

Our 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,
invite people to share the joy of the Spirit.

Reconciling in Christ Statement

"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."

St. Stephen's Lutheran Church E.L.C.A.
2500 Soquel Avenue Santa Cruz, CA 95062
831/476-4700 FAX 831/476-3918
email: office@ststephenslutheran.org
Web Address: www.ststephenslutheran.org
Office Hours: Mon.—Fri. 12—5:00 pm

Ministers: The People of St. Stephen's
Pastor: Rev. James P. Lapp
Church Administrator: Leslie Lapp
Church Musician: Gary Roberts
Sunday School: Leslie Lapp
Pre-School Director: Kathy Berens
Custodian: John Hopping
Videographers: Kent Madsen & Barb Rice

Music used by permission Onelicense #A-706539

Third Sunday in Advent

December 12, 2021

Welcome to people new to this church or faith, long time Lutherans, and Christians from every tradition. Welcome to all who have no church home, want to follow Christ, have doubts, or do not believe. Welcome to new visitors and old friends. Welcome to people of every age and size, color and culture, sexual orientation and marital status, ability and challenge. Welcome to believers and questioners and questioning believers. This is a place where you are welcome to celebrate and sorrow, rejoice and recover. This is a place where lives are made new. Welcome on this day.

The Gathering

Advent Wreath Lighting

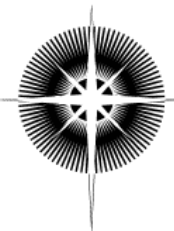
We praise you, O God, for this victory wreath
That marks our days of preparation for Christ's advent.
As we light the candles on this wreath,
Strengthen our hearts as we await the Lord's coming in glory.
Enlighten us with your grace,
That we may serve our neighbors in need.
Grant this through Christ our Lord,
Whose coming is certain and whose day draws near.
Amen.

*Opening Hymn

"Awake , Awake, and Greet the New Morn" Red #242

**Awake! Awake, and greet the new morn,
for angels herald its dawning.
Sing out your joy, for soon he is born,
Behold the Child of our longing.
Come as a baby weak and poor,
to bring all hearts together,
he opens wide the heav'nly door
and lives now inside us forever.**

Give a Gift. Change a Life.



What better way to celebrate the season of Jesus' birth than to give gifts of comfort and joy to those who are in need. Give meaningful gifts that inspire leadership, nourish the hungry and heal the sick.

Lutheran World Relief

provides gifts that improve the lives of people living in poverty around the world. For example: A Goat not only provides a woman farmer with milk to sell, but also helps her build a herd. Coffee seedlings help a farmer grow a lucrative crop that has the potential to significantly improve income. Seeds help farmers grow more and better crops when climate conditions are challenging. Emergency Water delivers immediate, potable water after disaster strikes. **LWR.org/gifts or 1-800-597-5972**

Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service

stands ready to welcome the most vulnerable refugees who are seeking safety and hope in America. Our gifts are essential in rebuilding their lives. Gifts from "Basic Needs Kit" to "Ready for Work kit" can mean so much to those who have nothing but the clothes on their backs. **LIRS.org or 877-291-7061**

Sponsor a Prayer Child

With our Sister Parish in El Salvador. Contact Kent Madsen for more info: 408-812-1141

S.P.I.N. Socks for People in Need (box in narthex)

NEW socks are a blessing for many reasons, especially health, but also because they provide comfort and a sense of dignity. Basic white crew sox are appreciated by everyone. You may also choose sox for women and children. Sponsored by the Association of Faith Communities.

The Season of Giving

This holiday season, we thank everyone who has supported St. Stephen's this past year with their time, talent and financial contributions and look forward to support from all of our members in the year ahead.

If you need a convenient way to make regular offerings or if you plan to make an additional gift before the end of the year, we encourage you to check out our electronic giving options. As the pace of life speeds up, especially around the holidays, you may find electronic giving a most welcome way to make contributions.

For more info. contact Janet Slay 475-5668
Your 2022 Offering envelopes are here, if you'd like to stop by and pick them up.

God uses money to confirm direction.

*"Trust in the Lord with all your heart,
and do not rely on your own insight.
In all your ways acknowledge him,
and he will make your paths straight."
Proverbs 3:5-6*

To us, to all in sorrow and fear,
Emmanuel comes a singing,
his humble song is quiet and near,
yet fills the earth with its ringing;
music to heal the broken soul
and hymns of loving kindness,
the thunder of his anthems roll
to shatter all hatred and blindness.

In darkest night his coming shall be
when all the world is despairing,
as morning light so quiet and free,
so warm and gentle and caring.
Then shall the mute break forth in song,
the lame shall leap in wonder,
the weak be raised above the strong,
and weapons be broken asunder.

Rejoice, rejoice, take heart in the night,
though dark the winter and cheerless,
the rising sun shall crown you with light,
be strong and loving and fearless.
Love be our song and love our prayer
and love our endless story;
may God fill ev'ry day we share
and bring us at last into glory.

*Greeting

P: The steadfast love of God, the life of Jesus Christ
and the power of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

C: And also with you.

