



# ST. STEPHEN THIS WEEK

## St. Stephen Lutheran Church Newsletter

### **MENACING SKY**

*Not until the past week or two has the sky looked so angry around lunchtime. Or even breakfast time. This is God's way of getting you reacquainted with your umbrella.*



### **BOTTLED WATER, PLEASE**



As of this morning, we have eight cases of bottled water ready to deliver to thirsty neighbors. Sharon Simmons and her outreach team are collecting water as part of a joint initiative with New Mt. Zion AME Church to benefit Kearney Center clients. The goal is to contribute, well, more than eight cases! Can you help? The deadline is this Sunday. Add yours to the pew full of water bottles in the fellowship hall. Thanks.

### **ST. STEPHEN'S PETS: GINNIE 'N' JUDI**

**GINNIE-ON-THE-ROXIE DUFFY, 2013-2022**

*By Judi Duffy*

My beloved fourth English bulldog, Ginnie, was almost 9 years old when she died peacefully June 21 in her favorite spot on the deck. My veterinarian friend, Dr. Wallace Randell, helped Ginnie to raise four litters (17 puppies in all). We were able to place them all with bulldog families who know and love this special breed.

I loved many things about Ginnie. One was that she seldom barked. When there was an animal on TV, she would bark at it and try to run behind the TV to catch the critter!

Now I'm lonesome in the kitchen. She was always there, sitting quietly with those "I'm so hungry" eyes, hoping I would drop something – anything!



She slept a lot and walked slowly, just like her human "mom." She chased my four cats only when they were too near to me. So jealous. Maybe they miss her too: Jimi, Mimi, Abby and Skyy sit on my lap and lie on my open newspaper now more than ever.

Rest in peace, dear Ginnie. I miss you.

*Tell us about your current or former pet, please. Send your story to Office Manager Lori. Her information is below.*

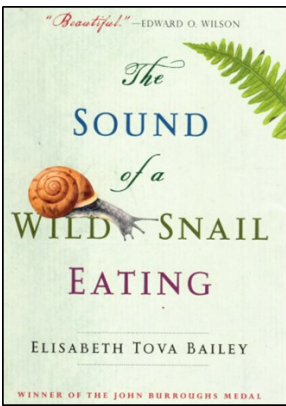
## ODE TO A SNAIL

Book review by Dave Suhrweir

“The Sound of a Wild Snail Eating” is not a book I would’ve chosen for myself, so I’m grateful that Karen Olson gave it to me as a gift. I found it to be thought-provoking and beautifully written.

The book starts with a life-transformative experience, like Dorothy after the tornado or Alice down the rabbit hole. But this is not fiction. The author, Elisabeth Tova Bailey, suddenly became a bed-ridden invalid. A friend gave her a potted violet with a stowaway snail. The snail became her constant, spiritually intimate companion. That fellowship inspired the book.

A terrarium with its natural furnishings provided an abode for Elisabeth’s little roommate. With “all the time in the world” at hand, she made minute observations of the snail’s daily activities and travels, which in some mystic way released her own confined existence. She was inspired to read extensively in poetic, scientific and philosophical literature about snails and, coincidentally, about life. Here are two of my favorite philosophical quotes that she encountered:



- “Think not of the amount to be accomplished, the difficulties to be overcome, or the end to be attained, but set earnestly at the little task at your elbow, letting that be sufficient for the day.” (*Sir William Osler, physician, 1849-1919*)
- “The natural world is the refuge of the spirit ... richer even than human imagination.” (*E.O. Wilson, biologist, naturalist and writer, from his book “Biophilia,” 1984*)

Despite some scientific vocabulary, this book is an easy read. The chapters are short, offering brief breaks from our busy lives.

As readers, most of us have lived satisfactorily so far without knowing or even desiring to know the detailed anatomy or behavior of snails. This book, however, takes us beyond Elisabeth’s room and her snail’s terrarium. I particularly appreciated its message that a disability can be a passage to a different ability. “The Sound of a Wild Snail Eating” provides meditative insight into a peaceful, restorative connection between our human existence and the world of nature – and a revelation of the blessings available to all in God’s “little and unimportant” creatures.

## MILLION-DOLLAR DREAMS

I’m not a regular reader of the *E-Spirit* newsletter from the Synod, but lately I’ve seen a few references to something interesting. They’re calling it Vision to Action, Phase 2, and it seems to involve a boatload of money that the Synod has – with a focus on how best to spend it. Pastor Tom, who said he’s eager to find out more, filled in some of the basic info.



