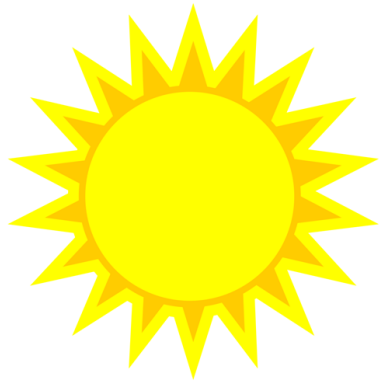


St. Stephen's Lutheran Church



Sun

September 2024

A Message From our Council President

My Volunteer Experience—By Beth Stiles

I grew up with a physical disability that showed because of my brace and splint on my right side of my body. It was embarrassing having kids and adults stare at me. As an adult I learned from my parents that they enjoyed volunteering for the church or synagogue. My dad referred to himself as a professional volunteer. This is one of reasons I started my advocacy business. My volunteer work started in the church. As a member, I have been a part of many different committees at church (throughout my life). Then I was elected to the Church Council. I watched the previous President, and I wondered if I could do the job. As I looked at the Council, I thought about each person (becoming President) When it came to me, I thought, with help, I could do the job. Then afterwards, Pastor Jim said that I was the first Council President that had a disability in (our) church.



From Pastor Jim: We are truly blessed that Beth serves as our President. She brings an entirely different perspective as someone living with the disability of cerebral palsy—one that connects us closely with the 3 year ministry of Jesus Christ. She inspires us all to offer our gifts to God through our church. Thank you Beth!

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



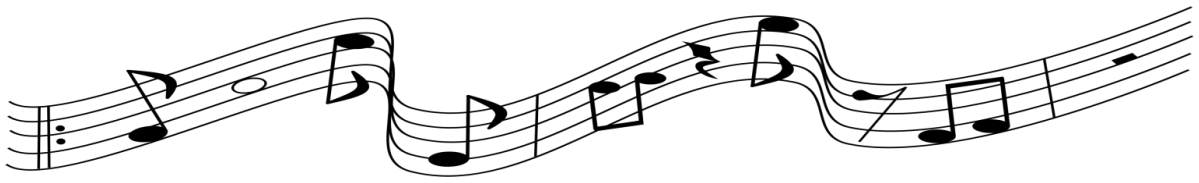
I have really been enjoying sharing my Continuing Education trip to Turkey and Greece with my seminary—the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago. Each Wednesday at 11am and 7:30pm on Zoom, I've been able to re-live this trip of a lifetime led by 2 wonderful professors Rev. Dr. Barbara Rossing (New Testament) and Dr. Esther Menn (Old Testament).

It made a very powerful impact on me to be able to trace some of the earliest known expressions of our Christian faith as we visited places where our ancestors gathered and began to share with the world this new way of Jesus Christ. It is amazing that even today, 2000 years later, we are still uncovering and learning new things about the beginnings of the Christian church. To sing and pray and reflect on our faith in these same places where the Body of Christ began to live as the church, deeply connected us all to our calling to follow Christ and lead God's people in the church today.

It was especially meaningful to be reminded that these hallowed ancestors, like Paul and John, were just regular human beings like you and I, and yet look at all the ways in which they were able to provide so much for so many over 2 millenia.

Recently, one of these more recent ancestors of mine, Rev. Gerald O. Pedersen, was lifted up in our Synod as he claimed his baptismal promises at 99 yrs and 11.5 months old. Pastor Gerry was one of my early mentors as I served as a Youth Minister with him for 3 years at Mount of Olives Lutheran, Mission Viejo. A regular old son of Danish immigrants to the Midwest, he was one of the last surviving navy veterans to have been present at the WWII surrender of the Japanese on the USS Missouri as a 19 year old. After the horrific nuclear bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the words of Gen. Douglas MacArthur that day, to now build a "world founded upon faith and understanding, a world dedicated to the dignity of man and the fulfillment of his most cherished with for freedom, tolerance and justice." propelled Gerry into ordained ministry.

Fulfilling that kind of Christian calling often led him to be called too controversial and offensive as he confronted our society's proclivity for war and military spending, especially. But he will always serve as a faithful beacon for this pastor and the Christian church, to stay dedicated to the truth of God's ways of peace and justice for the least in our world.



