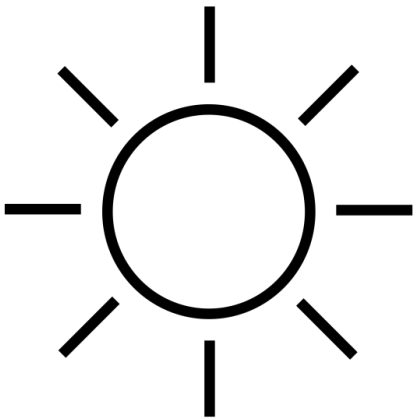


St. Stephen's Lutheran Church



Sun

October 2024

POLKA MASS ~ POTLUCK ~ TREE PLANTING

Reformation Sunday — October 27th 10:00 am

(See page 14)



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
Shelly Barker, Sofia Bartee 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

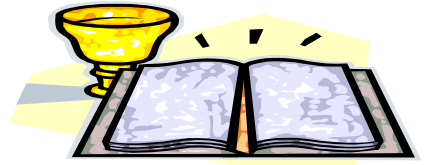
MISSION STATEMENT

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



Having just returned from Germany this summer as Leslie, Kyle and I accompanied Nathan at the beginning of his UC Berkeley research project that he received a small grant for, the events of the Reformation are fresh in my mind.

One of the highlights (even for Kyle and Nathan!) was our visit to Eisenach which is where Johann Sebastian Bach (“The Fifth Evangelist”) was born and raised. It is also where the famous Wartburg Castle is located on hill above the town. This is where the local governing ruler Frederick the Wise hid Martin Luther after he was excommunicated by the Roman Catholic Church for heresy at his trial in Worms and sentenced to death. Luther stayed there under the pseudonym “Junker Jorg” (the Knight George) from May 1521 to March 1522.

While there he put his prodigious mind and education to work and translated the Bible from the ancient Greek to the common German language. The New Testament only took him 10 weeks. It was the first time the Bible was now read by people in their common language. The highlight of the visit was seeing the room where he stayed and performed this enormous task. It was a moment to really appreciate the impact of that moment in history on each of our lives, which we often take for granted now. Remembering that we are descendants of what took place in that room so long ago and all the good that has come from it was something we talked about when we returned.

Our little church here is a recipient of that tremendous gift as we strive to fulfill God’s purpose for us has God’s claimed children in baptism. We can go directly to the Scriptures and remember the very origins of this faith we share. Even better, we are now able to take advantage of the latest scholarship and archaeological advances to make sure we interpret the messages of the Bible more authentically and faithfully, rather than be misled by certain leaders misuse of it.

This is because the Reformation is not only a moment in history, but IT IS ONGOING! As Lutherans, we are continually trying to reform and keep our mission focused where Jesus showed us to. That was a central tenet of the early Reformers—that this new Protestant Church will do its best to avoid its own straying from the central message of God’s grace in Christ for all people, and our joining with Christ in caring for the least of humanity and all creation. To always be re-forming!



Music at St. Stephen's

Choir rehearsals have resumed, right after church. We have ten voices, and seeking more of our members to join in "The Good News Singers".

We are already building towards a Christmas, and Easter Choir. Join, sing, and have fun!

Our Bell-Choir will be up and in rehearsals soon.

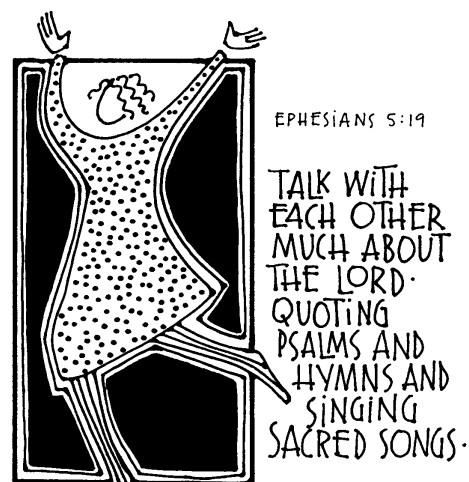
The Tracy kids will return before and during Christmas Celebrations.

