



ST. STEPHEN'S SUNDAY WORSHIP SCHEDULE

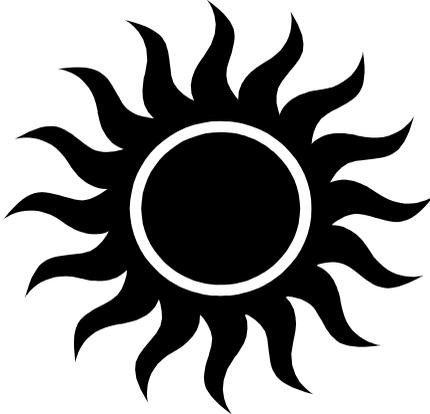
8:15 am Worship Service
Coffee Hour
9:30 am Choir rehearsal & Adult Forum
10:30 am Worship Service
& Sunday School

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

Non-Profit Org.
Postage Paid
Permit #79
Soquel, CA 95073

**POST OFFICE:
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PLEASE DO NOT DELAY
NEWSLETTER WAS SENT ON
Dec. 16, 2010**

St. Stephen's Lutheran Church



Sun

Celebrating 55
Years of Ministry
January 2011

ONE SERVICE
Sunday, January 30 at 9:30 am
 Followed by the
Annual Congregational Meeting @ 10:45
 (a light brunch will be served & nursery care provided)

We gather together to envision and plan for the future of our church. We will elect leadership, elect two voting members for Synod Assembly, and approve a budget for 2011 that reflects our mission. Please plan on attending to support your church as we continue to seek God's will for our ministry together. We need 40 members to vote. It's **ONLY** once a year...See you there!

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
email—office@ststephenslutheran.org
Rev. James P. Lapp, Pastor

Ministers: The Entire Congregation
Church Council: Pres.—Paul Powers, V.P.- Robin Gloe,
Sec.— Scott Medling, Treas.— Tom Eagle,
Bill Schraft, Don Smawley, Marta Bechhoefer,
Mark Linder, and Jeanette Dawson
Directors of Music: Suzanne Duval
& Gary Roberts
Custodian: John Hopping
Church Administrator: Leslie Lapp
Children's Minister: Dusty Gipson
Youth Minister: Lydia Ablor
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.

(ES Continued)

Another highlight was the day and a half of working in the clinic providing free consultations by the three doctors in our delegation (George Bunch, Kent Imai and Tim Friedrichs), physical therapy by Mitch Ronning, and dispensing medications by Jill and Wayne Adachi. Other members who helped in the clinic were Lisa Johnson from St. Stephen's, Vera Hope, Sarah Macway, David and Weston Gomez from Trinity Presbyterian and Walker Jones, Lisa's nephew who attends Pitzer. Lee Duffus from Trinity helped with crowd control. Mike Crudas and Tom Dunham applied fluoride treatments to about 90 children while Marie Imai and Emily Duffus entertained the children and their parents with games and bubble wands.

First time members (Kent, Marie, Vera, and Wayne) as well as previous delegation members met and spent quality time with their prayer child. During meal time in the homes of our prayer children, we learned about the life experiences of our host/hostess. We all felt a little closer to our Salvadoran family as our relationships deepen and we promised to keep them in our prayers and visit again, Dios quiere. (God willing). It was difficult to say our good-bye's.

The January delegation will participate in the scholarship awards and take pictures for us to enjoy upon their return. They will also hold VBS in a couple of different communities. The theme of VBS is 'The Good Samaritan' and the craft project will be Friendship Bracelet's and decorating picture frames with photos of each individual participate.

We look forward to sharing more stories with you in the near future. Thank you for your continued support of our work in El Salvador.

Your El Salvador representatives.

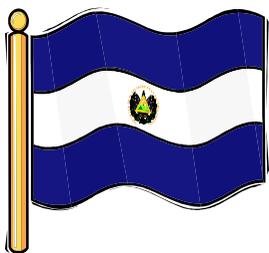
***“Administer true justice;
show mercy and compassion to one another”*** Zechariah 7:9

Faith is active in love. Love calls for justice in society.

Justice is love applied to many neighbors. "Doing justice" means addressing inequities in political, economic and social systems. It means more than acting out of a sense of charity, or making a donation or volunteering our time.

