A hand is shown from the right side, cupped and catching a vertical stream of water falling from the top. The water splashes and bubbles as it hits the hand. The background is dark and textured, possibly a wall or a backdrop. The overall mood is serene and refreshing.

*Where do you
get that
living water?*

JOHN 4:11

Third Sunday in Lent

March 8, 2026 at 10:00 a.m.

Welcome to people new to this church or faith, long time Lutherans, and Christians from every tradition. Welcome to all who have no church home, want to follow Christ, have doubts, or do not believe. Welcome to new visitors and old friends. Welcome to people of every age and size, color and culture, sexual orientation and marital status, ability and challenge. Welcome to believers and questioners and questioning believers. This is a place where you are welcome to celebrate and sorrow, rejoice and recover. This is a place where lives are made new. Welcome on this day.

Music “Lenten Prayer” Richard Purvis

The Gathering



Mark 6:32-44; Ephesians 3:20-21

together, the impossible is possible

Call to worship

If you need good news,
settle into this space.

We have good news to share.

If you need a word of hope,
then trust us when we say,
there is hope enough to go around.

If you need a glimmer of joy,
then you're in luck!

We have resilient joy abounding.

If you need to feel God's presence in your midst,
then know that this is God's house.

This is the good news of the gospel.

God is here. Love is real. Joy is on the move.

Let us worship our with-us God!

Call to confession

Friends, we are like the disciples.

The day that Jesus fed 5,000, his disciples could not imagine a solution to the crowd's hunger.

They told Jesus to send the crowds away.

We often do the same.

Like the disciples, we try to follow Jesus around, but when we run into issues,

we often cannot imagine how we could play a part.

That is why we need the Prayer of Confession.

For in this prayer, we remember that we *can* make a difference.

So friends, join me in this moment of truth telling.

Join me in prayer:

Prayer of confession

Holy God,

with you the impossible is possible.

5,000 can be fed.

The blind can see.

The hopeless can find hope.

With you the impossible is possible,

but we are quick to forget that.

We look at our hurting world and tell ourselves that nothing can be done.

We forget that you empowered the disciples to feed the crowd.

We forget that you are always with us.

Forgive our small-minded ways.

Forgive us for doubting that change could ever come.

But even more so, forgive us when we refuse to be a part of it.

With hope for a better tomorrow we pray, amen.

Words of forgiveness

Family of faith,

no matter how many mistakes the disciples made,

Jesus still washed their feet. Jesus still fed them.

Jesus still called them beloved.

The same is true for you and me, so hear and believe this good news:

today is a new day, and once again, we belong to God.

We are forgiven. We are called. We are not alone.

What good, *good* news. Amen!

*Opening Hymn

“When Our World Is Rent by Violence” Blue #1052

When our world is rent by violence
and our lives are marred by grief,
when our songs of calm assurance
turn to cries of unbelief:
God, we raise our lamentation
seeking refuge and relief.

When our cities stand forsaken
and the poor must beg for bread,
when the pris'ner sits forgotten
and the homeless find no bed,
God we raise our lamentation:
waken justice from the dead!

When our lives are burnt to ashes
and our hopes fade like a dream,
When our stories lose their meaning
and despair becomes their theme,
God, we raise our lamentation:
Come, Lord Jesus, to redeem!

Raise up beauty from the ashes;
end our violence; tend our peace.
Give us visions of a future
where all captives find release,
where oppression is evicted,
and all works of hatred cease.

* Greeting

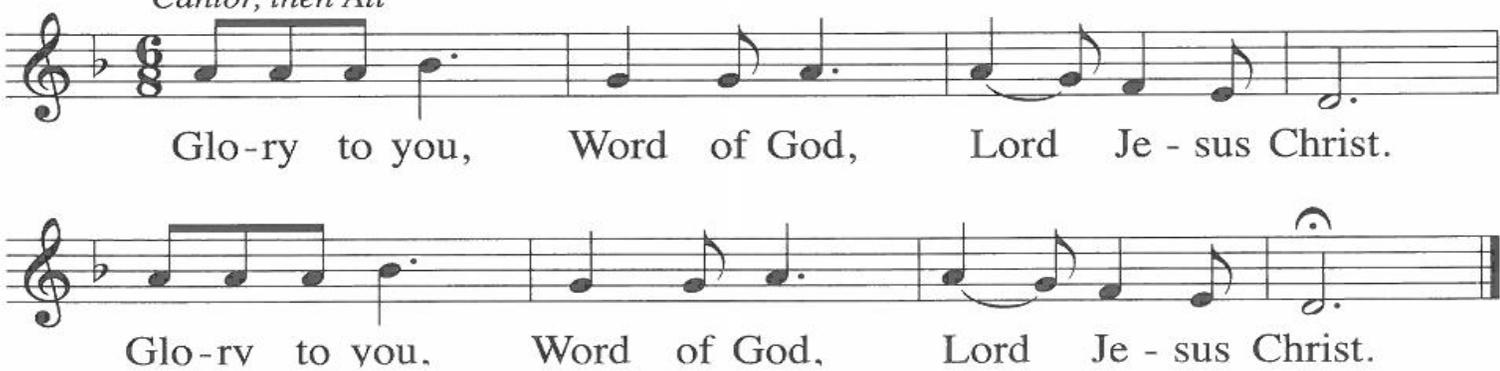
*P: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God,
and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

