



ST. STEPHEN THIS WEEK

St. Stephen Lutheran Church Newsletter

All Are Welcome!

St. Stephen Lutheran Church
Potluck Easter Breakfast
Sunday, April 20, 2025

Potluck 8:15am
Easter Egg Hunt 9:15am
Service 10:00am

Bring your favorite breakfast dish to share



ALMOST HOLY WEEK

Palm Sunday is this Sunday.
We'll begin worship outdoors and
process into the worship area with
our palms. A dramatic reading from
Luke will be done with a variety of
voices.

Thursday, April 17, is Maundy
Thursday. Worship (including a
healing service)
begins at 7 p.m.

Friday, April 18, is Good Friday.
Worship begins at 7 p.m.

Sunday, April 20, is Easter! As you
see from Margaret Bowers' colorful
poster above, the Easter potluck

begins at (yawn) 8:15 a.m., and the hunt for Easter eggs begins at 9:15. The
worship service, of course, begins at 10.



CONSIDER THE LILIES



This Sunday is the deadline for ordering Easter lilies to surround the altar on Easter Sunday. The cost is \$10 each. To dedicate one or more, complete the form in the narthex and drop it into the offering plate – or just email the dedication to Office Manager Lori.



‘HAVE YOU NO SENSE OF COMPASSION?’

That’s the question that Dave Suhrweir’s sign asked at Saturday’s “Hands Off: The People’s Veto,” where hundreds of protesters at the Old Capitol expressed their dismay with the new Trump administration in Washington. Dave was among several St. Stephen participants, including the ones in this photo. Pastor Tom’s sign read, “Only Bad DEI: Donald, Elon, Idiots.” Colleen Holdcraft’s sign: “NOT MY KING!” And Sylvia Smith’s sign: “Take (Heart).” “The two hours there were filled with meeting like-minded folks about the poor decisions of our president,” Pastor Tom said. “We were energized by the experience.” (*Caroline Collins also took part, and no doubt other St. Stephen members and friends.*)

JUST LOVE: GRACE IN ACTION

By Caroline Collins

If you’ve been reading the Synod’s E-Spirit weekly newsletter, you may have noticed recent invitations to “Grace in Action” Zoom gatherings, led by the Rev. Kari Niedermaier, pastor of All Saints Lutheran Church in Port Orange. These gatherings have two purposes: to promote the mission of the Just Love movement and to train lay ambassadors — equipping us to share that message within our own congregations. I’d love to share a bit about my experience attending the first session on March 13, in hopes that you’ll consider joining the next one.

“Our mission, plain and simple, is to see love established in public, which creates justice for all. Just love.” With this foundation, the evening focused on two goals: building relationships among participants, and practicing the spiritual skills of truth-telling and sacred listening. Jesus modeled these practices beautifully in his parables — using story to forge deep understanding and connection. We, too, can harness the power of our own stories to draw others in, build bridges and open hearts.



That night’s inspiration parable was the Good Samaritan. After reflecting on the Scripture, we were split into small groups and invited to recall a moment when we ourselves were in need — and help came from an unexpected source. We shared those personal stories and reflected together: “Where did you see God moving in that moment?” Rev. Kari then encouraged us to take these practices of storytelling and compassionate listening back into our church communities.

I found the gathering both powerful and challenging. With people I’d never met before, I was suddenly asked to listen to deeply personal stories — and share my own. It was a little like speed networking, but more vulnerable. Yet the mutual trust of a shared faith and a commitment to confidentiality helped us meet the moment with openness and grace. In the end, it felt refreshing to dive in. And, as we all know, once you do something hard, the next time is easier.

These difficult days call for a radical, faithful response. “Grace in Action” provides a space to be spiritually equipped — for our own growth, and for the healing work God calls us to do in the world. So, have I scared you, or intrigued you? Either way, I invite you to come and see. The next gathering is happening Thursday, April 24, from 6 to 7:30 p.m.

Zoom details:

[Click here to join via Zoom.](#)

Passcode: 643842

Meeting ID: 827 5503 3514

I’d love to see some fellow St. Stephenites there as we continue to learn, listen and grow in God’s just love together.

JOHN ALBRIGHT

A voicemail left over the weekend from Kathy, daughter of the late Chris Bischoff and John Albright, let us know that John passed away last week in Chicago. We don’t have a traditional obituary, but here is the Facebook announcement from the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago.

Dr. John Albright, a physicist, theologian, and long-serving visiting professor at the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago, passed away on April 2, 2025. A beloved teacher and lifelong Lutheran, Albright was known for his passion for the dialogue between science and religion, a calling that shaped both his academic and spiritual life.



Before coming to LSTC, Albright spent more than three decades at Florida State University, where he served as professor and associate chair of physics. He later chaired the Department of Chemistry and Physics at Purdue University Calumet before retiring in 2004. That same year, he joined LSTC’s community as a visiting professor through the Zygon Center for Religion and Science, where he taught courses on biblical languages and religion and science, and participated in wide-ranging conversations on faith, physics, and the nature of the universe.

