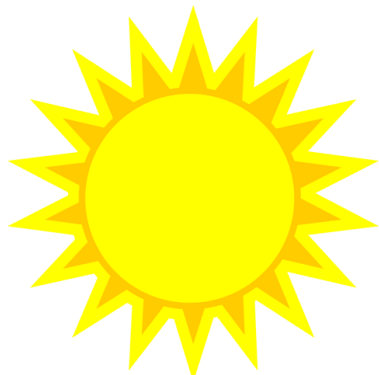


St. Stephen's Lutheran Church



SUN

February 2023

Ash Wednesday – February 22

Worship 7:15 pm

A recorded service will be offered on our website so you can observe this solemn and reflective beginning of preparation for the Joy of Easter.

Wednesdays in Lent —

March 1, 8, 15, 22 & 29

Soup Suppers at 6:00 pm

&

Worship 7:15 pm

A recorded Holden Evening Prayer Service will be available on our website.



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

From Pastor Jim



*“God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise;
God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong;
God chose what is low and despised in the world,
Things that are not, to reduce to nothing things that are”
-1 Corinthians 1: 27-28-*

The paradoxical nature of these words written by the Apostle Paul to a fledgling church in 1st century Greece have always drawn me to our faith by their truth and relevance. They are from the 2nd reading on the Sunday of our Annual Meeting, where we also hear how much God cares for the lowly in the Beatitudes from Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount in Matthew Ch.5. Lent will draw us further into this way that God has always been about.

As we learned at our Annual Meeting, we are increasingly becoming a remnant of what many of us remember being a part of a church was. Some scholars describe this worldwide situation as a “500 year Rummage Sale” where slowly, decade by decade the church has been cast aside as less and less an influence and source for people’s lives. The pandemic further isolated our communities and lives.

Yet, here we are, a remnant church where the above words to the fledgling church are very much welcome and heartening. We still have a powerful call and message to share, maybe more than ever before! As one of our hymns says: “Have no fear, little flock, for God has chosen to give you the kingdom.”

The future may look intimidating and scary. We have no idea how this quickening cultural shift away from faith and church is going to play out. But we do know that this is nothing new for God and humanity, and God is with us more and more as we fit the bill!

Still, I am very glad to be a part of this church, where the above words are deeply understood and lived out in so many ways together. Let’s continue to seek after these “underneath” ways that Jesus lifted up throughout his 3 year ministry, and join with the ones described above—just like we do with COPA, Santa Cruz al Salvador, our Child Development Center, St. Stephen’s Senior Housing, AFC, and the countless other ways we are trying to keep God’s main thing the main thing!



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

This is Christ's church.

There is a place for you here.

We are the church that shares a living, daring confidence in God's grace.

Liberated by our faith, we embrace you as a whole person

--questions, complexities and all.

Join us as we do God's work in Christ's name for the life of the world.

SCOUT SUNDAY

Sunday, February 5

Come enjoy our homemade donuts!



Scout troops across the nation are taking part in "Scout Sunday," a day in which the contributions of youth and adult scouts are recognized. Troop 633 celebrates this day every year at St. Stephen's Church, their headquarters for meetings and overnight activities since the early '60s. For the past 40 years, they have been led by devoted Scoutmaster Scott Caldwell.

The troop has assisted St. Stephen's with many projects over the years, including replacing the mulch in the children's playground, repainting the church, and building the fence. Per tradition, the Scouts will serve coffee and handmade donuts after both services on the 2nd.. We thank St. Stephen's for their long-lasting support.

Church Council Highlights

(meets 2nd Tuesday at 6:30pm in the church or/and Zoom.)

1. The 2023 Proposed Budget was approved at the January 10th meeting. Copies were made available to the congregation on both Sunday, January 15th and January 22nd per the Constitution requirement of two weeks before the Annual Meeting (Sunday, January 29th).
2. The fantastic news was shared about the sanctuary roof repairs which were completed before the historic series of storms hit us, and... the repairs were successful! Not a drop came through the two main problem spots that had plagued us for well over 12 years. Many thanks go to church office volunteer Sherilyn Jager and a very highly skilled worker from her office at Knox Roofing, who finally solved the vexing mystery! Also, many thanks were given to our Council Secretary Alys-sa Burkhardt, who provided the repair funds.
3. Pastor Jim replaced over 50 compact fluorescent light bulbs in our sanctuary light fixtures with LED bulbs—right before Christmas Eve services.
4. A worship highlight was the return of “All That Brass” for Christmas Eve. Thanks to Gary Roberts and Nathan Lapp for organizing the stirring music and ensemble. Attendance at the 5pm service was quite low. Next year we will probably eliminate that service.
5. Longtime member Don Ray, husband of our beloved Doris Ray, of Ben Lomond, passed away recently. A service will be organized by his daughter Donna Kemper who is a member of Good Shepherd Lutheran in Salinas. Rest eternal grant him O God and may light perpetual shine upon him.

