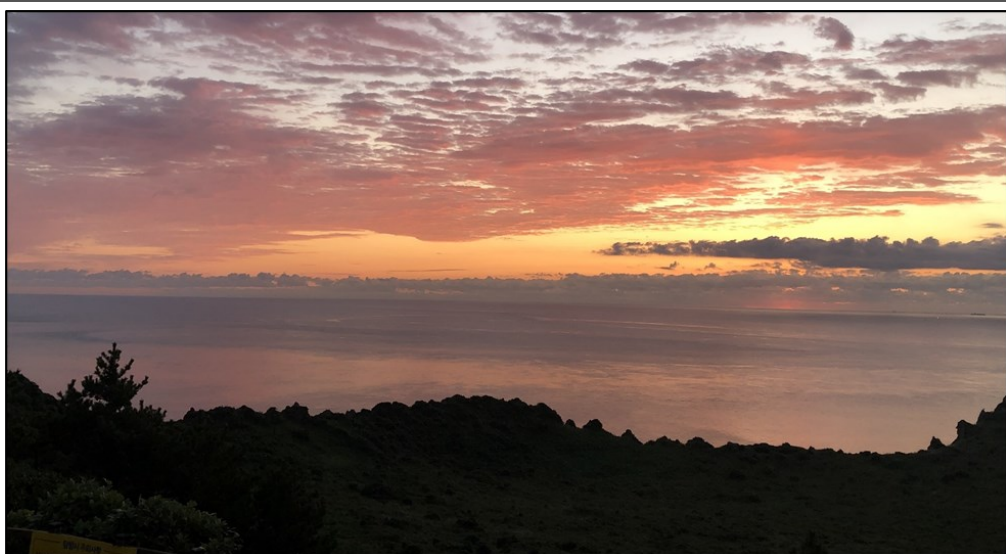




ST. STEPHEN THIS WEEK

St. Stephen Lutheran Church Newsletter



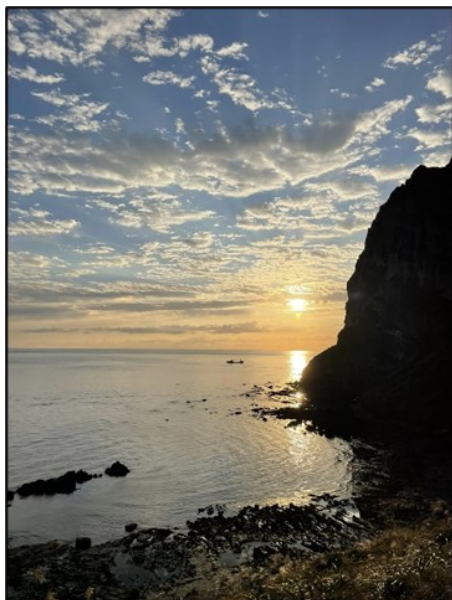
‘TRIP OF A LIFETIME’

Karl Barton narrates this tale of the family’s October journey to South Korea, site of Stephen’s fairy-tale wedding

The entire Tallahassee Barton clan, along with Gloria Unger (Melissa’s mother), took the trip of a lifetime for the Oct. 17 wedding of Stephen Anthony Barton and Crystal Youngjean Kim on Jeju Island. Jeju is known as the “Hawaii” of South Korea, and we had great weather during the five days we were on this beautiful volcanic island.

Of course, the wedding was the main event; however, during our first full day on the island, both families took a small tour bus to see the sights on the eastern side. The most striking geographical feature is Seongsan Ilchulbon or “Sunrise Mountain.” Although we didn’t climb all the way up that day, Melissa, Karl, Sarah and Isabel did make the ascent for sunrise on our last day.

The end of our first-day tour on a large catamaran included seven of Stephen’s friends who had just arrived and joined us for the windy, choppy ride.

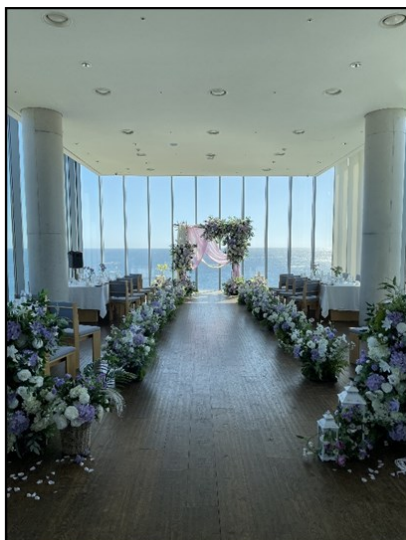



The night before the wedding, the compound where our family and Stephen’s friends stayed



(My Half-Time Pension) was transformed into a Korean barbecue feast for the rehearsal dinner, and Gloria was caught off guard when Crystal’s father asked her to say the prayer as the eldest. Gloria

rose to the occasion in giving thanks for the coming together of families, cultures and the couple – as well as getting a little choked up in the process, which brought the depth of the occasion and many sympathetic tears to those listening.



