

***St. Stephen's  
Lutheran Church***

***SUN***

**Lenten Wednesdays     March 6, 13 & 20**

**6:00 pm     Soup Supper**

**7:15 pm     Holden Evening Prayer**

**Holy Week**

**Palm Sunday**  
March 24 at 10am



**Maundy Thurs. — March 28**  
11am & 7pm

**Good Friday — March 29 at 7pm**

**Easter Celebration Worship**  
March 31 at 10am

9:00 Breakfast

**Bring Flowers for the Easter Cross**



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

***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. — Beth Stiles V.P.— Steven Hendrickson  
Secretary - Alyssa Burkhardt  
Treasurer— Mark Linder  
Sofia Bartee, Shelly Barker 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*



We were all moved by our outgoing President, Shelly Barker's leadership leading up to and including our Annual Meeting. As a relatively new part of the congregation, Shelly accepted her role and clearly called on the gifts God has blessed her with in order to help us begin to think about our future in the midst of numerical decline.

It is never an easy thing to confront the difficult realities of our own lives, let alone the ones of an institution like our church, where so many for so long (70 years!) have poured out their hearts and faith and love and gifts to be a light to the Santa Cruz community, and a place that holds our dreams and visions for a better way of life.

Yet, Shelly took on that responsibility as we faced some of the deeper questions that come when the church's finances start to take some bigger hits which start to look unsustainable. She allowed God's Spirit to speak through her preparation and honesty and tears and vulnerability. It became almost a relief to see that she carried the burden for us about the difficult news and decisions we are beginning to turn toward. Thank you Shelly.

We are fortunate to be able to have such a large reserve that there is nothing imminent. Instead, we are able to take some time and look honestly at our congregation's sustainability in the next several years. That is the impetus behind the Council forming a new Long Range Planning Task Force to now carry the vision of what might be next in our story as St. Stephen's Lutheran Church in Santa Cruz.

After listening closely in our Holy Conversations that were held in October leading up to our 70th Anniversary, we will now start to form some proposals about how we will respond to what has become an inevitable decline of churches like ours. Some who have agreed to serve on the Task Force have experienced first-hand what it is like when their church has had to close. So that kind of difficult reality will be a part of our vision for our future, in much the same way that we all will face such inevitabilities in our own lives.

At the same time, HERE WE ARE! There are powerful stories and possibilities that we will continue to lift up as we seek to always fulfill our mission. So there will be inclusion of what that means to us right alongside our facing a more uncertain future.

So, as always, please keep these efforts in your prayers as we all seek the best way to remain faithful given our post-pandemic circumstances and the massive cultural shifts we find ourselves in. I am actually looking forward to the ways that God's grace will surprise us along the way!



## **COPA Recent Actions**

### **Santa Cruz County Canvassing on Measures K and L**

On Feb. 16<sup>th</sup> COPA Leaders did canvassing on Measures K and L at the Beach Flats in Santa Cruz. Leaders continued to do canvassing work on Feb. 19<sup>th</sup>.

### **Workforce Development Information Session**

Eli Holliday and Mayra Bernabe, COPA Organizers, hosted a 45-minute zoom info. session to teach and create a space to ask questions about the workforce intermediary we are starting to sketch out. About 70 leaders participated.

### **Housing Team Meeting**

On Feb. 12<sup>th</sup> COPA leaders met to go over the application fees for state legislation. COPA will be supporting a piece of legislation to limit application fee collections that was proposed by Assemblywoman Pellerin. We're going to use this as an opportunity to learn how to move legislation in Sacramento.

### **COPA Meeting with Supervisor Cummings**

COPA Leaders from Santa Cruz County met with Supervisor Cummings to talk and work closely on issues we are both allied to.

### **University of California Santa Cruz Interns**

COPA has interns from (UCSC) who want to digitize our history. If you have COPA stories to share, please reach out to Eli Holiday ([eliholliday42@gmail.com](mailto:eliholliday42@gmail.com)) Mayra Bernabé ([mbernabe93@gmail.com](mailto:mbernabe93@gmail.com)) or Rosa Vitela ([copa.iaf1@gmail.com](mailto:copa.iaf1@gmail.com)). We want to have a better view of our organization's history.

