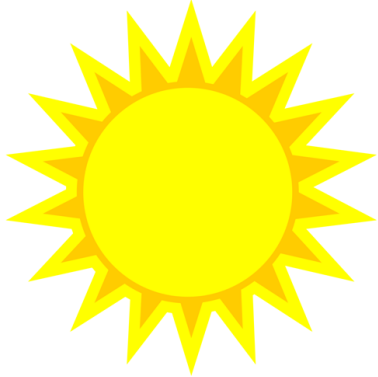


St. Stephen's Lutheran Church



SUN

November 2023

Grateful for God's Persistent Abundance

Consecration Sunday - November 19

Please bring your commitments to worship or send them in.

Let's all respond to God's love and grace for us generously with gratitude!

Please use the materials mailed out to you recently as we honestly reflect on how we will give back to God through our church in the coming year.

Through faith and persistence, as God enables us, let's strive to:

- Pray persistently for the ministry of our church.
- Attend worship services often to keep our faith first, and seek to interest others in sharing that with us.
- Be available to follow God's leading by offering your gifts of time and ability through our church.
- Thank God for your life's blessings by returning a tithe (10%) of your income back to God, through the ministry of our church in 2024.



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

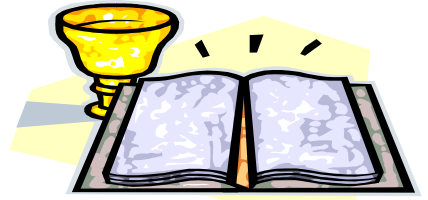
MISSION STATEMENT

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 Our Youth



**“Make my joy complete: be of the same mind,
having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind.”
Phillipians 2: 2—from Sunday, Oct. 1st**

What does having a home church mean to you and your family?

My parents first met each other in this church. They got married here, and when they had me and my sister we were baptized here. I still remember when the room next to the fire-side room was where all the toys were, and me and my sister would play in there and fight over which of us was older. I remember how my parents always chose someone from church to babysit me, first Shelby, then Rachel, and then Nelleke when she was old enough. I remember when we went through different Sunday School teachers after the one I knew for so long left. I remember when the senior housing was just an empty field which we would use for church celebrations. Every memory I have of my childhood somehow ties into the church, the people in it, or the things my parents would teach me about it. I liked to go to church because I got to see people who had known me when I was a baby. I liked to show off how much I'd grown up, and I would always follow what my mother was doing so I could look more like her. Even when I was old enough to make the decision whether I wanted to go to church or not, I still decided to stay because this is like my second home.

One day I was out at 38th Ave talking to this old man named Roger. He was telling me about how he could barely paddle because of his shoulder. That was the worst thing on the long list of injuries he had. I asked him, "If you're in so much pain, why do you still come out here and try to surf?" He replied with, "This is my church. If it weren't for surfing I probably wouldn't still be here."

That day made me realize how important surfing really is. To me, God is connecting with a Higher Power, which is exactly what you're doing when you're surfing. The whole goal is to be so much in sync with that wave that you can get to the nose and hang 10. But that's not possible without turning when the wave allows you to be able to set up for cross-stepping. Every other problem bubbling around in my mind goes away that moment. As I'm looking down the face of that wave, everything is clear to me. That's exactly why I consider surfing bringing me closer to God.

I feel most close to God when I'm at my lowest points. Whenever I am struggling and stressed, I turn to God and he is always there for me.

One question I have about faith is how vast the spiritual side of this world really is and what it is like.

I tend to view God in 3 different ways; those being the father, the son, and the Holy Spirit. I view God the father as this incredible being that is incomprehensible. When I close my eyes and envision him, I see him as a great white ball of light. I view Jesus as a human being who is like a friend that is always there for me. The Holy Spirit to me is the part of God that is within all of us as his creation.

I would say I feel most close with God when I'm by myself, especially without my phone. When I'm around a lot of people, I feel like there's a lot to comprehend and I kind of lose track of God. And when I'm on my phone, all of my other thoughts fly out the window. Every single time I've felt myself slowly get closer to God, I was either in church or by myself. The biggest doubt or concern I have about my faith is that I feel like sometimes I look at Jesus as more of a moral role model, and not as a risen messiah. I know everybody experiences and interprets faith differently, but I feel like that's my biggest concern, and I need to work on that.

