



# ST. STEPHEN THIS WEEK

St. Stephen Lutheran Church Newsletter



Join us for  
St. Stephen's  
**BBQ Picnic**

Outside on our beautiful property  
Sunday, Oct. 23,  
11:30 a.m.

*We'll have enough  
BBQ for all, so bring your to-go bags.  
We'll also provide vegetarian options,  
tables and chairs outside - and games!  
No need to RSVP.*

## AFTER THE STORM, THE GREATEST NEED

*By Pastor Rob Rose, Assistant to the Bishop, Florida-Bahamas Synod*

We are getting calls from pastors who have families who have lost everything – their home, their cars, all of their possessions. Total devastation. The greatest need right now is money for emergency grants for each one of these families. They need to pay for housing and replace all the “things of life” we take for granted.

Please know 100% of the money you send to the Synod will be used to meet the needs of the people devastated by Hurricane Ian. 100%. Please give so we can offer some hope and walk alongside our neighbors in need. To donate, visit <https://secure.myvanco.com/L-Z3JW/campaign/C-12VYY>.

If you have questions about how to give, where the money will go, how it will be used, please email me at [Robr@fbsynod.org](mailto:Robr@fbsynod.org) or call me at 813-876-7660, ext. 222. God bless you and thank you in advance for your generosity.



## ANOTHER WAY TO GIVE

By Pastor Tom



We're collecting gift cards to Home Depot, Lowe's, Publix, fuel stations and others appropriate for giving directly to people and churches hurt or devastated by Hurricane Ian. Thanks to your generous gifts already, St. Stephen sent \$250 in a variety of cards to All Saints Lutheran Church in Port Orange. The church building survived the storm, but the surrounding neighborhood suffered a lot of flood and wind damage.



## ONE MORE WAY

Lutheran Disaster Response describes its work like this: "Lutheran Disaster Response shares God's hope, healing and renewal with people whose lives have been disrupted by disasters in the United States and around the world. When the dust settles and the headlines change, we stay to provide ongoing assistance to those in need." Visit <https://www.elca.org/our-work/relief-and-development/lutheran-disaster-response>.



## MONTHLY FINANCIAL SNAPSHOT

By Pastor Tom, with Treasurer Jen Dritt



Total giving: \$20,095.  
Estimated expenses: \$18,300.  
So for September, we were in the black by \$1,795.  
And for the year, we're **in the red** by \$5,091.

Also, our Noisy Offering two Sundays ago totaled \$309 for the homeless ministries of New Mount Zion AME Church, whose representative spoke to us during the Ministry Minute.

## LUNCH NEXT TUESDAY

The OWLs lunch bunch is back – and heading back to Café De Martin at 11:30 a.m. Tuesday (Oct. 11). Park in the Esposito's parking lot. The restaurant, at 2743 Capital Circle NE, has outdoor seating. Let Margaret Bowers (who created that picnic poster above) know whether you'll be there.



## A FAREWELL TO JACKSON



Because Hurricane Ian disrupted travel for family from South Florida, the graveside memorial service for Jackson Sullivan has been changed to 2 p.m. tomorrow (Oct. 7) at the Tallahassee National Cemetery. God bless his bride, Barbara.

## COOL-WEATHER WAYS TO SERVE

By Sharon Simmons, outreach coordinator

- A hot cup of coffee and a brisk sunny day have greeted many of us this week. For the most part, Tallahassee residents are glad to see less heat and fewer bugs. However, a drop in temperature for those who live on the street signals a new struggle: how to stay warm at night in their encampment, in a stairwell or in a park. The teenage clients of CCYS-Going Places are facing those challenges. So now, in addition to backpack-ready snacks, sanitary supplies and toiletries, they're requesting long-sleeve shirts, sweatshirts, heavy jackets, twin-size sheets (for their residential program), sleeping bags, blankets, reusable water bottles and laundry detergent. If you don't have any of those items but want to support this initiative, make a financial donation to CCYS-Going Places, 2407 Roberts Ave. Tallahassee, FL 32310, ATTN: Justin Barfield.
- By the way, CCYS-Going Places has started a transitional housing program to get young people off the street. So far, it has one transitional apartment where a client can stay for three months while developing job security and learning how to take care of themselves in a traditional house. The young man for whom St. Stephen recently bought a bicycle was the apartment's first resident. Last week he received the keys to his own apartment. He'll have some furniture but may need other things. CCYS will let us know how we can support him as he moves forward. If you have (or someone you know has) an apartment or duplex CCYS could use in this program, call Justin Barber at 850-251-0174.



