



ST. STEPHEN THIS WEEK

St. Stephen Lutheran Church Newsletter



A PRAYER BEFORE THE STORM

Dear St. Stephen,

As we prepare for the possibility of another hurricane, I want to take a moment to let you know that even in times of unpredictability and danger, you are not alone. We have a faithful God and a network of resources that will work to keep us safe. We cannot control the weather but we can control of the way we respond to it. Listen to your instincts and to the advice of family and authorities. Stuff can be replaced; people and pets cannot.

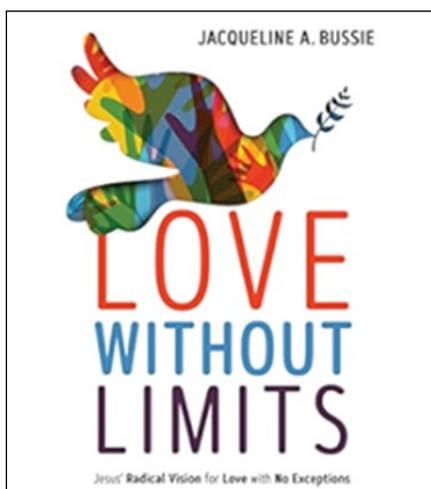
Depending on the severity of the storm, our members will work to make contact with everyone after the storm passes. If you're feeling overwhelmed, please reach out to me, a friend or a professional for help.

We pray for safety and for emergency responders.

In Christ,
Pastor Tom

YOU'RE INVITED TO 'LOVE WITHOUT LIMITS'

By Pastor Tom



The Sunday Morning Book Study Class will begin a new book at 9 a.m. this Sunday. We'll read 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*.

SPEAKING OF BOOKS...

St. Stephen's own Marda Messick has been making a name for herself as a poet. Marda, who was our pastor from 2008 to 2016, is the author of "Feral Princess," a collection of poems published this month by Apalachee Press.



Though your newsletter editor hasn't yet gotten his hands on a copy, he read the recent glowing review in the *Tallahassee Democrat*. James Kimbrell, head of creative writing at Florida State University and a faculty poet, wrote: "Rarely do we see a contemporary poet this bold in her use of narrative structure: we travel with a central speaker, beginning with childhood and onward through the myriad stages of life until mortality itself looms over the journey like a second character, sometimes nemesis, sometimes source of light."

He ended his review this way: "... Messick is not writing poems that are meant merely to entertain, though there is deep pleasure here. Messick sets for herself the goal of not only taking the reader on a journey, but creating feelings in the reader that are palpable, undeniable.



"Take 'Coronary,' for instance, a poem that depicts the near death of the speaker's son in the middle of a basketball game, when 'for close to a minute / on the fatal clock / his blocked heart stopped.' As a reader, my heart rate sped up during this poem that, when finished, left me wanting to find my son just to give him a hug and to rejoice in the simple fact of his breathing.

"Employing a combination of narrative, musicality, and haunting imagery, Messick has delivered a masterful and evocative volume of which any poet should be proud. Much like the wished-for presence in 'Let Me Be Met,' Messick becomes over the course of this collection, 'a kind escort, someone in light, a beckoning....'

"That this is her first volume is simply remarkable and bodes well for the poems that will surely follow this outstanding debut."

Marda has had readings and book signings already, and more are coming up. To find out all the latest information, or to buy a copy of "Feral Princess," visit her snazzy new author's website: www.mardamessick.com.

A NOTE FROM THE GUTTENPLANS

Have you been wondering where Martin and Vicki Guttenplan have been? They recently sent this note to Katharine Gossman and the choir, and Martin said we could publish it here.

This is a hard email to write as we have thoroughly enjoyed our singing in the choir and the total St. Stephen experience. We are now settling in quite well down in the Tampa Bay Area. We have found a new church home and wish everyone the best. Our grandson Luca is now 6 months old and lives around the corner from us in Oldsmar. If any of you are down in the area, we would love to see you.



