ST. STEPHEN THIS WEEK

St. Stephen Lutheran Church Newsletter

MUNCHERS

Here at Newsletter Headquarters, these and other striped caterpillars have been stretching out on our milkweed plant, munching away. One day, in their place, monarch butterflies will take to the air. Thanks be to God.

MINISTRY UPDATES

By Sharon Simmons, outreach coordinator

NOISY OFFERING: St. Stephen's generous contribution of $450 to the International Rescue Committee for school uniforms was gratefully received by (left to right) Rose Lamensdorf, casework supervisor, and Rose Achar, community sponsorship coordinator. In addition, the Delta Kappa Gamma Big Bend Coordinating Council joined us in making a donation for school uniforms. They donated $150, as did the Beta Phi chapter of Delta Kappa Gamma. *(Photo by Sharon)*

THIS SUNDAY: Ministry Minute returns with our own Barb Ehlmann as guest speaker. Barb is president of Lutheran Social Services of North Florida, also known as KidSafe.

COLLECTIONS R US: We continue to collect cleaning items for the International Rescue Committee. The collection tub is on the table in the fellowship hall.

SOCKS: October is "Sock It for the Homeless" time at Kearney Center. We'll collect men's and women's socks all month, through the 29th.

MANNA MESSAGE

Colin Hackley received this message from a Manna on Meridian organizer and asked us to pass it along.

This week at Manna is going to be a big work time in addition to distribution. We need to pull up carpet in at least three rooms for some new storage space, move two refrigerators and do other things that go along with that. Saturday we'll try to do all that during the regular Manna time (8-10 a.m.). Masks and utility knives will be available for carpet removal.

Questions? Contact our faithful Manna rep, Cassandra White.

'WHEN TWO OR THREE ARE GATHERED': EXCERPT FROM PASTOR TOM'S SERMON

… Jesus gave us a checklist of what to do. A four-step process of not only church discipline, but relationship discipline.

- Step One: If you're sinned against, then tell the offender, one on one.

- Step Two: If the person doesn't listen, repeat Step One but with the presence of two or three trusted witnesses.

- Step Three: If no reconciliation comes even then, tell the church or the community of believers.

- Finally, if none of that works, regard the person as a Gentile or a tax collector. Which on the surface feels kinda harsh. Yet the purpose of these steps is to care for people, not to issue a guilt-free way to cut people out….

A problem is that churches … find these steps not as ways to reconciliation, but as ways to "whip people back into shape," or to "deal with troublemakers" so that they don't come around anymore. Jesus spoke about conflict-resolution strategies that protected all the parties involved and encouraged continued dialogue.

Most of us have heard the phrase "when two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them." We hear it and think beautiful thoughts of Christ being present in our worship…. And it is true. Jesus is there. But in this context, Jesus makes us aware of a different truth….. When two or three gather to speak to one another and gather to resolve conflicts, using his method, then Jesus is there, too. The next time we are working to resolve conflict with one another, knowing that Jesus is there may help keep the tone and words from being hurtful….

MORE MIDWEEK UPDATES

- Here we see Karen Olson and Susan Warren on the town last week. "Karen and I have a many-year tradition of spending a nice lunch out for each other's birthdays," Susan wrote in a text message.

- In preparation for Hurricane Idalia, the Hartungs toted porch furniture to the garage and moved other potentially windborne items inside – all while thinking, "Let's leave the bird feeder up till the last minute." Well, the last minute came and went. Only on that Wednesday morning when Idalia's winds were whipping our crepe myrtle into a frenzy did we notice that we'd left the bird feeder hanging from the shepherd's crook outside. And, what do you know, despite the gusts, we still had feathered customers showing up for breakfast. The trickiest part wasn't the eating but the initial perching. I'm not sure that aircraft-carrier pilots could have done any better.

- **Some of us have been having fun taking meals to Ann and Pastor Emeritus Emory Hingst. Thanks to Care & Hospitality Coordinator Margaret Bowers, we have an easy way to do it. Here's the link: Meals For Emory & Ann Hingst via Take Them A Meal. It tells you everything you need to know, including their food preferences.**

- **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 flower chart in the narthex. The cost is $35, which you can place in the offering plate.**

UPCOMING BIRTHDAYS

Aaron Halvorson - 09/14
Ron Hartung - 09/14
Ceilia Greeley - 09/23
Violet Greeley - 09/23
Kirsten Matthis - 09/23
Laura Kimel - 09/28
Sue Williams - 09/28
Don Dowd - 09/30
Melody Duke - 09/30
Jeanette Sickel - 09/30
Vivian Halvorson - 10/02
Debee Meyer - 10/02
Emery Oates - 10/08
Janet Lovins - 10/09

IN THE WEEK AHEAD

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 Sunday:
9 a.m. - Book study
9:30 a.m. - Choir practice
10 a.m. - Worship, Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost
4 p.m. - Congolese Church Group meets in FH

Monday, Sept. 18:
5 p.m. - TIMA (Tallahassee Martial Arts) meets in FH
7 p.m. - Compassionate Friends meet in Ruth Room

Wednesday, Sept. 20:
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.

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The Rev. Tom Holdcraft, Pastor