C: And also with you.

*Gospel Acclamation

GOSPEL

Cantor, then All



Glo-ry to you, Word of God, Lord Je - sus Christ.

Glo-ry to you, Word of God, Lord Je - sus Christ.

P: (Sung by Pastor) One does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes forth from the mouth of God.

C: (Sing: “Glorv to you..” twice)

P: The Holy Gospel according to St. John the 4th Chapter

C: **Glorv to you O God.**

*Gospel Reading

John 4:5-42

Celebrate pg. 3

P: The Gospel of the Lord.

C: **Thanks be to God**

Sermon

Rev. James P. Lapp

*Hymn of the Day

“God We Gather as Your People” Blue #1038

God, we gather as your people to raise our song above,
And we dare to claim the promise of your love.
Though the day may not yet be here,
We trust it soon will be, when your children will be free.

REFRAIN

Oh, may our hearts and minds be opened,
Fling the church doors open wide.
May there be room enough for ev'ryone inside.
For in God there is a welcome, in God we all belong.
May that welcome be our song.

Oh, we sing for all the children,
That one day they be free;
And we sing for generations yet to be,
That they never have a reason
To doubt that they are blest.
May they, in your love, find rest. **REFRAIN**

Oh, we pray for all the young lives cut short
By fear and shame,
So afraid of who they are and whom they love.
May the message now be banished
That your love is for the few;
May their faith in you renew. **REFRAIN**

God, we're working for the future
when children far and wide can . . .
Live their lives with dignity and pride,
As they grow in strength and stature,
May they join us hand in hand,
As against all hate we stand. **REFRAIN**

An Affirmation of Faith

I believe in the good news of Jesus Christ.

**It sounds like welcome
and feels like home.**

**It sounds like laughter
and feels like mercy.**

**It sounds like love
and feels like a seat at the table,
so I believe in the good news of Jesus Christ.**

**I have seen it alive in the world.
And even when my heart aches,
even when wars rage,
even when mercy feels out of reach,**

**I remember the one who
welcomed the children
and led with nonviolence.**

**I remember the one who
cared for the vulnerable
and inspired those around him.**

**I remember that the good news really is good news,
for I have seen it alive in the world.
Thanks be to God! Amen.**

*The Prayers of the Church

Celebrate, Page 4

(Please offer a petition out loud from where you are.)

*Passing of the Peace

P: May the peace of God be with you always.

C: And also with you.

The Communion Meal

Offering — We honor and worship God by returning some of the gifts with which we have been blessed.

Music “We Are An Offering” Dwight Liles, 1957

*Offering Prayer

P: Let us pray.

**C: Gracious Provider,
You have set your immense treasures among us,
Opening your heart to the world.
As we prepare to feast on your bountiful love,
Deepen our commitment
To sharing those treasures with others.
Through our Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.**

*Great Thanksgiving

P: May God be with you.

C: And also with you.

P: Lift up your hearts.

C: We lift them up to God.

P: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

C: It is right to give our thanks and praise.

Eucharistic Prayer

P: It is indeed right, our duty and our joy.....

*Words of Institution

*Lord's Prayer

**C: Our Father, in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come, your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today, our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial,
and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours,
now and forever. Amen**

Invitation to Communion

P: All who are hungry, come! The feast of grace is spread.

Holy Communion

ALL, Yes — EVERYONE IS WELCOME!

Communion is by intinction, we dip the bread into either the wine (red) or grape juice (white).

AGNUS DEI

The musical notation for Agnus Dei is presented on three staves. The first staff contains the melody for "Lamb of God, you take a - way the sins of the world," with a fermata over the word "God". The second staff contains the melody for "have mer - cy on us." followed by a repeat sign and the instruction "Repeat as needed", and then "Lamb of God," with a fermata over "God" and the instruction "Last time". The third staff contains the melody for "you take a - way the sins of the world, grant us peace." with fermatas over "God" and "peace".

