



ST. STEPHEN THIS WEEK

St. Stephen Lutheran Church Newsletter



SANDY SAINTS

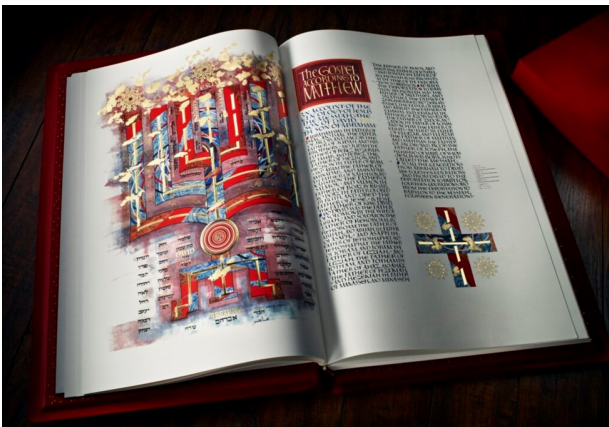
Above are the St. Stephen campers who posed for the camera after Saturday's sunset service on St. George Island. From left: Terri Schmitt; Susan & Rudy Hehn; Sylvia Smith; Kirsten Ebbesen & Patrick Kennell; Ridy Hofer (and her pup); Mark Greeley & daughters Ceilia & Violet; Janet Barber & Jim Christianson; and ace photographer Colin Hackley. In the bottom photo they're singing in the moonlight. That's Susan playing the guitar. Stay tuned for details about NEXT year's annual camping trip.



BIBLICALLY BREATHTAKING

By Pastor Tom

Stay after church a few minutes longer May 5 to encounter a lifesize reproduction of the original Saint John's Bible. As the publicity materials proclaim:



“This Bible is a seven-volume handwritten, hand-illuminated manuscript. Its illuminations create a modern theological statement about diversity and inclusion.” We've invited Carolyn Gosselin from St. John's Episcopal Church to share the advent of this first handwritten and hand-illustrated Bible produced since the 1500s. Hear about the background and turn the

pages of this beautiful manuscript. St. John's has the first five books of the New Testament for 2024 and will share the splendor of this work with St. Stephen.

OUTREACH UPDATES

By Sharon Simmons, chief outreach-er

- NOISY OFFERING:** Empowering graduating high-school seniors to attend the local college or university of their choice is the underlying mission of the Unity in the Community event at 3 p.m. Sunday, May 26, at Allen Temple CME Church, 849 Kissimmee St. All members of St. Stephen are encouraged to attend. Please RSVP to me at 850-445-1888 or sharonteacher49@yahoo.com by May 15. A catered dinner will follow the service. This joyful affair celebrates the life and community work of Brenda Christie's mom – and Brenda is a good friend of St. Stephen. This Sunday's Noisy Offering will be designated for the scholarship fund. *[Pastor Tom adds: "Our Ministry Minute presenter, who planned to speak about Unity in the Community, had to cancel last Sunday due to sickness. The Noisy Offering collection will be added to the gift we'll be bringing to the special event next month. We collected \$300 a few months ago. Let's add to that generous gift!"]*



- KIDNEY HEALTH:** Interested members of St. Stephen are invited to "The Future of Kidney Health Begins Here," a workshop scheduled from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday at the Bethel Family Life Center, 406 N. Bronough St. A free dinner will be served. Participants must pre-register by contacting Dr. Claudette Harrell at dovew101@aol.com or calling 850-766-5914.



- TRUCKLOAD OF TOILETRIES:** During May, we'll be collecting hygiene items that Pastor Tom and the St. Stephen delegation will take to the Florida-Bahamas Synod Assembly in June. They want deodorant, razors, shaving cream, lotions, toothpaste (adult or children), brushes & combs, shampoo and conditioner, soap bars or liquid soap, laundry soap, mouthwash, Chapstick, hand sanitizer and dental floss. Our items will be combined with those from other churches and donated for the men and women at the Orlando Union Rescue Mission. Place yours in the designated tub in the fellowship hall. Let's fill up Pastor's truck.
- MEETING TIME:** The Outreach Committee will meet Sunday, May 5, in the fellowship hall immediately after worship.



