



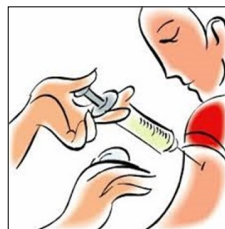
ST. STEPHEN THIS WEEK

St. Stephen Lutheran Church Newsletter

CATCHING UP ON ST. STEPHEN NEWS

By Pastor Tom

VACCINES – Lawana Lamb-Daniels arranged for staff members from the Publix Pharmacy to visit St. Stephen on Sept. 29 to offer vaccines to people before church. They administered more than 50 vaccines to around 28 people, including the Stover children! Lawana wishes to thank everyone who participated. (Where did Lawana get this idea? “It was my Goddaughter Alex. She works part time in the pharmacy at Publix and told me that Publix was now offering to come out to schools, businesses and churches to vaccinate those who wanted it. I thought it was a good idea and convenient – one could come to worship and not make a special trip to be vaccinated.”)



FINANCIAL UPDATE – Here is a year-to-date financial snapshot through the end of September:

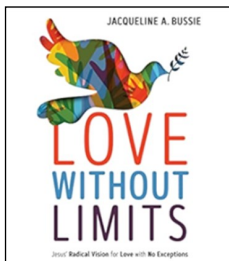
Total collections: \$197,998

Total expenses: \$204,478

So we're behind by: **\$6,480**

WHEN PEOPLE NEED A HAND – The Pastor's Justice and Mercy fund is at \$168.96. This is the account that allows us to help those in emergency need of shelter, utility-bill assistance or car repairs. If you're able to donate to it, please do!

DON'T FORGET ABOUT 'LOVE WITHOUT LIMITS' – The Sunday Morning Book Study Class has begun a new book at 9 a.m. We're reading together “Love Without Limits,” by Jacqueline Bussie. In our book study there are no requirements to attend each and every class, nor is anyone forced to read out loud. I urge you to pick up a copy of the book even if you can't make our Sunday-morning class. Pastor/Professor Bussie tells of growing up around conditional love from family and church and how she came to know the heart of Jesus' true message: a radical Love *Without Limits*.



ON DIVORCE: EXCERPT FROM PASTOR TOM'S SERMON

... “People were bringing little children to Jesus in order that He might touch them.” This is probably a familiar passage to you all.... What we might never have considered is: Who brought the children? Pretty sure that 95% of those who brought the children were single mothers. Mothers trying to eke out a living after a man signed a certificate of divorce and left them destitute. Children and women who were suffering. These groups were often exploited and made to live on the margins because they were seen more as property than human beings.

This is the emphasis here. Not to make people who divorced and remarried today feel guilty, but to point to the injustice that divorce without good reason puts upon people who are vulnerable in society. Jesus here, again, showed that he was still worrying about the exploitation he was seeing people put upon other people. Especially children.

So isn't God telling us that the real point of this lesson from Jesus is how to navigate committed relationships? Doesn't it make more sense to see these lessons to be teaching us about what it means to be in love and then teach us how to live together and be in committed relationship with well-fitting partners? That's very clear, if you ask me.

No one should go into a marriage thinking, “Well, if this doesn't work out I'm outta here.” But there are also abusers and users who want to dominate their partner. There are tyrants and low-lives who want to drag down others into the mess they've created. There are real reasons for divorce.

But most of all, if we believe in death and resurrection, then the death of divorce should lead to hope and new life....

BEFORE YOU GO...

- In this season of unprecedented natural calamities, all of us are asking ourselves how best to help. As Lutherans, we have a great answer in our own church family: Lutheran Disaster Response. In fact, some of us support it financially year-round. Some of us also occasionally get it mixed up with Lutheran World Relief. Here's an explanation from the ELCA website: "Lutheran Disaster Response is the disaster ministry of the ELCA, carrying out the church's model of accompaniment in deep relationship with organizations and churches throughout the United States and around the world. We stay in a community long after disaster strikes, working to make it stronger than before. Lutheran Disaster Response provides grant funding to ELCA synods, companion churches and other Lutheran organizations such as Lutheran World Relief and Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service." Want to donate? Want to find out more? Visit <https://www.elca.org/Our-Work/Relief-and-Development/Lutheran-Disaster-Response> .



Lutheran
Disaster Response

- Who wants to be our next OWL-in-Chief? Margaret Bowers has filled that role so well for so long, and she's looking for someone to succeed her. Please see Margaret if you have questions – and thank her for all she's done, despite being so busy with a job and with babysitting. ("OWLs" officially stands for "Older, Wiser Lutherans." Basically, it's a fun group of mostly retirees who meet for lunch once a month. Someone has to organize those lunches and figure out where we're going to eat and how many of us will be there.)



- A Taizé Prayer Service will be held at Faith Presbyterian at 6 p.m. the second Monday of the month, from now through December and from February through May. The service lasts 50 minutes, although worshippers may stay and pray as long as they wish. Services are ecumenical and open to all denominations.
- The Noisy Offering total for Tallahassee Integrated Martial Arts was \$200.
- 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 nametags, or ask Lori to sign you up. Include the \$40 with your regular offering. And then take the flowers home!



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

Bern Mustian - 10/30

Jen Reece - 11/02

Paul van der Mark - 11/06

Hector Quinones - 11/07

Barbara Sullivan - 11/07

Daniel Martinez - 11/07

Mark Warren - 11/13

Elliot Reece - 11/14

Cheryl Stuart - 11/14



COMING UP

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 Sunday:

9 a.m. - Book study

10 a.m. - Worship, Twenty-first Sunday after Pentecost

4 p.m. - Congolese Christian worship in FH



Monday, October 14:

5 p.m. - TIMA meets in FH

7 p.m. - TIMA meets in FH

Wednesday, October 16:

5 p.m. - TIMA meets in FH

7 p.m. - Choir practice



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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The Rev. Tom Holdcraft, Pastor

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