



ST. STEPHEN THIS WEEK

St. Stephen Lutheran Church Newsletter



HABITAT HOUSEWARMING

The Habitat for Humanity WomenBuild home was dedicated Tuesday, and it's a beauty. You'll recall that the Fixie Chicks were one of the WomenBuild teams working on this home. Among those Chicks was team co-leader Caroline Collins (*far left in this photo*). St. Stephen member Erin Kenney and Office Manager Lori Zengel also flexed their building muscles. Other church members contributed in numerous ways, particularly with financial donations. On one Sunday, Caroline brought prospective homeowner Bernice to our liturgy so she could thank us for our support.

“What a special experience to have taken part in this tremendous project with you all, and to see Bernice’s beautifully built and furnished home come to fruition today,” Caroline said Tuesday in a note to other volunteers. “That’s



[former FSU football star] Warrick Dunn handing Ms. Bernice a \$5,000 check from his Home for the Holidays Foundation, and Charlie Ward in the FSU jersey in the background. It's made out to Habitat, so I'm not clear if it was a contribution

toward the project or an extra gift for the Sherman family.” Either way, it was a big day on Volusia Drive. Nicely done, Fixie Chicks. (*Top photo by Pastor Tom, bottom photo by Caroline Collins*)

WRAPPING UP THE GIVING TREE

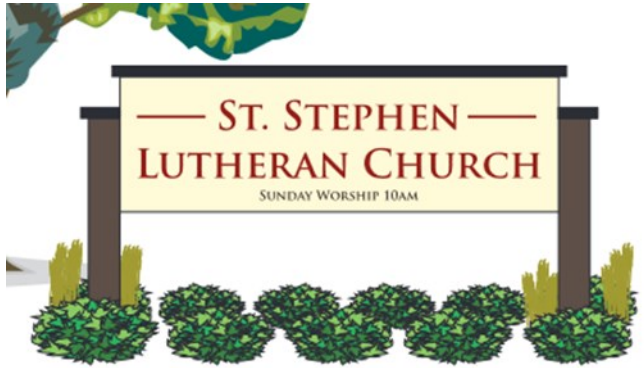
By Andrea Notley



The Giving Tree drive for 2022 is coming to an end! Please don't forget to bring your gifts to church by **this Sunday**. Also, if you don't want to make a tag, put your name on a sticky note – and I'll remove it and create a tag for you. Thank you as always, St. Stephen, for your generous gifts. You're making a wonderful Christmas for someone in need.

FOUR SIGNS TO CHOOSE FROM

Sunday is your last chance to vote on which St. Stephen sign you'd like to see alongside Meridian Road. In the fellowship hall, you'll see all four designs on display, along with the cost for each. Last week, Pastor Tom asked us to factor in the cost when we voted. Since then, he says, a St. Stephen household has indicated it'll donate the difference in cost between the least and the most expensive signs, around \$800. If you already voted and this news is causing you to rethink your choice, please see Pastor Tom or Lori. They'll remove your first vote and let you submit another in its place. Please do NOT just add another vote.



OUR LOGO

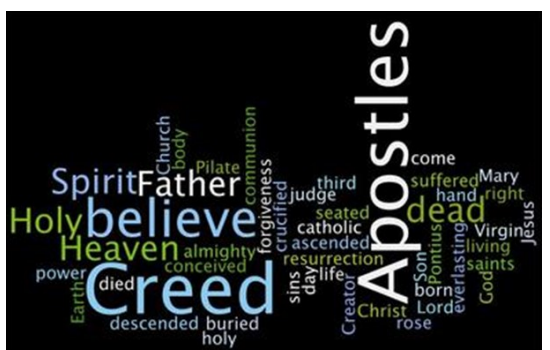
A couple of people studying the proposed signs wondered aloud why that round piece of artwork was included in three of the four designs. That's the official St. Stephen logo! It appears at the top of the newsletter each week, and it's on our website. As I recall, it was designed by former member Jennifer LaVia's sister, a talented and generous graphic artist. The hands symbolize "God's work, our hands." And the multiple colors illustrate our message of "All are welcome." So, yes, brag to your friends: "Of course my church has a logo. Doesn't yours?"



'CATHOLIC' QUESTION

By Pastor Tom

Have you wondered why we say "catholic" in the Apostles' Creed and Nicene Creed? If so, you're not alone. For different reasons, the word can make people uncomfortable. Until blue in the face, pastors and church scholars have explained that small-"c" "catholic" means universal, not a denomination. So, we profess belief in the holy, universal and apostolic church. However, a growing concern is how many hear "catholic" and become distracted or, worse, feel hurt. In the past year, a few members have asked our Worship and Music Committee to consider making the change. With Council approval, St. Stephen will discuss that and possibly vote to change "catholic" in our creeds to "universal." If you have any questions before our meeting, please contact me. Our next congregational meeting follows worship on Jan. 22.



LAST MONTH'S NOISY OFFERING...

