



# ST. STEPHEN THIS WEEK

## St. Stephen Lutheran Church Newsletter

### PASTORAL REFLECTION

“Be still, and know that I am God.” (Psalm 46:10a—NRSV version)

No passage is known or loved more than this one! It is one of my favorites.

I have a file of newspaper clippings collected from over the years. This week, I pulled out a yellowed, crinkled and torn column by Ellen Goodman, who wrote for *The Boston Globe*. Her column was titled “Simplify, simplify.”

She wrote of her peaceful getaway each year to Casco Bay, Maine. She and her husband would rid themselves of clutter, overbooked calendars and pressing decisions. The goal was to simplify.

“Wasn’t that what Thoreau wrote when he built his home at Walden Pond?” she wrote. “I look up his words in the tattered book on the shelf. ‘Our life is frittered away by detail...Simplify, simplify.’ His retreat from ‘details’ opened the spaces of his life. And so does ours.”

I am a firm believer in slowing down the frenetic pace of our lives long enough to hear the voice of God. I also know we feel His loving presence and guidance in the midst of busy days. But as we near the end of our Lenten journey and enter into Holy Week, Psalm 46:10a suggests a powerful way to know that God is God. “Be still, and know that I am God.”

Ellen Goodman’s message holds just as true today as it did in 1989. I thought following the advice of the psalmist would be a wonderful way to deepen our spiritual walk with Jesus as we journey toward Calvary. What are some ways we can simplify so we may be “still” before the Lord and perhaps hear anew His voice?

Take time every day or evening. It may be five minutes or more. If you do not live alone, then ask that you not be disturbed. Go someplace where you are alone and leave your cellphone behind! Maybe the alone place is sitting in the car? A room with the door closed? In the bathroom? There is no place too weird! Find the place that works best for you. Does lighting a candle or listening to soft music help you be still? Do you have a pair of headphones or noise-canceling ear buds that may help? Focus on whatever it is that makes you think of God.



Once your focus is honed, you will notice yourself “centering down” into the sacred. You may be more aware of the normal sounds around you and less aware of chaotic thoughts. If chaotic thoughts continue, that’s OK. Then, open with a simple prayer. “God, I am here and I know you are too. Help me to be still before you. Renew me. Replenish my spirit.” Or you may want to offer up a favorite passage. The purpose of this spiritual discipline is to make your body, mind and spirit as still as possible. You will know when this most holy time is over. You will feel it.

I believe we will know God in this kind of spiritual stillness. In I Kings 19:11b-12ff, the prophet Elijah’s life was caught up in craziness just like ours. As Elijah sought God, he discovered the following: “Now there was a great wind, so strong that it was splitting mountains and breaking rocks in pieces before the Lord, but the Lord was not in the earthquake; and after the earthquake a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire; and after the fire a sound of sheer silence.” It was then that Elijah heard the voice of God.

If you feel that silence and solitude is not your thing, then please don’t worry about it. Continue to remain faithful in all the ways you follow Christ in your daily life. You will still feel the love and presence of the Lord.

May it be so for you and me!

Pax,

Pastor Mary

### SIMPLY GIVING

Ever run out of the house on Sunday morning without your checkbook? Forget whether you’re up-to-date with your giving in relation to your pledge? Forgotten to stick a check in the mail to the church office while on vacation? Consider taking the stress out of your regular giving by authorizing automatic transfers from your bank account to St. Stephen, as others in the congregation have done.

It's easy to sign up securely through the "Simply Giving" program, which is endorsed by Thrivent Federal Credit Union. Just pick up and fill out a form from the ushers or from the church office (Lori will mail one to you), and place it in your next donation envelope. The church office will submit it to Vanco Services, which will initiate the automatic transfer process on the date you have specified, with the giving amount and frequency that you've indicated.

Questions? Ask Jennifer Buchanan at 850-321-7764 or [jennifernewtonbuchanan@gmail.com](mailto:jennifernewtonbuchanan@gmail.com).