- Our socks-for-homeless-people joint initiative with New Mount Zion AME Church is going well. The collection tub is back in the fellowship hall. So far we've almost filled one large cardboard box.
- There's also a collection tub on a pew in the fellowship hall for medium and larger-size T-shirts for Manna on Meridian. As the tub fills, Cassandra White will take them to Faith Presbyterian for transformation into Manna on Meridian bags.



## THE WOMAN WITH 'COLOR-VISION' EYES

By Karen E. Olson (Excerpt reprinted from the May 4, 1987, edition of the Tallahassee Democrat, from a series about the struggling Gadsden County town of Gretna)

A life of poverty can get plenty painful and plenty complicated. Experience has taught [Mary Wiley] Smith, above all, to wait – to just keep inching along, one painful step at a time, without looking too far ahead.... When Smith talks about God, however, she begins by giving thanks for her “color-vision” eyes – for the sight of a blue summer sky puffing with clouds, and the way the brightness splinters later into starshine.

“At night, when everything is real quiet, I get a peace when I just sit out and look at the stars,” she said. “I have a direct connection with God. I look at those stars twinkling up there, and I know man didn't put them there and I know science didn't put them there. Some nights, the clouds be so full of stars, they're just jammed tight. It's a dream vision for me. I get a deep release from all this tension. I sit there on the doorstep and I talk to God.”



When the mosquitoes get too ferocious, she burns a pile of cotton rags to keep them at bay. And she just keeps waiting.

You'll find this and more of Karen's stories in the book “Frogs, Turtles and Pineapples: Notes From a Pilgrim in Progress,” available at church or from Karen.

# THE MUSTARD SEED: EXCERPT FROM PASTOR'S SERMON

... The Jesus in the Gospel of Luke could take some lessons from Mister Rogers and from Barney (the purple dinosaur) about making people feel special. On top of the lulus he gives today, we are wise to recognize how often this lesson is taken out of its context and then used to preach a message of shame to people. Lessons to admonish people. As if we should throw out everything we know about Jesus and assume this is the Lord's intent.

No, it is we pastors and priests who feel the need to twist it in ways that convince folks that things could have been better if they'd just had a bit of faith. Saying harmful things like "Healing could have occurred if you'd had a tiny fragment of faith." Or "Your grief could have disappeared if you had just a pinch of faith." These statements are terrible ways to interpret what Jesus was saying and doing.

But unless one spends time in the text, and reads or has someone to teach them about the thematic material, then it's easy to be led astray. So, we look for the context, and our boundary markers are: the story of the rich man and Lazarus and the problems that come from loving money above all else, and next week's lesson on the healing of the 10 lepers, which is about giving thanks. Within these markers, we find the connection of this text about "mustard-seed-sized faith," and then we can come to appreciate Jesus' honesty about the demands of discipleship without seeing them as ways to shame us....

Jesus did not warn his followers ... to not make mistakes or stumble. The warning is to not be the one who trips up others on their walk of faith. Warnings to not be the one who fails to be hospitable and forgiving, and not be the one who fails to minister as Jesus would. This is the warning here.

## HAIKU CORNER

By Lex Lutheran

### FALL FUTILITY

In October, as  
I rake, more oak leaves float down  
right behind my back.



### CLUELESS

In church, as I ask  
God to forgive old sins, I'm  
thinking up new ones.

### GRATITUDE

On the edge of sleep,  
as I count God's blessings, I  
can't count high enough.



## MORE MIDWEEK UPDATES

- Have any questions for our 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](mailto:sslc@ststephenlutherantally.com) or call 850-385-2728.

## UPCOMING BIRTHDAYS



Emery Oates - 10/08  
Janet Lovins - 10/09  
Zach Bagnall - 10/17  
Isabel Barton - 10/19  
Val Kibler - 10/20  
Dave Suhrweir - 10/21  
Jim Sampson - 10/22  
Audrey Post - 10/24  
Barbara Ehlmann - 10/25  
Graham Reece - 10/26  
Bern Mustian - 10/30

## UPCOMING DATES

**This Sunday, Oct. 9:**

9 a.m. - Bible talk

9:30 a.m. - Choir practice

10 a.m. - Worship with communion, Eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost



**Tuesday, Oct. 11:**

11:30 a.m. - OWLs lunch gathering at Café De Martin

**Wednesday, Oct. 12:**

7 p.m. - Choir practice



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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