

**ST. STEPHEN'S
FALL WORSHIP SCHEDULE**

- 8:15 am Worship Service
and Coffee Fellowship
- 9:30 am Adult Forum
Choir rehearsal
- 10:30 am Worship & Children's Church
and Coffee Fellowship

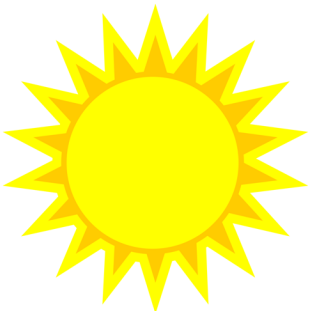
**NEWSLETTER WAS SENT ON
November 25, 2019**

**POST OFFICE:
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St Stephen's Lutheran Church
2500 Soquel Avenue
Santa Cruz, CA 95062

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St. Stephen's Lutheran Church



SUN

December 2019


Celebrating 65 Years of Ministry

The Season of Advent

Dec. 1, 8 (children's program), **15** (Ariose Singers), & **22**
Advent means "coming". It is a season of preparation. We prepare our hearts for the coming of Christ. This is a joyous time when God's people join in the excitement, anticipation, and enthusiasm of the sights and sounds of the holiday season. We will observe the tradition of lighting the Advent Wreath and adorning the tree with the Chrismons (Christian symbols) We will also pray for those who may not have a church home with the intention of inviting them to Christmas Eve Service.

**Tues., Dec. 24 Christmas Eve
Candlelight Evening Worship**

5:00 & 7:30 pm



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. — Renee Rice V.P.— Robert Bartee
Secretary - Treasurer— Kent Madsen
David Balogh, Jeanette Dawson,
Jay Johnston, Bill Schraft, and Rebecca Wickham
Directors of Music: Suzanne Duval & Gary Roberts
Sunday School: Leslie Lapp
Pre-School Director: Kathy Berens
Custodian: John Hopping
Church Administrator: Leslie Lapp
Office Open: Mon.—Thurs. 8:30am—2:30pm
Pastor Jim's Office Hours — Weds. & Thurs. 10 am to 1 pm
Pastor Jim's Cell Phone: [REDACTED] (Call 9a- 5p M-Thurs, or emergencies)
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.

VISION STATEMENT

To become an energetic, inclusive, multigenerational, multicultural,
missional community that offers, hope, joy, worship, service, play,
and life as disciples of Jesus Christ

Planning For the Holidays . . .

ELCA Good Gifts — Order now!

See lwrgifts.org 1-800-597-5972 or Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service
LIRS.org 877-291-7061 for meaningful gifts that inspire leadership, nourish the
hungry, and heal the sick . Including LWR fair trade coffee.

Gift Tree - Lutheran World Relief Baby Care Kits

Choose a tag from the tree in the narthex. Sleepers/PJs and hooded sweatshirt/
jackets, in specific sizes. More info MMRR pg. 10

SPIN: Socks for People in Need

New socks are a blessing for many reasons, especially health, but also because
they provide comfort and a sense of dignity. By assoc. of Faith Communities.

Poinsettias to honor loved ones — by Dec. 16

Sign up to help decorate the sanctuary & support our church ministry.

Saint Nick's Day goodies for our Senior Neighbors

We will be collecting candy canes, hershey kisses, and nuts. Our children will be
making cards. We will have a stealthy pm delivery on Dec. 5.

Holiday Boutique & Bake Sale — Dec. 15

We will need: breads, cakes, pies, candy, nuts & craft items.

