

ST. STEPHEN THIS WEEK

St. Stephen Lutheran Church Newsletter



TINY BUBBLES

Two Sundays ago, for the children's sermon, Pastor Tom dreamed up a new way to illustrate the parable of the sower and the seeds. The sower can't determine exactly where each seed will land, just as we couldn't guess where each bubble would land. But seeds can grow in the most unusual places, just as God's grace can bloom in even the hardest of hearts. So we take heart, knowing that the seeds of grace are as plentiful as these bubbles, and that God looks at each of us as good soil. *(Photo by Colin Hackley)*

GOOD GRIEF

By Jennifer Buchanan

This past fall, Pastor Tom facilitated a Grief Group to help us process thoughts and feelings about losing people close to us, and he asked me to offer another small group this fall. The book "Finding Meaning: The Sixth Stage of Grief" (along with the companion workbook) by David Kessler will be used to stimulate exploration and discussion. The loss does not need to be recent to benefit from participating, and both members and friends of the congregation are welcome. The group will meet for six weeks, at a time that works for everyone. Please let me know (jennifernewtonbuchanan@gmail.com) if you have questions, and let me know by Aug. 15 if you're interested in taking part.



THE GARAGE-SALE GANG

The hour-and-a-half we spend together in Sunday worship is unbeatable ... but it's such a small part of the life of St. Stephen. So much more is going on. Last weekend, for example, there was a big garage sale to benefit one of our former members, Frank Meyers. Long story short: After breaking his leg and encountering other setbacks, Frank is now in assisted living. Meanwhile, he needed to sell his house – which was nowhere near ready to go on the market. That's when a dedicated group of church members led by Susan and Mark Warren stepped in. After they spoke to a realtor about Frank's house, they oversaw a major purging of unwanted stuff and then organized a garage sale – where lots of other St. Stephen people got involved.

We asked Susan for details. She says Jennifer Buchanan, Greta Scavone and Colleen Holdcraft were instrumental in sorting and pricing sellable items. The garage sale lasted eight hours spread over two days, thanks to Susan, Greta,

Jen, Rita Ford and Anita Sawh. (Susan said, “They also bought a bunch of stuff ... all of the helpers, including Pastor!”)



As Pastor Tom announced Sunday, all those efforts so far have raised about \$1,000 for Frank. “Hoping to get a deep cleaning done in the house, a major yard spruce-up, then the house goes on the market,” Susan said, adding: “Mark was my superstar partner. We probably put in 20 hours before any of this

took place just cleaning and throwing stuff away.”

(When Susan took this photo of Rita, Jen and Anita, she instructed them to look exhausted. Which they did. Sort of.)

WHAT OUTREACH LOOKS LIKE

In your trusty newsletter, you can always count on finding inspiring photos of inanimate but inspiring objects. This top one was taken by the ever-faithful Andrea Notley, who has coordinated St. Stephen’s response to the ECHO back-to-school backpack drive for years. “A huge thank you to all those who participated this year,” Andrea said. “My trunk could not have fit another backpack! I also want to thank Cindy Suhrweir for helping me shop. I continue to be so happy to be a part of this amazing church family.”



Below is another time-honored photo opportunity: bottled water on the Hingst Hall pews. After Pastor Tom took this photo, the bottles were all delivered to the clients at the Kearney Center. Andrea says we had 19 “cases,” but if you enlarge this photo you’ll see that these plastic-wrapped packages of water bottles come in all sizes. Sharon Simmons said we donated 19 cases last year, and this year she was hoping for 20. Well, who’s to say that we didn’t donate more *bottles* than last year? Nicely done, St. Stephen.



GODSPEED

Dear St. Stephen,
I can’t say “Thank you” enough for providing a church home for me during my master’s degree. My time in Tallahassee would have been significantly different without the warmth and support of everyone in the congregation. I’m happy to be moving back to Columbus, Georgia, but I will miss St. Stephen very deeply!

Jordi Banitt, BM CSU 2024 | MM FSU 2026
(For you newcomers: Jordi teamed up with Karl Barton to give us some unforgettable flute duets. Now we're a one-flute family again. But what a flute it is.)

‘INSPIRED’: EXCERPT FROM PASTOR TOM’S SERMON

We can be inspired to do good things, and we can be inspired to do not-so-good things. These conversations with one another teach us about the kingdom of God right here on earth and happening right now. Inspiring us to do good things.