Kyrie "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel" # 257 vs. 1 - 2

**O come, O come, Emmanuel
And ransom captive Israel
That mourns in lonely exile here
Until the Son of God appear.**

(kyrie continued)

REFRAIN

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel,
Shall come to thee, O Israel!

O come, O Wisdom from on high
embracing all things far and nigh:
in strength and beauty come and stay;
Teach us your will and guide our way. **REFRAIN**

Hymn of Praise

"Hark! The Herald Angels Sing"

#270 vs 1 & 3

Hark! The herald angels sing,
"Glory to the newborn King;
Peace on earth, and mercy mild,
God and sinners reconciled."
Joyful, all you nations, rise;
Join the triumph of the skies;
With angelic hosts proclaim,
"Christ is born in Bethlehem!"

REFRAIN

Hark! The herald angels sing,
"Glory to the newborn king!"

Hail the heav'n born Prince of Peace!
Hail the sun of righteousness!
Light and life to all he brings,
Ris'n with healing in his wings.
Mild he lays his glory by,
born that we no more may die,
Born to raise each child of earth,
born to give us second birth **REFRAIN**

*Prayer of the Day

P: May God be with you.

C: **And also with you.**

P: Let us Pray.

Celebrate, Page 1

S.P.I.N.

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. Basic white crew sox are appreciated by everyone. But you may also choose sox for women and children.

This exciting program is sponsored by the Association of Faith Communities in Santa Cruz. See the box in the narthex.

Mary Martha/Ruth Rebecca Women's Circle

Holiday Boutique & Bake sale
Dec. 19 from 9:00 am to Noon

Fireside Room

Our ladies will again be having a boutique of various decorative items as well as jewelry, Christmas items and much more at amazing prices. Word has it there will be Hummels and Pigs galore! Along with this a bake sale of homemade delicious cakes, cookies and candy made and donated by YOU and the members of the circle. We will appreciate your contributions.

CHRISTMAS EVE

Candlelight Worship

Friday, Dec. 24
5:00 pm & 7:30 pm



A recorded Christmas Eve Service will be available on our website.

Upcoming Events:

December Benevolence Offering =
 Lutheran World Relief

- Dec. 14 Church Council 6:30 pm
- Dec. 14 Boy Scouts 7:00 pm
- Dec. 15 Women's Café Group 6:00 pm (off site)
- Dec. 16 Bible Study 11:00 & 7:30 pm (Zoom)
- Dec. 19 MMRR Holiday Boutique 9:00—noon
- Dec. 19 Confirmation 6:30 pm
- Dec. 20 Embroider's Guild 7:00 pm Fireside

Pastor's Office Hours Weds. & Thurs. 10:00 to 1:00

The Word of God

First Reading Zephaniah 3:14-20 Celebrate pg. 1

L: Word of God, Word of Life.
 C: **Thanks be to God.**

Second Reading Philippians 4:4-7 Celebrate pg. 3

P: Word of God, Word of Life.
 C: **Thanks be to God.**

(Please stand as you are able)

Gospel Acclamation

"Angels We Have Heard on High" #289 vs. 1

**Angels we have heard on high
 Sweetly singing o'er the plains
 And the mountains in reply
 Echoing their joyous strains**

G l o r i a . . . in excelsis Deo
G l o r i a . . . in excelsis Deo

P: The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke
 C: **Glory to you, O Lord.**

*Gospel Reading Luke 3:7-18 Celebrate pg. 3

P: The Gospel of the Lord.
 C: **Praise to you, O Christ.**

Sermon Rev. James Lapp

*Hymn of the Day

"Each Winter As the Year Grows Older" (New) #252

Each winter as the year grows older,
We each grow older too.
The chill sets in a little colder;
The verities we knew
Seem shaken and untrue.

When race and class cry out for treason,
When sirens call for war,
They overshout the voice of reason
And scream till we ignore
All we held dear before.

Yet I believe beyond believing,
That life can spring from death:
That growth can flower from our grieving;
That we can catch our breath
And turn transfixed by faith.

So even as the sun is turning
To journey to the north,
The living flame, in secret burning,
Can kindle on the earth
And bring God's love to birth.

O Child of ecstasy and sorrows,
O Prince of peace and pain,
Brighten today's world by tomorrow's,
Renew our lives again;
Lord Jesus, come and reign!

The Prayers of the Church

Celebrate, Page 4

The Communion Meal

*Passing of the Peace

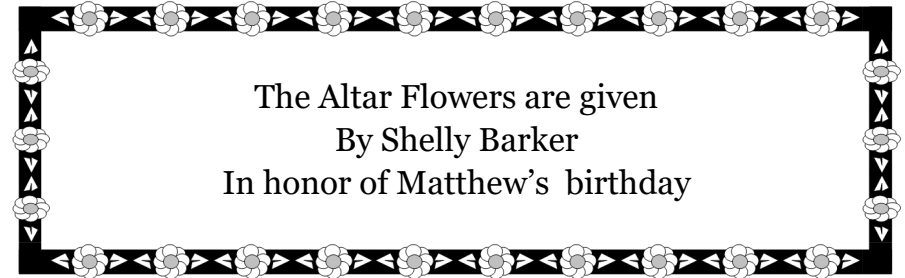
P: May the peace of God be with you always.

