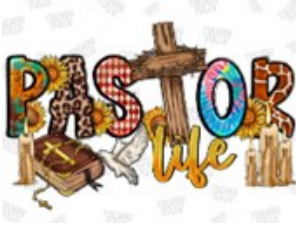




ST. STEPHEN THIS WEEK

St. Stephen Lutheran Church Newsletter

APPRECIATION DAY



One of the worst-kept secrets at church is that this Sunday, throughout the ELCA, is called Pastor Appreciation Day. Not that we don't appreciate Pastor Tom all the time – but Oct. 12 is designed to be special. How special? Well, there's going to be ... wait, no, can't spill any beans. Rest assured that it'll be a day of delightful surprises.

If you look online, you'll see that one way to show appreciation for pastors is to "Take their teachings to heart and live in peace with each other as a way of showing gratitude." That suggestion was offered by Al. Of course, Al had no way of knowing that we already do that every single day. Right? See you Sunday, you gritudinous Lutherans.

AN OWLS OUTING

It's almost lunchtime for the feathered friends. Barbara Sullivan announces that the OWLs (Older Wiser Lutherans) will gather at 11 am Tuesday, Oct. 14, at the Lively Café, St. John's Episcopal Church, 211 N. Monroe St. Please let Barbara know whether you plan to be there.



CALLING ALL QUILTERS!

By Caroline Collins

I haven't been to Luther Springs (Hawthorne, Florida) yet, but I couldn't resist signing up for this Quilting Retreat on March 2-6, 2026. It's only three hours' drive from Tallahassee. Are there any other quilters at St Stephen who'll join me?

March is five months away, so if you don't quilt but always wanted to learn, there's time to get up to speed. By the time I signed up, the single rooms were all booked, so I got busy and found myself a roomie so I could sign up for a double (\$375 per person) before they fill up.

You can bring your own project or work on community projects for nonprofits. Each quilter gets her own table. There will be teachers to assist with projects and to answer questions regarding different techniques. A day trip to a local quilt shop and show-and-tell provide further inspiration.

The getaway package of four nights' lodging, prepared meals and five days' quilting immersion for \$375 seems like a super value for a relaxing yet purposeful spiritual springtime retreat. Do let me know if you decide to go. It would be lovely to have familiar Lutheran faces on site.

More info here:

https://luthersprings.org/fall_spring_programs/quilting-retreat/



NAMES TO REMEMBER

One of the ways we distinguish one past year from another is with milestones. Some of them are totally joyful: the year you were married, the year your child was born, the year you joined St. Stephen. Some of them are poignant: the year a sibling, a parent, a spouse or another dear one died. Each year, the church calendar provides an opportunity for us to remember those who have gone on – specifically those who have died in the past year. Through the lighting of candles and the reading of their names, we honor their memory. In preparation for All Saints Day, which we will commemorate Nov. 2, the church office invites you to send in the names of loved ones who’ve died this year and whose names you would like to be included in this special part of the liturgy. Please get those names to Office Manager Rita by Oct. 27.

THE STORY OF MANNA

Compiled by Manna organizer Shellie Camp, Faith Presbyterian. If you’re sort of new to St. Stephen, you’ve no doubt heard references to “Manna,” but you might not know much about it. This will help fill in the gaps.

Manna on Meridian has been in operation for 15 years, with its first distribution occurring in January 2010. Members of Faith Presbyterian and St. Stephen Lutheran provided groceries to 20 families after solidifying their partnership to fight food insecurity during the fall of 2009. Manna’s partnerships quickly grew to include Saint Paul’s United Methodist Church, Grace Lutheran and the Unitarian Universalist Church of Tallahassee. By the end of 2010, Manna was providing groceries to 100 households per month utilizing only donations.



Manna’s founding members made decisions that continue to distinguish Manna from many other food pantries:

- The food provided by Manna is a gift without questions asked. No federal funds are accepted, nor does Manna purchase food from federally supported programs, both of which actions would require identification and proof of need.
- We welcome all with a hospitality table to enhance our goal of serving with dignity and respect.
- We do all we can to offer fresh produce each month.
- One hundred percent of food and money donated goes directly to feed the hungry.

Manna’s current leadership team continues to use those early decisions to guide our actions.

- Demographic information related to the number of individuals in the household, race, ethnicity, age is collected in accordance with our partnership with Second Harvest, but our neighbors are not asked to provide their names, identification or proof of need.
- The donations and food distributed by Manna are provisioned by God, and our job is distributing those gifts with minimal questions asked.
- We continue to work to ensure that our neighbors are served with dignity and respect.
- Not only are we able to offer fresh produce each month, but fresh produce is typically available weekly during our Sunday Choice Pantry and to our community partners through the Mobile Monday program.
- We still aim to direct all donated food and money to fighting food insecurity.

During and immediately after the pandemic, the need in our community rose as people lost jobs during the shutdown and eventually their homes. This need intensified when supply-chain shortages occurred, and food prices began rising sharply.

- In 2020, Manna served roughly 2,000 households.
- In 2024, that number jumped to 5,630, an increase of 185%.
- So far in 2025, Manna has served over 17,000 individuals in over 6,000 households
 - ◇ Over a third of those individuals are children, age 18 years or younger.
 - ◇ 23% are age 60 or older.
 - ◇ Nearly 50% identify as black or African American.

Next week: How can each of us support Manna?

