



ST. STEPHEN THIS WEEK

St. Stephen Lutheran Church Newsletter

THIS SATURDAY, YOU'RE INVITED TO A SPECIAL MEMORIAL SERVICE

Our official farewell to Pastor Emeritus Emory Hingst takes place at 11 a.m. Saturday at First Presbyterian, 110 N. Adams St. Having the memorial service at St Stephen would've been delightful, since Emory served this congregation for 23 years. But there just wouldn't be room for all of the people whose lives he touched. So please remember: First Pres, not St. Stephen. And give yourself plenty of time to park and find a seat. (Speaking of parking: Trinity Methodist and Aloft Hotels are allowing us to park in their lots for the service.)

Meanwhile, here's a remembrance from another former St. Stephen pastor, Marda Messick:

"What I remember most about our beloved Pastor Emeritus was his countenance. That's an old-fashioned King James Bible word, as in, 'The Lord lift up his countenance upon you, and give you peace.' Certainly Emory had an approachable, expressive face — the wide grin, the thoughtful frown, the blue eyes — a face that could *beam*. But the quality I cherish is the joyous radiance of his countenance when he baptized a child or celebrated the Lord's Supper.

"St. Paul wrote about that radiance in the Second Letter to the Corinthians:

'For it is the God who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.' That same glory-light shone in Emory, and it was a lamp to his feet as he walked through the valley of shadows.

"For twenty-three years the Rev. Emory Hingst lifted up his countenance upon us, St. Stephen, and blessed us with the peace of Christ. Now, our dear brother Emory beholds God face to face. In that we rejoice. May the Lord bless and keep him."

Now, a note from longtime member Ridy Hofer: "My fondest memories of Emory were his hugs after Sunday service. It was worth it to come to service just for his hugs alone. I also admired his commitment to the youth group. He was there, he showed up and he led by example. In other words, a person you could count on if needed. He leaves a hole in our congregation. Emory, rest in peace."

Finally, here's a message for Ann and the whole family from former Vicar David Berg: "We were so sad to hear about Emory's death. He was a wonderful friend, mentor and leader. Con and I often think of our time at St. Stephen and our year in Tallahassee. We will always cherish the confidence he had in my ability to pastor. Emory's spirit and faith have made a profound impact on my life in my 30 years in ministry. He was always so playful and a great, fun friend for our daughter, Kjrstin, who turned 2 during my internship there. May the memories bring you smiles and comfort and may God journey with you in times of sadness and tears."

For more reminiscences, see last week's newsletter.



CAN'T BE THERE IN PERSON?

This link will let you livestream Saturday’s celebration of Pastor Emory’s life (you can also use the link to watch the recording, if you can’t watch it live):

[Emory Hingst Service - September 7, 2024 \(youtube.com\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...)

OUR NEWEST CONFIRMAND

By Sharon Simmons, who promised to write this profile back when Astrid was globetrotting



Astrid van der Mark returned from her European adventure in Italy, Germany and a cruise through Denmark and was joyfully confirmed during church. Astrid, a freshman at Leon High School, has been assuming a serving role in the church for several years as a lector. She is a talented violinist and performs with the Tallahassee Youth Orchestra. Her academic schedule is impressive. She’s taking English, Latin, AP environmental science, culinary arts and Algebra 2. Astrid hasn’t decided what she’ll study after high school graduation but right now she’s leaning toward music. Congratulations, Astrid. We look forward to hearing more from you. The lights will always shine for you at St. Stephen.

‘THERE WAS ST. STEPHEN!’

By Sylvia Smith, who has been worshipping with us in person since December. She also takes part in a congregational book study and participates in outreach and tech teams.

Since 1974, ReconcilingWorks: Lutherans for Full Participation has advocated for the full welcome, inclusion and equity of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex and asexual/aromantic (LGBTQIA+) Lutherans in all aspects of the life of their church, congregations and community. The HIV/AIDS epidemic had not yet ravaged the community I would later call family, and yet, Reconciling Works was there, beginning its work.

