

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
August 25, 2021

**POST OFFICE:
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Permit #7079
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St Stephen's Lutheran Church
2500 Soquel Avenue
Santa Cruz, CA 95062



IN-PERSON / INDOOR WORSHIP
EVERY SUNDAY!
(With safety protocols in place)

BEGINNING
SEPTEMBER 12 AT 10:00 AM

Also Live-streamed and recorded on our website

~ Readers and Prayer Assistants are always welcome ~

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

9-7 David Balogh	9-19 Philip Spires	9-4 Jim Jones & Shay Barsabe
9-8 Cabel Dawson	9-20 Brian Awe	9-6 Ron & Sheila Buswell
9-11 Rebecca Wickham	9-24 Alex Csik Hughes	9-6 Jim & Naomi Florin-Gosciminski
9-12 Nikki Creel	9-26 Hayden Ruble	9-6 Ken & Susan Gross
9-12 Collin Travers	9-26 Hope Coronado	9-6 Kevin & Marla Meek
9-12 Hannah Travers	9-26 Jan Wagner	9-17 Paul & Connie Cunningham
9-14 Elias McMilin	9-29 Joanne Freymuth	9-29 Stephen & Lauren Pond
9-15 Ashley Volpi	9-30 Kristen Silva	
9-16 Rick Oldfield		
9-17 Marta Bechhoefer	9-1 Tom & Jeanette Dawson	
9-18 Connie Cunningham	9-3 Bill & Margaret Schraft	



Short Term: Rick & Susan Oldfield, Family of Lu Sluiter, Family of Jean Petersen, Lorie Juhl & Family of Betty Kievlan, Rachel Lapp and Dawit Yerda, Rachel B., Anne & Chloe Johnston, Jane Davis, Jo Ann, Leslie Lapp and Family, Healthcare workers, teachers, Marla Meek and family, Beth Stiles, Sandi Cane, Robbin, Nancy, Marisa, Margot Wilson, Kent, Family of Al Mitchell, Sam, George Webber & Family, Becky & Aaron Johnson, Nancy Hall family, Sadie, Lorraine Chavez, Lora Schraft Poulson, Nelleke, Hendrick, Don, Lina, Katarina, Taiyo, Mateo, Stephanie Jager, Casey, Cabel, Miller, Kyle, Noah, Esdras, Jenna Blair, Marissa Phillips, Immigrant families, The Homeless, Our Nation's leaders, Mt. Cross, St. Stephen's Child Development Ctr, Pastor Jim and Our Church Family. **Long Term:** The Sanders Family, Linda Johnson, Bailey Ingalls, Jan Shadle, Vi Olly, John B., Michelle, Josh, CJ, Jeff Tarantino, 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, 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.

El Salvador Sister Parish News



Mission: Santa Cruz al Salvador connects Greater Monterey Bay Area faith communities with communities in El Salvador, enhancing and enriching the lives of all participants. This mission is guided by the philosophy of accompaniment — walking together in a solidarity resulting in interdependence and mutual respect.

Join us in a life changing experience!

Family Fun(d) Fest Pivots to Virtual Event - I was hoping to provide details of this fall event in this newsletter. However, due to the rise in Covid-19 cases due to the Delta variant, the planning committee is changing this event to a virtual one. Details, however, are still being ironed out. Stay tuned!

El Pilar Latrine Update - Phase 6 (phase numbering corrected) of the latrine project has been completed! I've included recent photos of two latrines.

January 2022 Delegation - We are planning a delegation in January 2022 depending on the situation with the pandemic here and there. If anyone is interested in participating, please contact Kent Madsen. At least nine people from other churches have expressed interest in going. We are not asking for commitments yet, but would like to know what the level of interest is at St. Stephen's.

On behalf of the Board of Directors for Santa Cruz al Salvador (SCaS), I wish to thank all members of St. Stephen's who have contributed towards any of our projects such as the latrines in El Pilar or scholarships in El Salvador. Your gifts make a difference!

