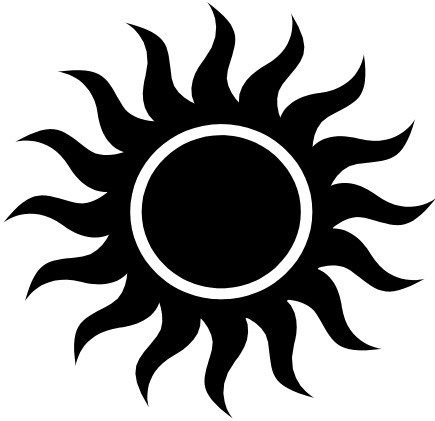


St. Stephen's Lutheran Church



Sun

Celebrating 57
Years of Ministry
December 2012

The Season of Advent

We join together in preparing for God's loving the world
through Christ on the four Sundays of Advent:

Dec. 2 (children's program), Dec. 9, 16 & 23

We will observe the tradition of lighting the Advent Wreath.
We will also pray for those who may not have a church home with
the intention of inviting them to Christmas Eve Service.

Christmas Eve Candlelight Services

Monday, Dec. 24th ~ 5:00 & 7:30pm
(includes a special children's time)
and 11:00 pm (with Holy Communion)



St. Stephen's Lutheran Church

Evangelical Lutheran Church of America

2500 Soquel Avenue, Santa Cruz, California 95062

Phone—831-476-4700 — Fax—831-476-3918

[www..ststephenslutheran.org](http://www.ststephenslutheran.org)

email—office@ststephenslutheran.org

Rev. James P. Lapp, Pastor

Ministers: The Entire Congregation

Church Council: Pres. — Robert Barteo, V. P. — Tom Eagle,
Treasurer— Mark Linder, David Balogh, Kim
Cappelloni, Jeanette Dawson, Barbara Rice, and
Rebecca Wickham

Directors of Music: Suzanne Duval
& Gary Roberts

Custodian: John Hopping

Church Administrator: Leslie Lapp

Children's Minister: Dusty Gipson

Office Hours: Mon.—Thurs. 8:30am—2:30pm



Pastor's Cell Phone: 325-9095 (Call Pastor between 9 am and 5 pm, M-
Thurs. or anytime for emergencies. Please only give to church members)

MISSION STATEMENT

St. Stephen's is a welcoming, healing community
who worship God in Christ,
nurture people growing in faith,
serve others with acceptance and love,
and invite people to share the joy of the Spirit.

From Pastor Jim



One of the things people kind of like to joke with me about is the sermon. Sometimes people **say something to me like, "You know, pastor, I get more out of the children's message!"** That may be because of the spontaneity of that message and the **genuineness of the children's comments or because the sermon that day just didn't connect for whatever reason.**

We laugh, but there is truth in that statement for all of us sometimes. There is also truth that we sometimes need a deeper, more thoughtful response to the scripture readings in an adult sermon. But, in general, most of us agree that it really helps to have things relating to God and our faith are best when they are simpler and voiced by children.

I have many cherished memories over the years of children's comments and responses. The best are when they run forward, hardly able to contain their joy and give me a big hug and try to sit close. And **the longer that I am in ministry the more I've become convinced that being present to children is a central responsibility of followers of Jesus Christ.**

In his book *Growing in the Life of Faith*, **Craig Dykstra says, "The faith of children is essential in the faith of the whole church"**. To me that means that it does every church well to put aside some of the ways that we adults become jaded and stubborn and take on the demeanor of child who more easily forgives and expresses joy about being **one of God's children.**

As we enter the Christmas season it would do us all well to be led **by our children as they lead us in worship on Dec. 2.** Let's apply the blessings that children bring to our church and lives to how we are church and how we are in the rest of our lives. Maybe Jesus wanted the children to come to him because he knows they understand how to express and share love in ways we have forgotten. May this advent season help us restore child-like wonder and love in our lives and church.

