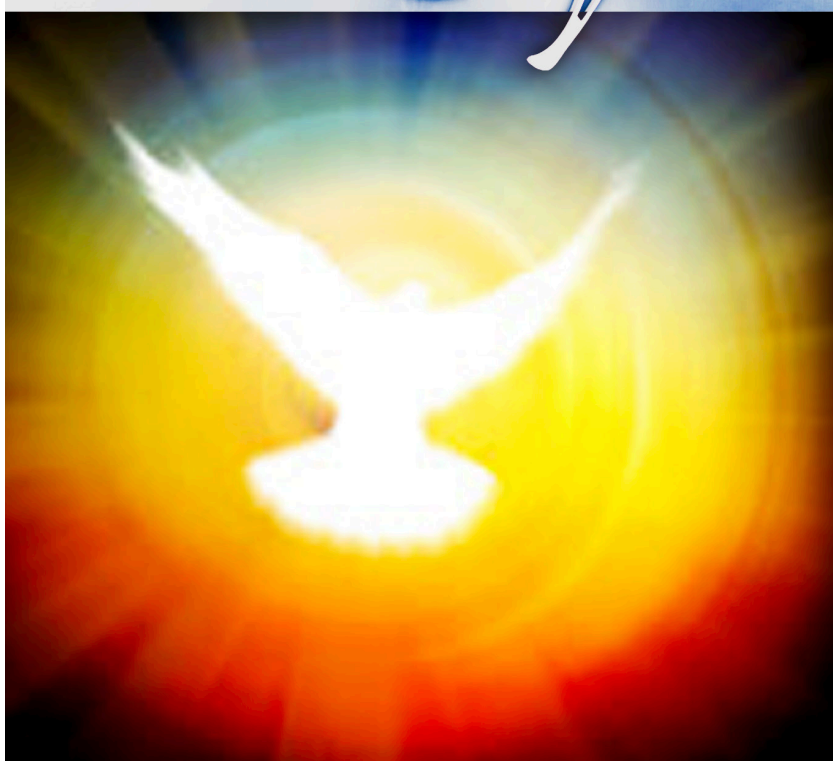




*St Mark's*  
LUTHERAN CHURCH  
**VOICE**  
QUARTERLY JOURNAL OF REFLECTION & NEWS



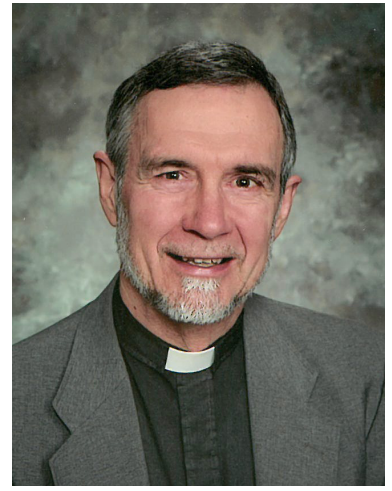
**SUMMER 2017**  
**JUNE - AUGUST**

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**WHAT'S INSIDE**

**Devotion-Pr. Ron Moe-Lobeda**  
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## PR. RON MOE-LOBEDA ASSOCIATE PASTOR



On Pentecost Sunday, five young people will be affirming the baptismal vows that their parents made on their behalf when they were much younger. Appropriate to this day of Pentecost when about 3,000 people originally were baptized and added to the community of disciples who had witnessed the death and resurrection of Jesus, we all will be reaffirming our baptism along with these confirmands and re-committing ourselves to follow in the way of Jesus. Therefore, we all will be asked if we intend to continue in the covenant that God made with us in our baptism:

- To live among God's faithful people;
- To hear the Word of God and share in the Lord's supper;
- To proclaim the good news of God in Christ through word and deed;
- To serve all people, following the example of Jesus; and
- To strive for justice and peace in all the earth.

Given that we in the Lutheran tradition espouse that we only need to be baptized once in our lifetime, this covenant renewal becomes a vital part of our every-day life—not just when we confirm our young people or when we receive new members into this congregation.

**To live among God's faithful people** is to be a member of a community of faith where everyone is welcome and has a sense of belonging. This community is meant to be a safe place where differing points of view can be expressed and are accepted without causing divisiveness within the community. This mutual sharing will not be without conflict because we all will never agree totally on everything. However, with the commitment to listen to one another, to respect one another, and to see through the lens of the other person, we can grow in our understanding of each other and experience the community that is a gift of God in our baptism.

**To hear the Word of God and share in the Lord's Supper** are the bedrock of our community. The Word comforts those who are afflicted and afflicts those who are too comfortable in their way of life. The Word also is meant to be a dialogue in which the Spirit speaks in and through each of us in order that we may grow in our understanding of God's will for our individual and corporate life. Sharing in Holy Communion is meant to unite us in our community so that whatever differences, disagreements, or disparities may divide us, we can draw upon the unifying strength of this holy meal to claim that we still are one in Jesus Christ.

**To proclaim the good news of God in Christ through word and deed** not only includes the words that we speak, but also the acts that we perform that reflect the love of God as revealed in Christ Jesus and the justice that God requires of all who have been baptized in Jesus' name. Sometimes our actions speak so much louder than our words, especially when we act together in speaking out on behalf of those who are impoverished, oppressed, or violated in any way, or in making peace with those who have done us wrong.

**To serve all people, following the example of Jesus** is a lofty expectation, but one to which we all are called to aspire in our baptism. After giving thanks to God at the start of each new day and dwelling in the power of the Holy Spirit, we can ask ourselves, "How will I be faithful to the testimony and witness of Jesus today in every encounter that I have with another human being (not to mention with all of God's creation)?" If this question is front-and-center in our daily lives, we always will know that we are not far from the realm of God.

**To strive for justice and peace in all the earth** completes the circle of what it means to be a baptized child of God in this world. Imagine what the earth would be like today if all who were baptized in Jesus' name would take this promise to heart! All that we can do is do our part to fulfill God's desire and design for this wonderful creation in which we all could live together in God's justice and peace that would be the foundation of the beloved community revealed to us in Jesus, our Christ.

