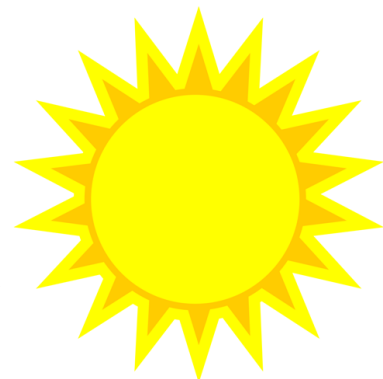


St. Stephen's Lutheran Church

Sun

September 2023



**Blessing
of Animals**

**Sunday
October 1st
10:00 am**

Bring your pet or a photograph of your pet to receive a special blessing during worship. All creatures great and small are welcome! This custom is conducted in remembrance of St. Francis of Assisi's celebration of all of God's creation including all the animals, on the Sunday his life is remembered and his witness of faith is lifted up.

As we recognize our mutual interdependence with God's creatures, the church's witness of joining with God and taking good care of ALL of God's creation is strengthened.

It's also an opportunity for a little bit of fun during worship!

PLEASE INVITE YOUR NEIGHBORS & FRIENDS!!!

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



**Let's Celebrate Our
70th Anniversary!**

Sunday, October 29th 2023

**Reformation Worship with our
Confirmation Youth!**

Followed by an All-Church Feast!

As a way to recognize and honor the 70 decades of ministry our church has offered to Santa Cruz County and beyond, I am looking forward to taking some intentional time to talk with one another. It has been a long 3 years struggling with the pandemic and now it time to take stock of who we are now and begin to build a new vision for our ministry in the next few years. Please save these dates in advance so we can have our best participation. You only need to attend one. Please pray for God's Spirit to guide our conversations.

House Meetings: Sundays Oct. 15 & 22 at 11:30—1p

Weds. Oct. 18 & 25 at 6:30-8p

Pastor Jim and congregational leaders will facilitate some Holy Conversations around the questions: (Please see pg.10 also)

Who are we as a church to you now?

What do you hear God calling us to be and where to go in the next few years?

Budget Information · July 2023

	July		YTD		
	Actual	Budget	Actual	Budget	Net
Contribution Inc.	\$ 8,944	\$ 11,250	\$ 77,981	\$81,800	\$ -3,819
Facility Use Inc. *	1,503	1,633	12,075	11,433	642
Investment Income	5,439	5,000	36,017	35,000	1,017
Total Income	\$ 15,886	\$ 17,883	\$ 126,073	\$128,233	\$ -2,160
Expenses	\$ 19,458	\$ 20,098	\$142,291	\$143,136	\$-845
Net	\$ -3,572	\$-2,215	\$ -16,218	\$ -14,903	\$-1,316

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

Contribution income for July was significantly below budget, resulting in a \$16,218 year-to-date deficit. \$10,000 was withdrawn from investments in July to meet expenses and \$12,000 will be withdrawn in August.

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 July			
Community Bridges	\$230	Lutheran Campus Ministry	\$112
Assoc. of Faith Communities	\$1,390	SS CDC	\$1,100
SS Scholarships	\$145	El Salvador Sister Parish	\$0
Habitat for Humanity	\$380	Lutheran World Relief	\$0
Mt. Cross	\$477	ELCA Synod	\$500
Am. Fdn. Suicide Prevention	\$330	COPA	\$1,000
World Hunger	\$265	Lutheran Immigration	\$0
CLU/PLTS	\$0	Grey Bears	\$0
Total		\$ 5,929	
2021 Benevolence Target (10%)		\$14,105	
% of Target		42%	

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

	July	Reserve	Needed to Payoff
Musical Instruments	\$ 70	\$91	
Hearing Impaired Equip	\$0	\$395	
Solar Electric Payback	\$450		\$6,620

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. Shelly Barker, Steven Hendrickson, Alyssa Burkhardt, Kent Madsen, Jay Johnston, Beth Stiles and Iva Tracey were in attendance. Pastor Jim was out sick for the meeting.
2. A COPA Retreat was planned for Saturday, August 26th from 10a-4p. Pastor Jim will serve as a co-chair along with Maria Rodriguez from Mujeres En Accion, which is a growing group of Latina leaders from the Salinas valley. They are all connected with various Roman Catholic parishes. The retreat was attended by Shelly Barker, Steven Hendrickson, and Tina Gates. We introduced our new Interim Lead Organizer, Liz Hall, who offered a teaching on reclaiming our civic life/citizenship in a democracy where we can act together in order to address the needs we see in our families and communities. A relational meeting training was given and we held 2 such individual meetings with other attendees from the other 12 churches and organizations represented. We are focusing on rebuilding and strengthening COPA by beginning with the basics: public, relational, individual meetings with people within our churches and then holding House Meetings to share our commonly held concerns and struggles, which leads to us acting together for the common good of our communities. **Watch for new opportunities to gather with Santa Cruz County COPA institutions soon.**
3. **Please refer to pgs. 12 & 13 in this newsletter for some good news regarding progress made in alleviating homelessness in our County.** Our participation in the Association of Faith Communities and the 18 in our shelter program and over 65 people in our Safe Spaces Parking Program are a part of that!