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

Rainy days were upon us for weeks! I could hear California's soils and roots lapping it up! California children are not used to being trapped inside due to weather.

Fortunately, the time was broken up with Christmas break. While at school inside we treat them to a few movies and popcorn, jumping on the trampoline, along with a variety of choices they have in the classroom; teacher directed, or to choose on their own. On the downside of having so much rain many in our community suffered damage enough to bring the President of the United States to visit our cities and small towns.

What can we do to help our small communities? It turns out that Addison's family, the family that made tie died shirts for all the children to wear in Chapel, surprising Pastor Jim during Christmas time, has a small business in Capitola. They narrowly missed the flooding by a few feet. I thought it would be a great idea to let you know about this business as the businesses that are open could use our patronage. **Mijo's Taqueria, 200 Monterey Ave #2, Capitola, CA 95010. The website is <https://mijostaqueria.com/>.** Their phone number is **(831) 465-0228**. Their hours are **11:00 – 6:30, and Friday and Saturday open until 7:00**. I viewed their website, and it all looks delicious. So please, if you are having a taste for some Mexican food, you can order online or drive over to help a small business in Capitola while the area is trying to recover. If you go on **Wednesday, you will receive a local's discount of 15%**. Let Anthony (Addies dad) know you are from St. Stephen's, so they know that we care by stopping by! We are so blessed that Addison's family; the Guajardo family is part of our SSCDC community. I have known Dave and Amy (Grandparents), and Andrea (Mom), for over 12 years and was delighted when Addison joined our St. Stephen' family.

In January and February, literacy comes to life in our preschool classroom. Lois Ehlert wrote the book "Snowballs". This story describes how all the bird food is covered in snow. So a family uses bird seed, popcorn, branches, string, etc., to decorate a variety of snow family characters, including a snow cat and a snow dog. I have collected many collaging items. Each child chooses which they are going to make. Please look for this display on our large display board at the entrance. You are sure to enjoy it! We also bring to life Jan Brett's, "The Mitten." A boy goes out into the

snow to play and loses his mitten in the snow. Several forest creatures crawl into the mitten. They are stuffed in there until a mouse sits on the bear's nose. The bear sneezes and the mitten flies into the air, leaving the animals tumbling. Each child wears a hat representing each animal. The teachers hold up a big white bedsheet as the mitten. They each crawl in while I narrate. Eventually, the sheet flies into the air and the students come tumbling out.

Valentine's Day is almost here! Leslie and I are partnering up to have the St. Stephen's children make Valentines for out senior neighbors. We try to do this every year. We want them to know that we think about them and care for their well-being!

This year I will make silhouettes of our older students in the preschool class for their parents as their Valentine card/gift. We will also be making bags for our Valentine exchange. We keep it traditional and old fashioned.

I am so fortunate to have the time to do special projects with our students. It is because of our three talented teachers, Brenda, Sam, and Rosio, that I can concentrate on these larger projects as they provide the daily learning and experiences. They are excellent teachers, and I am always grateful. Please give them prayers of thanks and continued strength as they work with our precious children each day.

We have a new student, Sebastian who just turned two joining our Toddler class this month. I continue to have a connection for over 10 years with two nearby home daycares who do infant care where we recommend students to each other. It is a trusted community connection which I appreciate.

Inflation Donation is still here (see next page)! I have edited the donation list which is also displayed at the donation spot in the Narthex. **You have all been very generous and it is helping our budget a lot.** I also put a few things on an Amazon wish list if you happen to shop there. For example, Kathy Allen donates printer ink and orders from Amazon. If you do shop Amazon, please consider joining Amazon smile and listing us as your donation preference and we will get a percentage of your purchase dollars.

I am so grateful for our community both church and school. I am so blessed to feel I always have friends who feel like family in town!

