

ST. STEPHEN'S WORSHIP SERVICE

Ready for your participation each Sunday at 10am.

In-person, Live Streamed on our website, or as a recording.

Go to 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)

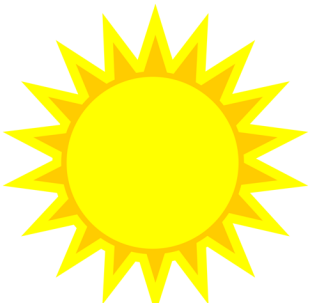
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St Stephen's Lutheran Church
2500 Soquel Avenue
Santa Cruz, CA 95062

St. Stephen's Lutheran Church



SUN

January 2022

ANNUAL
CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

SUNDAY, JAN. 30 @ 11:00 AM

ALSO VIA ZOOM
(watch for email link)

We gather together immediately following worship to elect leadership to our Church Council, elect voting members for Synod Assembly, and approve a budget for 2022 that reflects our mission.

This year we will also vote on a recommendation from the Church Council to reduce the number of Council members from nine to seven, as it has become more difficult to fill all nine positions.

The Proposed Budget will be available in the narthex on Sunday, January 16th.

Please plan on attending to support your church as we continue to seek God's will for our ministry together.

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 - Alyssa Burkhardt
Treasurer— Kent Madsen
Shelly Barker, Bill Schraft, Jay Johnston,
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.—Fri. 12:00—5:00 pm (new hours)
Pastor Jim's Contact Hours — Mon.—Thurs. 9am—5pm at 831-325-9095

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

Birthdays & Anniversaries

1-1 Nathan Lapp	1-17 Emily Valencia
1-9 Esdras Garden	1-18 Patty Travers
1-10 Colby Hanson	1-21 Chris Turzo
1-11 Mitch Crews	1-23 Diane Hintz
1-12 Linda Hix	1-25 Neil Crews
1-13 Jennifer Robe	1-26 Iris Colclough
1-14 Sofia Bartee	1-26 John Wickham
1-16 Ellie Russell	



SHORT TERM: Kent Madsen, Family of Ryan Barker, Chris & Tyler Slay, Dawit & Family (Ethiopia), Family of Rick Oldfield, Family of Ron Buswell, Family of Edna Lindquist, Chris & Patty, Gaye Cornell, Harriet Edsall, Dorothy, Laura, Rachel B., Anne & Chloe Johnston, Jane Davis, Kirsten Skiles, Healthcare workers, teachers, Jane, Nancy, Marisa, Margot Wilson, Rose, Sam, Aaron Johnson, Don, Lina, Sal, Katarina, Taiyo, Mateo, Stephanie Jager, .

LONG TERM: Kyle Lapp, Shelby Volpi, Jan Wagner, The Sanders Family, Linda Johnson, Bailey Ingalls, Jan Shadle, Vi Olly, John B., Michelle, Josh, CJ, Bobbie Erickson, Susan Anderson, Richard C., Brouse Family, Janet Baker, Sandy Godvine, Janelle Yung, Chris & Lorie Juhl, Karin, Will, Chris, Pearl Runquist, Volpi & Robe Family, Cabel, Miller, Noah, Esdras, Immigrant families, The Homeless, Our Nation's leaders, Mt. Cross, St. Stephen's Child Development Ctr, Pastor Jim & Our Church Family,), men and women of Armed Forces, and the Youth of today.

El Salvador Sister Parish News

Santa Cruz al Salvador would like to thank all the people and churches who made our Virtual Fundraiser 2021 such an amazing success. Thanks to your generosity we are able to continue with the scholarships for the University students as well as the work on the composting latrines. We are truly overwhelmed with everyone's giving spirit.

We have recently learned that an accurate list of students will be provided to us in mid-January. It seems appropriate to send out commitment cards to sponsors in late January early February. We understand that some of you may prefer to make your contribution for the year 2021 and we will gladly accept your support at any time. **We will have several students without a sponsor if you do not already have a prayer child or should you want to sponsor another child.**

A delegation will not be traveling to El Salvador in January and it is uncertain when we will be able to travel there again. Last year we asked for extra funds from our donors to provide gift bags to the families of the Prayer Children. Needed items were purchased in El Salvador by our in-country scholarship liaison, a wonderful benefit to the local economy. The goods were sorted and distributed by the University scholarship students which was another benefit to be able to get them involved. It felt so good to be able to give the families appropriate, necessary and equitable gifts.

