# each Sunday morning. SERVICI 'Together in Spirit" WORSHIP Ready for your participation STEPHEN'S

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NEWSLETTER WAS SENT ON June 25, 2020

POST OFFICE: DATED MATERIAL PLEASE DO NOT DELAY St Stephen's Lutheran Church 2500 Soquel Avenue Santa Cruz, CA 95062





#### Sunday Worship on website

We continue to record worship on Saturday mornings at 11:00. If any of 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.

#### A Prayer For the Living of These Days

How long, O Lord? How long until we can touch our parents and beloved elders? (and we thank you for each day we have had with them) How long until we can have things on our calendar to look forward to that don't involve staring at a computer? (and we thank you for the abundance of celebrations and movies and live music and meals with friends that we have been granted up until a few months ago) How long until we can gather together again to sing your praise? (and we thank you for calling an assembly in the streets to overturn the tables of injustice and racism) How long until the dying ceases, the brutality ends, the anxiety abates? How Long, O Lord? I'm not asking for a date. I'm asking for the faith that a date will come.

Amen. (from Rev. Nadia Bolz-Weber)

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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 John Hopping Custodian: 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

#### (Diversity continued)

to ensure authentic diversity. The ELCA recognizes that such diversity is not reflected across all three expressions of this church. The dominant center of power and privilege still resides with people of European descent and their culture, while people of color and/or whose primary language is other than English remain at the margins, along with their cultures and identities. This problem is compounded by the crosscutting issues of gender, sexuality, and ability. As a result, we have not been able to fully partner with God in turning the ELCA into the just, inclusive, and authentically diverse community described in the priority area for action under goal one of Future Directions 2025, where the ELCA is called to "develop a deep and shared understanding of who we are as a Lutheran church and equip leaders and all the baptized to communicate our theology and beliefs in accessible and compelling ways." We have failed to realize our vision of a church that welcomes all people regardless of race, background, status, ability, family situation, and numerous other identifiers. The ELCA continues to be the whitest denomination in the United States.

In a country where 39% of the population are people of color, only structural and systemic reinforcement can account for the glaring whiteness of our church. Thus, the work of this task force is rooted not in charity or pity but in resistance to tokenism and the nominal representation of cultures in ELCA structures. We work toward seeing a fuller glimpse of God's image and the fullness of God's creation. In addressing the need for authentic diversity within the ELCA, we strive for what the Holy Spirit created in the Pentecost moment: the fullness of God's diversity and creativity existing simultaneously in space and time.

We condemn any form of discrimination or harassment based on color, gender, race, ethnicity, social or socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, gender expression, or physical or intellectual (mental) ability. We propose a metanoia (a change of heart and mind) to dismantle structures of discrimination. We yearn to promote systemic and structural strategies to establish and ensure authentic diversity.

Full document available at ELCA.org/Resources



#### **Evangelical Lutheran Church in America** God's work. Our hands.

#### How Strategic and Authentic is our Diversity: A call for confession, reflection and healing action.

In Mark 12:31, as part of the Great Commandment, Jesus tells the disciples, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." Our baptismal covenant reminds us that "We will seek and serve Christ in all persons, loving our neighbors as ourselves, we will strive for justice and peace among all peoples and respect the dignity of every human being."

The manifold communities of the ELCA are called to exhibit authentic diversity— demographically matching the ethnic and racial composition of their respective contexts, as stated in the ELCA constitution (5.01.A16.). They are likewise called to recognize that race and ethnicity intersect with other marginalizing traits (including gender, sexuality, and ability) and that people in these groups are also vulnerable.

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is a predominantly white, middle-class church, most of whose members are of European descent. Intentional outreach efforts have increased the proportion of nonwhite members (African Descent, American Indian and Alaska Native, Asian and Pacific Islander, Arab and Middle Eastern, and Latino) from 2% to 7.3%.2 Yet this proportional increase coincides with a membership decline in white communities and congregations. Despite the ELCA's numerous multicultural efforts, there is still a lack of authentic diversity in all its expressions. Racism exists within the ELCA, boldly and outwardly as well as subtly and inwardly. White privilege is systemic and persistent. The problem calls for a radical, systemic change in accordance with the proclamation of the gospel. The ELCA recognizes the perpetuation of racism still exists within the denomination despite personal good intentions. Yet, the systemic and structural ambiguity toward the elimination of racism continues.

