



ST. STEPHEN THIS WEEK

St. Stephen Lutheran Church Newsletter

MINISTRY OF RECONCILIATION SUNDAY



Our annual celebration of God's inclusive love takes place this Sunday. There will be a special worship service followed by our now traditional lasagna luncheon. An FSU law professor will be our special guest speaker.

You are encouraged to reach out to others to join us in this celebration of inclusiveness.

TAKING CARE OF BUSINESS

More than three dozen members stayed around after the liturgy Sunday for the congregational meeting, where they approved a 2017 budget that is roughly the same amount as last year's. Actually, the exact total isn't available because of a last-minute, heartwarming amendment by Ol' Bill Taylor, St. Stephen's 100-year-old stewardship expert. With his bullhorn of a voice strong as ever, Bill asked whether we could increase our synod benevolence giving from 7 percent to 8 percent. (That's the portion of our weekly financial offerings that St. Stephen shares with the synod and the churchwide organization.) Of course, Bill's amendment passed unanimously. So the budget numbers need a bit of fine-tuning.

In the budget they presented, the Church Council members included \$5,000 as the first step toward regularly setting aside money for future building/repair projects. Along those same lines, member Michele Hartson – who's been instrumental in St. Stephen's recent repairs and improvements – asked them whether they were also devising a routine maintenance plan so that our buildings (and gutters) won't backslide because of neglect. Council members assured her that was part of the plan.

Council President Anna Amundson, who capably walked everyone through the budget, also noted that St. Stephen had received fewer pledges than usual this year. If you're usually a pledger (or want to be) and just didn't get around to it, it's not too late, she said. And this year in particular, she added, it would be very helpful. We're taking out a building loan, and the lender will take a hard look at our budget and expected revenue. In addition, as part of the call process, the synod and prospective pastors will take a hard look at the same. So please do make a pledge. It makes a real difference.

Many thanks to the council members: Anna, Beth Alexander (treasurer), Jennifer Dritt (pastoral support), Mike Martinez (outreach), Andrea Notley (education), TJ Oliveri (buildings and grounds) and Val Sullivan (worship and music).

REPRESENTING US IN JUNE

Also at Sunday's meeting, two members volunteered to be voting delegates at this year's Synod Assembly: Sandy Davis and Steve Kunst. They'll join Pastor Mary and hundreds of others June 1-3 in Kissimmee. This year's theme is "Freed & Renewed in Christ: 500 Years of God's Grace in Action."



PICKING UP THE PHONE TO CALL MAMA

This is an excerpt from a lovely essay by St. Stephen member Audrey Post that was published in the January-February issue of Tallahassee Magazine.

"The death of your mother, no matter what kind of relationship you had with her, is a devastating blow. Whether you mourn the loss of what was or grieve for what might have been but can never be, you feel the emptiness. That sense of loss might be tempered by the knowledge that her suffering has ended, the faith that she has entered the kingdom of heaven or the hope of a celestial reunion someday, but the loss is still overwhelming. It pierces your heart anew each time you pick up the phone to call her, only to remember she's not there anymore.... I have always believed that the pain of losing someone is directly proportional to the joy you shared in life. I'll be picking up the phone to call Mama for a long time to come. And smiling."

WANT TO JOIN US?

This note is for those of you who've been worshipping with us and have been thinking about taking the next step: becoming a member of St. Stephen. Pastor Mary would like to receive new members during worship on Feb. 12. Does that interest you? Have you been feeling a divine nudge to become more involved in the life of the congregation? If so, Pastor Mary wants to meet with you soon, either individually or as part of a group. You may get in touch with her at pastormnesmith@gmail.com or [561-602-8425](tel:561-602-8425).

TALLAHASSEE COMMUNITY CHORUS PRESENTS

Saturday at 7:30 p.m., the Tallahassee Community Chorus is presenting "Praise & Redemption: The Power of Song" at Ruby Diamond Concert Hall. The concert features the world premiere of "Sanctus" from the André Thomas Mass, and selections from Sacred Concerts by Duke Ellington. The chorus commissioned this movement by Thomas, its artistic director, as part of the André Thomas Mass. Ellington's Sacred Concerts combine jazz, elements of dance and African-American spiritual. Get tickets online at www.tchorus.org (or call 850-597-0603).

MORE MIDWEEK UPDATES

- End-of-the-year statements for 2016 are available in the narthex.
- Adult Study meets at 9 a.m. in the Matthew Room. Come and be a part of an informal group eager to learn more about Luther's Small Catechism!
- Remember: Place any transition questions you have for Pastor Mary in the "A-Ticket, A-Tasket" basket in the back of the sanctuary.



UPCOMING BIRTHDAYS:

Gladys Kane - 01/28
Jennifer Buchanan - 01/29
Graham Hackley - 01/30
Kris Knab - 01/30
Collin Schiffer - 01/30
Jayden Schiffer - 01/31

THIS WEEK'S CALENDAR

This Sunday:

9 a.m. - Sunday Church School
Adult study
10 a.m. - Worship, RIC Sunday
11:30 a.m. - RIC Luncheon

Wednesday, Feb. 1:

7 p.m. - Choir rehearsal

COMING UP

Feb. 26, 11:30 a.m.: St. Stephen Annual Talent Show

SERVING SUNDAY:

Pastor Mary Nesmith, Presiding, Preaching; **Barb O'Donnell**, Assisting Minister; **Phil Williams**, Cup Minister; **Jan Harrison**, Visitation; **Mark Warren**, Walkways; **Anna Amundson**, Greeter; **Jennifer Buchanan**, Lector; **Robin Oliveri & Val Sullivan**, Altar Guild; **Patricia Handschy & Susan Warren**, Counters; **Jennifer Dritt**, Bread; **Anna Amundson**, Announcements.



If you have news or photos to share, please send them to Lori at ststephentallahassee@embarqmail.com.

Don't forget our Facebook page:
<https://www.facebook.com/ststephentallahassee>.

St. Stephen Lutheran Church, ELCA