

## 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](http://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)*

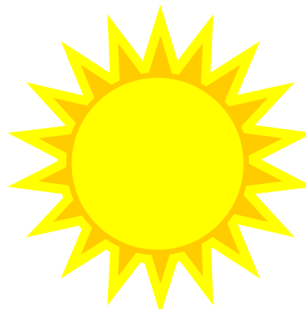
**NEWSLETTER WAS SENT ON**  
**November 28, 2022**

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

Non-Profit Org.  
Postage Paid  
Permit #7079  
Santa Cruz, CA 95060-9998

*St. Stephen's Lutheran Church*



*Sun*

*December 2022*

## **Holiday Events**

- Dec. 10** Memorial Service for those who died in the past year: Rev. Glenn Johnson, Christopher Slay, Mary Gilbert, Beverly Gilladett, Rev. Jack Zoellner. Please contact Pastor Jim if you would like to include others.
- Dec. 11** Mitten Tree (gifts for preschoolers)
- Dec. 11** Sunday Worship & Christmas Pageant—10am
- Dec. 18** MMRR Women's Circle Bake Sale
- Dec. 18** Holiday Potluck (after worship)
- Dec. 25** Sunday Worship—10 am

## **Christmas Eve Candlelight Worship**

**Sat. Dec. 24th at 5:00 pm & 7:30 pm**

The recorded Candlelight Service will also be available on our website: [www.ststephenslutheran.org](http://www.ststephenslutheran.org)



***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. — Shelly Barker V.P.— Steven Hendrickson  
 Secretary - Alyssa Burkhardt  
 Treasurer— Kent Madsen  
 David Balogh, Paul Cunningham, and Jay Johnston

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

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

12-2 Ken Gross	12-26 Shay Barsabe	
12-6 Don Smawley	12-28 Brad Tuttle	12-04 Peggy & Phil Crews
12-7 Donald Daves	12-31 Paul Cunningham	
12-7 Dawit Gebremeriam		12-04 John & Kathy Hopping
12-8 Maryann Hurttgam	12-31 Jeanette Dawson	
12-14 Sheryl Brouse	12-31 Dusty Gipson	12-22 Chris & Lorie Juhl
12-15 Robert Bartee		
12-18 Leslie Ruble		
12-20 Stefan Meek		



**SHORT TERM:** Erica Curry, Rosio, Gus, Alessandra, John W., The Family of Connor Kowalski, Debbie Garden, Tex & Dorothy, The Family of Vern Lillehaugen, Janine, Judi, David & Martha, Gary, Sandra Trippel, Shiela P., Mary Smith, Tina G., Paul Cunningham, Family of Tom Dunham, Barbara Allen, Family of Audrey Patterson, Tara McMilin & family, Anita & Howard, The People of Ukraine, Sydnei Wilbywold, Paul Paustian, Kurt Bell, Will, Deborah Henry, Kathi Chavez, Carla, Ellie, Adrian Cameron, Dawit & Family (Ethiopia), Gaye Cornell, Dorothy, Rachel B., Anne & Chloe Johnston, Kirsten Skiles, Nancy, Marisa & Isaac, Mateo & Lina, Don, Atlas, Margot Wilson, Rose, Will, Sam, Aaron Johnson, Sal, Katarina, Taiyo, Mateo, Stephanie Jager, Parents, Healthcare workers & teachers.

**LONG TERM:** Kyle Lapp, Shelby Volpi, Ashley, Sandie & Dale, Sanders Family, Linda Johnson, Bailey Ingalls, Jan Shadle, Vi Olly, Michelle, Josh, CJ, Bobbie Erickson, Lupe, Joyce, Susan Anderson, Jan Wagner, Richard C., Brouse Family, Janet Baker, Sandy Godvine, Janelle Yung, 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.



## Sister Parish News

**2022 Delegation** - By the time you read this, the 2022 delegation will have traveled to El Salvador and returned. Stay tuned for news of their trip in an upcoming newsletter.

**2023 Prayer Children** - The timing for our prayer child commitments has changed. As we did last year, we will be contacting you early in 2023 once the scholarship committee in Guillermo Ungo has identified scholarship recipients for the year. Also like last year, we will be asking that you open up your hearts and make an additional contribution in lieu of a gift bag. It only takes a little from us to make a big difference in the lives of the children we have come to know and love in Ungo. We are requesting an additional \$50 donation to provide for the families in 2023.