Peace in Christ,
Kent Madsen, St. Stephen's representative
on the SCaS Board of Directors



from Pastor Jim



I am very glad to be able to see many of you back in church beginning Sept. 12!! Although there have been many blessings that God has given us through the difficulties of the pandemic, I have become very tired of recording the worship service in a largely empty space!

In order to help everyone feel comfortable and safe upon returning to worshipping together in body and spirit, our Church Council has been planning some ways that will help us be the most welcoming and caring for the most vulnerable. Please contact me or a Council member if you have more ideas. Here is what has been planned:

Health Safety Protocols for Worship

1. Masks will be worn at all times. This way we are able to sing and pray out loud. Pastor Jim will maintain a 25ft. distance as he will be unmasked.
2. Air circulation will be constant. Fans will be placed at open doorways and the HVAC system will be running with the proper filters.
3. Holy Communion will continue to be shared using the pre-sealed cups and wafer. These and the bulletins will be available as people enter. Everyone will be asked to use the hand sanitizers as they are greeted.
4. All will be asked to maintain a 6ft distance from other family groups/individuals. (Taped off sections will guide this)
5. Offering plates will be on tables at various locations and we will stagger our approach to them.
6. Exchanging of The Peace will be done only with gestures - no physical contact.
7. Coffee Fellowship will only be outside. Rain cancels. Coffee will be served by a gloved and masked person. Goodies will be on individual plates/napkins to be picked up one at a time at tables.

A Message From our Church Administrator

So, I'll start with the big news: I've finally been discharged from home health care! Thanks be to God! With my new health, and empty nest I've taken on a second part-time job. I'm excited to be working with children again back at my old school Delaveaga Elementary. The church office hours will now be 12:00 to 5:00 pm.

Now back to the business of Faith. Our Women's Café group has been discussing God's promises. Rather than feeling entitled to God's protection and good graces, we are embracing His promises as roots to Faith, Hope & Love. It is remarkable, when we take it to God rather than whine about the issue at hand. We often are granted peace and clarity. God's perspective is best for what ails us.

1. When you are tired:

*"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and **I will give you rest**. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for **I am gentle and humble in heart**, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."* Matthew 11:28-30

2. When you think it's impossible:

*"Jesus looked at them and said, 'With man this is impossible, but not with God: **all things are possible with God**.'" Mark 10:27*

3. When you are ready to give up:

*"Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold, **13 but the one who stands firm to the end will be saved**."* Matthew 24:12-13

4. When you need a reminder:

*"I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. **But take heart!** I have overcome the world."* John 16:33

5. When your Faith is low:

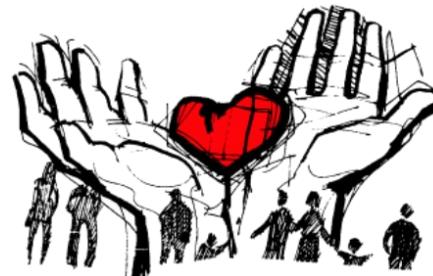
*"Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, **believe that you have received it**, and it will be yours."* Mark 11:24

Lets pray:

Open our eyes God to see your greatness and care. Help us to see that what you give is ALWAYS more than enough. ~ Amen

Benevolence Donations (Individual and Church)

2021 through July	
Am. Fdn. Suicide Prevention	\$235
SS Scholarships	\$245
Live Oak Resource Center	\$248
Habitat for Humanity	\$430
Mt. Cross	\$335
World Hunger	\$305
Housing Matters	\$295
CLU/PLTS	\$0
Lutheran Campus Ministry	\$42
SS CDC	\$485
El Salvador Sister Parish	\$50
Lutheran World Relief	\$65
ELCA Synod	\$500
COPA	\$1,000
Lutheran Immigration	\$0
Total	\$4,235
2021 Benevolence Target (10%)	\$14,360
% of Target	29%



