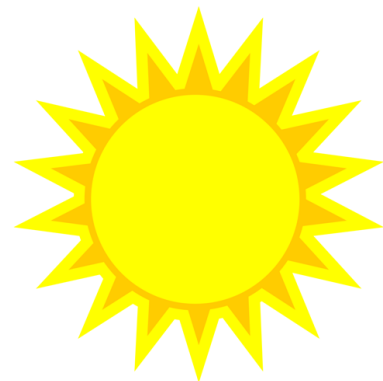


St. Stephen's Lutheran Church

Sun

August 2023



Blessing

STUDENTS & EDUCATORS
AUGUST 6 @ 10 AM WORSHIP

Join us in lifting up the unique gifts of every child as they transition into a new school year. May they be filled with fresh enthusiasm and a heart that is excited to learn and grow. May they have confidence and grace, and be equipped to persevere through the tough stuff. May they make good friends and be a good friend. Help them remember that God is always with them.

Let's pray for their teachers to have wisdom, understanding, and a heart to serve, as they embark on this journey together!

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

What does “Home” mean to you?



Last month I was very fortunate to be able to explore that question in a personal way as I visited the place where most of my DNA has been traced to: Southwestern Germany. Beyond the DNA test, I also discovered some church baptism and marriage records that traced my great-grandmother's family back to 1620 in a small town/church in Rhodt unter Reitburg. It is about 20 miles from Worms, where Martin Luther took his famous stand about what the message of the Bible is, and ushered in the Reformation. I'm the first in my family to figure this part of our story out.

The very gracious pastor, Rev. Bernd Rapp of the 3 point parish had responded to my hope to visit the church and him for a little while. He also brought the church/town historian, Hr. Gunter Baumann with him. Pastor Rapp served as our translator. They were both intrigued by my interest in their little church. Having a Lutheran pastor from the USA visit has not really happened in their memory.

And I wasn't even really sure either! But as I reflected with them, the phrase "Home can be an elusive thing" came to my mind. Because in some ways that's what I was doing there—looking for a sense of Home—a place where I came from and a place where I knew I belonged. It's more elusive for many Americans because many of our ancestors came here to leave difficult circumstances and may not have been very interested in telling those stories and passing things on generation to generation.

This was certainly true of my great grandparents Lapp. They were poor immigrant farmworkers who had already left that small hometown in Germany for a promise of a better life near Odessa, Ukraine. That led to them leaving that place for the cold, desolate plains of North Dakota. The only photo I have of them is in some tattered clothing some where in ND. They were also baptized in a Lutheran church that dates back to within 25 years of the very first Lutheran church. I had no idea how Lutheran I really was!

So it became clear to me that Home means knowing as much of the story of where I have come from, and connecting that to what Home means to me today. It grounds us and connects us in profound ways to understand these things. And it reinforces our truest sense of what Home is as part of God's family. So much change happens throughout our lives. To understand what Home means to us is pretty important to weather it all. I always pray that you have found a depth of what Home means to you through our church. And I am grateful to share that with you.

Budget Information · June 2023

	June		YTD		
	Actual	Budget	Actual	Budget	Net
Contribution Inc.	\$ 6,555	\$ 11,250	\$ 69,037	\$70,550	\$ -1,513
Facility Use Inc. *	978	1,633	10,572	9,800	772
Investment Income	4,385	5,000	30,578	30,000	578
Total Income	\$ 11,918	\$ 17,883	\$ 110,187	\$110,350	\$ -163
Expenses	\$ 19,063	\$ 20,848	\$122,734	\$123,038	\$ 304
Net	\$ -7,145	\$-2,965	\$ -12,547	\$ -12,699	\$142

* Includes Child Development Center facility use @ \$300/month (when paid) + Misc. Income.
 Contribution income for May and June was significantly below budget, resulting in a \$12,547 year-to-date deficit. \$10,000 was withdrawn from investments in June to meet expenses.
 Please remember your church if you are traveling. Thank you to those who have contributed!

