

WE TELL OUR STORIES

Reflections on having a Stephen Minister

The worst ever event in my life had occurred. My husband whom I adored had died. Disbelief, confusion, overwhelming sadness overtook my life and I felt aching loneliness all the time. Caring friends and family, of course, rallied around yet I often felt that I needed to comfort them. Encouraged to attend the Grief Share program facilitated by Rev. Bill Denham at St. Luke's, I dragged myself there. This program helped me to understand and accept the monstrous feelings of grief and pain that accompany the loss of one's life partner. When this program ended after 13 weeks, I was just beginning to come to grips with the many secondary losses and often difficult property/ inheritance issues that one also goes through after the death of a spouse. Bill offered me the opportunity to have a Stephen Minister to be there for me going forward. At first, I demurred. I felt I did not need one. I thought "Oh I have friends who are there for me." I also had concerns about whether I would like a total stranger. What if I wasn't comfortable with this person? I was assured that if that were the case, I should just tell Bill and that would be the end. I had serious reservations but decided to try it.

My first exchange with my caregiver was a brief pleasant phone conversation. We set up a date for her to come to my home. We would have tea and get to know one another. I was still unsure but also in a way looking forward to it. When my caregiver came through the door and we introduced ourselves, all of my reservations receded. She was there for one purpose and that was to care for and about me. Her sincerity and warmth were obvious. My story poured out as did my sadness. I was able to talk with her freely. She had clearly explained that our meetings and anything we discussed would be totally confidential and that the details would be between us. She made clear that her interest was in me and my feelings. This gift of her time and her focused caring was very powerful. I could share and cry or share and smile over my memories. She was entirely non-judgmental which allowed me to verbalize thoughts that were conflicted, confused, and sometimes angry. Her caring presence and open mind brought peace to me and made me more acutely aware of God's grace. Continuing to meet weekly, I was able to work through some more of the stages of grief as well as come to grips with the collateral losses and life changes that inevitably follow the loss of a spouse. The consistent Christian caring presence of my caregiver was like a life preserver for me and I will forever be grateful to her for being there for me. ~Anonymous

Following the 11 a.m. worship service these men and women will be commissioned as Stephen Ministers:

Gordon Arnold	Mary Jo Gillaspay
Lee Barrett	Carter Grinstead
Nancy Barziza	Steve McCarthy
Susan Bell	Paul Schrager

They have each completed fifty hours of classroom instruction to provide ministry to persons in and outside our congregation. Please be in prayer for them as they begin to walk alongside persons suffering with despair from loss of work, relationships, financial crises, and medical diagnoses. To learn more about the Stephen Ministry, contact Rev. Bill Denham at bdenham@stlukesmethodist.org or 713-402-5156.

ST. LUKE'S INSIDE-OUT HABITS

WE STUDY THE BIBLE AND WORSHIP

Genesis 12:10-20

¹⁰ Now there was a famine in the land. So Abram went down to Egypt to reside there as an alien, for the famine was severe in the land. ¹¹ When he was about to enter Egypt, he said to his wife Sarai, "I know well that you are a woman beautiful in appearance; ¹² and when the Egyptians see you, they will say, 'This is his wife'; then they will kill me, but they will let you live. ¹³ Say you are my sister, so that it may go well with me because of you, and that my life may be spared on your account." ¹⁴ When Abram entered Egypt the Egyptians saw that the woman was very beautiful. ¹⁵ When the officials of Pharaoh saw her, they praised her to Pharaoh. And the woman was taken into Pharaoh's house. ¹⁶ And for her sake he dealt well with Abram; and he had sheep, oxen, male donkeys, male and female slaves, female donkeys, and camels. ¹⁷ But the Lord afflicted Pharaoh and his house with great plagues because of Sarai, Abram's wife. ¹⁸ So Pharaoh called Abram, and said, "What is this you have done to me? Why did you not tell me that she was your wife? ¹⁹ Why did you say, 'She is my sister,' so that I took her for my wife? Now then, here is your wife, take her, and be gone." ²⁰ And Pharaoh gave his men orders concerning him; and they set him on the way, with his wife and all that he had.

Sermon Notes for June 9, 2019

He Didn't Say That? He Didn't Do That?

Second in the Series, *Father Abraham*

Rev. Bill Denham preaching

Hebrew stories are our stories.

Abram gets scared.

Is God trustworthy?

God keeps His promises.

Key Verse for the Week

Say you are my sister, so that it may go well with me because of you, and that my life may be spared on your account.

Genesis 12:13 (NRSV)

WE PRAY

Sunday, June 9 – Pentecost

Dear Lord, on this Pentecost fill each of us with the power and presence of your Holy Spirit. As you did so many years ago when you first empowered the church, give us tongues of fire that we may boldly proclaim your gospel of love and restoration to the ends of the earth. Give us the discernment of your spirit to better love those whom you have placed around us, help us to be your message of grace to the world. Amen. -Prayer by Rev. Thomas Harper

Monday, June 10

Heavenly Father, I so often lack patience. Not only patience for others, but also patience for your will. I want things to happen on my schedule, my timeline. And I want to know what will happen next. Lord, grant me patience in my everyday life so that I am kinder to others while I wait. And grant me patience for thy will, knowing that you are in charge and have infinite wisdom. Amen.