*Life can take a lot of energy out of you.
Music helps fill it back up.*

Upcoming for Reformation Sunday –
New German Music Liturgy!

Thank you for supporting the Musicians
Fund.

Yours in Christ & Mission, Gary



*making music in your hearts
TO THE LORD*

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

1. Devotions centered on how important the work of the church is in helping humanity discern what is true and what is false. This is never more apparent than when we approach a Presidential election—and especially this year. Grounding ourselves in God’s Word and God’s People is essential these days.
2. Council member Sofia Barteo joined the meeting from Cal Lutheran via Zoom as she just started classes there. She let us know how its going and thanked the congregation for the matching scholarship provided for her.
3. Pastor Jim reported on members he visits, the upcoming Synod Budget Assembly, and his leadership as Chair of the Lutheran Campus Ministry Board. The latter has required a much bigger effort as both sites at Cal State Monterey Bay and UCSC will be going through major changes. The Bishop’s Assistant, Rev. Amy Kienzie has begun providing new support for all Campus Ministries in our Synod. Funding opportunities from the ELCA have changed which has led to our parting ways with our joint effort at UCSC with the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. This will open up new possibilities to work with our Full Communion partners like Methodist, Episcopal, Presbyterian, United Church of Christ and others. The vision is that together we be able to fund a permanent long-term position that can really provide a much more inclusive and biblically genuine alternative to the Fundamentalist/Non-Denominational version of Christianity and campus ministry.
4. We learned that St. Timothy Lutheran in Monterey has decided to close.
5. Pastor Jim attended a conference in Denver on behalf of COPA, as the other dozen organizations like ours throughout the West/SW gathered to envision how we might work better together.



September has been a great month for our preschool.

Both classes are connecting well. The class sizes are a bit smaller, and the children are a bit younger. They are much quieter than last year, which enables them to engage better with materials and each other. Generally, they have settled into their routine. We spent the month in Room 4 body tracing and painting. Please enjoy the hallway display! Room 2 is working on their fall tree display.

We did apple tasting and each child spiral cut and peeled apples with an apple pie corer for snack. Somehow that activity makes them taste better. Each child predicted which they would like, and then followed up with picking which one they liked best. **Speaking of apples, we have 2 apple trees in our garden area that the children will tend to for Oktoberfest apple tree planting with the children.** We hope some will attend this fun gathering. Thank you, Tina, for including us. I will be sending home pictures of the children watering, etc. to their parents to cultivate interest.

We started rotating our Raising-A-Reader red bags with 4 books in each with our older, Room 4 classroom. We appreciate being a part of this First 5 activity that creates more interest in literacy for the children. They love taking the bag home each week.

October kicks off benevolence month for our preschool. We are appreciative of your support, whether a **monetary donation, Inflation donation of goods:** Costco unscented diaper wipes, Kleenex, Clorox wipes, Cheerios cereal, Chicken Dinos, Ritz, Graham or Cheeze-it crackers, or **Kards for Kids:** Safeway, Costco, and Amazon, and **prayers** are all welcome, and especially in October.