The biggest thing I've learned from Pastor Jim is to understand that the Bible sometimes needs to be brought into modern day context. The example I still tell people about is how one verse in the Bible says that if you find green splotches in your house, you need to call a priest to cleanse your house, and if it doesn't go away, you have to tear your house down and put it in an unclean part of the city. We now know that the green is just mold, and not something that you need to call a priest for. My favorite part of church is holy communion. When I was younger, it was just something I looked forward to for the wafer and grape juice, but now I really like the idea that God is forgiving, and that at any point I can get a fresh start. I think a unique gift God has given me is that I'm driven. I think I'm good at staying motivated and positive. I understand why that's important.

I love having a home church because it's a place where I can always come back and feel welcomed doing so. Places like school and volleyball are usually places where I feel comfortable and welcomed, but there will always be times when I won't. The one thing I might change about my home church would be that I would bring more people in. It's not that I don't like having a pretty small church (because I actually do like it), but the more the merrier!

My mom was the one who introduced me to Christianity. I think the most important thing she taught me was that God is *always* there for me. She always told me about how she found comfort in God at her lowest points. God being a higher power that no human can understand can be sort of intimidating, but in a way, I feel like it's a little comforting to have something so big and beyond the realm of understanding always by my side.

The song "Fly Love" from the movie *Rio* sort of encompasses what I feel about God. To be honest, if I didn't know any better, I could be convinced it's a gospel song. The song starts with the singer saying "Wasn't really thinking, wasn't looking, wasn't searching for an answer, when I saw your face" which I think perfectly represents how God often shows up and comes to support you when you've given up or when you're not expecting help. At the end of the song, the singer says "Now I know love is real" which I think could represent how vast and true God's love is.

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. Representatives from the Mary Martha / Ruth Rebecca Circle— Barbara Rice and Tina Gates— were our guests who began the agenda. The Circle is requesting that the Church Council begin a Kitchen Upgrade Task Force. Several reasons were offered and they volunteered to be part of the new Task Force. This was approved unanimously.
2. Beth Stiles reported on the plan for our 70th Anniversary Celebration. The cake will be ordered by the Confirmation parents and we will try to do a fun interview of some of our long-time members. Pastor Jim will set up the displays made by Lisa Johnson some years ago, which show St. Stephen’s history. Don Smawley has agreed to provide the main course for the lunch after church and people will sign-up to bring side dishes.
3. Pastor Jim reported on his presiding at 2 non-member funerals at Oakwood Cemetery, & on his leadership as V.P. of Assoc. of Faith Communities, on the Regional Strategy Team of COPA & as newly appointed President of Lutheran Campus Ministry SC and Monterey.
4. The Holy Conversation sign-ups went well and 4 gatherings were held. Summaries of the discussions are being compiled by the Sustainability Group to be presented to the Church Council. This will help us determine the direction of our ministry in the next 5 years or so.
5. Pastor Jim, Leslie and about 10 folks from St. Stephen’s attended the Memorial Service for our dear brother, Marshall Bautz on Sept. 23. It was held at Christ Lutheran—Aptos. We also met the new pastor there, Rev. Jonas Ellison.



Child Development Center

There are many things I am thankful for; I can find them near and far. There are many things I am thankful for, let me tell you what they are...

Wow! So many friends from St. Stephen's are participating in improving our preschool in different ways. First, **I want to thank the Saturday workday volunteers for painting the entrance door and our sandbox. We send a special thanks to Doug!** It looks fantastic! The sandbox is special because Ron Buswell built it for us from a drawing I made, and I (We) appreciate the help preserving it.

Thank you to all who donated for benevolence month in October. Every penny helped to get us through some time of struggle. Additionally, we reached out to our school families, and they pitched in as well. Thanks to our church and school friends we are stocking up on supplies we always use through Inflation Donation. Kards for Kids is affording us the ability to purchase the food and supplies we need. Not only do I (We) appreciate the actual donations, but I also feel embraced by all of you who have participated. **The prayers especially have turned things around with our 5 new students beginning in November!** Although SSCDC benevolence month has ended in October, we will continue to appreciate donations through Inflation Donation (Kleenex, Ritz & Graham crackers, Mac & Cheese, Clorox or Lysol Wipes, Lysol Spray, Ketchup, and Ranch salad dressing.) Kards for Kids (Costco, Safeway, Amazon, and Home Depot), and prayer.

The best part of now is the hope we see. We are cleaning out our spaces and redefining things. We are still safe and cautious as additional fun activities are returning. I am enjoying the time to do many things for and with the children, rather than supporting and enforcing health policy. Along with that I can move beyond the shock of losing our 4-year-old children to public school as **we are at full enrollment. That means 21 are enrolled**, with 15 attending full days. We have two siblings joining in Jan/Feb 2024 which brings us to 23. Families come here for our teacher child ratio and home feeling atmosphere. We also have excellent curriculum learned in a play atmosphere. Everything we do is developmentally appropriate. Therefore, this is a good number of students to serve while meeting our expenses and rebuilding our reserve.

