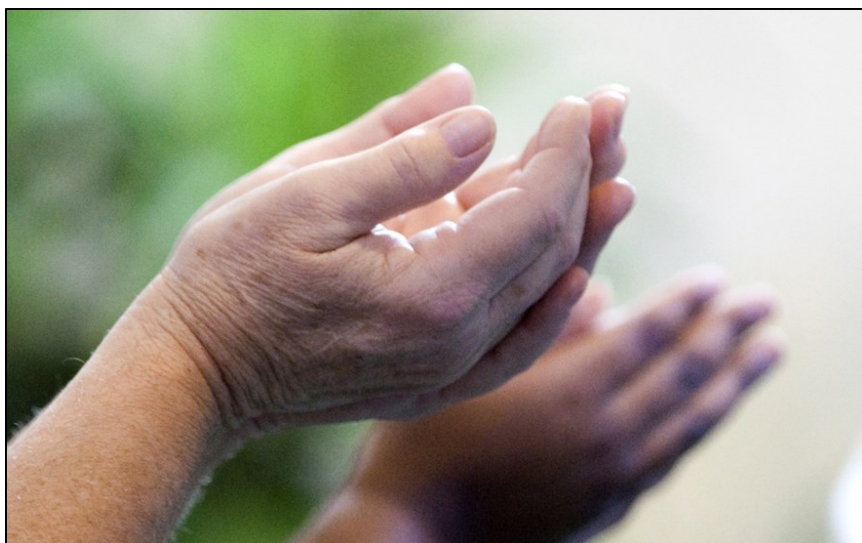




# ST. STEPHEN THIS WEEK

## St. Stephen Lutheran Church Newsletter



### PRAYING FOR PATIENTS AND THOSE AROUND THEM

If you're reading the local newspaper, you know that our hospitals are handling more people with COVID than ever. And you know that some don't survive. Helping patients and their families navigate the end of life is what St. Stephen member Susan Warren does for a living.

She's a palliative and supportive care social worker at Tallahassee Memorial. Doctors rely on her to help patients understand the scope of their disease; track down next of kin, especially when patients can't speak for themselves; help patients complete their advance directives, outlining their wishes for end-of-life care; and assist in the transition to comfort care, allowing patients to die peacefully and naturally.

Few of us can imagine undertaking any part of that job description. All of us can see how well it fits Susan's God-given gifts. "We rarely get active COVID consults," Susan said this week. "But we often see patients who had COVID and never rebounded." The hardest part is counseling families as they struggle to accept that their loved one won't recover – and that the time for aggressive medical care has ended.

The Delta variant is taking its toll on more than just patients. "During that first wave of COVID, I never felt that the hospital was overrun with the virus," Susan said. "Today, though, it's different. Looking at just one COVID wing – almost every bed is filled with an active COVID patient – the youngest is 35, the oldest 76, with 30 patients in between. And that's just one area. Administrative nursing staff are being pulled back into active nursing because almost 100 staff members are either out with the virus or quarantining. Patients who aren't on ventilators are so frightened and feel so alone as they struggle to breathe."

Susan asks us to pray for the patients, their families and the staff members who work tirelessly to provide care. May their feelings of helplessness give way to hopefulness and peace. God, be with Susan as she tends to them.

### YOUR STORY

You've read about Susan. What about you? In your job or in your neighborhood/community, are you ministering to people whose struggles have increased because of COVID? How is COVID's relentlessness affecting you, your school-kids, your emotions, your faith? Have you been inspired by others, maybe St. Stephen people, who've responded to particular needs? If so, please write a few paragraphs for this newsletter and send them to Lori, or call 850-222-5656.



## GREETINGS FROM WINTER GARDEN

*When the beloved Muchuruza family moved from Tallahassee last year, our hearts sank. Well, this photo will give your heart a boost. Seventh-grader Vivien and eighth-grader Vince are pictured here on the first day of school.*

*In case you're keeping track of vital statistics: Vivien is now 5-foot-5, and Vince is 5-foot-7. "They grow up too fast!" says their mom, Eunice. "Wishing all the kids a safe, healthy and joyful school year."*

## MORE CANTORS

It was a sad but lovely Sunday as we marked Isabel Barton's final day as our official cantor. By the time we finished giving her a couple of standing ovations and serenading her, our unflappable cantor's eyes were red with tears. Very sweet.

Now, others have stepped up to keep this new tradition alive, particularly for livestreaming worshippers who otherwise might be singing alone. At least for the moment, we're going with two cantors per service – in recognition that, although St. Stephen has an abundance of strong singers, Isabel was one in a million. Teaming up takes some of the pressure off these bold new volunteers. We thank you, cantors!



## ALL SMILES

*After a year of navigating life in each other's pandemic bubble, St. Stephen alumnus Michael Buchanan (younger son of Jennifer and Tom) and partner Sandya Das got engaged July 25 in California! Sandya is moving for work to Taipei, Taiwan, and Michael hopes to join her there soon. They'll set a wedding date for sometime next summer.*

## 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/bDPFfXH8A-RGQOfx6-8heLtGXmLT9dQK51JpimqRgVYMMaXuRBUBJaJ-o3TudaGR.XDFoWnQihGY0UEjX>

# 'THE SPIRIT CONSUMES US FROM THE INSIDE OUT': AN EXCERPT FROM SUNDAY'S SERMON

"...In three different places within our Gospel lesson, Jesus made the claim: 'I am the bread of life,' 'I am the bread from heaven' and then 'I am the living bread.' We consume the Word (the Bread) and find the Spirit consumes us from the inside out....

"[T]he most important takeaway is this new relationship that God extends to all people. 'Whoever comes to Him will never be hungry, and whoever believes in Him will never be thirsty.' We no longer need to pretend to fit a label. We no longer need to hide ourselves in a cave for the less than honorable things we've done. We no longer need to be anxious about the transitions we encounter in life – they'll come and they'll pass. For today, it is enough that you are reminded of the light inside you. Your strength and resilience to keep the love of God flowing out of you is real.

"No matter what mountain you're about to climb, or are climbing, or are climbing down, you are never alone."

## MORE MIDWEEK UPDATES

- Last Sunday, we saw the return of two pieces of the liturgy that we hadn't experienced in more than a year: a children's message (first time we've ever had a backpack on the altar), and an anthem (thanks to Isabel and Jake).
- 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](mailto: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:**  
10 a.m. - Worship, Twelfth Sunday after Pentecost

**Wednesday, August 18:**  
Noon - Bible study (online)



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