Benevolence Donations (Individual and Church)

2023 through June			
Community Bridges	\$230	Lutheran Campus Ministry	\$102
Assoc. of Faith Communities	\$1,280	SS CDC	\$1,050
SS Scholarships	\$145	El Salvador Sister Parish	\$0
Habitat for Humanity	\$380	Lutheran World Relief	\$0
Mt. Cross	\$177	ELCA Synod	\$500
Am. Fdn. Suicide Prevention	\$330	COPA	\$1,000
World Hunger	\$0	Lutheran Immigration	\$0
CLU/PLTS	\$0	Grey Bears	\$0
Total		\$ 5,084	
2021 Benevolence Target (10%)		\$14,105	
% of Target		36%	

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

	June	Reserve	Needed to Payoff
Musical Instruments	\$ 65		\$89
Hearing Impaired Equip	\$0	\$395	
Solar Electric Payback	\$380	4	\$7,071

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.”

Church Council Highlights

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

1. Devotions centered on hearing the Parable of the Sower and being reminded that as partners with God in our world, we are to seek ways to abundantly scatter the seed of God’s Word in all kinds of ways.
2. Attendance: Shelly Barker, Steven Hendrickson, Alyssa Burkhardt, Beth Stiles, Kent Madsen. (Jay Johnston—work, Iva Tracey -out of town.
3. Pastor Jim shared some impressions of his trip to Germany, including some Luther sites. He will share in more detail at a short series of presentations in September.
4. Pastor Jim updated us on COPA as a transition of Lead Organizers takes place. Tim McManus is taking a new position in Texas and a very warm send-off was held for him and his family at 1st United Methodist, Watsonville. Pastor Jim offered a prayer and tribute for the fine work Tim did with us for the last 10 years. We also welcomed Liz Hall (originally from Iowa) as our new Lead Organizer. We are sharing her with the Marin County equivalent of COPA. The Associate Organizer working with Santa Cruz County is Eli Holliday and he has been very busy meeting with our leaders and organizing a renewal of connecting our institutions. There will be a Leader’s Retreat on Saturday, August 26th as we re-organize after our 20th Anniversary Convention. This will mostly focus on internal organizing and congregational development as many of our institutions continue to experience decline in numbers. Pastor Jim and Mark Linder will attend the initial meeting of the Behavioral Health Task Force on August 2nd.



Child Development Center

Greetings from Trout Creek Montana, I finally made it here after one whole year. July was our last month with our students who are leaving for Transitional Kindergarten and Kindergarten. It was a full enrollment month even though children were coming and going on vacation. A few that left in June for kindergarten were clamoring to return to school to visit, so we had many drop in dates. **It is a compliment to us that they missed us enough to want to return for visits.** These are the same children who occasionally had separation anxiety during their regular schedules having tearful goodbyes wanting to stay with mom. What struck me the most was when I returned from visiting my daughter was a couple of students who like school but very quiet about it with the occasional smile, only feeling confident enough to let it all out at Chapel by dancing, approached me with hugs when I returned for a visit (As I take the month of July off). These were my first hugs from them. **The trust, joy, and warmth that develops in our most hesitant children warms my heart the most!** It is like waiting for spring to observe special flowers blooming.

Speaking of blooming, our garden is thriving and the children LOVE to be in the garden watering and tasting strawberries, snap peas, and cherry tomatoes. **They each have taken home zucchini, and they baked and took home a mini loaf of zucchini bread.** Our sunflowers are so tall and majestic, although I anticipated larger seed heads than they have produced so far. I look forward to future seed planting now that we have our mini greenhouse.

Slowly, the demographics are changing regarding the age range we will be serving. As I mentioned before, the public schools have opened Universal Pre-Kindergarten (UPK) to all four year old children rather than slowly transitioning over a few years, which was the original plan. This is so they can make up for the lack of funding as enrollment declines, therefore funding declines for public schools because families are moving out of Santa Cruz county due to lack of affordability in housing and services. It will be interesting to observe how this will all play out.

