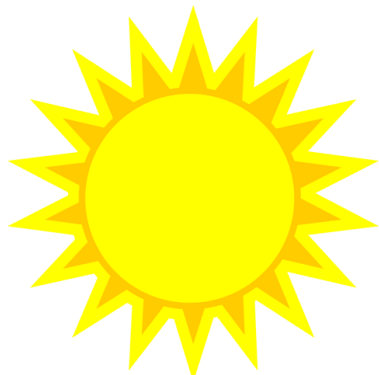


# *St. Stephen's Lutheran Church*



# *SUN*

## *March 2023*

## Observing the Season of Lent

**Wednesdays—March 1, 8, 15, 22 & 29**



**at 6:00 pm**

(We need soup-makers. Sign-ups in church.)

## **Holden Evening Prayer at 7:15 pm**

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

Palm Sunday — April 2 at 10am.  
Maundy Thurs. — April 6 at 7pm.  
Good Friday — April 7 at 7pm.  
Easter Sunday — April 9 at 10am.



***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  
Jay Johnston, Beth Stiles, and Iva Tracey

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

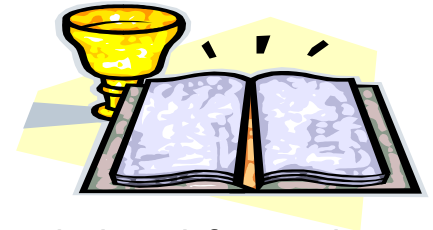
**MISSION STATEMENT**

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*



The day before Ash Wednesday, I learned of our dearly loved former long-time member Gwyn Larsen's untimely death of a recurrence of cancer.

It was kind of a blow to my spirit because we had just received her Christmas photo and letter where she had said that she was confronting the recurrence as if it might be something that she would be able to receive treatment for and get past.

Gwyn had battled cancer before and all of us knew her as the kind of joyful and strong spirit who would likely be able to overcome it again this time. She had just moved away from their home on Depot Hill in Capitola to Oceanside, CA to be near her daughter Chelsea and her new family. Her and her husband Dave's move happened right around the same time that the pandemic had begun, so we were unable to do a much-hoped for Farewell and Godspeed in worship.

They had been part of this church family since 1985—that's 35 years where she raised her 3 children (Zack & Peter) and served our congregation in many different capacities. She was the Council Secretary when Leslie and I arrived and could be counted on to help with just about anything the church asked for.

To see her warm and loving smile in her obituary in the Sentinel was just about unbelievable. She was one of the few folks who was about a generation ahead of Leslie and I, and we looked to her and the others as role models as we set out on our own journey of raising a family here. She was so encouraging of us, especially when she knew that some of our extended family would be coming to town to celebrate a baptism or confirmation or some other milestone. Her hospitality is something we will always be grateful for and see as God's Spirit ministering to us.

As a pastor's family we are often the ones extending God's love and welcome on behalf of the church. Gwyn was one of those who knew that and that it sometimes brought it's own challenges and difficulties for us. So she would make special attempts to care for us and we felt like extended family to her at times.

But most of all she provided us some hope. We looked to her and her family as something we could look forward to when we reached her place in life. It would be fun (and not as scary as we might have thought) to raise teenagers in Santa Cruz. That was a real gift for us as many of my extended family lived too far away to be more involved in the raising of our family and all the questions and doubts that come with that.

Of course, I wish we could have been closer so that there wasn't the inevitable drift from church that happens when one's children have grown and moved on. I wish we could have had that Farewell and Godspeed and had the opportunity to lift up her gifts one last time. Instead, as Ash Wednesday reminded us, we will trust in the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, and the resurrection to life everlasting. Rest well dear Gwyn. You are always in the heart of your church in Santa Cruz.