## PLTS - DECOMMISSIONING SERVICE SATURDAY, MAY. 27, 2017 AT 10:00 AM



Join us for a day of Thanksgiving,  
Decommissioning, and Celebration!

Next Saturday, May 27, there will be a Decommissioning of PLTS Ceremony beginning with a refreshments outside the chapel at 9:00 a.m., followed by a worship service at 10:00 a.m. during which each building on campus will be decommissioned. After the worship service, people are invited to bring their own lunch to eat before or during the 3.7 mile procession down the hill to the new campus at 2000 Center Street in downtown Berkeley where there will be an open house until 3:00 p.m. Everyone is welcome to attend this memorable event, which is free. However, you are requested to register by going on-line to [www.plts.edu](http://www.plts.edu).



### ST MARK'S FAMILY CAMPING TRIP, AUGUST 3-6

This year's camping trip will be at Portola Redwoods in the San Mateo mountains. It is a little over an hour from San Francisco and in a beautiful mountain area, but also not far from Pescadero.

The date is August 3-6. Most people come Friday evening and stay through Sunday breakfast. We have hikes, games, campfire and outdoor Sunday Worship.

This is our 6th annual St. Mark's Family Camping Trip, hosted by Parents with Kidlettes.

Please contact [larajdickinson@gmail.com](mailto:larajdickinson@gmail.com) for information. An evite will go out in May.

### MOUNT CROSS SUMMER CAMP PROGRAM

We are blessed to have such a valuable outdoor ministry resource for the children and youth of our churches in Mt. Cross Ministries. There are many camps scheduled throughout the summer for elementary children, middle-school youth, and high-school youth, along with special camps for families, confirmation youth, leaders in training, and youth with special needs. Below is the schedule of the major camps for the summer:

June 26-30	Family Camp
July 2-7	3rd Grade Camp
July 2-7	4th – 6th Grade Camp
July 2-7	7th – 9th Grade Camp
July 9-14	4th – 6th Grade Camp
July 9-14	7th – 9th Grade Camp
July 9-14	7th – 9th Grade Beach Camp
July 16-21	Confirmation Camp
July 16-21	7th – 9th Grade Beach Camp
July 23-28	3rd Grade Camp
July 23-28	4th – 6th Grade Camp
July 23-28	7th – 9th Grade Camp
July 23-28	7th – 9th Grade Beach Camp

The theme for this summer is "When You Go through the Deep Waters, I Will Be with You." If your children and their friends would like to have a special and fun experience in the outdoors with great supervision and Christian education, then you might want to check out Mt. Cross Ministries. You can find out more details by going to [www.mtcross.org](http://www.mtcross.org).

# YOUTH MINISTRY AT ST. MARK'S

## PENTECOST SUNDAY - JUNE 4

Pentecost Sunday is one of the three most important festivals of the church year—the day when we celebrate the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on Jesus' disciples and the gathering of these early disciples into a communal body that we acknowledge as the body of Christ. As we gather for worship this day, along with rejoicing with the 5 young people who will be affirming their faith, we will be giving thanks to God for the presence and power of the Spirit in our lives, both corporately and individually. As a way of celebrating this day, everyone is encouraged to wear something red to symbolize the fire of the Spirit that burns in our lives to nourish our faith and encourage us in our faithfulness as disciples of Jesus, our Christ.

## CONFIRMATION - JUNE 4

We celebrate with five young people as they affirm their faith on Sunday, June 4 at the 11:00 a.m. worship service. They are: Signe Bohlig, Emma Gray, Grace Ekdale-Hoch, Tayte Sall, and Evan Schieber. These young people have participated in our confirmation ministry for 3 years, and have weathered the transition of leaders and teachers during this time period. As they commit themselves to continue in the covenant that God made with them in their baptism, we pray that their trust in God will remain strong and that they will remain confident in their faithfulness to the way that Jesus has revealed to them by the power of the Holy Spirit. On this Sunday, the youth will be contributing to the planning of the 11:00 a.m. worship service and leading the congregation in our worship on this glorious day.

## YOUTH TEAM

We have 5 young people who will be confirmed on Sunday, June 4, and who will be entering high school or are already attending high school. These youth will double the number of high school youth who currently are active members of St. Mark's. At present, there is no active team that is focusing on the youth population of our congregation. I (Pastor Ron) would like to gather a team of adults and youth to assess how we might engage the young people of our congregation more fully in our community and in the ministry of St. Mark's. If you have any interest in this conversation, please let Pr. Ron know.

## YOUNG ADULT MINISTRY

How do you define "young adult" in the context of a congregation? Perhaps that label is best left to the self-selection of the individual. Pastor Tita left me with a list of young adults that has been compiled over who-knows-how-long a period, and probably includes members of St. Mark's who would consider themselves having moved on to other dimensions of ministry within our congregation—especially if you have added a child or two to your family constellation. Many names on her list are not listed as members of St. Mark's and probably were added based upon a one-time visit or contact. Therefore, I am going to make a general invitation to all self-identified young adults—singles, couples, and/or parents—in the congregation to gather on Sunday, June 18, @ 12:30 p.m. for lunch in the Fireside Room and conversation about how we might want to be in fellowship with one another on a more intentional basis. Please let Pr. Ron know if you are interested in this opportunity.

## A POOL PARTY!

The Foster's have invited all middle-school and high-school youth from St. Mark's to their home in Lafayette (3756 Highland Road) for a pool party on Saturday, June 24, 2:00 to 6:00 p.m. Along with swimming, you can play hoops, soccer, ping pong, badminton, or croquet. Bring appropriate attire and sunscreen. Food and drinks will be provided. Parents and siblings are welcome. If you need a ride from BART, note that in your on-line RSVP or call (650) 867-7012. Let's get together and have some fun this summer!

# AMMPARO

Accompanying Migrant Minors with Protection, Advocacy, Representation and Opportunities

St. Mark's received our Welcome packet from the national ELCA AMMPARO office in mid-April. It's official! After months of discernment and education that culminated in our January 2017 annual meeting, our congregation is now on the roster of Welcoming Congregations in the ELCA.