Thank you for your time and your financial support. Our important work could not be done without your help. The amount we are suggesting is \$125 (\$75 Prayer child sponsorship plus \$50 for gift bag) or the amount you feel is appropriate. Please make the check out to "Santa Cruz al Salvador and note in the memo the funds are for "Prayer Child".

Mail to: Marian Langdon, Financial Secretary
220 Horizon Way
Aptos, CA 95003

With gratitude for your support -
Gwen May, President 14



from Pastor Jim

Hooray for the Youth!!!



I want to shout it from the mountaintops!!!

What an absolute thrill and privilege it is to begin a new Confirmation/ Youth Group! Our last two Confirmands (Elias McMilin and Nathan Lapp) are off to college (UCSC & UC Berkeley), so these youth have arrived just in time for us.

We are meeting the 1st and 3rd Sundays from 6:30—8pm. We are just beginning to know more about each other and develop our small group by sharing our "Roses and Thorns". These are things that have gone well and haven't gone well as a way to encourage and support each other. Then we do something fun like the photo below—which was getting the church Christmas Tree.

At the end we spend time discussing the Lutheran Christian faith and how it relates to our daily life. This includes talking about the big questions like: Is there a God? Why are there so many different types of churches and what are they? If God is real, then why do bad things happen to good people?

Please pray for us as we begin this new venture of faith and friendship.

L to R: Liz Barker, Sophia & Arija Bartee, Asher Davis, Julia & Patrick Tracey



Filled with Hope and Gratitude

1) *Filled with hope and gratitude and filled with very God,
I sing with soul and spirit exultation,
for God has smiled upon the humble
servant who will give
her own sweet milk to Christ, the world's salvation.*

2) *God's eternal mercy, meant for all of humankind,
is given as deliv'rance from oppression.
The powerful and haughty find that
they are now cast down,
the lowly raised beyond this world's derision.*

3) *Hungry people eat good things and find an honored place;
the rich are sent away though they are hungry.
The promise to our forebears
God renews for us today:
the world is filled with God's abundant mercy.*

4) *Filled with hope and gratitude and filled with very God,
I sing with soul and spirit exultation,
for God has smiled upon the humble
servant who will give
her own sweet milk to Christ, the world's salvation.*

Devotion

"But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart" (Luke 2:19). As she went on through the daily grind of life in the northern hill country of Nazareth, Mary must at times have looked and remembered those events of Christmas as if, perhaps, they were some sort of dream. Raising children, feeding the family, trying to keep everyone healthy was a job that took all her energy and then some. Yet those events could not be ignored, and in the middle of performing the humble drudgery of her life, they filled her with hope and gratitude to keep her going. Christmas will soon be over, and we will return to our ordinary lives. But the glory of God's love in Christmas can lighten our lives all year long.

Prayer

God of love, kindle your presence in our lives and in our world, not just this special day, but in every day of our lives. Amen.

Mark Granquist Lloyd & Annelotte Svendsbye Professor of the History of Christianity

Luther Seminary "God Pause" 12/25/2021

children to be quite restful. **He [also] valued time to sit and talk and drink with friends and colleagues.** It was an intentional setting-aside of time and space for reflection and conversation and letting the Spirit move."

Although God desires rest for all, **systemic and structural challenges prevent some in society from receiving the rest they need to live balanced, healthy lives.** Thus, rest is a privilege, Moe-Lobeda noted. "If you need to work two jobs because you're paid a minimum wage and you also need to raise your kids, there is little time for rest," she said. "The reason people have to work two jobs is structural injustice. It's wage structures— one of the problems of advanced global capitalism."

Bateza is troubled by the sense "that people who are Black and Brown aren't in need of rest. A narrative of laziness is laid upon people who aren't working the way upper-middle-class white folks work. Black folks in particular are seen as shiftless."

Moe-Lobeda added, "**Racism leads to underpaid people of color and inadequate employment that deprives them of the capacity to nourish themselves with rest.** It's an abomination in many ways to deprive people of the basic things that God wants for us and calls us to."

