

*Everything is ready;
come to the
wedding banquet*

MATTHEW 22:4



20th Sunday after Pentecost

October 11, 2026

10:00 a.m.

Music “Cantilena” (Green Boughs) by Richard Purvis

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.

Please fill out the “Worship Slip” and place it in the offering plate.

(*) Asterisk means, “Please stand as you are able.”

The Gathering

*Litany of Praise for Creation

P: Glory to you, O God: you speak a word of power,
And so you create the world. We praise you, O God:

C: We praise you, O God.

P: For the Spirit hovering to bring forth life,
For the earth ordered from chaos, and for light and dark,
We bless you, O God:

C: We bless you, O God.

P: For the cosmos beyond our earth,
for the sky above our heads,
And for the cycle of evening and morning,
We exalt you, O God:

C: We exalt you, O God.

P: For the seas the lakes and the rivers,
For the land with its mountains and plains,
And for the trees, the plants, and their fruits,
We magnify you, O God:

C: We magnify you, O God.

P: For the sun to rule the day,
For the moon to brighten the night,
And for the shining stars, We extol you, O God:

C: We extol you, O God.

P: For the fish in the sea, and for the birds of the air,
And for the creatures in the deep,
We glorify you, O God:

C: We glorify you, O God.

P: For wild animals and creatures of all kinds,
For cattle and all livestock,
And for everything that creeps on earth,
We adore you, O God:

C: We adore you, O God.

P: For humankind made in your image,
For setting us on your good earth,
And for providing us food to eat, We praise you, O God:

C: We praise you, O God.

P: Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving
And honor and power and might
Be to you, our God, forever and ever.

C: Amen.

*Opening Hymn

“Look Who Gathers at Christ’s Table”

Blue #977

Look who gathers at Christ’s table!

Hear the stories that they bring.

Some are weeping; Some are laughing;

Some have songs they want to sing.

Others ask why they’re invited,

Burdened by the wrong they’ve done. (hymn continued)

Christ insists they all are welcome.
There is room for ev'ry one.

Clouds of light surround the table;
Ancient followers appear,
saints confessing how they wrestled
with their guilt, their doubt and fear.
Peter tells of his denying
Christ was ever in his sight;
Paul relates his fruitless efforts
to obliterate the light.

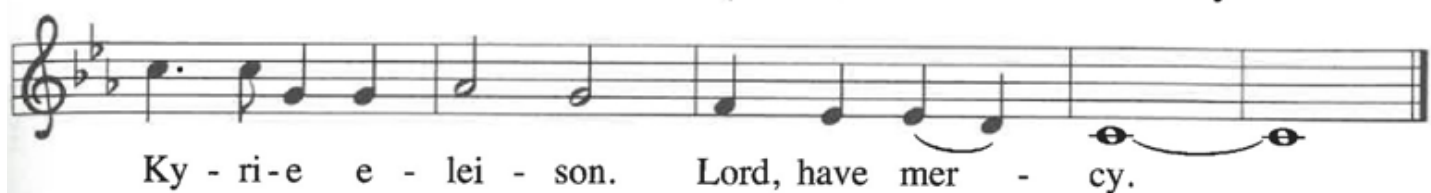
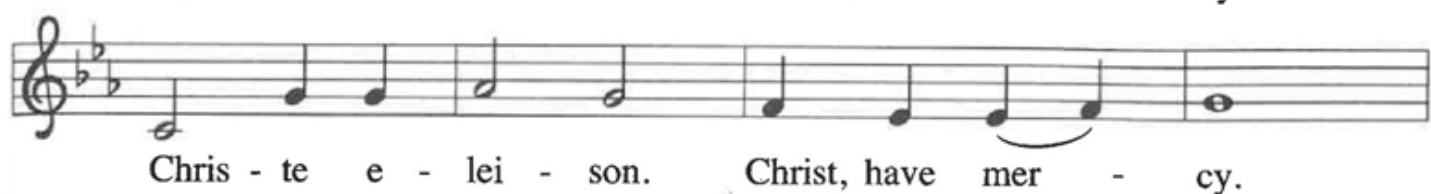
Their sad stories are repeated
in a thousand different ways,
But they share one thing in common;
They all end in thanks and praise
for the host who has invited
north and south and east and west
to converge around this table,
Where all life is fed and blest.

