

HAPPY
SUMMER

***St. Stephen's
Lutheran Church
2025***

**Special
Congregational Meeting**

Sunday, July 20 at 11 am

Our Church Council has called a brief (@ 20 min) Special Congregational Meeting for two purposes:

1. To provide a one-time grant of \$20,000 to our Child Development Center.

Rationale: The unplanned departure of 3 full-time tuition students in the middle of the school year has depleted their reserves. One staff person has been laid off and the Director has taken a salary cut in lieu of additional vacation time. Families are increasingly taking advantage of the new CA Transitional Kindergarten (4yr olds) which hurts enrollment. Without new income the school will need to close in the Fall. This grant will allow it to continue through the end of the year and to try and get new enrollments over the summer. If that doesn't happen then closure can be planned for the end of the year.

2. To begin a Spanish speaking ministry.

Rationale: A consensus action as a result of our Spring small group meetings of our Long Range Planning Task Force. This vote will enable us to seek funding from the ELCA Division of Evangelical Mission to call Rev. Eduardo Trejo (pt. time—El Buen Pastor, Salinas) to pt. time pastoral start-up ministry here.

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. — Steven Hendrickson V.P.— Beth Stiles
Secretary - Sofia Bartee
Treasurer— Mark Linder
Robert Bartee, Margaret Schraft, 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

"Pastor Jim Goes to the State Capitol"



On Monday June 9th I joined 100 other COPA leaders from Santa Cruz and Monterey counties in a quickly organized trip to Sacramento in order to speak and lobby on behalf some of our community's most vulnerable poor—immigrant workers.

Our Governor proposed a new budget that cut healthcare (Medi-Cal) for these tax-paying essential workers who form the backbone of our agricultural, tourist and construction economies and make all of our lives much, much better. Instead of acknowledging our need for these workers and granting them some kind of documented status, our politicians continue to just abuse them and treat them like a political football to kick around and take advantage of. It is a bold-faced lie to call all such folks the terrible things our President has and continues to call them.

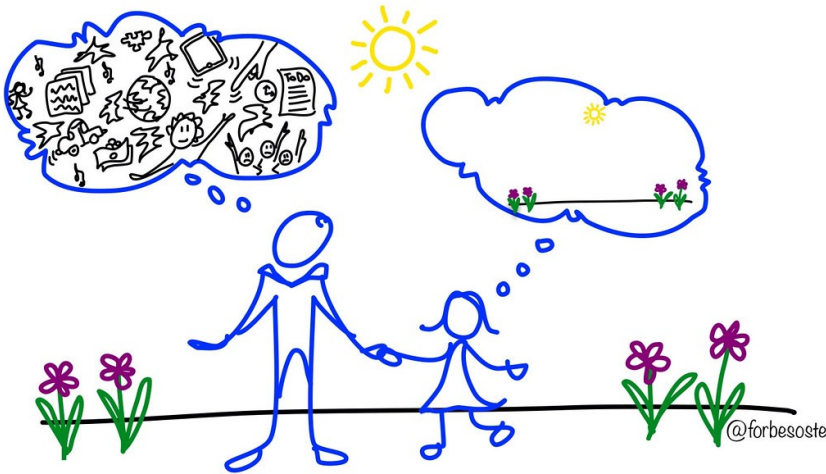
Through our 25 year relationships with people in the churches of COPA (many Roman Catholic/Latino) we know how wonderful and important 99% of these folks are for our communities. We need them. Many of them joined our trip and bravely told their stories, as well as 8 UCSC students, and reps from 5 sister IAF orgs. like COPA from throughout the state. We split into 8 groups to go to our state reps. Offices (35 of them) and let them know how inhumane this budget was. All agreed and told us that they were sponsoring a new budget that restored healthcare to undocumented workers.

We are hopeful that our trip made a difference and that we acted in the way that Jesus would have when he turned over the moneychangers tables in protest of how the poor were being taken advantage of by those in authority.

