

ST. STEPHEN'S WORSHIP SERVICE

Ready for your participation each Sunday morning.
"Together in Spirit"

Worship in the comfort of your own home.

Go to the recording at www.stephenslutheran.org

*(Print the bulletin and Celebrate so you can read, sing
and pray with Pastor Jim. Have some bread and
wine/grape juice ready for Holy Communion)*

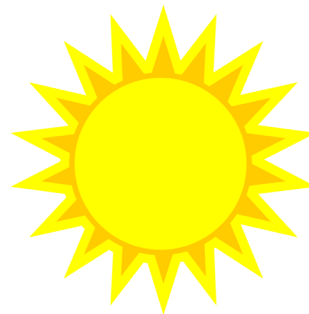
NEWSLETTER WAS SENT ON
July 30, 2020

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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

August 2020

Celebrating 66 Years of Ministry

Sunday Worship on website

We continue to record worship on Saturday mornings at 11:00. If you would like to participate, we are open to a **few people** Reading Scripture and offering the Prayers of Intercession from the Celebrate insert. Or if you would just like to come to worship, you can have an entire pew all to yourself! Call Leslie at 476-4700 to schedule your spot.

Thursday Bible Studies

Zoom with Pastor Jim
(check email on Weds. for link)
11am -12noon
and
7pm—8pm

*We will be looking at the upcoming
scripture readings for Sunday, to
enrich our worship experience and
uncover some of the deeper truths of
our faith.*



Vacation looks different than it used to. Lending to the tiredness that many of us are feeling is the fact that every decision we make has moral and ethical implications that we need to navigate.

We need to remember that getting time off and rest is important. God baked it into creation when God deemed one of the days 'sabbath' and commanded humans to keep it holy. The challenge is figuring out what rest looks like now when the demands are so many and the landscape so challenging to navigate.

Everyone's situation is unique, so we can't tell each other how to rest, but we can ask one another – 'how are you taking time off and getting rest?'. We can ask in a way that is rooted in love, in curiosity and encouragement, not guilt or shame, and then we can listen and we can encourage. May you find rest for your bodies and minds and souls in the weeks ahead – and may you invite others to do the same.

Rev. K. Grindberg, Asst. to Bishop

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 - Jay Johnston Treasurer— Kent Madsen
 David Balogh, Bill Schraft, Alyssa Burkhardt,
 Paul Cunningham, and Steven Hendrickson

Director of Music: 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

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

Dear St. Stephen's Congregation,

Hi, it's Nelleke Meerman! I grew up going to St. Stephen's from when I was 5 to 18. I am now 22 and I just graduated from Cal Lutheran in May! Starting in August I am working for a non-profit college women's ministry called Delight Ministries, serving as the West Coast Regional Director. I am currently raising support for this job and my goal is to be fully funded at \$40,000 by August 1st.

For my job, I will be mentoring Delight leaders all over the west coast and equipping them to lead this ministry on their campuses the best way possible. I serve as the point person for the leadership teams at each university and the bridge between Delight headquarters and the individual chapters. Now that you have heard the logistics, I want to tell you why I think this ministry is important.

Our world right now is full of fear and hurt. More than ever, right now college women of all different socioeconomic backgrounds, skin colors, sexual orientations and histories need a community. Delight is a community that is intended to welcome all with open arms, under all circumstances. All chapters of Delight are different because each school is different. My job and goal is to help each Delight chapter work as well as it can, and to make sure that all women feel they have a place in Delight if they would like to.

We are called to love like Jesus did- to make everyone feel seen, known, and valued. My call to ministry is to love all the women I come in contact with, to listen to what they need from this community, and to encourage my leaders to increase their perspectives to lead with humility and gentleness.

I would love to share more about my work and how you can support me financially and in prayer. Thank you for reading this, and I would love to have you on my team!