### **Regional Actions Ahead:**

#### **COPA Training, February 29, 2024, 6-7:30pm, El Buen Pastor Lutheran Church, Salinas.**

Liz Hall, COPA Organizing Supervisor, will be leading a training on how to lead an effective meeting, also called "The Organized Meeting."

#### **Region Wide Accountability Assembly (date TBD in Spring 2024)**

COPA is in an interesting spot right now: we are as locally powerful as we have ever been, and with Robert Rivas as the speaker of the house, and both senators Laird and Caballero as leaders in the state senate our region has a lot of state level power. For more information, contact your organizers Eli Holiday at (509) 832-3325 or Mayra Bernabe [mbernabe93@gmail.com](mailto:mbernabe93@gmail.com).

### **Organizing in Santa Cruz:**

**COPA Mental Health Team Meeting, February 20 at 6:30pm, at Peace United Church of Christ.** Contact Ken Thomas for more info: [kenthomas@cruzio.com](mailto:kenthomas@cruzio.com). The team was excited to use the accountability session as an opportunity to celebrate some of these victories and get further commitments from elected officials around access to mental health in our region.

### **Housing Team Meetings— TBA**

The housing team is looking at ways to build more affordable housing, limit application fees for rental units, and how to offer conflict resolution between landlords and tenants. For more info contact Barbara Meister: [barbara.meister@gmail.com](mailto:barbara.meister@gmail.com) or your organizer Eli Holiday at (509) 832-3325.

# **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 / Annual Meeting Highlights**

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

1. Devotional time was spent in prayer as we offered our cries for God’s help and mercy (Kyrie) and thanks and praise to God (Gloria), both in our lives and for the congregation.
2. We discussed the possibility of using “The Congregation in the Secular Age” by Dr. Andrew Root (Lutheran Seminary Professor) as a book study for the coming years devotions. We decided that this content was perhaps better used for the work of the Long Range Planning Task Force because it does a good job of helping to explain the decline we are experiencing and offers insight for how we can honestly face it.
3. The Long Range Planning Task Force consists of both people who were sought out and those who volunteered. They are Mark Linder, Steven Hendrickson, Jeanette Dawson, Doug Hahn, Tina Gates and Pastor Jim. They will begin to formulate a vision accompanied by specific proposals leading up to our next Annual Meeting. In particular, this is necessary because the 5 year agreement we came to regarding using up to \$25,000/year from the our \$1.4 million reserve, will expire. Beyond this, it will look to articulate some possible ways we may want to focus our efforts given the our state of numerical decline. Also, facility concerns that have been raised will be addressed. Please direct any ideas and thoughts you have to any of them.
4. Officers were elected as follows: President—Beth Stiles, V.P.—Steven Hendrickson, Secretary—Alyssa Burkhardt, Treasurer—Mark Linder. Installation took place in worship on Sunday, February 25th.



I find myself wondering at this time of year, is it really March? It seems like we just calmed down after the Christmas holidays to a regular schedule of activities.

March is here indeed and today; the sunshine came with it.

Rain is beautiful and necessary for our environment, however, too many days cooped inside can become hectic for teachers of California children used to being outside. It also helps spread those germs more easily and often.

So let us rejoice as spring is coming, the sunshine is out, and we continue to plan for our activities up to Easter which is March 31<sup>st</sup> this year. We begin with Dr. Suess, reading his books of rhyme, and eating Green Eggs and Ham on his birthday March 2. This year the MMRR Circle will be supplying us with chocolate gold coins that we use to celebrate St. Patrick's Day which is March 17<sup>th</sup>. That is a Sunday so we will celebrate and discover shenanigans in the classroom on Monday March 18<sup>th</sup>. The snack will be Lucky Charms cereal.

Our Easter Egg Hunt will take place on Thursday March 28<sup>th</sup>, as most of our children attend that day. The following week we will be closed for Spring Break. If you would like to donate Easter candy for this event it would be appreciated. Please leave the candy in the **Narthex SSCDC donation crate by March 24<sup>th</sup>** so we know how much to purchase the following week.

Regarding donations, I would like to thank members who have donated their **Thrivent** money to the school. This helps us keep materials current and updated for our classroom and playground.