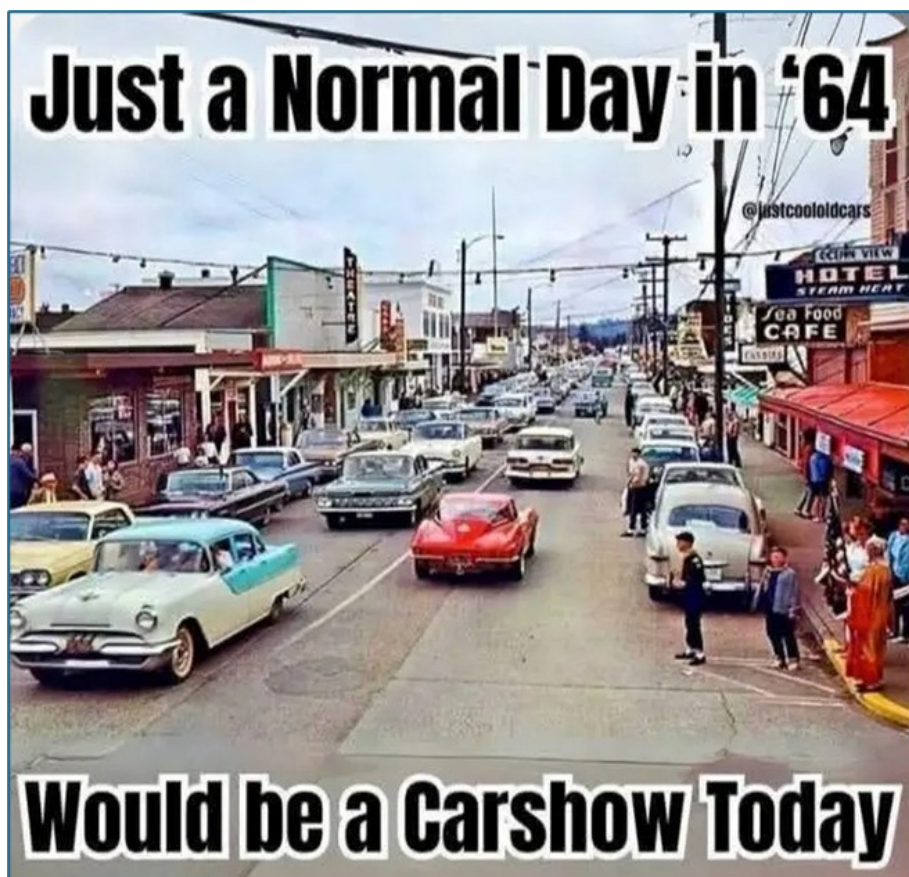
EXCERPT FROM PASTOR TOM'S SERMON

Today, Jesus teaches that faith is not some-“thing” that can be stored up or even quantified. It's not something we need more of. We have enough, even teeny-tiny faith can relandscape the world. Christ assures us that we have enough faith to uproot these injustices. Dear Church, be assured, you have faith. Wish for more if you want, but today's Gospel communicates to us just how serious Jesus was about already having enough.

And this faith is a way that shows there are no times when it is acceptable to be “less than forgiving, less than compassionate, less than hospitable.” God never expects us to be perfect, but always forgives, loves and is full of compassion. We should do these things, too.

BEFORE YOU GO...

- The interfaith prayer vigil for immigration justice will continue from 5 to 6 p.m. Sunday at the Historic Capitol steps.
- As the newsletter was being prepared, Pastor Tom sent this update related to immigration justice: “Several clergy members and I are scheduled to meet with Director Kevin Guthrie at FEMA this morning (10 am) to discuss the importance of allowing interfaith clergy to provide spiritual care to the people in the Everglades prison camp. Prayers appreciated.” Amen.
- Don't forget about our annual Socks for the Homeless drive, in partnership with New Mt. Zion AME Church. A tub in Hingst Hall is receiving new socks for men and women (at the Kearney Center) through Oct. 26.
- Need the contact information for a St. Stephen member? Use your digital directory. Don't have it on your phone? Office Manager Rita can fix you up.
- Please remember that you can look up past sermons or newsletters that you missed. Visit our website: <https://ststephenlutherantally.com/>.
- 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, out by the name tags, or ask Rita to sign you up. Include the \$40 with your regular offering. And then take the flowers home!
- If you're a fan of old cars, feast your eyes on this scene. If you're not, it's still a nice reminder to treasure what God places before you in the present, rather than waiting until it becomes nostalgia.



UPCOMING BIRTHDAYS



Isabel Barton - 10/19
Val Kibler - 10/20
Dave Suhrweir - 10/21
Jim Sampson - 10/22
Audrey Post - 10/24
Barbara Ehlmann - 10/25
Graham Reece - 10/26
Anita Sawh - 10/26
Bern Mustian - 10/30

COMING UP

Today:

Noon - Al-Anon meets in Pastor Emory Hingst Memorial Fellowship Hall, aka Hingst Hall (HH)

7 p.m. - AA meets in HH

This Friday:

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

This Sunday:

9 a.m. - Bible study

9:30 a.m. - Choir practice

10 a.m. - Worship: Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost

11:30 a.m. - Outreach Committee Meeting

Monday, October 13:

5 p.m. - TIMA meets in HH

Tuesday, October 14:

5 p.m. - NA meets in HH

Wednesday, October 15:

5 p.m. - TIMA meets in HH

7 p.m. - Choir

SERVING THIS WEEK

Pastor Tom, Preaching and Presiding; **Rob Schiffer**, Assisting Minister; **Rita Ford**, Cup Minister; **Erik Robinson**, Lector; **Ben Bush and Mark Greeley**, Tech Team; **Lawana and Sandy Lamb-Daniels**, Altar Guild; **Patricia Handschy and Rob Schiffer**, Counters; **Simone Schuster**, Cantor; **Denise Bookwalter**, Announcements



If you have news or photos to share,
please send them to Rita at
sslc@ststephenlutherantally.com.

Don't forget our Facebook page:
<https://www.facebook.com/ststephentallahassee>.

St. Stephen Lutheran Church, ELCA