We previously highlighted 7 possible areas of Welcoming Congregations activity under the ambit of Accompanying, Protection, Advocacy, Representation, and Opportunities (those are the A, P, A, R, and O in AMMPARO). Now we get to discern how we want our congregation's participation to take shape. It's time to **Inform, Identify, and Implement!**

We've been **Informing** ourselves about how St. Mark's can plug into work already happening here in the Bay Area and with mission partners. To that end, St. Mark's AMMPARO team leaders have been building relationships with Lutheran and interfaith ministry partners doing advocacy work in this area.

Now it's time for information about where St. Mark's members feel the Spirit's leading to get involved! Do we want to:

- Take a border immersion service trip
- Visit immigration court to learn and to support asylum-seekers
- Join interfaith actions and protests
- Write letters to policy-makers
- Assemble hygiene kits for border ministries
- Serve as overnight hosts for asylum-seekers traveling to San Francisco for court dates

We get to decide together - you tell us where you, your family, your ministry group wants to get involved. What excites you? How can you serve?

It's also time to **Identify** project captains for different areas of activity. We need someone to step forward to regularly uphold migrant minors and other asylum-seekers in the Prayers of the People. We also need a project captain for each of the activities we decide to undertake.

And then it will be time to **Implement** the projects the congregation wants to get involved in!

## **Ways You Can Get Involved Right Now**

**1) Pray for migrant minors and asylum-seekers. Here is a prayer to help you get started:**

*Gracious God, we remember all who come to America as refugees, especially children separated from their families. Lead them to safe homes, that they might live in peace and be reunited with loved ones. Please strengthen churches, agencies and individuals that serve vulnerable newcomers. Give them wisdom, patience, perseverance and love to minister effectively. Amen!*

**2) Sign up to receive St. Mark's AMMPARO email updates! How: email [rose@stmarks-sf.org](mailto:rose@stmarks-sf.org) or [ammparo@stmarks-sf.org](mailto:ammparo@stmarks-sf.org), or tell Cora Rose, Mary Ritter, Allana Helland, or Linda Krauskopf at coffee hour.**

**3) Participate in an upcoming national AMMPARO conference call. The date is TBD; but it's usually the first week of the month – contact Cora Rose or Mary Ritter for details for the next call**

**4) Discern where your gifts and interests align in support of the unaccompanied minor and asylum-seeker crisis, and be bold about letting us know!**

Please let us know how you want to be involved in any of the brainstormed activities, or what your idea is for other ways to get involved.

Meanwhile Learn more about the ELCA's AMMPARO commitment online here: <https://www.elca.org/Our-Work/Publicly-Engaged-Church/AMMPARO>

-- Cora Lea Rose  
St. Mark's AMMPARO/Welcoming Congregations team

# CAPITAL CAMPAIGN PLEDGE UPDATE

Pledges/Gifts/Bequests  
\$1,082,554

Amount Received To-Date  
\$624,163

Campaign Pledge Status  
Ahead of Schedule



As of May 1, 2017, St. Mark's capital campaign is 16 months into its 36 month commitment period. This time period represents 44% of the total pledge commitment period. In order to be considered on schedule, cash receipts to date should hopefully also total 44%. Actual cash receipts to date currently total 58%. Although campaign receipts are off to a very good start, this ahead-of-schedule status is due primarily to several large gifts and/or donations received up front or early in the pledge period. If focus is directed to individual members/friends pledging results, cash receipts total 33%, which is short of the expected 44%. The shortfall in members/friends pledging receipts is likely due to some pledges being made on an annual basis rather than a weekly or monthly basis. The most precise accounting of pledge activity will therefore occur at year-end.

Very good progress has been made on our three capital projects: (1) the installation of new hardwood floors in the sanctuary has been completed, (2) the repair and restoration of stained glass windows in the sanctuary is nearing completion, and (3) the installation of an elevator has begun.

Thank you to all of the members and friends of St. Mark's who have made a personal pledge of support to this worthwhile project. Your pledge of support is helping to make this project a reality. If you have not made a pledge to the capital campaign, our committee encourages you to prayerfully consider doing so. The capital campaign is a three-year campaign with 20 months remaining. All pledges, whether large or small, are much needed and greatly appreciated. Pledges can be made at any time by filling out an on-line pledge card at [www.stmarks-sf.org](http://www.stmarks-sf.org), or by contacting the church office at 415-928-7770.



## SUMMER INTERGENERATIONAL EVENTS

Two intergenerational events have been scheduled for Sundays, July 9 and August 13, between our two worship services (10:10 – 10:50 a.m.) as a way to invite the participants of our two worship communities to interact with one another and to fill the void of no education hour during the summer. These events will be held in the auditorium and will be interactive, fun, and a way to get to know each other in our community. Please mark these dates on your calendar, and watch for more details as we get closer to the event.



## ST. MARK'S ENDOWMENT FUND

Dream it. Make it Happen.

Do you have an idea for a ministry project?  
Visit [www.stmarks-sf.org/endowment](http://www.stmarks-sf.org/endowment)  
to learn more and apply for a grant.

## APPLY FOR A GRANT TO BRING INNOVATIVE SERVICE IDEAS TO OUR COMMUNITY

Have you heard about our Endowment Fund? St. Mark's established an Endowment Fund in 2011 which distributes grants to further our ability to do God's work with our hands both locally and around the world.

The Endowment Fund supports projects specifically outside of the congregation's annual budget, and offers grants to help pioneer and bring new ideas for how we serve our community. Do you have an idea for a special community service project, or are you part of a group doing service work with a similar vision to the core beliefs of St. Mark's? Apply for a grant to make your service idea a reality.

This year, \$6,000 in grant money will be distributed to selected proposals. Grant applications are accepted from June 4 to August 21, 2017. Apply online or learn more about the Endowment Fund here: [www.stmarks-sf.org/endowment](http://www.stmarks-sf.org/endowment)

Also, keep this fund in mind for your charitable giving. Our Endowment Fund gives donors the ability to create a long-lasting legacy to support creative, innovative, and new ideas to further the ministry and mission of St. Mark's.

