



ST. STEPHEN THIS WEEK

St. Stephen Lutheran Church Newsletter



IT'S A JUNGLE OUT THERE

But sometimes the right message from God can help calm our nerves as we slash our way through the COVID-19 jungle. This quote from Wednesday's Tallahassee Democrat is from Temple Israel Rabbi Michael Shields: "Our society has never been able to guarantee everyone 100% protection from infectious diseases. [But] we must fulfill the spiritual obligation to avoid reasonable and foreseeable danger to life. For this reason, I feel that I honor God, holiness and the sacred scripture by observing public health guidelines." Amen.

CHANGE OF PLANS FOR THIS SUNDAY

By Pastor Tom

On a routine exam at the ophthalmologist, it was discovered that I have a partially detached retina in my right eye. It is a fairly routine procedure, and thankfully it was found before permanent vision loss. The surgery was Tuesday, and due to the post-op restrictions, I will be out of service until Monday.

Therefore, the communion we had planned for this Sunday will be postponed until the following Sunday, Sept. 5. Thank you for your prayers and support.

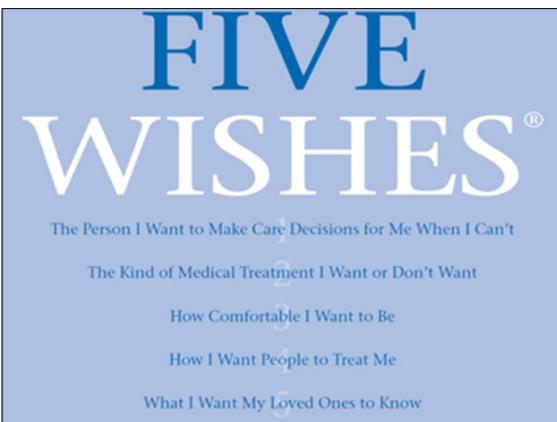
~~PLAN A~~
dreamline
PLAN B

[Colleen reported last night that her husband is on the road to recovery. We look forward to seeing Pastor Tom and his misbehaving retina soon.]

FIVE WISHES

"Do you have an advance directive?" If you've been to the hospital lately, it's one of the questions you were asked. If you haven't been to the hospital lately, Susan Warren is asking you now.

One of the most precious gifts you can give your loved ones is a document



outlining what treatment you want or don't want in the event you're unable to convey your wishes. None of us think it will happen to us – but it does happen, every day. Please join us this Sunday, after the service, for a brief discussion led by Susan. The Five Wishes advance directive document will be central to the discussion.

CLOSER TO GOD, CLOSER TO MOM

It's fun to leaf through the St. Stephen directory and marvel at the variety of people who've found a faith home in our congregation. And it's intriguing to ask yourself not just why they worship at St. Stephen but ... why they worship at all. Headlines tell us that fewer and fewer people turn to organized religion, but we're blessed to be surrounded by people who do.

We chose Erin Kenney to kick off what we hope will be a continuing discussion in the newsletter. Why Erin? Because it's somewhat unusual for single young adults to fit corporate worship into their busy schedules. So last week we asked Erin why she does, and how unusual she is among her acquaintances. Here's what she said.



"I have friends who attend church regularly, but I feel like we're in the minority. During college and for a few years after, I didn't come as often because I didn't feel like it was necessary for me – I didn't feel like I was getting much from it. It wasn't until my mom [the late Kris Knab] got sick that I started attending much more regularly. I needed to feel closer to God and to have an outlet for my worries. Attending church helped me process a life without my mom. Coming to church definitely helps me feel closer to her.

"I love our church specifically because of its small size. We truly are one big family, and I love the community. I always feel like I'm walking into open arms when I come to church. I also love giving back,

and there are so many opportunities to do that. St. Stephen is such a special place!"

[Erin got this off to a great start. Now, to keep it going, we asked Erin whom she'd like to see answer the same question. Look for their reply soon.]

A PARK AVENUE YARD IN NEED

By Nathan Basford

Don and I are doing pretty well here in Jackson County and continue to attend services via Facebook. We both are fighting sinus issues and coughing, but thank God we continue to test negative for COVID.

I'm giving up my house in Tallahassee, hopefully by the end of September – since trying to keep up three homes is impossible, especially when almost all of my time is spent taking care of Don. There's a long story behind my house on Park Avenue, but I'll give you the short version: In giving up the home, I need to make the front and side yards at least look better than they do now.

I'm wondering if any of the folks at St. Stephen could help me during a half-day workday next month. I'm looking at Saturday, Sept. 18, anywhere between 7 a.m. and noon. I'll furnish water and sandwiches. You'll want to bring a hat and yard tools. A chainsaw would come in mighty handy.



I hate asking for help but thought I could reach out to St. Stephen. Please tell Lori in the church office if you'll be able to join us at 735 E. Park Ave. You're the answer to my prayer.

AN EXCERPT FROM SUNDAY'S SERMON

John 6:56-59

"... We might read this text and want to say with Peter and the twelve that we would be there to continue to follow Jesus, to be rock-solid and counted among the saints unto the very end. Or we may want to recognize that it is OK to doubt, when it is honest and humble. After all, Peter made grand declarations about Jesus but later would not make the best discipleship choices.

"Or maybe there is another understanding. Maybe belief and unbelief that we claim on our lips is not really the point. That it is more about authenticity in our fellowship that is what's important to Jesus in John. When Jesus called his first disciples he asked them, 'What are you looking for?' To another who had been sick for 38 years he asked, 'Do you want to be made well?' When he was surrounded and about to be arrested, Jesus asked, 'Whom are you looking for?'

"Maybe it is not whether we believe or struggle with unbelief but instead a question from Jesus, 'What is it I desire?' In the end of this Gospel, Jesus will bring Peter back by asking three times, 'Do you love me?' Now that is not too hard of a teaching, is it? 'Love the one who in love for you sacrificed himself for the life of the world. Dwell in the one who dwells in you and believe in the truth you have heard.'..."

MORE MIDWEEK UPDATES

- 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 or call 850-385-2728.



UPCOMING BIRTHDAYS

- Andrea Notley - 08/26
- Susan Warren - 08/26
- Melissa Barton - 08/27
- Martha Marky - 09/08
- Sarah Rumph - 09/08
- Greta Langley - 09/09
- Bryon Ehlmann - 09/11
- Aaron Halvorson - 09/14
- Ron Hartung - 09/14
- Rebecca Holcombe - 09/14
- Jerry Ness - 09/14

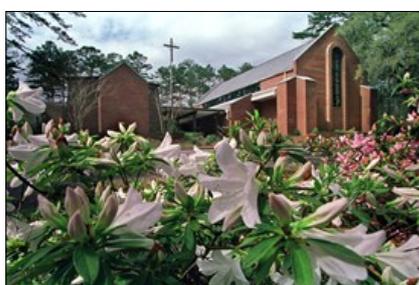
UPCOMING DATES

This Sunday:

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

Wednesday, September 1:

Noon - Bible study (online)



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