COPA is our way of fulfilling our baptismal covenant with God to "strive for justice and peace in all the world". Justice is the work of addressing the powers that be when they neglect basic human needs. It is difficult and long-term work that most of us would rather just leave to someone else. Life is hard enough. But if we are organized ahead of time (like we have done by being a part of COPA) then we can act quickly like this and not miss the opportunity to make a difference.

It was a long, hot day (6am—8:30pm / 95degrees) but our group was able to meet with Gail Pellerin, John Laird, Dawn Addis and Speaker Robert Rivas' staff, as well take part in a press conference on the Capitol steps. It also served to strengthen our resolve to act for justice and to strengthen our public relationships with each other and those in power who make such far-reaching decisions.

Mind Full, or Mindful?



Summer Spiritual Reflections by Steven Hendrickson

Ah, Summer! Beautiful warm weather and more free time! A break from the fall, winter, and spring routine. On the spiritual path,

opportunities arise to immerse in nature, reading, and an invitation to go deeper in seeking God. Nature calls! One can experience quality time in the forest, beach, or travel. To be alone to breathe in the sights, sounds, and feeling God's presence in creation is a wonderful opportunity to grow in faith. Using our bodies in exercise and engaging all of our senses of oneness in God within us and all that surrounds us.

Reading spiritual books can also be a portal to experiencing God in new ways. Fiction, biographies, and even children's literature can reveal marvelous insights. Our reading can be a reflection of what speaks to each of us, the choices are many. Intentionally using the readings of Christ in Our Home can help structure a pattern of daily scripture passages that help us prepare for worship.

Summer is also a time when many attend church less often, and our giving offerings also declines. I want to gently encourage you to immerse, not retreat from putting God first. The temptation to do so is always there. A good reason to be steadfast and have stability with our beloved local community is this: in times that are tough and challenging, our inner resources can make all the difference in living a life of peace, purpose, hope, and much love. So let's immerse, and not retreat from our spiritual journey with each other. God's peace, and much love be with you . . .

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

1. Our book study on “When Church Stops Working” focused on Ch. 4—which encourages us to engage in the spiritual practice of “waiting” (attentive looking), rather than trying to stay busy & fight for survival. This helps focus on what God is already doing in our community and then we can figure out how to join in.
2. The Long Range Planning Task Force summarized the 4 small group meetings held last March and April. Beginning a Spanish speaking ministry was a consensus idea that could begin now. Most see us moving to a pt. time pastor after Pastor Jim retires in 2030, with the likely scenario of Pastor Jim continuing in that role. It was also a time to express some of the sadness and grief over the decline of the number of members and resources over the past 5 years especially. The bigger possible ideas could wait until we move to a pt. time pastor.
3. A Memorial service for Epimenio “Ed” Valencia will be held on Sunday July 20 at 2pm. Ed and his wife Emily were long-time members who became inactive due to health reasons. He is the Uncle of Reina and Ila.
4. We will not meet in July but will review a document - “Strategic Recommendations for the ELCA” and discuss at our August meeting. This was distributed at the Synod Assembly attended by our President Steven Hendrickson and Council member Beth Stiles in Walnut Creek. It outlines possible new directions for the ELCA and its congregations.
5. Sofia and Arija Bartee were awarded \$2500 scholarships for Cal Lutheran. For the ’25-’26 school year. This amount will be matched by the University.



Our graduation was extra special as we planned ahead to surprise Pr. Jim with the children all wearing Tye Die shirts! Inspired by Leslie our friend Crista from Mount Cross came to facilitate this activity. She was masterful in working with 2-4-year-olds! They had so much fun squeezing the die onto the banded shirts. I loved how Crista guided the children and wished I could hire her. I told her so. Pr. Jim was delighted as the children proudly walked into Chapel in their shirts. All of them wore them, no hold outs. Thank you for bringing our ministries together with this activity Leslie!