Warmly, Kathy Berens

CDC Inflation Donation: Updated Feb. 2023

Kleenex
Clorox Wipes
Lysol Spray
Medium Nitrile Gloves
Costco Baby Wipes
Honey graham crackers
Ritz crackers
Cheeze-it crackers
Ketchup & Ranch Dressing
Pirate Booty
English Muffins
Cheerios or Kix cereal

For the FREEZER

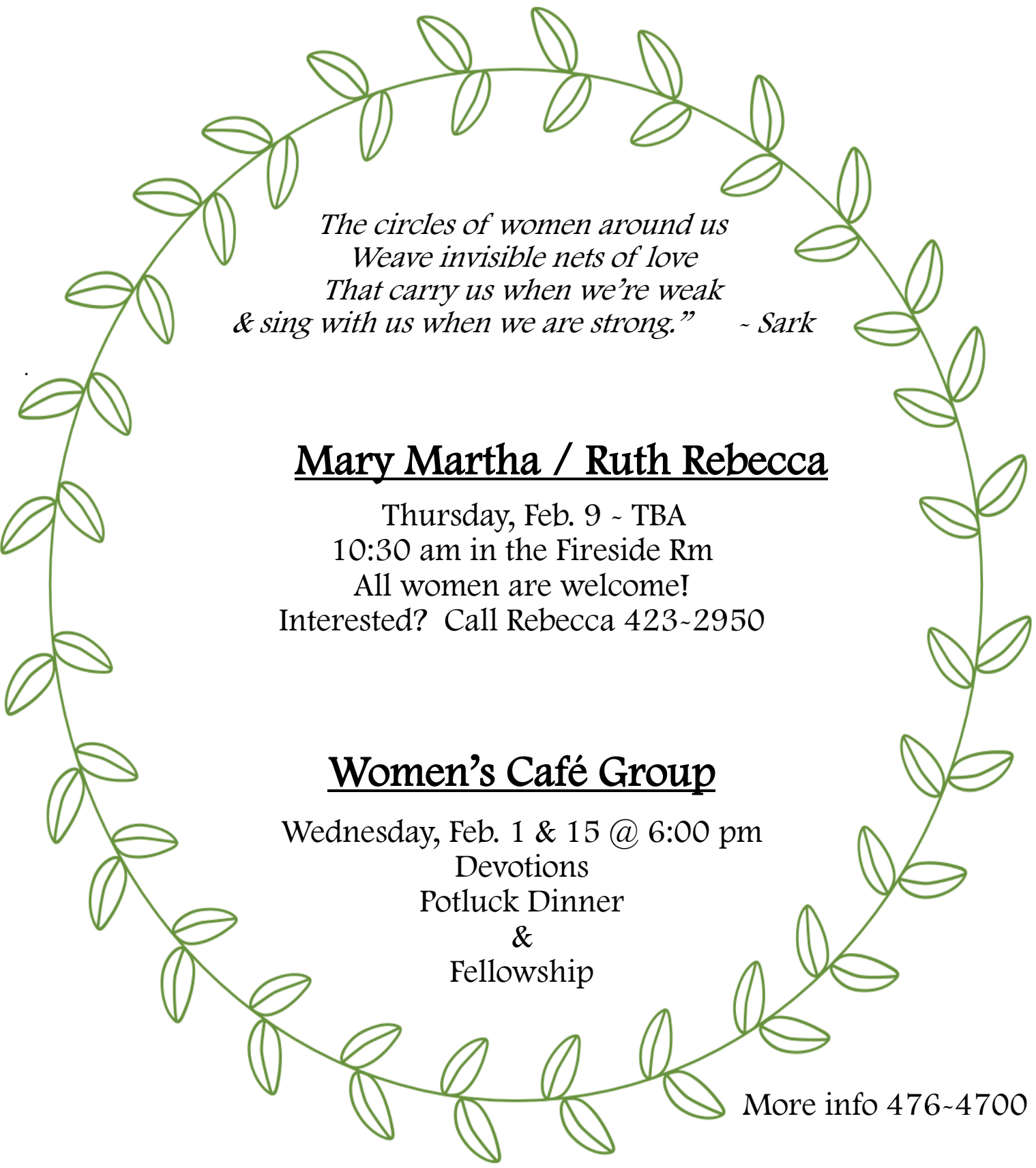
Chicken Dinos
Meatballs
Tater Tots
Butter

Thank you for your support!

Monthly Special Benevolence Offering

February — Association of Faith Communities
Rotating Shelter & Safe Spaces

January — Community Bridges \$235 (as of Jan. 27)



*The circles of women around us
Weave invisible nets of love
That carry us when we're weak
& sing with us when we are strong." ~ Sark*

Mary Martha / Ruth Rebecca

Thursday, Feb. 9 ~ TBA
10:30 am in the Fireside Rm
All women are welcome!
Interested? Call Rebecca 423-2950

Women's Café Group

Wednesday, Feb. 1 & 15 @ 6:00 pm
Devotions
Potluck Dinner
&
Fellowship

More info 476-4700

Sunday School

The children are asking about our "butterfly thing". Yes, I say. Let's do this. We will add some bling to our wings and come out of our cocoons on Easter. We will also have a sweet musical addition.