## NEWS FROM MARTIN LUTHER TOWER

On March 21 we held our annual meeting of the MLT Corporation. The Corporation consists of the members of the Martin Luther Tower Board and the members of St. Mark's Council. JoAnne Chadwick, Jon Moeller, and Omer Voss were re-elected to the MLT Board, and Kimberley Hamilton-Lam was elected to the Board. During 2016 the Board held two retreats with the Church Council, completed several upgrades and renovations, passed all property inspections, managed staff transitions while maintaining 99% occupancy, and fulfilled its \$250,000 pledge to the "Forward in Faith" capital campaign at St. Mark's. MLT officers were elected at the Board meeting following the Corporation meeting – Omer Voss, President; Barbara Engmann Vice-President; Jerry Lundblad, Treasurer; Barbara Bock, Secretary.



We are looking forward to beginning the replacement of our 50-year old elevators and replacing the oft-patched ULC roof. A recent accomplishment was the replacement of the worn chairs in Ben Brockie Lounge in the MLT building. A resident committee worked with Property Manager Ian O'Leary to find the best possible chair for the space.

# GOD'S WORK OUR HANDS SUNDAY

## SEPT. 10, 2017

**God's work.  
Our hands.**

This Sunday is an opportunity to roll up our sleeves and participate in one of many servant projects organized for the community of St. Mark's. There will be an opportunity to bake communion bread in the kitchen – join Kathy Lautz “Baker Extraordinaire” in the church kitchen if this project interests you. Want to go to the Tenderloin with a group of parishioners? We will be working at the Lutheran Social Services offices again this year providing sweat equity to their offices. There will be other projects too. Mark your calendars and come ready to work and worship and play on this special day!



## SIERRA PACIFIC SYNOD ASSEMBLY HIGHLIGHTS

May 4th - May 6th, 2017, Fresno, CA

The Sierra Pacific Synod met in Assembly for the thirtieth time under the theme “We Are Church Together: Telling Our Story”. The Assembly opened with a worship service with Synod Bishop Mark Holmerud delivering the sermon. St. Mark's members who attended (voting members) were Jane Borg, Pr. Elizabeth Ekdale, Steve Ernst, Margaret McLean and Pr. Ron Moe-Lobeda. Also in attendance were (non-voting members) Mary Ritter and Nadine Robinson (representing WELCA).

Of the 506 individuals registered at the Assembly, 417 were voting members and 89 were visitors.

Of the voting members, 61.63% were Lay members and 33.37% were Clergy. 47.24% were Male, 50.60% were Female and 2.16% did not define their gender. 7.91% of the registered members identified themselves as persons of color or non-English speaking persons.

Keynote addresses were presented by The Rev. Dr. David Vasquez-Levy, President of the Pacific School of Religion in Berkeley. Dr. Ryan Cumming, Director of Education with ELCA World Hunger,

presented the Bible Studies. As an outgoing ELCA Church Council member,

St. Mark's Pastor Elizabeth Ekdale, addressed the Assembly prior to her introduction of The Rev. Wyvetta Bullock, Assistant to ELCA Presiding Bishop Eaton. Rev. Bullock delivered the ELCA Churchwide Report. Providing music for the Assembly was Jonathan Rundman, who participated at St. Mark's on Reformation Sunday worship service. On Saturday, we celebrated Cinco de Mayo, appropriately, with a Mexican dinner and Folklorico and Aztec Dancers from the Fresno area.



We heard the reports from 10 congregations that had received grants last year from the Valley Coalition Mission Fund to represent Christ in new ways to the communities that they serve.

The congregations were asked to return this year to tell their stories of how the grants helped them connect to the communities that they serve.

At this Assembly: Three Resolutions were presented for consideration and were voted upon:

- #2017-1: Regarding the SPS 2017-2018 Compensation Guidelines for Rostered Ministers - - AMENDED AND PASSED
- #2017-2: Regarding the SPS declaring itself to be a Sanctuary Synod - - PASSED
- #2017-3: Regarding the SPS and the ELCA supporting the creation of a Department of Peacebuilding - - PASSED

Dominant topics addressed throughout this Assembly were Racial Justice; AMMPARO; Sanctuary (at all levels - ELCA, Synod and Congregation) Faith, Sexism and Justice; Peace Building; and Reconciling-In-Christ.

Videos of each of the Assembly sessions are available for viewing on the 'Sierra Pacific Synod - ELCA' YouTube channel.



# SENIOR MINISTRY AT ST. MARK'S

## TRIP TO THE ZOO WITH PR. ELIZABETH, MAY 25, 10:00AM

We're going to the Oakland Zoo with Pr. Elizabeth  
Leaving Martin Luther Tower parking lot at 10:00 am  
Returning approximately at 4:00 pm  
Bring a sack lunch

Cost: If you are over 75, your admission is FREE  
Seniors 65-75: \$15.75  
If you are between the ages of 15 - 64: \$19.75

Sign up deadline is May 22 in the Martin Luther tower office - you must pay the entrance fee to sign up! Thank you

## JUNE SENIOR LUNCHEON

St. Mark's Seniors, Thursday June 8, is our last MLT monthly luncheon for the season in Heritage Hall from 12:30-1:30PM! Please join us for a Toast to Summer! Come be among friends and enjoy a complimentary glass of sparkling wine! The cost is \$5, to be paid by Wednesday, May 31 in the MLT office. Luncheon options are: #1 Boneless Chicken Teriyaki with Asian Noodles and Summer Squash or, #2 Teriyaki Portobello Mushrooms with Asian Noodles and Summer Squash. Dessert will be Fresh Fruit Cups. See you there!

## SPIRITUALITY AND AGING GROUP

On Mondays from 11:00 - 12:00 Pr. Elizabeth will be hosting a group on "Spirituality and Aging" in the Brockie lounge of Martin Luther Tower, which is open to the St. Mark's community as well. This group will offer a safe place to reflect on aging issues in light of our faith - whatever our faith may be or wherever we are in our faith journey.

