



ST. STEPHEN THIS WEEK

St. Stephen Lutheran Church Newsletter

*Join us in Celebrating a
Potluck Breakfast
Reception
for*

Astrid van der Mark - confirmed
Andrew, Emily, Armand and Bastian Stover - new members
Blessing of the Backpacks - all students
Back to School for Teachers & Students

*Sunday, August 11, 2024
Eight o'clock in the morning
Fellowship Hall*

*Gordon will be making his famous
Biscuits & Gravy
Bring your favorite breakfast dish to share*

**Following Church please join us
for our congregational meeting.**

SO MUCH TO CELEBRATE

We had two affirmation-of-baptism ceremonies last Sunday. In one case, we rejoiced that Astrid van der Mark had completed her confirmation (with Professor of Lutheran Studies Dave Suhrweir). In the other, we welcomed Andrew, Emily, Bastian and Armand Stover as new members of St. Stephen. Check out the honorees in this photo by Colin Hackley.



toward the first day of school.

As Margaret Bowers spelled out in the flyer above, all of these folks will be guests of honor at this Sunday's potluck breakfast, beginning at 8 a.m. in the fellowship hall. Since it's a potluck, please bring what you can. Note that none other than Gordon Fleischer will be making his legendary biscuits and gravy. Plus, the young students of St. Stephen will have their backpacks blessed, as we tiptoe

Also last Sunday, we said our final goodbyes to artist-in-residence Blake Simmons, who's heading off to the University of West Virginia to make her mark in the world of puppetry. Godspeed, Blake.

FIRST THE MEETING...

By Pastor Tom



We have a congregational meeting coming up at 11:30 a.m. Sunday in the fellowship hall. Here's the agenda.

- 1) Elect Graham Reece onto the Church Council to hold the seat of Youth Representative.
- 2) Review our financial report and update the congregation on the new software and accounting standards report.
- 3) Present a Continuing Resolution to the congregation for vote and approval:

The Congregation of St. Stephen, on the advice of the Church Council, recognizes the need to revise the Buildings & Grounds position on the Council: that is, for one Council representative to be assigned to Buildings ministries and a separate member assigned to Grounds ministries. Each elected member will have voice and vote on the Council as a continuing resolution and not conflicting with the constitution or its bylaws.

- 4) Elect a member of the congregation to the Council to fill the vacancy resulting from the above resolution.
- 5) Continue the Open Forum discussions for ministries inside and outside of St. Stephen. For more on those discussions, look below!

... AND THEN THE OPEN FORUM

By Pastor Tom

This Sunday, in our Open Forum discussion, we'll spend about 30 minutes total in three small groups. People can choose which group to attend. In case some are interested in more than one group, we'll keep notes to share.

The theme is Journey to Mission:

- One group will discuss avenues to interact with people outside of St. Stephen.
- A second group will discuss ways to interact with people inside St. Stephen.
- A third group will discuss a roadmap for compiling our own video testimonies – with people to write and record thoughts about St. Stephen and put them on a St. Stephen YouTube page.



The meeting will be held in the fellowship hall, and groups can break out into the conference room and office lobby.

UNITY, NOT UNIFORMITY: AN EXCERPT FROM PASTOR TOM'S SERMON

... Today, as we wade into our assigned lessons, we are reminded ... that it is a human desire to be uniform. *Uni* means having only one. *Form*, from the Latin *forma*, means shape or appearance. "Having only one form" is our desire to want to be ... just like everyone else.

But if Paul in the Ephesians texts wants us to remember anything, it is to know (or remember) that the primary call of people is to be in unity, not uniformity. He wrote to a congregation of Jesus followers that thought they all had to be the same.



This is a constant journey for us to reject this desire for uniformity and embrace the call for unity – because we think that in order to be in harmony, we must be the same. Like a team with matching uniforms, we love the appearance of uniformity, but forget that it's God's call for humanity to not be the same as each other (how boring!). And Jesus' followers ought not behave in the same ways as society behaves....

TONIGHT! MUSIC!

A special concert is coming up tonight, and our own Tom Buchanan is taking part. It's the annual summer concert of the Thursday Night Music Club, of which trumpeter Tom is a member. This year's concert happens at 7:30 p.m. at Ruby Diamond Concert Hall.

You can buy tickets at

<https://thursdaynightmusic.club>.

They cost \$15, with a small purchasing fee, plus tax. Take it from those of us who've attended in years past: You'll love it.



BEFORE YOU GO...

- The Noisy Offering for July totaled \$487! That amount will be split among our St. Stephen teachers: Jen Reece, Donna Schiffer, Andrea Notley and Colleen Holdcraft.
- This Sunday we'll welcome the Rev. Dr. Derek Hoven, newly appointed assistant to the bishop. He will bring greetings from the bishop and preach.



- If you have an anniversary, birthday, special memory or special St. Stephen person or program you'd like to honor, celebrate by sponsoring the altar flowers for our service. Sign up on the flower chart, out by the nametags, or ask Lori to sign you up. Include the \$40 with your regular offering. And then take the flowers home!

COMING UP

Today:

Noon - Al-Anon meets in fellowship hall (FH)

7 p.m. - AA meets in FH

This Friday:

9:30 a.m. - TOPS meets in FH

This Sunday:

8 a.m. - Breakfast Potluck

9 a.m. - Book study

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

11:30 a.m. - Congregational meeting

4 p.m. - Congolese Christian worship in FH



Monday, August 12:

5 p.m. - TIMA meets in FH

7 p.m. - TIMA meets in FH

Tuesday, August 13:

11:30 a.m. - OWLs "Bring Your Own Lunch" in FH

Wednesday, August 7:

5 p.m. - TIMA meets in FH



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