

August 11, 2022



ST. STEPHEN THIS WEEK

St. Stephen Lutheran Church Newsletter



NICE CHAIRS, EH?

Our 120 new sanctuary chairs arrived Friday in a semi, which had been dropping off chair orders throughout Florida. We were last on the driver's list. Poor guy. Imagine you're driving a semi, turning off Meridian Road onto Pinewood, and then imagining how you could make an immediate left into our church driveway while trying to avoid the ditch. So the wise driver just pulled up the hill on Pinewood, between our driveway and Faith Presbyterian's, and parked.

Inside his trailer were 10 stacks of chairs, averaging 12 chairs each. That's one tall stack, and these chairs are pretty substantial. Question: How to get those stacks from the Pinewood hill to the St. Stephen door (the one closest to Katharine's piano)? Good thing Mark Warren was there with his pickup truck. The delivery driver came through again when he figured out that they could slide a stack of chairs from the trailer into the back of Mark's truck – where Pastor Tom, Jake Hartung and Bob Eshleman were waiting. Then Mark drove into our parking lot, and the three manly men unloaded one stack and circled back to get another, and another....

Meanwhile, other volunteers were stripping the cardboard and shrink-wrap off the stacks; carefully unstacking the chairs (the tiptop ones were a challenge); and carrying the chairs one at a time into the sanctuary. Inside, more volunteers were using scissors to remove the clear plastic protective "socks" from each chair leg and arranging the chairs in rows. Finally, using the dolly to carry four chairs at a time, volunteers transported the extra chairs into one of the classrooms, then prepared the piles and piles of cardboard and shrink wrap for recycling.

In all, it probably took about an hour and a half. Thank goodness for the shade from that tree in front of the sanctuary! The payoff came Sunday morning, when everyone got to actually sit in those chairs. Ah. Perfect. The ones at the end of the rows even have arms.

The team that day consisted of Pastor Tom, Office Manager Lori Zengel, Mark Warren, Bob and Linda Eshleman, Beth Alexander, Martin Guttenplan, and the Hartung Boys. In the days before, Lori and her son, Zach, had moved the old chairs into the High School Room and Pastor Tom had vacuumed the nearly empty sanctuary. Yes, another pastoral duty that they didn't cover in seminary.

THINKING OF YOU, KAYLEE

During Sunday's prayers, Sandy Larson lifted a prayer for her 8-year-old granddaughter, Kaylee. Asked after church for details, Sandy said Kaylee was at UF Health in Gainesville because of what she called heart arrhythmia issues. "She's stable," Sandy said, "and we're waiting for test results. Thanks to everyone for your concern and prayers."

ST. STEPHEN'S PETS: SAVANNAH HOLLY HARTUNG

Landscape designer Jake's cat is named after a type of tree. Savannah is 15 years old and, like most of us, has her share of quirks. Jake sent us a few of them:

- "She enjoys drinking fresh water dripping from the faucet.
- "She sits behind me on the couch and gently puts her claws into the back of my head when she wants petting.
- "She waits until I lie down in bed to pounce right onto the middle of my chest. That's where she wants to sleep."

Come on – let's hear some more tales of St. Stephen pets. Send yours to Office Manager Lori.



SALUTING OUR TEACHERS

During announcements Sunday, Pastor Tom updated us on the most recent Noisy Offering – because it got a late, great boost. As you know, the proceeds are going toward gift cards for five St. Stephen members who teach in Tallahassee's classrooms – to supplement the out-of-pocket money they spend on their classrooms and their students. Well, one St. Stephen couple learned about that plan after the fact. They were so pleased with it that they jumped in with a big donation. So this Sunday, each teacher is getting a gift card not for \$40 but for \$90. Nice.



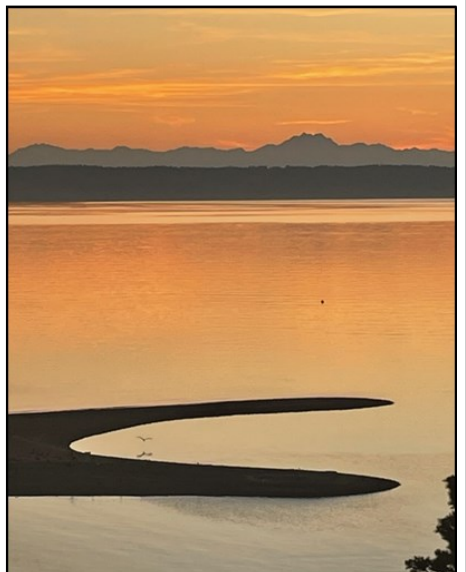
To classroom saints Colleen Holdcraft, Andrea Notley, Jen Reece, Donna Schiffer and Terri Schmitt: Best wishes for this new school year.