Bring your joy and bring your sadness,
and prepare to be surprised
by the host whose hands are wounded,
who will open wide your eyes
when he blesses bread and breaks it—
truth and manna from above! ~
and then passes wine that wakens
in your heart the taste of love.

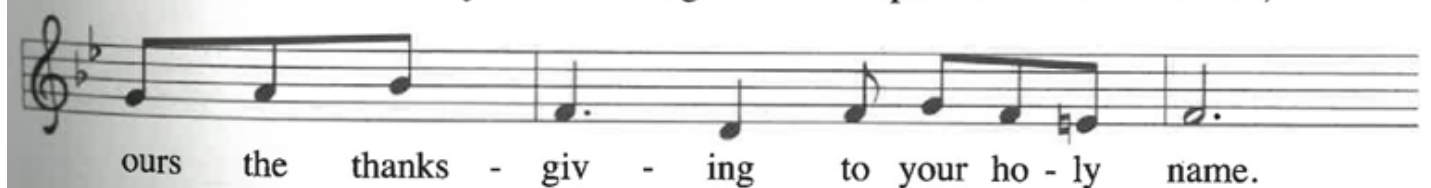
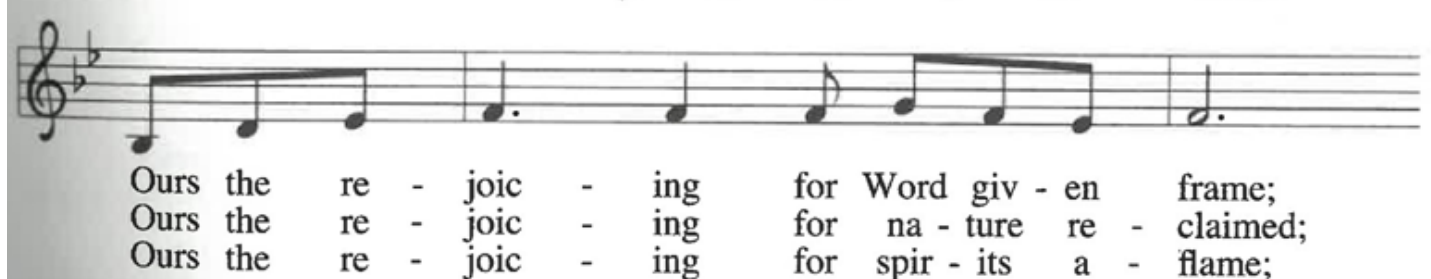
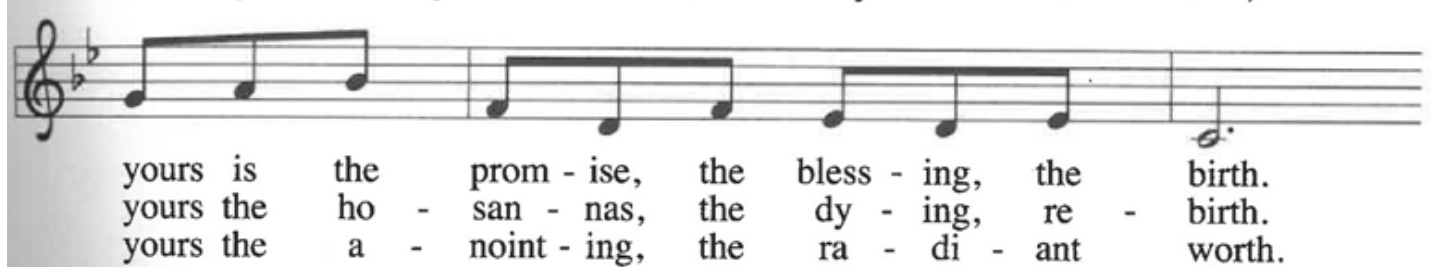
*Greeting

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



One of the following or another song of praise may be sung.