Drawing from his experience and his studies in racial justice, Bateza said, "Black folks can't rest in the ways that white people take for granted: driving, shopping or existing in all kinds of spaces." He believes the church should be fighting for everyone to have that opportunity to have the privilege of being able to rest.

Full article
Aug. 2021 Living Lutheran



The Spiritual Discipline of Rest

By Erin Strybis

In her studies as an ethicist, Dr. Cynthia Moe-Lobeda (Cal Lutheran/PLTS) claimed that humans' "primary call was to **love God and self and others and all of creation** with God's justice seeking, earth-honoring love." (This call rings true for the ELCA, whose tagline is "God's work. Our hands.")

Today she believes "that's our second calling. **Our first calling is to receive and relish and trust the love of God.**"

She added, "**We can't do good if we're not healthy and healed ourselves.** [Rest] is about respecting our own createdness and that we are valued by God."

Moe-Lobeda offers the example of parenthood. Parents both desire that their children thrive in work and rest well. Thus, our Holy Parent wants the same for us. "Yes, we are called to love," she said. "First, we are called to receive that love. I hold that to be a theological claim. It's grounded in the idea of grace."

Luther on Rest

Anthony Bateza is an assistant professor of religion at St. Olaf College, specializing in Martin Luther, moral theology and Christian ethics. He defines rest as intentionally stopping work in some way, with or without a goal or purpose for that stoppage. "**Rest is part of what God intends for creation and part of Godself.** All things are created and connected to God," he said. "Rest is for all people, not just Christians."

Bateza points to Elijah's mountaintop moment as an example of quality rest (1 Kings 19). "**There's something in the fact that we can hear God more easily when we feel that we're at rest,**" he said. "There has to be time for prayer and quiet stillness. A reminder it's God that's doing the work. It's about what God has given, what God expects and having time to commune with God."

Luther believed "sabbath was really a gift God offered," and he recognized the value of rest. Luther "found his time with his

Church Council Highlights

(meets 2nd Tuesday at 6:30pm in the church.)

1. Devotions centered on John the Baptist's call to prepare the way for the coming of Christ. "Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be made low, and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways made smooth."

-Luke 3:5. We reflected on the bulletin cover we just had where someone was walking on a flat sandy place, leaving a straight line of footprints. Pastor Jim shared that David Balogh (retired Geography professor at Cabrillo College) pointed out that the photo was a very apt description of that verse because sand is what results from worn down mountains and hills as it fills the valleys below it!

2. Treasurer Kent Madsen shared the difficult news that he will undergo surgery to remove a growing squamous cell carcinoma in his jaw on December 20th at Stanford Hospital. This will involve reconstruction of one side of his jawbone using bone from his fibula in his lower leg. Then he will receive radiation treatment for about one month after he recovers from surgery. (Update 12/28: The 12 hour surgery (5 to remove, 7 to reconstruct was successful. Recovery has been hampered by small blood clots in his lungs that have increased his heart rate, which has him in the ICU. His spirits are good and Pastor Jim was able to visit 12/23 for prayer and devotions.)

3. Kathy Allen (payroll bookkeeper) will graciously assume Treasurer duties while Kent recovers. Jay Johnston will graciously assume Videographer duties so that our worship services can continue to be live-streamed and posted to our website as a recording.

4. The Proposed Budget was presented to the Council by Kent. Council will approve/ amend at its January 11 meeting, which meets the 2 week requirement before the Annual Congregational Meeting on January Sunday 30th. The Proposed Budget will be available Sundays January 16th and 23rd.

Reconciling 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."



Child Development Center

In April 2012, our Child Development Center was officially licensed by Community Care Licensing. The vision of Sheila Buswell began its journey towards the 10-year anniversary for our preschool. In October 2011 Sheila Buswell, Pastor Jim, Dusty Gipson, Kathy Berens, Barbara Bautz, and Tracey Fleming began the Task Force meetings. We worked with Irene Freiburg of Growing Years to transition. Thomas Eagle helped us with Treasurer duties. Sherilyn Jager, Kim Cappelloni, and Connie Cunningham along with one parent, Hannah Forbes attended meetings. Bill and Margaret Schraft joined our school board and did a lot of painting and repairs to the facility. In December 2012 everything shifted. Kathy Berens became the Preschool Director and eventually Bill became the President. At that time, we had 6 children. Kathy was approved to do her internship at SSCDC for Palo Alto University. The Internship fostered our growth, including using local experts such as Small Business support from Cabrillo College. This internship was the first to receive 2013 Internship of the Year award for Palo Alto University completed by Kathy. That recognition was a message of confidence that our school was moving in the right direction. Finally, in May we were able to hire a teaching Assistant, Caryn Bowles.