Through programs, ministries, and in our daily lives, ELCA members are dedicated to understanding God’s work for justice in the world. We advocate dignity and justice for all people and stand with people in poverty and who are powerless. We lift our voice from an ethic of discipleship and willingness to speak for others as a matter of faith.

We participate in activities that relieve misery and result in peace and reconciliation in local communities and among nations.



El Salvador Sister Parish News

How wonderful it is that we have had two delegations this past year. Interest is growing and more people have indicated that they would like to visit El Salvador to meet their prayer child. Know that your prayer child is very interested in meeting you and many have asked us when their ‘madrina’ or ‘padrino’ will visit. We know that not everyone who has a prayer child can make this commitment so your prayers, cards, letters, gifts and support are very much appreciated.

In November the delegation members attended the graduation ceremonies again for the second year in a row. Judith Dunham from Advent in Morgan Hill and Ruth Cruddas from St. Stephen's were invited to participate in the handing out of diplomas to students graduating from K to 1st grade, 9th into high school and high school graduates.

From Pastor Jim

Sometimes I feel like we should change our name to “Epiphany Lutheran Church” because of all the bright lights that seem to be shining in and through our congregation. Epiphany is the season when we celebrate the Light of Christ that is among us and I see it all over the place.



There were so many things going on in Advent - children showing us the Christmas Story in costume and bringing good news to those in jail with Christmas goodie bags, the dedication of new finely crafted Chrismons (Christ - Monograms) and the beautiful symbols they bring to our worship life as they adorn our tree, adult forums that deepen our appreciation of our fellow churchgoers faith journeys and our worship life together, TWO pilgrimages to visit our sister parish in El Salvador and the sharing of medical and other skills and abilities with a people who have little health care, 75 Christmas gifts and hand-knitted warming things for migrant farmworker children on our North Coast who live in drafty and inadequate housing, work towards a new Live Oak Family Resource Center facility nearing completion, beginning work with COPA toward a new Youth Center at Shoreline Middle School that will at least duplicate the Boys and Girls Club facility and program downtown, continued COPA work toward an expanded Sheriff’s Activity League that gives many youth and children alternative and positive choices, role models and expectations through various free sports programs, continued work and expanded vision towards meeting the needs of seniors in our community by providing affordable housing on our land...It’s been an amazing Advent which will lead to an even more amazing Epiphany season! You are the Light of Christ!!!

January Happenings

Text Study & Sermon Talk

Join Pr Jim and reflect on the previous sermon and look at the current text. Tuesdays @ 11:00

Mary Martha/Ruth Rebecca

Thursday, Jan 13, 10:30 AM

Habitat for Humanity Lunches

Tuesday, Jan 11 @ 10:30 AM

Church Council

Monday, Jan 17, 7-9 PM

Band

Meets every Thurs at 6:30 PM

Knitting

Meets every Thurs at 6:45 PM

COPA Retreat

Jan. 16-17

CPR Class

Jan. 29, 8am—5pm Fell. Hall
Sponsored by the Boy Scouts
Call office for more info.

Dinner Groups

Sat. Jan. 29 — in homes

**Benevolence Offering =
Homeless Service Center**

Council Highlights

1. Our devotions centered around reflecting on Luke 2:19 “And Mary pondered all of these things in her heart”. We took some time to remember the words of the hymn “O Little Town of Bethlehem” - ‘How silently, how silently, the wondrous gift is given.’ This led us to spend some time in silent prayer with one another as we pondered in our hearts what it means to be the least anxious person around as leaders in the church. We asked God to make known God’s gifts to us so that we could become gifts to others.
2. We approved a new three-year lease with Growing Years preschool at the same rate of \$1500 per month and a third of all utilities. People cited the fact that the preschool serves low-income families and special needs children as reasons to renew our relationship at the same rates. These are unique aspects of the preschool that are rare in Santa Cruz County and they coincide with the mission of our church. Also, enrollment has been flat and tuition has been lowered to stay even with the preschool that opened up adjacent to the church.
3. A balanced budget for 2011 was approved by the council to be presented to the congregation with very little changes from last year.
4. Pledges form our Stewardship emphasis increased from 42 to 52 (50% of households) this year and also increased by about \$14,000 over last year for a total of @\$126,000.
5. We will vote on the Option to Lease Agreement with Mid-Peninsula Housing Corp. (non-profit) at our Congregational meeting Jan. 30th. This will move us into the planning phase of building 27-30 units of affordable senior housing on our vacant lot.

