



ST. STEPHEN THIS WEEK

St. Stephen Lutheran Church Newsletter

BISHOP, POTLUCK, RED-LETTER DAY

You newer Lutherans need to know this: Reformation Sunday is a pretty big deal in the church year. And this year, at St. Stephen, it's much bigger than usual.

The bishop of the Florida-Bahamas Synod will be leading our worship! Afterward, we'll gather in the fellowship hall for a potluck meal. (Here's a tip on the dress code: Try to wear something red.)



All of this wonderfulness happens Oct. 29 – just one week from this Sunday. So write it on your calendar. Margaret Bowers has created this link to SignUpGenius so we can tell each other what we're bringing for the potluck: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/60B044CAA92CA1F58-45260457-reformation>

BUT FIRST, THERE'S A HALLOWEEN PARTY

By Audrey Post



Those of us who participated in last Sunday's follow-up brainstorming sessions to our earlier town hall/open forum were so excited and inspired by the ideas we heard that a couple of us hatched a plan to get started immediately: We're throwing an Intergenerational Halloween Party at 6 p.m. Friday, Oct. 27, in the fellowship hall. Everyone is welcome. Please come in costume if you're so inclined. It's going to be great fun! (I'm coming as a gypsy fortune teller.)

Plans aren't complete, but we can share a few details:

- There will be a friendly competition for the best Halloween snacks, both savory and sweet. Winners get ribbons and, hey, we're all winners already because God loves us and we're part of the St. Stephen family.
- We'll have tea, coffee, juice, water and hot cider.
- Margaret is coordinating getting a cornhole game and croquet for outdoor games. Got a Frisbee or a football to toss? Bring it.
- We'll have cards for card games, and an "heirloom" Trivial Pursuit game (the original from the 1980s). Bring any other board games you want. Scrabble? Backgammon? Chinese checkers?
- We'll have a G-rated Halloween movie playing in the nursery for those who want to watch, and fun music in the fellowship hall.
- The kids are working on a special gift for Bishop and Mrs. Suarez for Reformation Sunday two days later, and Rita Ford says we can help the kids finish their project that night as part of an arts-and-crafts table.
- If FSU is competing in the ACC Women's Soccer Tournament at the same time, the game will be playing on a laptop or small TV somewhere in the area.



Our worship community has a lot to offer not just new members, but current members. Let's celebrate Halloween, God's love and our worship community together.

Have suggestions? Want to help? Email Audrey at post.audrey@gmail.com and Margaret at ambowersfl@gmail.com.

SPEAKING OF THOSE BRAINSTORMING SESSIONS...



You'll get to read all about them after the Church Council organizers go through their notes and make them easily digestible. Lots of ideas for attracting new members, reintroducing St. Stephen to the community, are under consideration. Rest assured, though, that this process is just beginning – and that no major changes will happen without the participation of the whole congregation. So keep an eye out for details soon.

SOCKS & SOAPS

By Sharon Simmons, outreach coordinator

- Just two weeks left to get socks in for our joint initiative with New Mount Zion AME Church for the clients at Kearney Center. Socks for men or women are greatly needed. You can find reasonable prices at Target, Dollar Tree and Dollar General, among others.
- We continue to collect cleaning and personal-care supplies for new Tallahassee residents through the IRC. The collection tub is in the fellowship hall. Items needed include cleaning liquid, dish soap, laundry detergent, bar soap/body wash, shampoo and deodorant. This is an ongoing initiative to support IRC and households.



PAY ATTENTION TO THE SCHOOL BOARD

Dave Suhrweir passed along this message from Equality Florida: We need *you* to attend the next School Board meeting on Tuesday, Oct. 24, at 6 p.m. to urge that the board's nondiscrimination policies include gender identity, ensuring that transgender students are protected.