Music at St. Stephen's

Hello, everyone. As another Fall is upon us, please give some thought and join the music team! All the harmonics are waiting for you, and talents. Your ideas are always welcome, let me know!

This fall music season welcomes Judi Alvarado, as directing a tone bar (bell) choir. This is another opportunity to join the team with a twist. Three or four members have already wished to take part

Good News Singers:

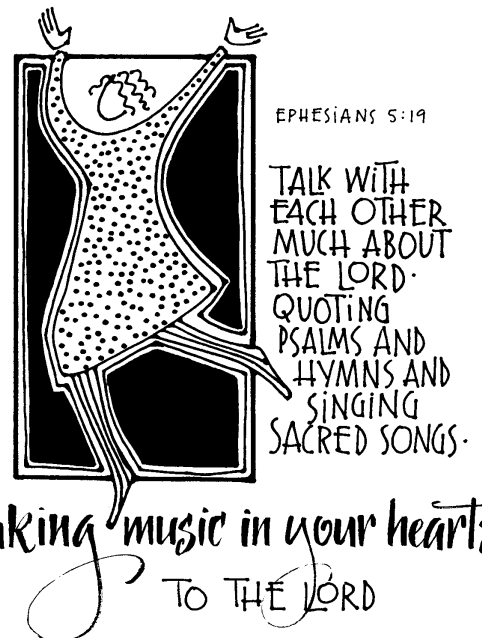
we need four part harmony this year. The rehearsals begin on September 8 right after church. I will be forming a Christmas, and Easter Choir. All new music.

The organ, piano & keyboard will all be used differently, hopefully every week. Always for worship.

Thank you for supporting the musicians fund.

*"The only thing better than singing,
is more singing.
Praise the Lord!"*

Yours in Christ & Mission, Gary



Reconciling In Christ Welcome Statement

(Approved at January 2020 Congregational Meeting)

“We welcome all who are seeking God’s love and grace.

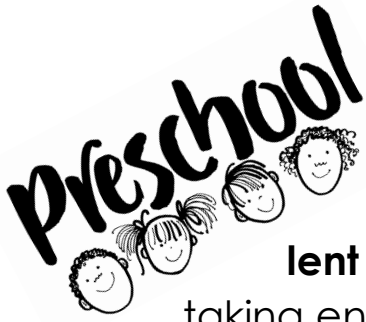
We welcome all because God welcomes all, regardless of race or culture, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, or relationship status.

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. We held a Zoom meeting due to Covid, and devotions were led by our Secretary Alyssa. They reminded us of how God’s grace and Spirit is present with us throughout our lives—even and perhaps especially when we may feel distant from God.
2. Pastor Jim reported that he is giving more time to our Lutheran Campus Ministry effort as the Chair of the Board. It is going through a major transition as Rev. Paul Larson, Cal Sate University Monterey Bay & Good Shepherd—Salinas announced he will be moving away in September as he takes a call to be pastor of a congregation in Carson City, Nevada. Also Rev. Jon Perez, Chaplain at CSUMB and Epiphany Episcopal/Lutheran—Monterey announced his retirement for June 2025. At the same time, our UCSC joint ministry with the LCMS will be coming to an end at the end of 2024. This was necessary due to the way the ELCA now provides funding for Campus Ministry. It no longer comes through the Synod, but directly from the ELCA Churchwide office which requires us to fund only ELCA efforts or those shared with our Full Communion denominational partners like Episcopal, Presbyterian etc.. So things at UCSC will be undergoing a redevelopment where we will form a new vision for what is possible now. We are very grateful for the many years that Messiah Lutheran (LCMS) has served as host of this ministry—both their facility and staff/pastors—particularly Rev. Rick Rice, who will continue in this role until the end of the year.
3. The Long Range Task Force is finalizing their proposal to the Council for compensation for pastoral leadership for the next 5 years. The congregation will vote on this at our next Annual Meeting on January 26.



Greetings from Seattle airport on my way back to Montana (August 20). In June, I was exhausted and looking forward to summer rest. **Our teaching team is so excel-**

lent that I was able to really heal and revitalize this summer, taking enough time to feel balanced. I wasn't expecting to see my mom again this summer and I am so grateful to return and enjoy beautiful Montana and her.

