



ST. STEPHEN THIS WEEK

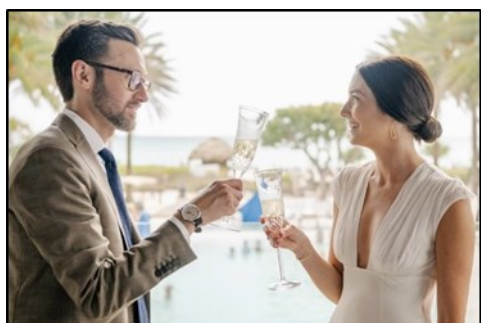
St. Stephen Lutheran Church Newsletter

PICNIC TIME IS HERE (IF WEATHER PERMITS)

Join us for fellowship and fun at 11 a.m. THIS SATURDAY at church. Just bring lunch and a chair. Margaret Bowers and her Care & Hospitality team will supply fruit and veggie trays, drinks, chips and paper goods. They'll even have games, such as cornhole, croquet & bocce ball. RSVP to Margaret, ambowersfl@gmail.com, 407-921-8671.



And what's a church picnic without a threat of rain? Looks like maybe a 70-percent chance. If the picnic gets scrubbed because of weather, Office Manager Lori will send out an email Friday afternoon to let everyone know. Then the next day, if people are interested, we'll gather in the fellowship hall after church for a not-quite-picnic-but-brief-bit-of-socializing-and-snacks.



A WARREN WEDDING

Susan Warren missed the liturgy two Sundays ago, but she had a splendid excuse. She and her snazzy-looking husband, Mark, were in Longboat Key for the marriage of daughter Perri to Paolo Mastrangelo. Nice pix, eh?



SEEKING JUSTICE

By Pastor Tom

Bringing people together across racial and faith lines. An end to gun violence. Decent affordable housing. My guess is that all three of those are important to you. All of them are the focus of the Capital Area Justice Ministry group of Tallahassee.

Four of us from St. Stephen attended the CAJM's celebration and greeting Tuesday evening at Trinity United Methodist Church. If you'd like to be a part of this organized group, please see Caroline Collins, Erin Kenney, Judi Duffy or me for more information.

And if you want to support the CAJM financially, you'll have a chance this Sunday. The Outreach Committee has decided that that's where the proceeds from the Noisy Offering will go.

GOD BLESS OUR GRADS

- Nathan James, the son of Olivia James and the grandson of Jim Christianson, will graduate from Lincoln High School on June 26. He's planning to go to Lively Tech in the fall.
- Baylie Elizabeth Alvis, Sandy Davis' granddaughter, will graduate from the University of Florida on Aug. 5. Her major is sports management. And after completing her internship with the Jacksonville Sharks, she'll be looking for full-time employment in her field. Says Grandma Sandy: "We are so proud of her."



Any more grads out there, St. Stephen? Please let Lori know so we can mention them in a future newsletter.

WHY WE BOW

Tucked within me is the same guy who took a 12-year worship hiatus after high school. So every once in a while I watch our worship services the way a visitor would and wonder: Why do we do this or that? Does every ELCA church do it that way? Every pastor? Every Sunday?

For example: Most of our assisting ministers and lectors (including me) bow as they approach the altar. Is that a rule? Are we bowing before the cross itself? If so, does that mean we don't bow if the cross is not on display? So I turned to Pastor Tom. He could've said, "Aren't you a little old to be asking such dumb questions?" Instead, he provided helpful context.



"In our worship class at seminary, we were given the option to bow both before the cross and/or the altar as a matter of personal piety," he said. "From that option, some might bow at the beginning and end of worship for the symbolism of 'entering' and 'exiting' worship, but not in between. Or they might not prefer that outward style at all.

"It is important to note, I think, that these are options and preferences and should not be viewed as requirements or (worse) sources of false pride. My current practice is to bow and say a quiet 'Thank you, Jesus' at the beginning and end of the service. I usually bow each time I approach the altar after that – but not if I step down briefly to get a Kleenex or sanitize my hands and quickly return.

"Again, this is all about personal piety. In other words, a person's style of worship, not something mandatory."

'GLORY': EXCERPT FROM SUNDAY'S SERMON

"In [the Gospel of] John, glory or glorification is not about winning an award, such as achieving the position of top disciple. Glory, in John's Gospel, is about being completely stripped of everything ... freedom, clothing, health, loyalty, dignity, even life itself – and then recognizing how God overcame all of it. That is glory on this side of the Resurrection.

"Then recognizing how we have betrayed and denied, and finding that God overcame that, too. Therefore we, too, can love the ones who betray and deny. We can be 'Christ-like,' in ways that exceed society's meager definition of love. That's glory...."

HAIKU CORNER

By Lex Lutheran

CRISIS IN THE LAUNDRY ROOM

No! Which one of you forgot to take the Kleenex out of your pocket?



STOP! THIEF!

The clear plastic dome over our bird feeder's gone. Vandals, or grackles?



PERSPECTIVE

Dear Lord, comfort those who wish that laundry and birds were their biggest woes.



REMEMBER THIS SONG?

NARTHEX

(Sung to the tune of "Downtown," it's from the talent show in 1988. Back then we worshipped in what is now our education building, and the narthex was the place we now refer to as the Matthew Room. The sacristy was next to it. The photo above gives you the view from the narthex, looking toward the altar.)



When you're alone and life is making you lonely
you can always go (to the) narthex!
People there scurry till your whole world turns blurry.
It's a hoot, I know, (in the) narthex!

And you can find 'bout any kind of list to sign your name on.
For altar flowers and coffee hours and for the softball game on
May 29.



The easel is king back there,
back where the ushers decide who will get folding chairs.
(It's the) Narthex! Where the fake stained glass is.
Narthex! Where Pastor's costume lives.
Narthex! Where all the late people wait.

So if you find you're in a line to shake hands with the pastor,
and though you sigh and wail and cry, the line won't move no faster,
just look around.

The room where you find yourself,
where stacks of old synod *Sonshines* are stuck on a shelf
(is the) Narthex! Call it a waiting room.
Narthex! Mildew is its perfume.
Narthex! Now it's there waiting for you.

You sang that out loud, didn't you? Good. To see more songs, visit <https://ststephenlutherantally.com/songs-of-st-stephen> .

MORE MIDWEEK UPDATES

- Welcome back, Katharine Gossman! Our services just aren't the same when someone else is behind that keyboard.
 - Beth Alexander leaped to our rescue Sunday when, at the last minute, we needed someone to lead the liturgy. Thanks, Beth. (And glad you're feeling better, Pastor Tom.)
 - Certainly one of the highlights of Sunday's service was hearing Colleen belt out the opening lines of "What's Love Got to Do With It?"
 - St. Michael & All Angels Church is hosting a **MEGA YARD SALE** this Saturday, May 21, from 8 a.m.—5 p.m. at 1405 Melvin St. Shop for live plants, household furnishings and children's items.
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- ST. MICHAEL & ALL ANGELS
Episcopal Church
- Have any questions for our Church Council members? 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.
 - 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.
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UPCOMING BIRTHDAYS



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
Bevin Reardon - 06/03
Billie Reardon - 06/03
Billy Oates - 06/14

UPCOMING DATES

This Sunday, May 22:

9:00 a.m. - Book study

10 a.m. - Worship, Sixth 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