## OUTREACH TEAM

**Outreach** is an all-encompassing word that means many things in the context of church. Given that a couple of my (Pastor Ron's) major responsibilities, in addition to preaching the Word and administering the sacraments, have been identified as reaching out to the young adult population and to the multicultural populations in our community and establishing ways that these people could be involved in the life and ministries of our congregation, I would like to be able to formulate a plan for this **outreach** with members of St. Mark's who have an interest and a passion for this ministry. This mission often is placed in the context of the more generic category of evangelism. However, from my perspective, while evangelism is every member's responsibility, **outreach** more accurately reflects the concerted effort that we might put forth to connect with these particular populations both by getting to know who lives in our neighborhood as well as by establishing programs that might draw these people to St. Mark's. Connected to this **outreach** is taking a closer look at how we make St. Mark's more visible in our community through our publicity and promote all that we are doing to nurture this beloved community. If you would like to be a part of this renewed focus on **outreach**, please let me know, or be prepared to respond when I ask for your participation.

# GREETINGS FROM PR. KATE WARN

*Greetings of grace and peace in this holy season.*

*I am writing from Kigali on a rainy Palm Sunday afternoon, in the early days of a week devoted to remembrance of the Rwandan genocide. Commemoration day in Rwanda (April 7), and commemoration week (through the 14th) are colored by deep sorrow as well as hope in these days. It has been 23 years since the Genocide began the Tuesday after Easter in 1994. Not surprisingly, this season tends to be somber here, but this year there is a stronger sense of movement to the promise of Easter life as the days of commemoration overlap with holy week. Rwanda lives between memory and hope, and the nation continues to offer many lessons of faith and fortitude and forgiveness.*

*As you will see in my newsletter this is a season of change in my own life, as I am beginning to prepare for a permanent return to the US. This is a bittersweet announcement as good things are happening in my work with the Lutheran Church of Rwanda, and the roots of YAGM are beginning to bear fruit. But after some months of discernment, I am finding myself living in God's time once again, trusting that this is the right time to move closer to family and to engage in mission amidst the challenges of US life. A new ELCA missionary for Rwanda has been with me for the past few weeks for initial orientation and learning. Rev. Janelle Neubauer will move to Rwanda permanently in May to begin her ministry as YAGM Rwanda country coordinator, and I will wrap up my time here with the completion of the current YAGM year in July.*

*There will be more to say as July draws near. I live with gratitude that global mission has taught me what it means to be a part of a world wide community of disciples who share faith in word and deed, prayer and other expressions of support. As is so often said in Rwanda: "turi kumwe." We are together -- to the glory of God. n peace, Kate*

## NEWS FROM RWANDA



In my work with the Lutheran Church of Rwanda this is also a season of new growth and life. After many months of planning, waiting and working with colleagues, we have started a new program of theological education and leadership development for pastors, evangelists, and other leaders of the church. The LCR has struggled for many years to raise up and train leaders. Many of the current pastors have minimal formal education and limited theological training. An understanding of Lutheran identity is particularly weak. In March, pastors gathered to explore themes of Lutheran identity and we hope this will be the first in an ongoing series of workshops for the church's ordained leaders.

This past week we also held the first session in a three year training program for LCR evangelists. Evangelists are the lay people who run congregations on a day to day basis and they are key to the life of the church. Earlier this week, I joined 2 LCR pastors in teaching themes of Lutheranism to 16 eager and engaged evangelists. I greatly enjoyed the chance to teach and answer questions raised by the evangelists (who struggle in this context heavily influenced by the prosperity gospel and Pentecostalism). There is an eagerness to learn among my colleagues here and I rejoice to see a new generation of leaders committed to serving the Lutheran Church of Rwanda. These new educational opportunities are made possible with the financial support of the ELCA and I am grateful for the ways we have been able to work together in mission.

### *To everything there is a season...*

It is the rainy season now in Rwanda, with frequent and lengthy rain showers, at least in Kigali. Last year's rains were sparse throughout the country, and in past months I have heard many stories of poor harvests, high prices for staple foods, and consequent hunger. Farmers are hoping for good rains in coming weeks and a better harvest this season.

In a land with tin roofs on most buildings, the sound of rain falling is often quite loud. Heavy rains, however, are a good occasion for taking a song and dance break, as seen in the photo on the left. Below are women from the LCR and Rev. Andrea Walker of ELCA Global Mission.



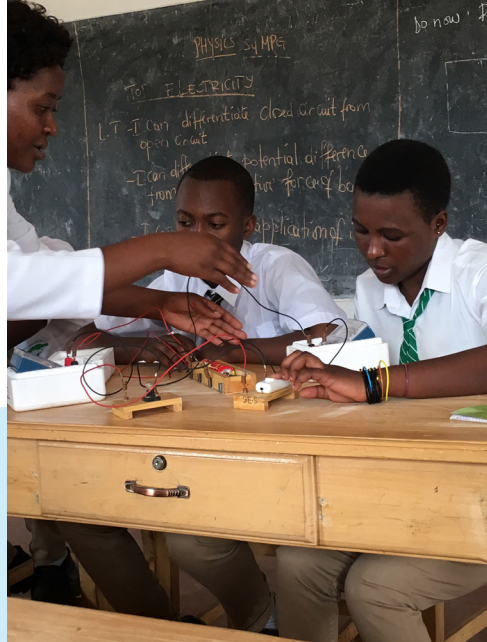
### *... and a time for every purpose under heaven.*

In the seasons of my own life I am in the midst of transitions. Although my work in Rwanda does not feel at all complete, I am feeling called to return to the US to be closer to family and to serve in new ways. My call to serve in Rwanda has been about laying foundations: for Young Adults in Global Mission, and for leadership development within the LCR. I trust that God will continue to build on these foundations as I return to the US in July 2017 and seek a pastoral call. As I begin to turn to this new season of life, I remain immensely grateful for the partnership that has sustained me in global mission! Thank you!

**Mary Ritter recently visited Lutherans in Rwanda. God is truly at work in this, our Sierra Pacific Synod partner in east central Africa.**



Pastor John Rutsindintwarane, assistant to the Bishop of the Lutheran Church of Rwanda and Director of PICO Rwanda, showed the progress of the Kigali Lutheran parish in building a kindergarten with funds from a 2015 St. Mark's Endowment grant.



