



ST. STEPHEN THIS WEEK

St. Stephen Lutheran Church Newsletter

THREE CHEERS FOR OUR FINANCE COMMITTEE

For the record, and for those who missed it, this is the letter that the new Finance Committee sent out last week. It appears that we're in very good hands.

Thanks to each of you for your participation in our February congregational meeting. At that meeting, we voted to form a Finance Committee. The Council appointed the committee in March, and we are pleased to provide an update about our work. Our role is not to make decisions on how we spend money; those decisions remain with the Church Council. Our job is to review the church's financial situation so we can advise the Council and offer recommendations.



We had our first meeting on April 16, 2025. The committee members are Rudy Hehn (chair), Margaret Bowers, Jen Dritt, Audrey Post and Sylvia Smith. We discussed our goals and how the committee could be helpful to the church and the Council. Our second meeting was May 21, and we met again June 11. Our new accounting software is a useful tool to assess our church's financial condition and to make thoughtful recommendations to our Church Council. These are our immediate goals:

- Assess how we manage our accounts and expense categories.
- Finish our review of the church audit completed in April (we found no alarming issues on our preliminary review).
- Work with Council and Pastor on the job description and salary of our new office manager. (This has been done.)
- Decide the best ways to give open, clear and useful financial information to our congregation.
- Begin budgeting for 2026.

Long-term goals:

- Review the past five years of income and expenses and give a report to the congregation.
- Encourage financial support for the mission of SSLC.
- Establish the best practices for managing our finances.

You probably noticed a financial report last month in the weekly email newsletter, something we plan to do in the first newsletter of each month going forward. We want to give an accurate financial overview to the congregation without causing people's eyes to glaze over, so please ask if you want more information. Transparency is key.

We are happy to report that in response to the congregational meeting, many families increased contributions to the church this year. We realize not everyone is able to increase giving right now, and we understand. Thank you again, siblings in Christ, for your support, your generosity, and your commitment to the wonderful worship community that is St. Stephen Lutheran Church Tallahassee, ELCA.

A SURPRISE UNDER THE HOOD

By Pastor Tom, describing a feline rescue that took place after he, Colleen, Jonas and Rita traveled south for last week’s Synod Assembly.

Our first trip to dinner in Orlando was an adventure. At a major intersection, we saw a stray kitten in front of us as we waited for the light to change. The kitten was disoriented and dangerously close to the cars crossing before us. Jonas considered getting out to help, but we were worried about safety and didn’t want to scare the kitty into the road.



That was when it began walking toward us. People in a nearby car honked and said the kitten was underneath our car. We all got out (since our light was still red) and looked under the car, but didn’t see the kitten. Relieved, we thought he’d gotten off the road.

But then the others said he’d crawled up into the engine compartment of our car! We got back in and, when the light turned green, slowly drove into a hotel parking lot across the street. Jonas crawled under the car, and I popped the hood. Colleen and Rita looked everywhere.

Finally, we saw the kitten but couldn’t get hold of it to pull it out. We tried honking the horn, but the kitten continued to hunker down. We tried several more times to get it, then decided to leave the vehicle, hoping that the kitten would feel safe and walk away on its own. Twenty minutes later, it hadn’t moved. We decided to find the nearest auto repair to see if they could put our car on a lift and help get the cat out safely.

Slowly, we drove about a mile to a tire repair shop, but their lifts were busy for at least another hour. The manager suggested we use their hose to flush the kitten out. That was the answer to our prayers! After we ran the hose about 30 seconds, the kitten managed to climb up to a tight spot where Jonas and I could reach it. Our four hands guided it through the engine hoses and brackets. The kitten was frightened but didn’t fight us. It was so tired, it gave up resisting and allowed us to help.



The manager of the tire shop brought us a box to put the kitten in. But when Jonas put the scared kitty in the box, it jumped out quickly and ran toward a dumpster. We were relieved it was OK and not on a busy road. We were also behind a grocery store, so there’d be options for food in the dumpster – and maybe a safer home in the future. *(Photos by Rita Ford, who said, “This was just like Jesus saving the lost sheep.”)*

ANOTHER CHECK PRESENTATION



By Sharon Simmons, outreach coordinator

During the Synod Assembly, Pastor Tom presented this last endowment check (from the St. Stephen Peace and Justice Endowment Fund) to Pastor Kari Niedermaier.

Pastor Kari and the Just Love advocacy training will be held in Tallahassee in January. All members of St. Stephen are invited to attend.

EXCERPT FROM PASTOR TOM'S LATEST SERMON

... Beloved, I thank God for all of you.

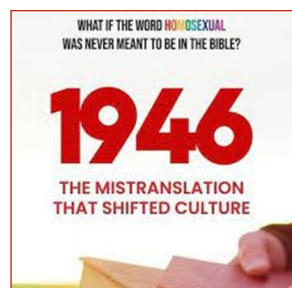
Fathers, mothers and all figures of parenting, all who protect and nurture others;

For children, adults and all times of development as it pertains to age – your suffering is acknowledged and able to be let go as the suffering flows to hope, and hope does not disappoint us;

And for the Spirit, the other, the outside of us and the invisible around us. The abstract and mysterious part of God that resides in, under and above us. The mystery that's not a problem but a place where God's glory is made visible. Where there's access, peace, sharing, and where God's love is poured out.

COMING UP FAST

- There will be another Pride Art Market at Common Ground Books from 3 to 8 p.m. on Sunday. It will overlap with an event inside the bookstore where Terry Galloway (*the* Mickee Faust) will sign copies of her memoir "Mean Little Deaf Queer." Common Ground Books is at 1102 S. Adams St.



- What if the word "homosexual" was never meant to be in the Bible? The Mickee Faust Club, in partnership with the Tallahassee Film Society, is showing "1946: The Mistranslation That Shaped Culture" at the Challenger Learning Center IMAX Theatre. Time is 3 p.m. June 28. More information is available at <https://www.1946themovie.com>.

BEFORE YOU GO...

- As I prepare to send this newsletter to Office Manager Lori, I see this two-word weather summary in the bottom corner of my computer screen: "Very humid." No kidding.
- 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 Lori to sign you up. Include the \$40 with your regular offering. And then take the flowers home!



UPCOMING BIRTHDAYS



Ruth Hartung - 06/23
Steve Kunst - 06/23
Sandy Davis - 06/28
Sarah Barton - 07/03
Loraine Sundberg - 07/03
Karl Barton - 07/04
Tom Buchanan - 07/13
Jonas Holdcraft - 07/15
Margaret Bowers - 07/19
Corine Brathwaite - 07/19
Emily Ruddell - 07/20
Michael Robinson - 07/25
Bertil Sundberg - 07/25
Ian Medley-Miller - 07/27
Ben Claussen—07/29

**If you have an upcoming birthday not listed above, let the church office know.*

COMING UP

Today:

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

5 p.m. - Chair Yoga in HH

7 p.m. - AA meets in HH

This Friday:

10 a.m. - TOPS meets in HH

This Saturday:

10 a.m. - Sew for Hope meets in HH

This Sunday:

9:00 a.m. - Book study this week

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

1:30 p.m. - On Purpose Women meet in HH



Monday, June 23:

5 p.m. - TIMA meets in HH

Tuesday, June 24:

5 p.m. - NA meets in HH

Wednesday, June 25:

5 p.m. - TIMA meets in HH



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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