



ST. STEPHEN THIS WEEK

St. Stephen Lutheran Church Newsletter

Wearing red is traditional for Reformation Sunday, which arrives in three days. But this first-bloom-of-the-season camellia in one St. Stephen yard will be wearing pink instead.



THIS SUNDAY, TIME TO WEAR RED

Oh, and grab your pledge card

By Pastor Tom

It's Reformation Sunday. Wear red if you have it! We'll share in communion. We'll also be collecting pledge cards for 2022. Please 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.

If you grabbed a card from the narthex or printed one out from last Friday's email, you may drop it into the collection plate at worship. Those worshipping from home may call Office Manager Lori Zengel with your pledge; send her an email; or mail in your card. 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.

LUTHER AND LUTHERANISM

We borrowed this from elca.org



Martin Luther was eight years old when Christopher Columbus set sail from Europe and landed in the Western Hemisphere. Luther was a young monk and priest when Michelangelo was painting the Sistine Chapel in Rome. A few years later, he was a junior faculty member at a new university in small-town Germany, intently studying the Scriptures, "captivated with an extraordinary ardor for understanding Paul in the Epistle to the Romans."

In these days Luther was tormented by the demand for righteousness before God. "I did not love, yes, I hated the righteous God who punishes sinners, and secretly, if not blasphemously, certainly murmuring greatly, I was angry with God." Then, in the midst of that struggle with God, the message of the Scriptures became clear, like a long-shut door opening wide. When he realized that a "merciful God justifies us by faith ... I felt that I was altogether born again and had entered paradise itself through open gates."

What Luther discovered is the freedom of Christians trusting God’s mercy in Christ. As he later wrote, “Faith is God’s work in us. It changes us and makes us to be born anew of God. This faith is a living, busy, active, mighty thing. It is impossible for it not to be doing good works incessantly. Faith is a living, daring confidence in God’s grace, so sure and certain that believers would stake their lives on it a thousand times....”

WHY RITA WORSHIPS WITH US

Rita Ford has been part of St. Stephen since 2010. You’ve seen her dance during the liturgy. You’ve seen her enthusiastically greet fellow worshippers. You might even have wished you could be as outgoing as she is.

But would you guess that she’s really kind of shy? We can’t tell you how many shy members and friends have politely declined an opportunity to be featured in these pages. Rita didn’t exactly decline – but when we asked her to write a paragraph on why she worships at St. Stephen, or why she worships at all, she agreed – but then secretly asked a St. Stephen friend to write it for her!

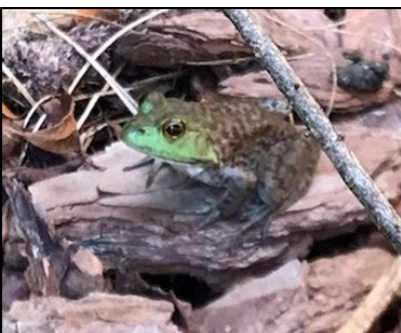


You’re probably thinking that Rita doesn’t need words to describe why she’s part of our congregation. She clearly feels the presence of God here, and that presence energizes her and us. But to put it into words, her friend Terri Schmitt talked with her and wrote up this brief look at why Rita worships with us:

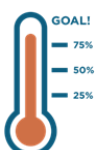
- 1) Even though she's a homebody through and through, the folks at St. Stephen are so welcoming that she can actually leave her home sanctuary and come to worship in person.
- 2) Rita’s father was a Lutheran pastor, so this Lutheran congregation connects her to her family in Guyana and her past.
- 3) She finds our sanctuary a tranquil and centering place.

FROGS OF FAITH

David Butler, our building-and-grounds coordinator who works at church almost daily, has made a discovery. “It appears we have a family of frogs living around our fountain,” he says. “Daddy is quite large. And deep in this picture, I think, is Mama. I see the little ones now and then.” We took the big photo, zoomed in on the center and cropped it. Take a look below.



PROJECT UPDATE



Total cost – \$196,999
 In hand amount – \$168,224
 Pledged amount – \$11,694
Still needed – \$17,081

'LEAVE THE DOOR OPEN A LITTLE': EXCERPT FROM SUNDAY'S SERMON

"... During a lunch break at the luxury-powerboat factory where I worked in Largo years ago, a conversation with [co-workers] turned to God. It wasn't something to be proud of, but something happened that I hope I never forget.