According to an article I just read quoting Diane Munez from the County Office of Education (COE), Santa Cruz is in a big childcare crisis. Of course we in the business already know this to be true. This is due to the cost of living being in the top 2% of the nation, with childcare costs soaring to \$2000 per child per month in the community. This makes UPK appealing, however, the infrastructure and teacher shortage complicates implementing this. Additionally, after school care and summer care is difficult to find for parents who work full time for preschoolers because they cannot be mixed with the general elementary aged students including kindergartners. I understand some preschools are opening an afternoon program to provide care for those who need the additional care in the afternoon which is also a great expense to parents, along with transportation to the second location. I think this adds a lot of transitioning for our young learners.

At our preschool we did raise the tuition by 8% so we can attempt to afford retaining a staff of 4 qualified teachers. I believe this is exactly the staffing we need due to our bathroom location and legal supervision ratios. There are no substitutes, and few opportunities to hire / replace existing teachers. **We are very blessed to retain the talented team we currently employ. As a ministry we pride ourselves on keeping the costs down for our families.** Beginning in September, tuition will be 1430.00 for Toddler care which includes diapering and potty training, and 1320.00 for potty trained preschoolers. This is one of the lowest rates around and yet so much for families! Truly I cannot believe the cost of childcare has come to this and it still doesn't provide for the kind of wages childcare workers should receive. We have managed to provide fair wages, insurance, and benefits. There's always room for improvement considering the cost of living here.

One solution for the decline in enrollment of four year old students is that I applied for the Toddler option serving 18 months and up. I am still waiting for approval. In the meantime, current families are increasing hours and I am excited about that. They also have younger siblings that will get to start sooner with this change to our License.

As I sit here in Montana I realize I may be repeating myself in the article but this is what has been foremost on my mind over the last several months. **Faith in God's plan is what has kept our ministry thriving. As a manager/director this can be challenging as my concern for staff and families continues throughout the challenges.** We made it through Covid, we will make it through UPK too! I pray for a few regular years of concentrating on activities with the children rather than bureaucratic/economical issues!

We are blessed to have Barbara Johnston return to our Board. I dearly enjoy working with her. Once again, **I thank Mary Kelly for all she contributed during her six years of volunteering for us.** Bill Schraft will remain as our president, Margaret Schraft as our recorder, Kathy Allen as our treasurer, Sandra Eldridge a member, and Pr. Jim as our spiritual council. I appreciate their time, wisdom & support!

Hopefully, my next article will be about how we are settling in with the changes and thriving. In the meantime, we sure do appreciate your participation in INFLATION DONATION. The following reduced list are items we can always use. Thank you for helping us keep our costs down!

Medium Nitrile gloves (Latex free)
Clorox or Lysol Wipes (For cleaning)
Kirkland Baby Wipes
Alba or Neutrogena sunscreen for children
Frozen Chicken Dinos, Graham Crackers, Ritz crackers



Holy Baptism

August 6

(Grandchildren of Ken & Susan Gross)

Mia Katherine Garrity

Parents: Patrick & Lisa Garrity

Nicholas George Gross

Parents: Eric & Julie Gross

Music at St. Stephen's



We need your voice: Join the "Good News Singers"
Thank you Janet, Tina, Margaret, Bill and Pr. Jim

We hope to have strings & woodwinds in September

Donate to the New "Musicians Fund" to enhance worship:
Vocals, instrumental & All That Brass