We welcome Rebecca Wickham to our SSCDC School Board. We are so fortunate to have her join us. She has been a great supporter of our program from the very beginning.

I want to thank and honor Kathy Allen for her 6 years of service as our Board treasurer. I will never forget running into her at Staples and mentioning I was looking for a treasurer. She said she would be interested! Talk about a God story, this was one of the best. She has taught me so much about creating a budget, pivoting through Covid and Transitional Kinder, loss, invoicing, and payroll. The list goes on and on. The best part is the friendship we have grown through the process. She was above and beyond and a true supporter of our program. We have an opening for Treasurer beginning September. We will have already created the budget for the 2025/26 fiscal school year. I will be trained in QuickBooks programs to process tuition, purchasing accountability, and invoicing as a back up to the incoming treasurer. The responsibility is the afore mentioned along with a monthly meeting the fourth Monday of the month via zoom, sometimes in person at 11:15 – 12:45. Please contact Bill Schraft or Kathy Berens if you are interested.

On July 20th a special congregation meeting is requesting a one-time-only grant of 20,000.00 to keep our school running. Pr. Jim explained in the

Council Highlights that we lost 3 students last winter in an unusual incident, along with losing our 4-year-old students to public transitional kinder. This has reduced our enrollment significantly. I have 4 new students for fall and am receiving inquiries as I write this. We are hopeful and want this ministry to continue to touch young children's lives by sharing the kindness & love of Jesus. I volunteered to reduce my hours and pay by one-third to get us through summer. I will re-evaluate in fall. I prioritize my two full time teacher's needs for full time employment before my own. We have laid off our wonderful part-time assistant Veronica with the hope of her return in the fall, per enrollment and budget. She was given an opportunity to work at her son's school for summer, thanks be to God. Finally, we have never requested financial help since I was hired. Thanks to the Johnson donation we survived through Covid and the initiation of public transitional kinder. Please consider voting for this one time only grant so we can continue our ministry to the dedicated people who want to continue here at SSCDC.

Warmly, Kathy Berens



August 17 @ 10 am

then

Potluck Lunch

Join us in lifting up the unique gifts of every child (Parent & Educator) as they transition into a new school year . . .

10 days in. May they be filled with fresh enthusiasm and a heart that is excited to learn and grow. May they have confidence and grace, and be equipped to persevere through the tough stuff. May they make good friends and be a good friend. Help them remember that God is always with them. Let's pray for their teachers to have wisdom, understanding, and a heart to serve, as they embark on this journey together!



Context for this work

The book of Revelation paints a picture of people from every nation, tribe, people and language who stand before God in worship (Revelation 7:9), as well as the reality that God will dwell with the people, wiping every tear from their eyes, and there will be no more death, mourning, crying or pain (Revelation 21:3-4). The ELCA has a unique role to play in carrying out the important ministry of reconciliation (2 Corinthians 5:11–21).

Structurally and organizationally, it might mean that the ELCA no longer experiences numeric decline of baptized members, but grows in the number of people who are disciples of Jesus and the number of congregations that are vibrant and vital.

When we asked nearly 1,000 ELCA rostered leaders what they think the future of the ELCA will look like, their most common responses were that the ELCA would be marked by the grace and love of Jesus Christ, centered on the cross and the gospel, welcoming and inclusive of all people, and defined by justice, advocacy and service.

Several future-oriented and hope-filled quotes about the future of the ELCA stood out across this project, including:

- “Our current church buildings would be functioning more like community centers. Our pastoral care and other offerings would be hyper-locally focused and relevant to people in each community.”
- “We would lean even more into the aspects of Lutheranism that make us unique, including our strong theology of the cross and emphasis on the grace of Jesus Christ. People who engage with ELCA churches would know that they are valued and accepted, and there is nothing they can do to separate them from the love of God.”
- “Our world has too much hurt and hate. Lutheran churches must help those who experience them to know they are not freed because of the good work we do, but because of the good work Jesus has already done for us. We offer an incredible message of liberation.”
- “Our metrics will have changed — no longer just butts in seats, but toward things like injustices addressed and lives transformed. We would focus even more on engaging in community and love of neighbor.”
- “We would ... invite others into the joy of the love of Jesus. I believe that if we focused primarily on that, the rest would probably take care of itself.” (continued)