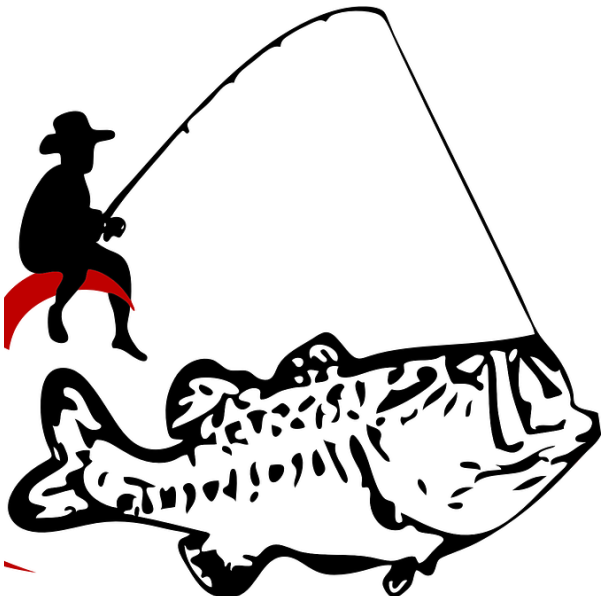
Mathew 4:12-23 "I will make you fish for people"

Fishing may not be your thing, but you can see the feeling of excitement on those who catch a fish. One of the things that makes fishing such a great sport is that it doesn't matter if you are young or old...you can still be good at fishing.

What does it take to be good at catching fish?

- Proper equipment
- Location...location...location
- Patience

Note that the list does not include talent. This scripture calls us to evangelize. I know, it's not "our thing". But, we all are equipped. We love God. We worship. We try to follow Jesus example. We confess when we mess up. These actions speak much louder than our words trying to convince people to believe. But, they need to hear from us to whom we credit our joys, success, etc. Put that way, it's not so hard to share our God stories, and invite people to church.



Since these kids are so young, our fishing expedition focused on who we fish for (those who are sad, lonely, hurting, afraid, sick, angry, etc. and those who do not know God) and what they become after we catch them (more colorful).

Be ye fishers of men —YOU CATCH THEM,
AND GOD WILL CLEAN THEM!

Faithfully, Miss Leslie

Provide Lunches for Volunteers Tuesday, February 21

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. [.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.

Nurturing St. Stephen's Unique Witness to God's Presence

By Steven Hendrickson

A single phrase of a prayer petition in the Celebrate insert on January 22 awakens my imagination, and calls for a heartfelt response. "Nurture each congregation's unique witness to your presence." Indeed, our "unique" witness emanates within us, together with our corporate body of believers in this time and space.

In this new year and a transition, hopefully post COVID, our church council will be discerning what the unique witness of St. Stephens will be going forward. I want to encourage you to deeply consider what your "unique" witness is. What qualities of your personal experience animate, move, or inspire trust in God and love for others?

Sitting with this question can be an opening to the Spirit deep within. Holding this in quiet meditation can lead to profound insights. Let this question sit and percolate in your heart. There is no hurry for an instant answer. Ask for God's Spirit to reveal what you yearn and long for in your life. How can you contribute to our witness of God's love at St. Stephens? If and when you sense your purpose and expression, please share this with Pastor Jim or any member of the church council. A number of your responses will immensely help in our congregational assessment of God's presence here.



My sense of our witness together is one of much love, peacefulness, acceptance, being gracious to everyone, and a willingness to care about and help others in need, especially those without a voice in society. There undoubtedly are other expressions of God's presence. Let us know how the Spirit is touching your heart. We pray that our witness is authentic, heartfelt, tangible, and filled with God's grace. Let's move forward together!



STEWARDS OF GOD'S GIFTS

Beth Stiles and Iva Tracey

We are all very grateful for these two relatively new women who have graciously offered their time and abilities as new Church Council members. After about 10 people decided that they could not serve our church in this important way, these two said..."Yes". It's not without some trepidation and some feelings about whether they are the best ones for the role. But their willingness to take a risk and do something neither of them have done before is an inspiration for us. Because they are trusting God's Spirit in this endeavor.

