



ST. STEPHEN THIS WEEK

St. Stephen Lutheran Church Newsletter

MASKS AT CHURCH ARE NO LONGER MANDATORY

On Sunday, the Church Council voted unanimously to suspend the mask requirement that's been in place for over two years. The Council still encourages people to wear masks – but, because COVID infections are declining and new vaccines and boosters are available, it believes that St. Stephen can safely move to mask-optional status. The new policy begins immediately.

As always, St. Stephen is doing its best to follow the advice of the Centers for Disease Control. According to the CDC, Leon County's COVID community level is medium. So its guidance is:

- If you're at high risk for severe illness, talk to your health-care provider about whether you need to wear a mask and take other precautions.
- Stay up-to-date with COVID-19 vaccines.
- Get tested if you have symptoms.



In short, the CDC concludes (and the Church Council agrees): People may choose to mask at any time. People with symptoms, a positive test or exposure to someone with COVID-19 should wear a mask.

BE IN THE PICTURE THIS SUNDAY MORNING

This Sunday, the inimitable 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. (If you're coming just for the photo, arrive no later than 11:15.)



The photo looks pretty ancient, doesn't it? This building was built in 1961 – five years after St. Stephen was officially established.

NOW WE'RE 66

The reason we're taking a congregational photo THIS Sunday is that it's the day when we're observing St. Stephen's 66th anniversary. Our congregation was officially established Sept. 30, 1956. Here's a glimpse of how things were around that time, as stated in our written history:



“Since we met in a church building not our own, Clair Hill, manager of Borden’s dairy, built a portable collapsible altar, and a sign. These two items were put in place each Saturday night in readiness for the Sunday services, and removed after services were over.... The weekly church bulletins were typed and mimeographed every Saturday by Marshall Fausold.

“Meeting places were hard to find (for activities other than the regular Sunday services). Over the years, we met for these activities in many places including the Jewish synagogue, the Unitarian Chapel, American Legion Hall, Sealey Elementary and the homes of members....

“Enthusiasm ran high. Financial problems were also great; however, there was no problem in securing Sunday School teachers and officers, choir, church council or ushers.... Everyone wanted to help do whatever was needed.”

Today, too, an extraordinary number of members step forward to help do whatever is needed. Our pastor, music director and office manager serve us exceptionally. Like any other congregation, we screw up sometimes. We step on toes. We let ministry opportunities pass us by. We lose our way. But together, we move on, always seeking to discern God’s plan for us and our community – and greeting new members as we go, including one this Sunday. Happy anniversary, dear St. Stephen.

GODSPEED, JACKSON

At last, the plans for Jackson Sullivan’s memorial service have been finalized with the Tallahassee National Cemetery. A graveside service is scheduled for 2 p.m. Friday, Sept. 30 (a week from tomorrow).

As you read in past newsletters, Jackson died Aug. 6 at home. He was almost



80. He and his bride, Barbara, joined St. Stephen in April 2019. We knew him as the tall, friendly, dapper fellow at Barbara’s side during worship. Few of us knew of his lifetime of accomplishments. Among many other things, he was a lieutenant with the Army Signal Corps and served as a platoon leader in Horst, West Germany. In various Florida cities, he was a city planner – including as executive director of a regional planning agency. He developed his

own consulting business in Ocala, then took a position as an urban planner with the Carlton Fields Tallahassee firm. As his obituary states, “Jack was a pianist, an avid reader, a traveler, once a tennis player, a golfer, and a fair poker player.”

In addition to Barbara, Jack is survived by two sons, three grandchildren, a brother, a sister-in-law and many nieces and nephews. If you want to make a donation, instead of buying flowers, please donate to www.americanrivers.org. Protecting Florida’s waters was another of Jack’s interests.

MINISTRY MINUTE: MEETING BRENDA CHRISTIE

Our debut Ministry Minute on Sunday introduced us to Brenda Christie, leader of New Mount Zion AME's Homeless Ministry. In fact, she's had that role for 15 years. In addition, she's been a mentor and volunteer with Leon County schools



for over 25 years. Brenda and her family also have been preparing and serving Thanksgiving dinner to homeless people for over 20 years. Not surprisingly, she was recognized as a community Volunteer of the Year for her efforts. Our outreach coordinator, Sharon Simmons, invited Brenda over so we could celebrate her work and learn more about her congregation's community outreach.

"Our ministry prepares and serves a hot, complete meal to over 200 clients at the Kearney Center," she told us, after opening with the Matthew reading that begins, "For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat." She continued: "Their clients always look forward to our visits. We also provide essential items. We have been blessed to have

St. Stephen partner with us on several initiatives.

"Each year, we kick it off with a bang in January with our TNT initiative. That's Toiletries 'N' Toilet Paper. In July, we have Water Week, donating cases of bottled water for homeless people. And in October, we have Sock It to the Homeless. Socks are the No. 1 item needed at the shelter. Thank you for your support, and I look forward to our continued partnership!"

Speaking of socks and partnership...

SOCKS, TREES AND TEACHERS

By Sharon Simmons

- As part of our ongoing joint efforts with New Mount Zion AME, soon we'll be collecting new socks for women, men and children. They'll be distributed to clients at the Kearney Center at the end of October. Let's sock it to this initiative.