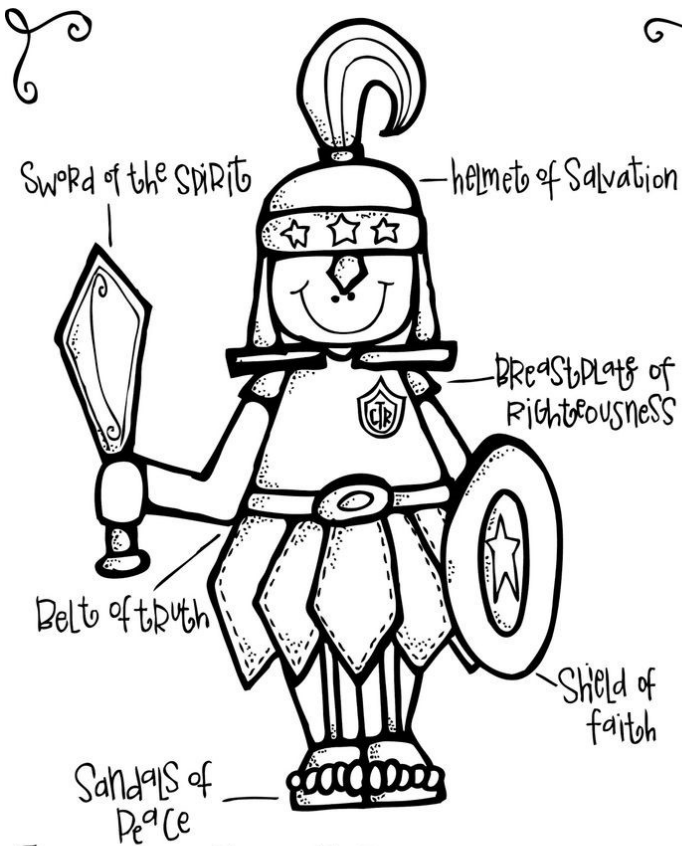
October is always a fun month at school. The literature is so much fun to share with the children as they anticipate the big day HALLOWEEN. **We love our tradition of parading around the senior housing center with the children and their parents on October 31.** We grew several pumpkins in our garden. One is large enough to carve and it was a volunteer plant that grew from the mulch in the raised planter!

Happy Halloween! Kathy Berens



Sunday School

Mark 7: 1-23 Clean hands or clean hearts, which is more important? Trick question right? *"All of you listen. It's not what goes into your body that makes you unclean, it is the bad words that come out of your mouth. Out of your hearts come evil thoughts, greed, cheating, and envy. This is what make you unclean."* We made small, dark, jagged hearts and the flip side was a big, bright, perfect red heart. Obviously we chose the big beautiful heart. Thank you God for forgiving us and cleaning our hearts.



Ephesians 6:10-20 The kids easily understand protective gear for skateboarding, playing football, bike riding, and skiing. But what protection does the bible say we need?

TRUTH — Know that God loves you.

RIGHTEOUSNESS —
Choose to do what God says is right.

PEACE —
Pray to God. Push out fear & chaos.

FAITH —
Trust in God overcomes doubt.

SALVATION — Loving God, beats evil.

Put on the whole armor of God

THE BIBLE — God's word guides us everyday, always & forever!

I've never been fond of the idea of armoring up each day, but spelled out this way is powerful. I do appreciate the term "Prayer Warrior", who embody this list. Bad things do happen to good people, so we need tools to manage those times. Thank you God for giving us the protection and guidance we need to walk safely through our daily life.