Two students demonstrated their work with electrical circuits in physics class at Rwamagana Lutheran school.



Our ELCA missionary Pastor Kate Warn and Pastor Janelle Neubauer, incoming Rwanda missionary, and two Young Adults in Global Mission (YAGM) hosted me for coffee after worship.



Pastor John Rutsindintwarane being honored on a rainy windy afternoon for his work empowering the Rusumo community to build a clinic.



ELCA Pastor Kate Warn and LCR Pastor Veronica at Kigali Lutheran parish after worship on Sunday. They are working with women of the Lutheran Church of Rwanda with the help of a 2016 St. Mark's Endowment grant.



Mary and Dorisela of Nyange celebrating the work the Nyange community has done to raise themselves out of extreme poverty!

# PEACE - AND JUSTICE - NOT WALLS FOR BETHLEHEM AND ALL OF PALESTINE AND ISRAEL - MESSAGE FROM HOLY LAND MINISTRY

Last December St. Mark's hosted PALESTINE: UNLIMITED, the photography exhibit from Dar Al-Kalima University which portrayed the hopes and realities of young Palestinians who have lived under Israeli military occupation for their whole lives, yearning for fuller lives not restricted by Separation Walls and military omni-presence. This situation has not changed; it has worsened, and worsens steadily in Palestine, with home demolitions, land confiscation, and increasing economic hardships and human struggles. And the Christian population in Israel-Palestine, already drastically reduced, is being forced out even from Bethlehem, birthplace of Jesus, by the continuing Israeli occupation. [www.brightstarsbethlehem.org](http://www.brightstarsbethlehem.org)

In April the film OPEN BETHLEHEM powerfully revealed the construction of the Wall around Bethlehem starting in 2002 with the invasion of Bethlehem and its consequences. St. Mark's was one of several co-sponsors of the film, shown at Grace Cathedral, St. John's Presbyterian Church and Charlie's Cafe in Bernal Heights. The film brought home to viewers an understanding of the oppressive human effects of the fortified Wall surrounding Bethlehem (or any place - we should pay attention also in California as a "Security Wall" is being contemplated on our southern border). [www.openbethlehem.org](http://www.openbethlehem.org)

However, the talented filmmaker Leila Sansour also demonstrated through her film the remarkable and peaceful resistance of Palestinians to their oppression, as they organized to screen the film internationally, beginning in London, then Canada and now the United States. Like the Kairos Palestine Document of 2009, or the film 'The Stones Cry Out', or the BDS (Boycott, Divest and Sanction) movement - OPEN BETHLEHEM calls upon viewers to advocate for Palestinian rights and justice. Without significant change, the Christian presence in Israel-Palestine will be reduced to only church structures - bereft of Christians, who are the "living stones" witnessing to God's love and working toward God's justice and peace amidst the conflicts of that land.

ELCA calls us to ADVOCACY for many crucial issues. Pray, yes; learn, yes; and take some action - advocate for changes, for peace, for justice! Write letters or call decision-makers - in Congress and elsewhere - to demand and support justice. As a Christian advocate for Palestine, ask - and keep asking - those in power to OPEN BETHLEHEM and all of Palestine; take down the Walls that separate people and propagate fear and distrust on both sides. Contribute to the hospitals serving Palestinians: Augusta Victoria Hospital in Jerusalem, founded by Lutheran World Federation. Support the schools with scholarships, e.g. Dar Al-Kalima University in Bethlehem and four Lutheran elementary schools in Palestine and Jordan.

Check [www.elca.org/advocacy](http://www.elca.org/advocacy) and look for the March 2017 "Advocacy Update," for more details on Augusta Victoria Hospital and several other topics. For more resources and information specific to Palestine and Israel, go to [www.elca.org/peacenotwalls](http://www.elca.org/peacenotwalls). This is indeed God's Work - in Our Hands.

## COMMUNITY GATHERINGS

By the time that you receive this newsletter, we will have begun gathering in small groups throughout the region in order to get better acquainted with each other, strengthen our relationships, and build up our community at St. Mark's. Our conversation will focus on some of our common life experiences. These gatherings are being held on:

Monday, May 22	7:00 p.m.	Gomez's	471 Lisbon St. SF (South)
Tuesday, May 23	7:00 p.m.	Hurley's	932 Rosemount Rd., Oakland
Thursday, May 25	7:00 p.m.	Jahnke/Richards	370-A Church Street, SF (Central)
Tuesday, May 30	7:00 p.m.	At Church	
Thursday, June 1	7:00 p.m.	Jackson/Tuominen	1834 35th Ave., SF (West)
Saturday, June 3	10:00 a.m.	Taylor's	1369 Columbus Ave., Burlingame

If you haven't yet signed up to attend one of these gatherings, you may still do so by responding to the electronic sign-up sent to you a few weeks ago, signing up on the bulletin insert, or contacting Pastor Ron. What better way to live out our baptismal covenant of living among God's faithful people!!

# ST. MARK'S CHURCH COUNCIL HIGHLIGHTS FOR WINTER/SPRING QUARTER 2017

- It has been a time of growth and renewal for the St. Mark's Church council.
- We elected council members to the executive board: Mark Semonian, President, Kate Knickerbocker, Vice President, Steve Ernst, Treasurer, Cristin Owens, Secretary and Nadine Robinson, Member at large.
- We elected and welcomed the gifts of many new council members: Beth Dioli, Aaron Greig, Dr. Kyle Schiefelbein-Guerra, Kate Knickerbocker and Greg Jahnke
- Council members were nominated to serve on committees: Jane Borg – Endowment, Steve Ernst – MLT, Matthias Will – Redevelopment
- We graciously thank past council members for their energy, wisdom and service: Matthew Helland – President, Marisa Lee – Secretary, Clovis Curl, Lisa Gray, Bill Mooney, Andrew Sallach and Viknesh Silvalingam
- St. Mark's council retreated to peaceful St. Dorothy's rest in Occidental, CA in February
- Culminated in a spiritual Transfiguration Sunday worship on site lead by Pastor Ron Moe-Lobeda. Council formulated the sermon with their individual transfiguration moments.
- Retreat included time for:
  - Fellowship and connection with each other
  - A Conversation and a guided interview to get to know Pastor Ron and how council can support his pastoral growth. Perhaps an intense first retreat for Pastor Ron – he was most gracious and open. (A hint was planted for more in depth conversation with Pastor Elizabeth – next year?)
  - A meandering hike through the beautiful woods on the grounds
  - A Devotion focused on the Parable of the Good



**From Left: Aaron Greig, Pastor Ron Moe-Lobeda, Dr. Kyle Schiefelbein-Guerrero, Steve Ernst, Jane Borg (front), Nadine Robinson (front), Mark Semonian, Pastor Elizabeth Ekdale, Cristin Owens, Matthias Will**

Samaritan and modern reflection by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. to support the theme of being a good neighbor.