Santa Cruz Chorale — Dec. 21 at 8:00 pm & Dec. 22 at 4pm
Holy Cross Church

Children's Christmas Pageant — Dec. 8 @ 10:30
Dress Rehearsal Dec. 7

Christmas Eve Worship — Dec. 24 @ 5:00 & 7:30 pm



Advent Wreath

Growing up Lutheran, an Advent Wreath has always been part of counting the weeks until Christmas. It was exciting to watch each week as the wreath which hung from velvet ropes, was lowered from the ceiling so that an acolyte could light the next candle. It has been my pleasure and privilege to construct the Advent Wreath for St. Stephen's these past years. This year as I thought about the wreath I wondered why this tradition became part of the Lutheran church so I did some research and I decided to share the information I found with you.

Advent means "the arrival". The symbol of the wreath helps us to focus on and remember the promised arrival of our Savior, Jesus and his promised return. The four candles on the wreath signify hope, peace, joy, and love, and the wreath itself is a circle of living greens to signify God's infinite love for mankind. The candle in the middle, the fifth candle is lit on Christmas Eve as a symbol of Christ's coming into the world. This is known as the Christ Candle.

But, what is the origin of the Wreath? Johann Hinrich Wichern was a Lutheran Missionary in Hamburg, Germany in 1833 where he ministered to the poor. He founded a school for neglected and orphaned children to feed, house and educate them. During the time leading up to Christmas, the children could not contain their excitement. To help them wait patiently Johann created the first Advent wreath. The first wreath had 24 candles. The four largest were white and lit on one of the four Sundays leading up to Christmas. The twenty smaller candles that circled the wreath were red and one was lit each day during daily prayers until Christmas Eve when the entire wreath was lit.

The tradition of lighting the Advent wreath spread throughout Germany. As the tradition evolved, the number of candles lessened so that there were only four white candles, one for each Sunday leading up to Christmas. In 1930 the Custom of the Advent Wreath spread to North America.

It is because of the historical significance of using white candles on the early wreaths that we use white candles on our Advent wreath at St. Stephen's. So this year as we lit each candle on the wreath and wait for Christmas I hope you will all take time out of your busy lives to give thanks and remember that Jesus came into this world as a baby and lived among us, died for us and rose again and we wait for the day that He will come again.

This year I am dedicating the Advent Wreath to my mother, Kathryn Lewis Greso, who started me on my faith journey. - Barbara Johnston

from Pastor Jim...



This past month we observed the 30th anniversary of one of the most horrific events in El Salvador's history and modern church history, when 6 Jesuit priests, their housekeeper and her teenage daughter were brutally murdered in the middle of the night. What made it even more horrible was that it was carried out by a group of soldiers who had been trained by our government. They were targeted for speaking out against the violence that they saw the poor experiencing as they tried to organize themselves for better lives.

Most times that our delegation goes to visit our sister parish in El Salvador, part of the itinerary is to visit the Pastoral Centre of the University where this atrocity took place. One of the more sobering experiences is viewing photographs of the unimaginable scene in the garden area where the bodies were found, and then walking through the same garden later on.

For me, it is something that will always be etched in my memory, along with visiting the chapel where Archbishop Oscar Romero was assassinated by a soldier with a machine gun as he celebrated Holy Communion at the altar. More recently, the same feelings, questions and commitments to fight against these things surfaced during my visit to Flossenburg, Germany to pay my respects to Rev. Dietrich Bonhoeffer's witness of faith as he was executed at the concentration camp there for his participation in a plot to assassinate Hitler.

Advent is a short season, but is filled with messages from the prophets about how God wants there to be justice for the poor and vulnerable and peace among the nations. This is in direct contrast to the values of whatever current empire is in physical power in our world and lives, where only the strong and well-off survive and deserve a better life.

As we prepare to send off another delegation to strengthen our relationships with our dear friends in El Salvador and continue to work for God's ways of justice and peace so that those things never happen again, and as we enter the hopeful anticipation of Advent, we are reminded of the very serious nature of the pursuit of the Christian faith. There are signs once again that the forces of empire in our own nation need to be held in contrast and accountable to the ways that our Creator hopes for us to live in. May our watching and waiting not be a passive endeavor that tacitly approves the things that led to the instances I shared above. May our focus stay strong and may we be willing to also put our lives on the line when it comes to speaking out for what is true, what is right and what is just. Amen.

