morning on Saturday. Are they really waiting for other birds to join them for breakfast?" If these two giants had shown up at OUR bird feeder, our poor little chickadees would have fainted. (Photo by Barbara Ehlmann)*



NOISY OFFERING

Bring your loose change (or any other money you'd like) for this Sunday's Noisy Offering. The money we collect this time will go to benefit Lutheran Social Services of North Florida and its free program for parents who can't afford car seats for their children. Which reminds us: Coming up **NEXT WEDNESDAY** is the fundraiser for LSSNF at Sonny's on Timberlane Road. Get some food there on that day – and, when you're ordering, mention that you support Lutheran Social Services of North Florida. Then LSSNF will get a cut of the proceeds. Questions? Call or text Dottie at 850-241-6434.



AN UPDATE ON THE WOMEN BUILD PROJECT

By Caroline Collins

Habitat for Humanity's Women Build 2022 campaign kicked off March 8 with a launch party and an online donation portal at <https://donorbox.org/women-build-2022-break-the-bias#info>. The team calling itself the "Fixie Chicks of Women Wednesdays" was hatched at that time. The Fixie Chicks have reached our individual team goal of \$2,500, a feat largely attributable to generous support from St. Stephen's community. Financial contributions from Ruth Hartung, Vicki Guttenplan and Anonymous totaled a whopping \$1,700. Offers of support in the form of labor came from handy women Lori Zengel, Erin Kenney and Susan Hehn. Offers of food on build day came from Judi Duffy and Gladys Kane. Thank you all!



While our team has reached both our financial-commitment goal and our volunteer-labor goal (16 women pledging to wield tools of construction), the overall Women Build goal of \$85,000 is still a long way off. Would you please help us spread the word so that together we can move the project closer to groundbreaking? Maybe you can forward this newsletter to a few friends, or perhaps you're inclined to make a donation yourself but you didn't want to do it online. Here are two more options:

- 1) Write a check to Habitat for Humanity, noting "Fixie Chicks" in the memo line, and mail it to Habitat c/o Te'Rel Bowman, 2921 Roberts Ave., Tallahassee, FL 32310. Be sure to include a note with your email address and ask that Te'Rel send you a receipt.
- 2) Chase me down at church on Sunday morning. I'll be glad to accept your donation in paper form on behalf of Women Build 2022, and I'll obtain a receipt for your tax-deduction reporting purposes.

THE EASTER TREE: EXCERPT FROM SUNDAY'S SERMON

"Easter reminds us what is real. The trauma of life is not erased or eradicated by magic, but we are given the chance to remember Jesus' words. To experience the account of Jesus' defeat of death for God's creation to benefit from it.... We need all of this because belief is not a natural response, especially when we are terrified. So let that be our first thing to hang on the cross. Our unbelief can decorate the Easter tree because it can be very real.

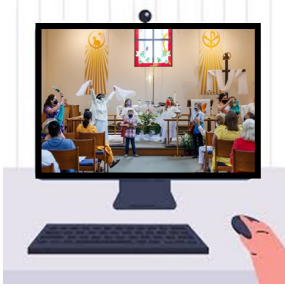
"What about the past two years of separation and death due to pandemic and its circumstances on health? Can we hang those on the cross? Do we hang the suffering and death of people with Black and Brown skin? Can we hang the atrocities of war and violence on the cross? What about the gun violence of our nation and within our community? Can we hang on the Easter Tree the senseless deaths, the homeless community or the hospitalized? What about the problems our nation has with incarceration and the legalized slavery that flows out of the prison system? Can we hang the unrepentant spirits of our politicians who bow to political bases, corporate greed and the cancel culture? 'If we truly decorate the Easter Tree,' writes Rector Nancy Fulton, 'then it will display all the pain of the world, as well as all the joy.'"

HAIKU CORNER

By Lex Lutheran

FULL HOUSE AGAIN

A glorious sight:
To stand with the choir and see
a sea of faces.



OUR VIRTUAL LIFELINE

To Paul van der Mark:
Thank you for keeping us all
connected in faith.

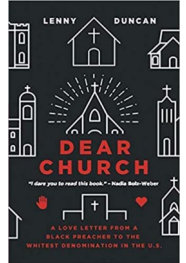


REVVED

Some Easter-pastors
look exhausted, but ours looked
exhilarated.

MORE MIDWEEK UPDATES

- Thank you to those who sponsored the Easter Lilies. If you haven't picked yours up, come by during office hours or after worship on Sunday.
- Moments ago, someone called to ask if I was open to a cash offer on our home. "Nope," I replied and hung up. Have you gotten calls like that?
- The new book study that Pastor Tom is leading begins this Sunday in the fellowship hall. The first book is "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. Even if you haven't asked Pastor Tom to order a book yet, go ahead and show up.
- 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

- Russell Reardon - 04/26
- Sarah Bacani - 04/29
- Colleen Holdcraft - 04/29
- Julia Bonfanti - 05/03
- Emily Jennings - 05/07
- Eva Mustian - 05/08
- Claire Claussen - 05/09
- Eunice Muchuruza - 05/16
- David Butler - 05/18
- Jennifer Dritt - 05/21
- Paxton Oates - 05/23
- Sandy Larson - 05/24
- Jake Hartung - 05/25
- Nicholas Oliveri - 05/25
- Blake Simmons - 05/25
- TJ Oliveri - 05/28
- Pepper Stewart - 05/29



UPCOMING DATES

This Friday, April 22:

Annual camping trip

This Sunday, April 24:

9:00 a.m. - Book study

10 a.m. - Worship, Second Sunday of Easter

Lori will be out of the office tomorrow, Friday, April 22.



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>.

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The Rev. Tom Holdcraft, Pastor

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