



ST. STEPHEN THIS WEEK

St. Stephen Lutheran Church Newsletter

TO MAKE THE WORLD BETTER

Pastor Tom’s words of welcome last Sunday

No matter how you felt when you woke up on the day after Election Day, let it be known that you are loved. Perhaps it’s easier to understand that the heartbroken are loved. Jesus made that clear in many ways. Harder to understand is the truth that the ones rejoicing on that Wednesday morning are loved too. Here’s the test God gives to the heartbroken and the rejoicing: “What will you do with God’s love?”

For with God’s love comes great responsibility. If you’re looking for ways to make the world better – and I’m convinced we all are, those rejoicing and those licking their wounds – then let yourself be returned to your primary identity. Not a Democrat, not a Republican, but a child of God.

That’s your true identity, “beloved child of God.” Neither political party defines you. Jesus’ mandate does: Love God and love neighbor.



SMILE FOR THE CAMERA

Every year or so, we like to get a fresh congregational photo. We’ve been looking for a time when a goodly number of us will be around anyway – and the date we’ve chosen is Sunday, Dec. 15, immediately after the liturgy. That’s also the day of the children’s Christmas program, which is woven into the liturgy.

So please scribble “Cong. photo after church” on your calendar for Dec. 15. And practice smiling. *(The picture above is St. Stephen’s first congregational photo, taken in 1955 or 1956, in front of the church they were “borrowing.”)*

O GIVING TREE

The Giving Tree is coming soon! As always, Andrea Notley (seen here in 2023) is in charge. And as always, she’ll have a list of families who could use our help to make Christmas brighter. Andrea will have the names of those “adoptable” families – and some of their Christmas wishes – starting Sunday, Nov. 24. You’ll need to bring your adopted family’s gifts to church by Dec. 15. Of course, if you’re not a skilled or enthusiastic shopper, or you just don’t have the time, Andrea can arrange for someone else to shop for your adopted family – if you make a donation and put “Giving Tree” on the memo line of your check. Questions? Ask Andrea, at notley90@comcast.net or 850-443-5293.



ON PURPOSE WOMAN

By Caroline Collins

Every month, women gather in St. Stephen’s fellowship hall for a meeting of On Purpose Woman. What’s that about? Ginny Robertson of Maryland founded the community in 1999 “to connect women around the world to their gifts, their purpose and each other.” Since then, several more locations have been added – including Tallahassee’s chapter, started in 2022.

Meetings feature a guest speaker and member spotlights, as well as time for sharing and fellowship. On Oct. 27, over 20 attendees enjoyed a presentation by Lydia Riedell, “Soundscape Alchemist.” She composes soundscape experiences to provide the “time and space to be in the moment, tune into self-awareness, and align our thoughts and intentions with our highest good.”

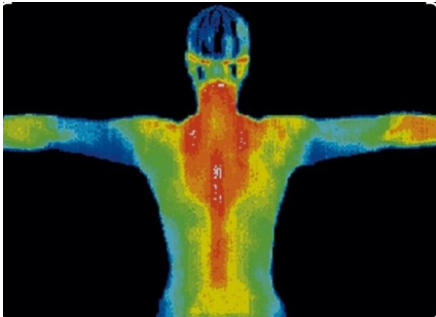
Let Barbara Sullivan tell you about her experience: “I really did not know what to expect when Caroline invited me. It certainly wasn’t a demonstration with Himalayan bowls! As the meeting got underway, I realized these strong women were involved in their businesses, our community, and supporting other group members to continue to believe in themselves.”

Three other newcomers had heard about the program at a hospice support group that meets over at Faith Presbyterian. They came to learn how sound healing can serve their loved ones in hospice care.

If you’re looking for a local tribe of women who support, inspire and practice making the world a better place, please join us any fourth Sunday, 1:30-3:30 p.m., in St. Stephen’s fellowship hall. The meetings are free, as are many of the resources (including a free digital magazine) available at www.opwgc.com. We appreciate St. Stephen’s generosity in allowing us to meet here.

NEXT MONTH...

On Nov. 24, On Purpose Woman’s guest speaker will be thermographer Angela Cunningham. Her mom, now-retired chiropractor Carol Cunningham, opened



Tallahassee Thermography 20+ years ago; Angela took over four years ago. She fell in love with helping people and sharing this fascinating technology. Thermography is a digital infrared imaging test that can detect and monitor early warning signs of breast disease by detecting changes in body or skin temperature. Painless, non-invasive and radiation-free, it enables early intervention for breast cancer and other diseases.

THE WIDOW’S UNNOISY OFFERING: EXCERPT FROM PASTOR TOM’S SERMON

... [Jesus] and his disciples are still in the temple, but now we are led to picture Him sitting down to watch the way the crowd was putting money into the treasury. The clearer translation is that “many rich people were throwing a lot of money into ornate receptacles.”

This was the temple’s collection plate, but it was shaped like the flare on a trumpet and made of bronze. Imagine the amount of noise that “throwing in” a large gift of “temple-approved coins” would make. Similar to the noise, perhaps, that we cheer when the children dump their buckets after the Noisy Offering collection, but that’s our whole congregation’s gift put together. Here, in the temple, individual givers were competing to make the most “noise” with their tithes to get personal oohs and selfish aahs.

Everyone noticed the big donors, but no one noticed the woman, the unnamed widow, who came and dropped in two small copper coins. She threw in two lepta. They were the smallest and least valuable of all coins circulating in Palestine. They were worth about 1/128th of a denarius. A denarius was a day’s wages for a worker in a field. So, in today’s system, if a laborer makes \$50 per day, the widow’s two coins would have equaled about 39 cents. It was all she had.



Imagine the pitiful sound those two coins would make in relation to the others’ noisy gifts. No one noticed her. Well, no one except Jesus....

BEFORE YOU GO...

- Thanksgiving is just around the corner. If you have words of thanks to share with readers of the newsletter, please send them to rrhartung1@gmail.com by noon Wednesday.
- 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



Elliot Reece - 11/14
Cheryl Stuart - 11/14
Marda Messick - 11/20
Cindy Suhrweir - 11/21
Sue Canning - 11/25
Marley Bonfanti - 11/26
Michael Bonfanti - 11/27
Phil Williams - 11/29
Nancy Staff - 12/01
Bob Eshleman - 12/02
Annelise Leysieffer - 12/04
Annette Claussen - 12/08
Janet Barber - 12/09
Ridy Hofer - 12/11
Laura Sullivan - 12/14

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 Saturday:

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

1:30 p.m. - Al-Anon meets in Matthew Room

This Sunday:

9 a.m. - Book study

9:30 a.m. - Choir practice

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

11:30 a.m. - Council meeting

4 p.m. - Congolese Christian worship in FH

Monday, November 11:

5 p.m. - TIMA meets in FH

7 p.m. - TIMA meets in FH

Wednesday, November 13:

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>.

St. Stephen Lutheran Church, ELCA
2198 N. Meridian Road | Tallahassee, FL 32303

The Rev. Tom Holdcraft, Pastor