December Happenings

Knitting

Meets every Thurs at 6:45 PM

Christmas Pageant

Dec. 2, 10:30 am

Holiday Boutique & Bake Sale

Dec. 2, 9:00 am - 1:00 pm Fireside

Parkinson's Support Group

Wednesday, Dec. 5 @ 12:30

Christmas Caroling

Sat, Dec 8, 9:00 am

Friendship Christmas Party

Sun, Dec 9, 5:30 pm

Women's Holiday

Soup Luncheon

Thurs, Dec. 13, 12:00 pm

Blue Christmas Worship

Sun. Dec. 16, 7:00 pm

Church Council

Monday, Dec. 17, 7:00 pm

CDC Board Meeting

Monday, Dec. 17, 7:00 pm

Habitat for Humanity Lunches

Thursday, Dec. 27 @ 10:30

CDC Board Meeting

Monday, Dec. 17, 7:00 pm

Benevolence Offering

COPA

Council Highlights

1. Devotions centered on I Corinthians 12 where Paul describes the church as the Body of Christ and how each member is a part of that Body and needs all the others to function well. Each member has a gift to share that is to be lifted up. When all the members are using their gifts for God's the glory, then the Body of Christ is healthy and strong. We talked about how the gifts of the council members help keep the Body of Christ at St. Stephen's healthy and strong. We acknowledged the gifts of those who have gone before us as we shared the news that Tex Ronning's father Joe passed away at the age of 104.
2. We spoke with Rev. Jeff Kjellberg via computer about our next steps with Kairos. Our work is being put on hold as we will work with our Bishop Mark Holmerud to address some of the concerns regarding the unity and common vision for ministry of the congregation.
3. A proposed budget was handed out from the Finance Comm. for the council to review and vote on at the December 17 meeting.
4. The annual meeting was set for Sunday January 27 after one worship service at 9:30am.
5. A facility use request from Lifespring Pre-school was approved. They may use our sanctuary for their Christmas program and pay a fee of \$400.



December Birthdays

12-4 Carol Bobo	12-18 Molly Mouw
12-5 Ruth Gonzales	12-20 Stefan Meek
12-6 Don Smawley	12-20 Greg Weber
12-7 Donald Daves	12-21 Robin Gloe
12-8 Kirk Adams	12-22 Vern Lillehaugen
12-8 Maryann Hurttgam	12-26 Shay Barsabe
12-11 Julie Gilbertson	12-28 Brad Tuttle
12-12 Zack Larson	12-31 Darren Crews
12-13 Cary Helgueros	12-31 Paul Cunningham
12-14 Sheryl Brouse	12-31 Jeanette Dawson
12-15 Robert Bartee	12-31 Dusty Gipson
12-18 Todd Johnson	



Anniversaries

12-04 Peggy & Phil Crews
12-04 John & Kathy Hopping
12-05 Wayne & Jill Adachi
12-05 Mike & Ruth Cruddas
12-17 Alfred & Ruth Mitchell
12-22 Chris & Lorie Juhl

Prayer Concerns:

Short Term: The Ronning Family, Todd, Juanita Perez– Flores, Mike Cruddas, Bob Gipson, Carla & Chris Brown, Marge, Marino, Marsha, Mark, Kevin, Stefan, Artie, Babe, the Hopping Family, Debbie, Daniel Gilbertson & sons, Jeff, Joseph, David, Ed & Heidi, John Simas, Elizabeth Riem, Madeline Massa, Sheryl Brouse, Kim Brouse, St. Stephen’s Child Development Center, St. Stephen’s Church Family

Long Term: Bonnie Hansen, Pearl, Corrina Kaut, Gail, Clint & Bonnie Bell Family, Howard Mason, Jan Wagner, Renie Leaman, Lisa Pawalkat, Beverly Gil-ladett, Gail & Nancy, Greg Weber, Lorie Juhl, Josh & Michelle, Suzanne, Jill Lapp, Ron Buswell, Bob Heppe, The Robe Family, Volpi Family & Riley, Brooks & Glen Leaman, and Chris Tury

Sunday School News

Dear Sunday School Families and Friends,
The kids have been hard at work. They are ready to kick off the season with our Annual Christmas Pageant:

“Christmas in Bethlehem”

Sunday, December 2nd
during the 10:30 service



This will be such a fun event and a great time to invite friends and neighbors to join us. We hope that you enjoy the performance!

This month we will also be decorating 100 Christmas Goody Bags for the inmates of the Santa Cruz County Jail. This is such a wonderful opportunity for our children to share God's love with others. The bags will be filled with treats and Christmas cards from our students. If you would like to donate items (individually wrapped, no foil, and able to fit in a lunch size bag) we will be including the following in each bag:

- Candy bar (full size)
- Bag of chips
- Fruit treat (gummy bears or like)
- Granola bar or bag of nuts or cookie (individually wrapped)
- Few Jolly Ranchers or something like it.