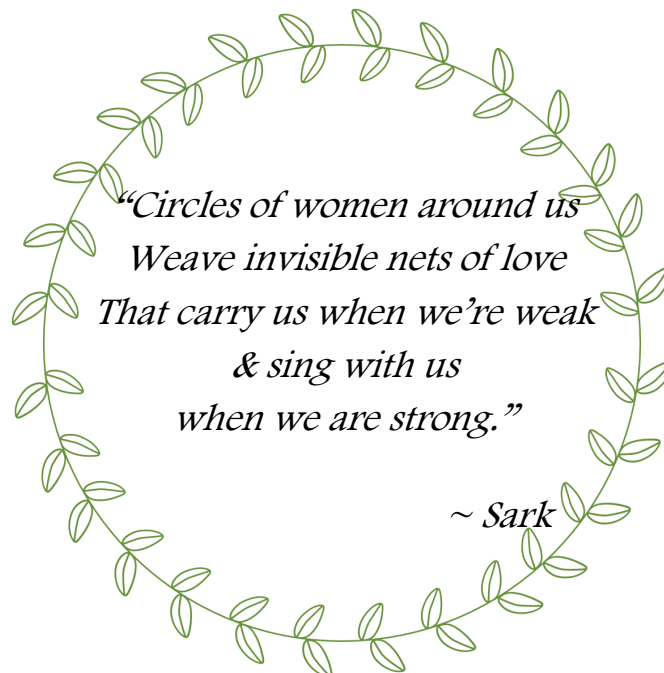
MaryMartha / Ruth Rebecca Circle

We have some great outreach ministry projects and events projected for 2024 and 2025. First and foremost this month, we will be discussing revisions to our kitchen update proposal to be reviewed by the Long Range Planning Task Force in October. As we firm up our schedule of activities, your participation is vital!

Calling all women of St. Stephen's
Thursday, October 10 at 10:30 am Fireside Room.

This will be our opportunity to plan projects and programs of outreach for the coming season. There are so many ways to share Christ's love in our community and beyond. We want YOUR ideas! See you then!

For further information, contact Tina gateschristina84@gmail.com or Cheryl Curry cherylcjf@cs.com



Women's CAFÉ group
Monday, October 28 at 6:00 pm
Dinner, Devotions & Fellowship 476-4700

Long Range Planning Task Force - Update

By Mark Linder, Council Treasurer

Background

As part of our 75th Anniversary Celebration Oct. '24, Pastor Lapp and one Council member facilitated several small group discussions earlier this year to listen to congregation reflections on where we are as an institution and where God's Spirit may be leading us in the next 5 years or so. After the pandemic, we and churches like ours throughout the U. S. (and especially Bay Area) are experiencing significant membership and financial decline. More specifically, just 40 years ago the ELCA used to have six million members nationwide. Today it is roughly three million members. At our last Annual Meeting we confronted the reality of how much smaller we have become and how much our financial giving has declined. We acknowledged that we are on a path to closure in the not-too-distant future as the larger culture continues to move away from being Christian, let alone part of a church. Given this environment, how does St Stephen's respond?

We are in a unique position with good financial reserves for the time being. Without the interest income from that \$1.4 million and the fact that our Pastor's Housing Allowance has and will remain about the same since 1997, we may have had to make more drastic decisions some time ago. At our last Annual Meeting our President expressed the concern we all have as we passed a budget that will start drawing more significantly from the principal of our reserves.

As a result, our Council formed a Long Range Planning Task Force to consider options and ideas for the next 5 years or so. The Task Force is a recommending body. Recommendations go to the Church Council and from the Council to the Congregation for discernment, discussion, and decisions. Task Force members are Doug Hahn, Jeanette Dawson, Christina Gates, Mark Linder, Steven Hendrickson and Pastor Lapp.

Task Force Update

The Task Force's initial purpose was to consider the issue of pastoral leadership over the next five years. A recommendation to continue funding a full-time pastor for the next 5 years will soon be going to the Finance Com-

mittee and the Church Council. The Council's recommendation will be presented to the Congregation for discussion and action at the January 26, 2025 Annual Meeting.

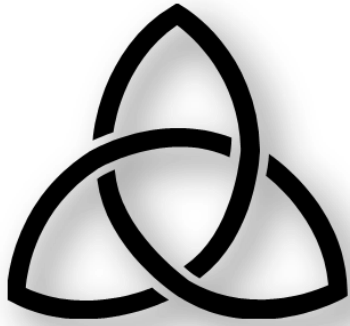
Task Force Next Steps

The Task Force is now considering ideas and options for the next five years and beyond. Ideas coming out of the earlier small group meetings are included in these conversations. The Church Council and the Task Force believe it is important for the congregation to create its future instead of just reacting to further decline as it happens. The Task Force is considering a wide range of short and long term analysis, development of possible alternative actions for discussion with the St. Stephen's members. The last two weeks of March 2025 the Task Force will be conducting 4 small group discussions to consider these ideas and others that may emerge from the conversations. The Task Force will refine the alternative actions and present its findings to the Council. There may be additional small group conversations prior to presentation of alternatives to the Congregation at its January 2026 Annual Meeting.