Child Development Center

Thanks to our excellent teachers Brenda Hansen, Samantha DeCoster, and Rosio Adame, who are all continuing with our Preschool, I was able to truly enjoy my summer. They are very skilled, and work together so well that I was able to take extended time off this summer. Getting away to visit family is wonderful, especially in Montana. Plus, now that I am a grandmother of 5 years, time is precious with my grandsons. One began Kindergarten and I got to attend his Back-to-school night and meet his teacher. That was special! It was fun to read a few books in the summer as during the school year I can't concentrate on reading as much. If it weren't for our excellent teaching team, I never could have had this very appreciated time for myself.

The last years have presented different challenges than we faced when building the school. Throughout it all we have had the support of our School Board members. This year Bill Schraft will continue to be our President, Margaret Schraft Recorder, Kathy Allen Treasurer, Sandra Eldridge, and Barbara Johnston members. Pastor Jim is our spiritual advisor. Thank you for returning for another year of service!

Our Toddler Option application was denied because we do not have a separate bathroom allocated to this younger group. I will pursue a waiver for a few younger siblings, but otherwise, it seems that we are meant to be a school who serves children ages 2-5. We do that well, so we will continue that focus!

The garden has been a source of great enjoyment. We hope to extend the planting season now that we have a greenhouse. We will be learning along with the children about seed planting and winter crops.

So here we are in exciting and busy September where we get on the seasonal and holiday train with fun activities along the way. We have a great group of children. Pre-kindergarten has a group of 6, Preschool 5, and Toddler Two's 6, with several twos on the way, bumping young three's up to preschool. By November we will have 18 students with full-time spots full. I feel more hopeful about this upcoming year even though we lost children to Public Transitional Kindergarten.

Thank you for contributing to **Inflation Donation**. As I put in the numbers for our new budget, I see how much your purchases helped our budget to get through a tough financial year. We did get through it, and we did keep all our teachers! So please continue to help if you can. This month please consider donating boxes of **Kleenex, Clorox or Lysol Wipes, Ritz and Graham Crackers**, to name a few off our main list.

May this be a blessed year for our Ministry, Kathy Berens

Sunday School

Matthew 13:40-41

Weeds grow everywhere & choke out good plants. Gardens require tending, as does our faith. We are all born "weeds" but with God's guidance and forgiveness we can grow big and strong with good fruit!



Matthew 13:31-33

Making mustard trees with our handprints made this lesson personal. Even the smallest of seeds can grow and bring change to the world. God's word is the tiny seed, our bodies are the trees, and our talents / skills are the tasty fruit! Our tree is so inviting, the birds come to make their homes.

Matthew 14:22-33

On the sea of life, there are floaters and sinkers...which are you? When we take our eyes off Jesus and put our confidence in our own ability, we will surely sink! We played a little guessing game of which objects will float and which will sink, sometimes surprised with the outcome. We also talked about ball games. If you do not keep your eye on the ball you will spend all of your time chasing it, or worse you might wind up with a black eye! Or like Peter, end up sinking! When the storms of life come, keep our eyes on Jesus!

Matthew 15:10-28 "Woman great is your faith!"

If we place our faith and trust in God, we can face the obstacles in our daily lives. This was emphasized when the kids were blindfolded and walked about the parkinglot, over curbs, and around cinder blocks. Imagine the trust they had when they only had my voice commands to reach each other.

Faithfully, Miss Leslie

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

St. Stephen's Scholarships Available

There are scholarships available from the Tippin Scholarship Fund. These scholarships are for undergraduate college-level education. The potential scholarship amount is determined by the funds available, the type of educational institution, and the number of applicants.

Please contact the church office (office@ststephenslutheran.org, 831-476-4700) for an application form; please submit completed forms to the church office by September 30, 2023.

Music at St. Stephen's



MUSIC MINISTRY: There will now be a monthly newsletter to keep you up-to-date on what is new, and what is to come, for our church music program. ALLELUIA! If you would like to share something musical with us, please let me know. There are wonderful concerts, and talents all over our county. It would be a billboard of musical information.