*Prayer of the Day

*Prayer of the Day

The Word of God

God Stories — How has God's Word come alive in your life?

First Reading Isaiah 25:1-9 Celebrate pg. 1

R: Word of God, Word of Life.

C: Thanks be to God.

Psalm Psalm 23 (choir & congregation) Cel. pg. 2

Second Reading Philippians 4:1-9 Celebrate pg. 3

R: Word of God, Word of Life.

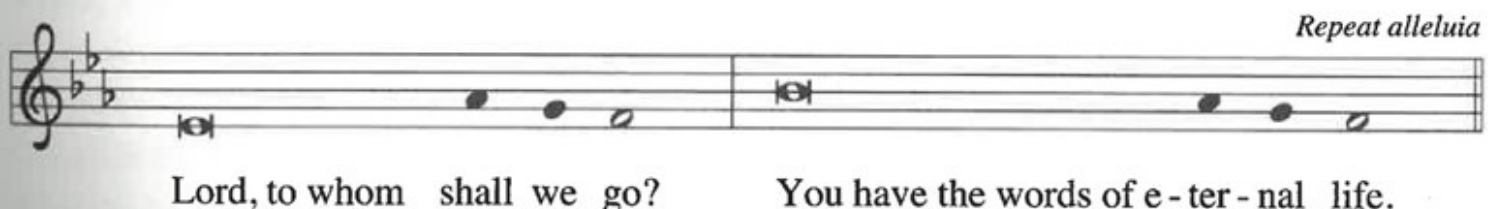
C: Thanks be to God.

*Gospel Acclamation

Blue #33



The proper verse may be sung, or all may sing one of these verses.



*Gospel Reading

Mathew 22:1-14

Celebrate pg. 3

P: The Holy Gospel acc. to St. Matthew, the 22nd Chapter

C: Glory to you. O God.

(The Gospel is read)

P: This is the Gospel of Jesus Christ

C: Praise to you, O Christ.

(Please be seated)

Message

Pr. James P. Lapp

*Hymn of the Day

“Let Us Go Now To The Banquet” Red #523

REFRAIN (sing Spanish only)

***Va~mos to~dos al ban~que~te,
(Let us go now to the banquet,)***

***A la me~sa de la crea~cion;
(To the feast of the universe.)***

***Ca~da cual con su ta~bu~re~te
(The table's set and a place is waiting,)***

***Tie~ne un pues~to y u~na mi~sion.
(Come, ev'ryone, with your gifts to share.)***

I will rise in the early morning;
The community's waiting for me.
With a spring in my step I'm walking
With my friends and my family. ***REFRAIN***

God invites all the poor and hungry
to the banquet of justice and good
Where the harvest will not be hoarded
So that no one will lack for food. *REFRAIN*

May we build such a place among us
Where all people are equal in love.
God has called us to work together
And to share ev'rything we have. *REFRAIN*

The Prayers of the Church

Celebrate, Page 4

The Communion Meal

*Passing of the Peace

P: May the peace of God be with you always.
C: **And also with you.**

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

Music “Here I am to Worship”
 Ruben Morgan, Hillsong Worship

Offering Prayer

P: God of creation,
 You send rain and the earth springs forth abundantly.
 All blessings are from you;
 make us generous with what we have.
 Use our gifts, our abilities, and our hearts
 in service to you and in love to our neighbors,
 today and always. **C: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 God thanks and praise.

*Eucharistic Prayer

P: It is indeed right, our duty and our JOY,
that we should at all times and in all places,
offer thanks and praise to you...

