



ST. STEPHEN THIS WEEK

St. Stephen Lutheran Church Newsletter



Here's something you don't often see: a sweet smile from the guest of honor at a baptism. Meet Zolëna Elizabeth "Zoëy" Hnatiuk-Larson. Two Sundays ago, she endured a bit of a bath from Pastor Tom to the delight of her dad, Gabe Larson; her mom, Veronica; her grandparents, Sandy and Tim Larson; and a sanctuary filled with family, friends and Zoëy-smitten Lutherans. After Zoëy sat down to relax, Jen and Chris Reece sang St. Stephen's baptismal song. Later, in the fellowship hall, a reception greeted Zoëy's fan club.
(Photo by Colin Hackley)

STARTING IN OCTOBER: COMMUNION TWICE A MONTH

When the pandemic struck, our communion frequency fell from weekly to monthly. Well, as of next month, we'll start receiving communion *twice* a month – on the second and fourth Sundays, says the Worship & Music Committee. Yes, that will mean extra work for the Altar Guild. Maybe you'd like to sign up? We can always use new Altar Guild members. If you're interested, check with Beth Alexander.



Tune in next week for another important update from the worship team.

THE FACES OF MINISTRY

A new, monthly Sunday-morning feature called Ministry Minute begins this Sunday, brought to us by the Outreach Committee. "Each of these five-minute talks will highlight a different ministry that St. Stephen is connected to," Pastor Tom said. "The talk will occur during sermon time." He swears that his sermon will be a few minutes shorter than usual, to accommodate this Ministry Minute.

Our first MM speaker will be Brenda Christie from Mount Zion AME Church. You've read her name in Sharon Simmons' outreach updates in the newsletter. Now you'll get to glimpse what makes Brenda's ministry tick. Love this idea.



DOLLARS & CENTS

- For August, we were \$2,471 below par. That is, our expenses totaled \$17,100 but our regular giving totaled \$14,629. Looks like our typical summer pattern, eh? Still, there was also a lot of special giving for particular causes, as you'll see below.
- On Noisy Offering Sunday, the children's buckets were filled with \$191 for Lutheran Disaster Response's efforts to address the recent flooding in Kentucky and Texas.
- The Justice and Mercy Account helped three different people and one nonprofit agency in August, totaling \$1,350 worth of assistance. We still have a good supply of gift cards for people who are hungry or nearly out of gas, but our reserve funds are running low.

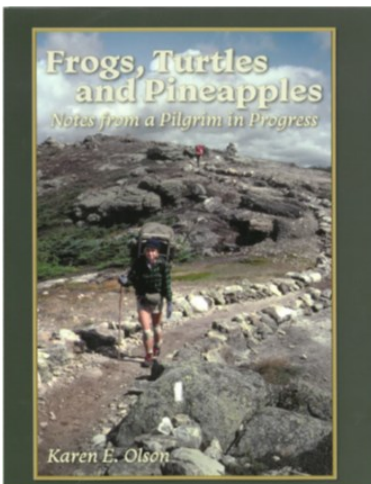


- Sometimes when we put out a call to meet a special need, you generously contribute even more than we sought. That's what happened with the special collection for a refrigerator to help a member of our worship family. The money above and beyond what we needed for the fridge will be used to buy new tires and brakes for the same person. "Thank you to everyone who was able to give," Pastor Tom said.
- Members aren't the only ones who donate to such causes. Visitors do, too. One of the guests who came for the recent baptism returned two days later with a check. She asked for it to go toward the refrigerator and to help reimburse the Hospitality Committee for the lovely reception after the baptism.

In ways large and small, mostly anonymously, we stand together as a congregation to make life a little easier for some of the people around us. "I cannot thank you enough," Pastor Tom said, "for your gifts and the loving aid they supply people."



'STEP OUT AND GO'



For many years, Karen Olson was a reporter and columnist for the Tallahassee Democrat. Her specialty was spotlighting people of faith, people in need, people whose stories otherwise wouldn't be told. She collected many of those stories in the heavyweight book she published in 2018, "Frogs, Turtles and Pineapples: Notes From a Pilgrim in Progress." We're going to excerpt inspiring passages from her book in the newsletter from time to time. Here's an excerpt from an April 14, 2002, Democrat story titled "Mother Jackson shares life's abundance," about a beloved community volunteer.

Although she says she's never owned a car or a house, Mother Jackson sees her life as one of abundance. "It doesn't take a car or a house or a beautiful place in order to serve the Lord. I've been serving the Lord since I was 15 years old, and I hardly had a place to stay."

... Mother Jackson has no inhibitions about praying on demand, discussing her relationship with God or urging discouraged guests [at The Shelter] to keep pursuing a better future. "If you get up and make one step, God will take two," she'll tell them. "But you have to step out and go out the door." She believes people listen because she knows God. Guests say it's because she knows them. "She's a special lady," said Ernest Johnson, a 66-year-old laborer. "She's been doing this a long, long, long time. She knows my name."

FEMUR FRACTURE

By Bob Eshleman [Pictured here with Linda in 2021]

Two weeks ago Tuesday, Linda fell while exiting the car in front of the Oak Valley Publix. Paramedics were there in no time at all to administer aid. They gave her two injections of pain medicine and headed for TMH. After several X-rays, it was determined that she had fractured her femur [thigh bone]. Within minutes she was booked into the orthopedic ward. After two more days of another X-ray, CT scan and numerous blood draws, she was prepped for surgery. She had a rod with six screws installed to support the femur.