## "ALL PRESENT!"

"All Present!" is a new term bringing back a previous Sunday tradition. This Sunday, the familiar small, red pew pads will be passed around the congregation. The revised form allows additional ways for the office to receive pastoral visit requests, email information and whether a visitor is interested in uniting with St. Stephen. All those present are asked to sign the form. This is a helpful tool for the office to track who has not been present for a while. We do not want anyone to drop through the cracks! Pastor and the Care & Hospitality Committee can then coordinate how to extend a loving outreach. We also need to ensure our weekly attendance is accurate, as this is important information for the Parochial Record. The information is required of each congregation by both the synod and the ELCA. The Guest Book will still be in the narthex, and its continued use is encouraged.

## ADULT STUDY

What's new in the adult study class on Luther's Small Catechism? Different class members have led us through the Ten Commandments, Apostles' Creed, Lord's Prayer, Sacrament of Holy Baptism and Holy Communion. This Sunday, Pastor Mary will lead us on what Luther called "The Office of the Keys and Confession."

Have you ever wondered if the Lutheran church encourages the Brief Order of Confession and Forgiveness only during Sunday's worship service? Have you ever thought it was "too Roman Catholic" to confess your sins privately and confidentially to the pastor? Is it OK to confess your sins to another trusted person and hear the words assuring forgiveness from that person? What exactly is the "Office of the Keys"? Is there an actual key given us when we unite with a church? If so, what does the key open ... and why didn't Lori give me one?



Come and be a part of this fun and inquisitive gathering! We meet in the Matthew Room at 9 a.m.



## LILIES

We'll be using Easter lilies to adorn our chancel area for Easter. Would you like to dedicate one or more? The cost is \$10 each, and we'll have the dedication list in the Easter bulletin. Look for a form to fill out in the Sunday bulletin. Then place it with your check in the offering plate, and be sure to designate on the check that the money is for the Easter lilies. The deadline is Sunday, April 9.

## PRAYER PETITION

Gracious God, we give thanks today for the work and witness of your servant Robert Schaefer, who has enriched the ministry of the Florida-Bahamas Synod in his service as our bishop. Bless and preserve him at this time of transition. Prosper all that has been done to your glory in our time together; heal and forgive all that has fallen short of your will for us. Day by day, guide him and give him what is needed, friends to cheer his way, and a clear vision of that to which you are now calling him. By your Holy Spirit be present in his pilgrimage, that he may travel with the One who is the way, the truth and the life, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

## DEMENTIA TRAINING

Are you interested in joining Pastor Mary in a gathering for those interested in learning more about how to improve the care of persons living with dementia? Caregivers will also find this helpful, as their role can be exhausting and frustrating. The gathering will be Tuesday, April 25, 8:30 a.m.-1 p.m. at Saint. Paul's United Methodist Church, 1700 North Meridian Road. It is free with breakfast and lunch provided. Also, 4.5 continuing education credits are available if needed for professional training. Please know that all are welcome to attend. Speakers include Pastor Kathy Fogg Berry, who wrote "When Words Fail," and local dementia expert Dr. Megan Bakan, with the Alzheimer's Project. Please let the office know of your interest by Friday, April 21.

# RIDE FOR HOPE

June 10<sup>th</sup> is the date for the annual Ride for Hope fundraiser for the TMH Cancer Center. We are putting together a Team Kris and will ride to show support for our sister Kris in her courageous fight against pancreatic cancer.



The question is: Are you going to be on that team pedaling away into the countryside with the rest of us on a beautiful summer morning? There are a variety of distances, and the general spirit of the event is that this is a ride, not a race... unless, of course, you want it to be. If for some reason you are unable to ride, prayers of support are always welcome! To register, use the following link: <http://therideforhope.com/register/>.

Registration is \$25. ([kirstenebbesen740@gmail.com](mailto:kirstenebbesen740@gmail.com)). Join our team.

## Schedule of Services for Lent/Holy Week

### Midweek Lenten Worship Services:

**6:15 p.m.** – Soup and Salad

**7:00 p.m.** - Lenten Series on “The Seven Last Words From the Cross,” Scripture Readings, simple Taize chants:

- **Wednesday, April 5:** The Seventh Word: “Commit”

### Sunday, April 9, 10 a.m.: Palm/Passion Sunday:



- Procession with Palms
- Dramatic Reading of the Passion
- Holy Communion
- Instrumentalists
- Darkened sanctuary to symbolize Holy Week's beginning.