## Treasurer Notes ...

### Budget Information · January 2023

	January		YTD		
	Actual	Budget	Actual	Budget	Net
<b>Contribution Income</b>	<b>\$ 12,160</b>	<b>\$ 11,267</b>	<b>\$ 12,160</b>	<b>\$ 11,267</b>	<b>\$ 893</b>
<b>Facility Use Income *</b>	<b>1,313</b>	<b>1,633</b>	<b>1,313</b>	<b>1,633</b>	<b>-321</b>
<b>Investment Income</b>	<b>7,724</b>	<b>5,000</b>	<b>7,724</b>	<b>5,000</b>	<b>2,724</b>
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$ 21,196</b>	<b>\$ 17,900</b>	<b>\$ 21,196</b>	<b>\$ 17,900</b>	<b>\$ 3,296</b>
<b>Expenses</b>	<b>\$ 20,720</b>	<b>\$ 20,098</b>	<b>\$ 20,720</b>	<b>\$ 20,098</b>	<b>\$ 622</b>
<b>Net</b>	<b>\$ 476</b>	<b>\$ -2,198</b>	<b>\$ 476</b>	<b>\$ -2,198</b>	<b>\$ 2,674</b>

\* Includes Child Development Center facility use @ \$300/month (when paid) + Misc. Income.

Contribution income for January was slightly above the budget and Total Income was also above budget—a very good start to the year.

*Please remember your church if you are traveling.*

*Thank you to those who have contributed this year!*

#### Benevolence Donations (Individual and Church)

2023 through January			
<b>Community Bridges</b>	<b>\$220</b>	<b>Lutheran Campus Ministry</b>	<b>\$30</b>
<b>Association of Faith Communities</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>SS CDC</b>	<b>\$0</b>
<b>SS Scholarships</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>El Salvador Sister Parish</b>	<b>\$0</b>
<b>Habitat for Humanity</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>Lutheran World Relief</b>	<b>\$0</b>
<b>Mt. Cross</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>ELCA Synod</b>	<b>\$0</b>
<b>Am. Fdn. Suicide Prevention</b>	<b>\$175</b>	<b>COPA</b>	<b>\$0</b>
<b>World Hunger</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>Lutheran Immigration</b>	<b>\$0</b>
<b>CLU/PLTS</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>Grey Bears</b>	<b>\$0</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 425</b>		
<b>2021 Benevolence Target (10%)</b>	<b>\$14,105</b>		
<b>% of Target</b>	<b>3%</b>		

#### Special funds for the Musical Instruments (Organ & Piano), Hearing Impaired and Solar Electricity

	January	Reserve	Needed to Payoff
<b>Musical Instruments</b>	<b>\$ -658</b>		<b>\$416</b>
<b>Hearing Impaired Equip</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$395</b>	
<b>Solar Electric Payback</b>	<b>\$149</b>		<b>\$8,690</b>

## **Church Council Highlights**

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

1. Devotions consisted of sharing some of our faith stories as we get to know each other as a new Council. Half of us offered these at the last meeting and the other half will do so at the next one.
2. Pastor Jim gave his report which included updates on some members whose health is declining. He also was called on by the Interim Bishop of our Sierra Pacific Synod, Rev. Claire Burkat, to serve as her Advisor as she began implementing a Draft Policy for Discipline of Rostered Leaders when an allegation is made. He also shared his activity as the Vice President of the Association of Faith Communities and their work to shelter 20 people, as well as the 40 Safe Spaces Parking clients, and then helping move them into permanent shelter. All County Supervisors have been approached to provide permanent funding for these programs which have the highest success rate of any in the County.
3. Both the minutes of the Annual Meeting and the last Council meeting were approved.
4. Treasurer Kent Madsen introduced some elements he has added to his reports in order to make some aspects of financial accounting more clear. He was thanked by all the Council for the great amount of work he has put in as our Treasurer for the last several years.
5. Pastor Jim updated the Council on the next steps for COPA. Plans for our 20th Anniversary Assembly in May are getting underway. We are trying to bring 30 from our congregation, 10 from St. Stephen's Senior Housing 10 from our preschool. A clergy gathering will take place March 30th.
6. We were saddened to learn of beloved former long-time member Gwyn Larsen's untimely death from a recurrence of cancer on Feb. 13th. Blessed be the memory of this child of God and may light perpetual shine upon her.

