



ST. STEPHEN THIS WEEK

St. Stephen Lutheran Church Newsletter



PENTA SNACK

We haven't had many butterflies in our yard this summer, but this giant swallowtail was worth the wait.

CATCHING UP ON COUNCIL NEWS

St. Stephen had its midyear congregational meeting Sunday. Here are a few of the headlines.

- Pastor Tom provided an update on St. Stephen's \$25,000 endowment fund, which is a pretty exciting new way for our congregation to live out our mission. "Late last year we received a financial gift of \$25,000 to begin the fund," Pastor explained yesterday. "An endowment fund creates an ongoing financial resource that can be used for ministries above and beyond regular offerings. The Endowment Committee is made up of Mark Bertolami, Jen Dritt, Erin Kenney, Jim Sampson, Sharon Simmons and me. We are working with the ELCA Foundation and the Rev. Ana Lugo to develop policy and write a resolution for the St. Stephen constitution. The proceeds from the fund will be used for peace and justice ministries. We give thanks to God for this opportunity."
- Speaking of Treasurer Jen Dritt ... she said our finances are pretty typical for this time of the year. In an upcoming newsletter, we'll give you a financial snapshot of the first half of the year.
- Our newest Church Council member is Jake Hartung, who will be our coordinator for everything related to buildings and grounds. It's not a one-person job, as you former B&G people know, so let's all be ready to give Jake a hand.
- Speaking of buildings and grounds...
 - * Our current and past congregational leaders received an ovation for the excellent results of our sanctuary project. President Denise Bookwalter, who played a key role, noted that not only is the building structurally sound now, but you can appreciate its beauty every time you come to church.
 - * Karen asked whether we're monitoring the roof and walls – to make sure that the contractors actually provided a permanent fix to the "roof thrusting" problem. Pastor Tom said we're arranging to have an expert come in with lasers to take measurements – to make sure that, if we do need any further work, it'll be completed within the two-year warranty period.



- * **The new back door for the fellowship hall should be installed next week. It'll replace the shabby wooden double doors that lead out to the mailbox – and it'll look just like the glass front door into the fellowship hall. Half of the expense was donated by a member, and the other half will come from Building and Grounds' reserve funds from a previous collection campaign.**
- * **We hope to have the new chairs for the sanctuary by September or October. Nice surprise: While we were piecing together this newsletter, a \$1,000 check for the chair fund arrived in the mail. So now we've collected \$5,930 toward the \$8,054 bill! Just a little more than \$2,000 to go.**
- * **We're looking at the best ways to pass along our old chairs.**
- * **We plan to replace the glass in the oval window at the back of the sanctuary and the exterior glass protecting the front stained glass, Pastor said. The seals are broken, so the windows are fogged. The glass in the columbarium needs replacing, too.**
- * **Within three to five years, we hope to replace the front sign on North Meridian Road and resurface the parking lot.**

WHAT'S 'MINISTRY MINUTE,' ANYHOW?

By Sharon Simmons, outreach coordinator

Beginning in September, look for Ministry Minute during the liturgy on the third Sunday of the month. It will be our committee's way of spotlighting the many St. Stephen members who've answered the call to work in the community to support local nonprofits. If you'd like to volunteer to give a 3-minute Ministry Minute talk, please call me or Office Manager Lori to sign up.

Here are other updates from your friends on the Outreach Committee:

- **St. Stephen is proud to partner again with New Mount Zion AME Church for the annual July Water Works. It'll provide individual bottles of water to residents at the Kearney Center so they can stay hydrated during the brutal summer heat. From July 1 through July 24, we'll collect those bottles of water in the fellowship hall. Last year we collected 10 cases of them. Let's try to break that record.**



- **CCYS-Going Places needs shampoo; body wash or bar soap; sanitary supplies for women; laundry soap; and backpack-size snacks, juice boxes and small water bottles that clients can take with them. The agency isn't accepting clothes now, since its clothes closet is full. An appropriately sized bike for the male client we assisted earlier has been identified and should arrive soon. Thanks be to God for your generosity.**



