

December 9, 2021



# ST. STEPHEN THIS WEEK

St. Stephen Lutheran Church Newsletter



*"For you, O Lord, my soul in stillness waits...." (Photo by Jake Hartung)*

## THANK GOD FOR YOUR GENEROSITY

The financial updates are really upbeat this week.

First, let's look at the Capital Campaign for our sanctuary work. The budget, you'll recall, is nearly \$197,000. Counting the money that's been pledged but not yet given, all we need to cross the finish line is \$1,825. "I am blown away by the generosity of St. Stephen and the financing of this much-needed work without going to get a loan," Pastor Tom said. "Praise the Lord!"

Now, let's look at pledges for the 2022 budget. "As of Dec. 8," Pastor said, "we have received pledge cards from 35 people/families for a total of \$142,630 in planned giving to St. Stephen ministries. Of that total, 16 people/families increased their giving from last year for a total amount of \$13,520." So far, two people who didn't give pledges last year have done so for the upcoming year. Well done, St. Stephen.

If you haven't already, please turn in your pledge as soon as possible. The more pledges we get, the easier it is for our Church Council representatives to prepare a budget for 2022. Send in a pledge card if you have one. Or, easier still, just leave an email or phone message for Office Manager Lori. Bless you.

## A SEA OF POINSETTIAS

Once again this year, we'll be decorating the chancel area with poinsettias for Christmas. Would you like to dedicate one (or more)? The cost is \$10 each, and the dedication list will be in the Dec. 19 and 26 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.



## 'YOU ARE DOING GREAT AND IMPORTANT WORK'

*Editor's note: My Midwest brother-in-law Richard Koekneke, a retired pastor in the Missouri Synod (and a terrific jazz pianist), last year compiled a few dozen columns he had written with advice for fellow pastors. He packed a lot of wisdom into those columns, even for those of us who'd never dream of becoming pastors. Here's an excerpt that reminded me how hard our own pastors, past and present, have worked to help you and me make sense of our lives.*

“As you go about the work of sermon preparation and preaching, worship planning and leading, class preparation and teaching, meeting deadlines of every description, dealing with staff concerns, addressing relational issues in the congregation, helping people handle life crises and calamities, visiting the sick in the hospital and the home and the nursing home, rejoicing at the birth of a baby or the new birth of a believer in holy baptism, helping dying people face the facts of their condition with the eyes of faith in Christ, walking with grieving families through their pain and sadness, helping couples prepare for the great adventure of marriage, addressing the moral issues that are so rampant in our society, disciplining seekers and reaching out to unbelievers, working with lay leadership, dealing with the church budget, representing Christ in your community, enduring all those evening meetings – all the while trying to manage your own household well and trying to take care of yourself – know this: You are doing great and important work. You are making a Christ-like difference in this world and for eternity. You are touching lives with the truth and love of Jesus Christ. Thank you for giving to the Lord.”



*Thank you, Pastor Tom, Pastor Marda, Pastor Emory....*

## 'HOPE FOR EVERYONE': EXCERPT FROM SUNDAY'S SERMON

“... People came out to hear John speak the Word of God. Sometimes God was smiling and sometimes God was frowning. Like the people who heard John and felt the Word from God in their bones, we also have a choice. We can choose to live in fear or we can choose to live in love. We can get to work removing roadblocks put up to keep people down, or we can wait for God to blast them away.

“Clearly, the political authorities and the religious authorities are not the final authority. And we know it when God's Word speaks; God is here. We feel it deep in our bones and it chokes us up.



“This is Advent, it can be the greatest feeling and the most frightening to be cleansed by fire and scrubbed with fullers' soap, but there's hope in the final words today. Hope for everyone with ears to hear ... 'All flesh shall see the salvation of God.' And the last I checked, 'All' means 'All!'”

*Want to read the rest of Pastor Tom's sermon, or previous sermons? Go to our website (<https://ststephenlutherantally.com/>), look on top for the dropdown menu called “More,” and click on “Sermons.”*

## 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/eBx00D5AyThXEg3vKEdoZNYDFOWdLKEjmi3g6J8hYpNuEtjfv-r2k0s101YPNNrx.kJDmAHhaohT7R9kQ>

# HAIKU CORNER

By Lex Lutheran

## DRAMA AT THE BIRD FEEDER

Chickadees zip in,  
zip out. "Eat! Quick!" They fear our  
seed will disappear.