## **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.**



## **Child Development Center**

Each year we make Valentine cards for our Senior neighbors. Room 4 made 40 cards. Leslie and I collaborate, and Rosio facilitates the making of the art. We found a sweet poem on Pinterest to finish it off. At Thanksgiving, we made cards and Leslie took the Sunday school children who also made a few cards and made it a "Turkey Trot" to deliver cards to each doorstep. Leslie was delighted to see one entrance decorated with Valentine's we have sent over the years. I remember one year when our students accompanied her to deliver and they had so much fun. We received a thank you note from some of our senior friends and really appreciated knowing that they enjoy our outreach and caring for them.

At Circletime, I made a point of showing the preschool children what they made and read them the poem.

This is a very special card, that you can always see.

The reason it's so special is, it's just for you from me.

Whenever you are lonely or even feeling blue.

You only have to hold this card, and know I think of you!

**Happy Valentine's Day**

Love, The St. Stephen's Children

I introduced them to the concept of community outreach/service; Kindness to neighbors, or picking up trash off the beach, etc. This plants the seed for them as they get older and might want to share in other ways with their community.

Our next holiday is sure to bring shenanigans back to the classroom, and a few golden chocolate coins!

This month we will introduce Jan Brett's, "The Mitten." The children dress as the animal characters with a hat and each crawl into the mitten (Teachers holding a white sheet) until the mouse sits on the bear's nose, he sneezes, and they all come tumbling out! This is another example of how we bring literature to life. We hope you have had the opportunity to see our Snowballs display in the hallway, our last Literature come to life.

We will enjoy books from Dr. Seuss and eat “Green Eggs and Ham.” Last year one parent was so surprised her son ate eggs, and asked for seconds even being green as he would not eat scrambled eggs at home!

We honored William Bulfin on Scout Sunday as he and his crew renovated our garden area. We will hang a plaque in his honor in our garden this spring. We are looking forward to getting our garden going. I do need to add some chicken manure and other things to replenish the soil. Last year growing season wasn't that great, not even at my home. This year we hope for a successful garden, including milkweed for our Monarch butterfly visitors. The caterpillars were voracious eaters last year and we ran out of leaves. If you know of a source for local milkweed plants that are affordable, please let me know!

The teachers and I look forward to some regular activities with the children that are not completely holiday focused. I like to play games with them that teach numbers and letters in a fun way. We finished all the conferences with the parents and now it is time to play and practice what we are building on.

I was recently informed that Amazon smile will be discontinued as a source for donations to schools. I thank you for considering this and did not realize it would be short lived. I will research any further opportunities for this kind of thing and let you know if we pursue it. We do continue to have a wish list for items on Amazon.

Inflation Donation is still up and running. Thank you for the items that help our snack and supply budget. A new list can be found on our display in the Narthex.

I continue to meet each Monday morning with the County Office of Education (COE) and the Superintendent of Santa Cruz City Schools, along with other Preschool directors, about 60 each week. What began as a Covid information session has become information on other subjects that effect directing schools and implementing safety. Due to the bad news regarding safety of children on school campuses the COE will be conducting four 2.5 hour sessions over the next 4 months for emergency training. Preschool Directors have been included to join public school teachers to learn together how to protect our children. I appreciate being included.

Warmly, Kathy Berens



## **Our December Benevolence Is making a difference**

When natural disasters strike or war drives families from their homes, our hearts ache with compassion, but often we don't know how to help. Lutheran World Relief does. Your donation shows God's love in action.