**For Those Who Have Everything: A Gift to Santa Cruz al Salvador in Their Honor** - Again this year we have available Donation Acknowledgement Cards with a photo greeting from Salvadoran children and notation inside that "A donation has been made in your honor to Santa Cruz al Salvador, mission project of area Presbyterian & Lutheran Churches." On the back is our motto: "Building Relationships for Better Lives" with an explanation that donations provide scholarships, school supplies, pure water and composting toilets in our communities. Please contact Kent Madsen if you are interested in making this kind of donation.

**A Special Thank You** - to the Johnson family for the special gift to Santa Cruz al Salvador from the Glenn (Barbara) E. Johnson Family Trust, announced in the November newsletter.

On behalf of the Board of Directors for Santa Cruz al Salvador, thanks to all members of St. Stephen's for their contributions. We cannot do our work without our donors. *Your gifts make a difference!*

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

## *From Pastor Jim*



I would like to extend a very big thank you to our Sustainability Task Force for all of their time and efforts in gathering us in various small group House Meetings recently (or soon to come).

Co-Chairs Alyssa Burkhardt and Mark Linder both led by inspiring example during worship, as they shared their faith stories and what they are particularly grateful for at St. Stephen's. They reminded us of the precious gift we all have in being active participants in the life of our church. I was particularly moved by the parts where they had experienced some difficult times in various churches before coming here. It's certainly true that there is no perfect church or one that lives out God's Truths all the time, but they were not deterred and kept seeking a place that was doing better at including ALL of God's children.

Other House Meeting leaders on the SFT are Robert Bartee, Steven Hendrickson and Shelly Barker. All five of them and I will be contacting you to invite you to help me and the Church Council discern the Holy Spirit's calling to what is next for our congregation. We feel that it is time to do this kind of "pulse-taking" after we have emerged from some of the more restrictive aspects of the pandemic.

We were just about to consider beginning a Dinner Church somewhere nearby in a community setting on weeknight. For my sabbatical in 2019, I had engaged with such a "Fresh Expression" of the Church after we had spent a year studying the book "From the Steeple to the Street". This was one way that churches like ours (smaller, declining, mainline Protestant) had connected with the non-church-going community around them. Maybe it's time to renew that idea for ourselves. Or maybe God is moving us in a different direction. Please pray for how you may bring an uplifting and helpful spirit to these House Meetings as we honor the work of our church leaders!

## ELCA Good Gifts & God's Global Barnyard

As odd as it seems to **give someone the gift of a cow, or a goat, or some chicks, or honey bees**, it is this kind of a gift that can change a life, a family and possibly a whole community.

These Gifts are a creative, meaningful way to support the ministries that mean the most to you and your loved ones. The items in the Good Gifts catalog lift up examples of work being done in different projects and programs supported by funds from the ELCA: **Fund for Leaders, Global Church Sponsorship, Malaria Campaign, New Congregations, Vision for Mission, World Hunger and Disaster Response**. Each of these programs is a long-term partnership-based ministry that focus on the needs identified by local congregations and global companion churches and their communities.

Your gifts to **God's Global Barnyard** will support the sustainable development ministries of the ELCA World Hunger, which include training, education, resources (and much more) to help the community care for animals and create new market opportunities like **starting a small business selling eggs, meat or dairy products**. Your gifts support this comprehensive approach to animal husbandry. ELCA.org or 1-800-638-3522



## 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 automated giving program. As the pace of life speeds up, especially around the holidays, you may find electronic giving a most welcome way to make contributions. Janet Slay 475-5668.

Your 2022 Offering envelopes are in the Narthex.

## Benevolence Donations (Individual and Church)

2022 through October		
Am. Fdn. Suicide Prevention	\$400	
SS Scholarships	\$200	
Live Oak Resource Center	\$275	
Habitat for Humanity	\$750	
Mt. Cross	\$285	
World Hunger	\$640	
Housing Matters	\$900	
CLU/PLTS	\$295	
Lutheran Campus Ministry	\$373	
SS CDC	\$735	Plus Johnson Trust gift: \$25,000
El Salvador Sister Parish	\$200	Plus Johnson Trust gift: \$10,000
Lutheran World Relief	\$50	Plus Johnson Trust gift: \$5,000
ELCA Synod	\$750	
COPA	\$1,500	Plus Johnson Trust gift: \$4,165
Lutheran Immigration	\$0	
Grey Bears	\$0	Plus Johnson Trust gift: \$5,000
Total	\$7,353	
2021 Benevolence Target (10%)	\$14,360	
% of Target	51%	Johnson Trust gifts: \$49,165



Treasurer Notes ...