So many people in the entire congregation donated time, money, and talents to building our school. We had crab Dinners, Aebleskiver Breakfasts, and Kathy's first fundraiser for a new bike, in which John and Rebecca Wickman donated to. It meant so much! Margaret Schraft and Barbara Johnston joined our school board. This was just the beginning our ministry to children with Director Kathy's goal to bring joy to the congregation and share the love of Jesus with them. So many have volunteered over 10 years to build and have been acknowledged in the SUN as the tasks were completed. Today I think of Ron Buswell, Jim and Leslie Lapp, John Hopping, Joel Hurttgam, Kirk McMillan, Kathy Allen, and Ross Johnston. So many helping hands to thank (Property workdays, meal fundraisers, scholarship donors, gardeners, and well-wishers) too many to list in this article but all intertwined in our history.

We reflect as this decade ends and renew in the vision of our preschool currently serving 20 happy families. It is a new beginning on old tried and true while new ideas percolate in our 4 teachers. Thanks be to God.

Warmly, Kathy

people, the benefits of this practice are immediate. For some of us, realizing the benefits of meditation will take some more time. In fact, the science of meditation shows that **the benefits of consistent meditation will be present for you even if you are not consciously aware of those benefits.**

Technology has helped us to better understand the practice of meditation and has given us tools to help us to meditate. The instruments we have today to measure the effects of meditation are much more sophisticated than the tools we had in the 1970s when I was first exposed to the science of meditation. Also, at this point in the 21st century, we can look back at more than 50 years of physiological data which consistently supports the effectiveness of regular meditation.

If you have a smartphone you have access to multiple "Apps" that can assist you in your practice of meditation and prayer. In addition to those portable "Apps", access to the internet can also provide tools to support a practice of regular meditation. Finally, if you are a little skeptical of free advice, **consider reading the 2017 book by Dan Harris, Meditation for the Fidgety Skeptic.** Perhaps, you will go forward in the New Year with a new practice that should **provide you with improved wellness, joy, and peace.**



Bringing Wellness, Joy & Peace to Our Lives

~ **Robert Bartee, Ph.D.**

Greetings, brothers, sisters, and friends in Christ. It is with joy that I take this time to share my talents with you. Here is some free advice that I can get away with saying that, as a clinical psychologist in practice for over 25 years. The advice I offer is something that I do every day. **Take time out to meditate.**

Why meditation? To begin with, meditation is an important part of our Christian and Judeo-Christian traditions. Meditation combined with prayer offer profound spiritual, emotional, mental, and physical benefits. **So how should one meditate?**

Meditation can often appear complex and difficult. That said, meditation at its core is simple and easy. **The most difficult thing about meditation is taking the time to do it.** So, I recommend scheduling a time to meditate. I recommend that my patients schedule a time to meditate at least twice a day. Of course, you can meditate and pray more often. I like to combine meditation and prayer. I have found that meditation as part of my bedtime routine **helps me improve the quality of my sleep.**

I often think of things in life as being on a continuum with either pole of the continuum being an outlier or the exception to the rule. On one end of the meditation continuum, meditation can be a brief 30-60 second exercise, and at the other end, meditation can take hours or even days. I find that it is best to find something on the continuum that fits you. **My meditation practice is about 8 minutes multiple times a day.** This practice leans toward the middle of the continuum.

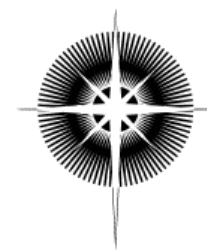
The type, or how a person mediates can be as varied as the colors of the rainbow. Whatever you do, **don't fall into the trap that you have to mediate a certain way for your mediation to be successful or of benefit to you.** The key to any successful mediation practice is consistency. Think of it in this way; find a time and style of meditation that suits you. Next, do your meditation practice consistently. For some

Welcome New Members!