God’s redemption is not only for human beings but for creation as a whole. And our solidarity with God’s creation is a benefit for us. We don’t want to miss it. We groan inwardly, waiting on tiptoe for what God will do next. And as we groan, so too does creation, and so too does God’s Holy Spirit.

MULTIPLE CHOICE

Rudy Hehn, whose camera captured a backyard visitor this week, asks:
“What is this gray rat snake doing?
A) Sunning itself to get warm;
B) Looking for a bird breakfast;
C) Tanning for mating season – she had no luck getting into the local tanning salon.”



WEEDS AND WORDS

Last Sunday’s closing hymn, “Come, Ye Thankful People, Come” includes the noun “garner” not once but twice. It’s the “harvest home” hymn, so there’s lots of agricultural terminology. One worshipper asked: What’s a “garner”? Turns out that, in biblical terminology, it refers to a storehouse or granary where grain and other agricultural produce is collected and stored.

That hymn also mentioned “wheat and *tares* together sown, unto joy or sorrow grown.” “Tares” is a mostly unfamiliar word for “weeds.” Your newsletter editor’s yard is filled with weeds. Based on the Gospel reading from Matthew 13, he now suspects that “an enemy came and sowed weeds” among his flowers. Grrr.

Finally, in our prayers last Sunday, we were asked: “Whom else requires prayer today?” Your English teacher would quietly point out that “whom” should be “who.” Why? Because just as we would say “he requires prayer,” we also would say “who requires prayer.” It all depends on how the sentence is written. Take a look at this variation: “Whom should we pray for today?” Yep, in this case “whom” would be correct. We should pray for “him,” not “he.” Amen?

BEFORE YOU GO...

- Watch for encouraging news from the Finance Committee soon! We can't let down our guard, but we're certainly heading in the right direction. Many thanks to Rudy "Rat Snake" Hehn and everyone else who's keeping an eye on our giving and our spending.
- Have you visited St. Stephen's website lately? The congregational photo from late last year is the first thing you see. Just about everyone is wearing red. Take a look! <https://ststephenlutherantally.com/>
- Our most recent newsletter forgot to thank Kirsten Ebbesen for filling in for Katharine at the keyboard.
- It also forgot to mention that former member, former Floridian (and former president!) Anna Amundsen worshipped with us two Sundays ago. Bless you, Anna.
- Reminder: Lutheran Disaster Response shares God's hope, healing and renewal with people whose lives have been disrupted by disasters in the United States and around the world. With your help, it will support people affected by the earthquakes in Venezuela and any other disasters that may strike this season. If you're able to give, visit www.elca.org. Or call 800-638-3522.
- 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 votes to provide him with a company car. It's a 1934 Packard. No doubt this baby would stop traffic on North Meridian Road. God, watch over us as we drive through life.

COMING UP

Today:

Noon - AI-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:

9:00 a.m. - Bible study

10 a.m. - Worship, Ninth Sunday after Pentecost

Monday, July 27:

5 p.m. - TIMA meets in HH

Tuesday, July 28:

6 p.m. - NA meets in HH

6 p.m. - Confirmation for adults

Wednesday, July 29:

5 p.m. - TIMA meets in HH

Thursday, July 30:

10 a.m. - Bible study

SERVING THIS SUNDAY

Pastor Tom Holdcraft, Preaching and Presiding; **Kirsten Ebbesen**, Assisting Minister; **Audrey Post**, Cup Minister; **Judi Duffy**, Lector; **Susan Hehn**, Cantor; **Audrey Post and Ben Bush**, Tech Team; **Beth Alexander**, Altar Guild; **Rob Schiffer and Kirsten Ebbesen**, Counters; **Patrick Kennell and Jacob Nallapu**, Ushers; **Denise Bookwalter**, Announcements.

UPCOMING BIRTHDAYS

Bert Sundberg - 7/25
Kevin Robinson - 7/25
Kirsten Ebbesen - 7/26
Ian Medley/Miller - 7/27
Ben Claussen - 7/29
Astrid van der Mark - 8/2
Sharon Simmons - 8/9
Monty Mortensen - 8/13
Caroline Collins - 8/14
Marilyn Larson - 8/22
Greta Scavone - 8/23
Jerry Harrison - 8/24
Andra Notley - 8/26
Susan Warren - 8/26
Melissa Barton - 8/27
Jacob Nallapu - 8/28



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