We look forward to Thanksgiving & Christmas Brass

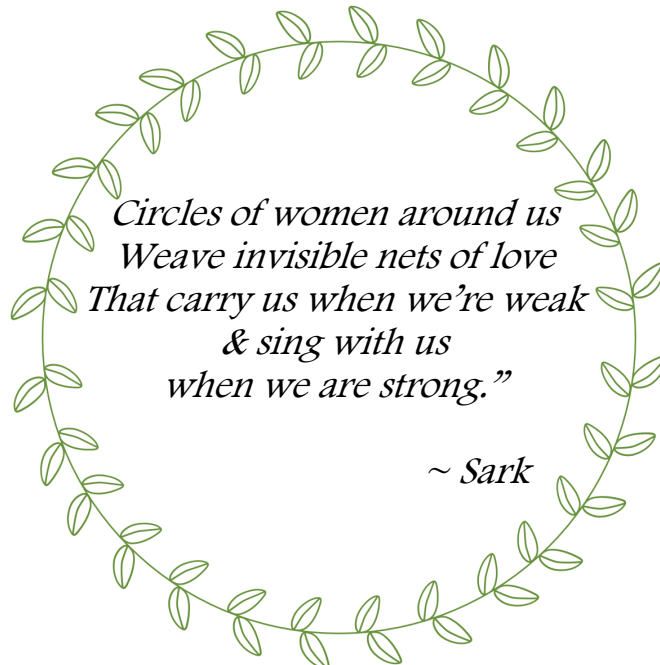
Yours in Christ, Gary

Women's Café Group

Wednesdays, August 2 & 16 @ 6:00 pm

Devotions , Potluck Dinner & Fellowship

More info 476-4700



MaryMartha / Ruth Rebecca

Pillowcases for Habitat Families — To date, our industrious sewers have made over 40 pillowcases for the families at the homes in Rodeo Creek Court!

We will be presenting them to the families this month. Event times have been narrowed down to Thursday, August 10th at 5:00pm or Saturday, August 12th at 9:30am. Habitat for Humanity volunteer coordinator, is contacting the families to determine which date will be most convenient for them. As soon as we have a confirmed date, church members and friends will be notified as to the preferred day. The Mary, Martha, Ruth, Rebecca Circle are grateful to Thrivent for the Action Team seed money and generous folks for their time and talent for this project.

If you would like to attend, contact Tina Gates at 760-992-4804 or gateschristina84@gmail.com. We would love to have you join us as we celebrate homeownership for these deserving families!

Sunday School

Matthew 28:20 ...“Remember I am always with you”. Holy Trinity Sunday, we were filled with the Holy Spirit. Fun to play with balloons and notice that they are nothing until they are blown up . . . great analogy.

Matthew 9:12-13 Who needs a doctor? Let me rephrase that, who has NEVER been sick and needed a doctor? Clearly we all will need a doctor at some point. We even go in for wellness checks as prevention. Likewise, are any of us free from sin? Nope. That means we all need Jesus. He is the doctor of all doctors. Absolutely coming to church serves as a “wellness check”. Our joining together in worship, sharing God's gifts, and praying builds a healthy church family AND a healthy YOU.



Church Administrator returns from the “Kerry Camino”

A trek in Ireland, much like our North coast. I was with 4 women from our Seminary years. We nurture each others spirits & tend our souls as we encounter historic sites, plod through sheep fields, and climb ladder stiles, always on the lookout for our yellow arrows. We laugh much of the way, as we encounter God at work. We experienced “welcome” like never before.

FOR THE TRAVELER by John O'Donohue

*Every time you leave home,
Another road takes you Into a world you were never in.*

*New strangers on other paths await.
New places that have never seen you
Will startle a little at your entry.
Old places that know you well
Will pretend nothing Changed since your last visit.*

*When you travel,
A new silence Goes with you,
And if you listen,
You will hear What your heart would Love to say.*

*May you travel safely, arrive refreshed,
And live your time away to its fullest;
Return home more enriched, and free
To balance the gift of days which call you.*



Provide Lunches for Volunteers August 22

4th Tuesday of each month @ 10:30

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.