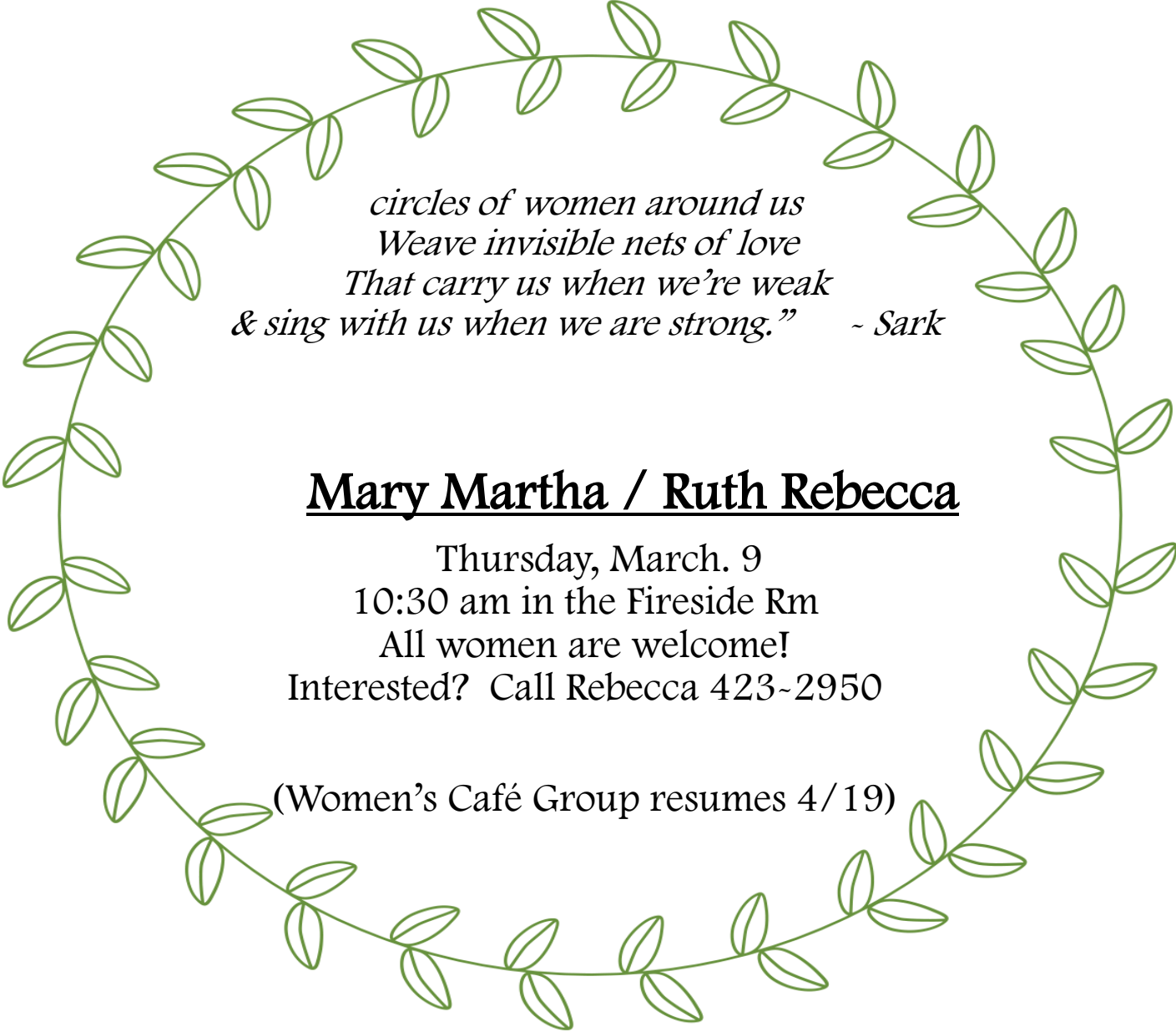
One Year later: The war in Ukraine. Our love has enveloped thousands of neighbors in need. Essential health care services. Emergency shelter. Empowering local partners. Protecting vulnerable women and girls. Water, sanitation and hygiene. Cash assistance for Ukrainian refugees in Poland.

Neighbors in Tanzania. Their need is overwhelming. We are improving the health and nutrition of mothers and their families. Training and sending community health workers into remote villages to teach parents how to make nutritious meals and share critical hygiene skills. Simple interventions have truly profound impacts and remind our neighbors of God's ever present grace and love.

