

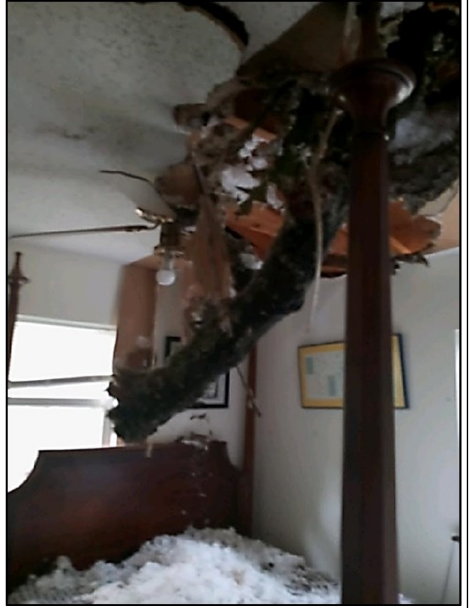


ST. STEPHEN THIS WEEK

St. Stephen Lutheran Church Newsletter

'I LITERALLY STARTED SCREAMING': TERRI TELLS HER STORM STORY

Around 1 a.m. Thursday, Sept. 9, a stealthy storm blew Terri Schmitt's domestic tranquility to smithereens. The storm knocked over a pine tree that towered over her rental house, atop a hill just north of I-10 and west of Meridian. That tree came crashing through the roof. In fact, one limb (see photo) came close to skewering the bed where Terri and her dog, Pippin, were sleeping – and next to that limb was a live power line. Miraculously, no one was hurt.



"I felt like I was in a real-life horror movie after I heard the two colossal booms," Terri recalled – one boom for the main trunk and another for that limb. "I literally started screaming and kept screaming at every turn." Terri's first frantic phone call was to the city utilities emergency line, but she couldn't get through. So she called Rita Ford, whose stepdaughter owns the rental house. Then she called 911, who notified the fire department.



"Electrical wires were holding up the kitchen ceiling," Terri said. "I had to dig my way out the front door because so much had collapsed there. The side door was not an option, because the roof caused the wall to sag and jammed the door shut. A path had to be cut on the right of way in order for any vehicle to be able to make it to my home."

It's a home that she shared with quite an animal family. "I got my dog and lizard, Cherub, out before the first firefighter got to me," Terri said. "But there was also Moonlight, the great horned owl. Her home was smashed. [More about Moonlight in a moment.] The firefighters also helped me transfer my three parrots to travel cages." Then they had to clear the path even more so they could get the cages out – and so Rath, Rita's husband, could get in. That was about 2 a.m. Rath took Terri to the Fords' residence so her animals could get settled in.

But there was still work to do. About 4 a.m. Terri and Rath drove back, on a Moonlight-the-Owl mission. "It was too dark to see," Terri said. "And we needed to avoid a downed power line. So I left the car running with the headlights shining at the owl's large enclosure. With flashlights we saw that about one-third of her roof had collapsed and her perches and safety box were down. But I was glad to see her eyes shining back at me when I opened the door.

"I had no gloves or other usual equipment. I had no carrier for her. But there was a sheet in the car. So I told Rath to stand in one corner of the owl house with the flashlight, while I rushed in to catch her in the sheet. I wrapped her in it and told Rath to drive my car. She struggled surprisingly little during the capture and car ride." They set her up in a dog crate until Terri could get her to the Florida Wild Mammal Association in Crawfordville, where she's been ever since – waiting for Terri's new house. (More about *that* in a moment.)



The next day, by the time Pastor Tom and Colin Hackley arrived to help out, the tree was gone and the house had been tarped. Other St. Stephen people who've assisted in cleanup and more are Bob and Linda Eshleman, Mike Martinez and Nancy Staff, Beth Alexander, Sharon Simmons, and Margaret Bowers and her husband and son. "Plus a half-dozen non-St. Stephenites," Terri said. "My son, Isaac, and his girlfriend came on Friday and worked for several hours in the dark to collapse the dangerous kitchen ceiling, so I could get in to try to salvage some things. My sister, Cristy, came

to help two weeks later, and she really helped me to start moving on." Many others have contributed their concern and prayers – and money, though Terri never requested any.

Since that stormy night, Terri has been lodging with the Fords. The good news – yes, there is good news! – is that Terri's in the process of closing on a house. Closing date is Nov. 5. The new home on Faringdon Drive is five houses up the street from Anita Sawh, Rita's sister. Terri can't wait.



Meanwhile, she's filled with gratitude. "My critters are loud, demanding and relentless, so Rita's family is putting up with a lot," Terri said. "Usually Rita cooks at least two meals a day – and packs my lunch for me many days! I try to reciprocate by helping with dishes – and not letting my crew mess up her home too much. I'm so grateful to Rita, Rath and Ajay."



When we sent Rita this story, she replied: "I just wanted to cry reading this. I thank God every day for protecting Terri during such a traumatic experience. Terri is such a beautiful person and has become a part of my family. In all of her struggles God is there, blessing her and making her stronger. I know good things are coming her way."

P.S.: Before you buy renter's insurance ... check with Terri. She has some hard-won advice for you.

Please join us for a
*Housewarming & Blessing
of Terri's Home*
Saturday, November 6, 2021
12noon-?
2752 Faringdon Drive
Huntington Woods



Help Terri unload her belongings and set up her new home
Smaller gifts can be dropped off at church (unwrapped)
anytime! Big items, please call Margaret at 407-921-8671
to arrange delivery.

A list of items that are needed will be announced in a separate email.