Hymn

“Beautiful Savior”

Red #838

Beautiful Savior, King of creation,
Son of God and Son of Man!
Truly I'd love thee, truly I'd serve thee,
Light of my soul, my joy, my crown.

Fair are the meadows, fair are the woodlands,
Robed in flow'rs of blooming spring;
Jesus is fairer, Jesus is purer,
He makes our sorrowing spirit sing.

Fair is the sunshine, fair is the moonlight,
Bright the sparkling stars on high;
Jesus shines brighter, Jesus shines purer
Than all the angels in the sky.

Beautiful Savior, Lord of the nations,
Son of God and Son of Man!
Glory and honor, praise, adoration,
Now and forevermore be thine!

*Communion Blessing

P: May this Holy Communion of our Lord Jesus Christ
strengthen us and keep us in God's grace now and forever.

C: Amen.

*Prayer after Communion

P: Generous Host, You have shared your feast with us
and made us new. Send us now to set tables of love
and grace in our communities, that your liberating love
might nourish the world into freedom,
in the name of the crucified one, Jesus Christ our Lord.

C: Amen

The Sending

*Blessing

P: As you leave this place, when you meet anger, speak with love.
When you meet fear, speak with hope.
When you meet pain, speak with gentleness.
But no matter what, speak this good news.
For the good news of the gospel is love and justice for all.
So go forth speaking. For if you won't, then who will?
Thanks be to God for this good, *good* news.

C: Amen

*Closing Hymn “Sent Forth by God’s Blessing” Red #547

Sent forth by God’s blessing,
our true faith confessing,
the people of God from this dwelling take leave.
The supper is ended. Oh, now be extended
The fruits of this service in all who believe.
The seed of Christ’s teaching,
Receptive souls reaching,
Shall blossom in action for God and for all.
Your grace shall incite us, your love shall unite us
To work for your kingdom and answer your call.

With praise and thanksgiving
To God ever living,
The tasks of our ev’ry day life we will face –
Our faith ever sharing, In love ever caring,
Embracing God’s children, the whole human race.
With your feast you feed us,
With your light now lead us;
Unite us as one in this life that we share.
Then may all the living with praise and thanksgiving
Give honor to Christ and his name that we bear.

***Dismissal**

P: Go in peace. Care for others as God cares for you.

C: Thanks be to God.

Music “O Day of Peace” C. Hubert & H. Parri
18998~1918

Serving Today

Reader: Christa Garcia

Altar Guild: Tina Gates

Coffee Host : Rebecca Wickham

Office Help: Candace, Sheila & Sherilyn

* Sign up to Read, Host Coffee & Dedicate Altar Flowers *



Missing a pew buddy?

*A phone call to someone who is not here
goes a long way.*



SHORT TERM Family of Pr. Herb Schmidt, Family of Marc Northcott, Camryn, Corbin, Marilyn, Nathan, Dorothy Ronning, Bob Holzwarth, Amanda, Mary Robe & Family, Renee, Family of Laura Gates, Sina & Bella, Chad Fields, Laura, Ayla, Beth Stiles, Margaret Schraft, Laura & twin babies, James, Don & Taiyo, Pr. Gary & Corinne Stevenson, Family of Bobbie Erickson, Kevin, Beth, Liz, Sam, Florence, Tom Williams, Tim Oldfield, Kathy M., Nancy, Corrine & Daniel, Connie Garcia & Family, Family & friends of Rev. Jim Carr, Grey, Levi, James, Galahad, Debbie, Sam, Nate Barker, Robbin, Keith, Noelle, Ensley, Middle East Peace, Tom Dawson, Dustin, Father Jack Davis, Adolfo, Elida, Jeannie, Anetta, Jane, Barbara Allen, Gary & Marjie Toops, Rachel B., Anne & Chloe Johnston, Isaac & Marissa, Mateo & Lina, Atlas, Sal, Katarina.

LONG TERM Those suffering with Mental Illness, James Sheehan, Biergiel—Colclough family, Eric Utto-Galarneau, Beth UG, Brian Utto, Kathy Brooks, Joel Hurtgamm, Dawit & family (Ethiopia), Miller, April, Aaron Johnson, Shelby, Ashley, Frank, Joe, Lisa & Beau, Linda Johnson, Jan Shadle, Vi Olly, Mike, Susan Anderson, Brouse Family, Janet Baker, Sandy Godvine, Janelle Yung, Karin, Will, Chris & John B., 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.

** Please notify when to remove **



Hello, My Name is Crystal. I Am writing This Letter To say Thank YOU for adopting My Family for Christmas. As I am A SINGLE MOTHER, IT GETS HARD SPECIALLY During The Holidays. This has been a big help for me because the kids ask for everything and I'm not able to get them much. thankfully this year will be better, i am excited for The kids. i know they will be happy and appreciate Anything that is given to them. thanks for helping out my famin in need.