**Inflation donation** continues and we appreciate your donation of food and supplies such as Kleenex, Clorox wipes, medium Nitrile gloves, Kirkland/Costco baby wipes. Ritz, Keebler, and graham crackers, Goldfish, Pirate Booty, Cheerios cereal, and Kraft macaroni and cheese. Those are the basics of what we use. **Kards for kids** continues and our SSCDC envelopes are in the narthex on the volunteer sign up table. We are so grateful to have received gift cards from **Safeway, Amazon, Costco, and Home Depot!** Also, please **donate buttons** for sewing.

I was very excited to facilitate having our bathroom, kitchen, and hallway floors cleaned in February. Barring the general wear and tear over the decades, rest assured that the floors are clean, waxed and/or sealed. We

will have the Fellowship Hall carpets cleaned during Spring Break after most of the rain has passed. It is nice to be able to take on some deep cleaning projects after having such a tight budget over the last few years as we recovered from our Covid budget.

**It is your prayers and generosity that keep our little school thriving. As things are reducing around us, the love that you share for your preschool continues to grow bigger and touch the hearts of many.** God has blessed our preschool over the years and continues.

We have 22 students, and they are full of energy and keep us on our toes. I will be sending out registration forms this month as we look forward to planning for next year. Universal Preschool will have a big impact on our next school year as we will have 6 students leaving for kindergarten, and 3-5 leaving for Universal Pre-kindergarten (UPK). That leaves us with 11 current students returning. We do have 5 on our list to enter the Toddler class in September, and 2 in January.

The enrollment amount will have to balance with how many teachers we will need, however, 4 of us is the best number for total coverage. We will have more children potty training and need coverage since the bathroom is not attached to Fellowship Hall or outside. We must stay at the legal ratio 1:12 for coverage while a teacher is in the bathroom with children. Also, we will have to look at our curriculum and facilities overall and change our expectations as we will be predominantly a school for two-year-olds, and three-year-olds turning four. We are still a child development center, but I may not be able to do my more advanced projects as I have my whole career with four-year-olds going on Five. I must admit I am mourning that a bit as that was my favorite age group to teach. Who knows, we may luck out and have some families enroll that prefer private to public Pre-kindergarten and continue having some in that age group. Only our Lord God knows the plan. **I have faith that we will meet the challenge and forge ahead, especially if all of you are praying for us.**

So let us return to the new hope of spring and the opportunities to enjoy our children while they are here as we garden, sew, learn, celebrate, and play together.

Warmly, Kathy Berens



# Music at St. Stephen's

## Easter Celebration

with "All That Brass"



### Easter Processional:

Would you and your family like to participate, and process into church? We need banners expressing the Easter season. It's a great opportunity to show love for Christ and for our church. AND it's fun AND it's a multi-generational event.

### Join the Easter Chorus:

Sing along with the "Good News Singers". We will be presenting two new songs for the season: *Christ is Risen, Shout Hosanna & Come* and *Christians Join to Sing*.

### Join the Music Team:

Join to sing! What a great place for self-expression, sharing your talent in our God house, and rejoicing with others with Hope, Peace, Love and Joy.





