

April 28, 2022



ST. STEPHEN THIS WEEK

St. Stephen Lutheran Church Newsletter



AH, TO BE A ST. STEPHEN CAMPER

By Mark Greeley

The St. Stephen campers have all returned safe and sound from a great weekend at St. George Island State Park. Seventeen of us enjoyed a mild, breezy and occasionally buggy few days of play, swimming, archaeology, worship and mild sunburn. New to the trip this year were culinary delicacies of fire-toasted Peeps and hot dogs deep-fried in bacon grease. Old traditions continued as well, including bayside sunset worship, potluck chili and misbehaving cars that required repair to get us home.

I want to thank all the warm and friendly people who come on this trip every year. The setting is beautiful but the people make the whole thing worth it. Special thanks to Colin Hackley for all his work to make this trip happen.

If this all sounds like fun and you're sorry you missed it, then do not fear! In a few weeks we'll get to work reserving sites for April 2023, so watch your email. Or contact Colin or me and we'll get you on the list. *(Photo by Mark Greeley)*

HAVE YOU 'BOUGHT' A CHAIR YET?

By Pastor Tom

You might recall that the new chairs for our sanctuary were scheduled to arrive around mid-July. This month we received word that they're in production but, well, the company is experiencing delays related to manufacturing and transportation. No big surprise these days, right?

If there's a silver lining to this little cloud, it's that the delay gives us more time to raise the remainder of what we'll owe for the chairs. The goal is \$8,054, and we're a little more than halfway there. If you're able to chip in, please do. *(Remember: The fabric on our chairs won't look exactly like this sample chair.)*



MASKING AND COMMON SENSE

Nancy Hayes, director of clinical foundations in the FSU College of Medicine's Office of Medical Education, had the following paragraph in a recent email. Audrey Post, who works at the med school, thought we might find it helpful.

The “masks expected” signs are down, but our vigilance in preventing a new surge in COVID-19 should stay high. In the last 2 weeks in Leon County the number of new cases per day rose 181% (now 25/day) and the positivity rate also rose. Fortunately the hospitalization rates have not increased, and the vaccines are doing well against all variants. But in some places, we are seeing a rise in new cases as mask mandates are dropped.



Best advice – use common sense to assess risk and apply best practices. Indoors with large numbers of people? Masking is a good idea. Wondering if you're getting a cold or if it's just Tallahassee allergy? Masking is a good idea. Above all – respect the choice of others, and don't be a “pandemic bully.”

BUILDINGS HOLY, BUILDINGS LOWLY

If you're relatively new to St. Stephen, you might not know that construction crises – like our recent roof-thrust adventure – are hardly new in our history. At many a talent show since the 1980s, we've sung about such woes. Here's one we sang in 2012, to the tune of “Infant Holy, Infant Lowly.”

Buildings holy, buildings lowly,
fragrant as a cattle stall.
Lord, we muddle through a puddle
after every nasty squall.
Air is musty, mildew lingers,
metal's rusty, wrinkled fingers.
Dehumidify us, Lord! Dehumidify us, Lord!

Every member can remember:
Twenty-twelve was mighty tough.
Roofers started, then departed,
but their tarps were not enough.
Winds were whipping, shingles missing,
rafters dripping, Lutherans hissing.
God, why do you soak us still? God, why do you soak us still?



SPEAKING OF SONGS...

By Ron Hartung

For 30-some years I've been writing lyrics for and about St. Stephen. Most of them were goofy, performed during our annual pre-COVID talent shows. Almost all of them were performed only once, then tucked away. I figured that one day, after I retired, I might sift through them and see which ones were worth keeping.

Well, I'm retired now, and I've been sifting. As a result, you'll find a 50-page collection on our website called “Songs of St. Stephen.” In it are the lyrics to 103 songs divided into Serious and Fun. The Fun section is further divided: Pastors; Buildings; Choir and Music; Call Committees and Interim Pastors; Vicars; Potlucks; and Church Life in General. In each section the lyrics are arranged chronologically – so you can skip over the ones that predate your arrival.

SONGS OF
ST. STEPHEN

I realize that I appear to be tooting my own horn here, and I'm suitably ashamed. But even if these weren't my lyrics, I'd be promoting them. Because I'm a long-time St. Stephen fan. For me, and maybe for you, spending time with these songs is like looking through a photo album or reuniting with old friends. It's a reminder of dear people and special moments from our shared past. Reading these lyrics brings those moments to life again, however fleetingly. Some make me chuckle. Some make me misty-eyed. All of them help tell our church's story.

