



# ST. STEPHEN THIS WEEK

## St. Stephen Lutheran Church Newsletter

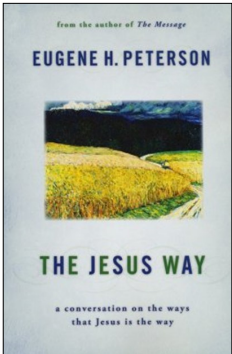
### MAKE THEIR CHRISTMAS BRIGHTER

This year, once again, Andrea Notley and assistant Erin Kenney are continuing the Giving Tree tradition here at St. Stephen -- distributing wish lists gathered from as many as 30 clients. So far, Andrea says, about a dozen St. Stephen people have stepped forward to shop for them. Are you willing to take part? If so, Andrea or Erin can give you a shopping list. Your deadline for bringing your wrapped packages back to church is Dec. 11. If you can't shop yourself, you can make a donation and a Giving Tree elf will do the shopping. Either way ... thank you!



### 'THE JESUS WAY'

"A way of sacrifice. A way of failure. A way on the margins. A way of holiness. All of these ways prepared the 'way of the Lord' that became incarnate and complete in Jesus. But somewhere along the line, have we lost the way? In 'The Jesus Way,' Eugene Peterson continues his stimulating conversation in spiritual theology, considering all the ways that Jesus is the Way compared to the distorted ways the American church has chosen to follow."



That's the publisher's description of "The Jesus Way," the book we're invited to begin discussing next month. Join Pastor Tom for the next book study at 9 a.m. Sundays beginning Dec. 4, in the Matthew Room. Please see Pastor if you'd like him to order a book for you. Cost is \$19.

### ALMOST SHOWTIME FOR GRAHAM

Noted actor Graham Reece is performing in "Elf: The Musical" at Young Actors' Theatre. He's playing the role of Charlie the Elf in Cast B, whose shows are:



- Saturday @7:30
- Sunday @2:00
- Friday 11/18 @7:30
- Saturday 11/19 @2:00
- Sunday 11/20 @7:00



Tickets are available online at <https://www.youngactorstheatre.com/> or call 850-386-6602. Graham would love to see St. Stephen members in the audience!

### WHAT SHALL WE PRAY FOR NOW?

Long before social media existed, churches had prayer lists in their Sunday bulletins – to let us know who could use our prayers. We still have those lists, thank goodness. If you use ours, you've seen that some items remain listed for a long time ... even years. Lives change, and what we pray for today might be different from what we prayed for previously. So from now on, in an effort to keep our lists fresh, we're saying that every new prayer request will have a shelf life of two months. If the need persists, of course, you may submit an updated request. And we'll keep praying.



## LEARN ABOUT FOOD INSECURITY



Experts from the FSU College of Medicine are hosting an hourlong session on “Community Connections: Highlighting Community and Scientific Innovation to Address Nutrition and Food Security Needs.” The Zoom session, scheduled for noon-1 p.m. Wednesday, Nov. 30, is open to everyone. All you have to do is register. Click [here](#). (The Zoom ID is 932 9104 1318.)

## SHADOWS OR ... ???

*When Dwight Polivka looks toward the choir on Sundays, he notices that the shadows over Pastor Tom's shoulders appear to be, well, wings. Go ahead. Take a look. Squint a little. That's our pastor – nothing short of angelic.*

*(Photo by Beth Alexander)*

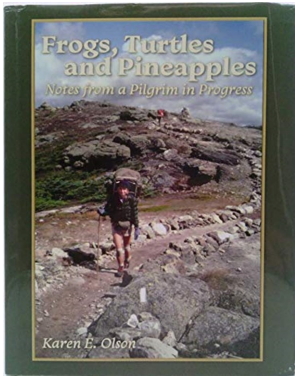


## THE TRANSIENTS' TALE

*By Karen E. Olson (Excerpt from the June 24, 1989, edition of the Tallahassee Democrat)*

... Ministers reeled off a wish list of resources that would make [working with transients] easier, including more shelter beds, alcohol-treatment programs and money for social services. But in the end, [Father Roy Marien at the Co-Cathedral of St. Thomas More] said, there are no easy answers – only the continuing challenge to love in the midst of harsh circumstances.

The risk and pain hit home this spring to Ruth Shields, secretary of Oak City Assembly of God on U.S. Highway 90. Usually content to dispense grocery vouchers, she found herself wrapping her arms around a 19-year-old youth named Cisco, who was walking home to Mexico in a pair of uncomfortable dress shoes.