We have just wrapped up our Halloween activities including the parade around senior housing. This is a fun community gathering and parents get to enjoy and meet other parents in addition to sharing with our senior neighbors.

We have two sets of twins starting this month. One fraternal for the Toddler class, and one identical for the preschool class. All girls. We also welcome our

This month we will have Picture Day on November 9th. **We will celebrate Saint Martin's Day on November 14th as we have for several years with our German family.** We meet at Crows Nest in the evening to see the play of St. Martin giving his fancy cloak to a poor beggar man who needs warmth. Each child made a paper lantern, and we parade in the sand together, sing German songs, then eat a hearty soup together back in the table area. This is another great way for the parents to get to know each other and we always have a big turnout. Then we move onto pie baking with the children on the 16th and 17th, so they learn the meaning of Thanksgiving by bringing something they have made to their family to share. We are closed Thanksgiving week. After Thanksgiving, we have Central Fire visiting us along with their big fire engine to teach fire safety to the children.

...I'm thankful for the earth, I'm thankful for the sea, I'm thankful for my friends and I'm thankful to be me. Happy Thanksgiving, we are thankful for you all. Warmly, Kathy Berens



Matt. 21:28-32 We know that God keeps His promises, loves us, and will always be with us. God says we should BEE Faithful too. So, we got out our buzzing bees again. Bee trustworthy, truthful, honest etc. What if a dad asks his two sons to help him with yard work. One was respectful in saying that he'd be happy to help, but then never left the couch and kept watching tv. The other was disrespectful saying no, he's too busy working on his model airplane. But then he did what was asked. Which son pleased his father? Our class was quick to answer. They knew right away that we make mistakes and can change our minds to make things right!

Nov. 19—deliver cards to seniors

Dec. 10 - Xmas Pageant



Music at St. Stephen's

MUSIC MINISTRY: If you have a music event to share with us, please do. Thank God, music is always happening—it would be great to gather together at an event, and enjoy a concert in our community.

DESIGN MUSIC BANNER: Make your ideas, artwork & colors come to life with creating a fresh new music banner. Include, seasonal themes, such as Christmas, Easter, Thanksgiving, Living Spirit, and inspiring quotes. Use symbols of our church. Great for thanksgiving, offering, and a blessing. Put it all together.

MUSICIANS FUND: A huge thank you, to everyone who donated \$1,102.00 to the fund. You are very generous and greatly appreciated. This will help to move forward with musical invitations.

ALL THAT BRASS: Thanks very much guys, for your talents, and spirit. We look forward to your return.

Rawly Capone, Trumpet — November 19

Christmas Brass — December 17

Full Brass Ensemble 10 am

Still looking forward to strings & woodwinds in our service. Many talented young musicians are eager to participate in our church music. So, come on down!

Musical Quote:

“Music can change the world because it can change people.” ~ Bono

Women's Café Group

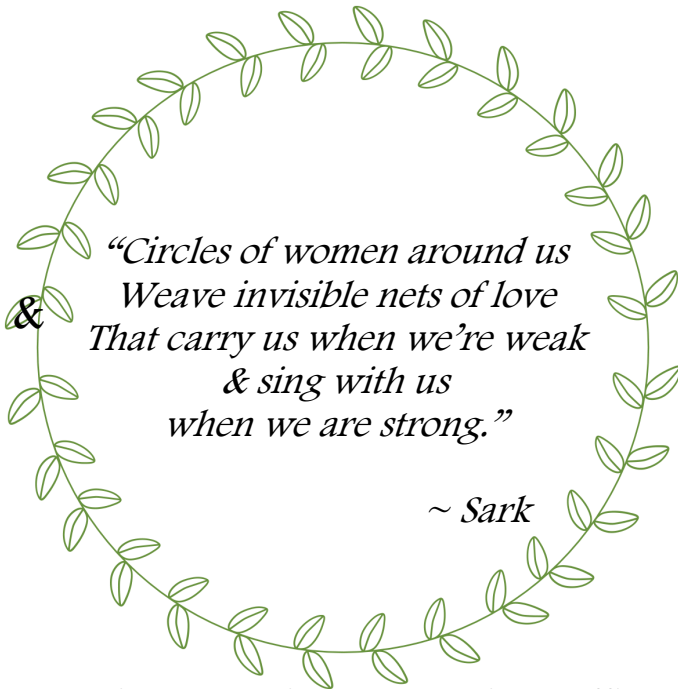
Wednesdays, November 1 & 15

@ 6:00 pm

Devotions , Potluck Dinner
Fellowship 476-4700

MaryMartha / Ruth Rebecca

Thursday, November 9th
10:30 Fireside Room



We will be baking pumpkin muffins to give to our neighbors in the Senior Housing next door.

