

July 6, 2023



ST. STEPHEN THIS WEEK

St. Stephen Lutheran Church Newsletter

OUR WATER-BOTTLE MINISTRY

In her latest effort to keep our hearts and minds from turning to overheated mush this summer, Outreach Coordinator Sharon Simmons has an idea for us. She's a former teacher, you know, so this idea takes the form of an assignment. Settle down now, class, while Ms. Simmons gives us the details.

OBJECTIVE: Be Jesus to our neighbors.

STANDARD: Matthew 10:40-42 (“... whoever gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones in the name of a disciple – truly I tell you, none of these will lose their reward”).

Goal: Bring individual bottles of water for homeless clients at Kearney Center.



ACTIVITIES:

1. Buy case or more of bottled water.
2. Bring water to fellowship hall.
3. Place water on pew with WATER WORKS sign.
4. Pray daily for homeless in our community.
5. Repeat activities 1-4 above.

EVALUATION: Meet minimum congregational goal of 10 cases by July 30.

Everybody gets an A!

PREPPING FOR OUR OPEN FORUM

As you know, in preparation for our July 30 open forum, the Church Council and Pastor Tom are inviting us to think about our relationship with St. Stephen.



First they asked us to consider this question: **What is the primary thing that inspired you to join St. Stephen?** Then, last Sunday, the ushers handed out a second question: **What do you dream about for the future of St. Stephen?** Please turn in your reply in

the narthex Sunday, or email it to Lori in the church office.

Hand-in-hand with thinking about the future, this congregational meeting presents an opportunity to look back at the year so far and assess our progress. Before Pastor Tom left for vacation, he jotted down a few thoughts. “Since our last congregational meeting in January,” he wrote, thinking about building-and-grounds issues, “we have purchased a new piano for our worship space; performed a variety of major plumbing and air-conditioner repairs and improvements; installed a new front sign; and converted lights in the lobby and fellowship hall to LED.” On another subject, Pastor also noted that two people who’d never gone to Synod Assembly did so last month. As a result, he said, “They have inspired others to want to attend, whether as voting members or as visitors.” Those are just a few examples.

As you’re able, in a quiet moment, please pray about St. Stephen – past, present and future – and see what ideas God might be planting in your heart. What a blessing it is to be part of this church. See you on the 30th.

CLASSROOM MEMORIES

Here in July, our Noisy Offering is being designated for the classroom teachers who are members of St. Stephen. We won't have a formal Ministry Minute speaker, but we'll be collecting offerings all month to purchase gift cards for our active teachers – to help pay for the myriad of supplies they need to ready their classrooms for the fall. Along the way, we're asking members to share memories of their own most memorable teachers.



Terri Schmitt: "My favorite was Mr. Mitsch, biology teacher, Park High School, Cottage Grove, Minnesota. I liked him so much I took advanced biology my senior year. He was short, quick-witted and totally down-to-earth. Class was equal parts deep dive into biology and stand-up comedy."



Donna Schiffer: "One of my absolute favorite teachers was Mr. Sam Shive, Forrest High School (now Westside High), Jacksonville. He taught high-school English, and I was lucky enough to have him for 11th and 12th grades. He was the one who introduced me to computers. He took a small group of us to



Sarasota and introduced us to art and theater. He read my truly bad writing and gave me useful feedback. When you were in his class, you felt like he was seeing you as a person, not just another student. He was challenging, but also kind. I'll never forget how he kept his room freezing cold, and would tell us to take two pieces of lettuce, put one in the refrigerator and one in the oven,



and see which one lasts longer! A funny, funny man. His memory inspires me to be a better teacher."

ANOTHER VICAR VISIT

Last week we got an update on former Vicar Anna White. This week, we learn the latest about the delightful Bergs, who were with St. Stephen in 1991-92.

David and Constance Berg send greetings from Southern California! We downsized to be closer to family and now live in a rural area where lots of farm animals call us neighbors. We moved to the quiet foothills after living six miles from the ocean for seven years. David is busy supply-preaching on Sundays, and during the week he is a full-time hospital chaplain at St. Bernardine Medical Center. He loves keeping a vegetable garden, and we're very lucky to have lots of flowers in our backyard. Constance is a part-time hospice chaplain and also has a successful business sewing vestments for pastors. Water aerobics is the highlight six months out of the year here.