Habitat 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. [Www.habitatmontereybay.org](http://www.habitatmontereybay.org)



**Zoom
with Pastor Jim**
**check email on
Weds. for link**

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

*For the next several months, we will be using the biblical resource:
"Manna and Mercy"*

A brief History of God's Unfolding Promise to Mend the Entire Universe by Rev. Daniel Erlander (the same author as "The Tales of the Pointless People", which we used in Lent).

Anyone can join in at any point. Each chapter stands alone, but is also connected as part of the whole story of the Bible. Copies are available at church for \$10 each. Or it can be mailed to you.



Finding Art in the AFC Shelter

Randy always had a creative side. As the son of a university professor, he was exposed to arts & culture from an early age. Over time, a passion for music began to emerge, and he started working as a touring musician, collaborating with artists who would go on to write for big name pop stars. Music became his life, and he poured everything into it. He found belonging and identity in his community of like-minded musicians.

While he was thriving in this environment, his life eventually derailed because of substance abuse. With time, he began taking his recovery seriously, and started rebuilding his life. Along the way he met his partner Sophie, who was also in recovery. They anchored one another, strengthening their sobriety.

Randy's world fell apart again when Sophie tragically died. It sent him into both emotional and economic turmoil. He reflected on the time recently. "I had trouble figuring out who I was. I had to figure that out while in crisis, with unstable housing." He hit rock bottom when he ran out of resources and found himself sleeping outside. He vividly remembers his second night on the street, when a torrential storm hit. He described it as "absolutely traumatic."

This trauma led him to seek shelters, and AFC. While things didn't turn around overnight, he was able to stabilize. He connected with several of AFC's volunteer cooks, some of whom he is still keeps up with. "AFC was a God given thing. It turned the most hellaciously terrible experience into something meaningful," Randy said.

Part of that meaning came through an unexpected avenue: the pandemic lockdown. Randy sheltered in place at the United Methodist Church. The church generously offered their space, even creating an art room. This room turned out to be a safe haven for him. Even though he had never painted before, he spent hours in the room putting his emotions and dreams onto canvas. It reignited his creative passion. "Once I started, that's all I did," he remembers.

He soon found his favorite subject to paint: his dreams. He had often reflected on his dreams, but putting them in to images was transformational. Even though the images were often abstract, they reflected profoundly personal experiences. One of the most personal was a dream he had about Sophie, his late partner. In the dream, she comforts him with words he can't forget, "I know how it all ends up. You're going to love it."

Finding creative momentum led to momentum in other areas of his life, including his housing search. He began putting his name on every affordable housing waitlist he could find. With time, his hard work paid off, and he was offered a small affordable studio with just enough room to paint.

Randy had a particularly meaningful milestone this past winter when he had his first art exhibit. The show took place on a First Friday at London Nelson. Hundreds of people passed through, taking in Randy's works and hearing the stories behind them. He even sold his first painting. More than the money it brought in, the experience brought Randy a sense of pride & gratitude, putting his journey into perspective. "Doing this art exhibit was such an accomplishment," he said. "It symbolized turning such a terrible experience into something positive. It made the world a little bit of a better place."

August Special Benevolence Offering

California Lutheran University

The ELCA social statement on education calls us to remember our roots: "From the time of the Reformation, the Lutheran church has been a teaching and learning church...With his teaching on vocation, Lutheran understood the Christian life to be one of service to God and neighbor in one's every day places of responsibility; education equipped Christians for this vocation. He taught that education served the common good of Church and society: In a move unusual for his day, he taught that schools for all –both those who were wealthy and those who were poor, both boys and girls..."

For 50 years the congregations of the ELCA in the West, and its predecessor bodies have been committed to this idea of educating young people for lives of leadership and service in the world, and the establishment of CLU is the lasting mark of that commitment. By sending your people to CLU and supporting it with offerings and prayers, our congregations have continued in the rich tradition of a Lutheran understanding of education. As CLU President Dr. Chris Kimball writes, "CLU has emerged as a remarkable place where students, faculty, alumni and friends come together in a dynamic environment of academic excellence in the arts and sciences with a focus of service as well as vocational and spiritual exploration."