Budget Information · October 2022

	October	October	YTD	YTD	Net
	Actual	Budget	Actual	Budget	
Contribution Income	\$12,040	\$11,625	\$113,303	\$119,250	\$-5,947
Facility Use Income *	\$7,475	\$1,216	\$17,729	\$12,166	\$5,563
Investment Income	\$5,466	\$5,000	\$50,190	\$50,000	\$190
Total Income	\$24,981	\$17,843	\$181,222	\$181,416	\$-194
Expenses	\$23,237	\$19,672	\$195,617	\$201,694	\$-6,077
Net	\$1,744	\$-1,830	\$-14,394	\$-20,278	\$5,883

*\* Includes Child Development Center facility use @ \$300/month (when paid) + Misc. Income.*  
Contribution income for October was above the budget (thank you!) as well as Miscellaneous Income; year-to-date expenses have exceeded income by \$14,394. In early September an additional \$12,000 was withdrawn from investments, making the year-to-date withdrawals \$17,000.

*Please remember your church if you are away this holiday season.  
Thank you to those who have contributed this year!*

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

	October	Reserve	Needed to Payoff
Organ	\$160	\$0	\$19
Piano	\$0	\$120	
Hearing Impaired Equip	\$0	\$395	
Solar Electric Payback	\$220		\$9,131

Church Council Highlights

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

1. Devotions centered around praying for our congregation by offering our Kyries and Glorias. We particularly remembered both David Balogh as he moved to Ft. Collins, CO and Paul Cunningham who had been hospitalized for a tumor impeding a leg nerve.
2. Pastor Jim reported that he had co-chaired the COPA Accountability Session for the Board of Supervisors candidates in Santa Cruz and Monterey Counties. All candidates agreed to help achieve COPA’s agenda of building more affordable housing, protecting renters from unfair practices, seeking more behavioral health and substance abuse treatment opportunities, and providing healthcare for immigrant farmworkers.
3. Pastor Jim also met with District 1 Supervisor Manu Koenig (who serves where our church is located), as the Vice President of our Association of Faith Communities. He chaired the meeting where he and 3 others petitioned for the funding of our Faith Community Shelter program (serves 20 unhoused people), and our Safe Spaces Parking program (serves 40 people by allowing them to sleep in their vehicles in church parking lots). We requested \$250,000 per year for annual funding.
4. Pastor Jim will be working with Interim Bishop’s Communication Director Ms. Catherine Slabaugh (recent CLU grad) as she forms a new Campus Ministry coalition.
5. Pastor Jim met with Mt. Cross Interim Director Rev. Jeff Burrow (ret. Bishop from Greater Milwaukee Synod), as they seek a new Executive Director.
6. Treasurer Kent Madsen presented the preliminary 2023 budget. It will be voted on by the Council at the December 13 meeting to be brought to the Annual Congregational meeting on Sunday, January 29th after worship.
7. Steven Hendrickson, Margaret and Bill Schraft, Kent Madsen and Barbara Rice attended the Interim Bishop’s Conference 6 Gathering on Nov. 12th

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

**Our preschool is so grateful for the generous donation from Pr. Glenn and Barbara Johnson and the desire, faith, and confidence they had in this ministry.**

Glenn always greeted me on Sundays asking, "How's the principal doing?" I hear his voice and feel his hug to this day. It is difficult to put into words how meaningful this support is to me, and all who have built and supported our preschool ministry. Thank you, Pastor Glenn, and Barbara! We send thanks to Lisa as she has been so supportive of our preschool, and her family for seeing this generous gift through.