*Neema ya Yesu. Neema ya Yesu.* The Swahili words, meaning the grace of Jesus, were sung with swelling pride by young schoolchildren and teachers, at a recent school kit distribution in the Highlands of Tanzania. This is a love that is so known that it overflows from the hearts of moms and dads in joy song and dance. It's a love witnessed in the smiles of pre-schoolers. It is the love of Jesus and his all-encompassing heart. Thanks you for sharing this love with our brothers and sisters around the world. May we continue to share the grace and love of Jesus, until it reaches every neighbor.

Learn more at [lwr.org](http://lwr.org)





*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, March. 9  
10:30 am in the Fireside Rm  
All women are welcome!  
Interested? Call Rebecca 423-2950

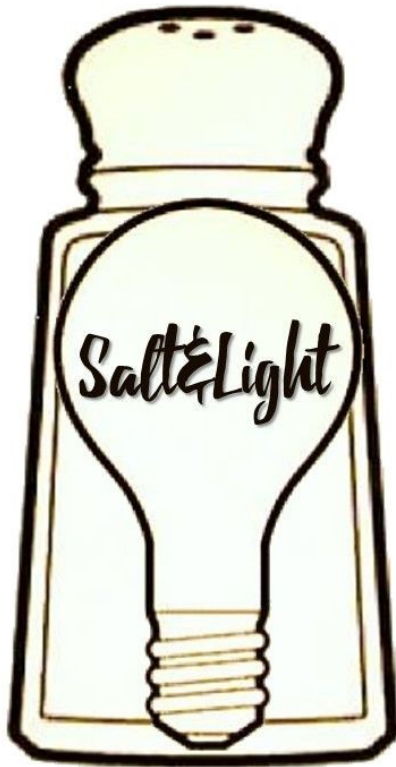
(Women's Café Group resumes 4/19)

**Monthly Special Benevolence Offering**

**March—St. Stephen's Scholarship Fund**

**February — Association of Faith Communities**  
Rotating Shelter & Safe Spaces  
\$130 (as of Feb 22)

## Sunday School



**Shake & Shine**  
Matthew 5:13-16

### Matthew 5:13-16 **Be Salty & Shiny**

Who wants to eat popcorn without salt? Not me, salt makes many things taste better. When we share God's love, we are the salt that makes life better. Like a flashlight without batteries, we can't shine without our power source. When we listen and follow God's words, we are empowered. Let's Shake & Shine!

### Matthew 5:21-37 **Forgiving & Forgiven**

God is more interested in what's in our heart than He is in what's in our hand. Hmm, there is plenty to be said there. We had a big, lacey, red heart, and we messed it up with a black marker that represented hurtful actions and words. The kids then wiped the heart clean and shared ways to do better and apologize. This pleases God, as does our sweet valentine delivery, see page 6.

Matthew 17:1-9 The Transfiguration = a complete change of appearance to be more beautiful. You and I have many wonderful experiences in our daily walks with Jesus. Others can see that we have the love of Jesus in our heart by seeing his reflection shining bright in us! However, right after the mountain top, we enter Lent and lose our "Alleluia". The tangible symbol of burying it in a box allows us to build anticipation for the Glory of Easter!

Miss Sheila & Miss Kim will be our artistic advisors. Mark your calendars for March 19 & 26. This will be *Wing Bling* time, and prep for our Easter *Fly By*.