In August, we bid farewell to Jade, Lily, Sienna, and James as they left for public Universal preschool. This means **we had 10 children leave our program this year**. As of today **we are enrolling 6 new students, all but one are 2 years old**. This is a much younger school now. I was able to rearrange some of the materials to make our classrooms better prepared for this younger group. We are looking forward to seeing how this next group develops. In the beginning it might be challenging with so many new children in the resting room especially, but somehow we always make it through and children thrive.

Now I will share a cute community story with you. Two of our children went to the same school in Soquel for TK. They went to morning day-care first, then had to find their way to the classroom. One of them was a bit tender about it. They saw each other and took each other's hand and walked to class together. It made all of the difference! So sweet. I ran into one of them at the Dollar Store. He was often shy and reluctant as he was especially attached to his parents. This child was happy, smiling, and sharing the great things about his new school. **This is what our job is at SSCDC: fostering caring, kindness, and confidence so that children can go out in the world and find their next place to thrive.**

I would like to thank Sandra Eldridge for her 6 years of volunteer service to our school board. Her advice and wisdom was greatly appreciated. She is a wonderfully supportive person of whom I truly appreciate! We are looking to recruit another member. If you are interested, please contact Bill Schraft or Kathy. The commitment is mostly Zoom meetings the 4th Monday of each month. Most of our building is done,

but the support and fellowship is so helpful to keeping our school supported with talented and caring minds who share.

Moving forward with our school board, I especially appreciate the devotions when Pastor Jim incorporates perfect reflections and verses in support of our mission and ministry at the preschool. I welcome **Bill (President) and Margaret (Recorder) Schraft, and member Barbara Johnston who continue to serve. I am especially grateful for Kathy Allen, our treasurer.** Her commitment and support has brought me great comfort and thrills as we have created our third annual budget together! This has helped realize the best balance between size of school and quality of care. This year a little less is more as we guide a very young group.

Congratulations to Teacher Sam who was accepted to nursing school. She will remain with us part time and we are so thankful for that!

SSCDC Benevolence month is in October. Kards for Kids (Safeway, Costco, Amazon) and Inflation Donation (Mac & cheese, Ritz & Graham crackers, Clorox cleaning wipes, Costco baby wipes, Kleenex, and frozen Chicken Dinosaurs) are still our fundraisers for this school year. Your generosity collectively helped us create a rainy day fund and proceed with confidence as we transitioned through summer. Every penny makes a difference and we appreciate you!

I look forward to working another year with John Hopping who is so helpful to our school! I also can't wait to ride on Leslie's endless energy and enthusiasm for our church and children. She truly cares and I love working with her. May the Holy Spirit inspire Pastor Jim as he shepherds us through another year. May Gary find inspiration as he creates music for us. Who else will step forward and stand out with their time and talents this year? I see those out there supporting our church, and appreciate all the efforts of time and talent. **We are small but loyal and mighty.**

May the peace of our Lord rest in all of us as we worship together and support another group of children in our preschool ministry.

Warmly, Kathy Berens

Sunday School

Scripture not just for kids!



Ephesians 5:15-20 “So be careful how you live. Don’t live like fools, but like those who are wise. Understand what the Lord wants you to do. Be filled with the Spirit, singing Psalms and spiritual songs, and making music to the Lord in your hearts. Give thanks for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.” Good advice 2,000 years ago, still applies today!

Ephesians 5:1-2 “Imitate God in everything you do, because you are His dear children, Live a life filled with love, following the example of Christ. He loved us and offered Himself as a sacrifice for us.” Sometimes I’m given a lesson using the second reading rather than the Gospel. This particular verse was timely and I’m hearing it loudly! Life doesn’t have to be so complicated. Can we simply imitate Christ? Is there anyone we respect or admire more? Others will fail us, but Jesus will not! Thanks be to God for the perfect role model.

Mark 6:34 “When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd. So he began teaching them many things.” Did you know that sheep are mentioned more than 200 times in the Bible? Jesus often compared people to sheep and He was the shepherd. We are thankful that He never leaves us wandering, lost and alone, without a shepherd to guide us!

