



# ST. STEPHEN THIS WEEK

St. Stephen Lutheran Church Newsletter



*This sparkling photo finished first in Florida State's Petals & Perspectives Spring Facilities Photo Competition. And it was taken by someone you know ... Jake Hartung! There's more news about Jake later in the newsletter.*

## COMING SOON ... SYNOD ASSEMBLY

By Sharon Simmons



This year's annual Florida-Bahamas Synod Assembly will be June 4-6. The Synod has designated that congregational gifts will be going to the HOPE Partnership. All this month, we'll have a designated tub in Hingst Hall to collect any of the following items:

- Washcloths
- Men's and women's travel-size deodorant
- Travel-size conditioner
- Travel-size lotion
- Travel-size shaving cream
- Sports bras (S-XXL)
- Tampons, pads and panty liners
- Men's boxer briefs (S-XXL)
- Men's T-shirts (black, gray, navy, other dark colors) (S-XXL)
- Women's T-shirts (black, gray, navy, other dark colors) (S-XXL)
- Athletic gym shorts with drawstring (M-XXL)
- Razors
- Q-tips
- Plastic cups



By the way, Mark and Sue Canning will be our congregational representatives at the Synod Assembly.

## ‘LUCKY TO HAVE YOU’

This week, a story published by Florida State University News spotlighted a program run by a familiar face at St. Stephen. Here’s how it began:

“For international student athletes like Saofé Duval and Gabor Hornung, the transition to college in the United States involves more than practices and matches. It also means adapting to a new language, culture and academic system.

“Before arriving on campus, international students whose native language is not English must demonstrate proficiency in spoken and written English through standardized



testing. Undergraduate applicants are required to meet minimum score thresholds on exams such as the TOEFL iBT (Test of English as a Foreign Language internet-Based Test). Even with this foundation, adjusting to academic life in the U.S. can present challenges — from navigating classroom discussions to understanding cultural nuances and expectations.

“To support this transition, Florida State University offers Academic English Skills for International Students (EAP 1850), a course designed to help undergraduate international students strengthen their academic English and communication skills after enrollment. This past spring, Duval and Hornung enrolled in the course. It also introduces students to U.S. classroom expectations, cultural norms and the wide range of resources available to help them succeed at FSU.

“The course is taught by Patrick Kennell, director of the Center for Intensive English Studies (CIES). Founded in 1980, CIES provides English language instruction for international students preparing to study at U.S. universities and operates within The Graduate School at FSU.

“‘This is one of my favorite courses I’ve ever taught,’ Kennell said. ‘It’s developing their English, but it’s also developing their cultural knowledge and helping them navigate their way through their first semester here at Florida State.’”

When Patrick posted this story on Facebook, he wrote: “I am a lucky guy to have a job like mine!” He got several complimentary replies, including this: “Smart, organized, and a visionary.... The students are so lucky to have you.”

*Isn’t it inspiring to see our churchmates doing good work in the community? If you have similar examples you’d like to see in the newsletter, please send them to [rrhartung1@gmail.com](mailto:rrhartung1@gmail.com).*

## BACK TO THE PEW

*Austin Newberry, beloved former member of St. Stephen, posted this message on Facebook this week.*



For the past 11 years I have had the immense privilege of serving as a pastor in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Three years ago I found it necessary to step back in order to take care of myself. I am much healthier now, in every way, but have decided as my leave period ends not to continue in ministry. There are lots of reasons for this, but for the sake of brevity I’ll just say that in this stage of my life, I simply want to be Austin. I enjoy my work with students here at [Indiana University] Columbus and have the joy of feeling that I make a difference. My faith is still important to me, and I look forward to living that out from the pews.

I am so appreciative of all the support I have had from so many of you, especially in the struggle for LGBTQ+ folk to serve as ordained ministers. I thank the people I have ministered with at First Lutheran in Louisville, KY, Grace in Bayonne, NJ, and St. John in NYC, and all those churches I've served in other ways. Thanks also to the many pastor friends and colleagues who continue to inspire me. I am especially grateful to Darrin, who, with much patience, grace and love, has traveled down this road with me. So please join me in celebrating what was and what is yet to be.

## LIGHTS, CAMERA, JAKE



If you watched WCTV news last week (or peeked at Facebook), you might have caught a quick glimpse of Jake Hartung – as part of a feature story on the grounds-and-landscaping team at FSU, where Jake is a horticulture design specialist.

