



ST. STEPHEN THIS WEEK

St. Stephen Lutheran Church Newsletter

PASTORAL REFLECTION

Still and silent they move to the altar.
 One, then another and another
 Dark shadows become graceful dancers
 Gliding to and fro.
 Lifting, carrying, folding the fair linen
 Heads bowed, listening to the inner voice
 Directing their dance of quiet servitude.
 At last, the tomb is bare
 Made clean by gentle worn hands
 It is ready to receive the gift from God.
 On Easter morning, it will awaken.
 The linens and warmth of the eternal flame
 Will fill our hearts, again
 With the promise. "He is Risen!"

--Joy Faust

This poem was written and given to me by Joy Faust. Joy was one of my parishioners at St. John's Lutheran Church in Des Moines, Iowa. She served as a faithful Altar Guild member. Year after year, I sat mesmerized by their "dance of quiet servitude."

"Quiet servitude." What a lovely phrase with which to sum up our Holy Week journey toward Easter's dawn of resurrection. Faithfully partaking of the Last Supper and the Washing of the Feet as we hear a new commandment to "Love one another." Quiet servitude. Faithfully keeping watch with Jesus on the night in which he is betrayed. Quiet servitude. Faithfully standing with Jesus during his arrest, mock trial and tortures. Quiet servitude. Faithfully carrying his cross, as if we ourselves are Simon of Cyrene. Quiet servitude. Faithfully standing watch as he is crucified. Quiet servitude.



You may embrace the quiet servitude found within the spirit of Maundy Thursday's worship service. Holy Communion. Washing of the Feet. Stripping of the Altar. Hearing again the old, old story of all that happened throughout that fateful night. The Good Friday worship service invites us to touch, kneel before, kiss and reverence the rough wooden cross.

It is disjointed to experience the joys of Easter resurrection without first experiencing the passion of Jesus our Lord.

I invite you to make a commitment to attend both the Maundy Thursday and Good Friday worship services. Jesus implored his disciples to stay awake and keep watch. Let's keep the dance of quiet servitude going!

PAX, Pastor Mary

INTERESTED IN BECOMING A NEW MEMBER?

Pastor is getting together several individuals who have expressed interest in uniting as fellow members of St. Stephen Lutheran Church. If you are interested, please put a check mark in the "Wish to Unite with St. Stephen" box found on the weekly "All Present" attendance pad. Please make sure you include the phone number you wish Pastor to use. You may also let Pastor know in person of your interest.





'ALL PRESENT!' PADS

Don't forget each Sunday to use the "All Present!" forms found in the red pew pad books. This helps you notify the pastor if you desire a visit or a call, if you are a visitor, if you wish to unite with St. Stephen, and if you are a member.

REST IN PEACE, AMY GRANTHAM

Our prayers of condolence surround longtime worshippers and congregational friends Betty Wilder and her mother, Cootie Rhodes. Betty's daughter Amy Grantham, 45, died unexpectedly earlier this week. We prayerfully ask that God's loving presence through Jesus Christ our Lord give comfort to Amy's family and friends. Rest eternal grant Amy, O Lord. The funeral will be Good Friday, 12 noon, at Abbey Funeral Home, 4037 N. Monroe St., Tallahassee.



SAVE THE DATE!

Everyone is invited to attend a retirement party for Jim Sampson on Friday, May 5. Jim has been teaching at FSU for 35 years, and we are celebrating that with a party at the home of Sue and Phil Williams. The band starts playing at 7 p.m.! More details later!



✠ THE RITE OF PRIVATE CONFESSION ✠

I am blessed with all kinds of conversations when people find out I am a pastor. While I was tooling around one day in Monticello, someone of the Roman Catholic faith asked why Lutherans do not practice private confession between the pastor and church member.

Did you know that we do? This has to be one of the best-kept secrets in Lutheranism! Martin Luther was a huge advocate of retaining private confession. Luther shared his passion for the retention of private confession when he wrote in his:

- Treatise "Of Confession": "I will let no one take away private confession and would not exchange it for all the wealth of the world, for I know what strength and comfort it has given me."
- Eighth sermon against Carlstadt (1522), who had abolished private confession in Wittenberg during Luther's absence: "I know the devil well. If you had known him as well as I, you would not have thrown private confession so quickly to the wind."
- "Babylonian Captivity of the Church": "Of private confession, which is now observed, I am heartily in favor, even though it cannot be proved from the Scriptures; it is useful and necessary, nor would I have it abolished; nay, I rejoice that it exists in the church of Christ, for it is a cure without equal for distressed conscience."

A few years ago, as a part of my Lenten discipline, I participated in "The Rite of Private Confession." I did not participate as the pastor hearing a church member confess heavy-hearted sins. Instead, I participated as one wishing to confess, repent and receive forgiveness for my own sins.

I sought out a trusted colleague who led me through "The Rite of Private Confession." Immediately, I felt the "strength and comfort" given me, to use Luther's words.