## Provide Lunches for Volunteers Tuesday, March 28

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

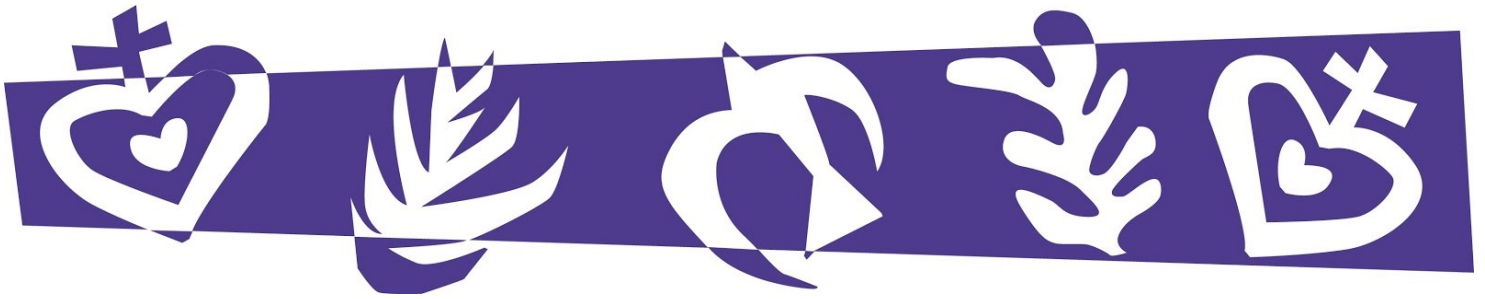
Donate your vehicle & help build strength & stability for families in our communities. 100% of net proceeds from the sale of your vehicle will fund our work helping local families. [.habitatmontereybay.com/donate-a-car](https://www.habitatmontereybay.com/donate-a-car) or (877)277-4344



**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.*



## **Psalm 51—A Scriptural Template for Lenten**

By Steven Hendrickson

As we enter the season of Lent, how is your daily scripture reading and quiet time going? Especially now, we are greatly encouraged to hear God's Word and embrace self examination. King David's words reflect this prayerful inner dialogue. Noting his shortcomings, blockages, and sinful inclinations, his experience and heartfelt desires frame the structure of the Psalm. Even though the entire Psalm is to be commended, verses 5 and 19 seem problematic, but these need to be discussed at another time.

Verses 6 and 10 are rich for reflection. "You desire truth in the inward being, therefore teach me wisdom in my secret heart (V. 6)." "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and put a new and right spirit within me ( V. 10, NRSV)." These are hopeful pleas in one who knows that what proceeds from the heart is not pure, Godly, or in keeping with the spark planted deep within. To put it bluntly, the issue is human sin, his and ours. On our own, the effects of our sin in the world are grotesque and ghastly. But, thanks be to God, we are not left as orphans twisting and spinning in the wind. Through David, we know that God's forgiveness helps to mitigate our existential predicament. These verses are lifted up as context clues as to where God's power emanates from. David is aware through God's Spirit that evil and good coexist in our heart, but truth and light are our inheritance through the image, likeness, and DNA of the Triune God. Apparently, David attributes confession, humbleness, and a teachable attitude are a means to access a changed life, and most of all, communion with God. The numerous pleas for help in overcoming sin gives us much to reflect upon in the forty days of Lent. The number 40 means completion, after we humbly engage in confession and changing our mind. Easter and new beginnings arise like bright "Sonshine."

Let's "return to the Lord" over the coming days and weeks leading to the Crucifixion and Easter. Sitting with this Psalm and the other appointed readings can refresh us with a renaissance of faith. Blessings to each of you in Lent.

May God's peace be with you.....

## **STEWARDS OF GOD'S GIFTS**

### **Don Smawley and John Stout**

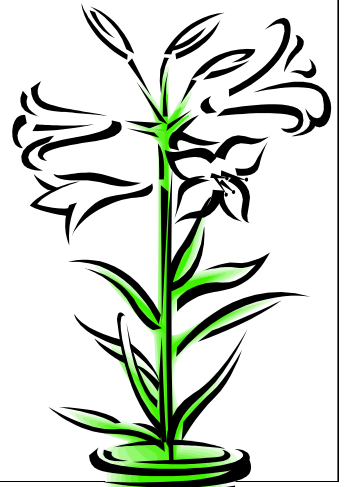
As Palm Sunday approaches we lift up the many gifts of Don Smawley who has adorned our sanctuary with the palms from our tree since time immemorial! The time has arrived where climbing that ladder with his brother is no longer wise, and we want to express our deep thanks for all those years of service to the worship life at the beginning of Holy Week. Just as Don was saying he wouldn't be able to do it this year, our friend from St. Stephen's Senior Housing, John Stout chimed right in and said he would happy to help! You may know John as our devoted "Donut Man" since our Coffee Fellowship started back up. And we also lift up Don for the many, many times he has provided us with his wonderful goodies over the years. Both are saints among us!

