



ST. STEPHEN THIS WEEK

St. Stephen Lutheran Church Newsletter

A FINAL SALUTE TO JERRY NESS

When Jerry Ness greeted you, his big paw swallowed up your hand. He smiled at you with shy eyes and spoke quietly in that deep, rich voice of his. Since 1978, St. Stephen has been blessed to have Jerry and his wife, Sandy, as



members. But as Pastor Tom announced last Sunday, Jerry passed away July 24. He was 85. This is a lovely line from his obituary: "Jerry always had a smile on his face, and everyone became his friend."

His final resting place is a place of honor, reserved for a chosen few. A graveside service with full military honors will be held at 10 a.m. Monday, Aug. 15, at Tallahassee National Cemetery on Apalachee Parkway.

Gerald Arthur Ness was a kid of 18 when he enlisted in the U.S. Navy. That was the beginning of a 26-year career as a chief hospital corpsman. Over those years he was stationed many places, but he especially enjoyed his time in Bahrain and in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. His final orders brought him to Tallahassee, where he later retired. This is where he and Sandy raised their two kids, Eric (who lives in Sweden) and Jennifer (who lives here in town). And now there are five grandchildren: Katie (Washington, D.C.), Jack (Charleston, S.C.), Cole (Tallahassee), Emelie (Sweden) and Ellinor (Sweden).

Jerry and Sandy – who both grew up in Minneapolis, and married 55 years ago – have been such a blessing to St. Stephen.

Here's a glimpse of their church life from a 1998-99 congregational directory: "Both of them take their turn counting financial contributions on Sundays. Jerry also sweeps the sidewalks. Sandy sends baptism and birthday cards, is a gift presenter and is a fellowship hostess....



They write: 'Both of us enjoy people. It's a good feeling to make a difference in someone's life.'

Jerry's obituary showed us how he continued to make new friends. "In lieu of flowers," it read, "the family requests memorial donations to Sweat Therapy Fitness, 1122 Thomasville Road, Tallahassee, FL 32303. Please write 'RSB Scholarship Fund' in the memo line. Jerry enjoyed his Rock Steady Boxing classes, which were instrumental in helping him live with Parkinson's. He considered the staff and all classmates his friends."

Rest in peace, old friend.

MEMORIES OF JERRY

“‘Heartfelt’ — that was Jerry Ness. I remember his big easy grin and his bear hugs. He was so humble and pleased to show the oil paintings he’d done over the years, and to share food at his table. His warm kindness to my late husband Woods always touched me. He was a sweet-hearted treasure of a man.” *(Marda Messick)*

“After his military career ended, Jerry continued to serve our community, our country and the military as an administrator of the ASVAB (Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery) assessment to high-school students. How surprised I was the first time he came into my guidance office. For many years I called ASVAB time ‘St. Stephen Day,’ because I knew Jerry would come a little early and we would have a chance to chat about our St. Stephen family, his children, my children and life in general. What a wonderful, caring man” *(Sharon Simmons)*

“In the 1980s, I bought a worn-out old VW Beetle. The previous owner had painted it the color of watered-down pea soup – with a brush. After I saved up a little money, I wanted to get it repainted, and I knew just the kind, talented, trustworthy guy who could help me. At that time, Jerry had a little side business: a tiny rented space where he could do paint jobs. My ugly duckling of a Beetle became a shiny red beauty with yellow wheels, thanks to Jerry.” *(Ron Hartung)*



SUDDENLY, CHAIRS!



Our new chairs for the sanctuary are arriving a month or two earlier than expected. We’re told they’ll be delivered sometime after lunch Friday – as in, tomorrow! If you plan to help move the chairs from the truck into the sanctuary (using the new dolly), tell Lori so she can add you to the list. Then she or Pastor will send us text messages when they get a better idea of exactly when the chairs will show up.

FINANCIAL SNAPSHOT FOR JULY

Here’s the latest from Pastor Tom and Treasurer Jen Dritt.



- Offerings: \$18,777
- Budgeted Expenses: \$22,967
- +/- for July: **-\$4,190**

Speaking of dollars: Sunday’s Noisy Offering raised \$152.64. The proceeds will go toward gift cards for the five St. Stephen members who teach in Tallahassee schools. “Donations will help offset out-of-pocket expenses that teachers incur to prepare their classrooms, teach or even feed children,” Pastor Tom said. What an important ministry they perform.



ST. STEPHEN'S PETS: MEET MOLLY

Molly is Emily Jennings' 7-year-old, 35-pound dachshund-beagle mix. "She came to live with me the Friday before Christmas 2019," Emily says. "She is very



clingy – always by my side! She barks at strangers (while wagging her tail). Loves to go walking and knows when it's time for a treat. She insists on sleeping in my bed, and enjoys burrowing under the covers – never had a dog do that! I returned the bed I bought her to PetSmart.