Treasurer Notes ...
Budget Information · July 2021

	July	July	YTD	YTD	Net
	Actual	Budget	Actual	Budget	
Contribution Income	\$10,128	\$11,750	\$83,716	\$83,800	\$-84
Facility Use Income *	\$788	\$917	\$42,305	\$6,417	\$35,888
Investment Income	\$4,385	\$3,750	\$21,020	\$26,250	\$-5,230
Total Income	\$15,300	\$16,417	\$147,041	\$116,467	\$30,574
Expenses	\$18,156	\$18,208	\$115,142	\$132,733	\$-17,591
Net	\$-2,856	\$-1,791	\$31,898	\$-16,267	\$ 48,165

* Includes Child Development Center facility use @ \$300/month (when paid) + Misc. Income. Contribution income for July was below budget. On the other hand, we were blessed with \$7,500 in Miscellaneous Income in April as well as the income for the Paycheck Protection Program loan which was forgiven in April. Expenses have been reduced by the grant from the Silicon Valley Community Foundation for Pastor and Administrator salaries (those funds were fully used by the end of April).

While the church has restricted activities, 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 and Solar Electricity

	March	Reserve	Needed to Payoff
Organ	\$0	\$260	
Piano	\$27	\$112	
Hearing Impaired Equip	\$0	\$395	
Solar Electric Payback	\$286		\$14,621

Church Council Highlights
(meets 2nd Tuesday at 6:30pm.)



1. We had to change our meeting space to the sanctuary as the Scouts are beginning to meet in person, but are still not able to meet in the Fellowship Hall due to Covid restrictions per our state licensing requirements from our Child Development Center. It also gave us the opportunity to happily witness the first meeting where girls have been included in Scouting!

2. Devotions were taken from Measuring the Days by Walter Wangerin (same author who wrote our Palm Sunday liturgy—"The Cry of the Whole Congregation").

He drew from Psalm 33 v. 22: "Let your steadfast love, O Lord, be upon us, even as we hope in you." He reminded us that we are always moving in to the future with calculated guesswork and faith (pandemic or not!). And the less that we believe in those who are with us in our lives (our church family), the more we are tempted to just "sit in a stony conservatism and wait for the future to come and get us." As we move into a new way of worship and living out our mission as the gathered faithful at St. Stephen's, we must depend on God's steadfast love as we plan and act and live into our future.

3. We affirmed our decision to begin in-person worship every Sunday at 10am beginning Sunday Sept. 12th. Health Safety Protocols were discussed. See pg. 3 for the list of changes we will be making for worship.

4. Robert Bartee reported for the Security Task Force. Council decided it was best to purchase our own security camera system and install it ourselves. The cost is within our budget line item for Facility Maintenance. Robert, Jay Johnston and Pastor Jim will work together to install it.

5. The Sustainability Task Force met, facilitated by Alyssa Burkhardt. They will be contacting church members to re-connect as we return to in-person worship. COPA continues to work with the County Health dept. as it revises its Access to Care Agreement with the various healthcare providers.

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

As we begin September, I am looking forward to seeing you all in church worship on September 12th

at 10:00. It has been pretty lonely around here without the hustle and bustle of church activities and having the opportunity to say hello to those who come by. I am hopeful that many will come so we can see who we are now after all this time. During this time, your little preschool has been operating for a full year during Covid-19, thus far we are all healthy.

Our new students, mostly Toddlers have been trickling in. At first, we looked around us and everyone became so much younger and smaller after a large older group. Unfortunately, not all enrollments turn out the way we have hoped so our class list continues to adjust. Most of the entering students are very happy to be here and engage with others immediately. A couple of very young children do cry and want mommy. Brenda and the team are working hard so they can acclimate, especially in the resting room. Overall, it is going well.

