



# ST. STEPHEN THIS WEEK

## St. Stephen Lutheran Church Newsletter



## GREETINGS FROM TANZANIA

However much you traveled this summer, chances are you didn't log nearly as many miles as the Muchuruzas, beloved former members who now live in Central Florida. Eunice and Victor took their children, Vince and Vivien, to Tanzania – 8,000 miles away. For about a month, the kids got to immerse themselves in this land where their parents grew up. "We created so many memories with family," Eunice wrote to Ruth. "Everything was an adventure for the kids. Some was culture shock for them – especially the Maasai."

In the photo above, they're all wearing a traditional Maasai robe, or shuka. Besides the colorful cloth, Eunice said, the women wear beaded necklaces and shave their heads, and the men carry an iron rod as a weapon. That building behind them, she explained, is a traditional house for a family of seven to 10, with a low roof and no windows. "Women are builders of these traditional houses," Eunice wrote proudly, adding a smiley face.

One of many highlights was the trip to Safari National Park and their climb up Mount Kilimanjaro. (In the smaller photo, the man on the right is their guide. Victor had to miss the climb.) Best of all, Eunice said, was seeing Vince and Vivien "spending time with their grandparents and family and friends. Those are memories they will treasure forever."



## ROLLIN', ROLLIN', ROLLIN'...

By Sharon Simmons



The young man we told you about from Capital City Youth Services/Going Places has received his bicycle, thanks to donations from St. Stephen. The original bike order was canceled. Then his case manager drove him around town to local shops – but was unsuccessful. Things didn't look promising. But, on a whim, they stopped at a Walmart and found a big-and-tall section. There they found a bike that the young man fell in love with. Smiles are abounding.

## 'I WAS A REFUGEE, AND YOU REACHED OUT TO ME'

By Candace McKibben, on behalf of the Tallahassee  
Refugee Connection Ad-hoc Committee

Since the International Rescue Committee opened its doors here in 2015, Tallahassee has become home to 90 refugee families from Afghanistan, Syria, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Colombia and El Salvador. With the war in Ukraine and other world crises, the number is expected to increase. On Sept. 19, you're invited to an informational meeting to learn how your congregation, club or informal group can support the important work of successfully resettling these new neighbors. The one-hour meeting will include:



- A refugee sharing how help from community members is crucial and deeply appreciated.
- Karen Duncan, the director of development at IRC of Tallahassee, explaining the community's significant role in empowering refugees to become self-sustaining.
- And a Housing Outreach Mentorship Education team member sharing what the sponsorship experience has meant to the team and the family served.

You'll get to gather printed materials and learn from experienced volunteers and IRC staff about logistics and opportunities. The meeting is set to start at 6:30 p.m. in the fellowship hall of Faith Presbyterian, 2200 N. Meridian Road, across from St. Stephen. Among those planning to attend is Sharon Simmons, our outreach coordinator. So you'll have someone familiar to sit with.

## IT'S A BAPTISM PARTY



Grandma Sandy Larson reports that son Gabe (who grew up here at St. Stephen) and his wife, Veronica, are having their daughter Zoey baptized this Sunday at St. Stephen. "We'll have a cake, fruit, snacks and other refreshments after the service," says Sandy. By the way, the CDC has reduced its COVID "score" for Leon County from High to Medium. Officially, that means masks for indoor gatherings are optional. Just in time for a bite of Zoey's cake.

## THAT'S DR. MICHAEL MCKIBBEN

Mark Canning passed along a tidbit he'd seen on Facebook about Michael, who grew up here at St. Stephen, too. So we reached out to Michael's elated mom, Barb O'Donnell, for details. Here's her newsy reply.

For the past five years, Michael has been working toward a Ph.D. in statistics at N.C. State University. In August, that dream became a reality as he successfully defended his dissertation. I was fortunate to be able to watch on Zoom and found that I was as anxious for him during that morning as I was during those math competitions back in middle school!



Michael's area of focus is experiment design, and he'll be putting his knowledge and skills to work as a data scientist with Google, in its NYC office. His girlfriend, Laura, just finished her clinical rotation at Western Psychiatric Institute in Pittsburgh, completing the requirements for her Ph.D. in clinical psychology.

Michael was able to complete his research and tutoring responsibilities remotely during this past year, and I've been spending lots of time in Pittsburgh, getting to see them and the rest of my family. [Wednesday] morning, Drs. McKibben and Machlin headed out for the Big Apple, and new adventures. Laura is taking a position as a postdoctoral fellow in Katie McLaughlin's lab at Harvard. The lab studies how early-life trauma impacts structure and function and risk for mental-health symptoms.

I have really come to appreciate how much work – real work, 'til one's brain hurts – goes into obtaining higher degrees. I'm embarrassed to say that when I was younger, I thought things came easier to smart people because, well, they're smarter. I've seen with Michael and his friends how much discipline and fortitude go into the process. There are so many hurdles along the way. The first couple years were so tough, and we wouldn't have been surprised if he had mastered out, as several from his cohort did. I'm looking forward to the graduation ceremony in December.