Presently, the ELCA is one of the largest Christian denominations in the U.S., with nearly 3 million members and about 8,500 congregations. The ELCA has a rich history, tracing its roots to the reformer Martin Luther. Much might be possible through the strengthened collective efforts of those across the ELCA to reflect God's love in the world.

Full report available at www.elca.org



Music at St. Stephen's

Greetings everyone, the Good News Singers are on a Summer break for July and August. All choir members have been very spirited in singing, and supporting our worship services. Thanks choir for all you do.

Our first fall rehearsal is scheduled for September 7th after Church, along with a Choirfeast Luncheon. Please sign up before the 7th so I can plan the menu / amount of food. Just bring yourself, I'll do the rest. We will lunch in the Fellowship Hall, and arrangements have been made with Leslie.

We are still on te search, and planning the music outreach programs. If you know any Christian based players , bands, soloists, (secular is ok) please contact me. The invitation has been mailed to several groups already.

During the summer, I will be lifting compositions of our very talented women. Many are the wives of famous composers.

I will be taking off two weeks this summer for a needed break also.

May your family summer plans go well, and stay safe. May the joy of life with Jesus, be with you always.

Yours in Christ & Mission, Gary



Women's CAFÉ group
August 7 & 21
at 6:00 pm Dinner & devotions

Mary Martha / Ruth Rebecca Circle
Break for Summer

We will hold a Bake Sale on Sunday, September 14th after worship
to assist in chipping away at the cost of the Kitchen renovation.

Monthly Special Benevolence Offering

JULY = World Hunger

"It takes more than meals to feed the world". ELCA World Hunger is a comprehensive and sustainable program that uses multiple strategies—**relief**, **development**, **education**, and **advocacy**—to address the root causes of hunger and poverty. We respond to neighbors around the corner and around the world. We respond to hunger and poverty in the U.S. and around the world by addressing root causes. People are connected to the resources they need to lift themselves out of poverty. **Between 70-75 % of funds are spent internationally, and 20-25 % are spent domestically.**



Together, in Christ's name, we experience the transforming power of connection. As individuals, congregations, and synods, our humble offerings and actions are gathered, blessed, and multiplied. Together, we are ELCA World Hunger.

August

AUGUST = California Lutheran University

We are proud to be sending Sofia & Aria Bartee!

The ELCA social statement on education calls us to remember our roots: "From the time of the Reformation, the Lutheran church has been a teaching and learning church...With his teaching on vocation, Lutheran understood the Christian life to be one of service to God and neighbor in one's every day places of responsibility; education equipped Christians for this vocation. He taught that education served the common good of Church and society: In a move unusual for his day, he taught that schools for all –both those who were wealthy and those who were poor, both boys and girls..."

For 50 years the congregations of the ELCA in the West, and its predecessor bodies have been committed to this idea of educating young people for lives of leadership and service in the world, and the establishment of CLU is the lasting mark of that commitment. By sending your people to CLU and supporting it with offerings and prayers, our congregations have continued in the rich tradition of a Lutheran understanding of education. As former CLU President Dr. Chris Kimball writes, "CLU has emerged as a remarkable place where students, faculty, alumni and friends come together in a dynamic environment of academic excellence in the arts and sciences with a focus of service as well as vocational and spiritual exploration."

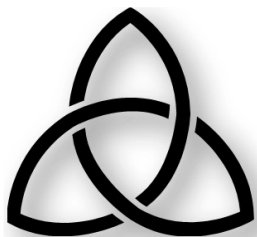
And

Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary

We provide theological education for the training of clergy and lay leaders through ordination, non-ordination, and research level degrees and certificates.