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: Please think about giving, so we can develop an outreach program, and bring solo, instrumental talents to share their skills, and spirit with us. This is great for community outreach, and builds communication a different way.

WHAT IS A TUNED PERCUSSION INSTRUMENT? If you have time, and want to learn to play one, I need 2-4 Lutherans for some 4-part harmony. Donate a little time after church, it's good for the spirit.

ALL THAT BRASS: will be performing 4 times this year & next.

GOOD NEWS SINGERS: will return in a few weeks. Introducing new song—"Come, Christians Join to Sing" with Brass Live Sunday Morning (date TBA).

MUSIC QUOTE:

"Where words fail, music speaks." ~ Hans Christian Anderson

Yours in Christ, Gary

Women's Café Group

Wednesdays, September 6 & 20 @ 6:00 pm

Devotions , Potluck Dinner & Fellowship

More info 476-4700



MaryMartha / Ruth Rebecca

Thursday, September 14th

10:30 Fireside Room

MM/RR starts up again after summer break. Come with ideas about things you want to do at meetings and long term projects you'd like to undertake.

An enthusiastic group met at Habitat for Humanity's Rodeo Creek Ct. on August 12th. In the spirit of community, the women of St. Stephen's Lutheran Church presented colorful handcrafted pillowcases to the homeowner families as housewarming gifts and a heartfelt welcome to the Live Oak neighborhood. Pastor Jim shared that the pillowcases had been blessed in worship the previous Sunday. He also extended a personal invitation to visit the church. Amid lively conversation and refreshments, each grateful family chose their gifts and tucked them into a tote bag reading "Home is the Sweetest Place of all". Thank you to everyone who participated and supported this project!

Inner Preparation for House Meetings

By Steven Hendrickson

In October, Pastor Jim will convene a series of House Meetings for us to share where we are now in our spiritual journey, and intuit what our future together as St. Stephen's Lutheran Church might be. With our world greatly changing, this is an opportunity to reflect, assess, imagine, and dream to craft a vision of who we are, and how we can invite and serve our community in Christ.

There are two questions that I would like for you to deeply consider over the next month. The first one is: Who am I in God? This is a basic question in Christian Spirituality, an invitation to look within; for one to truthfully name the present quality of one's life in Christ on a personal level. How is worship at St. Stephen's enriching and blessing your devotion, spiritual practice, and interactions with those inside our congregation and others you encounter in daily life? Consider your yearnings, longings, prayer life, as well as trauma and tragedy in your life and in the world. Take your time and create a story that you can share at the House Meeting.

The second question is: What is God calling our church to be? This is a very open ended question, ripe for creativity, prophecy, intuition, and imagination! What is our purpose, image, and especially our message to Santa Cruz and the entire world? Using our stories from the first question, how can we create a vision and narrative that is so compelling that we and others who join us are transformed? Our stories will hopefully dream boldly, creating a new way of being church, and project a welcoming picture of what it is to be followers of Jesus Christ now. Please sit with these questions over the next month, and come prepared to share your stories at our House Meetings. ~ May God's grace and peace be with you



Marshall Bautz

September 23 at 1:00

Christ Lutheran ~ Aptos

A service celebrating the life of long-time St Stephen's and Light of Life, Scott's Valley member, who passed away in May. Marshall's children warmly invite everyone in the St. Stephen's community to attend. A reception will follow the service.

Provide Lunches for Volunteers September 26

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.

PROPERTY WORK DAY

Saturday, Sept. 9th 9:00 to 11:00 am



SANTA CRUZ COUNTY

2023 HOMELESS POINT-IN-TIME COUNT & SURVEY

Every two years, typically during the last 10 days of January, communities across the country conduct comprehensive counts of the local homeless populations in order to measure the prevalence of homelessness in each local Continuum of Care.

The 2023 Santa Cruz County Point-in-Time Count was a community-wide effort conducted on February 23rd, 2023. In the weeks following the street count, a survey was administered to 416 unsheltered and sheltered individuals experiencing homelessness in order to profile their experience and characteristics.