“Honestly, it just broke my heart,” she said. “I could tell he was lonely, he was tired, he was upset. That could have been my son. That mother instinct came through.”

She still wonders how the teenager is doing. As in most of these cases, there's no way to know.

*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.*

## ABOLISHING THE DEATH PENALTY

People in the Tallahassee area who support the abolition of Florida's death penalty will gather Wednesday, Nov. 30, for a prayer service at Good Shepherd Catholic Church, 4665 Thomasville Road. The service begins at 7 p.m. and is open to the public. It will include the reading of the names of 99 people executed by the state since 1976, along with the 205 names of their victims. Florida is one of 27 states that have a death penalty.



# EXCERPT FROM PASTOR TOM'S REFORMATION SUNDAY SERMON

... In my study, one of the commentators I follow is Father Richard Rohr. His words speak of deep wisdom to me. This week, they directed me to a section in the Wisdom of Solomon book in the Old Testament. In that section of the Bible called the Apocrypha, we are told of a God who is all-powerful and merciful.

It says in Chapter 11: "the whole world before you is like a speck that tips the scales, and like a drop of morning dew that falls on the ground. But you are merciful to all, for you can do all things, and you overlook people's sins so that they may repent.

For you love all things that exist, (breathe that in a second) and detest none of the things that you have made, for you would not have made anything if you had hated it. How would anything have endured if you had not willed it? Or how would anything not called forth by you have been preserved? You spare all things, for they are yours, O Lord, you who love the living."

This is wisdom language from God. There's a purity, and a tranquility in God's word which draws us into relationship. An inviting God that calls, offers forgiveness and leads us to joy....

## HAIKU CORNER

By Lex Lutheran



### SUNDAY-MORNING TRAFFIC

A deer family,  
skittish, hesitant, at last  
sprints across the road.

Then, moments later,  
a goose gang takes its sweet time,  
as if I weren't there.



They nearly succeed  
in keeping me from getting  
to the church on time.

## MORE MIDWEEK UPDATES

- Janet Barber reports that former member Cherie Jacobson underwent double-bypass surgery last week and is recuperating well at daughter Karin's home. Office Manager Lori can send you her address.
- Don't forget that Blake Simmons wants participants for her Advanced Placement research-project survey on puppetry. You can scan the QR code or copy this link: [https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfypvTIUSGjOmjSdoFW9qU-ItI0r2jbVW2mQgnwPsQUTNsp3A/viewform?usp=sf\\_link](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfypvTIUSGjOmjSdoFW9qU-ItI0r2jbVW2mQgnwPsQUTNsp3A/viewform?usp=sf_link)
- Next Tuesday (Nov. 14) is the deadline for you to let Pastor Tom or Rita Ford know whether you're interested in taking part in a St. Stephen Thanksgiving meal – or in receiving (or helping to deliver) Thanksgiving meals for home-bound church members or friends.

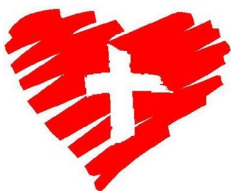


- Here's Brenda Christie, our friend from New Mount Zion AME Church, posing with a cartload of socks that we helped collect for people experiencing homelessness. "Many thanks to you and St. Stephen's support of our annual sock drive," she wrote to our outreach coordinator, Sharon Simmons. "The socks will allow the men and women at The Kearney Center to have warm feet during the cold winter months."



- As Pastor Tom reminded us recently from the pulpit: It's not too late to get a flu shot. And, of course, we owe it to ourselves and each other to keep up-to-date on our COVID boosters.

- You're invited to enjoy drinks, hors d'oeuvres and live music a week from today at a fundraiser for Lutheran Social Services of North Florida. It's scheduled for 5:30-7:30 p.m. at 708 N. Forest Drive. The suggested minimum donation is \$100 per person, to support LSSNF's work in the community. You can buy tickets at [www.lssnf.org](http://www.lssnf.org).



- 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



- Daniel Martinez - 11/10
- Mark Warren - 11/13
- Elliot Reece - 11/14
- Cheryl Stuart - 11/14
- Marda Messick - 11/20
- Cindy Suhrweir - 11/21
- Sue Canning - 11/25
- Marley Bonfanti - 11/26
- Emory Hingst - 11/26
- Michael Bonfanti - 11/27
- Phil Williams - 11/29
- Graham Hackley - 11/30

## UPCOMING DATES

### This Sunday, Nov. 13:

- 9 a.m. - Bible talk
- 9:30 a.m. - Choir practice
- 10 a.m. - Worship, Twenty-third Sunday after Pentecost

### Wednesday, Nov. 16:

- 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