At a previous meeting, parents, teachers and community members spoke on behalf of the rights of LGBTQ+ families. They want to see the School Board finalize the district's *Inclusive School Guide for LCS Employees*. While some language in the guide still troubled community members, the resounding message was that this guide answered many questions that have arisen since the passage of multiple anti-LGBTQ laws in Florida. Here are a few points that Equality Florida highlighted:



- Dress code applies regardless of the students' gender identity and gender expression.*
- Schools will permit students to form GSA clubs in accordance with School Board Policy 2430.*
- LCS personnel will maintain and monitor restrooms and changing facilities to ensure the safety of all students. In addition to multi-user restrooms, all schools must provide students with access to single-user, unisex restrooms.*
- The parent, or student of legal age, may deviate from the student's legal name by listing the preferred name in the Student Information System in accordance with Rule 6A-1.0955, Florida Administrative Code. Faculty and staff shall use the preferred name listed in the Student Information System.*

A parent, or student of legal age, may provide a preferred personal title or pronoun by listing the preferred personal title or pronoun in the Student Information System. An employee may, but is not required to, use the student's preferred personal title or pronoun when it has been listed in the Student Information System by a parent or student of legal age.

"We appreciate the efforts made by Superintendent Hanna and the Leon County School Board," Equality Florida stated, "to find solutions that implement the new laws without creating additional and unnecessary harm."



CALLING ALL CANS

Some of our creative members need empty cans for a craft project. Assorted sizes, nice and clean, labels removed. They're needed next week, so this Sunday would be a convenient time for you to drop them off on the church's kitchen counter.

'BUT FEW ARE CHOSEN': EXCERPT FROM PASTOR TOM'S SERMON

... When I put these three parables together, as Matthew intended, I find it becomes a bit clearer what Jesus was trying to communicate – and notice that what God wants us to hear is sometimes not what is heard from the pulpit....

The key to the interpretation of this parable [about the king who gave a wedding banquet] rests in the very last sentence. Ironically, it is the sentence we mostly skim over. The last verse is: “For many are called, but few are chosen.” ...

Parable 1 [three Sundays ago]: The one son who changed his mind to go work in the field. Be like him.

Parable 2 [two Sundays ago]: The one who produces the fruits of the kingdom. Be like her.

Parable 3 [last Sunday]: The one who answers the invitation to the banquet with a “yes” must follow through with the call in responsibility. Be like them.

We are familiar with being called. The church and pastors say we are called to this or that, but when it comes to the matter of being chosen, then we are reminded that the calling is not the end. Jesus was (and is) communicating the responsibility of those who are called to follow.

And that responsibility is to reorient our lives. To walk in God's way. If you're Christian, then to follow Jesus, actively. Embody his teachings in our behavior. We all need to “put on” Jesus and start again.

C'mon, it's a nice day to start again!

MORE MIDWEEK UPDATES

- From Pastor Tom's welcome notes last Sunday: “Even in the midst of crumbling earth and longing groans, we gather to praise God! A God who dwells in the midst of chaos; a God who brings the fold through the wilderness.”
- Part of the fun of singing in the choir is getting to sing an anthem lyric like this one from last Sunday: “Praise the Lord, falcon and swallow,/ Circle and follow heaven's design./ Praise the Lord, whitetail by leaping,/ Lizard, by creeping, fall into line.”
- We are now accepting names of loved ones for remembrance during the All Saints service on Nov. 5. Please email or call Lori with names by Wednesday, Nov. 1.
- Sign up to take a meal to the delightful Ann and Emory Hingst. This link, [Meals For Emory & Ann Hingst via Take Them A Meal](#), tells you everything you need to know, including their food preferences.



- The cost of altar flowers has risen to \$40, up from \$35. If you have an anniversary, birthday, special memory or special St. Stephen person or program you'd like to honor, celebrate by sponsoring the flowers for our service. Sign up on the flower chart in the narthex. Include the \$40 with your regular offering. Bonus: You get to take the flowers home!

UPCOMING BIRTHDAYS



Fred Allen - 10/19
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
Jen Reece - 11/02
Paul van der Mark - 11/06
Hector Quinones - 11/7
Barbara Sullivan - 11/07

IN THE WEEK AHEAD

Today:

Noon - AI-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, Twenty-first Sunday after Pentecost
4 p.m. - Congolese Church Group meets in FH



Monday, Oct. 23:

5 p.m. - TIMA (Tallahassee Martial Arts) meets in FH

Wednesday, Oct. 25:

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

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