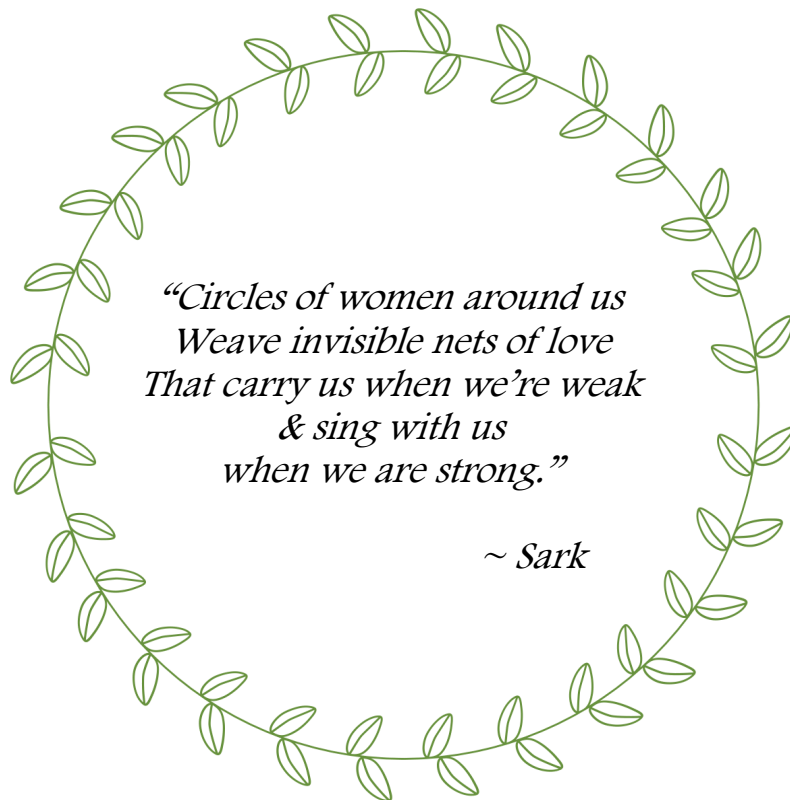
## MaryMartha / Ruth Rebecca Circle

Thursday, March 14 ~ 10:30 Fireside Room

All women are welcome.

Contact Tina Gates 760)992-4804 or  
[gateschristina84@gmail.com](mailto:gateschristina84@gmail.com)

Our project for the day will be hiding Leprechaun coins for the pre-school kids to find.



## Women's Café Group

Resumes after Easter

Dinner, Devotions & Fellowship 476-4700

## **Monthly Special Benevolence Offering**

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

February — Association of Faith Communities  
Rotating Shelter & Safe Spaces

\$20 (as of Feb. 20)

### **Provide Lunches for Volunteers March 26 at 10:30 am**

4th Tuesday of each month

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



### **My Second Life By Beth T. Stiles, Council President**

As Pastor Jim was installing the Church council I was daydreaming. 45 years ago I was in the hospital for 5 weeks and 2 days. During that time I did not realize that I was near death. I was so sick that I thought I saw God but not sure at age 19 years old. I had major surgery and a collapsed lung. I had a chest tube in my left side. I said to God if you get me over this illness I will do your work for you. After getting over surgery and the collapsed lung I received a diploma from high school and a certificate in Early Childhood Education. After many different jobs and self employment I found my niche helping people with disabilities.

As I take this leadership advocacy course I will be learning how to advocate for you AND people with disabilities.

From Steven Hendrickson, A Book Preview:

## **“The Congregation in a Secular Age: Keeping Sacred Time against the Speed of Modern Life”**

By Andrew Root, Baker Academic Books

A number of ELCA parishes are abuzz with this groundbreaking study of exactly the times we are living in. An effort to share the contents of this book will be offered to the St. Stephen's Long Range Strategic Planning Task Force. In this first installment of a series of articles, a synopsis or overview is given. The ideas expressed here are of the author Andrew Root, a Lutheran theologian.

A dominant feature of today's world is the pervasive impact of technology and an acceleration of the speed of time. We are being asked to do much more in less time. Keeping up with email is a good example of this. Speed and innovation is a constant demand. Most of us cannot keep up because of the impossible rate of speed. A general malaise and chronic depression result, and according to Root, is a common feature in many congregations. Leaders feel great pressure to implement change and develop innovative programming. This demand is asked of parishioners who are already stressed out with the demands of life. Locally for instance, many people need to work very long hours just to keep up with the expense of living here, As we see our numbers decline, we are already exhausted! In this text, Andrew Root names three essential realities and then attempts to explain their implications and explore possible solutions:

1. The increase of speed in which society is moving and changing.
2. The decreasing rate of decay or the time it takes for something to become obsolete.
3. The loss of communal identity that results in a freedom of expression. One must curate a personal self that is always relevant, changing, and innovative. Root contends that this is an idolization of self that leads to exhaustion.

Pastor Jim and I will be working together to present these ideas and how we at St. Stephens can respond to the congregation through the Task Force, Church Council and these columns in our newsletter. We pray for love through being filled through God's Spirit, and a humble resolve to move forward together.

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



## **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.

## **Easter Pancake Breakfast 9:00 am**

(Free will offering)



Our traditional breakfast has been resurrected! Thanks to our leaders Judi & Robert, and Tina (Thrivent). Come for this yummy reunion, bring a friend & celebrate!!!

**Saturday  
March 23**  
(palm cutting)



For those of you who remember, we used to have a committee who faithfully & proudly took care of our property. Now, we have you. Yes, YOU. Please sign up for an hour or two.