PLTS is one of eight seminaries of the ELCA, a founding member of the [Graduate Theological Union](#), and a graduate school of CLU.

Theological education is done in the context of people who are rich and poor, liberal and conservative, and a wide array of human race, religion, sexuality, education, experience, and background. If our theology did not take all people into account, it would be deficient. PLTS develops leaders for the church by: deepening faith in Christ; challenging the mind; expanding the heart; and energizing for mission.



Trinity Tuesday

(Pub Theology / Discussion)

One Beverage One Hour One Question

Tuesday July 1 at 6:30pm

First Tuesday of the month at Discretion Brewery

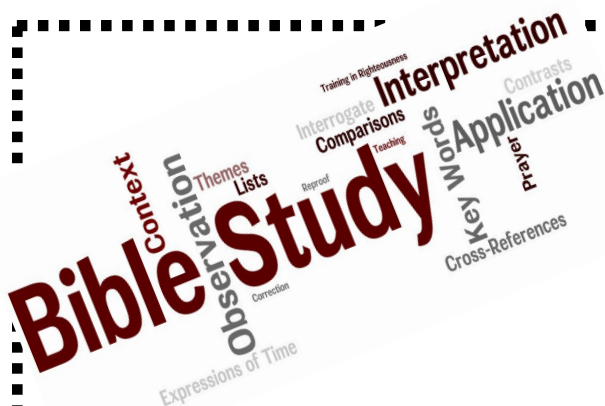
GOT A QUESTION?

The Why's are always a challenge!

WHAT'S ON YOUR HEART?

We continue to explore how we encounter God in ordinary moments from ordinary questions provided by you! Join the conversation in a relaxed, thoughtful atmosphere.

No theological degree required—just bring your honest perspective. Share ideas. Listen deeply. Connect with others. *Trinity Tuesday—where meaningful conversations happen over a cold one. Kathy Allen*



On ZOOM with Pr. Jim

Check email on Tues. for link

WEDNESDAYS

7:30 – 8:30 pm

As we grow in our faith, we grow in community.



El Salvador Sister Parish News

University Student Scholarships - We support up to 15 students who graduate from the Guillermo Ungo school with partial University scholarships. This month I want to share one of their letters received this spring.



Dear Sponsor or Godmother, I hope this message finds you well. My name is Yoana Elizabeth Landaverde Artiga, and I want to take a moment to express my sincere gratitude for being such a special part of my life. Your support is invaluable to me, and I can't help but be grateful and fortunate to have you as my sponsor. Thank you for helping me become a professional.

Let me tell you a little more about myself. This year I started college, it's my first semester. The university I attend is called the Polytechnic University of El Salvador. I'm studying Civil Engineering. Since I began my studies, I've faced challenges and moments of doubt, but I'm positive and will work harder and pursue my dreams with determination. I've learned to value education and understand that every effort counts. That we must take advantage of the opportunities that life and people give us.

Every day I feel more passionate about what I study. I've had the opportunity to learn from incredible teachers. I'm excited to think about the future and how I can contribute to society. And everything is possible. Thanks to your financial support, it's a great help to me.

With Love and Gratitude, Yoana

2025 Delegation - Contact us if you would like to join this year's delegation. It's never too soon to tell us about your interest in traveling to El Salvador with our group.

Visiting El Salvador is a life-changing experience!