ANOTHER UPDATE FROM THE PACIFIC NORTHWEST

By Janet Barber

I arrived at Jim's place in Des Moines (that's on the Puget Sound between Seattle and Tacoma, not in Iowa) later than usual due to a Barber Family Reunion in Tampa in June, followed by a two-week bout with COVID. A six-day heat wave finally broke here, and we're enjoying the usual balmy, sunny weather common at this time of the year.

After reading Melody Duke's piece in the last St. Stephen newsletter, Jim and I decided to visit her church in Tacoma. It was quite a treat: lovely old church in the middle of a culturally diverse neighborhood. We loved its diversity, abundance of children and vibrant church musician, who made us feel like we were worshipping at a black Baptist church. Jim even knew the pastor (of course!). We will arrange to spend more time with Melody, my fellow St. Stephen transplant. Come visit us and see why I love it here in the summer. *(Photo taken from a park in front of Jim's apartment)*



REPORTING LIVE, FROM CHINA

In a recent newsletter, Jennifer Buchanan filled us in on the magnificent wedding of son Michael. His new bride, Sandya, is in the Foreign Service, and after the honeymoon these two adventurers headed for her new outpost – in China. Here is an update from Michael’s blog, dated July 31.

We arrived in Beijing and are quarantining comfortably at the Hotel Maxmelim!... People have had to sacrifice a ton to get here. Because of the pandemic, many were returning after years of not seeing spouses, or preparing for years apart as their kids finish school. Everyone has had to make incredibly difficult decisions. Sandya and I feel very lucky that we are doing this together.



After landing in Tianjin, each person we've seen has been wearing head-to-toe hazmat suits and goggles that fog up in the heat. Customs, medical, hotel staff, drivers, even U.S. Embassy personnel. The number of people wearing deeply uncomfortable clothes who are helping us out is staggering. Terminals and highway lanes have been cleared. Teams from the U.S. Mission in China have been on call 24/7, keeping us organized and supplied and filling online chats with positive emojis.

Curious drivers on the highway took pictures of our convoy, which was plastered with public health messages.... Hazmatted workers wave. The support we've had from people from the U.S. and China has been incredible.

Now we sit. And read. And test. And make tea. Veterans help newbies order snacks. We have so many snacks. Enough to crunch on as we stare at the street outside, where trees are green, cicadas chirp, and nobody is dressed like an astronaut.

(Editor’s note: We checked with Jen this morning and got this update: “They were finally released from their 10-day quarantine in Beijing Tuesday (their yesterday), so they are in their apartment.”)

HAIKU CORNER

By Lex Lutheran

THE USHERS’ NEW DUTY

Now they’ll be watching
to make sure we’re not napping
in our plush new chairs.



ALL-YOU-CAN-EAT BACKYARD BUFFET

If this hummingbird
keeps gorging on our blooms, she’ll
be too fat to fly.

‘WELL DONE, LITTLE DAISY’

I figure I’m not
the only backyard gardener
who talks to his plants.



'IF YOU STRUGGLE': EXCERPT FROM PASTOR'S SERMON

... If you bristle at Jesus' command to sell possessions and give alms to the poor, ask yourself: Why?

If you struggle with Jesus' illustration that the Son of Humanity will come like a thief, perhaps we need to look at: To whom does our world belong?

The Spirit of God does not provide an escape for us from this life, but she does lead us to hold on loosely to the things we have and to the money we acquire – for they ultimately do belong to God....

MORE MIDWEEK UPDATES

- The pressure's on in the Bookwalter/Greeley family. Young Ceilia was flawless in her debut as lector last Sunday. This Sunday, her father is reading the lessons. Good luck, Dad.
- Reminder: The Thursday Night Music Club's Jazz Showcase, with Tom Buchanan as one of the musicians, is TONIGHT at 7:30 p.m. in Ruby Diamond Concert Hall. Order tickets online: <https://thursdaynightmusicclub.org>. They're only \$15.
- 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

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 14:

- 9 a.m. - Book study
- 10 a.m. - Worship, Tenth Sunday after Pentecost
- 11 a.m. - Outreach Committee meeting



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