We are entering into one of the most somber weeks of the church year. If you would like to enhance your reflective journey toward Easter resurrection, please prayerfully consider participating in "The Rite of Private Confession." The cool thing is that this may be done either with me as your pastor or with a trusted friend. Your friend does not have to be ordained to listen to you and, through God's grace, to proclaim the words of forgiveness. If both of you prefer a time of quick instruction with me, I am available.

You will find copies of "The Rite of Private Confession" printed on purple paper in the narthex. I will meet you anyplace and anytime should you want to experience this powerful rite. Rest assured that all will be kept in the strictest of confidence.

Pastor Mary

ST. STEPHEN CAMPERS

The St. Stephen campers would like to invite beach- and fun-loving fellow St. Stepheners to come visit with us for the day at St. Joseph Peninsula State Park on Saturday, April 22. The day starts with Gordon's delicious breakfast at 8:30 a.m. and continues on the beach for most of the rest of the day. Once sandcastles have been built, toes dipped and fish and flags captured, we dine together and then gather on the beach for sunset service ... oh, and then s'mores over the bonfire, of course. We'd love to share both the beauty of this amazing park and our fellowship and our traditions.



Email kirstenebbesen740@gmail.com for information and head count.

SIMPLY GIVING

Have you considered the ease of financial giving made possible through our Vanco Online Giving program? It eliminates the need for check writing and assists continued financial support of our ministries should you travel or if you are away for several months at a time! Jennifer Buchanan has volunteered to be our facilitator! Here are two endorsements for Simply Giving:

- “Getting tired of saying ... or at least thinking, ‘I forgot my (envelope, checkbook, cash)’ on Sunday morning? I did, but I fixed that! And it was the easiest thing I have ever done ... just filled out the form for my bank’s checking account to send the amount I decided on the 15th of each month to St. Stephen Lutheran Church! Now I only have to remember to set the alarm, get up, get dressed and drive to church. Thank heavens, one less thing to remember for me, and SunTrust does all the work! Yeah!” (Gladys Kane)
- “We signed up for Simply Giving several years ago. It’s been great! I was the poster child for forgetting the checkbook, forgetting the envelopes, forgetting when I’d last paid, etc. Now I don’t have to worry about it. The amount is deducted from my checking account every Monday. To date, there has never been a snag. I highly recommend using this service.” (Tom Buchanan)

ADULT STUDY

Adult Education class will resume on Sunday, April 23. We will close out our study of Luther’s Small Catechism by watching and discussing Rick Steves’ video on “Luther and the Reformation.”



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.:

- Veneration 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: 9:00 a.m. - Easter Breakfast and Easter Egg Hunt;

10 a.m.:

- Festival worship
- Holy Communion
- Instrumentalists



EARTH DAY 2017

By Pat Simmons



Hello, SSLC! This year's celebration of Earth Day is April 22. There's no shortage of events happening in Leon County, including The Adventure Race, exhibits by Sustainable Tallahassee, and the March for Science. In addition, St. Francis Wildlife will host its third annual Wildlife Fest (wildlife exhibits, children's activities, food, music) in Gadsden County from 9:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. at White Dog Plantation (the old Nicholson Farmhouse), on SR 12 between Havana and Quincy.

Earth Day was selected to be observed right in the middle of the spring bird migration at our latitude. Birds from spoonbills to warblers will be commonly seen feeding their chicks during this time. Butterflies and bees will dominate flowers; dragonflies will snatch mosquitoes; frog croaks will fill the evening air; and lizards will scurry between rays of sunshine. Earth Day is a recognition of spring's renewal that emanates from Creation's hands like no other time, and those of us at St. Francis Wildlife hope you and your family are able to spend time outdoors to enjoy the Earth Day celebrations.

MORE MIDWEEK UPDATES

- 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.
- Ride for Hope: June 10 is the date for the annual Ride for Hope fundraiser for the TMH Cancer Center: <http://therideforhope.com/register/>. Registration is \$25. (kirstenebbesen740@gmail.com). Join our team.



UPCOMING BIRTHDAYS:

Ursula Morgan - 04/15

J.T. LaVia - 04/16

Cassandra White - 04/16

Tyler Notley - 04/18

THIS WEEK'S CALENDAR

Tonight:

7:00 p.m. - Maundy Thursday service

This Friday:

7:00 p.m. - Good Friday service

This Sunday:

9 a.m. - Easter Breakfast/Easter Egg hunt

10 a.m. - Easter worship

Monday, April 17:

Office is closed for Easter Monday

6:00 p.m. - Council meeting

Wednesday, April 19:

11:30 a.m. - OWLs gathering at Samrat Restaurant

7 p.m. - **NO** Choir rehearsal

SERVING SUNDAY:

Pastor Mary Nesmith, Presiding and Preaching; **Cheryl Stuart**, Assisting Minister; **Sandy Larson**, Cup Minister; **Sharon Simmons**, Visitation; **Marilyn Larson**, Greeter; **Ron Hartung**, Lector; **Val Sullivan**, **Martha Marky**, **Gladys Kane & Susan Warren**, Altar Guild; **Patricia Handschy & Susan Warren**, Counters; **Barb O'Donnell**, Bread.



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>.

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Designed by Lori Zengel, office manager, ststephentallahassee@embarqmail.com.

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