A woman with blonde hair, smiling, wearing a traditional Korean Hanbok. The top is dark green with white cuffs and a pink sash. The skirt is light pink. She is standing outdoors with trees and a building in the background.

The wedding took place in the stunning Glass House, which was beautifully adorned with purple and white floral arrangements. The highlight of the ceremony was definitely the vows that the bridal couple had written without having shared them with each other previously. Stephen promised to love and support Crystal as she pursues her dreams and passions, and even quoted from 1 John 4:18 that “There is no fear in love...” – which surprised the groom’s father, who is used to a much healthier dose of religious skepticism from his son. It was eloquent and made the bride exclaim at its conclusion that hers would pale in comparison; however, the emotional content and love Crystal expressed in her vows again brought the depth of the occasion to the fore and tears flowing from the couple and witnesses alike.



During the ceremony, the bride and groom wore a wedding dress and tuxedo. Then for the reception and the cutting of the cake, they changed into the traditional Hanbok, which both mothers had worn throughout the ceremony and tasting menu luncheon.

Crystal's family gifted the Hanbok that Melissa wore as a keepsake.

Our final two days were in Seoul – where Sarah, Isabel and the newlyweds went to the night markets for the sights, sounds and street food on Isabel’s 21st birthday. We all toured the Gyeongbokgung Palace grounds the next day



and had an amazing lunch at Sanchon, a vegan Buddhist restaurant. Then Melissa, Karl and the happy couple explored neighborhoods with traditional Hanok houses and stores and then a Buddhist temple during active prayers.

After we all returned to the States, Stephen and Crystal took a honeymoon tour all over South Korea and then went to Japan before returning home to Alexandria, Virginia. Melissa is determined to return to Jeju since we only saw about one-third of the island. In preparation for this trip, Stephen did mention plans to return to South Korea with “the grandchildren.” So it

seems that this trip of a lifetime could become one of many as we celebrate the coming together of the families and cultures in the wedding of Stephen and Crystal Barton.

POTLUCK THIS SUNDAY


Just like that, it's potluck time again – this Sunday, right after the liturgy. If you're able, please bring a dish to share with your churchmates and visitors. (No drinks needed, thanks.) While we're gathered in the fellowship hall, we'll also hear from a special guest: the Rev. Ana Lugo, regional gift planner for the ELCA Foundation.



TIME TO TURN IN OUR ESTIMATES OF GIVING

By Pastor Tom

I invite you to prayerfully consider your estimate of giving for the 2024 calendar year. I know how hard it is to let go of our money gods, but this is where spiritual growth and the building up of the church occurs. You and I are part of something bigger. Will you join me in offering the first fruits to the Lord?



2024 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.

This Sunday, you will be invited to place your estimate-of-giving card in a basket during worship. Alternatively, you may call or email Lori in our church office with your estimate of giving for 2024, but please do so before Dec. 10 so our financial team can prepare the budget for a congregational vote in January. Taking the right risks for the sake of the Gospel brings about amazing rewards.

RETURN OF THE GIVING TREE

Once again this year, Andrea Notley has received names from Leon County Schools – names of families most in need, gathered by social workers. The Giving Tree offers each of us an opportunity to brighten the holidays for one of those families. If you let Andrea know you're interested, she'll send you information about your person's wants or needs. As always, if you want to participate but don't like to shop (or aren't able to shop), you may donate money and Andrea or one of her elves will shop for you. (Include the donation with your regular offering.) Make sure you return your wrapped gifts by Dec. 10. Call or text 850-443-5293 or email notley90@comcast.net.



ASSISTING A FRIEND

By Pastor Tom

You may have noticed that Tarrance is back. We helped him return to Tallahassee a few weeks ago and are keeping him sheltered (most of the time) at Suburban Inn with money from the Justice and Mercy Fund. Football week-ends proved to be an added challenge because even economy motels have significant price increases. During those weekends, the Church Council voted to allow Tarrance to shelter overnight in the shed. This was done after a lot of thought and prayer. In the end, we believe that – because of our lengthy relationship with Tarrance, and the fact that he is about to begin receiving his monthly Social Security disability checks – this was the right thing to do. Something Jesus would have us do. More than once, Tarrance has told me that there's no telling where he'd be without St. Stephen's help, and I give thanks to all of you for that.