December Happenings

Knitting Group

Thursdays at 6:45pm

Alcoholics Anonymous

Fridays at 7:00 pm

Alanon Family Group

Saturdays at 10:00 am

Finance Committee

Dec. 6 @ 8:30 am

Church Council

Dec. 11 @ 6:30 pm

MMRR Circle

Dec. 12 @ 10:30

Embroider's Guild

Dec. 16 @ 7 pm

Women's Café Group

Dec. 18 @ 6:00 pm off site

Newsletter Collating

Dec. 19 @ 10:00 am

Provide Habitat Lunches

Jan. 27 @ 10:30 am

*Please sign up to help on Sundays
Coffee Hosts
and
Ushers needed*

Council Highlights

1. Devotions were from the book From the Steeple to the Street. We remembered that we are in a "Post-Christendom" society and that we will have to stop relying on typical ways to welcome new people, as we move toward possibly beginning a fresh expression of the church.

2. Rev. Herb Schmidt gave us an update about our work to help the homeless through the Assoc. of Faith Communities. 30 parking places are currently being offered in other church's parking lots and the Santa Cruz police station. We can help by providing a meal once a week at the Winter Emergency Shelter at the Vets Hall on 7th Ave near the church. Look for sign-ups. He thanked the congregation for the use of two parking spots to store their truck and trailer.

3. COPA continues to work to bring affordable housing and more behavioral health services as Kaiser seeks to build a new clinic in Live Oak. We will host a Behavioral Health Civic Academy on Sat. Feb. 8th to learn more.

3. The ELCA Model Constitution was updated last August and we will be bringing the changes for approval to the Annual Meeting, which was set for Sunday, January 26 after one service worship at 9:30a.

4. Kent Madsen introduced the 2020 budget for discussion. As stated in last years motion to approve an amended budget, a task force of the Council is working on bringing a proposal for how we may fund our budget into the future.



El Salvador Sister Parish

"Building Relationships for Better Lives"

Sponsor a Student in El Salvador

This is an important part of our scholarship program -- we connect primary and secondary school scholarship recipients in El Salvador with a person or family in the U.S. who cares about them, prays for them, and takes an interest in their education and life.

It's time to think about recommitting to support your Prayer Child for 2020. Or, if you don't have a Prayer Child, there are new students who need a sponsor. Please contact Kent Madsen with questions about continuing your sponsorship, or starting a new one. We suggest a contribution of at least \$75 for each student sponsored.

We also offer sponsorships for University students. They are handled on a case-by-case basis.

Prayer Child Sponsors: It is time to be assembling your gift bag for your student. We only accept one-gallon clear zip-lock bags. Please bring them to church by December 29th and either give them to Kent Madsen or leave them by the sound board at the back of the church. There will be pages with suggestions for the gift bag in the narthex.

For Those Who Have Everything:

A Gift to Santa Cruz al Salvador in Their Honor

Again this year we have Donation Acknowledgement Cards with a picture greeting from Salvadoran children and notation inside that "A donation has been made in your honor to Santa Cruz al Salvador, mission project of area Presbyterian & Lutheran Churches." On the back is our motto: "Building Relationships for Better Lives" with an explanation that donations provide scholarships, school supplies, pure water and composting toilets in two rural poverty communities.

We hope you will consider making a donation in honor of family & friends on your Holiday gift list this year by making a donation of the amount you would have spent for their gift. Contact Kent Madsen to make donations & receive Donation Acknowledgment Card(s). Your gift supports our friends in El Salvador.

Monthly Special Benevolence Offering

December –Lutheran World Relief

This is a ministry of U.S. Lutherans serving communities living in poverty overseas. It is perhaps best known for the way it responds to the suffering induced by natural disasters. But day in and out, LWR works far beyond emergency operations. Their vision is a world in which each person, every community, and all generations live in justice, dignity and peace.