**We celebrated St. Martin's Day once again at The Crow's Nest pier** thanks to Maya Buhr who is from Germany and has reenacted this tradition for us for several years as a preschool, and community gathering. Hailey went here for 3 years and is in first grade, and Ethan is with us now. She supplied us with the materials to make paper lanterns at school. **We gathered in the cement sitting area in a circle, overlooking the harbor with lanterns glowing while she reenacted the story of St. Martin.** After, we paraded out onto the sand and gathered for traditional German songs sung in German. Then, we gathered on the docks for Lentil Soup with sausage, crusty bread, and cookies. **All but one preschool family attended that evening. It was a beautiful night and a wonderful opportunity for families to meet each other as many are new to our school.** Who is St. Martin? "The incident for which he is most remembered also occurred when Saint Martin was a soldier. He was approaching the city of Amiens, in Gaul (France), where he met a naked beggar. Martin cut his riding cloak in half and offered half of it to the beggar. That night Martin had a vision of Jesus, clutching his cloak and telling angels that Martin had given it to him. In some versions, he awoke to find his cloak whole again. The experience was enough to cement his belief in the Christian faith and he was baptized shortly after." (<https://www.iamexpat.de/expat-info/german-expat-news/history-saint-martins-day>) How is St Martin's Day celebrated in Germany? On November 11, **streets in Germany are illuminated by the many lanterns carried by children in the annual Saint Martin's Day processions.** (Wikipedia)

Returning to St. Stephen's by the enthusiasm of Miss Leslie we are preparing for the Christmas Pageant on December 11, at 10:00 worship! Once again, we will combine our children's ministries to delight you with

## THE ADVENT WREATH

Wishing you a Happy New Year as the Church begins a new liturgical year. -

**The Advent Wreath is a Christian tradition that signifies continuous life.** The circle of the wreath has no beginning and no end, symbolizing the eternity of God and the everlasting life we find in Christ. The idea of the wreath dates back to the early 1800's when Pr. Johann Hinrich Wichern who ministered to poor children, used the wreath to help the children mark the weeks until Christmas. In the beginning, the wreath had twenty five candles, one lit each day begin until Christmas. December 1<sup>st</sup>. In later years the wreath was reduced to four candle that would mark the weeks leading up to Christmas.



This year our wreath utilizes blue candles to mark the weeks until Christmas. **The blue color has come to represent hope.** Advent is a time of hope and longing for the coming of the Messiah. Beginning with the candle on the front left and then moving clockwise, one candle is lit each week. The candles represent the four **themes of Advent: Hope, Love, Joy, and Peace.** The large white candle in the middle of the wreath represents Christ. It is called the "Christ Candle" and is lit on Christmas Eve. In many churches it burns until Epiphany which marks the visit of the Magi. The body of the wreath is made of evergreens that represent eternal life, because they are always green.

This year as in past years, our family **dedicates the Advent Wreath to the memory of my mother Kathryn Lewis Greso who introduced me to using the Advent Wreath to mark the weeks till Christmas when I was a young girl.**

We hope as we light each candle on the wreath, your thoughts will turn inward away from the hustle, bustle, and pressures of today's world, and help you focus your thoughts toward Christ who entered the world that long ago Christmas night.

Faithfully. Barbara Johnston



## All That Brass

### Two Times

**Christmas Eve 7:30 pm  
&  
Christmas Day**

# Waiting and Emptying Ourselves: Modes of Being in Advent

By Steven Hendrickson

**How are your daily devotions of reflecting upon Scripture along with silence going?** With the time of Advent here, this is an ideal time to lean into this practice to experience the presence of Christ within. Advent is traditionally known as a time of waiting. Yes, we wait in silence to hear that still small voice, and we let go and empty ourselves of mental chatter and anything else that intensifies at this time of year. Waiting and emptying ourselves is a call to choose God's presence instead of all the activities which grab our attention and drive us to distraction. One way of emptying ourselves is to consciously limit the activities we choose to engage in. Shopping, parties, etc, are not necessarily off limits. But, we selectively choose what will give joy instead of expectation and obligation, and busy-ness

**Saying the Welcome Prayer by Thomas Keating often will help to remember your intention to be attentive to God's presence "on the go."** One can google the Welcome Prayer on an electronic device, so it is always available. Please pay special attention of the letting go statements. In our emptying, we allow Jesus Christ to fill us and realize our true selves, created in God's image and likeness.

Our Lutheran distinctive of not entering into Christmas too early is also an encouragement of waiting and emptying. **My prayer is for each one of us to have a holy and blessed Advent, leading to an awesome abundance of Christ being born in us and all of Creation.**

Blessings of Advent Peace and Christmas Joy be with you.....