*Words of Institution

*Lord's Prayer

P: God, remember us in your love and teach us to pray:

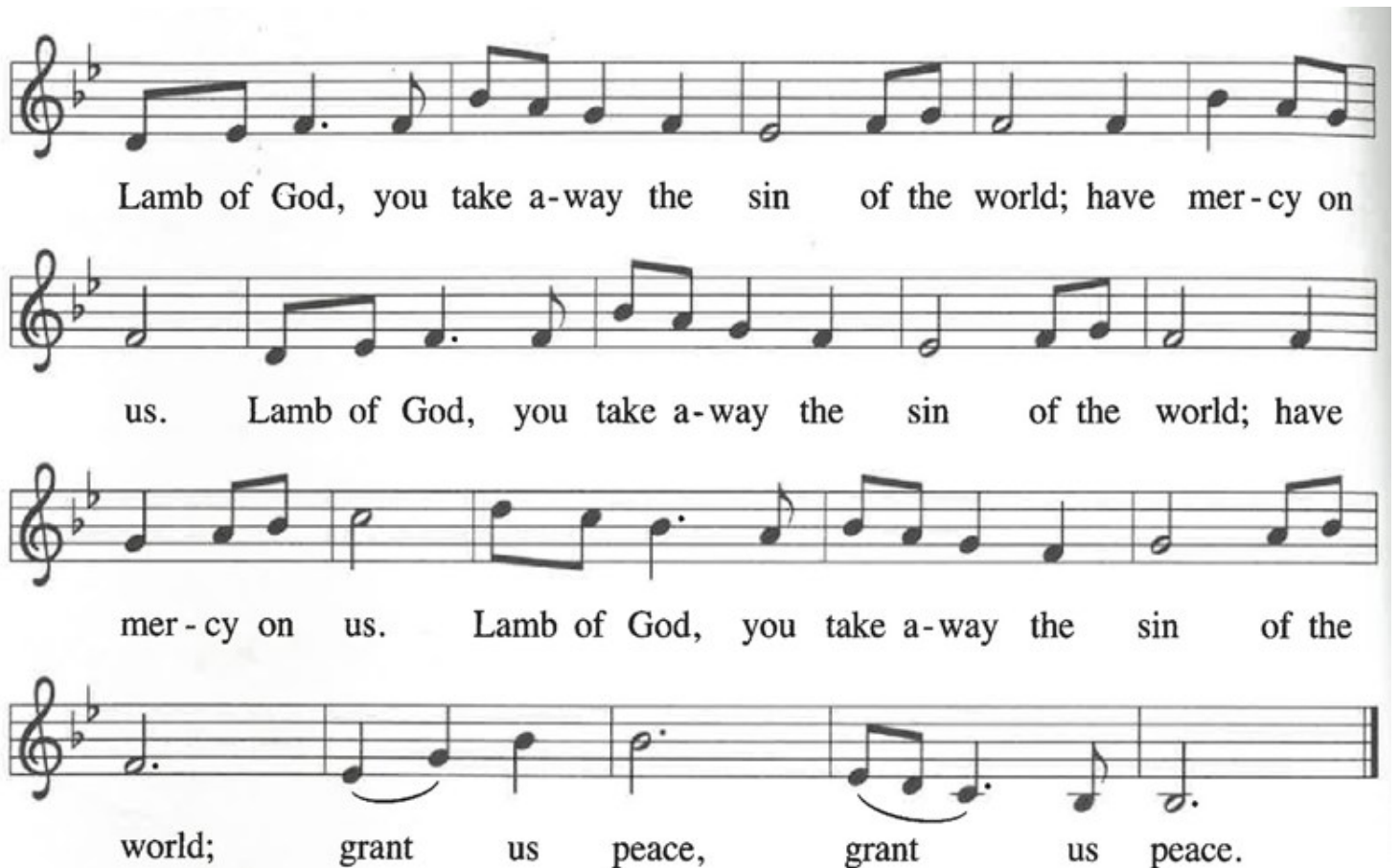
**C: Our Father, in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come, your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today, our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial,
and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory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

*Invitation to Communion

P: Christ invites you to this table.
All who are thirsty, all who are hungry, come!

(Please be seated)

Lamb of God



Communion Hymn "Come, Let Us Eat" Red #491

Come, let us eat, for now the feast is spread,
Come, let us eat, for now the feast is spread.
Our Lord's body let us take together,
Our Lord's body let us take together.

Come, let us drink, for now the wine is poured.
Come, let us drink, for now the wine is poured.
Jesus' blood poured let us drink together,
Jesus' blood poured let us drink together.