Albright’s career included work with the John Templeton Foundation, national service to the Lutheran Church in America, and international recognition for his teaching in the field of religion and science. He was also the faculty mentor for the Hyde Park Religion and Science Society, a student-focused religion-and-science group for students in Hyde Park and the greater Chicago area. He often collaborated with his late wife, Carol Rausch Albright, and remained active in adult forums and study groups at his Lutheran congregation in Chicago.

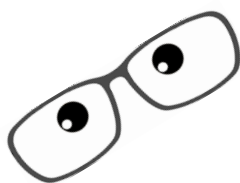
We wish him and his family love and light as they honor his remarkable life.

John joined St. Stephen on 9/29/63 and transferred his membership on 12/1/1995. For many years at St. Stephen, he led a popular Sunday-morning discussion group. And among those who attended the Easter Vigil service, John was well-known for chanting the long, intricate, dramatic passage that accompanied worshippers as they filed in from the “campfire” outside.

I HEAR YOU

By Ron Hartung

It was fourth grade, I think, when the medical establishment determined that my eyes needed help seeing the classroom blackboard. So I was fitted with glasses. On the way home from that appointment, my mom stopped off for groceries. And there, in the Eagle store in Davenport, Iowa, is where I first encountered the dazzling new visual world that awaited me thanks to my glasses. The orange of the Wheaties box was never so bright. The apples and lettuces, peppers and grapes simply sparkled. Who knew?



I was reminded of those sensory revelations Sunday, the first time I came to worship with my new official-old-man hearing aids. Last month is when the medical establishment determined that my ears needed help hearing the higher notes in the soundtrack of life. Last week, my first time wearing them, I instantly noticed the sounds of crumpling paper, skidding leaves, twittering birds, that little magnetic timer that helps me make Ruth’s tea every day – and, of course, I could hear dear Ruthie better than ever.

But Sunday morning’s prelude actually brought me to the verge of tears. Suddenly I could hear in glorious detail all those keys on the right side of the piano keyboard. Not perfectly, but better, much better. Not until Sunday, I think, did I fully appreciate the marvelous music that Katharine makes.



So far, so good. I wonder, though, whether my hearing aids might suffer a meltdown if I subject them to the ultimate St. Stephen hearing test: potluck in the fellowship hall. I fear I’m not brave enough to try.

EXCERPT FROM PASTOR TOM’S SERMON

Thinking about Judas’ complaint that Mary could have helped the poor with the money she used to buy the perfume for Jesus’ feet

... Not that long ago, we needed to make a major repair on this worship center. The weight of the roof was actually pushing the walls apart and there were decisions to be made. There was a chance the problem could have been remedied for about \$30,000, but this congregation elected to be sure it was fixed, and to make other needed improvements, for a total of about \$195,000.

Could that extra \$165,000 or so have been used to help the poor and feed the hungry? Of course, but the donors and the congregation wanted to pour out their gifts at the feet of Jesus as a sign of gratitude and awe at all God has done for them in this place. So that St. Stephen continues on long after we are gone....

Judas did not understand the value of Jesus’ death, but Mary did. She poured out a year’s salary onto Jesus’ feet. What an excessive waste it was, but it was this outpouring of love that carried Jesus into Jerusalem, and carried him into the love that he showed to his disciples at the Last Supper and in the evening when he washed his disciples’ feet.

A love that, above all else, heals.

BEFORE YOU GO...

- Thanks to the generosity of St. Stephen members, 1,429 diapers for babies and toddlers were donated to the local Refuge House. Says Outreach Coordinator (and photographer) Sharon Simmons: “Thank you from the bottom up!” (We didn’t get the names of these women unloading the diapers.)



- 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



Beth Alexander - 04/11
Rudy Hehn - 04/12
Donna Schiffer - 04/13
Erik Robinson - 04/14
Elizabeth Halvorson - 04/15
Cassandra White - 04/16
Sandy Lamb-Daniels - 04/17
Terri Schmitt - 04/17
Colleen Holdcraft - 04/29
Julia Bonfanti - 05/03
Emily Jennings - 05/07
Eva Mustian - 05/09
Claire Claussen - 05/09

**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)
7 p.m. - AA meets in HH

This Friday:

10 a.m. - TOPS meets in HH

This Sunday:

9 a.m. - Book study
9:30 a.m. - Choir practice
10 a.m. - Sunday of Passion/Palm Sunday
11:30 a.m. - Council Meeting

Monday, April 14:

5 p.m. - TIMA meets in HH
7 p.m. - TIMA meets in HH

Tuesday, April 15:

5 p.m. - NA meets in HH

Wednesday, April 16:

5 p.m. - TIMA meets in HH
5:30 p.m. - Finance Committee Meeting
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