November—Santa Cruz al Salvador / Sister Parish

= \$ 276 as of 11/18

STEWARDS OF GOD'S GIFTS

Thank you to all who participated in our **Thanksgiving potluck** for our St. Stephen's Senior Housing neighbors! It is so important to be engaging in fellowship with each other. Thanks to all who brought baked goods to share with our Senior neighbors. A simple reminder that we care for them.

Thanks to the Sustainability Group folks who shared from their heart about our need to Give in Gratitude for all that God has done for us: **Mark Linder, Steven Hendrickson, Alyssa Burkhardt, Robert Barteo and Terri Adams.**

Thanks to **Don Smawley** who installed a new water spigot in the front of church, to **Matthew Barker** who installed a lock on the electric box out front, and to **Paul Cunningham** who fixed the old coffee cart for preschool to use, and to **Barbara Rice** for donating a new, lighter, and more stable coffee cart.

Adult Forum Series

Every Sunday in December at 9:30 am

“Into the Wilderness . . . Share the Good News”

Continue the journey with Pastor Jim through photos and stories. Hear how he refreshed his mind, heart & soul through the wilderness of Grand Canyon National Park on the Colorado River for two weeks with Nathan.

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 automated giving program. As the pace of life speeds up, especially around the holidays, you may find electronic giving a most welcome way to make contributions. Janet Slay 475-5668.

Your 2020 Offering envelopes are in the Narthex.

FOR A CHILD HAS
BEEN BORN FOR US.



Sunday School

Jeremiah 31:31-34 "I will write it on their hearts, and I will be their God.....I will remember their sin no more" We played with a lump of red play dough. It is so cool to be able to make it into anything you want. If we don't like what we have made, we can start over and try again. Over and over we "re-form" the dough until it becomes what we like. Just as God's love re-forms us with forgiveness. Every day God promises to be with us and to help us to live out Love in the world.

ASON GIVEN FOR US.

Ephesians 2:8-9 "Saved by Grace!" If you were on a big ship in the middle of the ocean, and you fell overboard,

what might the captain do? Would she tell you to swim to land? Would she offer to throw you a life ring only if you can prove that you are really worth saving? Would the captain ask you to climb halfway up the side of the ship and only then offer to pull you the rest of the way? Of course not! She would rescue you—period! We are like that person drowning in the ocean. God rescues us, not because of anything that we do, but simply because He loves us. We are saved by grace, just because God loves us. It's nothing that we can brag about. It is simply a wonderful gift.

Luke 19 🎵 🎵 *Zaccheas was a wee little man, and a wee little man was he. He climbed up in a Sycamore tree to see what he could see...* 🎵 🎵 Such a sweet little ditty we remember from our childhood. But the real story is that Zaccheas was a hated man. A thief. He became rich by cheating people. Yet Jesus called to him by name and chose his house to dine at. He confessed, was forgiven and was changed by Jesus. Our new friend Xavier reminded us that Jesus gives us second chances. He seeks us and saves us!

2 Thessalonians 3:6-13 "If you want to eat, you need to work." Easily proven in nature: birds migrate to the other end of the earth to find warmth and food, Squirrels bury their food for when they need it, etc. Idleness will lead to starvation. We shouldn't grumble about work, we should be grateful. We can feel a warm satisfaction when we work hard at something good. When we want to do what God desires, our lives will reflect that. Whether in church or out and about in society, we want to make sure to be productive and compassionate, rather than stirring up trouble or acting lazy and entitled.



Come, tell THE STORY with our children at the Pageant Dec. 8!