And

Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary

We provide theological education for the training of clergy and lay leaders through ordination, non-ordination, and research level degrees and certificates.

PLTS is one of eight seminaries of the ELCA, a founding member of the [Graduate Theological Union](#), and a graduate school of CLU.

Theological education is done in the context of people who are rich and poor, liberal and conservative, and a wide array of human race, religion, sexuality, education, experience, and background. If our theology did not take all people into account, it would be deficient. PLTS develops leaders for the church by: deepening faith in Christ; challenging the mind; expanding the heart; and energizing for mission.

June: Society for the Prevention of Suicide—\$70

July: ELCA World Hunger - \$105 (as of 7/20)



Sister Parish News

Prayer Child Sponsorships - Thank you to those who have committed to support your prayer children for another year and have made the associated donations. We have received over \$10,000 in sponsorships *plus* \$4,800 for student gifts.

2023 Delegation - There will be a delegation to our communities in El Salvador in November this year. Planning for the itinerary is underway. Visiting El Salvador is a life-changing experience!

2023 Fundraiser - Stay tuned for more information on our upcoming fundraiser. We will be using the mail again rather than an in-person event since we've been so successful the last few years. 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, scholarships in Guillermo Ungo, or University Scholarships. ***Your gifts make a difference!***

Peace in Christ,

Kent Madsen,

St. Stephen's representative on
the SCaS Board of Directors



Birthdays & Anniversaries

8-3	Robert Gipson	8-18	Derek Poetzing	8-3	Steve & Theresa Loback - Campbell
8-7	Pastor Herb Schmidt	8-20	Imagin Abler	8-6	Mark Linder & Mary Dean
8-9	Lydia Abler	8-23	Kasey Garden	8-15	Ross & Barbara Johnston
8-14	Renee Rice	8-25	Lea Powers	8-30	Scott Ruble & Leslie Radford
8-15	Susan Oldfield	8-27	Leslie Lapp		
8-17	Brad Cramer	8-28	Rachel Lapp		
		8-30	Emma Gipson		

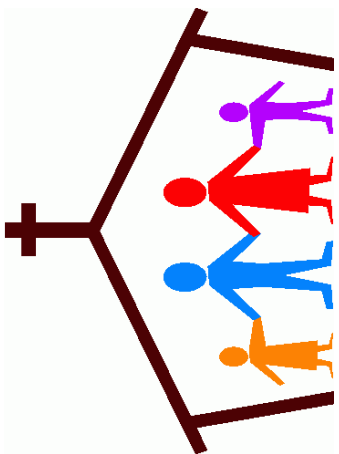


SHORT TERM:

Jim & Anne Schafer & family, Karin Zaun, Family of Mark Oeding, Conrad, Boudreau family, Keith, Chelsea, John, Mateo, Tim, Charmaine, Linda, Atlas, Tony, Sandi Csik, Janiea Paustian, Amy Wimmer, Gray, Hailey, Jesse, Joyce, James, John, Elida, Jeannie, Anetta, Jane, Barbara Rowe, George & Scott, Darlene Woodburn, Jacob & Family, Barbara Hansen, Tom Harris, Barbara Allen, Rena Brown, Carla Brown, Kathy, Joel Hurttgam, Jacob & Family, Family of Kirsten Skiles, Carla Brown & children, Sandy, Levi & Alexandria, Norman's Father, friends in Bakersfield, Gary Toops, Donna Kemper, Lisa & Beau, Craig Dahl, Family of Kurt Bell, Genell Csik, Barbara Bartee, Family of Mark Cronquist, Barbara Stiles, Paul Cunningham, Anita & Howard, Sydnei Wilbywold, Paul Paustian, 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, Stephanie Jager, Parents, Healthcare workers & teachers.

LONG TERM:

Biergiel—Colclough family, 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, 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
July 27, 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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