- **The International Rescue Committee isn't accepting items from community partners right now – because it's conducting an inventory of the many wonderful donations that St. Stephen and other community members have made to help new residents in Tallahassee.**
- **St. Stephen's Justice and Mercy Fund is low. That account lets Pastor Tom help community members, both at St. Stephen and in the larger community, during periods of financial strain. Please include a donation along with your weekly offering.**

- **See the separate item below on our backpack project.**

PREPARING KIDS TO GO BACK TO SCHOOL

By Andrea Notley

Please consider participating in ECHO's Back-to-School Clothing Drive, because

BACK TO SCHOOL
CLOTHING DRIVE



We need you!
Our Kids are headed back to school in August.
Would you join ECHO in providing clothing and supplies?
Contact Us for additional details to help us NOW!
phone: 850-224-3246 ext. 207 or kpride@echothl.org

every child wants a new outfit and backpack to start school. There are two ways you can help. You may adopt a student by getting information from Erin Kenney or me and buying a backpack, then filling it with two outfits, socks and underwear. Or, if you don't want to shop, you may donate money. The backpacks are due back by July 17! Please contact me @850-443-5293 or Erin @ 850-459-7744 for more information. Thank you!

EXCERPT FROM PASTOR TOM'S SERMON

Jesus was, and is, often difficult to understand, and the things he said and did are open to more than one interpretation. No one but Christ could be a fierce apocalyptic prophet, a wise philosophical teacher, a divine healer and feeder of multitudes, AND the One who was able to meet the high bar of sacrificing his own life in order to teach us about God.

Jesus oscillates between "comforting and catastrophic." God, in multidimensional form. Human beings want to flatten God out, but Jesus won't allow it.

As we go back to the journey with Jesus as his face is set toward Jerusalem ... you can imagine the other disciples watching Jesus turn away potential followers and wonder what they were thinking. "More the merrier!" "Fill the pews, Jesus!" I'd have been the first to tug on Jesus' sleeve and give him advice about the benefit of more bodies on the journey. But, then again, maybe I'd have been one of the three who made excuses to not follow him.

One thing's for sure: God's reality continues to clash with the world's reality, especially when we identify following Jesus as a singular or right way to believe. Jesus won't allow human beings to flatten out God. Instead, Christ calls people to newness and to commitment.

To catch up on Pastor Tom's sermons, visit <https://ststephenlutherantally.com/sermons>.

HAIKU CORNER

By Lex Lutheran

OUR BUZZING BACKYARD WORKFORCE

Sunrise to sunset,
they spread pollen like crazy –
busy as, well, bees.

CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEE CALM

At age 26,
could you have kept your cool as
Ms. Hutchinson did?

IF ISABEL CAN'T BE OUR CANTOR...

What if we all sat
around her, stopped singing and
just listened to her?



MORE MIDWEEK UPDATES

- No newsletter next week!
- Remember – we're dying to share photos and stories of you and your favorite pet(s)! Please send them to Lori (see below).
- An excited and relieved Terri Schmitt reports that she just completed the state requirements to be a licensed teacher. Congratulations!
- Have any questions for our Church Council members? They're listed on our website, <https://ststephenlutherantally.com/about-us>. Also, remember that Council meetings are open to everyone.
- 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 Barton - 07/03
Karl Barton - 07/04
Tom Buchanan - 07/13
Jonas Holdcraft - 07/15
Margaret Bowers - 07/19
Corine Brathwaite - 07/19
Emily Ruddell - 07/20
Kirsten Ebbesen - 07/26
Ian Medley-Miller - 07/27
Ben Claussen - 07/29



UPCOMING DATES

This Sunday, July 03:

9 a.m. - Book study

10 a.m. - Worship, Fourth Sunday after Pentecost

Sunday, July 10:

9 a.m. - Book study

10 a.m. - Worship, Fifth Sunday after Pentecost

**The church office will be closed Monday, July 4, in observance of Independence Day.*

***Lori will be out of the office on July 5 & 6.*



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