Note to the Congregation: We will be putting up the Christmas gift tree the first part of November. This year we will be partnering with the Santa Cruz Volunteer Center, who will distribute the gifts to local families. The tags will give the gender and age of the child receiving the gift. Watch and wait for more detail when the tree goes up.

Newcomers welcome. Contact Tina Gates at 760-992-4804
or gateschristina84@gmail.com.

PROPERTY WORK DAY

Saturday, Nov. 18 th 9:00 to 11:00 am

Paint picnic table, Weed, Clean . . .



Recollecting God Experience

By Steven Hendrickson

In one's journey of faith, life happens! There are high and low points, and of course, the ordinariness of everyday. We trust and know that our Lord is with us, but are we really paying attention? Whether we are aware of God's presence varies from person to person. The Spirit speaks to us in a myriad of ways; scripture, worship, silence, nature, other people, and even sensations of the body, or intuition and premonition. **God has infinite ways of communicating.** As receivers of God's promise of presence, we can respond with openness, expectation, joy, and most of all thankfulness. But many will ask, how can I experience a reality beyond word, form, image, and what dominates my present awareness? There are two very doable suggestions for you to consider. As always, my words are meant for those who freely wish to listen, if not that's fine.

In worship, Pastor Jim asks a wonderful question. Are there any God Stories among us today? **Our congregation has shared beautiful examples of the Spirit's presence, intercession and involvement in our lives.** My suggestion is to purposefully ask, listen, and observe what comes up in your daily living. Keep or start a journal to record what you are experiencing, especially your longing and yearning. Most of all, share your story with the congregation who will listen and support your journey.

How is your daily time of reading scripture and silence going? Pondering God's Word in silence is the quintessential way to be open, receptive, expectant, and ready to live the life of a disciple of Christ. Five minutes of silence is a good place to start. **A humble, quiet, and prayerful stance can change one's life.**

My prayer for all people, but especially those in our congregation is that an experience of the Christ Presence within our heart, beyond sin, word, and form will become very real. Knowing and sensing our image and likeness in Christ within the cave of our heart changes us and our world.

May God's grace and peace be with you on this journey.



Provide Lunches for Volunteers November 28

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

Habitat "Cars for Homes" Program. Donate your vehicle and 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.



Zoom with Pastor Jim

check email on
Weds. for link

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

NO class Nov. 23

*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.

Treasurer Notes ...

Budget Information · September 2023

	September		YTD		
	Actual	Budget	Actual	Budget	Net
Contribution Inc.	\$ 14,948	\$ 11,250	\$ 99,588	\$104,300	\$ -4,712
Facility Use Inc. *	1,975	1,633	14,997	14,700	297
Investment Income	4,385	5,000	44,788	45,000	-212
Total Income	\$ 21,308	\$ 17,883	\$ 159,373	\$164,000	\$ -4,,627
Expenses	\$ 22,972	\$ 20,848	\$184,454	\$184,082	\$372
Net	\$ -1,664	\$-2,965	\$ -25,081	\$ -20,082	\$-4,999

* Includes Child Development Center facility use @ \$300/month (when paid) + Misc. Income.
 Contribution income for September was well above budget due to a bequest, but there is still a \$25,081 year-to-date deficit. \$22,000 was withdrawn from investments this summer to meet expenses. *Please remember your church if you are traveling. Thank you for this year's contributions!*

Benevolence Donations (Individual and Church, including proceeds from Easter Lilies & Poinsettias)

2023 through September			
Community Bridges	\$230	Lutheran Campus Ministry	\$282
Assoc. of Faith Communities	\$1,390	SS CDC	\$1,230
SS Scholarships	\$145	El Salvador Sister Parish	\$0
Habitat for Humanity	\$380	Lutheran World Relief	\$0
Mt. Cross	\$477	ELCA Synod	\$756
Am. Fdn. Suicide Prevention	\$330	COPA	\$1,500
World Hunger	\$265	Lutheran Immigration	\$0
CLU/PLTS	\$155	Grey Bears	\$0
Total		\$ 7,140	
2021 Benevolence Target (10%)		\$14,105	
% of Target		51%	