Faithfulness to the biblical mandate to proclaim the gospel requires us to foster greater equity, fairness, and justice at all levels of the ELCA Our Council devotions were from Romans 5: 1-5, where the Apostle Paul reminds the Christians in Rome that God is with them, helping them and sustaining them even in the midst of difficult times that they are experiencing through no fault of their own. When things go bad and there is some kind of suffering, we do not give in to des-



pair. Instead we remember that God is still with us and can turn the present suffering into something that can help us and others. This is still true for the people of God today.

Parker Palmer writes about people these days as suffering from something he calls "Citizen's Heart", which he says is somewhat akin to the PTSD of "Battle Fatigue", "Shell Shock", and the Civil War title for it—"Soldiers Heart". Having lost loved ones to COVID-19, and having had our own lives altered in so many unforeseen ways that make us question so many things we had come to rely on in what I call, "The Great Before", has shaken our spirits and psyches in ways we did not think possible in this advanced 21st century. And now, as so many of us have become indelibly aware of how deadly our age old demon of white racism still is, as we watch the cell phone videos that are exposing this denied truth over and over again—our hearts become ever more burdened as American citizens. Palmer offers this poem by Edna St. Vincent Millay as a way to heal a 'Citizen's Heart".

- <u>Dirge Without Music</u>
- I am not resigned to the shutting away of loving hearts in the hard ground. So it is, and so it will be, for so it has been, Time out of mind; Into the darkness they go, the wise and the lovely. Crowned With lilies and laurel they go; but I am not resigned.

Lovers and thinkers, into the earth with you. Be one with the dull, the indiscriminate dust. A fragment of what you felt, of what you knew, A formula, a phrase remains– but the best is lost.

The answers quick and keen, the honest look, the laughter, the love,-They are gone. They are gone to feed the roses. Elegant and curled Is the blossom. Fragrant is the blossom. I know. But I do not approve. More precious was the light in your eyes than all the roses of the world. Down, down, down into the darkness of the grave Gently they go, the beautiful, the tender, the kind. Quietly they go, the intelligent, the witty, the brave. I know. But I do not approve. And I am not resigned.

May we find the courage to act on those last few words and join with our fellow citizens seeking a better way of living together—a better way shown to us in the way that God is always trying bring through Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit of love for ALL people. May this time never pass without some kind of permanent change to improve the lives of those who are most vulnerable now.

## **Council Highlights**

1. Nelleke Meerman joined the meeting at the request of Council member Robert Bartee, in order to share with us her exciting news of serving as a regional coordinator for a college campus women's ministry called Delight. We were privileged to offer her \$1000 toward the raising of her own compensation. These funds came from the Lois Meeker Memorial Fund, established by her husband Gary Meeker. <u>If you are able to provide</u> <u>additional funds for Nelleke's new ministry, please contact Pastor Jim or Leslie.</u>

2. Given the events and protests that took place around the country and world regarding police brutality and white racism, Pastor Jim read a statement from the ELCA Conference of Bishops in order to allow for some discussion amongst the Council as to where we stand on these matters as a larger church. The statement can be found at "elca.org".

3. Pastor Jim shared that a close friend of Lew and Bobbie Erickson, Emilio Zuniga, passed away at age 52. We had grown to know and love Emilio over the several years he had attended the early service with Lew. He was well-known locally as a baker at The Buttery. Pastor Jim was asked to lead his memorial service and burial, which took place on June 16 &17.

4. Pastor Jim attended the vigil for local Sheriff Damon Gutzwiller on behalf of the congregation, as well as the burial service at Oakwood Cemetery.

5.. The COPA Delegates Assembly will take place via Zoom on Sat. June 27. This happens once a year so we can gather with leaders from our other 25 member institutions to hear about our progress and determine our future actions. Contact Mark Linder for more info.

6. Council approved a motion to continue recording our worship services and not gathering in person with groups of more than 10. This will continue until the State and County Public Health Depts. move into the next phase of reopening. At that time Council will revisit whether or not to make any changes to our current practices.

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## **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

From the Board of Santa Cruz al Salvador to our member churches:

Because we haven't been seeing you in person during these months, we still hope that we can raise some money toward the funding of the next ten latrines in El Pilar.

There are so many benefits to the composting latrines: health, sanitation, privacy, and eventual production of fertilizer for the crops.