In his presence now we meet and rest,
In his presence now we meet and rest
In the presence of our Lord we gather,
In the presence of our Lord we gather,

Rise, then, to spread abroad God's mighty Word,
Rise, then, to spread abroad God's mighty Word,
Jesus risen will bring in the Kingdom,
Jesus risen will bring in the Kingdom.

The Sending

Prayer after Communion

P: Sustaining God, with this bread and cup,
you nourish us with mercy and abundant life.
By your spirit, send us from this table to a needy world.
Make us living signs of your liberation, healing, and love,
following the way of Jesus, in whose name we pray.

C: Amen

Farewell & Godspeed

Barbara & Ross Johnston

*Blessing

P: Creator God bless you and keep you.
Creating Christ shine through you with grace and mercy.
Creative Spirit nourish you and give you + Peace.

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. Flourish with creation.
C: **Thanks be to God.**

Music “Marche Grotesque” by Richard Purvis

Serving Today

Reader: Janet Slay

Coffee Host: Kathy Berens & Connie Cunningham

Altar Guild: Candace Anderson

Office Support: Candace Anderson, Sheila Buswell
& Sherilyn Jager



Given by
Barbara Rice & Kent Madsen
In celebration of
Asher & Amelia's Birthdays

REFORMATION SUNDAY

OCT. 25TH

10:00am WORSHIP
GERMAN MUSIC LITURGY

11:00am OKTOBER FEAST
& Fun

Brats Provided!

You bring Sides, Dessert & Beer!

See sign ups

“Roll out the barrel . . . ”

with an OOMPA Band

“Thirsty Nine” band is on hold
pending numbers

A Free will offering will be collected to
go to their music scholarships



Holy Conversations

Today, Oct. 18 & Nov. 1

A time for exploring where God might be calling us to next! These small group gatherings have been planned by our Long Range Task Force (Pr. Jim, Mark Linder, Tina Gates, Jeannette Dawson & Steven Hendrickson). As we have studied the book “When Church Stops Working” as a faithful response to the reality of our church’s decline, it is time to re-gather our spirits and begin to ask “What are our hopes for the future of our congregations ministry.” Let’s begin to dream and imagine together about some creative ways that our ministry together can now engage in.



& Día de los Muertos

November 1

Bring a photo of your departed loved ones, framed or unframed, to display on a remembrance table in the church narthex. You can pick up your photo beginning Sunday, November 8 following worship.

Don't have a physical photo or can't come in-person to church right now? Email a digital photo by October 28 (or any other questions you may have) to Christa Garcia at christawynekengarcia@gmail.com and she will print and display them for you.

New Ways of Giving

Our *Virtual Offering Plate* has been enhanced. Donations can be made by: credit card, debit card, PayPal, Venmo and Zelle.

- 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.

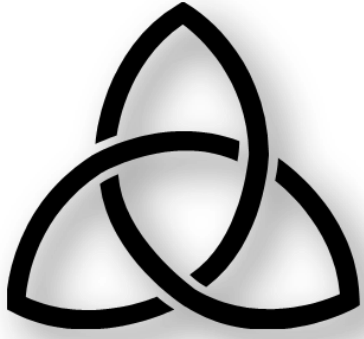
All are available at
<https://ststephenslutheran.org>
Or by scanning this QR code.



Prayer Concerns

SHORT TERM *Alfred Family, James & Family, Family of Mark Linder, Brian Garcia & Family, Dorothy Ronning, James, Kavon, Janet, Shelton, Judy, Mary, Brandon, Josie, Andre, Lurline, Tyeleiga, Diane Johnnie, Phill, Tina Brown, Alma Black, Andrea Black Tamsen, Leila, Doug Yaryan, Rob, Ross Johnston, Debbie Greso, James White, Jeffery, Zaun family, Doug Lentz, Barbara Allen & Family, Rev. Will & Dorothy Sieburg, Pam Huypner, Bob Zigler, Kathybelle, Taiyo, Kat, Kevin, Liz, Sam, Kathy M., Nancy, Grey, Levi, James, Galahad, Debbie, Sam, Nate Barker, Middle East Peace, Tom Dawson, Dustin, Father Jack Davis, Adolfo, Elida, Jeannie, Anetta, Jane, Rachel B., Anne & Chloe Johnston, Isaac & Marissa, Mateo & Lina, Atlas, Katarina.*