## **Easter Lilies**

### **Help decorate our sanctuary & honor loved ones**

- ~ Make \$15 checks payable to St. Stephen's, Memo line "Lily"
- ~ List your dedication on the sign up sheet
- ~ Take home your flower after the Easter service.

The Easter lily has traditional and spiritual meaning. Mentioned in the Bible, the white lily symbolizes purity, rebirth, new beginnings and hope and is most often associated with the resurrection of Jesus. In Pagan traditions, the Easter lily is associated with motherhood and is gifted to mothers as a symbol of gratitude.







## **Sister Parish News**

**2023 Prayer Children** - Stay tuned for more information on prayer children for the new year. We received a preliminary student list, but it wasn't ready for distribution yet. However, we are getting close to having the final list. We will be contacting you by e-mail and in-person when the list is ready.

**2022 Delegation** - One of the activities of the delegation was participation in Graduation Day at the Guillermo Ungo School, held annually in November. Here are a couple of Steve Barrett's photos. Steve, a member of Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd in Salinas, is a board member and a veteran of many delegations.

Graduation Day at the school is an all-age affair. Various ages are "promoted" to their next grade and, of course, the high school "seniors" graduate. In the top photo at right, Don Fito congratulates a young student. Don Fito, you may remember, was the founder and long-time superintendent of the school. He was also host to our delegations for many years. In the second photo, students are escorted to the stage, usually by a parent.

On behalf of the Board of Directors for Santa Cruz al Salvador, thank you, members of St. Stephen's, for your contributions and sponsoring students. We cannot do our work without our donors.

*Your gifts make a difference!*

*—Kent Madsen*



# Birthdays & Anniversaries

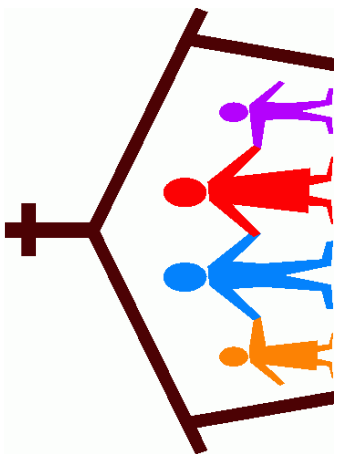
		3-20	Peggy Crews		
3-5	Steven Pond	3-22	Elizabeth		
3-6	Bev Hickman		Balogh		
3-8	Judy Russell	3-23	Sheila Buswell	3-10	Steve & Julie Mouw
3-12	Theresa Loback	3-23	Polly		
	- Campbell		Cappelloni	3-16	Bill & Sherilyn Jager
3-12	Tina Gates	3-24	Dean Slay		
3-18	Keith Slay	3-27	Chuck Davis	3-19	Brad & Shawn Cramer
3-18	Shelby Volpi	3-28	Steven		
3-19	Oliver Spires		Hendrickson		

## Prayers please

**SHORT TERM:** Family of Gwyn Larson, Family of Kirstin Skiles, Joel Hurtgam, Judith Alvarado, Ross, friends in Bakersfield, Gary Toops, Donna Kemper, Beau, Family of Sandie Sanders, Craig Dahl, Family of Kurt Bell, Genell Csik, Barbara Bartee, Mike Homa, Mateo, Ruth & Steve Cronquist, Erica Curry, Rosio, Barbara Stiles, Family of Connor Kowalski,

Shiela P., Mary Smith, Paul Cunningham, Barbara Allen, Anita & Howard, Sydnei Wilbywold, Paul Paustian, Deborah Henry, Carla, Ellie, Adrian Cameron, Dawit & Family (Ethiopia), Gaye Cornell, Dorothy, Rachel B., Anne & Chloe Johnston, 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:** April McCalmont, Marty Nehring, Miller Mouw, Kyle Lapp, Shelby Volpi, Ashley, Frank, Joe, 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, Immigrant families, The Homeless, 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  
February 24, 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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