Please feel free to contact me:
 (831) 421-2645 nmeerman@delightministries.com

In Memoriam - Delores Price - 8/27/24 — 7/2020

Delores was 95 years old and had recently begun to be more tired and had begun hospice care. We were able to celebrate a contactless Holy Communion about a month ago through her backyard screen door, thanks to the help of her caregiver. She was especially grateful and happy to see to me and have the Lord's Supper one last time. She seemed to be doing well, but looking back I think she knew that it would be our last time together after many years of pastoral Holy Communion visits together. She was a former Travel Agent and was always fascinated to hear about our daughter Rachel's travels and adventures. She was a faithful member of the Mary/Martha, Ruth/Rebecca Circle and kept in touch even when she became homebound. We are keeping her daughter Jennifer (Atkinson) Parsons in our prayers as their family grieves together. No services are planned at this time.

American Foundation for Suicide Prevention

Dear St. Stephen's, Thank you for your contribution of \$305 for the Overnight Walk—NYC. We are honored to partner with you in fulfilling our mission of saving lives and bringing hope. Your investment allows us to continue to create a culture that is smart about mental health and build initiatives to further understand and prevent suicide.

More than 47,000 people die by suicide in the US each year, making it the 10th leading cause of death. Through our research, education, advocacy, and loss support programs, AFSP has become the leading national organization dedicated to preventing loss of life by suicide. Our recently launched Project 2025 is focusing on critical areas that can reduce suicide the fastest and help us achieve our bold goal to reduce the suicide rate 20% by 2025. With the support of the community and donors like you, AFSP is able to develop and implement life-saving strategies that will have the greatest impact.

As the leading private funder of suicide research, recently invested in 26 new research studies, bringing our currently funded research to more than 18 million dollars. We also continue to meet the needs of the community through a nationwide network of 75 chapters, with chapters in all 50 states. Staff and volunteers across the country tirelessly work to support those affected by suicide loss, deliver an array of local educational programs and resources to better understand mental health and suicide prevention, and participate in our advocacy efforts.

We make it a priority to maximize funds contributed to prevent suicide by utilizing 83% of every donor dollar on our research and program initiatives.

Our vision is to build a world without suicide. That vision is not possible without your continued involvement. Thank you for your support. If you have questions or would like more information, call 888-333-AFSP ext.2048

In Memoriam — Al Mitchell

Al was a very well-known Santa Cruz man in several different ways. Mitchell's Cove on West Cliff Drive is named after his family, and he was a Santa Cruz Lifeguard Supervisor and Mission Hill Middle School shop teacher for many years. He was admitted to Dominican Hospital last week with difficulty with his eyesight, and he declined rapidly after that and died on Saturday 7/25. It was especially hard for Ruth, Eric, Kirsten and Nick not to be able to see him and be by his side due to the restrictions for hospital visitors that are in effect. The doctor was hoping to release him so that he could be home with his family at their beloved family house on Almar. So we are keeping all of them in our prayers especially as they grieve the fact that were not able to be there as they might have otherwise. No services are planned at this time, but at some point we will gather as a St. Stephen's family and remember our dear saints and lift up their witness among us.

from Pastor Jim



As people of God trying to pay attention to things of the spirit, it is often tempting to get caught up in looking for “signs” from God about what things mean or what we’re supposed to do or what God may be telling us. As Lutheran Christians, who approach life with a balance of faith and reason, we know better than to do this and put our trust in such things. It borders on turning faith into some kind of superstition.

However, these days we really want to know how God is working in the midst of our unimaginable circumstances. Our impatience can easily turn into making God fit into our expectations. Still, I have found that especially when times are tough, God’s Spirit and ways seem to jump out at me more than when things are going relatively smoothly.

As we met as the Child Development Center Board recently, I was looking for something to lead our devotions like I do at the start of every meeting. Something in my spirit drew me to a little book that our beloved and dearly missed for a mere 7 months now, Rev. Bonnie Bell had given me 5 years ago entitled “Jesus Calling” by Sarah Young. It’s a daily devotional book with the subtitle: “Enjoying Peace in God’s Presence”. Certainly that is what our Board and preschool staff need a great deal of as we face such difficult decisions where the circumstances change weekly and so much is unknown.