I have two requests. If you can give a little extra to the Justice and Mercy Fund, we can keep Tarrance sheltered at Suburban Inn – since home games for FSU football are nearly over. That would be an awesome gift, as temperatures are beginning to drop. Second, if you have any shoes (size 9 or 9½ men's) that you can give to him, I'd be deeply thankful. We have done a good thing by "adopting" Tarrance, because St. Stephen needs people like him. It is

through him that we know Christ and, with our care for him, become known to Christ. (Matthew 25:36-40)

UPDATE FROM OUR FINANCIAL TEAM

Year-to-date income: \$258,069

Year-to-date expenses: \$235,575

+/-: +\$22,494 (This amount includes \$21,713 in designated funds)



LAMPS AND OIL: EXCERPT FROM PASTOR TOM’S SERMON

Based on Matthew 25:1-13, where 10 bridesmaids tried to prepare for the bridegroom’s arrival. Half ran out of oil for their lamps and were labeled foolish; the other half wouldn’t share their oil and were labeled wise. Pastor Tom offered another way to view the story.

... What if some of the unprepared, “foolish” ones said, “You know, we could run out and try to find oil, but the most important thing for us to do is stay here to greet the bridegroom, whether with oil or not. We’ll just have to say we are sorry if our lamps go out, and rely on his good graces.” If that was said, then a prepared, “wise” one might have said, “My heart burned when you spoke about saying ‘Sorry’ and relying on grace. Maybe I have put too much stock in my own self-concern and not enough in joy.”

So, the ending could have been: They all go off and greet the bridegroom, in various states of preparedness, and all of them are a bit more humbled. It is not a bad model for a typical Christian worship.

Since the bridegroom is Jesus, what would he do? And this is where the parable leads us. It’s not hard to imagine that he’d say, “You’re all kinda foolish and you’re all pretty guilty, but you remained united. You didn’t throw the other out. You didn’t hurt one another over your greed. Come with me into the banquet hall and let me show you the way. I am the light of the world.”



HOLIDAY SCHEDULE

Sunday, Nov. 26, 10 a.m.: Former Bishop Trexler presides over our liturgy.

Saturday, Dec. 16, 9 a.m.: Decorating the sanctuary.

Sunday, Dec. 17, 10 a.m.: Worship, including children’s Christmas program.

Sunday, Dec. 24, 10 a.m.: Fourth Sunday of Advent worship.

Sunday, Dec. 24, 7 p.m.: Christmas Eve service, with communion and candle-light.

Monday, Dec. 25: No service.

Sunday, Dec. 31, 10 a.m.: Lessons and Carols.



BEFORE YOU GO...

- In his words of welcome last Sunday, Pastor Tom helped prepare us for Advent: “We begin to look back on the past year and plan for the next one. We may consider the ways we were wise and foolish back then but never plan to be foolish tomorrow. Next year we always plan to be wise! ☺ It’s not blind optimism but good karma to do this. It’s the Christ in you recognizing the Christ outside of you. This, I believe, is what Jesus taught his followers to see. That we are given a ‘deep sense of personal choice,’ and the knowledge of consequences.”
- If you have an anniversary, birthday, special memory or special St. Stephen person or program you’d like to honor, celebrate by sponsoring the altar flowers for our service. Sign up on the flower chart in the narthex. Include the \$40 with your regular offering. And then take the flowers home!



UPCOMING BIRTHDAYS

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
Nancy Staff - 12/01
Bob Eshleman - 12/02
Brian Oliveri - 12/03
Annelise Leysieffer - 12/04
Annette Claussen - 12/08
Janet Barber - 12/09
Ridy Hofer - 12/11
Laura Sullivan - 12/14



IN THE WEEK AHEAD

Today:

Noon - Al-Anon meets in fellowship hall (FH)
7 p.m. - AA meets in FH

This Friday:

9:30 a.m. - TOPS meets in FH

This Saturday:

10 a.m. - Sew for Hope meets in FH

This Sunday:

9:00 a.m. - Book study
9:30 a.m. - Choir practice
10 a.m. - Worship, Twenty-fifth Sunday after Pentecost
11:30 a.m. - Legacy Giving Presentation from Rev. Ana Lugo with Potluck
4 p.m. - Congolese Church Group meets in FH

Monday, Nov. 20:

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

Tuesday, Nov. 21:

7 p.m. - Alateen meets in FH

Wednesday, Nov. 22:

5 p.m. - TIMA meets in FH



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