The most recent ten latrines were done entirely by members of the two communities with local supervision. They were completed just before the "shelter-in-place" order went into effect in El Salvador. And so, in addition to the above-mentioned benefits, there is pride of ownership not only of the latrines but with the successful completion of the project itself.



If you would like to participate, please write a check, payable to Santa Cruz al Salvador, and put "latrines" in the memo portion. You can also pay online at santacruzalsalvador.org.

> If you are writing a check, please send it to: Marian Langdon, Financial Secretary, ScaS 220 Horizon Way Aptos, CA 95003

## **Monthly Special Benevolence Offering**

## **Homeless Service Center**

The first step to finding community solutions for homelessness is education. Learn about homelessness in Santa Cruz County, read success stories of clients we've served, and dive into some national resources on understanding homelessness. As is often the case, there's more than meets the eye.

One of the easiest ways to take action is to break through some of the myths surrounding homelessness. Homelessness can be an uncomfortable topic for many, and understanding the facts can help. It not only makes homelessness easier to discuss, but it also empowers you to form well informed opinions about proposed solutions. It can reduce stigma, which can make resources more accessible for those experiencing homelessness. While the pathway to becoming better informed can take many forms, we invite you to explore our Get Informed pages to get started. Www.housingmatterssc.org

Every day we are reminded of how much people can accomplish with a little support and a chance to be connected with the services they need. *Larry* found that support here at Homeless Services Center, and wanted to share with you; "*My time at HSC helped re-focus my energy...I am thankful every day for the beauty of the ocean, my job, and the help that got me out of a situation so that I don't have to be that 'homeless guy' anymore." Thanks to our amazing donors and supporters, we are able to help more people get back on their feet and share their success stories. This fund allows quick / creative response to the rapidly evolving landscape. Your donations provide emergency and transitional services to hundreds of children and thousands of adults every year through our programs: Rebele Family Shelter, Paul Lee Loft & Winter Shelter, Page Smith Community House, Daytime Essential Services Center, 180/180 Initiative, and the Recuperative Care Center.* 

**June – World Hunger** = \$90 (as of June 22)

#### **Child Development Center**

Jesus loves the little children, all the children of the world . . . they are all precious in his sight J

Young children are naturally curious about differences between each other but it is not a barrier to how they relate to each other. They are more concerned with whether they get to play with the toy they want, if someone takes their toy, or discovering how to share a toy. Friend selection has more to do with personality and enjoying the same kind of activity or play. As teachers, it is our job to help them find common ground in play with others who may not initially have the same interests or personality.

Early Childhood Development includes anti-biased curriculum, especially in literature. We enjoy listening to music from different cultures. Our teachers share the knowledge that people come from different places, speak other languages, have different interests, think about things uniquely, and have various abilities. These teachings are embedded in the curriculum like the changes of the seasons. Just as they take in the love of Jesus as it is presented to them in Chapel. They LOVE Chapel and feel the love of Jesus.

I feel very fortunate to work with this innocent age group where everything is new, everything is interesting, and nothing or no one is classified as adults have been doing for centuries. We celebrate each other by practicing kindness. At our preschool, we have one rule: Be kind to yourself, others, and materials. Empathy is taught by noticing how the other feels, helping them when they are hurt, redirecting behavior when they hurt another, and changing the behavior rather than just saying "I'm sorry." Empathy is practiced daily and eventually softens impulse. Children are impulsive and egocentric. It is our job to appropriately show them how to be kind and caring to others while drawing boundaries, and getting help when someone has been unkind to them. At Circle Time we encourage the children to share ideas and we teach respect for listening to others when they speak.

Our parking lot graduation was so beautiful with 8 families gathered together as we celebrated the individual accomplishments and personalities of each child. The air was filled with families singing songs that praise and share the love of Jesus. I wish everyone could have seen this celebration. Pastor Jim was truly at his best as he shared God's love with families that may rarely go to church. The children were delighted to finally receive their own bible along with their library bag, portfolio, progress report, and graduation certificate.

Moving forward we plan to open July 6 and navigate Covid-19 regulations. It will not be easy but your teachers have arranged the classrooms and playground to serve an initial cohort of 12. We will do our very best and observe how we progress at our school and in the community. On any given day we may have to switch things up, but we are used to thinking on our feet and being flexible. Please pray for our good health as we are taking a risk. The rules and regulations may be changing for now but the love will remain the same!