Knowing that we ALL are in need of such peace now, I offer Sarah’s reflection as God’s imagined voice, that just so happened (a sign?) to be the one for our meeting day, July 27.

“Hope is a golden cord connecting Me to you. The cord helps you hold your head up high, even when multiple trials are buffeting you. I never leave your side, and I never let go of your hand. But without the cord of hope, your head may slump and your feet may shuffle as you journey uphill with Me. Hope lifts your perspective from your weary feet to the glorious view you can see from the high road. You are reminded that the road we are traveling together ultimately leads to Me forever. When you consider this radiant destination, the roughness or smoothness of the road ahead becomes much less significant. I am leading you to hold in your heart a dual focus: My continual Presence and the hope that I want your life to be guided by.”

We certainly need God’s presence and hope right now. Let’s never forget who we are and who we belong to and the way that we are always being led into. We are always a people of hope—looking for the ways that God’s ways can be lived and shared among us even when our heads slump and our feet are just shuffling along—kinda like we are these days. Know that you are loved, cared for and prayed for as we all wait and hope together for better days!

Council Highlights

1. Devotions from Romans Chapter 5 reminded us of how Christians try to understand life when it gets difficult and we encounter suffering that is unavoidable. We are trying to remember these days that God's Spirit is always with us, and that it is God's will that during such experiences good things will come of it as we move through it. Good things like endurance, character, and hope. Our hope is that our witness as the Body of Christ in our community will become stronger and more visible as people seek a new spirituality post-pandemic.
2. There will be no changes to the way we are offering our ministry during the pandemic. New cases are expected to increase over the next month as people have become tired of the restrictions and are not following guidelines as closely as before. Indeed, Santa Cruz County new cases have more than doubled just in the month of July with an all-time high of over 70 new cases reported in one day recently. During March—June, the highest daily total was less than 10. So we will continue to offer the recorded worship services and Zoom Bible Studies most likely until there is a vaccine that has been distributed, which won't be until next year.
3. Pastor Jim has been able to meet safely with some of our homebound members who do not have access to a computer or email or the worship services online. Kent and Barbara have been providing a DVD recording of the worship services for them too. Leslie sends the Sunday bulletins and the written sermons to them as well. He led the last Zoom Preschool Chapel this month as the Child Development Center plans to reopen August 3. We will have Chapel with the children with social distancing and masks, but may go back to Zoom if the preschool has to close again. The last few Zoom Chapel services were not attended very well as the novelty of the new venue wore off on the children. It was especially wonderful to see Iris Colclough (4yrs) from our church joining in on the Chapel time! Pastor Jim underwent successful gall bladder removal surgery Monday July 20 and recovered quickly.

Reconciled In Christ Welcome Statement

(Approved at January 2020 Congregational Meeting)

"We welcome all who are seeking God's love and grace. We welcome all because God welcomes all, regardless of race or culture, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, or relationship status. We welcome all without regard to addictions, physical or mental health, imprisonment, socio-economic circumstances, or anything that too often divides us. Our unity is in Christ."



El Salvador Sister Parish News

Changes and Challenges for Santa Cruz al Salvador

As a generous church family, we have taken such pride in being able to help support children, University students, and sanitation projects in El Salvador. Since the Covid-19 pandemic, we have been challenged with our fundraising attempts. We were not able to have our popular wine event, but still have hopes we can come up with some fundraising event in the future. For now, we write and talk to our connections in our Salvadoran communities. The university students have been our current focus and concern. Our 17 university scholarship students are having a tougher time due to the lack of internet service and poor cell service. One of our students, Anita, says that she has to go outside and search for a place where she can get a good enough signal to connect with her virtual classes or turn in assignments. Others have no service at their homes. Hopefully, now that things are loosening up a bit, they may be able to travel to a location with internet or better cell service in order to keep up with their studies until schools are able to open.