## **Monthly Special Benevolence Offering**

This is a ministry of U.S. Lutherans serving communities living in poverty overseas. It is perhaps best known for the way it responds to the suffering induced by natural disasters. The current crisis is in the path of Hurricane destruction in Central America. But day in and out, LWR works far beyond emergency operations. Their vision is a world in which each person, every community, and all generations live in justice, dignity and peace. Learn more at [LWR.org](http://LWR.org).

the Christmas story, the celebration of the birth of Jesus. **Each child picked a Friendly Beast costume. Each year we go in the church wearing our animal caps and stand on the stairs to sing.** This year I decided this was a better way to learn the music and get comfortable with the atmosphere, especially since they are not usually allowed to stand on the steps. I cannot wait to see how they do! It is sure to be a delight, and I hope you can see it for yourselves.

**I am so happy that Mary, Martha, Ruth, Rebecca will be meeting again.** I enjoyed having the members here and the activity in the building. We are so blessed that they have decided to dedicate their Christmas tree giving for the SSCDC preschool children. This is so meaningful to combine community activities amongst our ministries. I am sure the parents will be very touched by this, as am I.

In the new year our student roster will be adjusting a bit. Enrollment has been different this year as many families prefer a half day program, as some parents are able to be home with their young children. Covid changed some priorities for families. **Between January – March we are expecting 5 new students to join us.** We will be glad to serve them. We are grateful this will bring us back to our planned budget to round out the fiscal year. As times are changing in preschools especially in Santa Cruz, I found Pastor Jim's sermon on November 13 to be especially comforting and helpful in reframing my thinking. Moving on from, "This is the way we have always done preschool." It makes the changes feel more positive. **Your teaching team pivots to the needs of families in today's world. It is also a comfort to have our dedicated school board members help us through changing times and keeping a steadfast route through them.**

I am so grateful for our **wonderful teachers Brenda Hansen, Samantha DeCoster, and Rosio Adame.** Thank you for your prayer for Rosio as her broken wrist heals. We are so very blessed to have a full teaching team who care so well for our children! Please keep them all in your prayers as we are in a very busy time.

Well, we made it through the busiest time of the school year, fall! **It was a lot of fun to get our families together for activities and invite parents back into the building to share their child's experience.** I look forward to our time to reflect as we approach the new year, and the new discoveries here in 2023. You all make it possible; Thanks be to God!

Warmly, Kathy Berens



## Sunday School

### ***Luke 19:1-10 "Little Man — Big Problem"***

The Big problem is Sin, and the Big answer is Forgiveness. Not only could Zaccheaus not see Jesus, but he did not know Jesus. He was small in stature & small in character. By Jesus spending time with this hated man, came a reformation / a change of heart. Zaccheaus paid back all he stole and more. May we pray for those who do wrong, that God's goodness will prevail!

### ***Luke 6:17-26 "In search of happiness"***

Most people experience joy when we blow bubbles. Isn't it funny how something so simple can make so many people happy. Not just kids, but all of us. There is just one problem, the fun doesn't last! The minute you reach out and touch one, it pops. Just as people chase happiness, it is always just out of reach. Or, just when we think we have it, our bubble bursts. Jesus knew that we often look for happiness in the wrong places. The "Bee-Attitudes" help us to achieve the "hive" of happiness as we follow Jesus, as we trust Jesus, as we depend on Jesus!

Thank you my little Turkeys, the card delivery Trot was a delight, for each of us.

We are excited to bring back our Pageant. These kids have been looking at the photos from years past wondering when it was going to be their turn. The time is now, and we are creative as we let the Spirit set the stage during these uncertain days.

Come, help us share the Christmas story  
Sunday Dec. 11 at 10am!

Faithfully, Miss Leslie

## **Provide Lunches for Volunteers Tuesday, January 24**

4th Tuesday of each month  
(December cancelled)



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. [.habitatmontereybay.com/donate-a-car](https://www.habitatmontereybay.com/donate-a-car) or (877)277-4344



**Zoom  
with Pastor Jim**

**check email on  
Weds. for link**

**THURSDAYS 11a -12noon  
& 7:30 – 8:30 pm**

*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. As we grow in our faith, we grow in community.*