Sending hugs to all, Kathy Berens



#### <u>Sunday</u> School for ALL

"ELCA Faith Lens" from Ms. Leslie

Not everyone has a room of their own. Where would you go if you didn't have a place to live?

With many people's travel plans on hold across the country, the hospitality industry has been left with millions of empty hotel rooms. Many are concerned that the spread of the corona virus poses an inherent danger to the homeless, who stay in cramped shelters. <u>Many immigrants</u> who are seeking asylum or citizenship in the United States have been put in detention centers and are also in danger of contracting the corona virus, by simply being placed in close proximity to others who are detained. Large cities are finding creative ways to use these empty hotel rooms to house the homeless or those recovering from corona virus.

Despite protests from locals in the area, a judge in California allowed a 76 room hotel to be converted into a shelter for the homeless. It will temporarily house those without an address and who are more susceptible to contracting the corona virus. Numerous elderly already living in the community raises a question: Whose safety is more important, those who already have a room, or those who still need one?

In my Father's house there are many dwelling places.

- What do you need to feel safe and free from worry where they live?
- What would it be like to be in another country, unable to speak the language, and looking for a place to live?
- Would your family open your home to someone who needs a place to live? Why or why not?

Jesus tries to comfort his disciples by saying that in his Father's house there are many rooms or dwelling places, and that he goes to prepare a place for them. We often hear this text at funerals. People begin to get visions of having their own lavish mansion in heaven when they die. In many ways that understanding misses the point that a dwelling place is truly home only when it is with God. Having a room to ourselves is nice, but God making room for us to be in the Triune presence is even better.

Pretty soon the disciples enter into a time when they do not know where things are headed, similar to the temporary separation we are experiencing now from friends and loved ones. Such separation can cause us to rethink our relationships and goals. We begin to ponder where we think we should be, and where we think God

Birthdai	s & Anniversaries
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7-2	Vi Olly	7-23	Martha Balogh
7-6	Scott Poetzinger	7-24	Sherilyn Jager
7-9	Sandi Crouser	7-24	Ingrid Lanoue
7-10	Kyle Lapp	7-24	Julia Poetzinger
7-12	Arija Buswell	7-25	Terri Adams
7-17	Don Ray	7-25	Eve Roberson
7-18	Gary Meeker	7-27	Mark Linder
7-19	Darvin Awe	7-29	Kylie Ronning
7-20	Michael Lyons, Jr	7-29	Beckett Ruble
7-21	Cheryl Bartee	7-31	Barbie Grow

7-22 Kevin Meek



**Short Term:** Jean Patterson, Nicholas Gross & family, Sheila (Terri's sister), Family of Suzanne Duval, Vanessa, Rose, George Webber & Family, Cox Family, Becky & Aaron Johnson, Trippel family, Grandma Joyce, Marlene Simmen, Lily Williams, Duke, Michael, Kimberly & Danny, Lora Schraft Poulson, Debbie, Julie, Kelly, Doug Hahn, Michael, Kayla, Don, Lina, Katarina, Taiyo, Mateo, Stephanie Jager, Cabel, Kyle, Esdras, Jackson, Joe, Pat,

Robert & Dusty

Gipson

7-18 Manny & Patricia

7-28 Charles & Sandra

Eldridge

Travers

7-1

Riley, Shelby, Frank, Kaitlyn, Daniel, Ryder, Jenny, Abby, Healthcare workers, Immigrant families, The Homeless, Our Nation's leaders, Mt. Cross, St. Stephen's Child Development Ctr, Pastor Jim and Our Church Family. <u>Long Term:</u> Lee Arvid, people of the Bahamas, The Sanders Family, 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

Acts 7:55-60 1 Peter 2:2-10 John 14:1-14



## Provide Lunches for Volunteers Tuesday, July 28 (4th Tuesday of each month)

Contact church office if you can provide Sandwiches, Fruit, Chips or Cookies

## STEWARDS OF GOD'S GIFTS

## **Nelleke Meerman / Lois Meeker**

We just honored Nelleke for graduating from California Lutheran University last month, which is great stewardship on her part in and of itself. She used the gifts God gave her very well, majoring in Psychology and beginning a photography business too. She has always been an inspiration for us at St. Stephen's as we have helped her grow in her faith through our Confirmation program, helping lead our singing in the worship band, and attending Mt. Cross & ELCA Youth Gatherings. She would often bring her friends to church too.