PLEASE RSVP!
407-921-8671 or email ambowersfl@gmail.com

HONOR THE LORD WITH YOUR FIRST FRUITS

By Pastor Tom

Sunday, Oct. 31, is Reformation Sunday. **Wear red if you have it!** We'll share in communion that day. We'll also begin collecting the pledge cards for 2022. Please begin to prayerfully consider your planned contributions for the ministry of St. Stephen. This estimate of giving is vital information for our Church Council to begin preparing our budget. Our planned gifts are also vital to our own spiritual development and maturity. Thank you in advance for your generous stewardship and trust in God's mercy.

2022 Estimate of Giving
In support of God's mission for St. Stephen Lutheran Church:
To be an active community that welcomes all people to nurture and share their faith and gifts with everyone, according to God's call.

NAME(S): _____

I/we pledge to intentionally give financially to the ministry of St. Stephen Lutheran Church.
(Please select one option)

\$ _____ per week
\$ _____ per month
\$ _____ per year

I/we understand that this plan can be changed by notifying the financial secretary.

Cards will be available in the narthex this Sunday. You may drop yours into the collection plate at worship. Those worshipping from home may call Office Manager Lori Zengel with your pledge; send her an email; or print out and mail the card attached to the email you'll receive tomorrow. *"Honor the Lord with your substance and with the first fruits of all your produce."* (Proverbs 3:9)

FAREWELL TO CHERYL – AND MORE SYNOD NEWS

By Sue Canning

Along with husband Mark (and, of course, Pastor Tom), Sue represented St. Stephen at last week's virtual Florida-Bahamas Synod Assembly. We asked her to share her impressions.

At the outset, I kept getting distracted from what we were doing by how we were doing it. I was in awe that the Synod staff pulled off a very smooth two-day remote assembly for over 250 people. Just think about coping with the technical competence of that many people that ranged anywhere from zero to no problem. Add real-time remote voting to that miracle. We had a two-page ballot with candidates to fill about 30 open positions total among four Synod entities.

My lasting impressions:

- The Florida-Bahamas Synod benefits an amazing number of people through a broad scope of ministries. For example, we have Global Mission Partners in Haiti, Guyana, Surinam and Jamaica.
- A new ministry called Deaf Palms has been approved as a mission church. This church hopes to travel the state with a goal of increasing full access to worship for the hearing-impaired.
- Every young person in our Lutheran family is vital for the life of every congregation. None who want to attend the upcoming Youth Gathering should be denied the chance due to money. It costs \$1,000 per youth. If you don't have an eligible youth in your congregation, donate so that no Synod youth is left out.
- Cheryl Stuart concluded 12 years of service as vice president of the Synod Council. Did you know she had served that long? I did not. She stirred the assembly in many ways. Here is one way she challenged all Synod congregations: Did you know that the man who murdered nine people at Emanuel AME Church in Charleston, S.C., in 2015 was raised Lutheran? He was confirmed and attended regularly. He reportedly continues to espouse white supremacy views. What message did he not hear in his Lutheran congregation? Does our silence on issues of racial inequality speak the loudest? What can we do to ensure that our Lutheran congregations are living out loud the messages Jesus taught?



The farewell for Cheryl was heartfelt and much deserved. I cannot imagine willingly putting in that much time on the business of the church. Bishop Suarez said Cheryl did so with compassion and competence that will be hard to replace.

Want to see what you missed at the Synod Assembly? Visit <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCoR5To0qOoHQJyXzL2I4meq>.

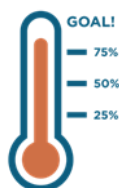
FOUR FRIENDS

“Billie and I enjoyed Sunday dinner in the country with Nathan and Don,” Audrey Post says. “We had a lovely visit that was filled with lots of laughter and reminiscing. Nathan’s brother Larry came by as we were leaving and took this photo.”



PROJECT UPDATE

There was much blessed activity in the Capital Campaign this past week. More than \$10,000 shifted from the “Money Pledged” category to the all-important “Money in Hand” category. Thanks be to God for everyone who has pledged, who has donated or who is prayerfully considering a donation. Here’s where things stand, according to Pastor Tom’s updated figures:



Total cost – \$196,999
Money in hand – \$168,052
Money pledged – \$11,744
Money still needed – \$17,203

REACHING OUT TO HAITI

This is Pastor Hugues (pronounced “Hughes”) Balde, from Tallahassee’s Haitian congregation. He was posing last week beside his church’s first shipment of shrink-wrapped bundles to Haiti, a nation reeling from an earthquake and so much more. St. Stephen was among the congregations assisting in the effort. “Our items of tarps, soap and toothpaste are seen on top,” said Pastor Tom, who delivered those items and a St. Stephen check for \$2,800. “They are preparing to send more love packages, so please keep the toothpaste, tarps and soap coming. A basket for those donated items is in the fellowship hall.”



MORE MIDWEEK UPDATES

- All Saints Day is coming up Nov. 7, so St. Stephen will be accepting the names of loved ones for the remembrance. Please get names in to Office Manager Lori by Wednesday, Nov. 3.



- 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



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
Jen Reece - 11/02
Paul van der Mark - 11/06
Hector Quinones - 11/07
Barbara Sullivan - 11/07
Daniel Martinez - 11/10

UPCOMING DATES

This Sunday:

10 a.m. - Worship, Twenty-second Sunday after Pentecost

Wednesday, October 27:

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>.

St. Stephen Lutheran Church, ELCA
2198 N. Meridian Road | Tallahassee, FL 32303

The Rev. Tom Holdcraft, Pastor

*Edited by Lex Lutheran. Designed by Lori Zengel, office manager, sslc@ststephenlutherantally.com.
Website: <http://www.ststephenlutherantally.com/>*

If you no longer want to receive this newsletter, please [unsubscribe](#). To unsubscribe please reply with "UNSUBSCRIBE" as the subject line.