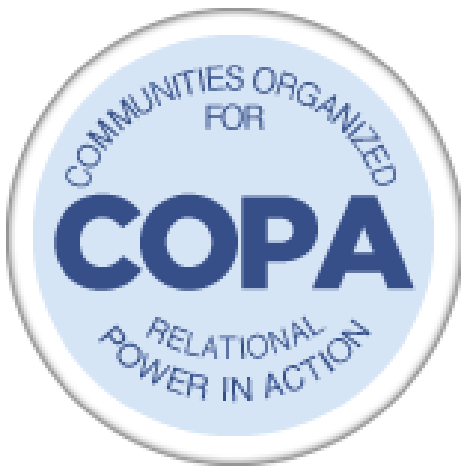
We're also grateful for Beth's leadership with the Alzheimer's Walk and her having completed some education toward her new job. We look forward to her perspective and gifts as the first differently-abled person to serve on our Church Council. Iva's commitment to our church since arriving during the pandemic as she raises her teenagers and works full-time also reminds us to look for the ways we can thank God through this kind of service to our church!



Welcome New Member

Tina Gates

It has been such a joy to welcome Tina from Hope Lutheran in Palm Desert. It seems like she has been a part of this church for a very long time already! That may be because she had spent a good part of her life here in Santa Cruz, moving away right about the time that Pastor Jim and Leslie arrived here in 1996. She returns here to be near her family living in Scotts Valley. Tina brings some wonderful gifts as part of the Stephen Minister training program in peer counseling and a leader in the Women's ministry at her former church. She already has been a big help collating the newsletter and looks forward to seeing what God calls her to next through St. Stephen's and beyond.



COPA Retreat Helps Envision Next Steps

On Saturday, January 21st at the Steinbeck Center in Salinas, Bill Schraft, Steven Hendrickson and Pastor Jim attended the FIRST in-person COPA event since January of 2020! Everyone was excited to finally see and be with one another again. Some have known and worked together for over 20 years.

Around 75 leaders from 12 institutions got together to share our stories of the work we engaged in over the past 3 years in our communities—making them safer and more just for people our society often overlooks. We also began to look ahead at what we want to work on in the future.

Specifically, we will celebrate the occasion of our 20th anniversary as an organization of organizations with an impressive record of public victories that have improved the lives of everyone in our communities. **This will take place either May 7th or 21st after church in Salinas. We committed to bringing 50 people, so please mark your calendar!**

And the work is always ongoing. So we will be announcing our new public agenda at this large assembly where close to 1000 of us will gather with some of our public officials. These kinds of numbers show our relational power and encourage our community leaders to follow through on helping us provide things like more affordable housing, better access to medical and behavioral health care, and better services for our essential migrant workers and their families.

Birthdays & Anniversaries

2-4 Kyle Travers

2-7 Marla Meek

2-8 James Russell

2-10 Paul Powers

2-12 Beverly Giladett

2-18 Kathy Hopping

2-18 Jay Johnston

2-19 Connie Creel

2-19 Charles Eldridge

2-21 Caitlin Hopping

2-24 Miller Mouw

2-29 Beth Stiles

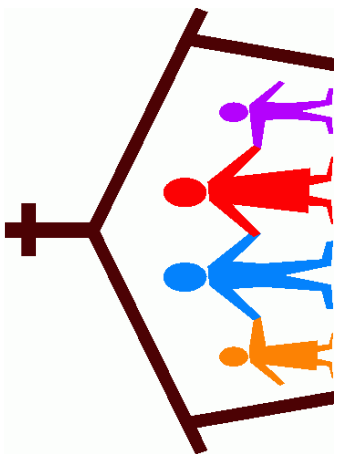
2—6 Pastor Jim & Leslie



SHORT TERM: Gary Toops, Donna Kemper, Lisa, Donny, Amy, Family of Sandie Sanders, Craig Dahl, Family of Kurt Bell, Genell Csik, Mike Homa, Mateo, Family of Mark Cronquist, Erica Curry, Rosio, Barbara Stiles, Alessandra, John W., Family of Connor Kowalski, Shiela P., Mary Smith, Tina G., Paul Cunningham, Barbara Allen, Beth Stiles, Anita & Howard, Sydnei Wilbywold, Paul Paustian, Will, Deborah Hen-

ry, Carla, Ellie, Adrian, Cameron, Gaye Cornell, Dorothy, Rachel B., Anne & Chloe Johnston, Kirsten Skiles, Nancy, Marisa & Isaac, Mateo & Lina, Don, Atlas, Anthony, Steve, Margot Wilson, Rose, Will, Sam, Aaron Johnson, Sal, Katarina, Taiyo, Mateo, Stephanie Jager, Parents, Healthcare workers & teachers.

LONG TERM: Kyle Lapp, Shelby Volpi, Ashley, Dom 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, Dawit & conflict in Ethiopia, Immigrant families, The Homeless, The People of Ukraine, 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.



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)

**NEWSLETTER WAS SENT ON
January 30, 2023**

**POST OFFICE:
DATED MATERIAL
PLEASE DO NOT DELAY**

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

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