As is typical in the news biz, much of what Jake said during the interview ended up on the cutting-room floor. But this sentence was a keeper, when he described the reactions of students and visitors flocking to the campus at semester's end: "To see the families and the graduation

photos happening, it's very rewarding to see that and know that I had something to do with the plants when they were small." This photo, sent out by FSU afterward, shows Jake being interviewed by WCTV anchor Julie Montanaro.

## ONE MORE FROM FACEBOOK

At its best, Facebook can open the door to a wonderful community of support. So pardon the newsletter guy if he mentions one more family member who made an appearance in Facebook this past week. This photo of Ruth Hartung, showing how far she's come since her chemo days, attracted dozens of likes and comments.

Here's a remark from one of her Woodville Elementary teacher pals: "Adorable! Ruthy has always been and remains a dish! Glad to see you looking so well and so happy! Sending love and best wishes." Amen.



## EXCERPT FROM PASTOR TOM'S SERMON

Troubled hearts come in many packages, and I will not pretend to understand or explain where God is in the midst of our nation's division.

How did "evangelical" and "Christian" become titles for us to fear?

"Evangelical" means sharing the good news "that God so love the world that God gave us the Son ... not to condemn the world but that we might be saved." Being Christian should mean that one follows Christ and does what he did.

And you know what the amazing thing is? There are multitudes of people who do the things Jesus did, say the things Jesus said, and love people the way Jesus loves – AND they don't even call themselves Christian. (Gasp!)

Ordinary people doing extraordinary actions of love.

## BEFORE YOU GO...

- Retirement comes in many shapes and sizes, and changes from day to day. Wednesday, at newsletter headquarters, retirement was two people relaxing in their living room, windows open, shades up, breeze blowing, garden humming, picture-perfect. No traffic noise. No leaf-blower growl.



Silent. *Silent*. Well, wait. "What's that tiny sound? Drops of water in ... what IS that soft sound?" Of course. Five feet in front of us, just outside the windows, down close to the ground, a house finch was making herself at home in our bird bath. Over and over she'd dunk her head and wings in the water, pause, then dunk and fluff some more. I stood and tried

to catch her in the act with my camera, but off she flew. Only later, when a much larger brown thrasher was making waves, living up to the thrasher name, did I get this pic. You don't have to be retired to capture such God-given moments, but sometimes it helps.

- Happy Mother's Day to all of the loving mother figures in our congregation.
- Next Tuesday, expect to see St. Stephen's OWLs (Older, Wiser Lutherans) gather for lunch at 11 a.m. at Little Italy. Care to join them? Tell Barbara Sullivan.
- 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 Office Manager Rita to sign you up. Include the \$40 with your regular offering. And then take the flowers home!
- And pictured here is the newsletter editor's latest suggestion, in case the Church Council ever decides to provide him with a company car. It's a Chevy from way back in 1932. The gentleman's tie is whipping over his shoulder. His companion's hat is about to fly off. The yellow wheels match the yellow car. They're having the time of their lives. God, watch over us as we drive through life.



## 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 Saturday

11 a.m. - Craft Day and Taco Lunch

### This Sunday:

8:30 a.m. - Parfait Breakfast

9:00 a.m. - Bible study

9:30 a.m. - Choir rehearsal

10 a.m. - Worship, Fifth Sunday of Easter

### Monday, May 11:

5 p.m. - TIMA meets in HH

### Tuesday, May 12:

5 p.m. - NA meets in HH

### Wednesday, May 13:

5 p.m. - TIMA meets in HH

7 p.m. - Choir rehearsal

### Thursday, May 14:

10 a.m. - Bible study

## SERVING THIS SUNDAY

**Pastor Tom Holdcraft**, Preaching and Presiding; **Audrey Post**, Assisting Minister; **Rita Ford**, Cup Minister; **Andrew/Bastian Stover**, Lector; **Mark Greeley and Ben Bush**, Tech Team; **Susan Warren and Rita Ford**, Altar Guild; **Margaret Bowers and Patricia Handschy**, Counters; **Erik Robinson and Colin Hackley**, Ushers; **Denise Bookwalter**, Announcements

## UPCOMING BIRTHDAYS



Emily Jennings - 5/7  
Eva Mustian - 5/8  
Claire Claussen 5/9  
Eunice Muchuruza 5/16  
Jennifer Slusarz 5/20  
Jennifer Dritt 5/21  
Paxton Oates 5/23  
Sandy Larson 5/24  
Blake Simmons 5/25  
Jake Hartung 5/25  
Nicholas Oliveri 5/25



If you have news or photos to share,  
please send them to Rita at  
[sslc@ststephenlutherantally.com](mailto:sslc@ststephenlutherantally.com).

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

St. Stephen Lutheran Church, ELCA