

Worship livestream online at www.ststephenslutheran.org

Recorded for you to view anytime.

Please participate by having your worship bulletin and Celebrate ready

Zoom Bible Studies with Pastor Jim on Thursdays 11am & 7:30pm.

Check your email on Wednesday for the link to the Zoom meeting.

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

"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.—Thurs. 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, Jay Johnston

Music used by permission Onelicense #A-706539

Third Sunday in Advent December 11, 2022

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

Prelude "We are waiting for Jesus" J. Helgen

Welcome

Advent Wreath Lighting

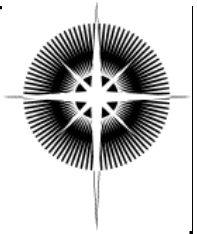
P: We praise you, O God, for this victory wreath
That marks our days of preparation for Christ's advent.
As we light the candles on this wreath,
Strengthen our hearts as we await the Lord's coming in glory.
Enlighten us with your grace,
That we may serve our neighbors in need.
Grant this through Christ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

*Opening Hymn

"Joy To The World" Red #267 verses 1—2

**1. 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!**

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**

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 socks are appreciated by everyone. But you may also choose socks for women and children.

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 2023 Offering envelopes are here, please pick up in the Narthex.

“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*

**2. 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.**

*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.**

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 (next pg.)**

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

The Word of God

Christmas Pageant

Sunday School & Preschool

*Hymn of the Day "Away in a Manger" Red #277

Away in a manger, no crib for his bed,
The little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head;
The stars in the bright sky looked down where he lay,
The little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay.

The cattle are lowing;
The baby awakes,
But little Lord Jesus no crying he makes.
I love you, Lord Jesus;
Look down from the sky
And stay by my cradle till morning is nigh.

(next pg.)



Poinsettias

Help adorn the sanctuary for Christmas Eve! Poinsettias may be donated in honor or in memory of loved ones and will be listed in the Christmas Eve bulletin. Call the office. Cost is \$15. Please make the check payable to St. Stephen's, but keep it separate from your regular offering to make bookkeeping easier. You may take your plant home after Sunday, December 25 to enjoy. Proceeds benefit our church ministries.

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

Holiday Events

Dec. 11 Mitten Tree (gifts/preschoolers)

Dec. 18 MMRR Circle Bake Sale

Dec. 18 Holiday Potluck (after worship)

Dec. 22 Knitter's Party 7:00 pm

Dec. 25 Christmas Day Worship—10 am
With "All That Brass"

Christmas Eve Candlelight Worship

Sat. Dec. 24th

5:00

&

7:30 pm (with "All That Brass")

Share the joy with your friends. The 7:30pm livestream and recorded Christmas Eve Service will be available on our website.

www.ststephenslutheran.org

Be near me, Lord Jesus;
I ask you to stay
Close by me forever and love me, I pray.
Bless all the dear children in your tender care
And fit us for heaven to live with you there.

*The Prayers of the Church

Celebrate, Page 4

*Passing of the Peace

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

C: **And also with you.**

Please share a sign of God's Peace with the words:
"Peace be with you."

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

Special Music "Filled with Peace and Gratitude"

*Offertory

"O Come, All Ye Faithful" Red #283 vs. 1

O come, all ye faithful
Joyful and triumphant
O come ye, o come ye to Bethlehem
Come and behold him
Born the King of angels

REFRAIN

O come, let us adore him
O come, let us adore him
O come, let us adore him
Christ the Lord

*Offering Prayer

P: Savior of the nations, come.
Make your home here in us.
Feed us with your love,
So that our faith shines ever new
And our lives reveal your light.

C: **Amen**

*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**

*Blessing

P: May God direct your ways in peace,
Make you abound in love for one another and for all,
And strengthen your hearts
as we wait for the coming of Christ
Almighty God, Father, + Son, and Holy Spirit,
Bless you now and forever.

C: **Amen**

The Sending

*Closing Hymn

"Joy To The World" Red #267 verses 3—4

**3. 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.**

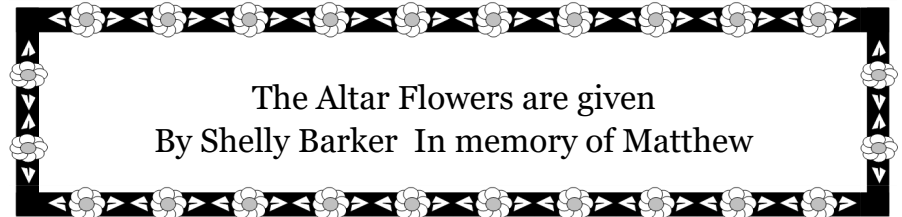
**4. He rules the world with truth and grace
And makes the nations prove
The glories of His righteousness
And wonders of His love,
And wonders of His love.
And wonders, wonders of His love!**

*Dismissal

P: Go in peace. Christ is with you.

C: **Thanks be to God.**

Postlude "In Dulci Jubilo"



Coffee Host: Don Smawley

**Ushers needed for Christmas Eve
5:00 & 7:30 pm**

Prayer Concerns

SHORT TERM: Craig Dahl, Family of Kurt Bell, Genell Csik, Mike Homa, Mateo, Family of Mark Cronquist, Erica Curry, Rosio, Barbara Stiles, Alessandra, John W., The Family of Connor Kowalski, Shiela P., Mary Smith, Tina G., Paul Cunningham, Family of Tom Dunham, Barbara Allen, Beth Stiles, Anita & Howard, The People of Ukraine,