2023 SHELTERED/UNSHelterED POPULATION¹

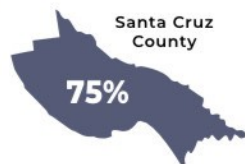
21%

SHELTERED
N = 378

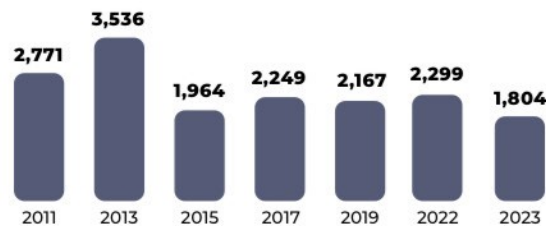
79%

UNSHelterED
N = 1,426

RESIDENCE AT TIME OF HOMELESSNESS



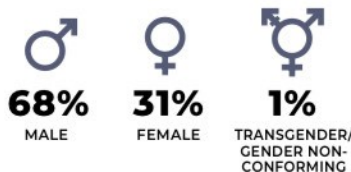
CENSUS POPULATION: LONGITUDINAL TREND²



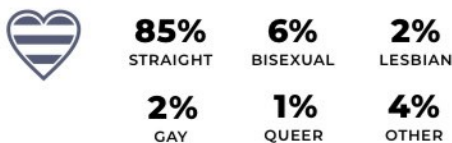
AGE

10% UNDER 18
18% 18-24
53% 25-54
19% 55+

GENDER



SEXUAL ORIENTATION



RACE

TOP 4 RESPONSES³



ETHNICITY

44% IDENTIFIED AS LATINX/HISPANIC

EMPLOYMENT STATUS



28%
HAD SOME FORM
OF EMPLOYMENT

OF UNEMPLOYED...

56% WERE LOOKING FOR WORK
16% WERE UNABLE TO WORK
28% WERE NOT LOOKING FOR WORK

FOSTER CARE



SPECIAL POPULATION DATA

CHRONIC HOMELESSNESS



VETERANS



FAMILIES



UNACCOMPANIED CHILDREN AND TRANSITION-AGE YOUTH



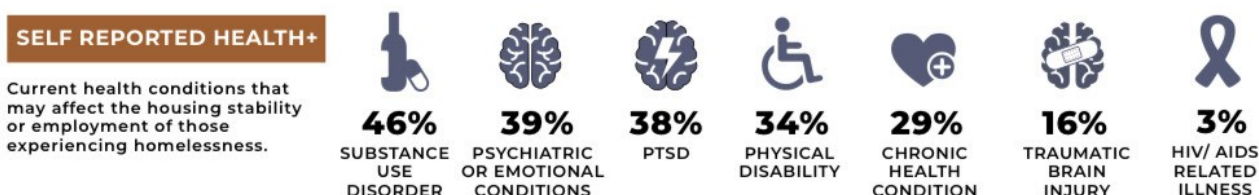
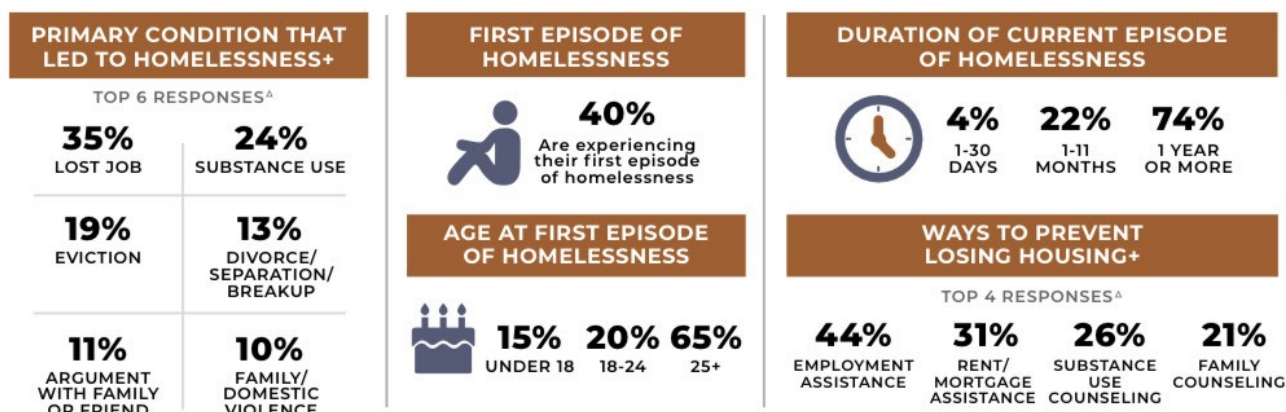
JUSTICE SYSTEM INVOLVEMENT

25% of survey respondents spent one or more nights in jail/prison/juvenile hall in the past year.