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

	September	Reserve	Needed to Payoff
Musical Instruments	\$ 50	\$193	
Hearing Impaired Equip	\$0	\$395	
Solar Electric Payback	\$307		\$5,957

November - Special Benevolence Offering

Santa Cruz al Salvador / Sister Parish

“Building Relationships for Better Lives” See page 15

October—Child Development Center=\$1230

Birthdays & Anniversaries

11-5 Sandra Eldridge	11-16 Stephen Cappelloni	11-24 Kirstin Csik-Hughes
11-7 Dorothy Ronning	11-17 James Abler	11-24 Kathy Johnson
11-8 Lorie Juhl	11-17 Ariela Turzo	11-25 Brian Brouse
11-9 Grace Schmidt	11-19 Isaiah Brouse	11-26 Mathew Garden
11-10 Amanda Cuninghm	11-19 Briana Juhl	11-26 Galahad Hughes
11-11 Charlotte (Smawley)	11-19 Jessica Juhl	11-26 Linda Ronning
Judd	11-20 Hilding Ronning	11-26 Sam & Nancy
11-11 Zellie Lapp	11-22 James Jones	Loya
11-13 Colin Boyle	11-22 John Hopping	11- 27 David & Martha
11-14 Barbara Johnston	11-23 Xavier Brown	Balogh



Sister Parish News

November Special Benevolence - The special benevolence at St. Stephen's for November is the El Salvador Sister Parish project. For those of you who have not yet contributed to our 2023 fundraiser (mailed in September), this would be an excellent time. It is also a chance to donate something extra for the year. We are in particular need of donations for the next round of composting latrines in El Pilar.

2023 Delegation - Please pray for the people who will be traveling to El Salvador with this year's delegation. Pray that they remain safe and healthy and have a great time walking with the people in our communities.

Visiting El Salvador is a life-changing experience!

Prayer Children for 2024 - A reminder that we will be renewing prayer child commitments in early 2024 for the next school year. We will also be looking for sponsors for students new to our scholarship program.

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



In Memoriam

Grace Schmidt

November 9, 1932 — October 24, 2023

After a series of falls, my dear wife, partner, friend and love of my life, peacefully passed away yesterday surrounded by our wonderful close family. She was a true gift to me throughout our life together of 67 years. She was about to turn 91. After the series of falls she was put on hospice, and was not in any pain for 4 days and then very peacefully fell asleep with everyone around her. She was an incarnation of her name, Grace. Undeserved kindness, unconditional love for me, my family and many friends and colleagues. We celebrate her life and if or when there is a memorial service/ or zoom remembrance we will let all of you know.

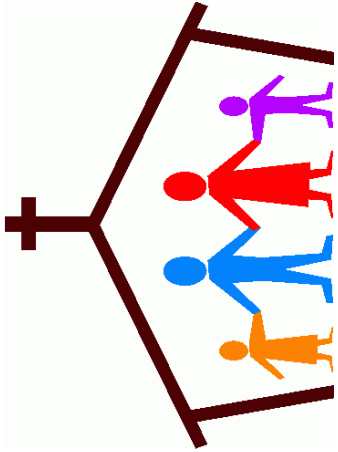
Blessings, peace and joy, Herb



SHORT TERM: Middle East Peace, Carla Brown, James, Tina, Lurline Moore, Keith, Taiyo, Monte Anderson, Beth's mom, George Webber, James Boudreau, Frank, Dustin, Julie, Caitlin S., Family of Lupe Rodriguez, Eric Utto-Galarneau, Father Jack Davis, Corcoran family, Keith, Frank, Susan, Mike Homer, Charlie & Tracy, Andre, Joshua & Andrea, Irma, Family of Deane Strong & M. Hudi,

Sam, Jamie Sheehan, Ralph, Aria Brown, Karin Zaun, Chelsea, Atlas, Tony, Sandi Csik, Janica Paustian, Amy Wimmer, Gray, Hailey, Jesse, Joyce, James, John, Elida, Jeannie, Anetta, Jane, Barbara Rowe, George & Scott, Darlene Woodburn, Barbara Hansen, Tom Harris, Barbara Allen, Kathy, Joel Hurttgam, Sandy, Levi & Alexandria, Norman's Father, Gary Toops, Donna Kemper, Lisa & Beau, Craig Dahl, Genell Csik, Barbara Bartee, 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, Aaron Johnson, Sal, Katarina, 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, 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
November 1, 2023**

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

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

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