



ST. STEPHEN THIS WEEK

St. Stephen Lutheran Church Newsletter



RING A BELL?

David Butler recently found this 16-by-16-inch embroidery at the church and has framed it. But so far, no one seems to know who created or owns it. We checked with our resident FSU art professor, Denise Bookwalter, who didn't recognize it but did a little digging. "It reminds me of Peruvian Applique,"

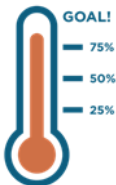
Denise said Wednesday, when she passed along this link:

https://www.etsy.com/listing/722869887/vintage-1980s-andean-embroidered?ref=sold_out-1&frs=1 "Here is one listed on Etsy that is similar. It looks like this is a traditional size, and if you Google 'Peruvian Applique' you can see others like it." Before she digs any further: Does anyone know whose it is?

If so, please call Lori at 850-385-2728.

PROJECT UPDATES

The amount we need to cover our sanctuary project has now slipped below \$18,000. Just a little more to go! Pastor Tom passed along these updated figures for the Capital Campaign:



GOAL!	Total cost – \$196,999
75%	Money in hand – \$157,509
50%	Money pledged – \$22,044
25%	Money still needed – \$17,446

Also, the total donated for our Siblings in Christ in Tallahassee's Haitian congregation has risen to \$2,800! Pastor Tom is delivering a check to Pastor Hugues Balde this afternoon.



THANKS TO MARK AND PHIL

By Emily Jennings and David Butler

As you look around the church campus, you may not be aware of the contributions of Mark Warren and Phil Williams. Behind the scenes they have given of their time and talents many times to improve our gardens. From hauling away mounds of yard debris, to providing and delivering much-needed mulch and plants, they have saved St. Stephen a considerable amount of money and helped stretch the buildings-and-grounds budget for more critical needs. The next time you walk around the campus, sing the praises of these two men.



SPEAKING OF THE GROUNDS...

- Mount St. Stephen is no more. The mammoth pile of yard debris that had consumed a corner of the parking lot was hauled away this week, says David Butler. So there's more space now for parking.
- Pictured here are people who helped pull weeds from around our azaleas



Saturday. Front row, from left: Carol Santos, Judi Duffy and David Butler. Second row, from left: Jonas Holdcraft, Pastor Tom Holdcraft, Margaret Bowers, Emily Jennings, Ron Hartung and Mark Bertolami. The faces in photos like this have changed regularly over the years, except for one: Emily has experienced more workdays than anyone else ... and often her workdays have been the one-woman kind. Thanks, Emily.

WRESTLING WITH SCRIPTURE: EXCERPT FROM SERMON TWO SUNDAYS AGO

Sometimes it's hard to excerpt a sermon that's written too well. One thought leads to the next so seamlessly that you think, "I can't figure out where to end the excerpt, and I don't have room for the whole sermon." That's what happened with last week's newsletter. I gave up and used an excerpt from the children's sermon instead. But this week I returned to that sermon, and I'm sharing the beginning here. It's an excellent illustration of how Pastor Tom tackles a tough topic and goes to great lengths to help us grapple with it. At the end, you'll see a link so you can continue reading it on our website.

"It is not good for anyone to suffer aloneness. God will provide an equal as partner." AMEN!

There are some texts of the Bible that get way too much attention. Both in the Hebrew and New Testament canons, there are what scholars call "texts of terror." These are the areas of the Bible that communicate hurtful statements that raise suspicions to our contemporary sensibilities. For instance, there are texts that report sexual abuse, murder, war, trickery and even genocide in the Bible.

And sometimes these are affirmed and approved by the writers who speak for God. These understandings of God's work, the Spirit's movement, and the overall care for God's people reach far beyond those original contexts and, as biblical scholar Luis Melendez-Antuna wrote regarding these kinds of narratives in the Bible: "[They] sit at odds with contemporary sensibilities and today's ethical principles."

In other words, sometimes these ancient texts, which followers of God utilized to learn and understand God’s work in the world back then, now whisper in our ears a different message. And on these occasions we find those words and understandings to be quite disturbing, to say the least.

While in today’s texts we do not encounter a true “text of terror,” we find disturbing teaching from Jesus about the issue of divorce. Our natural tendency is to understand that Jesus is talking to us here. Condemning us, if we have been divorced and/or remarried. And while most of the time, when we encounter scripture, we do want to put ourselves in the lesson and story ... it is important for us to always recall, especially with texts like today’s, that we do not want to throw out our common sense, either. Never does Jesus require people to check their brains in the parking lot before entering church.

So how do we remain faithful to the text and calm our sensibilities when we hear the whispers in our hearts about texts that don’t make sense today? The first way, I think, is to be sure to remember how times have changed since these scriptures were penned and scrolled....

Read the rest:

https://img1.wsimg.com/blobby/go/05b12b43-ab11-4b1c-abcd-74dbfd0f6f54/downloads/Sermon_10032021.pdf?ver=1633962970338

BELIEVE

Some of you will remember this from the original version of our Arise liturgy.



That God is our creator, I believe, I believe.

I don’t understand but I believe.

That Jesus is our savior, I believe, I believe.

I don’t understand but I believe.

That the Spirit is the flame that illumines both their names,
that they all three love me the just way I am,
that heaven’s all around me, I believe, I believe.

I don’t understand but I believe.

I don’t begin to understand but I believe.

HAIKU CORNER

By Lex Lutheran



OCTOBER

First time in six months
I’m almost, *almost* wishing
I’d put on long sleeves.

PEDESTRIAN’S PLEA IN AUTUMN

Sweep your sidewalks, please.
Walking on acorns is like
dancing on marbles.



OLD MAN AND HIS LAWN

When I was 15
I never dreamed I’d worry
about sod webworms.

MORE MIDWEEK UPDATES

- Audrey Post asked that we share this link to a newspaper column about inspiring photojournalist Nick Oza, “the son of a cloth merchant from Bombay, India,” whom she worked with at the *Macon Telegraph*. Sad to say, “Nick O” died recently. This column, Audrey said, “dovetailed with Pastor’s message this morning that interpreted Jesus’ words about the rich man and the eye of the needle, and how we need to use our talents and time.... I have no idea what Nick O’s faith tradition was.... But ... Christ would have smiled upon his actions.” Here’s where you’ll find the complete column on macon.com: <https://www.macon.com/opinion/opn-columns-blogs/article254779062.html>



- The church office is running low on Publix/Walmart gift cards, which we often give to visitors who are seeking help. If you’re able to donate some, preferably \$10 cards, we’d be most grateful.
- 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 2021 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

Zach Bagnall - 10/17
Isabel Barton - 10/19
Val Kibler - 10/20
Katie Black - 10/21
Dave Suhrweir - 10/21
Jim Sampson - 10/22
Audrey Post - 10/24
Barbara Ehlmann - 10/25
Graham Reece - 10/26
Leah Kennell - 10/28
Bern Mustian - 10/30

UPCOMING DATES

This Saturday:

8 a.m. - Manna distribution

This Sunday:

10 a.m. - Worship, Twentieth Sunday after Pentecost

Wednesday, October 20:

Noon - Bible study (online)



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