Birthdays & Anniversaries

12-2 Ken Gross	12-22 Vern	12-04 Peggy & Phil
12-6 Don Smawley	Lillehaugen	Crews
12-7 Donald Daves	12-26 Shay Barsabe	12-04 John & Kathy
12-8 Kirk Adams	12-28 Brad Tuttle	Hopping
12-8 Maryann Hurttgam	12-31 Paul	12-05 Wayne & Jill
12-11 Julie Gilbertson	Cunningham	Adachi
12-14 Sheryl Brouse	12-31 Jeanette	12-17 Alfred & Ruth
12-15 Robert Bartee	Dawson	Mitchell
12-20 Stefan Meek	12-31 Dusty Gipson	12-22 Chris & Lorie Juhl

Prayers Please

Short Term: Jean Petersen Family, Judy, People of Queensland & New South Wales, Doug Hahn, Angel Cobas, John, Susan Gross, Victor Zajdel, Lisa Baker, Iris, Stephanie Barker, Steven, Jenny Taylor, George, Kirstin, Michael, Kayla, Jim Chester, Pastor Bonnie, De Grassi Family, Jacqueline, Family of Ellen

Klinck, Yvonne Stephens, Nancy, Joyce, Eric, Sasha, Naomi, Sophie, Alan Modena, Don, Lina, Katarina, Taiyo, Mateo, Stacy Mauzey, Stephanie Jager, Cabel, Kyle, Esdras, Jackson, Joe, Pat, Riley, Shelby, Kaitlyn, Daniel, Ryder, Immigrant families, The Homeless, Our Nation's leaders, Mt. Cross, St. Stephen's Child Development Ctr, Pastor Jim and Our Church Family.

Long Term: people of the Bahamas, The Sanders Family, Sue Gibson, Ernestine Bartee, Barbara & John Bartee, Paul Compese, Linda Johnson, Bailey Ingalls, Jan Shadle, Vi Olly, Susan Anderson, Rick, Bobbie Erickson, Edna Lindquist, Richard C., Eric VonSchell, Lauri Hollist, Ken Pahel, Pat M., Gary, Brouse Family, Janet Baker, Sandy Godvine, Janelle Yung, Barry & Barbara, Chris & Lorie Juhl, Karin, Will, Chris, Pat Hubbard, Cathy, Pearl Runquist, Volpi & Robe Family, men and women of Armed Forces, the President, and the Youth of today

Mary Martha / Ruth Rebecca

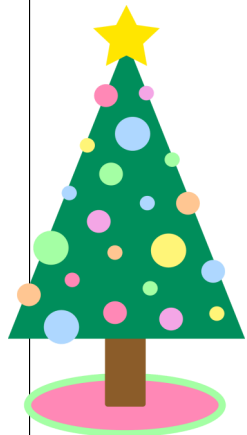
Holiday Fellowship

Thursday, Dec. 12
10:30 am in the Fireside Rm

CHRISTMAS GREETINGS! We will be having our regular meeting on December 12. All are welcome. This will include a COOKIE EXCHANGE! Would you like to have a variety of different homemade Christmas cookies this year? Just bake and bring 2 dozen of your favorite cookie recipe and have fun "swapping".



Walking into the church, you will see our usual Christmas tree hung with many paper ornaments. On each one is written an item you may wish to donate for small children in third world countries. A box is provided for these items. Please drop them (**unwrapped**) by **December 22**. The ladies of the Circle will then put together kits of items as requested by Lutheran World Relief. Thank you.



Annual Boutique & Bake Sale
Sunday, Dec. 15
8:00 am to noon in the Fireside Room

Also, On DECEMBER 15 our ladies will be having a BOUTIQUE of various decorative items as well as jewelry, Christmas items and much more at amazing prices. I hear there will be some Hummels available. Along with this a BAKE SALE of homemade delicious cakes, cookies and candy made and donated by the you and the members of the circle. We will appreciate your contributions.

Please bring you items on Saturday December 14 between 1:00 and 3:00 PM, if possible, to the fireside room where we will be arranging and pricing items for display. Thank you so much for your support, Ginny Ruble.