Task Force reflections on the challenges and opportunities for St. Stephen's

We are in a period of transition and transformation. Our challenges are similar to the challenges faced by the early Christian church. Luke articulates these challenges in the Book of Acts. How do people of faith respond to an outside world and culture that is not very supportive of our faith based institutions. In many ways we are beginning anew. While it is uncomfortable and a bit scary at times, it is also potentially energizing. So through prayers, discernment, discussion, decisions and seeking God's guidance throughout we believe there is an important and unique role for people of faith going forward.

One final note. A reminder that the members of St. Stephen's are the decision-makers on any next steps. The Task Force is an advisory body to the Council and Congregation only. Please keep them in your prayers.



NEW! - Trinity Tuesday

(Pub Theology / Discussion)

October 1st

(First Tuesday of the month)

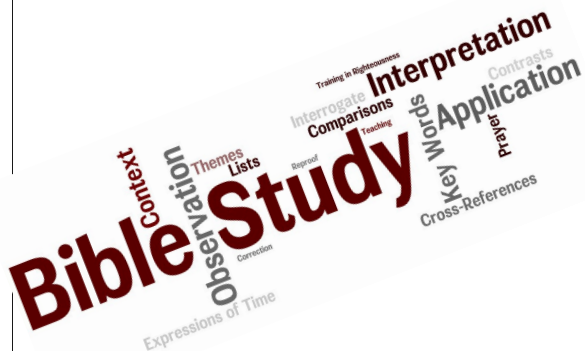
Place: Discretion Brewing 41st Ave.

6:30pm — 7:30pm

We will gather together for 1 hour to discuss 1 question about faith, and enjoy 1 drink (3-in-1). When you arrive you will be invited to write your faith question on a slip of paper and place it in a bucket.

Everyone is invited to join us this fellowship gathering. Bring a theological question you would like to discuss or share a “faith” concern in a relaxed space with people who are interested.

Until this group is established, we might Pub shop. For now, please contact Kathy Allen 430-6359 for the details. This is modeled after other Lutheran churches (St. Marks Sacramento & Immanuel Los Altos).



ZOOM with Pr. Jim

Check email on Tues. for link

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

We are traveling to Turkey and Greece and discovering some of the earliest Christian communities and what their faith meant to them in those times. Then we reflect on the parallels of our situation today. As we grow in our faith, we grow in community.



Sister Parish News

Thirty Years and Counting! Santa Cruz al Salvador is celebrated thirty years of accompaniment with communities in rural El Salvador with a special event at the **Watsonville Public House on Saturday**

September 21 from 2-4 pm. As of this writing, 80 tickets have been sold, with more ticket sales expected at the door. Thank you to everyone from St. Stephen's that attended or supported this event! Proceeds will go toward the funding for another group of composting latrines in the El Pilar communities.

Planning is well underway for the **November 18-26 El Salvador delegation.** As usual, there will be time to interact with people in our communities through craft projects, meetings, and shared meals. There will be time to hear from community leaders speaking about the current social and political conditions in El Salvador. There will also be time for fun! St. Stephen's will be represented by Jeanne Boudreau traveling with this year's delegation.

On behalf of the Board of Directors for Santa Cruz al Salvador (SCaS), we thank everyone at St. Stephen's who have contributed toward our programs. ***Your gifts make a difference!***

Peace in Christ,

Kent Madsen & Jeanne Boudreau,
St. Stephen's representatives on the SCaS Board of Directors

**Let's have fun and celebrate
with festivities & fellowship!**



Wear something **RED**

"Roll out the barrel . . . "



REFORMATION SUNDAY, OCT. 27TH

10:00am **GERMAN MUSIC LITURGY** WORSHIP

11:00am **APPLE TREE** PLANTING (w/preschool)

Martin Luther and Johnny Appleseed will be proud!