Fortunately, we fund a year in advance so we have until the end of this year to try to raise the approximately \$20,000 we will need for the 2021 university scholarships and housing. We hope that you will continue to keep these students in your thoughts and prayers. If you are able, please consider giving a donation to help continue to support these students. We are committed to making sure our students do not lose their scholarships. Your help is so appreciated!

You may donate to Santa Cruz al Salvador online at santacruzalsalvador.org or through St. Stephen's.

Kent Madsen
For Santa Cruz al Salvador

Alirio Humberto Hernandez Aquino
Preparing for graduation in May, 2020
University Don Bosco
Study Program: Communications

August Special Benevolence Offering

California Lutheran University

The ELCA social statement on education calls us to remember our roots: "From the time of the Reformation, the Lutheran church has been a teaching and learning church...With his teaching on vocation, Lutheran understood the Christian life to be one of service to God and neighbor in one's every day places of responsibility; education equipped Christians for this vocation. He taught that education served the common good of Church and society: In a move unusual for his day, he taught that schools for all –both those who were wealthy and those who were poor, both boys and girls..."

For 50 years the congregations of the ELCA in the West, and its predecessor bodies have been committed to this idea of educating young people for lives of leadership and service in the world, and the establishment of CLU is the lasting mark of that commitment. By sending your people to CLU and supporting it with offerings and prayers, our congregations have continued in the rich tradition of a Lutheran understanding of education. As CLU President Dr. Chris Kimball writes, "CLU has emerged as a remarkable place where students, faculty, alumni and friends come together in a dynamic environment of academic excellence in the arts and sciences with a focus of service as well as vocational and spiritual exploration."

And

Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary

We provide theological education for the training of clergy and lay leaders through ordination, non-ordination, and research level degrees and certificates.

PLTS is one of eight seminaries of the ELCA, a founding member of the [Graduate Theological Union](#), and a graduate school of CLU.

Theological education is done in the context of people who are rich and poor, liberal and conservative, and a wide array of human race, religion, sexuality, education, experience, and background. If our theology did not take all people into account, it would be deficient. PLTS develops leaders for the church by: deepening faith in Christ; challenging the mind; expanding the heart; and energizing for mission.

July: Homeless Service Center - \$ 110.00 was given (as of 7/27)

Child Development Center



We were unable to reopen in July as we had hoped due to uncertainties in regulations, especially the order for young children two and over to wear masks at school and to find out if Santa Cruz public schools were to return to classes or online learning. After careful considerations and not knowing how situations may or may not change, we have decided to open on August 3rd. The teachers have prepared the classrooms by eliminating 50 percent of the classroom items to make cleaning easier. We have ordered PPE and created a check-in table outside the office for the children following guidance for health checks. Parents are not to enter the building so we need to make that transition as easy as possible on the children. Additionally, we created a block schedule that minimizes transitions for the children during the day. At this time we have a solid cohort of 12 students. Before Covid-19 we had 22 students.

Some children were unable to return as parents have had to change how they work and provide for education and care in their homes. The Shippee family had been with us for 4 years with their children and their son had one more year. Due to uncertainties, they decided to make other plans for Ben. Jessica, their mother sent me this message, "**St Stephens has been one of the best things to happen to both of our children. You and the amazing teachers put Alexandra on a path for success far above what was considered kindergarten ready. The same goes for Ben who simply requires the social time outside the home to stimulate his curiosity and help enforce the social responsibilities all rambunctious little kids need. We owe you all so much and wish situations were different so Ben could finish his last year with you.**" I share this with you so you can know what our school has meant to one family. Each day brings bittersweet feelings as we receive such kind feedback, yet while saying goodbye. So we move ahead to see what we can create in the midst of uncertainty while providing the safest environment we can.

We are thankful for Barbara Johnston's leadership, and Kathy Allen's business accounting as we navigated keeping our business healthy while we waited to reopen. The School Board voted to retain Barbara as president during the next steps as she has been in the trenches with us. Bill Schraft will return for another term as president in a few months. I am grateful for our board members, including Pastor Jim for support and guidance through the pandemic. This year we are blessed to have Barbara as President, with Bill replacing her soon as her term ends. Board members for the 2020/21 school year include Kathy Allen as Treasurer, Margaret Schraft as Recorder, Pastor Jim, Mary Kelly, and Sandra Eldridge. We are very grateful for their support and partnership!