- The Giving Tree will be arriving in November. This initiative, coordinated by Andrea Notley and Erin Kenney, gives us a chance to choose a local schoolchild and provide presents for Christmas. If you want to be involved but don't want to brave the stores during the holiday season, you may donate to the church by check beginning Nov. 1 – with "Giving Tree" on the memo line.



- Congratulations to Denise Bookwalter and Donna Schiffer on their induction into the Beta Phi chapter of Delta Kappa Gamma Society International for Key Women Educators. They join other outstanding teachers at St. Stephen: Colleen Holdcraft, Andrea Notley, Emily Ruddell, Terri Schmitt and, well, me!

NEED SOME BUILDING MATERIALS?

By St. Stephen friend Michele Hartson

Graceful Solutions is moving to a new location, and in our current building we need to reduce our inventory of building and renovating materials. That includes tile, lighting fixtures, ceiling fans, cabinetry and other items – most for pennies on the dollar. Feel free to browse and make offers between 9 and 5 Saturday and Sunday at 1190 Capital Circle NE.



REFUGEES AND US

By Sharon Simmons

Monday, the fellowship hall at Faith Presbyterian Church was full of community members from various churches in Tallahassee and Gadsden County along with other social-service agencies. Everyone had gathered to learn about the work of the International Rescue Committee (IRC). Terri Schmitt and I represented St. Stephen.



Since 2015, the IRC has welcomed 900 new residents to Tallahassee and surrounding areas. Over the years refugees have arrived from the Republic of Congo, El Salvador, Colombia, Afghanistan and Syria. The IRC is federally funded and, as Development Director Karen Duncan put it, at the “epicenter of human generosity.”

The mission and scope of programs is supplemented through community fundraising, volunteers, the use of interns and donations of furniture, clothing, cleaning supplies, diapers and sanitary supplies. There is a CRITICAL need for cleaning supplies, diapers (all sizes) and sanitary supplies, as these items can't be purchased with food stamps.

A new IRC program is HOME (Housing, Outreach, Mentorship and Education). It involves a church or civic group adopting a refugee family and financially providing a home/apartment, furnishings, clothing, fellowship, transportation to appointments and English-language help.

If getting more involved at IRC is right for you, contact Karen Duncan at 510-847-6274. Need even more information? Watch for a display board coming soon. We can look forward to Karen's Ministry Minute presentation at St. Stephen in April.

BONUS-WORTHY

Music Director Katharine Gossman and Office Manager Lori Zengel each recently received a surprise bonus. They wrote in to show their appreciation.



“Dear St. Stephen Community, I was so uplifted by the unexpected bonus I got this week. What a great surprise when returning from vacation. This is just one of the many instances that reflect how great a congregation this is, and I want you to know I appreciate my job and working for you very much. Thanks again from the bottom of my heart.” (Lori)

“Dear Pastor Tom and Congregation, please accept my deepest thanks for the surprising and beyond-generous gift you gave to me. I am truly appreciative for your kindness. Peace be with you all.” (Katharine)

FUNNY THINGS HAPPENED ON THE WAY TO...

By Lex Lutheran

- Tuesday morning, we were driving to get our hair cut. Ruthie had her mug in her left hand. We were almost there when I heard the clink of metal hitting ceramic. The small garage-door opener clamped on the sun visor had come loose and splashed down in Ruthie's tea. Good thing that tea wasn't hot. She calmly grabbed some Kleenex and started to mop up multiple tea drops. After pulling over, I fished the garage-door opener out of the tea. (It still works, by the way.) Imagine the odds: that it would work its way loose at the exact moment that it could freefall into Madam's tea.



- **Sunday, I was driving to church. Our car radio is synched to my phone, so when a text message arrives, the radio asks whether I want to hear it. I hit "Play." The disembodied voice began dutifully reciting: "You have an upcoming appointment with Stephen Richardson... If you don't have our PocketPatient app installed yet, please use the following link to download it." Ah, what a link! It took up 19 lines on my phone, and the voice speed-read it as quickly as an auctioneer, one letter at a time, on and on and on. First I smiled, then I laughed out loud. Soon, of course, it became tiresome. Only when it began to repeat the entire link did I finally hit "Cancel."**



MORE MIDWEEK UPDATES

- **The members of our choir are back from their summer hiatus! Starting Sunday, they'll serenade us once more. You'll see a new face in the soprano section.**
- **You may remember that St. Stephen chipped in to buy gift cards for our members currently teaching in this area. Andrea Notley was among them and, now that she's settled in, she wanted to let us know how she spent her card. "I bought four pairs of child headphones to be used with the iPads. I also purchased a trash can with a lid. I'm very thankful for the amazing generosity of all the members of St. Stephen."**
- **Have any questions for our newly installed Church Council members? They're listed on our website, <https://ststephenlutherantally.com/about-us>.**
- **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. 25:

- 9 a.m.** - Bible talk
- 9:30 a.m.** - Choir rehearsal
- 10 a.m.** - Worship with communion, Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost and Noisy offering
- 11:15 a.m.** - Congregational photo



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