Tuesday, June 11

My Lord, You are amazing! Your works and your love and your compassion blow us away. Forgive us when we take you for granted. Remind us to recognize your glory daily and thank you for your awesomeness. Lead us in your ways to serve your kingdom. Amen.

Wednesday, June 12

Heavenly Father, pets can bring such joy and companionship to our lives. For many, a pet feels like an integral part of the family. Thank you for the gift of their presence, the fun they

bring, and the love they give. And we pray that you bring comfort to those who mourn the loss of their cherished companion. Amen.

Thursday, June 13

Lord, forgive us as we often overlook the day-to-day people whom we take for granted, but who assist us in our daily lives. The policeman directing traffic, the cleaning person keeping bathrooms tidy, the server preparing our coffee. Lord, make us aware of them and be thankful for them. And Lord, we give thanks as well for the behind-the-scenes people whom we depend on, such as engineers working in the water treatment plants and the power plants. Lord – thank you for them all. Amen.

Friday, June 14 – Flag Day

Heavenly Father, we give thanks for the gifts you have bestowed upon us; our families, communities, and nation. Within these gifts, you have blessed us with immeasurable freedom which, in turn, requires protection through our commitment and sacrifice. Bless those who stand and protect our freedom, and we pray that you protect them with your omnipotent strength. Amen. -Prayer by Ed Smith

Saturday, June 15

Heavenly Father, we pray for travel mercies for all those who are embarking on journeys or are in the midst of a trip. We pray for their safety and that their logistics go smoothly. And we pray that if there is a disruption, that you give them patience and quick resolution. Amen.

PRAYER OPPORTUNITIES

Blast off for Vacation Bible School! | June 10-14

Be in prayer this week for all the children attending VBS that they may discover how to serve God and God's mission for their lives. Also, pray for our volunteers that they may all grow in their faith while sharing the story of God's unfailing love.

So many ways to pray...

- ~ Write your prayer request on one of the leaves found in the pew rack
- ~ Visit the interactive prayer wall: StLukesMethodist.org/prayer
- ~ Call the prayer line: 713-402-5088

We are here for you! If you or someone you know needs prayer, a hospital visit or contact from a minister, call Rev. Bill Denham at 713-402-5156.

WE MAKE FRIENDS

It's back! Pastors' Sunday School Class | 9:55-10:45 a.m. | Fellowship Hall
Join Rev. Thomas Harper as he teaches on John Wesley's sermons.

Barefoot in the Park | Presented by Tapestry Players

Thur.-Sat., June 13-15 | 7:30 p.m. | Sun., June 16 | 2:30 p.m. | Rotunda Theater
A romantic comedy by Neil Simon, *Barefoot in the Park* follows newlyweds as they learn to cope with life and each other. Directed by Sid Davis. \$15 general admission—purchase at the door or online at tapestryplayers.org/barefoot.

Special Sr. Adult Event! Have dinner with friends and attend the opening night performance of *Barefoot in the Park*

Thursday, June 13 | Dinner at 6 p.m. | Show at 7:30 p.m. | Dinner and Show \$25
Reservations by June 10: StLukesMethodist.org/events or 713-402-5087.

What's your favorite song from the movies? *Somewhere Over the Rainbow?* *Beauty and the Beast?* *The Days of Wine and Roses?* *Moon River?*

Beat the summer heat with *Music from the Movies* presented by Rob Landes
Sunday, June 16 | 4 p.m. | Sanctuary | Concert is free with a goodwill offering benefitting *Senior Rides and More* (www.SeniorRidesAndMore.org).

Men's Small Group | *Seeing Gray in a World of Black and White*, by Adam Hamilton

Thursdays, June 20-August 1 | 6:30 - 7:45 a.m. | ES301, Led by John Holmes
Join the conversation on the political, moral and religious issues that divide us.
Register: StLukesMethodist.org/group-life.

Bible Journaling | Sunday, June 23 | 4:30-6 p.m. | ES306

Join us in exploring this creative approach to Bible study. We will meet on the 4th Sunday of every month to share techniques and spend time together in God's word. No art experience needed. Led by Sally Penning (spenning@stlukesmethodist.org) and Helen Shultz. Register: StLukesMethodist.org/group-life.

WE GIVE OURSELVES AWAY

in generosity and service.

This year's VBS Offering will benefit Seed Company, whose mission is to translate the Bible into every language of every people group, to the ends of the earth. With over 2100 language groups without a single verse of Scripture, we invite you to join us to end Bible poverty, now!
Contribute at <http://My.StLukesMethodist.org/vbs-missions>.

Please donate food to the VBS Lounge!

Over 250 hungry teen helpers and volunteers will appreciate your snacks. The VBS Lounge is located in the Hines Baker Room and snacks can be brought each morning. Email Rachel Fisher (rfisher@stlukesmethodist.org) for more information.

Wedding Season is in full swing! Join the Wedding Team

1 hour on Friday and 1.5 hours on Saturday | 1 weekend per month
Play a role in life-changing events by assisting with wedding rehearsals and ceremonies. Contact Devon Jones: djones@stlukesmethodist.org.



The more we practice gratitude, the more we experience it in our hearts and the more we feel it inside, the more we express it in the way we live.
Stop by one of the new displays to grab a mini thank-you card and "Pass it On!"