11:30am



F E A S T LUNCH

BRATS! HOTDOGS! DELICIOUS SIDE DISHES!

PRETZELS! YUMMY DESSERTS!

APPLE CIDER, SOFT DRINKS & BEER!!

(Martin Luther's wife, Katie was the family brew-master)

- Fun activities and crafts for children of *ALL* ages
- Bring Side Dishes and Desserts. Sign up now!
- Sponsored by Thrivent Action Team Jeanette and Tina

Birthdays & Anniversaries

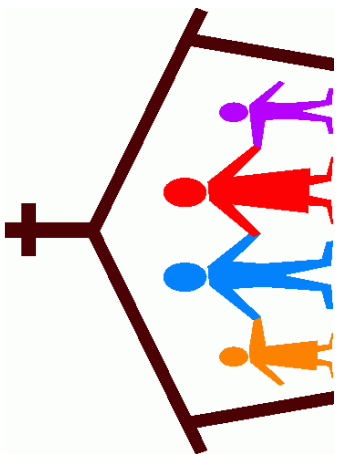
10-3 Pastor Lapp	10-18 Naomi Florin-	10-2 Joel & Maryann
10-3 Becky Judd	Gosciminski	Hurttgam
10-4 Liz Wingert	10-21 Kathy Berens	10-11 Darwin & Patrice
10-8 Amelia Davis	10-22 Asher Davis	Awe
10-13 Toby Abler	10-24 Tom Eagle	10-30 Robert & Cheryl
10-13 Janet Slay	10-25 Bill Schraft	Bartee
10-14 Tom Dawson	10-27 Kim Frey	
10-16 Sam Loya	10-29 Michael Cappelloni	

*9/23 Belated wishes to
Steven Hendrickson*



SHORT TERM: Family of Travis, Boci, Isaac & Marissa, Chris Powers, Gloria, Jack & Kim Sanford, Lucia, Dennis Lewis, Beth Stiles and family in the loss of her mother, George Webber, Marta's parents, Adrienne, George & Louside Matz, Friends in Tel Aviv, family of Barbara Klapper, family of Lauren Patrick, Patrick & Family, The Moore family, the Brown Family, Family of Sandra Barker, Nick, Family of Tom Harris, James, Beth Mills, Mary D., Candace Anderson & family, Tom, Galahad, Susan O., Family of Mike Homer, Debbie, Sam, James, Michael Lee, Nate Barker, Grandpa Dennis, Bob & Shirley Salter, Monica & Family, Lurline Moore, Beth Butler, Family & friends of Sgt. William Nelson, Jen, Robbin, Maria Mendoza, Ila & Reina, Francisco, Margot Wilson, Michael, Keith, Noelle, Ensley, Tim Oldfield, Sierra, Julie R., Anne Rice, Rosie, Janet, Sue, Middle East Peace, Tom Dawson, James, Taiyo, Marissa, Isaac, Alvarado family, Dustin, Eric Utto-Galarneau, Father Jack Davis, Sandi Csik, Janica Paustian, James, John, Elida, Jeannie, Anetta, Jane, Barbara Allen, Joel Hurttgam, Sandy, Levi & Alexandria, Gary Toops, Donna Kemper, Paul Cunningham, Paul Paustian, Dawit & Family (Ethiopia), Gaye Cornell, Dorothy, Rachel B., Anne & Chloe Johnston, Nancy, Mateo & Lina, Don, Atlas, Will, Aaron Johnson, Sal, Katarina, Stephanie Jager, Parents, Healthcare workers & teachers.

LONG TERM: Biergiel—Colclough family, Carla Brown, April McCalmont, Marty Nehring, Miller Mouw, Kyle Lapp, Shelby Volpi, Ashley, Frank, Joe, Dom, Lisa & Beau, Linda Johnson, Bailey Ingalls, Jan Shadle, Vi Olly, Bobbie Erickson, Joyce, Mike, 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, S.S. Senior Housing, 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
September 27, 2024**

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

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

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