“St. James in Miami closed its doors and the property was sold for a hefty bundle,” he said. “The Florida-Bahamas Synod got a large portion -- around a million, I believe. I attended a workshop at the Synod that began the vision process. Some of the ideas floating around were for affordable-housing communities situated around new churches and using eco-friendly materials and construction; training provided for learning new languages; justice ministry; and partnerships with denominations with whom we’re in full communion, or even other faith-based traditions. Other ideas were to use the money to call more pastors of color into positions of leadership in our Synod.

“It’s exciting, and I’m pleased the Synod hired an outside organization to help guide us so we can all share ideas.”

Sounds like a big opportunity, right? Let Pastor Tom know if you’d like to be involved in future discussions.

## NEWS FROM OUR MELODIOUS ALUMNA

*We were delighted to have Melody Duke worshipping with us again last Sunday and asked her to give us an update on her life in the Pacific Northwest. Melody is on the left in this photo, with a backdrop that Florida can only dream about.*



Hello, dear peace family. It is more of a blessing than you can imagine to see your faces – at least partially. This is a bittersweet visit, as I put together plans for selling the condo here and moving to Tacoma.

As some of you will recall, I'm a member of an ELCA congregation there, Peace Lutheran, on the infamous hilltop. It includes a wonderfully diverse congregation, both culturally and financially – operating in peace, along with quite a bit of chaos. A large old church, founded over 100 years ago by Russian immigrants, is now operating a housing ministry to help homeless individuals back into the mainstream – including managing three properties while building an extra DADU [detached auxiliary dwelling unit] on one, a food and clothing ministry with weekly meals, a community garden and an associated community center that provides after-school tutoring. The location allows and calls for that extent of involvement.

You can see they have the same heart as our St. Stephen family. I do miss the music and humor of our St. Stephen family, though! Please come visit anytime. I have a “new” old Craftsman home just a few blocks from the Hong Kong Market and close to so much PNW beauty. Love you all!

## EXCERPT FROM PASTOR TOM'S JULY 10 SERMON ON THE GOOD SAMARITAN

Humans will always measure and judge before giving mercy to one in peril. Jesus focused on the action, not the tribe. The action of mercy ... not the worthiness of the entity to receive it. It is why He commanded, “Go and *do* likewise.” Do ... mercy ... Not because we might receive a reward, but because what will happen if we do nothing? If we do nothing, then suffering will continue and death will come next. Be careful who you hate. It may be the very person that saves your life one day.

Catch up on Pastor's sermons: <https://ststephenlutherantally.com/sermons>

## MORE ABOUT ELECTIONS

Last week's newsletter provided a link to the Leon County Supervisor of Elections Office, so you could check your voting status and do your prep work for the upcoming primary election. We found out this week that the *Tallahassee Democrat* is keeping track of who's endorsing which candidates. Here's a link:



<https://www.tallahassee.com/story/news/politics/elections/2022/07/19/tallahassee-leon-county-races-endorsements-running-list-elections-vote-guide/10068422002/>

# HAIKU CORNER

By Lex Lutheran

## BET HE'S A NOISY EATER

Saw a jumbo snail  
as big as Violet's fist,  
'neath my wheelbarrow.



## CAN'T WHINE ABOUT MY MINOR WEATHER WOES

All around the world,  
someone's truly suffering  
from drought, flood, wind, flame ...

## BURNING POETRY QUESTION

So is the plural  
"haikus" or just "haiku"? (I  
hear your eyes rolling.)



# MORE MIDWEEK UPDATES



- 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](mailto:sslc@ststephenlutherantally.com) or call 850-385-2728.



# UPCOMING BIRTHDAYS

- Kirsten Ebbesen - 07/26
- Ian Medley-Miller - 07/27
- Ben Claussen - 07/29
- Astrid van der Mark - 08/02
- Doug Mann - 08/06
- Sharon Simmons - 08/09
- Caroline Collins - 08/14
- Val Sullivan - 08/17
- Marilyn Larson - 08/22
- Jerry Harrison - 08/24
- Andrea Notley - 08/26
- Susan Warren - 08/26
- Melissa Barton - 08/27



## UPCOMING DATES

### **This Sunday, July 24:**

**10 a.m.** - Worship, Seventh Sunday after Pentecost - We welcome Pastor Candace McKibben

### **Sunday, July 31:**

**10 a.m.** - Worship with communion, Eighth Sunday after Pentecost /Noisy offering



If you have news or photos to share,  
please send them to Lori at  
[sslc@ststephenlutherantally.com](mailto: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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