C: **And also with you.**

*Dismissal

P: Go in peace. Christ is near.

C: **Thanks be to God.**



Serving Today

Usher—

Reader — Janet Slay

Coffee Host — Rebecca Wickham



SHORT TERM: Family of Ryan Barker, Tyler Slay, Family of Rick Oldfield, Family of Ron Buswell, Family of Edna Lindquist, Chris & Patty, Gaye Cornell, Harriet Edsall, Dorothy, Laura, Bobbie Erickson, Rachel B., Anne & Chloe Johnston, Jane Davis, Kirsten Skiles, Jane, Nancy, Marisa, Margot Wilson, Rose, Sam, Aaron Johnson, Don, Lina, Sal, Katarina, Taiyo, Mateo, Cabel, Miller, Noah, Esdras, Shelby, Healthcare workers, teachers, Immigrant families, The Homeless, Our Nation's leaders, Mt. Cross, St. Stephen's Child Development Ctr, Pastor Jim & Our Church Family.

LONG TERM: Kyle Lapp, Jan Wagner, The Sanders Family, Linda Johnson, Bailey Ingalls, Jan Shadle, Vi Olly, John B., Michelle, Josh, CJ, Susan Anderson, Richard C., Brouse Family, Janet Baker, Sandy Godvine, Janelle Yung, Chris & Lorie Juhl, Karin, Will, Chris, Pearl Runquist, Volpi & Robe Family, Dawit & Family (Ethiopia), men and women of Armed Forces, and the Youth of today.

*Blessing

P: The God of hope

Fill us with all joy and peace in believing,
So that we may abound in hope
By the power of the Holy Spirit,
Through Christ Jesus, our host and our guest..

C: **Amen.**

*Closing Hymn

"Joy To The World" Red #267

Joy to the world! The Lord is come!
Let earth receive her King!
Let every heart, prepare Him room
And heav'n and nature sing,
And heav'n and nature sing,
And heav'n and heav'n and nature sing!

Joy to the earth, the Savior reigns!
Let all their songs employ,
While fields and floods
Rocks, hills, and plains
Repeat the sounding joy,
Repeat the sounding joy,
Repeat, repeat the sounding joy.

No more let sin and sorrow grow
Nor thorns infest the ground;
He comes to make his blessings flow
Far as the curse is found,
Far as the curse is found,
Far as, far as the curse is found.

He rules the world with truth and grace
And makes the nations prove
The glories of His righteousness
And wonders of His love,
And wonders of His love.
And wonders, wonders of His love!

Offering — We honor and worship God by returning some of the gifts with which we have been blessed.

Offertory

"Come Now, O Prince of Peace" Red #247 vs. 1 & 2

1. Come, now, O Prince of peace, make us one body.
Come, O Lord Jesus, reconcile your people.
2. Come now, O God of love, make us one body.
Come, O Lord Jesus, reconcile your people.

Offering Prayer

P: God of our waiting and watching,
We offer the gifts of our hearts and our lives
To the service of all your people.
Prepare the way before us
As we meet you in this simple meal,
Through Christ Jesus, our pathway and our peace.

C: **Amen**

*Great Thanksgiving

P: May God be with you.

C: **And also with you.**

P: Lift up your hearts.

C: **We lift them to the Lord**

P: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

C: **It is right to give God thanks and praise.**

P: It is indeed right, our duty and our joy....

*Words of Institution

*Lord's Prayer

**C: Our Father, in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today, our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those
who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial,
and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom,
the power and the glory are yours
Now and forever. Amen**

P: Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to you.
Share in the feast of salvation.

(You may be seated)

Holy Communion

*Guests: You are welcome to come forward to receive
Communion as part of this church family! Children are
welcome to come forward and receive a special blessing if they
have never communed before.*

Invitation to Communion

Come to Christ's banquet.
Feast on God's gift of grace.

Lamb of God

"Love Has Come"

Red #292 vs. 1 & 3

**Love has come a light in the darkness!
Love shines forth in the Bethlehem skies.
See, all heaven has come to proclaim it;
Hear how their song of joy arises:
Love! Love! Born unto you, a Savior!
Love! Love! Glory to God on high!**

**Love has come and never will leave us!
Love is life everlasting and free.
Love is Jesus within and among us,
Hear how their song of joy arises:
Love! Love! Love is the gift of Christmas.
Love! Love! Praise to you, God on high!**

Communion Hymn

"Come Now, O Prince of Peace" #247 vs. 3 & 4

3. Come now and set us free, O God, our Savior.
Come, O Lord Jesus, reconcile all nations.
4. Come, Hope of unity, make us one body.
Come, O Lord Jesus, reconcile all nations.

The Sending

*Prayer after Communion

P: Most High God,
You have come among us at this table.
By the Spirit's power, form us to be bearers of your word,
Sharing gifts of mercy and grace with all,
Through Christ Jesus, our host and our guest.

C: Amen.