Office Manager Lori has posted the digital version. Go to our website, <https://ststephenlutherantally.com/>. Click on More, then on Songs of St. Stephen. Feel free to download it. Or print it out. Or sing a few!

'YET GOD PROVIDED': EXCERPT FROM SUNDAY'S SERMON

"When the pandemic began, we faithfully meditated on what this would mean for the way we 'do' church. We searched for wisdom to guide us along the way, and we required many hands and talents. The traditions of St. Stephen were disrupted. Important things – like the Service of Reconciliation, talent shows, camping trips, choir, OWL lunches, Sunday school, large-group worship and others – were put on hold.

"Yet God provided – because God's Spirit, working in you all, was NOT put on hold. In the two years, it was like we experienced the entire Book of Psalms. Like in Psalm 1 and 2, we heard God's wisdom and acknowledged God's role in providing for us. And as in the subsequent Psalms, we chronicled joy and sorrow, hope and skepticism, gratitude and anger.... All the words and phrases in the Psalms patch together a quilt of the emotions and experiences that make up our lives."



HAIKU CORNER

By Lex Lutheran

LIGHTING THE BAPTISMAL CANDLE

This might be the best
advice of all: Try to be
at least 6 feet tall.



BEACH-COLORED FLOORING

Now if the campers
track sand on our new carpet,
we won't see a thing.

THEN AGAIN...


If campers bring back
a bear, though, the Altar Guild
will not be amused.



MORE MIDWEEK UPDATES

- Pastor Tom reports: “In our Noisy Offering on Sunday, we collected \$107.18 for Lutheran Social Services of North Florida in support of the KidSafe car seat program! Thank you for your donations to this worthy cause. My lunch at Sonny’s yesterday was fabulous, too. We’ll let you know the results of that LSSNF fundraiser when the numbers come in.”



- Enjoy standing outside after church but afraid of getting sunburn? We’re told that a couple giant umbrellas will be providing shade at the benches outside the sanctuary this Sunday. Give ’em a try.
 - Have any questions for our Church Council members? Ask them! They’re all listed on our website, <https://ststephenlutherantally.com/about-us>. Or you can ask Pastor Tom. Or, if you’re bashful, you can ask me, your newsletter editor. I’ll try to get an answer and, if appropriate, share it with everyone in the newsletter. Just send your letter to Lori, whose contact info is below.
 - Our Justice and Mercy Fund helped Terrance, a friend of St. Stephen, get his utilities turned back on after he became delinquent following a double hernia procedure. “He stayed overnight at TMH, and we provided transportation to and from there,” Pastor Tom said. “Thank you for your financial gifts to help him get his power back on!”
 - On a recent shopping trip, when saltines were scarce as choir altos, I desperately bought a box of unsalted crackers. I was thinking that maybe if I slathered them with peanut butter, I wouldn’t mind them so much. Since then, good ol’ salted crackers have returned. So I’m prepared to give some lucky Lutheran an unopened box of Nabisco Premium Saltine Crackers (Unsalted Tops), absolutely free. Is your mouth watering? Call 850-222-5656.
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- 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

- 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





Let us be grateful to the people who make us happy;
they are the charming gardeners who make our souls blossom.
-Marcel Proust-

BBH Volunteer Recruitment Event and Garden Party

Wednesday May 4th | 10:00 am - 12:00 noon

You are invited to our first BBH Community Volunteer Drive and Garden Party!

Do you love nature? Tending to plants in your garden? BBH is looking for people who are compassionate and caring, with a desire to invest in helping people in the local community. Please join us for a fun morning of learning about BBH Volunteer opportunities. You will meet some of our amazing volunteers and hear why they are passionate about their commitment to our organization (*many have been with us for over 10 years*). Light refreshments will be served in a lovely garden setting and you will receive a beautiful plant to take home. Join us for a memorable morning of flowers, friendships, and finding new ways to help your community!

To learn more and sign up, contact

Elizabeth A. Sellers

BBH Community Engagement Coordinator
at (850) 566-2814 or (850) 878-5310
or email easellers@bigbendhospice.org



your home of care. licensed since 1983
www.bigbendhospice.org

UPCOMING DATES

This Sunday, May 1:

9:00 a.m. - Book study

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



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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