I do not know what lies ahead but we are prepared to try and serve families in need of childcare. Please pray for our good health and safety, along with the wisdom to make the appropriate decisions to keep our community safe. My original motivation and vision in Directing our Preschool was to bring joy to the congregation. We are ready to hear the joyful noise of our children!

Warmly, Kathy Berens



Sunday School for ALL

The Way, The Truth & The Life

The Way Activity – One way to deal with worry is to center ourselves in God through prayer. This prayer by Thomas Merton :

O Lord God,

I have no idea where I am going,

I do not see the road ahead of me,

I cannot know for certain where it will end.

Nor do I really know myself,

And that fact that I think

I am following Your will

Does not mean that I am actually doing so.

But I believe

That the desire to please You

Does in fact please You.

And I hope I have that desire

In all that I am doing.

I hope that I will never do anything

Apart from that desire to please You.

And I know that if I do this

You will lead me by the right road,

Though I may know nothing about it.

Birthdays & Anniversaries

8-3	Robert Gipson	8-20	Imagin Abler	8-3	Steve & Theresa Loback - Campbell
8-7	Pastor Herb Schmidt	8-23	Kasey Garden		
		8-25	Lea Powers	8-6	Mark Linder & Mary Dean
8-9	Lydia Abler	8-27	Leslie Lapp		
8-14	Renee Rice	8-28	Rachel Lapp		
8-15	Susan Oldfield	8-30	Emma Gipson	8-15	Ross & Barbara Johnston
8-17	Brad Cramer				
8-18	Derek Poetzinger			8-30	Scott Ruble & Leslie Radford
8-19	Evelien Millang				



Short Term: Family of Delores Price, Family of Al Mitchell, Sam Loya, Jennifer & family, Family of Cheryl Denny, Jean Patterson, Nicholas Gross & family, Sheila & Terri, Frank Giammona, Derek, Heather, Kevin, Family of Suzanne Duval, Vanessa, Rose, Shelly Barker & family, George Webber & Family, Cox Family, Becky & Aaron Johnson, Marlene Simmen & family, Lorraine Chavez, Kimberly & Danny, Lora Schraft Poulson, Doug Hahn, Michael, Kayla, Don, Lina, Katarina, Taiyo, Mateo, Stephanie Jager, Cabel, Kyle, Noah, Esdras, Jackson, Joe, Pat, Riley, Shelby, Frank, Kaitlyn, Daniel, Ryder, Jenny, Abby, Immigrant families, The Homeless, Our Nation's leaders, Mt. Cross, St. Stephen's Child Development Ctr, Pastor Jim and Our Church Family. **Long Term:** Healthcare workers, The Sanders Family, Linda Johnson, Bailey Ingalls, Jan Shadle, Vi Olly, John B., Michelle, Josh, CJ, 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, and the Youth of today.

P A N D E M I C

Submitted by S. Hendrickson Written By Lynn Unger...3/11/20

What if you thought of it as the Jews consider the Sabbath—
the most sacred of times?

Cease from travel.

Cease from buying and selling.

Give up, just for now, on trying to make the world different than it is.

Sing. Pray. Touch only those to whom you commit your life.

Center down.

And when your body has become still, reach out with your heart.

Know that we are connected in ways that are terrifying and beautiful.

(You could hardly deny it now.)

Know that our lives are in one another's hands.

(Surely, that has come clear.)

Do not reach out your hands.

Reach out your heart.

Reach out your words.

Reach out all the tendrils of compassion that move, invisibly,
where we cannot touch.

(Sunday School Continued)

Therefore I will trust You always

Though I may seem to be lost

And in the shadow of death.

I will not fear,

For You are ever with me,

And You will never leave me

To make my journey alone.