Our Ministry Minute speaker three Sundays ago was Jeanette Sickel. Jeanette, who lives in Whigham, Georgia, had worked for years with colleagues who were blind and, upon her retirement, she felt compelled to help improve vision services in Georgia. "As an advocate, I work to connect persons who are visually impaired with the resources that will allow each individual to develop to his or her full potential," she told us that day. "At present, these resources are not well-developed in Georgia. This is particularly true in rural South Georgia.... In many communities, an idea hangs on from decades ago that blind people can't do very much."

Jeanette is a member of the Georgia Council of the Blind, as well as the Blind Lions of Georgia. Both of those groups, she said, seek to make the public aware that although lack of sight certainly is an inconvenience, it does not shut a person down. All proceeds from November's monthly Noisy Offering were given to support the good work that Jeanette and the Blind Lions of Georgia are doing. The total donated: \$200.



... AND THIS MONTH'S NOISY OFFERING

Here in December, our Ministry Minute speaker is a local celebrity. She's Adrian Fogelin, author of numerous works of young-adult fiction, and half of the musical duo Hot Tamale. She also happens to live in Seminole Manor, the same southwest neighborhood as our own Karen Olson. Both Karen and Adrian regularly seek out ways to assist their neighbors, many of whom face multiple challenges. On Dec. 18, Adrian will fill us in on ways we can become involved in Seminole Manor's food ministry. Please note: Usually with Ministry Minute, we hear the speaker and then wait until the next Sunday to collect a Noisy Offering for that ministry. This month, however, the "next Sunday" is Christmas! So on Dec. 18, we'll have both the guest speaker AND the Noisy Offering. In other words ... come prepared Dec. 18! Bring your checkbook!



EXCERPT FROM PASTOR TOM'S SERMON

... Back then John was not baptizing to make people feel bad – or good – about themselves. He was enlisting people in a cause. He was doing his part in repairing the broken.

He's telling you, and me, that it is time to have the heart to take a stand and follow the way of Jesus. There will always be something to be afraid of ... be it spiders and snakes or failure or disrespect or being laughed at or even shunned ... So we need this place (this Holy Ground) to discover the process of divine repair and holy welcome and reignited hearts.



The truth is, we really need Advent to be longer than just four weeks ... Not because we need more shopping time! We need more Advent time because there is much to repair in our world. But God promises to not let things stay the way they are. God promises to repair!...

CHRISTMAS POINSETTIAS



We'll be decorating the chancel area with poinsettias for Christmas. Would you like to dedicate one (or more)? The cost is \$10, and the dedication list will be in the Dec. 18 and Dec. 25 bulletins. Just fill out the form in the bulletin and place it with your payment in the offering plate, or email Lori with the information. The deadline is this Sunday.

PLACES YOU MIGHT WANT TO BE

- **Saturday:** Annual holiday card signing for those on Death Row, noon to 4 p.m., northeastern part of Cascades Park (across Suwannee Street from DOT building). For some, this is the only piece of mail they get all year. Sponsored by Tallahassee Citizens Against the Death Penalty. Join fellow St. Stephen members there.



- **Dec. 17:** Decorating the sanctuary! Beginning at 10 a.m.
- **Dec. 18:** During the liturgy, Rita Ford and Colleen Holdcraft will lead the St. Stephen children in a Hallelujah Dance. Also during that liturgy, Jonas Holdcraft will play the violin. We'll have a Noisy Offering and guest speaker (see story above). And we'll have a baptism! The liturgy begins at 10 a.m.
- **Dec. 24:** Worship on Christmas Eve, beginning at 6 p.m. (What a change from last year – when we worshipped at 4 p.m. in the fellowship hall. So good to be back in our sanctuary.)



- **Dec. 25:** Worship on Christmas Day, beginning at 10 a.m.
- **Jan. 22:** Congregational meeting, after the liturgy.

MORE MIDWEEK UPDATES

- Remember that a donation to the Manna on Meridian food pantry can make a great gift. Visit <https://bit.ly/MannaonMeridian>. To donate in someone else's name, please include their name and address in the note section of the checkout process so Manna can send them a letter.



2023 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.

- Haven't filled out your "estimate of giving" card yet? You have until the end of the year. You may pick up a form in the narthex or, easiest of all, just email Lori your pledge.

- 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 flower chart in the narthex. The cost is \$35, which you can place in the offering plate.
- 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 or call 850-385-2728.

UPCOMING BIRTHDAYS

Annette Claussen - 12/08
Janet Barber - 12/09
Maria (Ridy) Hofer - 12/11
Laura Sullivan - 12/14
Rita Ford - 12/18
Wesley Holdcraft - 12/18
Pastor Tom - 12/29
Kate Stuart - 12/29
Mike Martinez - 12/30



UPCOMING DATES

This Sunday, Dec. 11:

9 a.m. - Book study: "The Jesus Way" by Eugene Peterson
9:30 a.m. - Choir practice
10 a.m. - Worship with communion, Third Sunday of Advent

Wednesday, Dec. 14:

7 p.m. - Choir practice

Saturday, Dec. 17:

10 a.m. - Decorating the sanctuary



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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2198 N. Meridian Road | Tallahassee, FL 32303
The Rev. Tom Holdcraft, Pastor

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