## JUST BEFORE THE DOWNPOUR

Can't see showers yet,  
but one leaf just raindrop-bounced.  
There goes another.

## WATCH YOUR STEP

You wonder why I  
look down when I walk? Two things:  
New shoes and goose poop.



**FREE Facebook Live Workshop**

**Hospice and Palliative Care Services for Older Adults with Dementia and their Family Caregivers: What to Know and Ask**



**Nicole McCann-Davis, M.S.**  
Associate Vice-President of Health Equity & Access  
Seasons Hospice and Palliative Care  
Oak Park, IL



**Tracey Mills, M.A., M.Div.**  
Outreach Program Coordinator  
Community Hospice and Palliative Care  
Jacksonville, FL



**Tracy Wilkinson**  
Family Caregiver and ACTS2 Project Facilitator  
Jacksonville, FL



**Tomeka Norton-Brown**  
ACTS2 Project Coordinator  
Tallahassee, FL

### KEY TOPICS:

- Overview of Hospice and Palliative Care Services
- Culturally-Responsive Hospice and Palliative Care Services
- Accessing Hospice and Palliative Care for Persons with Dementia
- Caregiver Perspectives on Hospice Care
- Skills Training and Support for Dementia Caregivers
- Caregiving Resources

**Join us!**

**THURSDAY  
DECEMBER 9, 2021**

**7 p.m.-8:15 p.m.  
Eastern Time**

[@facebook.com/SupportACTS2](https://www.facebook.com/SupportACTS2) or  
[www.ACTS2Project.org](http://www.ACTS2Project.org)

**TO REGISTER & RECEIVE YOUR  
FREE WORKSHOP MATERIALS:**

Please e-mail **Tomeka Norton-Brown** at  
[tnnorton@fsu.edu](mailto:tnnorton@fsu.edu) (for mail and in-person  
distribution)



## MORE MIDWEEK UPDATES

- **Reminder from Karen Olson:** The famous “Festival of Lessons and Carols” will be broadcast live from Kings College in Cambridge, England. It’s at 10 a.m. on Christmas Eve on the WFSU-FM classical station, 91.5.
- **Andrea Notley** reminds us that all gifts for the Giving Tree are due this Sunday.
- Prayers are requested for Gladys Kane, who is recuperating at home after surgery; Martha Marky, who got to go home this week from TMH Rehab; Jan Harrison, whose son and daughter are both undergoing medical procedures; and Audrey Post, who’s scheduled for gallbladder surgery after Christmas.
- **Married for 50 years?** Quite an accomplishment – but old news for Jan and Jerry. In his announcements Sunday, Pastor Tom thanked Jan for quietly pointing out the misprint in the bulletin: The Harrisons have actually been married for 59 years! God bless them as they tiptoe toward 60.
- **Let’s see ...** if Ruthie and I want to celebrate our 59<sup>th</sup> anniversary, we’ll have to live to be 100.
- **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 2022 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](mailto:sslc@ststephenlutherantally.com) or call 850-385-2728.



## UPCOMING BIRTHDAYS

Janet Barber - 12/09  
Judi McDowell - 12/09  
Ridy Hofer - 12/11  
Chris Bischoff - 12/14  
Laura Sullivan - 12/14  
Cheslyn Donaldson - 12/17  
Rita Ford - 12/18  
Wesley Holdcraft - 12/18  
David Kennell - 12/24  
Pastor Tom - 12/29  
Kate Stuart - 12/29  
Mike Martinez - 12/30



## UPCOMING DATES

### This Sunday:

10 a.m. - Worship, Third Sunday of Advent

12:15 p.m. - Council meeting

### Wednesday, December 15:

Noon - Bible study

### Sunday, December 19:

10 a.m. - Worship, Fourth Sunday of Advent

### Friday, December 24:

3 p.m. - Worship with communion, Christmas Eve



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