Our daughter, Kjrstin – who was a year and a half old when we came to Tallahassee – is now a safety training manager for Horizon Airlines and lives in Portland. She also sings in a community choir. Our son, Andrew – who was born when we were living in North Dakota – works at the front desk of a hotel/convention center in Stevens Point, Wisconsin, and loves Midwestern life.



We will forever remember our most wonderful year when David was a vicar at St. Stephen. You all taught us the meaning of generosity and kindness, as well as encouragement and acceptance, while laying the foundation for 30 years of pastoral leadership under the brilliant direction and kind mentorship of Pastor Emory. We send our warmest greetings to everyone!

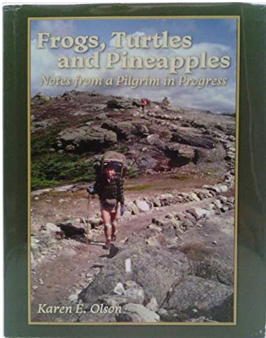
CHAPLAIN HEALS WITH PATIENCE

By Karen E. Olson (An excerpt from the Jan. 16, 1988, Tallahassee Democrat)

When you’ve been a hospital chaplain for almost 30 years, you learn when to bend the rules. Never mind if it costs several hundred dollars to sterilize and refill the large whirlpool bath at Tallahassee Memorial Regional Medical Center. That didn’t stop Chaplain Harold Hawkins from arranging an immersion baptism for an elderly patient three years ago.

The man was about 70, with a broken hip and other frailties. He recently had made a verbal profession of his newfound faith, but he wasn’t sure he’d ever make it back to church in time to complete his initiation. So hospital workers toted him into the tub on a stretcher.

“We go out of our way to meet people’s needs,” said Hawkins, a Southern Baptist who conducts his ministry in an ecumenical fashion. “I break all the rules.... There are no set rules except to be appropriate and to be caring – just good old common sense.” Members of his loose-knit and ever-changing flock usually have one thing in common – crisis. Their ranks may include a little boy who has just shot his father, or a panic-stricken man in the throes of a heart attack, or a woman laboring to deliver a baby that she knows is already dead....



“Everybody who comes here needs spiritual care,” Hawkins said. “They strip you of your clothing, your possessions, your identity. You come in as a number, as a chart, as a case.”

You’ll find this and more of Karen’s stories in the book “Frogs, Turtles and Pineapples: Notes From a Pilgrim in Progress,” available at church or from Karen.

DATES AND DEADLINES

- **July 11 (next Tuesday):** If you want to join the St. Stephen gang listening to (and maybe dancing to) Big Band music played by Tom Buchanan and his pals, be at the Lake Ella American Legion Hall by 7 p.m. Admission is only 6 bucks. RSVP to Margaret Bowers.
- **On or before July 23:** Bring your new backpack to church, marked with your name or with the name of the ECHO-referred child you adopted for new back-to-school clothes. See Andrea Notley if you have questions.
- **July 30:** Stick around after the liturgy for our whopper of a congregational meeting/open forum. We’re going to explore where God might be leading St. Stephen.
- **On or before July 30:** Bring a case of water to the fellowship hall, for homeless clients at Kearney Center.
- **On or before July 30:** Make your Noisy Offering donation for St. Stephen’s classroom teachers, to help them buy things they need for their students this fall.



MORE MIDWEEK UPDATES



- 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 flower chart in the narthex. The cost is \$35, which you can place in the offering plate.
- Have any questions for our Church Council members? They’re listed on our website, <https://ststephenlutherantally.com/about-us>.

UPCOMING BIRTHDAYS

Tom Buchanan - 07/13
Jonas Holdcraft - 07/15
Margaret Bowers - 07/19
Corine Brathwaite - 07/19
Emily Ruddell - 07/20
Michael Robinson - 07/25
Bert Sundberg - 07/25
Kirsten Ebbesen - 07/26
Ben Claussen - 07/29

IN THE WEEK AHEAD

This Sunday:

9 a.m. - Book study

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

**Pastor Tom will be out of the office until July 12.*



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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