September is going to be a fresh start in many ways. We are excited to share some new activities with the children. We have begun the process of screening each child in the Preschool program so we can write goals and teach to their individual needs. For instance, I shared 5 wooden leaves face down. The child turns it over and attempts to or reads the number. Then, they put them in order. They are given 5 cards and they count the leaves on each card and match with the correct number. They are learning to count with one-to-one correspondence (point and count). If successful, I add in 6-10 and repeat the process. I stop where they stop. It is okay to say, "I don't know," after all we are all here to learn. If visual identification has not been reached yet at the numbers level, we go back into the Visual Discrimination Continuum which begins with objects, colors, shapes, letters, numbers, then letters and sounds. We go back and fill in the foundation then build back up. It is thrilling to watch them learn, especially when a hesitant child leaves the table feeling good about participating in the activity.

So here we go...Covid-19 changes and all. We will continue to follow the most stringent of guidelines that are updated weekly with the County Superintendent. Please pray for the good health of our children and staff as we begin school year 2021-2022. Your endless support and prayers are treasured.

Kathy Berens

Update From the Lapps

Thank you for your prayers for our family, especially this past year! We have recently received some very good news after it looked like our hopes were dashed for Rachel's husband, Dawit to receive his expedited spousal visa. Somehow, miraculously, after the application had been denied and quickly re-submitted, Rachel was notified that it had been re-evaluated and APPROVED! We were out fishing with Paul Cunningham when the email came through and the joyous news was shared. Rachel's learned patience about fishing really paid off as this very complicated story unfolded in a way we had hoped for since February. I had just shared with the congregation in outdoor worship the Sunday before that the application had been denied and that it would be another year or so before he could be here. It seems that some of you pulled some heavenly strings, because things quickly changed in a system that is notoriously slow, unresponsive and lengthy. Dawit's final interview has been scheduled for the end of December, so we will welcome him in the New Year!

And our "little" boy Nathan has started to leave the nest as we moved him into his triple dorm at UC Berkeley on Aug. 18. We are all glad its not too far though, as he will become an Uncle around Nov. 11!



**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"**

HOPE IS A CLIMATE SURVIVAL STRATEGY

By Karyn Bigelow & Avery Davis Lamb (8/12/2021)

This week, the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) released a report on the state of the climate crisis. It is a report that frames, in the cautious language of science, the dire state of the world. This panel of experts from around the world found that warming of 1.5 to 2 degrees Celsius in the next century is certain unless there are extreme and immediate cuts in greenhouse gases. This level of warming would spread and intensify the kinds of extreme weather — hurricanes, wildfires, floods, and heat waves — we have seen unfold for over a decade. This report shows us the reality that our actions will not be enough to prevent catastrophic climate change. Immediate action on climate *can* prevent the worst effects of climate change — but catastrophe has already happened. Catastrophes are happening all around us.

What are we to do in the face of utter catastrophe? How can we possibly have hope amid the undoing of the world?

In his book on hope, *Faith, Hope, and Love*, theologian Josef Pieper argues that there are two kinds of hopelessness: despair and presumption. Both, at their root, are the same problem, for “they transform the ‘not yet’ of hope into either the ‘not’ or the ‘already’ of fulfillment.” Hope is not optimism. It is not the expectation that everything will turn out in the end. Nor is it the belief that we are doomed, despite our best efforts. Rather, hope is the possibility that through truth-telling and holy action, we might turn back to God. To have Christian hope is to act in courage, claiming what we know and what we can do. It is held together by realistic truth-telling about the world, acting to create a better world, and looking toward the redemption that comes through the grace of God.

Let’s tell the truth: We know what is happening. We know it is bad. We know who is causing it. We know how to change it.

The first two truths are well-documented by the IPCC report. The third is not. Phrases like “human-caused climate change” and “anthropocene” mask the truth of who is causing climate change: large corporations who profit off of the destruction of God’s creation and the exploitation of God’s people. We do not all bear equal responsibility for the climate crisis. Just **100 companies** are responsible for 71 percent of climate pollution. (see more at sojourners.net)

From Tension to Inspiration

by Emily Carson, ELCA Faith Reflections

Jesus consistently stepped into tense situations rather than tiptoeing around them. He didn’t avoid difficult interpersonal dynamics; he embraced them and recognized that tension is often a catalyst for transformation (of people and systems).