The Tracey Family—Iva, Lia, Patrick and Julia

We were very blessed to receive them into God's Family gathered at St. Stephen's on Sunday Dec. 19th—a very special day because Iva's parents were able to travel here from their home country of Slovakia and be present. Oldest daughter Lia offered her gift of voice by singing "Mary Did You Know?" which inspired everyone in our worship. Amazing! Patrick & Julia attend Monte Vista Christian and are part of our new Confirmation/Youth Group.

The Tracey's moved to the Aptos area last year and have been worshipping with us during the pandemic. They are coming from Immanuel Lutheran Church in Los Altos, where Leslie Lapp was confirmed and where her father still attends! Iva's husband is Roman Catholic and we were able to meet him on Christmas Eve.



Epiphany

. . . Means "to show" or "to make known." It was first observed in the East as a feast commemorating Jesus' baptism as an adult. Later it became a celebration of Christ being made known to the Gentiles, beginning with the Wisemen (Magi) who came from the East to worship the Christ child. Another theme of Epiphany is God's light overcoming the darkness of evil and sin.

The color of Epiphany Day is white for light and purity. The Baptism and the Transfiguration of Jesus are celebrated during this season, so white is a reminder of Baptism robes and the gleaming white color of Jesus' clothes when he went up the mountain of transfiguration. On other Sundays in Epiphany the color is green.

The star that guided the wisemen to Bethlehem is a symbol of Epiphany.



Provide Lunches for Volunteers Tuesday, January 25

4th Tuesday of each month

Please sign up in the narthex or call the church office if you can provide a lunch item: sandwiches, fruit, chips, or cookies. Bring your item to church and someone will deliver the lunch for you. Easy! Presently Habitat for Humanity Monterey Bay is building eleven homes at Rodeo Creek Court (cross street Harper). These are homes for low income families, though they must have an income and provide 500 hours of sweat equity before they can take ownership of their new home.

Habitat "Cars for Homes" Program

Donate your vehicle & help build strength & stability for families in our communities. 100% of net proceeds from the sale of your vehicle will fund our work helping local families. Start your car donation today at <https://www.habitatmontereybay.com/donate-a-car> or (877)277-4344

Monthly Special Benevolence Offering

January—Society for the Prevention of Suicide

is the leader in the fight against suicide. To fully achieve its mission, AFSP engages in the following Five Core Strategies:

- #1 Fund scientific research
- #2 Offer educational programs for professionals
- #3 Educate the public about mood disorders and suicide prevention
- #4 Promote policies and legislation that impact suicide and prevention
- #5 Provide programs and resources for survivors of suicide loss and people at risk, and involve them in the work of the Foundation

December – Lutheran World Relief = \$82 (as of 12/23)

Hannah Travers Pilgrimage

Thank you for your email. I hope you all are doing well.

I have been traveling through Europe for the last couple of months and knew that at some point I wanted to reach Portugal. My grandfather's side of the family is from there and it is a place I really feel at home. I had heard about the various Pilgrimages to Santiago during my Spanish class in high school, and there is one that goes through Portugal to Santiago de Compostela. Since I wanted to get to Portugal, I decided to take the less traditional route and walk the Caminho Portuguese backwards to Porto!

This proved to be lonely at times due to the fact that not many people walk that direction and November is off season, but finishing this **150 mile walk** by myself was a very accomplishing and gratifying experience. Luckily, when I stayed in hostels along the way, I met many amazing people who were walking for many reasons such as religion, personal growth, and just because they could!

Now I return home with many lovely memories from my trip, and a lot of gratitude for what can be accomplished when you set a goal and just do it, even if you may have some fear or hesitation. And usually it is not the original goal you set out to finish that is the reward, but the unexpected experiences you have and the connections you make along the way.

I hope to see you over the holidays, Merry Christmas!!
Best, Hannah (Dec. 15, 2021)



We all miss each other!
Let us know what's been happening in your life. Your notes help keep everyone hopeful and joyful. Email it to church: **"office@ststephenslutheran.org"**