"This picture was taken while I was recovering from a fractured pelvis I suffered when walking Molly."

and I rescued Georgia, an Australian cattle dog my brother had found starving in the country in middle Georgia. She lived 14 years – a dear, sweet dog."

Molly is just the latest in Emily's long line of pets. "Our family had basset hounds Sam and Rolf for 12 years. We also had Perry, a shih tzu, for 12 years. And Mom

Let's hear from the rest of you St. Stephen pet people. Tell us about your puppy, turtle, shark, giraffe or.... Please send a paragraph and photo to Office Manager Lori. Her contact information is below.

OUTREACH UPDATE

By Sharon Simmons, St. Stephen's outreach coordinator

The International Rescue Committee (IRC) has completed its inventory and organization of furniture and clothing – so once again it's accepting both by appointment. If you have furniture, snap a picture on your phone and send it to Karen Duncan at 510-847-6274. She'll check with the furniture supervisor to see if that item is needed. She'll also help arrange pickup for large items. IRC will accept babies', toddlers' or children's clothes on Monday or Tuesday by appointment only. Call or text Karen (see number above) to set up an appointment.



CCYS-Going Places is still not accepting clothing but appreciates the donations of backpack-friendly snacks, toiletries, laundry detergent and sanitary supplies. ECHO (Emergency Care Help Organization) IS accepting furniture and clothing (adults' or children's). Drop off clothing at ECHO's main office, 548 E. Bradford Road; no appointment needed. To donate furniture and arrange pickup, call Jon Hinkle at 850-224-3246, ext. 205.

Many thanks to the congregation for donating cases of water for our joint initiative with New Mount Zion AME Church for Kearney Center. You'll hear more about our next joint initiative in September.



EXCERPT FROM PASTOR TOM'S SERMON

... Have you noticed the last few Sundays, while in Luke's Gospel, we have been walking through instances of distraction? "Martha, Martha. Why are you so distracted?" Then last week, the distracted disciples need Jesus to teach them how to pray. Now today, the rich man is distracted by his wealth and possessions.

Luke leans in gently to whisper in our ear, to recognize that just as we too can be distracted by good things, we can also be taught to let go. What would it mean for us to say "no" and let go of the distractions? Even the good ones?

Martha's work and service of hospitality was good, but she was distracted from letting herself be near Jesus... Let go, Martha.

Prayer is good, but the disciples were distracted from intimate conversation with Jesus and desired a formulaic prayer... Let go, followers of Jesus.

Now today, wealth and possessions are not in themselves evil, but they become powerful agents that distract us from God... Let go....

HAIKU CORNER

By Lex Lutheran

BACKYARD FLOWERS IN AUGUST

So shy back in spring,
they've orgy-bloomed into one
Technicolor swirl.



WIDE-OPEN NIGHT SKY

Walk two blocks north, past
sprawling oaks, and suddenly
the stars are on fire.



EVOLVING

My bride has taught me
to view home as an ever-
changing work of art.



MORE MIDWEEK UPDATES

- The annual blessing of the backpacks will be on Sunday.
- **Reminder:** Tom Buchanan is selling tickets for the Thursday Night Music Club's Jazz Showcase, coming up a week from today at 7:30 p.m. in Ruby Diamond Concert Hall. If you can't find Tom, order tickets online: <https://thursdaynightmusicclub.org>. Tickets are only \$15, and the show is always a blast.
- Margaret Bowers, who works at Bevis Funeral Home, says Bevis is offering a free seminar Sept. 20 on "The Advantages of Planning Ahead." You can choose 10 a.m. or 6 p.m. Bevis is at 200 John Knox Road. For more information, call 850-385-2193.
- St. Stephen member Ute Horn-Hoeflich, who works at the FSU College of Medicine, passes along this opportunity: An upcoming Community Rounds program titled "Supporting Healthy Aging at Health System and Community Levels" is open to the public via Zoom. It's scheduled from noon to 1 p.m. Wednesday, Aug. 31. Zoom ID: 932 9104 1318. Register [here](#).
- We're running low on Publix cards and gas cards, says Lori. Those little cards – in \$10 and \$20 denominations – are invaluable for Pastor Tom when people in need come to our door.
- Don't forget – the art teacher at Terri Schmitt's school is collecting shoeboxes for kids' art projects. Drop them off in the fellowship hall.
- 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

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, August 7:

9 a.m. - Book study

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



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
2198 N. Meridian Road | Tallahassee, FL 32303
The Rev. Tom Holdcraft, Pastor