CHRIS BISCHOFF: 1940-2024

Pastor Tom learned Sunday that former member Chris Bischoff, who joined St. Stephen in 1963, had passed away. Here are excerpts from the obituary published by Merkle Funeral Service in North Monroe, Michigan.

Christina Lamson Bischoff, 83, of Monroe, Michigan, passed away in her home Sunday surrounded by family.

Chris was born Dec. 14, 1940, in Toledo, Ohio. After graduating from Burnham High School in Sylvania, Ohio, Chris furthered her education by taking classes at Susquehanna University in Selinsgrove, Pennsylvania.

While raising her three beloved children, Helen, Cathy, and Jack, Chris' creative spirit shone brightly. She delighted in knitting and sewing, crafting outfits for her children. Faith was also an anchor in Chris' life. For more than five decades, she was a devoted member of St. Stephen Lutheran Church in Tallahassee. Her commitment to her faith community brought a deep sense of purpose and belonging.



Outside her home, Chris enjoyed bowling and playing bridge and was often seen bicycling through the neighborhood with local ladies. Her heart, however, found true peace at the beach. The relentless waves and sands of Destin, Florida, offered a tranquil escape.

To cherish her memory, she leaves three children, Helen (the late Curtis Heminway of Munford, Tennessee, Cathy (Tom) Pottorff of Monroe, Michigan, and Jack Albright of Charleston, South Carolina; four grandchildren, Thomas, Brittany, Edward and Jonathan; five great-grandchildren; a sister, Ann (the late Ian) Greig of Phoenix, Arizona; and a sister-in-law, Linda, of Holland, Ohio.

A private service is being planned in Tallahassee. Her care has been entrusted to Merkle Funeral Service, 2442 N. Monroe St., Monroe, Michigan, (734) 384-5185. Online guests may visit www.merklefs.com to leave words of inspiration and comfort or to share a photo. *(Photo by Colin Hackley)*

REMEMBERING CHRIS

When Chris Bischoff moved away in 2015, some of her pals bade farewell in the newsletter. Here are excerpts.

“I remember that Chris was always very involved in church happenings,” said Jan Harrison, who joined St. Stephen in 1969. “She and I attended many Sunday School classes together, and I got to know her very well. She was always easy to talk to and a very caring person.”

Emily Jennings, who came to St. Stephen a year after Chris, knew that she would miss conversations with Chris about years gone by. “She remembered so many people that were former members,” Emily said. “She was the only person that I could talk to that remembered Marie Helgerson and Susan Hove. Her Jack and my Jill were born the same month. We carpooled our kids to confirmation classes.”

Martha Marky has worshipped here off and on since she was a college student — and officially since 1965. “Chris was always a faithful member of our church family,” Martha said, “and we had children that are about the same age. We will certainly miss her.”

What a blessing Chris was to us.

'THANK YOU':

EXCERPT FROM PASTOR TOM'S SERMON

... All of you, who give to the mission of the church, whether your gift is by donation or service or sometimes both –

You keep the lights on, and the gospel proclaimed, and you keep the vision of Jesus' inclusion of children first. You get it. Thank you! For your giving, for your prayers, and for your divine wisdom.

Without you, things would look far different in here, and the community out there would suffer even more than it is suffering.

BEFORE YOU GO...

- **Attention, history buffs:** St. Stephen is about to celebrate its 68th birthday. What was originally known as St. Stephen's United Lutheran Church was officially organized Sept. 30, 1956. No big celebration – until No. 70, two years from now.
- **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

- Sue Williams - 09/28
- Jeanette Sickel - 09/30
- Vivian Halvorson - 10/02
- Emery Oates - 10/08
- 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



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, Nineteenth Sunday after Pentecost

4 p.m. - Congolese Christian worship in FH

Monday, September 30:

5 p.m. - TIMA meets in FH

7 p.m. - TIMA meets in FH

Wednesday, October 02:

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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