Monthly Special Benevolence Offering

Lutheran Campus Ministry

Reaching out with the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the students, faculty and staff of UC Santa Cruz and CSU Monterey Bay, Lutheran Campus Ministry of the Monterey Bay supports students on their faith journey by providing opportunities for Bible study, prayer, worship, service and fellowship.

MaryMartha / Ruth Rebecca Circle

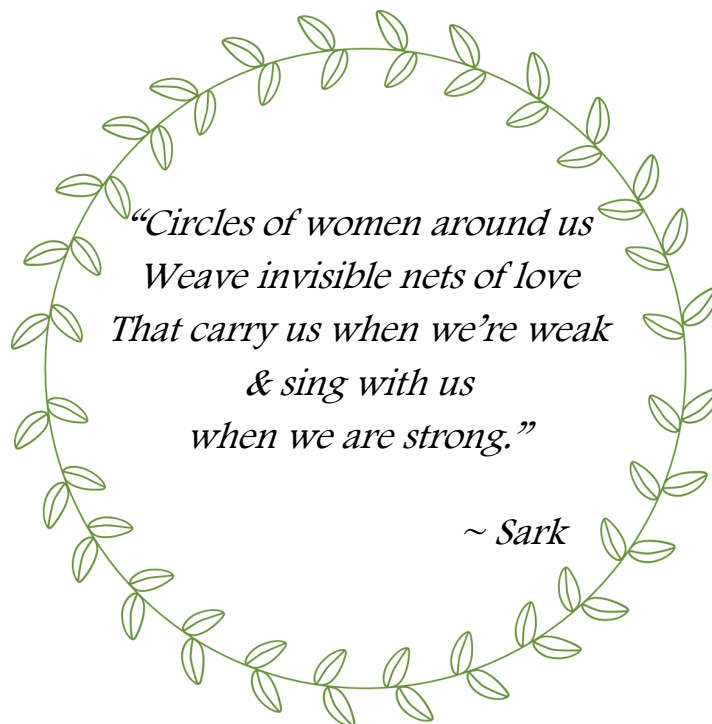
Calling all women of St. Stephen's
Join us for our Fall Kickoff

Thursday, September 12 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

Mondays, September 16 & 30 at 6:00 pm

Dinner, Devotions & Fellowship 476-4700



Association of Faith Communities

Summer News

A Long Journey Home, A Local Call to Action,
South County Expansion, & Donation Needs.

Returning Home

Michele's journey back to housing was long and, as it turns out, serendipitous. A string of bad breaks and medical issues could've left her defeated, but she refused to give up. Read how she's come to say, "I'm at peace. Everywhere I look is beauty."

Read Michele's Story at AFCsantacruz.org

Dozens of Seniors to Lose Housing

AFC and COPA recently hosted a faith leader meeting to respond to the impending rent increase at St. George Apartments that will leave dozens of seniors homeless. Local congregations decided to draft a public letter of concern, attempt to advocate for residents directly with the property owners, and stand in support of residents at an upcoming city council meeting. Want to stay in the loop with how to help? Email us at info@afcsantacruz.org.

AFC Expands Programs to South County

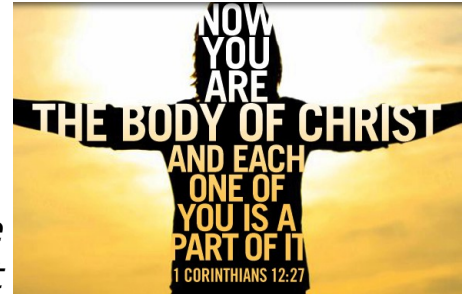
In the wake of a 60% increase in homelessness in Watsonville and the closing of the Salvation Army's shelter, AFC is expanding services to South County. We plan to open a 20 bed rotating shelter and 20 spot safe parking program this fall, and are currently recruiting host sites. The effort is being supported by Housing for Health and the 1440 Foundation. Does your organization want to provide a meal?

Hygiene Items Needed!

AFC shelter and safe parking members are in need of hygiene supplies! This includes shampoo, shaving cream, razors, toothpaste, deodorant and anything else you find yourself using on a regular basis. Travel sizes are ideal, but donations of all sizes are welcome. New and gently used clothing, especially for men, are also always needed.

