



ST. STEPHEN THIS WEEK

St. Stephen Lutheran Church Newsletter

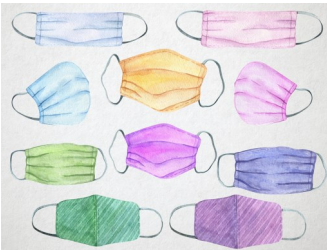


FIFTY YEARS AGO

This is how the Cannings looked as they walked down the aisle on their wedding day. "Susie is beautiful and looks so very happy," Val Kibler wrote to Mark the other day on his Facebook page. "You, on the other hand, look terrified." Replied Mark: "You got that right! And I'm still terrified every now and then." God bless Mark and Sue now and way beyond their 50th anniversary.

SORRY, BUT MASKS ON ... FOR NOW

Each week brings news of how the devious COVID virus is turning lives upside-down. The primary message from the CDC continues to be "Get vaccinated." However, this week the agency added this advice for fully vaccinated people: "To maximize protection from the Delta variant and prevent possibly spreading it to others, wear a mask indoors in public if you are in an area of substantial or high transmission."



So, in light of the latest CDC guidelines, and because the Tallahassee area is seeing an uptick in cases and hospitalizations, St. Stephen is revising its protocols for in-person worship. Until further notice, our worship leaders are asking everyone who participates in the liturgy in person to stay masked for the entire service – as an extra measure to safeguard each other's health.

"I really DO NOT want to go backward, but the stats for infections are going backward," worship coordinator Beth Alexander wrote in a note to Pastor Tom yesterday. "I would hate for one of our own to become sick, as I know you would."

Yes, it's frustrating. Yes, we'd all like to build a bonfire and roast these masks. But we can't do that just yet. We trust that God is with us as we wander through this pandemic minefield. Thank you for your understanding. See you at church.

BIG BUNCH OF BACKPACKS

By Andrea Notley

This turned out to be a great year for the ECHO Back to School backpack drive! I was a little unsure at first, when I got my list of students from ECHO. There were 20 students, ages 12-18. Well, you provided for all of them – so they'll have clothes and backpacks in time for school. St. Stephen made my heart happy once again.

I also want to thank my Back to School partner, Erin Kenney. She graciously shopped for several of the backpacks, made possible by St. Stephen people who donated money instead of shopping.

I'm very thankful to call St. Stephen my church family.



CONCERT TIME FOR TOM AND THE GANG

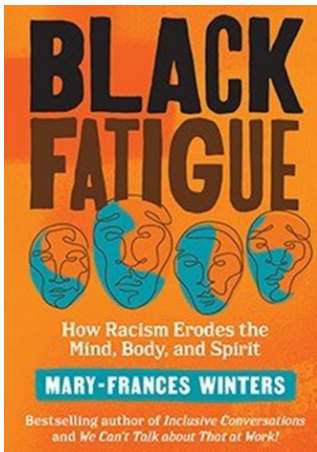
The Thursday Night Music Club Jazz Showcase (which includes church member Tom Buchanan) is set for 7:30 p.m. Aug. 12 at Ruby Diamond Concert Hall. Tickets are only 10 bucks. Such a deal!

Get tickets from Tom himself at church Aug. 9. Or you can get them online (<https://thursdaynightmusic.club>) or at Beethoven & Company, the music store owned by Mr. Buchanan. See you there.



A SYNOD BOOK INVITATION

The Florida-Bahamas Synod's Just Love Team invites you to join a six-week book discussion on "BLACK FATIGUE: How Racism Erodes the Mind, Body, and Spirit" by Mary-Frances Winters. Winters has a history of helping organizations address diversity, equity and inclusion. The term "Black fatigue" refers to how history, policy, practices and unaddressed disparities generate cycles of weariness and stress that take a heavy toll on people. This book discussion will deepen your understanding of the suffering that racism causes and our call in the Gospel to experience wholeness.



The online Zoom sessions will run from Aug. 4 through Sept. 8, on Wednesdays from 7 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. A special Facebook group will also be created on the synod page for ongoing discussion. The Zoom format will include a brief presentation on the weekly reading, breakout groups in chat rooms, and a plenary sharing session. Registration is required by Aug. 3:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZMkd-urrTluHNU9FMWjOuZHPY6XUxzBPjB1>.

You can find the book on Amazon and through other booksellers.

'LIFE IS GOOD': EXCERPT FROM SUNDAY'S SERMON

"... [W]e people are at our best when we recognize the limited time we are given. We are going to make the phone call, finish the will, make a donation, seek forgiveness, tell an 'I love you' today if we recognize there may not be a tomorrow. There is only the now – and in that now there is good.

"But, going deeper scripturally speaking, life is indeed good when we die a little each day. When we kill off the ego, the selfishness, and kill the desire to close our fists instead of opening our hands. Life is good when we take risks for the sake of the gospel and connect with people who are outside our immediate tribe and learn things that we didn't know we didn't know...."



BIBLE STUDY DOESN'T FIT YOUR SCHEDULE?

For those who'd like to take part in the weekly Bible study but have a schedule conflict, here's a link to the recorded meeting:

https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/URqHOblBh8-zTvtBCgPtKY_BV9H9MvyGeW9-Vc96TBDlqQufhqd1eBAgoTDLsqS.nEXsqYZWNVeol_q8

MORE MIDWEEK UPDATES

Monday is when Office Manager Lori will send out a link to our new names-and-faces directory. So if you want your photo included in this first edition of the directory, make sure you send her a picture by lunchtime tomorrow. Her contact information is below. Here's how the info will look in the directory:



**HOLDCRAFT, Colleen and Tom
Davis, Jonas, Wesley**

Street
City, State, Zip
Phone
Email

- 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 2021 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

Benjamin 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:

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

Wednesday, August 4:

Noon - Bible study (online)



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>.

St. Stephen Lutheran Church, ELCA
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The Rev. Tom Holdcraft, Pastor