At our last Church Council meeting Nelleke was invited to give a presentation about her new calling to serve as a regional coordinator for a college women's ministry called "Delight". We were very proud to hear how she is seeking to give back to God by offering her first 10 months after graduation to this ministry that helped sustain her through those formative years of college. As a sign of our appreciation and encouragement, the Council decided to give her \$1000 toward the raising of her own compensation. These funds were generously given by Gary Meeker as part of the Lois Meeker Memorial Fund. Gary made sure to let us know how pleased he and his children are that Lois' spirit of dedication to her church and faith could be passed on to Nelleke as she offers her gifts in Christian ministry!

God should be.

Their trusted teacher, on whom they have relied to not only teach them how to live out the scriptures, but also who has also given them life and hope, will no longer be with them in the same way. Unable to learn from our favorite teachers or coaches we too may feel ourselves wandering or fear we have lost our way. Everything had been planned out for us by someone else, and now our work, sports, and school schedules are out the window.

Jesus responds, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life, no one comes to the Father except through me." This passage can be divisive, used to separate people into categories of saved or condemned. Jesus meant these words to be a message of hope. The disciples can take comfort, not condemnation, from the knowledge that they have known Jesus, and because they have known Jesus, they have known God the Father. Jesus is the way to whom? Jesus is the truth about what? Jesus is what kind of life? Remember that everything Jesus said about himself and did in his earthly ministry pointed people to what God the Father was like and was doing.

Philip just wants things to be simplified. "Just show us the father and we will be satisfied" he says. Philip just wants to get back to basics and know where God is in all this craziness. Jesus points Philip back to the work they did alongside him as they ate with Jesus in peoples homes, healed the sick in numerous houses. In time they spread the good news while living among people in their dwelling places. Jesus reminds them of all that God has done through them to that point and encourages them that God is going to do even greater things through them.

It is scary when our teacher leaves us and we must trust our training. But Jesus reminds us that, through the Holy Spirit, he is still here guiding us, going ahead of us, and dwelling with us, and making room for us. Like the disciples we yearn to be face to face with our closest friends. After this struggle we will look back and think, "Jesus was with me and I didn't even know it." God is here and knows that we are worried, upset, lost, and wanting to see face to face. This is where faith comes in. Jesus says, "Do not let your hearts be troubled, believe in God, believe also in me."

- What things do you want to ask God to do for you in this moment?
- What would you like God to show you so that you would be satisfied?

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.

#### Treasurer Notes ... Budget Information · May 2020

	May	May	YTD	YTD	Net
	Actual	Budget	Actual	Budget	
Contribution Income	\$10,379	\$11,833	\$59,965	\$62,252	\$-2,287
Facility Use Income *	\$538	\$1,535	\$6,868	\$7,673	\$-805
Investment Income	\$3,385	\$3,750	\$18,815	\$8,750	\$65
Total Income	\$14,302	\$17,118	\$85,648	\$88,675	\$-3,027
Expenses	\$18,208	\$20,484	\$99,226	\$98,144	\$1,082
Net	\$-3,906	\$-3,366	\$-13,578	\$-9,469	\$-4,109

\* Includes Child Development Center facility use @ \$300/month + Miscellaneous Income. Total income for May was below budget, while we had somewhat lower expenses. We are still running with a deficit larger than expected. A Paycheck Protection Program loan in the amount of \$45,300 was granted to St. Stephen's, including 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

May	Reserve	Needed to Payoff
\$0	\$-20	\$20
\$75	\$270	
\$0	\$395	
\$344		\$16,751
		Paid Off!!
	\$0 \$75 \$0	\$0 \$-20   \$75 \$270   \$0 \$395

#### **Benevolence Donations (Individual and Church)**

2020 through May	
Am. Fdn. Suicide Prevention	\$305
SS Scholarships	\$380
Live Oak Resource Center	\$245
Habitat for Humanity	\$220
Mt. Cross	\$345
World Hunger	\$0
Homeless Service Center	\$2
CLU/PLTS	\$0
Lutheran Campus Ministry	\$63
SS CDC	\$60
El Salvador Sister Parish	\$0
Lutheran World Relief	\$0
ELCA Synod	\$250
СОРА	\$500
Lutheran Immigration	\$0
Total	\$2,370
2020 Benevolence Target (10%)	\$14,658
% of Target	16%