(continued)

This kind of behavior is also possible when it comes to giving. We might like to convey the impression that we are “good givers,” and we might be reasonably successful in our efforts since other people usually do not actually “see” our financial situation and our giving. However, if we are trying to say one thing and do another concerning our giving to the Lord, we will be confronted by our deception every time we look at the register in our checkbook. Here’s why: Our checkbook will quickly and methodically strip away our pretense. We can deceive others; we can even deceive ourselves in many areas of life, but our checkbook always tells the truth about what is really important to us.

The Apostle Paul summed up this matter with this statement: the testimony of our conscience should be that “. . . we have behaved in the world with . . . godly sincerity, not by earthly wisdom but by the grace of God” (2 Cor. 1:12). In other words, by walking in holiness and sincerity that God provides in response to our obedience, what we do will match what we say, including in the area of giving.

Think about it: If your checkbook could talk, what would it say about you and about your giving to the work of the Lord at St. Stephen’s Lutheran Church? Would it testify that you are walking in holiness and sincerity in your giving, or would it have a different story to tell?



WHY OUR OFFERINGS ARE IMPORTANT

“Faithful Stewards of God’s Infinite Grace”

Nobody likes a hypocrite. The idea of someone saying that we should all be a certain way, and then they themselves doing the exact opposite, immediately turns us off. We have no respect for such people and we consequently reject whatever it was that they were saying.

We see this in the political realm frequently when a certain candidate promises to govern in a certain way and then faced with certain circumstances does not deliver on that promise. We also see it in the church. Church leaders have in been caught in various scandals that are in direct opposition with what they may have been saying others ought or ought not to do.

When it comes to the Christian life, sometimes we, too, say one thing and do another. We receive the grace of God freely and are loved by God unconditionally, but sometimes find it hard to be gracious and loving toward others. We pretend that everything is going well with us and put on a happy face when we really may be going through a difficult personal time and need the support of the church community. Instead of being honest, seeking out others, and coming to worship more regularly, we drift away and convince ourselves that nobody really cares and that we’re too busy to be in church. And sometimes we pretend to love other Christians, when, in reality, we can’t stand some of them.



January Birthdays

- | | | | |
|------|------------------|------|----------------|
| 1-1 | Nathan Lapp | 1-21 | Chris Turzo |
| 1-10 | Colby Hanson | 1-25 | Neil Crews |
| 1-11 | Mitch Crews | 1-27 | Crystal Hintze |
| 1-12 | Linda Hix | | |
| 1-13 | Mary Jane Hoch | | |
| 1-13 | Jennifer Robe | | |
| 1-14 | Sofia Bartee | | |
| 1-14 | TJ vonSchmacht | | |
| 1-17 | Laura Hayes | | |
| 1-17 | Emily Valencia | | |
| 1-18 | Patricia Travers | | |



- 1-5 Jim & Susan vonSchmacht
1-20 Don & Doris Ray
1-24 Lindsey & Becky Cramer

Prayer Concerns:

Short Term: Sonja Peterson & family, June Boudreau, Renie Leaman, Kathybell, Greg Weber, Bill Schraft, Carmen Harper, Opa Meerman, Dan Meck family, Kaitlyn Cahill, Jill Lapp, Richard Wedemeyer, Madaline Massa, Joshua, Susan Holton, Pastor Martir, Marino, Marge, Artie, Babe, Marsha, Mark, Kevin, Stefan, Claudia, Ione H., Jacob, Bowen Family, Nana Jan, Steve, Daniel, Lorena, family & friends of Bob Nelson.