Child Development Center



The holiday season Halloween, Thanksgiving, and Christmas gives us the opportunity to join St. Stephen's ministries in reaching out to our neighbors, and each other in celebration and fellowship.

Following our successful parade at Halloween where we shared our children with Senior Housing, and they shared a goodie bag for each child, we kicked off our fall of neighborly sharing.

For our second year, our children joined in with the Sunday School to create turkey handprint cards to distribute at the Thanksgiving Fellowship Potluck with our neighbors in senior housing. These were combined with treats made by our church members. This year our cards read: **We are very thankful, we are very glad, for friends to meet, for food to eat, for neighbors, home and family. With Love From, The St. Stephen's Children.** One resident, a great-grandmother of one of our students, was so delighted to receive her card and is saving it with last years card. We love the generation connection on our campus.

In December, we have combined Sunday School and our Preschool to celebrate Christmas together in worship. Please save the date for our Christmas Pageant on **Sunday, December 8th at the 10:30 worship service** to enjoy this celebration of Jesus! Most of our Preschool children have signed up to perform. We are adding more songs to the program this year. The sounds of Christmas began in our halls in October, in preparation for this fellowship event.

Our St. Stephen's community continues to reach out in these ways. No matter how many of us show up for these events, the outreach of giving and sharing is our collective goal. If we bring joy to just one person's day, then we have shared the love of Jesus. In doing this we share Jesus with ourselves because the outreach of kindness brings us closer to God, and each other. We hope you can experience our next fellowship event as a community at our Christmas Pageant.

Another way our preschool is sharing is contribution to facility repair and maintenance projects. Recently, we had the floor stripped and polished, and in January we will join finances to repair the main water drainage pipe. As the preschool grows stronger, we share what we can to care for our facility.

Merry Christmas! Kathy Berens

Treasurer Notes ...
Budget Information – September 2019

	September	September	YTD	YTD	Net
	Actual	Budget	Actual	Budget	
Contribution In- come	\$11,714	\$11,745	\$109,891	\$110,465	\$-574
Facility Use In- come *	\$734	\$792	\$15,054	\$7,125	\$7,939
Investment In- come	\$3,613	\$3,583	\$31,335	\$32,250	\$-915
Total Income	\$16,061	\$16,120	\$156,280	\$149,840	6,440
Expenses	\$17,690	\$19,099	\$170,971	\$173,224	\$-2,253
Net	\$-1,629	\$-2,979	\$-14,691	\$-23,384	\$8,693

* Includes Child Development Center facility use @ \$300/month for 11 months + Miscellaneous Income. Contribution income met budget in September, but we're still recovering from lower summer contributions so the year-to-date deficit is still \$-14.7K. We have withdrawn funds from investments to meet expenses. Please consider giving more to support your congregation.

**Special funds for the Organ, Piano, Hearing Impaired,
Solar Electricity and Narthex Bathroom**

	September	Reserve	Needed to Payoff
Organ	\$0	\$20	
Piano	\$0	\$95	
Hearing Impaired Equip	\$0	\$395	
Solar Electric Payback	\$298		\$17,893
Narthex Bathroom	\$202		\$2,101

Benevolence Donations (Individual and Church)

2019 through September	
Am. Fdn. Suicide Prevention	\$615
SS Scholarships	\$497
Live Oak Resource Center	\$191
Habitat for Humanity	\$396
Mt. Cross	\$500
World Hunger	\$0
Homeless Service Center	\$189
CLU/PLTS	\$181
Lutheran Campus Ministry	\$1,035
SS CDC	\$300
El Salvador Sister Parish	\$0
Lutheran World Relief	\$0
ELCA Synod	\$970
COPA	\$1,500
Lutheran Immigration	\$0
Total	\$6,374
2019 Benevolence Target (10%)	\$14,800
% of Target	43%

Kent Madsen
Treasure