19% on probation/parole at the start of their most recent episode of homelessness

UNSHelterED POPULATION BY SLEEPING ACCOMMODATION

35% TENT
46% VEHICLE
18% OUTDOORS/STREETS
<1% ABANDONED BUILDING



SUBPOPULATION DEFINITIONS

CHRONICALLY HOMELESS

An individual with one or more disabling conditions, or a family with a head of household with a disabling condition, who:

- » Has been continuously homeless for one year or more and/or;
- » Has experienced four or more episodes of homelessness totaling twelve months, within the past three years.

VETERANS

Persons who have served on active duty in the Armed Forces of the United States. This does not include inactive military reserves or the National Guard unless the person was called up to active duty.

FAMILIES

A household with at least one adult member (persons 18 or older) and at least one child member (persons under 18).

UNACCOMPANIED TRANSITION-AGE YOUTH

Youth under the age of 18 and young adults from the ages of 18 to 24 years old (TAY) who are experiencing homelessness and living without a parent or legal guardian.

+ Multiple response question, results may not add up to 100%.

^Δ Only displaying top responses, all response data will be available in full report.

▫ Sourced from census data rather than survey data.

Note: Some percentages have been rounded so total percentage will equal 100%.

The complete comprehensive report includes a more detailed profile of the characteristics of those experiencing homelessness in Santa Cruz County. It will be available summer 2023.

Source: Applied Survey Research, 2023, Santa Cruz County Homeless Census & Survey, Watsonville, CA.

Sister Parish News

2023 Fundraiser - Watch your (postal) mailbox for the 2023 Fundraiser letter. We are once again asking for your support via the mail, rather than an in-person event. Our focus of this year's fundraiser is to honor two people who have been key to Santa Cruz al Salvador's success. First is Don Fito, a founder of Guillermo Ungo and its school with whom we've worked closely for nearly 30 years.



At right is a photo of Don Fito with Kent from a few years ago. Ruth Cruddas recently retired from the Board of Directors. She was a guiding light to our project for most of those 30 years.

2023 Delegation - There will be a delegation to our communities in El Salvador in November this year. Planning of the itinerary is underway. A regular activity is a craft project for the children, pictured here. Visiting El Salvador is a life-changing experience!



On behalf of the Board of Directors (SCaS), I wish to thank all you 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

9-7	David Balogh	9-24	Alex Csik Hughes	9-4	Jim Jones & Shay Barsabe
9-8	Cabel Dawson	9-26	Hayden Ruble		
9-11	Rebecca Wickham	9-26	Jan Wagner	9-6	Jim & Naomi Florin-Gosciminski
9-12	Collin Travers	9-29	Joanne Freymuth		
9-12	Hannah Travers			9-6	Ken & Susan Gross
9-14	Elias McMilin			9-6	Kevin & Marla Meek
9-15	Ashley Volpi				
9-17	Marta Bechhoefer	9-1	Tom & Jeanette Dawson	9-17	Paul & Connie Cunningham
9-18	Connie Cunningham	9-3	Bill & Margaret Schraft	9-29	Stephen & Lauren Pond
9-19	Philip Spires				

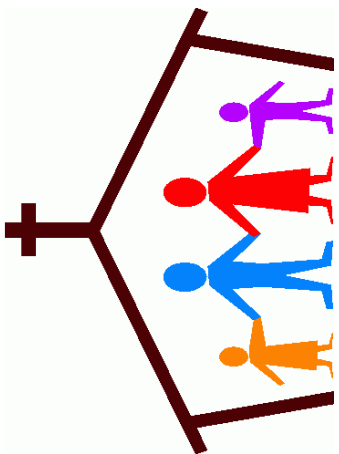
Prayers Please

Family of Lupe Rodriguez, Eric Utto_Galarneau, Rev. Susan Birkelo and family of Joe Barndt, Keith, Andre, Joshua & Andrea, Irma, Family of Deane Strong & M. Hudi, Sam, Family of Jim Schafer, Jamie Sheehan, Ralph, Aria Brown, Karin Zaun, Family of Marshall Beautz, Conrad, Boudreau family, Chelsea, John, Mateo, Tim, Charmaine, Linda, 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, Sandy, Levi & Alexandria, Gary Toops, Lisa & Beau, Craig Dahl, Genell Csik, Barbara Barte, Barbara Stiles, Paul Cunningham, Anita & Howard, Sydnei Wilbywold, Paul Paustian, Dawit & Family (Ethiopia), Gaye Cornell, Dorothy Ronning, Rachel B., Anne & Chloe Johnston, Nancy, Marisa & Isaac, Mateo & Lina, Don, Atlas, Katarina, Taiyo, Anthony, Steve, Margot Wilson, Rose, Will, Aaron Johnson, Sal, 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
August 29, 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