Long Term: Robe Family, Kaitlyn McKinney, Clint & Bonnie, Maya & Emma, Chrissy DeStefano, Nicco Hall DeStefano, Betty, Faith Conrad, Paul Hayes family, Cathi Decker, JoAnn, Eric Hedsrom, Jim Boone, George Trippel, Jean Weiland, Carla Spain, Mildred Belle, Linda Taylor, family of John Cahill, Ron Buswell, Dorothy Ronning, Bonnie Hansen, Jon & Judy, Peggy, Ned R., Devin Barlow, Alison Barlow, Dorothy Anderson, Shirley Fuqua, Greg & Allison Pate, Aravella, Michelle & CJ Muchanic, Suzanne Podolski, Wayne Jackson, Martha Beito, Chelsea Rocha Family, Brooks & Glenn Leaman, Bob Heppe, Jeffery Patterson, Mark Gregory, Chiris Tury, Cheryl Bayne, Vince Catalano, Jeanette Howe, Ron Waltrip, Jo Wishart, Cathy Yost, the jobless, Sister Parish, the youth, our troops, Pres. Obama & family, Peace & Healing for the earth.



Youth Corner

I hope everyone had a wonderful Christmas and a lot of fun ringing in the New Year! I always look forward to the New Year as a chance for a new beginning, and a chance to make a positive change in my life. Have you made a New Years' resolution? Mine is to improve the quality of my life and health, and that of those around me to the fullest of my ability. I'm looking forward to this New Year and new Youth Group season, and hope that you are too!

I would like to start with a Parents' meeting again, to compare schedules and plan out our meetings for the Spring season. Please bring your calendars and suggestions, as well as any suggestions your Youth may have for activities they would like to do. I will be sending out an email reminder, and making calls to find out when the most parents will be available for this meeting, so please be on the look-out for updates!

Just a couple of things to think about working in again this year:

Youth Retreat at PLTS - March

Easter Breakfast- late April

Easter Lilly sales

Western States Youth Gathering July 1-5

Wishing you all a year filled with health and happiness!

Peace, Lydia Abler c: 408.319.1413

Thank you for your faithful support St. Stephens! As Christians, we are sent by God into the world in a variety of ways, reaching out to the hungry, the sick, the oppressed, extending God's love and mercy to those in need. Whether through quilts and kits, Fair Trade coffee and chocolate, or generous gifts of time and money, we serve God through service to our neighbor.

As you know, LWR's ministries provide Christ's healing presence to suffering people, offering hope where disaster, war and injustice prevail and empowering people to marshal their own resources to create better lives for their families and communities. Thank you for being part of this important life of service.

At LWR we envision a world where each person and every generation lives in justice, dignity and peace. To move toward that vision, we must constantly challenge ourselves to remain aware of the needs of the world and to put our faith into action to address those needs. By choosing to serve your neighbor and organizing your congregations around this call to service, you are supporting LWR and our many shared ministries that send children to school, enable farmers to grow healthier, more diverse crops, and empower women and men to change their communities for the better

In Christ, John A. Nunes
President and CEO

To learn more about our work see www.lwr.org

Dinner Groups

**Sat, January 29
and / or
Sat, February 5**



These are great times of fellowship for us to help build our sense of Christian community by sharing a meal and good conversation together! Groups are 6-10 people, potluck to gourmet feast...host decides! Sign up in church for which date(s) you are available and if you can host!

For more info call Jill Adachi 426-5950

STEWARDS OF THE MONTH

Sherilyn Jager, Jean Peterson & Carol Bobo

We thank our regular office volunteers for their weekly commitment and the extra work they put in over the holidays. What a faithful witness they provide assisting our Church Administrator, Leslie, by cheerfully giving their time and abilities. They remind us that we all are created to live as givers because we come from the One who gave us everything and then gave us his life.

Sunday School News



I hope that you all had a wonderful Christmas holiday filled with family, friends and love. What a wonderful performance! I am so proud of the hard work of our Sunday School students, families and friends who made the Christmas Pageant a success again this year. Thank you to everyone.

During our November classroom discussions our students came to the conclusions that one of the things we should be most thankful for was the free will that God has given us. They talked about that with free will we can make our own choices about a lot of things (not just following God or not) and that we will bear the consequences of those choices, good or bad. They also realized that while we might make choices that turn away from God he continues to love us, although sometimes it is hard to feel like that. Wow! I was so amazed at this conversation. I was kind of just expecting them to be thankful for family, friends and pets. Just after that an interesting idea was brought to our attention through Pastor Jim. We were blessed with the opportunity to provide Christmas goody bags for the inmates of the Santa Cruz County Jail via the Chaplain, Rev. Karla Norton. The kids decorated and filled 50 bags with various treats for the inmates and I delivered them just before Christmas. I couldn't think of a more appropriate follow-up to our Thanksgiving discussions and conclusions. We are all so happy to have the chance to remind someone that they are loved, even when we make mistakes.