Tension can be defined as the state of being stretched. We can experience it individually, and it also happens collectively within communities. While many of us tend to walk in the opposite direction of tension, Jesus offers an alternative: walk toward it.

As we figure out what to do with tension in our daily lives, it’s useful to step into several narratives from the Gospel of Luke that reveal insights about the ways Jesus navigated disagreement and uncertainty.

Mary & Martha: Luke 10:38-42 It’s a story about two very relatable sisters. Sometimes I cringe a bit when I read commentaries on Mary and Martha because theologians and preachers are sometimes far too quick to make caricatures of them—especially Martha, Martha, Martha with all her busy work.

To me, they both seem relatable. Sometimes we’re more like Mary—able to slow down and savor important moments of connection. Sometimes we’re more like Martha—frenzied and distracted with work that feels sincerely important but perhaps isn’t as pivotal as we might imagine.

Mary and Martha had different approaches to preparing for a visit from Jesus. Rather than avoid the tension that was going on between these two sisters, Jesus stepped into it. He valued them both immensely. But he didn’t want to miss an opportunity to expand awareness and insight. Jesus wasn’t a silent guest. He stepped into the tension and shared reflections with respect; he used the discord to invite Mary and Martha into a new way of thinking about what matters most.

Religious Authorities: Luke 15 In the Gospel of Luke, Jesus ruffled plenty of feathers. Jesus had been spending a lot of time with people characterized as tax collectors and sinners. Religious authorities were dumbfounded. They couldn’t figure out why a religious person like Jesus would be cavorting with people of ill-repute.

Rather than dismissing their commentary and confusion altogether, Jesus steps closer and tells stories meant to expand their empathy and compassion. In Luke 15, we find some of the Scriptures’ most beloved parables: the lost sheep, the lost coin and the prodigal son. Jesus embraces the tension in the system and offers stories. He did what he could to equip the people around him to see their environment and neighbors in new, less judgmental ways.

Fighting about Greatness: Luke 22:24-30 The disciples were some of Jesus’ closest friends. They ate meals together. They traveled together on foot. Even with their proximity to Jesus’ ministry, the disciples weren’t perfect. Like any other group of people, they sometimes disagreed. (Full article at boldcafe.org)



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

Contact church office if you can provide Fruit or Cookies (everything else covered)

Habitat Cars for Homes program

Donate your vehicle to "Cars for Homes", and help build strength and 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

Volunteers Needed

The Finance Committee offering counters' group is in need of additional members to assist with this vital weekly endeavor. The time commitment for a volunteer is approximately 3-4 x per calendar quarter for about 60-90 minutes. The task is completed in pairs of group members. The only skill required is your desire to volunteer. Knowledge of MS Excel is a plus, but not a necessity. Orientation provided.

Thanks to Susan Gross, Bill Anderson, Mark Linder, and Rebecca Wickham for your continued support. Kim Frey and Barbara Rice are leaving the group at this time and we thank them for their time and faithfulness.

Please contact Janet Slay (475-5668) or the church office if you would like to volunteer.

We are ALL invited to an online
Viewing Party in our Fireside Room of

Holy Eucharist
And
Rite of Installation

Of the fifth Bishop of the Sierra Pacific Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

The Reverend Dr. Megan Rohrer

Saturday, September 11 at 2:00 pm

Monthly Special Benevolence Offering

Lutheran Campus Ministry

Reaching out with the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the students, faculty and staff of UC Santa Cruz and CSU Monterey Bay, Lutheran Campus Ministry of the Monterey Bay supports students on their faith journey by providing opportunities for Bible study, prayer, worship, service and fellowship.

August— California Lutheran University &
Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary = \$20 (as of Aug 26)