The Truth Activity – Much of our worry or sense of feeling lost comes from not believing that God is with us in any given moment or situation. The truth is God is always here with us. One way to remember God's presence with us is through something called the "Game of Minutes," created by missionary and mystic, Frank C. Laubach. The goal is to pick one hour out of your day and bring God to mind once during each minute of that hour. You can then write down your "score" for the percentage of time you were able to remember God. The goal is to improve your "score" each day. Another variation would be to set a timer to remind you each hour during the day to stop wherever you are and remember God's presence with you in that moment.

The Life Activity – When Jesus talks about leaving the disciples it probably felt to them like their lives were over. Find things that bring you life, whether it is a hobby, walking through nature, cooking, music, or art. Before you begin that activity pray a prayer of thanks to God for the life it brings you. After the activity offer up another prayer of thanks for God's grace that gives you new life in Jesus Christ.

Closing Prayer

God of all troubled hearts, help us to believe in you when we feel worried, upset, lost, and cannot seem to find you. Jesus, remind us each day that through your words and actions you point us to God. May we point others to you, Lord, through the work you have given to us today. Through the Holy Spirit help us make room for you in our homes and our hearts, and to know that wherever we dwell, you are there living in us. Amen.

STEWARDS OF GOD'S GIFTS

Paul & Aaron Cunningham

Our church is very grateful for the work these guys have been putting in by rebuilding the fence between our facility and Public Storage downhill for us. The termites got to it and it was being used as a place for desperate folks to sleep etc.. Paul and his son Aaron got right on fixing it, only to have it knocked down several times. But they have been patient and persistent and kept improving and repairing it despite the frustration. Besides this much-needed sharing of their gifts for the benefit of our church, Paul has been an usher here for about 100 years! I know...he ages quite well. See what being a dedicated churchgoer gets you! He also is serving on the Church Council for the first time in many years. Thanks for offering your talents and time!

Treasurer Notes ...
Budget Information · June 2020

	June	June	YTD	YTD	Net
	Actual	Budget	Actual	Budget	
Contribution Income	\$12,200	\$11,833	\$72,165	\$74,085	\$-1,920
Facility Use Income *	\$788	\$1,535	\$7,656	\$9,208	\$-1,552
Investment Income	\$4,014	\$3,750	\$22,830	\$22,500	\$330
Total Income	\$17,002	\$17,118	\$102,651	\$105,793	\$-3,142
Expenses	\$17,217	\$19,292	\$116,458	\$117,435	\$-977
Net	\$-215	\$-2,174	\$-13,807	\$-11,642	\$-2,165

** Includes Child Development Center facility use @ \$300/month + Miscellaneous Income.*
 Total income for June was at budget (*thank you!*), and we had somewhat lower expenses. We are still running with a deficit larger than expected, but catching up. A Paycheck Protection Program loan in the amount of \$59,300 (last month’s report had an incorrect amount) was granted to St. Stephen’s and the Child Development Center.

While the church is closed to fight the coronavirus pandemic, our expenses continue. *Thank you to those who have mailed contributions or made them online on our website.*

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

	June	Reserve	Needed to Payoff
Organ	\$240	\$220	
Piano	\$0	\$270	
Hearing Impaired Equip	\$0	\$395	
Solar Electric Payback	\$354		\$16,398
Narthex Bathroom			Paid Off!!

Benevolence Donations (Individual and Church)

2020 through June	
Am. Fdn. Suicide Prevention	\$305
SS Scholarships	\$380
Live Oak Resource Center	\$245
Habitat for Humanity	\$270
Mt. Cross	\$410
World Hunger	\$180
Housing Matters	\$2
CLU/PLTS	\$0
Lutheran Campus Ministry	\$65
SS CDC	\$110
El Salvador Sister Parish	\$0
Lutheran World Relief	\$0
ELCA Synod	\$500
COPA	\$1,000
Lutheran Immigration	\$0
Total	\$3,467
2020 Benevolence Target (10%)	\$14,658
% of Target	24%