EXCERPT FROM PASTOR TOM'S SERMON

I don't know how to shepherd... I do, however, know what it's like to be a sheep. I know what it's like to be lost, undisciplined and quite selfish. Don't we all have the in-born desire to want others to do everything for us?

And then suddenly Jesus, revealed in love with truth and action, turned the childishness of humanity upside down by laying down his life while we were still sinners. Since Jesus did this, might there be something that I too need to sacrifice?

You see, in order to belong to something, we must be connected to it in some way. How sad it is when so many people are not connected to a repenting and forgiving church. Jesus reminds those of us who are connected to spiritual communities that there are other sheep who do not belong to the fold and He must gather them also....

It's a matter of staying connected to the flock; continually coming to the Lord's Table; remembering your baptism; and doing the hard things even though it may not feel like much progress is being made. People are counting on us.

You see, what we are doing here, in case you were wondering, is building muscle; recharging our energy; and making room for more sheep. And perhaps most astounding we are here to keep this place going for people who haven't come into the fold, yet. And it will be enough. What we need is here.

BEFORE YOU GO...

- Here are some of the surprises that awaited Office Manager Lori Zengel on Wednesday morning, otherwise known as Administrative Professionals Day. Sharon Simmons and Rita Ford had urged all of us to keep this a secret, as they sneakily collected items to show Lori how much we appreciate her. Sharon described Lori's impact in her April 1 email to the congregation: "In many cases she is the voice or face of St. Stephen, greeting folks when they first come in or call. She oversees picking up and placing the flowers for worship or special occasions, typing agendas or minutes for council meetings, constructing the weekly bulletin, tabulating weekly counter numbers, working with the treasurer to ensure bills are paid, keeping the calendar of events and usage of the fellowship hall, typing, and disseminating the weekly newsletter! Phew! What a lot! We're sure there's more, but you get the idea. She's a jewel!" God bless you, Lori.



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- Saturday morning, take part in the "Great Outdoors Lunch" potluck at Nathan Basford's house, 11:30 a.m. Nathan lives about an hour west of Tallahassee, near Greenwood, at 6476 Blue Springs Road. This event sounds delightful. "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 for us to enjoy the outside and fellowship. I'm furnishing the paper products, beverages and hopefully a beautiful day."
- Sunday there's a potluck after church, celebrating Earth Day and April birthdays.



- 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!

SURPRISE!

What a wonderful surprise awaited me when I came into the office yesterday, especially since I had no idea it was Administration Professional Appreciation Day, or that one even existed. You are such a thoughtful and generous congregation, and I am blessed to have you in my life. And honestly, I feel appreciated everyday here and don't need a special day to be recognized (though I'm not complaining).

It will take me a week to go through all my goodies! I did, however, get the chance to read the cards last night and I am humbled to say the least. I felt all of the kind words and sentiment.

Thanks again!!!



UPCOMING BIRTHDAYS



Russell Reardon - 04/26
Colleen Holdcraft - 04/29
Julia Bonfanti - 05/03
Emily Jennings - 05/07
Eva Mustian - 05/08
Claire Claussen - 05/09
Eunice Muchuruza - 05/16
Jennifer Dritt - 05/21
Paxton Oates - 05/23
Sandy Larson - 05/24
Jake Hartung - 05/25
Blake Simmons - 05/25

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 Sunday:

9 a.m. - Book study

9:30 a.m. - Choir practice

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

1:30 p.m. - On Purpose Women meets in FH

4 p.m. - Congolese Christian worship in FH

Monday, April 29:

5 p.m. - TIMA meets in FH

7 p.m. - TIMA meets in FH

Wednesday, May 01:

5 p.m. - TIMA meets in FH

7 p.m. - Choir practice



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

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

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