I was born in Montgomery, Alabama, raised in Freeport, Grand Bahama Island, and have lived in Tallahassee since 1981. With two beautiful older sisters, I attended Our Savior Lutheran Church in Freeport, Grand Bahama, when Sig G. Sandrock was pastor. Sunday School at Our Savior planted important seeds – that everyone is loved by God – no exceptions. The transition back to the United States in the mid-’70s was harsh and challenging. Later accepting that I was gay meant avoiding church and embracing God’s loving presence only privately.

While not experiencing the extreme spiritual abuse many did, rejection and shaming was common – and my mother, guided by a church she attended, never accepted my long-term relationship or my partner. After my mother died, I approached her church (which my father’s family also had connection to). Eventually, homophobia was openly preached from the pulpit. It was shared with me pointedly that same-sex relationships are “not what God calls Christians to” and “not something we can confirm,” and that my relationship was sin. Well, knowing that my relationship and my person – Carol Knox – were the best things in my life, I soon left.

Carol was a missionary kid in the United Methodist Church and showed an interest in returning to church later in life. She monitored the issue of LGBTQ inclusion in the UMC carefully. After she died, and this time with great care, I looked for a church community. This time, rather than follow family tradition, I used trusted LGBTQ resources, which led to Reconciling Works. When I entered my ZIP code, my heart jumped out of my chest. There was St. Stephen! Pastor Tom Holdcraft soon answered many questions and became a trusted friend on this journey.



And then I met all of you! You are an incredibly special bunch, and I hope you know that. Both St. Stephen and Our Savior are now important to me. My dream is that we might organize a trip to Freeport one day. We can spread the example of RIC and assist with the ongoing recovery from the 2019 Hurricane Dorian. Meanwhile, I know my Carol is pleased and relieved in the knowledge that I found St. Stephen: a place for connection, communion with God, and where everyone can take action, welcome others and share according to God's call.

In November, St. Stephen will celebrate its 25th anniversary of becoming an RIC congregation. Upcoming newsletter stories will look at how we became an RIC place, and how one member in particular keeps an RIC tradition going.

BEFORE YOU GO...

- **Good news, choir fans:** Choir rehearsal resumes next week. That means you'll be hearing lovely anthems soon. It also means that if you've been aching for an opportunity to join the choir, now's your chance. See Katharine Gossman.
- **As was announced during worship on Sunday, we will be providing refreshments for the Pr. Emory's reception. Please use this link to sign-up:**
[St Stephen Lutheran Church: Emory's Reception \(signupgenius.com\)](http://StStephenLutheranChurch.org/EmorysReception)
- **OWLs will not meet this month but will be back in October.**
- **If you have an anniversary, birthday, special memory or special St. Stephen person or program you'd like to honor, celebrate by sponsoring the altar flowers for our service. Sign up on the flower chart, out by the nametags, or ask Lori to sign you up. Include the \$40 with your regular offering. And then take the flowers home!**



UPCOMING BIRTHDAYS

Annette Claussen - 09/06
Martha Marky - 09/08
Greta Langley - 09/09
Bryon Ehlmann - 09/11
Aaron Halvorson - 09/14
Ron Hartung - 09/14
Ceilia Greeley - 09/23
Violet Greeley - 09/23
Kirsten Matthis - 09/23
Sue Williams - 09/28
Jeanette Sickel - 09/30

COMING UP

Today:

Noon - Al-Anon meets in fellowship hall (FH)
7 p.m. - AA meets in FH

This Friday:

9:30 a.m. - TOPS meets in FH

This Saturday:

10 a.m. - Sew for Hope meets in FH
11 a.m. - Celebration of Life service for Pr. Emory Hingst

This Sunday:

9 a.m. - Book study
10 a.m. - Worship, Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost
Noon - DKG meets in FH
4 p.m. - Congolese Christian worship in FH

Monday, Sep. 2:

5 p.m. - TIMA meets in FH
7 p.m. - TIMA meets in FH

Wednesday, Sep. 11:

5 p.m. - TIMA meets in FH
7 p.m. - Choir practice





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>.

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

The Rev. Tom Holdcraft, Pastor

*Edited by Ron Hartung (alias Lex Lutheran). Designed by Lori Zengel, office manager, sslc@ststephenlutherantally.com.
Website: <http://www.ststephenlutherantally.com/>*

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