With so much love and appreciation,

Aaligan
Uziel
&
Crystal ♡

MERRY XMAS & HAPPY NEW YEAR!

HEARTFELT GRATITUDE TO YOU!

Dear “Angel Tree” Adopt-a-Family Friends,
The results are in! This past holiday season, nearly **4,000 people** in our community experienced holiday magic *because of you*. From children receiving their first bikes to seniors finding a lifeline of connection, you created a wave of kindness that reached every corner of Santa Cruz County.

"The brightest part of our holiday was you...thank you!"

With love, Zoe, Marisol, and Juan

But wait! There's more to your impact:

Because of your outpouring of support, we partnered with the **Center for Farmworker Families** and **Barrios Unidos** to provide specialized, trust-based distributions for families who did not feel safe participating in more public campaigns. You ensured that safety was never a barrier to holiday joy, and that even more neighbors in our community felt seen and cared for.

"You have no idea how much you helped our family..."

~Toni and the kids

LENT is about BECOMING,
DOING,
and CHANGING,

WHATEVER IT IS
THAT IS BLOCKING THE FULLNESS OF LIFE
IN US RIGHT NOW.

Sister Joan Chittister, OSB

+ + + + + + + + + + + + +

*“Lent offers us the practical and effective
weapons of fasting and almsgiving
as a means of combating
an excessive attachment to money.
Giving not only from our abundance,
but sacrificing something more
in order to give to the needy,
fosters that self-denial which is essential
to authentic Christian living.”*

Pope John Paul II



Lenten Wednesdays
6:00 pm
(Worship 7:00pm)



March 11, 18 & 25

Lent invites us into a unique season of slowing down, listening deeply, and opening our hearts to spiritual renewal. Instead of focusing only on what we give up, Lent encourages us to let go of what weighs us down and make space for grace, strength, and hope. As a church family, we walk through these 40 days together—praying, supporting one another, and trusting God’s guidance. With this spirit of reflection and renewal, we invite you to join us for the services that will shape our Lenten journey.

Other Giving Options

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>





PANCAKE BREAKFAST & EASTER CELEBRATION

Sunday, April 5

- Set up, servers & clean up. See sign up sheet.
 - Help with Children's activities during worship.
 - Sign up to order a Lily to help decorate the sanctuary.
 - Plan ahead and invite folks.
Let them see "our light shine".
 - Thank you Sandi Crouser - Thrivent Action Team Grant
-



“COPA After Church”
Sunday, March 29th
11:20a – 12:30p

Plan to stay after worship to meet with Pastor Jim and COPA Associate Organizer Eli Holliday. We will discuss our current efforts for justice in Santa Cruz and Monterey counties, as well as our hopes for future relationships and actions with other churches and organizations.

Upcoming Events:

March Benevolence Offering =
St. Stephen's Scholarship Fund

- March 10 Scouts 6:00 pm
- March 10 TBD - Beati Quorum Choir rehearsal
- March 10 Church Council 6:30 pm
- March 11 Preschool Chapel 10:15 am
- March 11 Lenten Wednesday
Souper 6:00 pm (Hosts: Christa & Sam Garcia)
Worship 7 pm
- March 12 Women's Circle of Promise 10:30 am
- March 12 Men's A.A. Group 7:00 pm
- March 13 A. A. Group 7:00 pm
- March 13-15 Mt. Cross Women's Retreat
- March 29 Palm Sunday Dramatic Worship
Readers needed
- April 2 Maundy Thursday worship 11 & lunch 12:00
Worship 7 pm
- April 3 Good Friday worship 7pm
- April 4 Easter Set up 10 am
- April 7 Trinity Tuesday 6:30 pm Discretion Brewery
come for honest conversation and genuine community
- April 18 Pr. Herb Schmidt Memorial 1:00 Messiah, High St.

Pastor's Office Hours Wednesdays 10 to 1:00

Our 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, invite people to share the joy of the spirit.

Reconciling in Christ

“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.”

St. Stephen's Lutheran Church E.L.C.A.
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Web Address: www.ststephenslutheran.org
Office Hours: Mon.—Friday. 12:00 —5:00 pm

Ministers: The People of St. Stephen's
Pastor: Rev. James P. Lapp
Church Administrator: Leslie Lapp
Church Musician: Gary Roberts
Sunday School: Leslie Lapp
Pre-School Director: Kathy Berens
Custodian: John Hopping
Videographers: Jay Johnston, Kent Madsen & Barb Rice

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