"We had decided that it was all rubbish (to spare you the more colorful word we used). God and religion were an 'opium of the people,' someone said, paraphrasing Karl Marx – something people in power created to control other people. Another said, 'What kind of God could allow the things that happen in the world to innocent people?' 'How can God be real?' We were on a roll, for sure.

And then one of the guys, Brian, said: 'I don't really know if there's a God or if there isn't a God, but I want to leave the door open a little – in case God *is* real.'

"By no means will I claim that we all became believers with his interjection, but we did all become quiet for some time in our measure of those words. Something happened [amid] our certainty of a godless world that gave us the possibility of a God-filled one...."

BIBLE STUDY DOESN'T FIT YOUR SCHEDULE?

For those who'd like to take part in the weekly Bible study but have a schedule conflict, here's a link to the recorded meeting:

https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/OwXfGkczuGn7JWxSrsq5agv2yIOS9Q-cFRn5nGPhEvPDI8o24QjisIxBgev9laE.UnKCHuy6_yB9KI4

HAIKU CORNER

By Lex Lutheran



IS HEAVEN LIKE THAT REVIEW SESSION WHEN YOU WERE A STUDENT TEACHER?

Where the Almighty
narrates a video of
all your worst moments?

OR IS HEAVEN LIKE THE FINISH LINE AT A MARATHON?

Where throngs of people
simply cheer the fact that you
finally finished?



PRE-CHURCH GROOMING IN A PANDEMIC

Behind this mask I'm
shaved and trimmed, in case Jesus
decides to show up.

MORE MIDWEEK UPDATES

- It's generally bad form to answer a phone call during the liturgy. Particularly when you're the pastor, in the middle of a children's message. But last Sunday, God called Pastor Tom. If you haven't already watched the video of that service, you'll want to look it up. Here's the link: <https://www.facebook.com/ststephentallahassee/videos/233185328723550/>



- Remember: Terri Schmitt's housewarming/moving-in is a week from Saturday. Terri gratefully provided a list of small items she'd particularly appreciate: hose; nozzle; bird bath; welcome mats; yard tools (someone has already donated a rake, hedge clippers and hand pruner); natural-material quilts, throws and blankets; natural-bristle broom and hand broom; metal dustpan; natural-fiber scrubbies or metal ones; and organic spices. RSVP to Margaret Bowers at 407-921-8671 or ambowersfl@gmail.com. Let her know whether you plan to show up at noon Saturday, Nov. 6, at 2752 Faringdon Drive in Huntington Woods, and let her know what gift you're planning to buy. If you can't come to Terri's, feel free to drop off a gift at church between 9 a.m. and 1 p.m. weekdays, or bring it with you to this Sunday's service. Or contact Margaret.



- The Giving Tree is coming! Andrea Notley, our keeper of narthex trees, says it'll appear in a couple of weeks, providing opportunities to brighten the holidays of people who are struggling financially.
- All Saints Day is coming up one week from Sunday, and we're accepting the names of loved ones for the remembrance. Please get them in to Lori by Wednesday.
- Apart from Pastor Tom (and maybe God), the person whose name appears most in our newsletter is Lori Zengel. As office manager, she's the glue that holds this place together. Rummaging through old emails this week, we found this one from Pastor Marda dated Aug. 23, 2012: "Today I offered the office manager position to Lori Zengel, who I believe will be a good match in terms of skills, maturity, and personality.... I'm very pleased with this choice." So are we. Thank you for years of faithful service, Lori.
- 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

- 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
- Mark Warren - 11/13
- Elliot Reece - 11/14
- Cheryl Stuart - 11/14
- Jamie Martinez - 11/19
- Marda Messick - 11/20
- Cindy Suhrweir - 11/21
- Sue Canning - 11/25
- Anna Amundson - 11/26
- Emory Hingst - 11/26
- Michael Bonfanti - 11/27
- Phil Williams - 11/29



UPCOMING DATES

This Sunday:

10 a.m. - Worship, Reformation Day/Pledge Card Sunday

Noon - Council meeting

Wednesday, November 3:

Noon - Bible study (online)

1 p.m. - List of AllSaints names due to Lori



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

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

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