LONG TERM *Pr. Gary & Corinne Stevenson, 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, Ruth, Susan Anderson, Brouse Family, Janet Baker, Sandy Godvine, Janelle Yung, Karin, Will, Chris & John B., Those suffering with Mental Illness, Immigrant families, The Unhoused, People of Ukraine, People of Palestine/Israel, Our Nation's leaders, Mt. Cross, S.S. Senior Housing, Pastor Jim & Our Church Family, men & women of Armed Forces, and the Youth of today.*



Trinity Tuesday

(Pub Theology / Discussion)

One Beverage ~ One Hour ~ One Question

Tuesday November 10 at 6:30pm

First Tuesday of the month at Discretion Brewery

*BRING YOUR DEEPEST QUESTIONS,
AN OPEN HEART,
& A CURIOUS MIND*

Gather with us for an evening of meaningful conversation and real community. Bring your questions about faith, life, and everything in between. No judgment, no limits—just authentic dialogue over a cold one.

Whether you've been with us from the start or you're stepping through the door for the first time, there's a seat waiting for you.

Past conversations: How do we see God? How are we called? Why do bad things happen to good people? Recognizing our God-given talents. How do we forgive?

Kathy Allen 430-6359 for more info.



On ZOOM
with Pr. Jim

Check email on
Tues. for link

WEDNESDAYS
7:30 – 8:30 pm

We will be looking at the upcoming scripture readings for Sunday, to enrich our worship experience and uncover some of the deeper truths of our faith. As we grow in our faith, we grow in community.



A huge thank you goes to Nancy Adams , for her beautiful voice & song selection—perfect! She will sing for us again in Nov. or Dec. I look forward to working together once more.



The “Players Wanted” invitations have been mailed to Santa Cruz, Harbor, and Soquel High Schools.

We welcome new members to our choir. Please give a thought to joining our singing group. Support is also needed for a Christmas Choir.

As always, we are grateful for the recent \$300 donation for the musicians fund, and we are in need for a bit more. Than you very much .

The Pipe Organ (Mr. Pipes) will be tuned before Christmas . The cost has been covered—hooray!

Yours in Christ and Mission, Gary

Upcoming Events:

October Benevolence Offering =
Music Outreach

TODAY & Oct. 18 & Nov. 1 Holy Conversations 11:30 am
Sign up now

Oct. 13 Scouts 6:00 pm

Oct. 13 Church Council 6:30 pm

Oct. 14 Bible Study Zoom 7:30 pm

Oct. 15 Women's Bold Café 6:00pm
devotions and potluck

Oct. 15 Men's A.A. Group 7:00 pm

Oct. 16 "Next Stage Productions" 11 to 1

Oct. 16 A. A. Group 7:00 pm

Oct. 22 Newsletter Deadline NOON
Think about sharing a God Story!

Oct. 25 Reformation / Oktoberfest

Oct. 25 Reader needed

Oct. 31 Host AFC Shelter Dinner St. John's, Aptos 6 p

Nov. 1 All Saints / Dia de los Muertos celebration

Nov. 3 Trinity Tuesday 6:30 pm
Discretion Brewery 41st Ave.
Faith Questions genuine community

Nov. 12 Circle of Promise 10:30 am

Pastor's Office Hours Wed & Thurs. 10:00 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.
2500 Soquel Avenue
Santa Cruz, CA 95062
831/476-4700 FAX 831/476-3918
email: office@ststephenslutheran.org
Web Address: www.ststephenslutheran.org
Office Hours: Mon.—Fri. Noon—5:00 pm

Ministers: The People of St. Stephen's
Pastor: Rev. James P. Lapp
Church Administrator: Leslie Lapp
Music Director: Gary Roberts
Sunday School: Leslie Lapp
Custodian: John Hopping
Powerpoint: Jay Johnston, Kent Madsen & Barbara Rice

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