- A Review and reflection on our St. Mark's mission statement and our 3 Mission priorities
- Expectations of our roles on council, components of faith and how to tend to our faith growth were lead through group a discussion facilitated by Pastor Elizabeth.
- Monthly business: continued support for the FEW committee elevator project, MLT cooperation meeting, phone calls to facilitate progress with pledges, discussion of Adult Forum topics, revision of membership report to more accurately reflect membership and important reflection and review of reports from committee chairs and staff
- Any specific questions or request to view minutes can be submitted to Cristin Owens: cristinowens@gmail.com. I have hopes to update our Council bulletin board by the nursery in June.

Respectfully submitted, Cristin Owens, St. Mark's Church Council Secretary

## WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBERS!

### SACRED ACTS AT ST. MARK'S

**April 15, 2017**

**Affirmation of Baptism of:** Allison Kaup, Alvin Clark, Huck Neilsen, Erin Brown Neilsen, Rommel Schiefelbein-Guerrero, Jesse Peirce, Cynthia Moe-Lobeda, Pr. Ron Moe-Lobeda

**Baptism of:** Michael Peirce

**April 30, 2017**

**Affirmation of Baptism of:** Karl Nicholas, Robyn Flores-Violette, Chris Flores-Violette, Aika Shoo, Alexander Herman, Sophie Herman, Aedan Herman

# WOMEN'S MONTHLY STUDY GATHERINGS

All women are welcome to the Gatherings. There are two different groups meeting at different dates, times and using different study materials.

## First Tuesdays from 6:30pm to 8:30pm in the Conference Room

All women are invited to gather on the first Tuesday of the month from 6:30pm to 8:30pm in the Conference Room. You are invited to come for dessert and fellowship for the first half hour and then discussion until 8:30.

### Our books for this time are:

**May 2** - It Runs in the Family: On Being Raised by Radicals and Growing into Rebellions Motherhood by Frida Berrigan

**June 6** - Coming Home to Tibet by Tsering Wangmo Dhompa

**July 11 (note date change)** - The Brother of Jesus and the Lost Teachings of Christianity by Jeffrey Butz

## Second Tuesdays from 11:00am to 1:00pm in the Fireside Room

All women are invited to come for study at 11:00 and at noon to bring their sandwich or salad and share fellowship. Drinks and dessert will be provided. Our Bible study will center on "All Anew," the theme of the 2007 WELCA Triennial Gathering in Minneapolis. Our topics are:

**May 9** - "Reclaiming the "L" Word: Renewing the Church from Its Lutheran Core"

**June 13** - "Dancing down the Hallway: Spiritual Reflections for the Everyday"

**July 11** - Luncheon Out

**August** - NO MEETING

If you have any questions, please contact Suzanne Smith at 415.285.7438 or [suzathome@comcast.net](mailto:suzathome@comcast.net).

# ADULT FORUM

## May 21 and May 28 in Heritage Hall

We will watch the documentary 'Miss Representation' produced and directed by Jennifer Siebel Newsom. This powerful documentary uncovers a glaring reality we live with every day but fail to see. The film exposes how mainstream media contribute to the under-representation of women in positions of power and influence in America. The film also challenges the media's limited and often disparaging portrayals of women and girls, which make it difficult for women to achieve leadership positions. Pr. Elizabeth will facilitate discussion. Note that the video contains adult content and language. It is very appropriate for teens to view though they should be forewarned. We will watch half a segment each Sunday and allow plenty of time for conversation.

## June 11 in Heritage Hall

Sierra Pacific Synod assembly recap by our voting members and attendees: Nadine Robinson, Steve Ernst, Jane Borg, Margaret McLean, Mary Ritter, Pr. Elizabeth and Pr. Ron.

Pr. Elizabeth will give a final reflection on her service on the ELCA Church Council. Her term ends in August after serving for six years. Come and learn what the ELCA is doing in our synod and throughout the world at this forum.



The Carrington Family gathered at St. Mark's Lutheran Church in San Francisco for a classical guitar recital by Eliza, a student at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music. This photo was taken by the vacationing Pr. Kimberli Lile who said, "The recital was awesome!"

# REFORMATION 500 HYMN FESTIVAL, SATURDAY, OCTOBER 28, 2017, 1 PM

What better way to commemorate the Reformation than to sing! Our Reformation 500 Hymn Festival will be co-sponsored by the San Francisco Chapter of the American Guild of Organists, and we will be joined by Lutheran musicians from throughout the Bay Area as we celebrate some of the musical treasures of our Lutheran tradition. The highlight of the Hymn Festival will be Bach's Festival Reformation Cantata, "God the Lord Is Sun and Shield" which includes his beloved setting of "Now Thank We All Our God" for brass, orchestra, and choir. There will be other musical surprises as well, including works by Brahms and Martin Luther's friend and collaborator Johann Walter. You will be singing favorite Luther hymns as well, so warm up your voice, bring your friends and neighbors and join in the fun! Don't forget- when the final hymn is finished, the St. Mark's Oktoberfest begins! Your musical efforts will be rewarded with beer, sausage, fun kid-friendly activities, German polka band, dancing and more. This sounds like the best Saturday of the year! Don't get left out!