Don't forget to bring a pair of socks for S.P.I.N. (Socks for People In Need) to the Christmas Pageant. December 2nd will be that last day of our collection.

Please let me know if you have any questions or would like to help with any of our activities.

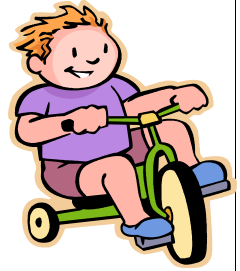
Sincerely,

Dusty Gipson

831-338-3787 home dustygipson@yahoo.com

* SAVE THE DATE: February 22-24 *
3rd—5th grade Mt. Cross Retreat

St. Stephen's Child Development Center



It's been a busy month with preparation for the coming holidays and implementation of the new school year's curriculum. The toddler teacher, Maria, has done an amazing job with her students, which most of you know, can be challenging when working with 2 & 3 year olds.

Shelia Buswell, the librarian at Vine Hill Elementary School, invited the Center to come and listen to a Halloween Story and meet Mr. Bones; a skeleton that was donated to the library from San Jose State University. What a treat and fun field trip experience for the children, parents and staff. Thank you Shelia it was fantastic!

The children had a Halloween party and a costume parade. They trick-or-treated at Pastor Jim and Leslie's offices too. Parents donated the goodies and some were able to attend the festivity. Thank you to all that came and participated.

Thank you to Kathy Berens for choosing St. Stephens CDC to obtain volunteer & observation hours for one of her college courses. What a tremendous help she has been in assisting with the Center's face lift and in heading the tricycle donation fund for the toddlers.

Volunteers are always welcome....if you know of anyone who needs undergrad hours in a course that is related to the child development field please contact me and I'll be glad to work with them in obtaining them.

Have a peaceful and blessed Christmas Season ~

Tracy Fleming, Director
cdc@ststephenslutheran.org



Dylan David Smith

Born September 30

Proud grandparents John & Rebecca Wickham



**Saturday Dec. 8
9:00 am @ church**

The Christmas holidays are almost here. I have booked the “St. Stephen’s Lutheran Church Christmas Choir” to sing carols at **three** retirement communities.

- We will be singing for the residents of **Pacific Coast Manor at 10:00 am.**
- Then we scurry over to **Driftwood Retirement Community** to sing for the folks there from **11:00 am to 11:30.** We can wander the halls afterwards for some caroling until about 12:00 noon, if we so desire.
- After that we have a **break for lunch**, and then will regroup and meet at **Kindred Health Care Center at 1:30 pm.** We’ll sing a slightly longer program there for about forty-five minutes from **2:00 pm to 2:45 pm.**

Please arrive at St. Stephen’s Church no later than 9:00 am . We will provide music books for you. I’ll hold a quick rehearsal of the carols that we plan to sing and then we’ll be off. **Dress festively and feel free to bring sleigh bells** (if you have them), or car keys to jingle when we sing the appropriate songs.

Please pencil the date into your December calendars if you’re interested. I hope many of you can join in the caroling. It’s always a very gratifying experience to witness the power of music, particularly during the Christmas holidays. Many of the residents love it when we come, especially when we ask them to sing along and include them in the performance.

In peace,
Suzanne Duval

Blue Christmas Worship Service

Sunday, December 16^h at 7 p.m.

St. Stephen's will be offering a Blue Christmas Service -- a time when the "blue" feelings many people experience during the holidays can be acknowledged.

This is not a joyous season for everyone. Greetings of Merry Christmas or Happy Holidays, non-stop shopping, parties, and other traditional ways of celebrating the holidays often contrast sharply with the feelings of people for whom it's not "the most wonderful time of the year." For families suffering from the recent or impending death of loved ones or in crisis due to illness or any other kind of loss, or for those who suffer from **Christmas** depression or other mental illness, it **can be a very isolated and lonely time.**

In this Blue Christmas Service, all those who are not having a very Merry Christmas for whatever reason, and the friends who support them, are invited to come and be with one another in a liturgy that speaks of the compassionate love of God for His hurting people. **Together we will offer up our pain, sorrow, anxiety, and loneliness** to the One whose birth we commemorate -- our Lord Jesus Christ.