This month we plan to explore what the childhood of Jesus might have been like. We will explore his life through games, food and a look at typical family life and education. During our last Sunday this month we will begin our Valentine card preparation. We will be delivering our handmade cards to convalescent homes in Santa Cruz on Sunday February 13th after church. We welcome anyone who would like to join us in this fun project. Please let me know if you have any questions or concerns about our program.

Sincerely, Dusty Gipson 831-338-3787 home dustygipson@yahoo.com

Mary Martha / Ruth Rebecca Circle

**Thursday, January 13
10:30 am Fireside Room**

Please join us for an interesting presentation by Ms. Debbie Brooks, of the Santa Cruz Volunteer Center. Debbie will speak about the ways we can volunteer in the New Year!

Bring your own sandwich. Coffee and dessert provided.
Hostesses: Doris Ray and Joanne Freymuth

All women are welcome!

Sunday Adult Forum

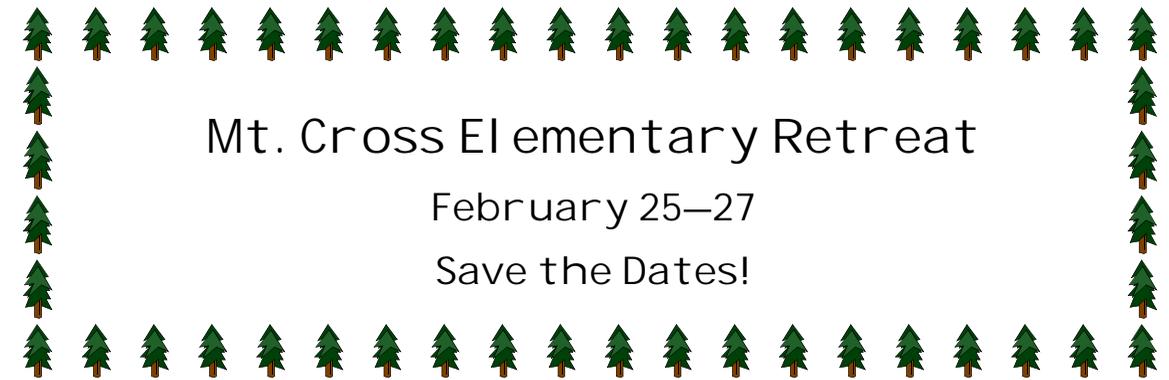
**January 9 through
February 27**



**9:30 am
Fireside room**

“Living the Questions”

Join Pastor Jim as we take some time to deepen our walk of faith by asking some of the harder questions of life. We will use a critically acclaimed DVD series with some of the leading Biblical scholars and thinkers to stimulate our discussions.



Mt. Cross Elementary Retreat

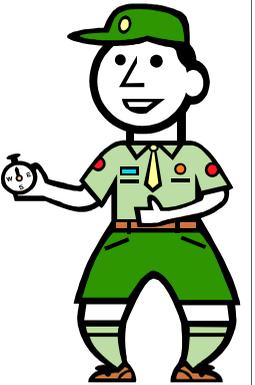
February 25–27

Save the Dates!

Thank you Boy Scout Troop 633 -

With the amount of traffic our facility sees each week, the carpet takes a beating as do the vacuum cleaners. Thus, we are especially grateful for the Boy Scouts generous donation... a very nice, brand new, commercial “Sanitaire”!

We also owe them thanks for helping us spruce up when our Bishop came to town. Trimming the hedges is a tough job for anyone!!! Yeah, Scouts!



Financials

<u>Income</u>	Nov '10	Nov '09	Jan- Nov '10	Jan-Nov '09	Jan-Nov Budget
Contrib.	\$15,976	\$19,105	\$196,251	\$200,026	\$207,263
Misc.	\$368	\$352	\$7,766	\$6,412	\$5,040
Total	\$16,344	\$19,457	\$204,017	\$206,438	\$212,303
<u>Expenses</u>					
Total	\$15,877	\$16,259	\$207,689	\$209,757	\$213,635
<u>Net Inc.</u>	\$467	\$3,198	-\$3,672	-\$3,319	-\$1,332