*[After we expressed our delight with Michael's news, Barb added:]*

Our St. Stephen kids are all pretty special, aren't they? Michael was fortunate to grow up surrounded by so much love and interested adults. As a parent, I truly appreciate that and the influence it had on him, especially since we didn't live near any extended family.

## SPEAKING OF BARB...

*We asked her to elaborate on her own adventures.*

I am doing well, and enjoying all the time I'm spending in the 'Burgh. *[That's Pittsburgh to the rest of us.]* The city has a lot going on in the summer that I enjoy – outdoor concerts, summer musical-theater series, and lots of parks and trails for hiking and biking. Pitt has an active OLLI program, and I'm taking a couple in-person courses this summer. So I think I've adjusted to retirement – as many people say, you wonder how you had time to work.



## EXCERPT FROM PASTOR'S SERMON

... It is clear Jesus teaches of another way for human beings to live, a way that is not quid pro quo. A life where there is no equation that promises "If you do this, then you get that." He proclaims God's economy to be a gift economy.

Jesus is not only calling us to recall the heavenly inclusion for all people at the banquet feast but calling us to a way of living that will not be a transactional exchange. No one can understand this kind of call unless you have been "given to" without a cost. If you've received this kind of grace, you might understand.

This is hard teaching because we have drunk from the breast of capitalism and have strived to be self-sufficient and even clawed our way to upper- and middle-class positions, but we also know there's more to life. Jesus draws us to this "more" and calls for us to stop counting, measuring and weighing. To stop saying, "I deserve this and you don't!" I don't deserve anything. None of us deserve anything. And yet God gives us so much. The question then becomes what will we do with God's infinite love....



## WANT TO DELIVER MEALS?

Sue Canning reports that Meals on Wheels needs volunteers. “It only takes two hours max once a week,” she says. “If you prefer to ride with me once to see what’s involved before deciding, email me at [susan.canning49@gmail.com](mailto:susan.canning49@gmail.com) – or let Lori know and she’ll get in touch with me.” To get in touch with Elder Care Services, the people in charge of Meals on Wheels, call 850-245-5938.



## HAIKU CORNER

By Lex Lutheran



### EVIDENCE OF MELTING

There’s chocolate ice cream on her seat belt. Two big scoops, hot day, slow licker.

### THESE WORDS LOOK SO MUCH ALIKE...

But what a diff’rence. Compare “awesome” and “awe-filled” with darker “awful.”



### WEED WHACKERS AT THE READY

Sounds like invaders. Revving engines! Shouting! War? Just lawn guys next door.

## MORE MIDWEEK UPDATES

- Barbara Sullivan is still waiting to submit the obituary for her husband, Jackson, because she hasn’t received confirmation from the Tallahassee National Cemetery for his graveside service. Keep her in your prayers.
- As you saw in your email this week, one of our members needs help buying a new refrigerator. If you’re in a position to help, please designate “Refrigerator” on your offering envelope. Any excess funds collected will go to the Justice & Mercy account.
- Irene Ranzinger, a longtime member of Grace Lutheran who in years past was one of St. Stephen’s most active members, has entered hospice care. If you’d like to send Irene and Gary a note, ask Office Manager Lori for their address.
- See you right after the liturgy Sept. 25. We’ve asked Colin Hackley to take a brand-new congregational photo, outside, in the shade. No masks.
- We still need counters. If this is a way you can assist St. Stephen’s financial ministry, please let Pastor Tom or Office Manager Lori know.
- The art teacher at Terri Schmitt’s school got your shoeboxes and now covets your clean, empty glass jars and bottles for another art project. BYOB to the fellowship hall.



- Decide whether you want to take part in Lutheran Social Services’ upcoming fundraiser on classic French cooking. It’s set for 6:30 p.m. Sept. 22 at Publix’s Aprons Cooking School, 3521 Thomasville Road. The donation is \$100 per person, \$180 per couple. Email Dottie Hinkle at [info@lssnf.org](mailto:info@lssnf.org) by Sept. 19.
- No newsletter next week, ladies and gentlemen. Take the time to reread every single newsletter from the past year, on our website. What fun!
- Have any questions for our Church Council members? They’re listed on our website, <https://ststephenlutherantally.com/about-us>.

- **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](mailto:sslc@ststephenlutherantally.com) or call 850-385-2728.**



## UPCOMING BIRTHDAYS

- Martha Marky - 09/08**
- Sarah Rumph - 09/08**
- Greta Langley - 09/09**
- Bryon Ehlmann - 09/11**
- Aaron Halvorson - 09/14**
- Ron Hartung - 09/14**
- Mary Nesmith - 09/22**
- Ceilia Greeley - 09/23**
- Violet Greeley - 09/23**
- Kirsten Matthis - 09/23**
- Douglas Bagnall - 09/26**
- Laura Kimel - 09/28**
- Sue Williams - 09/28**
- Don Dowd - 09/30**
- Melody Duke - 09/30**
- Jeanette Sickel - 09/30**



## UPCOMING DATES

**This Sunday, Sept. 4:**

**9 a.m.** - Bible Talk: Parable of the Good Samaritan

**10 a.m.** - Worship, Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost

*\*The office will be closed on Monday, Sept. 5 for Labor Day.*

*\*\*Lori will be out of the office from Sept. 6-14.*



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

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