It is our prayer that those who attend will be blessed with peace, hope, and especially the comfort of knowing they are not alone and deeply loved by God.



Gifts that keep on giving

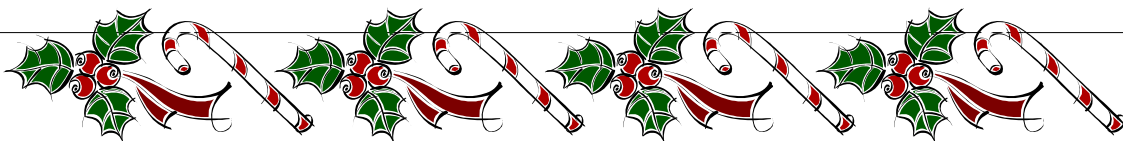
See lwrgifts.org or 800-597-5972 or elca.org/good gifts 800-638-3522 for meaningful gifts that inspire leadership, nourish the hungry, and heal the sick . Including LWR fair trade coffee & chocolate!



Circle's Christmas Boutique & Bake Sale

Sunday, Dec. 2nd from 8:00 to noon

We will need: breads, cakes, pies, candy, nuts, and craft items too. Please wrap your baked goods in cellophane and tie with a red or green ribbon. Boutique items can be brought between 1:00 and 3:00 Saturday. Baked goods no later than Sunday 8:00 am. We will price items.



Friendship Christmas Party

Dec. 9th at 5:30 pm

Lu Sluiter's Home—141 Cabrillo St., Capitola

Bring: Finger food (not dessert) to share & beverage
and a wrapped gift for the fun-filled exchange game!

MM / RR Circle Christmas Luncheon

Thursday, December 13 @ Noon

Please join us at the home of Lu Sluiter (141 Cabrillo St., Capitola).

Lu Sluiter and Lois Meeker are preparing a soup luncheon.

All ladies are invited to attend & you need not bring a thing!



THRIVENT BUILD ON PARK PLACE IN SANTA CRUZ

We are pleased to announce that **Thrivent Financial for Lutherans** has awarded a matching grant of \$125,000 to **Habitat for Humanity Santa Cruz County** to build a home on **Park Place in Santa Cruz!** The local Thrivent Chapter, Thrivent representative (Mary Elizabeth Bellizzi) and the Lutheran churches in Santa Cruz County provided letters or emails of support which had a very positive influence on the selection committee. Habitat for Humanity Santa Cruz County has committed to raise \$100,000, and the Thrivent Chapter will raise \$25,000 with the help of local churches and other organizations. Donations can be either monetary or gifts in kind (material or professional labor). The home must be completed by the end of 2013 to qualify to receive this grant. More will follow in next month's newsletter.

Thanks to all who supported this effort!

Ron Buswell, member of St. Stephen's & Habitat BOD President

Stewards of the Month

Santa Cruz al Salvador Leaders

Year after year these folks keep our congregation in meaningful relationship with our brothers and sisters in Christ in Guillermo Ungo, El Salvador. We enjoyed a wonderful Pupusa lunch, and they organize and carry out other ways we can contribute to the scholarships and health care center that we support there. Soon they will lead delegations back to the villages, bring letters, prayers, much needed supplies, and renew our friendships once again. They follow the way of Jesus which lifts up those who many have forgotten and work for justice on behalf of the poor. Thank you for inspiring us with your witness of faith put into action and keeping us close to our neighbors who live so far from us.



Poinsettia Sale

This year's Poinsettias are sold to support our Pre School. You will have a dedication printed in the bulletin on Christmas Eve. The plants will grace the sanctuary during Christmas services, and then you will be able to bring you plant home to enjoy for the rest of the holiday season. Sign up, or call the office.

\$15 to "St. Stephens" with memo stating "Poinsettia" by Dec. 9.



The Season of Giving

This holiday season, **we thank everyone who has supported St. Stephen's this past year with their time, talent and financial contributions** and look forward to support from all of our members in the year ahead. If you need a convenient way to make regular offerings or if you plan to make an additional gift before the end of the year, **we encourage you to**

check out our electronic giving options. As the pace of life speeds up, especially around the holidays, you may find electronic giving a most welcome way to make contributions. Contact Janet Slay 475-5668 for more information.