**Rain or Shine, there is plenty of work to do . . . inside & out!**

Standard: Weeding, Windows and Cleaning. Sometimes: Mopping the church floor, Tree-trimming, Painting and Re-organizing.



## **St. Stephen's is Now Accepting Zelle®**

A new giving option has been added! You may now contribute to St. Stephen's using Zelle®. Zelle® is a bank-to-bank money transfer method. To use it, you must first sign up on your bank's website or app. Then, follow these steps:

1. Log into your bank's website or app.
  2. Select the "Transfers" or "Move Money" functions.
- The first time, you will need to select "New Contact". Find St. Stephen's with the e-mail address "[giving@ststephenslutheran.org](mailto:giving@ststephenslutheran.org)".
1. Enter the amount you wish to send.
  2. Please add a Reason or Purpose for your donation.
  3. Review and click or touch Send.

## RE – LENT

REMEMBER, REDEVELOP, REFINE, REKINDLE, REBIRTH,  
REWARD, REVIVE, RESTART, REFORM, REUNITE, REFRESH,  
REBUILD, RECYCLE, REDEEM, RELIEVE, REBOUND,  
REFLECT, REMIND, REOPEN, REDRAW, RENEW, REINVENT,  
RECLAIM, RECREATE, REBOOT, R E L A X !

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

## What to Give up . . .

- |                     |   |                         |
|---------------------|---|-------------------------|
| Give up complaining | - | Focus on Gratitude      |
| Give up pessimism   | - | Become an Optimist      |
| Give up worry       | - | Trust Divine Providence |
| Give up bitterness  | - | Turn to Forgiveness     |
| Give up hatred      | - | Return Good for evil    |
| Give up negativism  | - | Be Positive             |
| Give up anger       | - | Be More Patient         |
| Give up pettiness   | - | Become Mature           |
| Give up gloom       | - | Enjoy the Beauty all    |

around

- |                   |   |                     |
|-------------------|---|---------------------|
| Give up jealousy  | - | Pray for Trust      |
| Give up gossiping | - | Control your Tongue |
| Give up sin       | - | Turn to Virtue      |

# Birthdays & Anniversaries

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

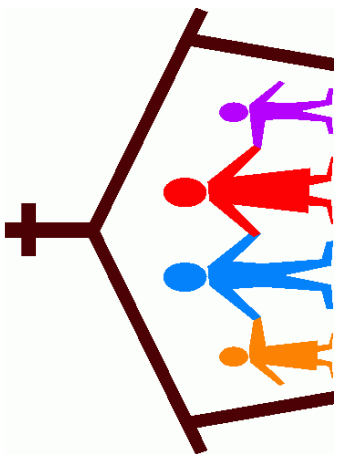


**SHORT TERM:** Rebecca Wickham, Michael, Margot Wilson, Maria, Ila & Reina, Steven Kamlin, Mike Homer, Randy M., Keith, Noelle, Ensley, Tom Peyser, Bob Zeigle, Jan, Jessie V., Margaret, Bill Gile, Tim Oldfield, Sierra, Beth's mom, Julie R., Anne Rice, Cheryl Davis, Rosie, The Webber Family, Janet, Sue, Lindsay Rosenberg, Middle

East Peace, Maria, Cody Turner, Jan, Jacque N. Diane Strong, Tom Dawson, James, Tina, Lurline Moore, Keith, Taiyo, Marissa, Isaac, James Boudreau, Alvarado family, Dustin, Eric Utto-Galarneau, Father Jack Davis, Sam, Atlas, Sandi Csik, Janica Paustian, Jesse, Joyce, James, John, Elida, Jeannie, Anetta, Jane, Barbara Allen, Kathy, Joel Hurttgam, Sandy, Levi & Alexandria, Gary Toops, Donna Kemper, Lisa & Beau, Craig Dahl, Genell Csik, Paul Cunningham, Paul Paustian, Dawit & Family (Ethiopia), Gaye Cornell, Dorothy, Rachel B., Anne & Chloe Johnston, Nancy, Mateo & Lina, Don, Atlas, Anthony, Steve, 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, 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 & 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 28, 2024**

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

St Stephen's Lutheran Church  
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Santa Cruz, CA 95062

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