With a minimal amount of physical therapy, she was discharged on Labor Day. She is making remarkable progress via in-home physical therapy twice a week and continuing support from her Cabana Boy. She is also receiving support of many meals from family and friends. I know she would be very pleased with prayers from her St. Stephen family for a speedy and full recovery.

As a side note: I am considering shopping at Winn-Dixie!

Check your church directory for Bob and Linda's contact information. Or get in touch with Office Manager Lori. (Some members don't appreciate having their info in the newsletter.)

INSTEAD OF A SLICE OF PASTOR TOM'S SERMON...

Here's an excerpt from a Sept. 8 New York Times interview with religious scholar Karen Armstrong.



(Q) Are there religious historians or scholars you especially admire?

(A) My understanding of religion was transformed nearly 30 years ago by the great Muslim scholar and mystic Ibn al-Arabi (1165-1240).

(B) Sadly, he is little known in the West. A truly religious person, he insisted in "Fusus al-Hikam," was equally at home in a synagogue, temple, church or mosque, since no faith has the monopoly of truth:

"Do not praise your own faith so exclusively that you disbelieve all the rest. If you do this, you will fail to recognize the real truth of the matter. God, the omnipresent and omnipotent, cannot be confined to any one creed, for he says, 'Wheresoever ye turn, there is the face of Allah.' (Quran 2:115). Everybody praises what he believes; his god is his own creature and in praising it he praises himself. Consequently, he blames the beliefs of others, which he would not do if he were just, but his dislike is based on ignorance."

I immediately copied this extract and pinned it onto the bulletin board beside my desk. It has remained absolutely essential to my work. When I am lecturing in Pakistan, for example, my host always tells me to finish by quoting these words and you can almost feel the relief in the room.

ALMOST PICTURE TIME



A week from Sunday, Colin Hackley will line us up in the parking lot after the service and take a picture that our archives will call "Congregational Photo 2022." We haven't taken one in several years, so please be sure to show up.

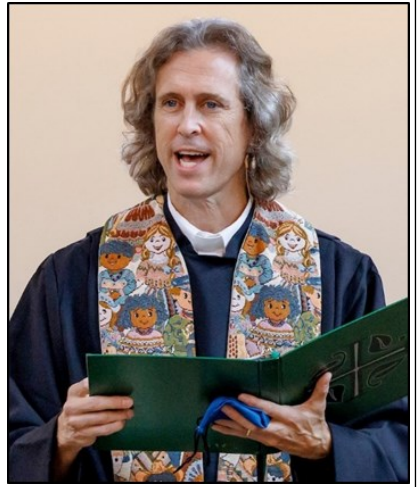
FOUR YEARS LATER...

On the left: Pastor Tom in September 2018.



On the right: Pastor Tom in September 2022.

What do you think, friends – have you discerned any growth in our pastor? Something seems a little different, but I can't quite put my finger on it....
(File photos by Colin Hackley)



HAIKU CORNER

By Lex Lutheran

WHO NEEDS 'ACTIVEWEAR'?

Now that I'm retired,
my daily wardrobe consists
of chic passivewear.



MORE FROM MR. INTROVERT

Shoot, I can't even
share the peace without getting
mildly exhausted.



LAST SUNDAY'S CHILDREN'S SERMON

Sure, I'm OK with
masking at church, but dancing?
In public? Too shy.



MORE MIDWEEK UPDATES

- Terri Schmitt recommends a trip to Midtown Reader at 7 p.m. Friday to hear Tim Miller discuss his new memoir, "Why We Did It: A Travelogue From the Republican Road to Hell." Excerpt from one description of the book: "Miller wryly recounts the key moments that he and others ... decided it was fine to encourage the Obama-birth-certificate and Clinton 'Kill List' crowd as long as it was good for the team.... Miller warns that Republicans will continue to make the same choices and political calculations, with disastrous consequences for the nation, until his former friends are shaken from their self-deception and stop playing the dangerous games with our democracy that brought us to the brink."
- Choir practice is back! Starting next week, the sanctuary will be alive with the sound of rehearsal on Wednesdays at 7 p.m. Want to join in? Music Director Katharine Gossman would love to see you there.
- Irene Ranzinger, member of Grace Lutheran and former member of St. Stephen, passed away Sept. 1 at age 86. Longtime members here fondly remember Irene, Gary and kids Craig, Tury and Cheryl. In addition, Irene is survived by four grandchildren and a great-grandson. She'll be honored with two services. The first is set for 1 p.m. Friday at Red Hills Village, the second at 1 p.m. Saturday at Grace. Instead of flowers, please send donations to Big Bend Hospice or Grace Lutheran in Irene's memory.



- **Dave Suhrweir noticed that Don Dowd’s birthday is coming up Sept. 30. Since Don and devoted caregiver Nathan Basford can’t worship with us in person, Dave thought they’d love to receive cards from us. You’ll find their address in our online directory. If you don’t remember how to access it, contact Office Manager Lori and she’ll give you their address.**
- **Reminder: Meals on Wheels needs volunteers. To get in touch with Elder Care Services, the people in charge, call 850-245-5938.**
- **Sunday is the deadline for deciding whether to take part in Lutheran Social Services’ 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.**
- **Have any questions for our newly reinstalled 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 or call 850-385-2728.**



UPCOMING BIRTHDAYS

- 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
- Vivian Halvorson - 10/02
- Emery Oates - 10/08
- Janet Lovins - 10/09



UPCOMING DATES

This Sunday, Sept. 18:

- 9 a.m. - Bible talk
- 10 a.m. - Worship, Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost
- 11 a.m. - Council meeting

Wednesday, Sept. 21:

- 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