## SUMMER CONCERTS AT ST. MARK'S

**Saturday, May 20 - 4:00PM**

Musae - "A Child's Garden"

**Saturday, May 20 - 8:00PM**

Music Teachers Association Piano Recital

**Sunday, May 21 - 4:00PM**

Volti - "Ivory Depths, Slippery Slopes"

**Sunday, May 21 - 8:00PM**

Music Teachers Association Piano Recital

**Sunday, May 28 - 4:00PM**

Wagner Society of Northern California Piano Recital and Reception

**Saturday, June 3 - 8:00PM**

Chanticleer - "Psalm"

**Saturday, June 7 - 7:30PM**

Young Women's Choral Projects "How Can I Keep from Singing" Tour Send-off Concert

**Monday, June 12 - 8:00PM**

Civic Symphony of San Francisco Mozart to Mendelssohn Spring Concert

**Friday, August 4 - 8:00PM**

American Bach Soloists Academy Concert

**Saturday, August 5 - 8:00PM**

American Bach Soloists Academy Concert

**Sunday, August 6 - 7:00PM**

American Bach Soloists Academy Concert

**Saturday, September 9 - 7:00PM**

Voices of Music Concert

**Saturday, September 23 - 3:00PM**

New Esterhazy Quartet Concert

## NOTES FROM THE OFFICE

**Winnie Heslin, Director of Operations**

### New Events Administrator

We are excited to announce that we have a new Events Administrator, Deidre Rettenmaier, who has recently joined our staff! A long-time resident of San Francisco, Deidre comes to us with an extensive background in non-profit development and program coordination, as well as a passion for the arts. Please direct all event and room reservation inquiries to Deidre. Deidre's office hours are Monday-Fridays, 10:30am – 2:30pm. She can be reached at [events@stmarks-sf.org](mailto:events@stmarks-sf.org) or 415-928-7770 x2290.

### Summer Hours

With the start of summer, our office will be shifting to summer office hours, effective May 30, 2017 to September 4, 2017. Our reduced hours are as follows: 9:00AM-4:00PM Monday-Thursday, Friday 9:00AM-12:00PM

### Our Mission in Action

Our office recently received a note that I wanted to share with you. It was a powerful reminder that all of our work here at St. Mark's is done so that we can live out our mission while "responding to God's compassionate love".

*Dear St. Mark's,*

*I was homeless off and on for 10 years in San Francisco. I often slept in front of St Mark's door. I just wanted to say thank you. I'm sure it kept me safe. I was very lucky to be allowed such a nice place to sleep and I really appreciated it. I'm not sure if it was really allowed or not but nobody ever told me no. I'm doing much better now with my family in Kentucky, working full time and sleeping in my own bed.*

*When I look back on it, I feel so grateful to all the people in San Francisco who were so kind. I certainly didn't deserve it. Thank you all very much.*

-Joe



# ST. MARK'S WORSHIP SCHEDULE

## Sundays

9:00 am.....Holy Communion with Children's Time  
10:00 am.....Refreshments, Fellowship Hour and Education  
11:00 am.....Choral Eucharist  
12:15 pm.....Refreshments and Fellowship Hour

## Wednesdays

6:00 pm.....Community Dinner  
6:45 pm.....Mid Week Worship (Fall, Winter, Spring)

**Check our weekly Parish Announcements and our Facebook page**

[www.stmarks-sf.org/blog](http://www.stmarks-sf.org/blog)

[www.facebook.com/stmarkssf](https://www.facebook.com/stmarkssf)

For more events and activities at St. Mark's!

## Church Office Summer Hours

Monday through Thursday 9:00AM to 4:00PM, Friday 9:00AM-12:00PM  
415-928-7770

### Staff

### Extension

### Email

The Rev. Elizabeth E. Ekdale, Lead Pastor	2300	<a href="mailto:ekdale@stmarks-sf.org">ekdale@stmarks-sf.org</a>
The Rev. Ron Moe-Lobeda, Associate Pastor	2460	<a href="mailto:moe-lobeda@stmarks-sf.org">moe-lobeda@stmarks-sf.org</a>
Dr. Timothy Zerlang, Director of Music	2330	<a href="mailto:zerlang@stmarks-sf.org">zerlang@stmarks-sf.org</a>
Winnie Heslin, Director of Operations	2250	<a href="mailto:heslin@stmarks-sf.org">heslin@stmarks-sf.org</a>
Stefani Lawrence, Communications & Media Coordinator	2260	<a href="mailto:lawrence@stmarks-sf.org">lawrence@stmarks-sf.org</a>
Deidre Rettenmaier, Events Administrator	2290	<a href="mailto:events@stmarks-sf.org">events@stmarks-sf.org</a>
Rachel Friedland, Bookkeeper/Accountant	2320	<a href="mailto:accounting@stmarks-sf.org">accounting@stmarks-sf.org</a>
Mark Semonian, Council President		<a href="mailto:semonian@stmarks-sf.org">semonian@stmarks-sf.org</a>
Edda Mai Johnson, Nursery Coordinator		<a href="mailto:nursery@stmarks-sf.org">nursery@stmarks-sf.org</a>

Carl Storey, Security

Elvira Markov & Johanna Najera, Nursery Attendants

Jenny Hart, Sunday School Coordinator

The Rev. Chuck Lewis, Visitation Pastor

## Reconciling in Christ

St. Mark's is a "Reconciling in Christ" Congregation. St. Mark's is one of over 500 congregations, synods and organizations across the ELCA and the ELCIC (Canada) which have declared that people of all sexual orientations and gender identities are equally welcome to join fully in the worship and life of this Christ-centered community.

For more information, please speak to one of the pastors.

## Other Important Numbers

Martin Luther Tower	(415) 885-1084	<a href="http://mltinc.org">mltinc.org</a>
Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary	(510) 524-5264	<a href="http://www.plts.edu/">http://www.plts.edu/</a>
ELCA (national office in Chicago)	(800) 275-3522	<a href="https://www.elca.org/">https://www.elca.org/</a>
SF Interfaith Council	(800) 638-3522	<a href="http://www.sfinterfaithcouncil.org/">http://www.sfinterfaithcouncil.org/</a>