



# ST. STEPHEN THIS WEEK

## St. Stephen Lutheran Church Newsletter



*Shortly before the wind and rain of Tropical Storm Fred, this hibiscus was showing off in yellowy splendor. Afterward, alas, it was soggy and wrinkled and sad. They don't last long, these show-stoppers, but what a welcome gift from God – especially during a week with such dire news from all across the world.*

## OUR PROJECT IS PICKING UP SPEED

By Pastor Tom

The people of St. Stephen have been so patient during the planning and seemingly endless waiting connected with our sanctuary project. I'm happy to report that your patience is about to be rewarded. Things are starting to fall into place. And soon we'll need your help. Here are some updates.

- Next week is the deadline for receiving estimates from the three general contractors who've expressed interest in our project. Two of them have already done an actual site visit since the drawings were approved.
- When the contractors' bids come in, the Building Design Team will hand over the reins to the Bid Review Team: Mark Bertolami, David Butler, Jen Dritt, Ann Hingst and me. Doug Mann has agreed to read the final contract when the general contractor is selected.
- Karl Barton is taking command of our audio needs and will be in contact with the general contractor selected for the project.
- The 14 hanging lights for the sanctuary have been delivered and are safely stored at St. Stephen.
- Calling all able-bodied volunteers! We'll need you in the coming weeks to help remove the furniture from the sanctuary and help Karl remove speaker/mic wires before work begins. We'll have to roll the piano into the fellowship hall and do whatever else is necessary to convert that into our temporary worship space. Please watch for those workdays and help if possible. These are busy but exciting times for St. Stephen!



## CHECK OUT THESE STOOLS, KIDS

By David Butler, building and grounds coordinator

As we continue to cultivate the pollinator garden, these two toadstools are



the latest addition. We invite children and adults to come sit on a frog and enjoy the garden. Butterflies, bees and hummingbirds are already blessing us with their presence. The garden will also be used as a container garden for our youth. We're delighted that the tangerine tree is bearing fruit. Next spring, with its blossoms, it will join the other plants as a welcome addition to the garden.



## 'PLEASE PRAY FOR MY FRIEND'

By Judi Duffy

I was so inspired by Susan's story last week that I decided to share my own. My friend, a retired actuary, tested positive for COVID two months ago. He was so lacking in oxygen that he was incoherent. I worked with his partner by phone for three days to get him to go to the hospital. He kept refusing because he thought hospitalization meant a ventilator.

Finally we persuaded him and he spent several days in the ICU and step-down unit before going home on nasal oxygen. He now has complications from COVID: He's on a walker, his diabetes is difficult to control and he sometimes has cognitive issues.



Please pray for my friend. And please, please urge everyone you know to get vaccinated and wear a mask. We have lived too long to be shot down by the dreaded COVID.

## STAIRWAY TO HEAVEN

Here's a joke a former newsroom colleague sent me.

St. Peter: "Why should I let you into heaven?"

Me: "Once, a coworker said 'supposably' seven times in a meeting, and I just let her."

St. Peter: "Get in here!"



## WALKING IN KRIS' FOOTSTEPS

*As most of you know, St. Stephen member Erin Kenney is the daughter of the late Kris Knab, beloved champion of social justice. Here's a quick glimpse of what Erin has been up to lately.*



United Partners for Human Services created the Kris Knab Service Award in 2019 to recognize a member of the nonprofit community who possesses a compassion and commitment to building a stronger community through their service and leadership. I have been fortunate enough to proudly present the award every year on her behalf. It brings me great joy that this award is named after her, and I'm sure she would love it too.

I currently work for the Florida Senate, which has been very interesting during this pandemic! We only got to work from home for the month of April in 2020. Otherwise, we've been in the office. Because of that and some recent travels, I've decided to watch our Sunday service remotely, but I hope to see everyone soon! One of my recent travels was to visit former member Summer Shepherd in Colorado! *[That's Summer on the right in this photo.]*

I sure do miss my St. Stephen family!

## 'CHEWING ON FOOD AND SPIRIT': AN EXCERPT FROM SUNDAY'S SERMON

"There's a picture in my office that a person gave to me. Her name was Gretchen, and the first time I met her was in her hospital room. In that room, as the sun streamed in through the window, she told me that she no longer wanted to continue her chemotherapy. She watched and wondered what I'd say. Would I argue with her or root her on to keep fighting?

"I'd be lying if I told you I didn't want to change her mind, but there was a sureness in her voice and a look of determination that told me she had thought long and hard over this decision. Her mind was made up and now she wondered: Would the pastor she'd never met, until that day, understand?

"This encounter began a seven-month journey with Gretchen [and her husband] .... I would go to their home by the water, and they'd always offer a little something to eat. A muffin or coffee cake and a cup of tea. Over this food and drink we shared the important things in the heart: They told me about their lives; their families; their joys and regrets; the love they felt for each other....

"[I]t wasn't small talk. It was rich and deep and with a lot of silence between the words. Blessed time to chew on the emotion shared. And each time we met, we'd lift up and share in Holy Communion together. We chewed on food and we chewed on Spirit. In a similar way, that is what Jesus is talking about in our Gospel lesson this morning. Chewing on food and Spirit...."

## 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/j/84461229920>

## MORE MIDWEEK UPDATES

- 'Twas the first Sunday after Isabel Barton left for college, and the sky didn't fall! Many thanks to all of the members of the worship, music and IT team who are juggling cantors, microphones and other factors to make sure our liturgy continues to be available to participants near and far.

- Letter to Sharon Simmons from Brenda Christie at New Mt. Zion AME



Church: "Thank you and the members of your church for your generous donations of bottled water. I am truly grateful! Thank you for being a blessing to my ministry. We were able to provide over 40 cases of bottled water to the Kearney Center."

- In response to our call for items about our members, Vicki Guttenplan sent this sweet note: "Caroline makes for a good friend!"

- 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

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, Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost

### Wednesday, August 25:

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>.

St. Stephen Lutheran Church, ELCA  
2198 N. Meridian Road | Tallahassee, FL 32303

The Rev. Tom Holdcraft, Pastor

Edited by Lex Lutheran. Designed by Lori Zengel, office manager, [sslc@ststephenlutherantally.com](mailto:sslc@ststephenlutherantally.com).  
Website: <http://www.ststephenlutherantally.com/>

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