2013 Offering Envelopes Are Here

Please pick them up in the narthex.

Remember to bring your "Giving Card" and "Time & Abilities" sheet and place it in the offering plate any Sunday during worship.

BOOK CLUB

Date: Saturday, January 26

Time: 10:30 am

Place: Fireside Room

Book: “To Heaven and Back” A Doctor’s extraordinary account of her death, heaven, angels and life again. By Mary C. Neal, M.D.

Questions: Contact Candace 476-9753 or Kathy 430-6359



September, 2012

Dear St. Stephen’s,

Thank you so much for sending me to Mt. Cross to be in the two week “counselor in training” program. I had such a wonderful time and met so many great people. Most importantly, I became a better leader and became closer to God. So, thank you again for making that experience happen for me. I’m sure my parents are very happy also to have the support you gave to me.

Love, Rachel Lapp (16 yrs old)

+++++

Dear St. Stephen’s,

Thank you for sending me to Mt. Cross. It was very fun. I got to go hiking, swimming, archery, and a lot of other things that were very fun. My brother Kyle was my counselor!

Love, Nathan Lapp (9 yrs old)



El Salvador Sister Parish News

The Santa Cruz al Salvador Board wishes to extend a great big thank you to all of you for your continued support and your willingness to help build relationships with your prayer child. The Pupusa meal was a great success, not only in funds raised but in the fellowship. There was a lot of energy in that room!

By the time you read this, the first delegation will have returned from El Salvador. It was small - Just Kent Madsen and 2 people from Advent Lutheran in Morgan Hill. Attending graduation was the highlight. A full report, as always, will be in a few months.

The Lutheran Church of El Salvador: Ruth Cruddas attended a **Sister Parish 'Encontro" (Encounter") sponsored by the Lutheran Church of El Salvador** for all of their international sponsors. Stay tuned to news about that. Something you will be hearing about in 2013 **is a project led by the Synod's Global Mission Advocacy Team (GMAT).** The Synod Council gave GMAT approval to raise money for **the El Salvador Pastor's Endowment Fund. This is a fund held by the Lutheran Foundation for the purpose of having money for pastor's salaries.** You will receive a letter in January telling you more about this.

To all Sponsors - the delegation leaving Jan. 1 will have a medical focus, **holding several 'clinic days'.** They will also be present at the scholarship ceremony. This is when we distribute the school supplies,

(Sister Parish Continued)

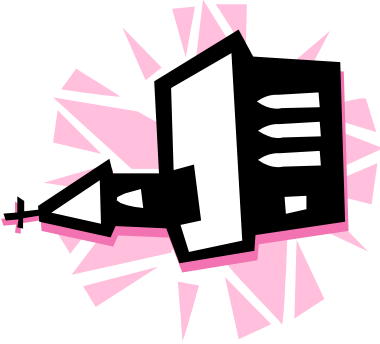
scholarship ceremony. This is when we distribute the school supplies, and give the children the small gift bag, letter & picture that you promised to send when you signed your commitment card. (Remember that promise?) Please get your gift bag to Ruth in a 1 gal storage bag (no larger than that) by Dec. 23 - the Sunday before Christmas. Suggested items: t-shirt, sleeveless tops for girls, pens, pencils, hair and **nail stuff for girls, candy treats (that don't melt), yo-yo's & other small toys, etc.**

Health kits: washcloth, toothbrush, toothpaste. Place these items and any of the OTC items listed below in the blue basket in the narthex.

Commitment Card - **If you haven't already turned in your Prayer Child Commitment Card**, please do so as soon as possible. For those of you who do not have a prayer child and are interested please contact Chris Madsen or Ruth Cruddas. We should be getting more names in February.

Thank you again for your continued support of our work in El Salvador.

Feliz Navidad, from
Your El Salvador representatives.



ST. STEPHEN'S WORSHIP SCHEDULE

8:15 am Worship Service

9:30 am Adult Forum & Choir Rehearsal

10:30 am Worship Service

Children's Church

Coffee Hour

St Stephen's Lutheran Church
2500 Soquel Avenue
Santa Cruz, CA 95062

Non-Profit Org.
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**NEWSLETTER WAS SENT ON
November 26, 2012**