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



Prayer Concerns

SHORT TERM: Elizabeth Schilling & Family, Family of Patrick McCalmont, Jeanne, Aundree & Family, Kathybelle, Mt. Cross Summer Staff, Family of Ed Valencia, Tex & family, Those in need of patience & resilience, Those who need help forgiving & letting go, Carla Brown, Kevin & Cindy, Dawn, Gerry Daves, Tim Oldfield, Laura, Joana, James S. Chad Fields, Chelsea & Logan Preston, Cassidy, family of George Webber, Sam, Isabelle Hackman, Eric, Ellie, Paula & family, Julia, Jim Aller's family, Bill Giles family, Dr. Bruce Dunn's family, Grey, Ruth Stiles, Riley, Mary Saccullo, Ana Cardenas, Rose, Levi, Lisa J., John B., Linda, Unemployed, Isaac & Marissa, Gloria, Marta's parents, Gary & Louse Matz, Nick, James, Mary D., Tom, Galahad, Debbie, Sam, Nate Barker, Robbin, Francisco, Michael, Keith, Noelle, Ensley, Sierra, Middle East Peace, Tom Dawson, Taiyo, Marissa, Isaac, Alvarado family, Dustin, Father Jack Davis, Sandi Csik, Sam, Adolfo, Elida, Jeannie, Anetta, Nancy, Jane, Barbara Allen, Gary & Marjie Toops, Rachel B., Anne & Chloe Johnston, Mateo & Lina, Don, Atlas, Sal, Katarina, Stephanie Jager.

LONG TERM: Those suffering with Mental Illness, James Sheehan, Biergiel—Colclough family, Eric Utto-Galarneau, Joel Hurtgamm, Dawit and family (Ethiopia), April McCalmont, Miller Mouw, Kyle Lapp, Will, Aaron Johnson, Shelby Volpi, Ashley, Frank, Joe, Dom, Lisa & Beau, Linda Johnson, Jan Shadle, Vi Olly, Bobbie Erickson, 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, People of Palestine/Israel, 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.

New Ways of Giving

Our *Virtual Offering Plate* has been enhanced. We are now able to receive donations made by: credit card, debit card, PayPal, Venmo & Zelle.

There are three choices:

- 1) **Vanco**, our regular electronic giving provider;
- 2) **PayPal / Venmo / Zelle** for single one-time gifts;
- 3) **PayPal** with the possibility of recurring donations and an option to cover the fees.

All are available at <https://ststephenslutheran.org>
click the **Donate Now** button or scan this QR code

Questions: Call Kent Madsen or Janet Slay



Birthdays & Anniversaries

7-1 Robert & Dusty
Gipson

7-18 Manny & Patty
Travers

7-28 Charles & Sandra
Eldridge

7-2 Vi Olly

7-5 Judith Alvarado

7-6 Scott Poetzing

7-6 Beckett Ruble

7-9 Sandi Crouser

7-10 Kyle Lapp

7-12 Arija Buswell

7-21 Cheryl Bartee

7-22 Kevin Meek

7-23 Martha Balogh

7-24 Sherilyn Jager

7-24 Julia Poetzing

7-25 Eve Roberson

7-27 Mark Linder

7-29 Kylie Ronning

8-3 Robert Gipson

8-7 Pastor Herb Schmidt

8-9 Lydia Abler

8-14 Renee Rice

8-15 Susan Oldfield

8-17 Brad Cramer

8-18 Derek Poetzing

8-20 Imagin Abler

8-23 Kasey Garden

8-25 Lea Powers

8-27 Leslie Lapp

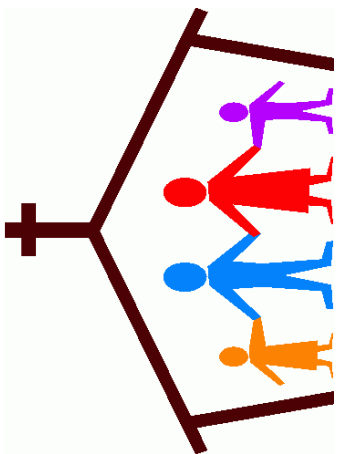
8-28 Rachel Lapp

8-30 Emma Gipson

8-3 Steve & Theresa
Loback - Campbell

8-6 Mark Linder
& Mary Dean

8-15 Ross & Barbara
Johnston



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
June 26, 2025

POST OFFICE:
DATED MATERIAL
PLEASE DO NOT DELAY

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Santa Cruz, CA 95062

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