Sustainability

By Steven Hendrickson



"Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what the will of God - what is good, acceptable and perfect." Romans 12:2

"For as in one body we have many members, and not all the members have the same function, so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and we individually are members of one another." Romans 12:4

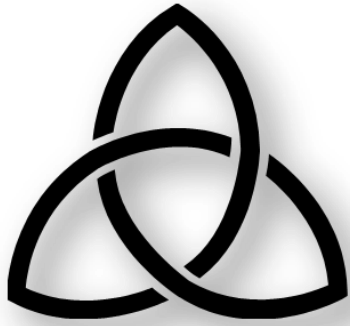
As all of us are very well aware, there is a crisis of sustainability in our world. Spiritual, cultural, political, and economic realms; and all of our earthly environment are in imminent danger of massive negative changes. Many institutions, families, and life itself are at a major inflection point. We cry out to God, "How long?" and "What are we to do?" The above verses written by Paul may offer humanity a way to center themselves in God, if viewed in a personal and macro view.

The first verse addresses the major need for a change in how we think, relate, and treat one another. Our shared history and personal inclinations are clearly not working, needing a profound transformation. By being renewed with an "experience of God in Christ," new pathways and Godly discernment are available to all. Remember, we need to see this in terms of a personal and enlarged view of our oneness with all of creation. This is happening now and has always been in existence. The change that is needed is to move from "knowing about God" to an experience of Presence within our hearts and all of creation. This knowing of God present in everyone and everything was much stronger from the days of Christ until the sixteenth century when science, rationality and consumerism changed the overall thought process of the world.

The second verse refers to the many God given gifts that we have to share with one another and an interdependent world. As beings who experience God in many different traditions and cultures, we can grasp God's love in Christ in a beautiful tapestry of colors, customs, and infinite demonstrations of grace care, and compassion. As was stated above, we benefit most when enlarging our view to encompass all of creation, and what our individual contribution is.

This short and incomplete explication of these verses are offered as "starting" or "seed thoughts." As we surrender ourselves to God's love, asking for insight and direction, we then act as disciples of Christ.

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



NEW! - Trinity Tuesday

(Pub Theology / Discussion)

October 1st

(First Tuesday of the month)

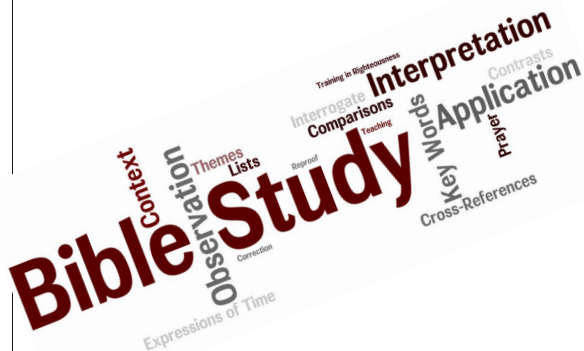
Place: TBA

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 (SCaS) is celebrating thirty years of accompaniment with communities in rural El Salvador with a special event at the **Watsonville Public House, Saturday September 21 from 2-4 pm.** This Public House is a nonprofit, community brewery and an outreach of the Presbyterian Church that is run by minister/brewmaster, Robby Olson. It is also dog friendly!

We will also have a **special guest**, Joseph Russ, a Presbyterian Mission Worker living in El Salvador and studying migration in the Northern Triangle of Central America. Our delegations have really enjoyed meeting with Joseph the last couple of years and learning about his mission to create a plan for immigration that works for everyone. A \$30 ticket to this special event will include one glass of beer, wine, cider or sparkling water and lots of delicious hors d'oeuvres. Proceeds from this event will go toward water and sanitation projects in our communities.

At the recent SCaS Board retreat, Kent Madsen shared some memories from those early trips to El Salvador as we reflected on the changes that have occurred there-and how we might continue to be helpful and relevant in 2024 and the future. While much has changed, it continues to be a challenge for students to receive a quality education in rural communities and the government does little to provide basics such as composting latrines and water in homes - more than a third of homes in rural communities do not yet have water piped to their homes and most that do only have running water a few hours a week to fill their pilas or barrels.