### Thursday, April 13: Maundy Thursday: 7 p.m.:

- Holy Communion
- Foot Washing
- Stripping of the Altar
- Darkened sanctuary

### Good Friday, April 14: 7 p.m.:

- Adoration of the Cross
- Simple Liturgy
- Darkened sanctuary

*There will be no Easter Vigil service but rest assured it will be resurrected next year! The decision was made prayerfully with Pastor Mary, Katharine Gossman, and the Worship Committee.*

### Easter Sunday, April 16: 8:30 a.m. - Easter Breakfast and Easter Egg Hunt;

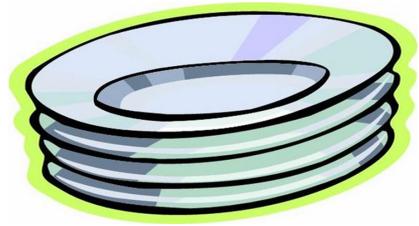
**10 a.m.:**

- Festival worship
- Holy Communion
- Instrumentalists



## MORE MIDWEEK UPDATES

- Ol' Bill Taylor is still in CenterPoint Rehabilitation Center and has suffered a fractured hip. He could use the boost of short visits.
- Beth Alexander writes: "I wanted to thank everyone for the prayers that have sustained my family and me throughout the last three weeks. I have used the phrase 'prayers have sustained me' because it seems to describe best the way I feel God's comfort, peace and guidance since Chris died. It is wonderful to be part of a church family that truly carries one another through trials. My friends, co-workers and family all enjoyed the celebration of Chris' life and meeting our church family."
- "Woods and I want to thank everyone for your loving support during our recent illnesses. The prayers, cards, visits and meals were so cheering and helpful. I'm happy to say we are both much, much better!" (Marda Messick)
- The Claussen Baby Shower is April 9, at 3 p.m. They are registered at Amazon.com.
- The OWLs will be gathering at Samrat Indian Restaurant (2529 Apalachee Parkway) on April 19, at 11:30 a.m. Please let Jan Harrison know if you plan to attend.
- Remember: Place any transition questions you have for Pastor Mary in the "A-Ticket, A-Tasket" Transition Basket in the back of the sanctuary.
- There are several unclaimed dishes on the credenza in the fellowship hall. If you left one from one of our recent events, please take it home. All dishes remaining by April 19 will be donated.



## UPCOMING BIRTHDAYS:

Ol' Bill - 04/05

### THIS WEEK'S CALENDAR

#### This Sunday:

**9 a.m.** - Sunday Church School for children  
Adult study on Lutheran Small  
Catechism

**10 a.m.** - Worship, Fifth Sunday in Lent

#### Wednesday, April 5:

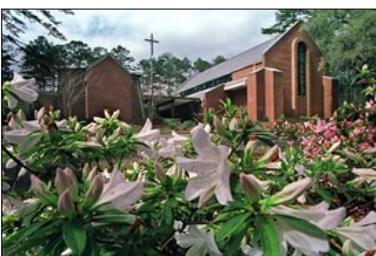
**6:15 p.m.** - Lenten supper

**7 p.m.** - Lenten Midweek Service, The Seventh  
Word: "Commit"

**7:30 p.m.** - Choir rehearsal

## SERVING SUNDAY:

**Pastor Mary Nesmith**, Presiding and Preaching; **Kirsten Ebbesen**, Assisting Minister; **Phil Williams**, Cup Minister; **Jan Harrison**, Visitation; **Tim Larson**, Walkways; **Jan Harrison**, Greeter; **Gladys Kane**, Lector; **Robin Oliveri & Val Sullivan**, Altar Guild; **Janet Barber & Sandy Davis**, Counters; **Sandy Davis**, Bread; **Anna Amundson**, Announcements.



If you have news or photos to share,  
please send them to Lori at  
[ststephentallahassee@embarqmail.com](mailto:ststephentallahassee@embarqmail.com).

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

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

Designed by Lori Zengel, office manager, [ststephentallahassee@embarqmail.com](mailto:ststephentallahassee@embarqmail.com).

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