There is growing concern for human rights and environmental abuses and while this is not specifically our mission, we will continue to spend time on our **November 18-26 El Salvador delegation** studying these issues and understanding the current reality in El Salvador. Yes, we need to examine what we are doing in our lives and missions to make sure we are still effective and relevant, but also recognize the special opportunity God has given us with each trusting and loving relationship with which we are blessed.

There are still opportunities to become a prayer child sponsor for children in our communities. An annual donation of \$125 can provide great encouragement and tangible support for individual students and for the school in Guillermo Ungo that we are so privileged to accompany. Please see Jeanne or Kent to purchase tickets or for more information on these events and opportunities.

On behalf of the Board of Directors, 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

Plan Ahead—October is Coming!

No Oktoberfest, but an



Polka Mass & Potluck Reformation Sunday—October 27th

In the spirit of Martin Luther's words: *"If the world were to end tomorrow, I would still plant an apple tree today"...* we celebrate our renewal in Christ that is new every morning.

Polka Mass (you know, "Roll out the barrel" & "Edelweiss" and the like). Remember, the first hymns of the church were to the tunes people knew from their gatherings at the pubs. Lederhosen & Dirndl not required, nor is Reformation RED, but all are certainly welcome. But if you have red lederhosen or a red dirndl you better wear em! Ha Ha.



Johnny Appleseed may not be joining, but back to Martin Luther. Let's sow some seeds, by planting an apple tree.

Who's willing to get a Thrivent Grant or help organize? Contact Tina Gates 760-992-4804.

Birthdays & Anniversaries

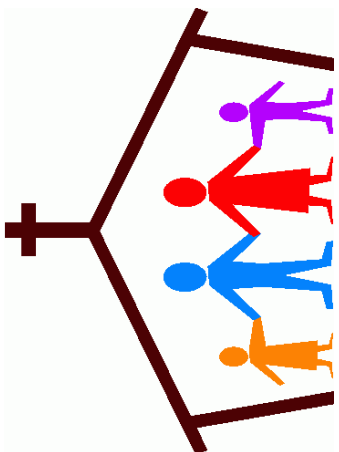
9-7	David Balogh	9-24	Alex Csik Hughes	9-4	Jim Jones & Shay
9-8	Cabel Dawson	9-26	Hayden Ruble		Barsabe
9-11	Rebecca Wickham	9-26	Jan Wagner	9-6	Jim & Naomi
9-12	Collin Travers	9-29	Joanne Freymuth		Florin-Gosciminski
9-12	Hannah Travers			9-6	Ken & Susan Gross
9-14	Elias McMilin			9-6	Kevin & Marla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



SHORT TERM: Beth Stiles and family in the loss of her mother. Adrienne, George & Louside Matz, George Webber, Friends in Tel Aviv, family of Barbara Klapper, family of Lauren Patrick. Patrick & Family, The Moore family, John Wickham & 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. Debbie, Sam, James, Michael

Lee, Nate Barker, Grandpa Dennis, Bob & Shirley Salter, Monica & Family, Lurline Moore, Beth Butler, Jen, Robbin, Maria Mendoza, 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, Father Jack Davis, Sandi Csik, Janica Paustian, James, John, Elida, Jeannie, Anetta, Jane, Barbara Allen, Joel Hurtgam, Sandy, Levi & Alexandria, Gary Toops, Paul Cunningham, Paul Paustian, Gaye Cornell, Dorothy, Rachel B., Anne & Chloe Johnston, Nancy, Mateo & Lina, Don, Atlas, Will, Aaron Johnson, Sal, Katarina, Stephanie Jager, **LONG TERM:**

Biergiel—Colclough family, Carla Brown, April McCalmont, Marty Nehring, Miller Mouw, Shelby Volpi, Ashley, Frank, Joe, Dom, Lisa & Beau, Linda Johnson, Bailey Ingalls, Jan Shadle, Vi Olly, Bobbie Erickson, Joyce, Mike, Susan Anderson, Richard C., Brouse Family, Janet Baker, Sandy Godvine, Janelle Yung, Karin, Will, Chris, Pearl Runquist, Volpi & Robe Family, Cabel, 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
August 29, 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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