



St Mark's
LUTHERAN CHURCH
VOICE
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December-January 2016

St Mark's
LUTHERAN CHURCH

Advent Worship at St. Mark's 2015

Holden Evening Prayer Wednesdays in Advent at 6:45

"My heart shall sing of the day you bring. Let the fires of your justice burn. Wipe away all tears for the dawn is near, and the world is about to turn." This is the refrain of a famous paraphrased hymn of the Song Mary from Luke 2 set in an Irish traditional melody. It is powerful and gentle. With this at the heart of our waiting and anticipation in Advent, we will gather using the meditative Holden Evening Prayer. In addition, we will reflect on paintings and essays of current women leaders in North American Christian communities. This is based on the book, "Holiness and The Feminine Spirit: The Art of Janet McKenzie. Come every Wednesday and worship December 2, 9, 16, and 23 at 6:45 with simple refreshments afterwards.

These Advent Mid-week Services are essential preparation for Christmas. Take a break from your week, take a breath, take time—Wednesdays at 6:45 pm in the beautiful, candle-lit sanctuary.

St. Mary's/St. Mark's Joint Advent Vespers- Sunday, December 6, 4 pm, at St. Mary's

Our tradition of coming together with our brothers and sisters from St. Mary's Cathedral for a musical time of Advent contemplation continues on Sunday, December 6 at 4 pm, at St. Mary's. This liturgy is always a magical service in the Cathedral as we listen to the joint choirs of St. Mary's and St. Mark's sing beautiful music in that spectacular space, and watch the city darken around us as the day comes to an end. This year the music will include works by Heinrich Isaac, Christ Tietze (the Cathedral's Organist and Director of Music) Lasso, and Handel, among others. Pastor Elizabeth Ekdale and Pastor Tita Valeriano will participate in the liturgy along with the pastoral staff of the Cathedral.

It's time now for singing! 10 pm Christmas Eve Music

As part of our Christmas Eve celebration this year, the choir will sing Dietrich Buxtehude's *Das Newgeborne Kindelein* (The Newborn Little Child), a delightful work filled with joy and a lovely text:

The newborn little child,
the dearly beloved little Jesus
brings again a new year
to his chosen Christian flock.
Thus the angels rejoice
who like to be around and with us
and singing freely in the heavens
that God is reconciled with us.
Since God is reconciled and our friend,
what can the wicked Foe do to us?
Despite the Devil, the world, and hell's portals,
Lord Jesus, you are our refuge.
You bring us a true jubilee year.
Why should we always mourn?
Look alive!—it's time now for singing:
Lord Jesus, you turn away all suffering.

The music will start at 10 pm on Christmas Eve and will feature not only the Buxtehude, but also music for brass and organ by Gabrielli, music for strings and organ by Handel and Pachelbel's beloved *Canon*. During the service (which starts at 10:30 pm) we will hear a just published arrangement of the beloved carol "Infant Holy, Infant Lowly", and the beloved "O Holy Night."

Festival Epiphany Service

Wednesday, January 6, 7:00 pm

The word Epiphany means "showing forth," and it names the day that the church tells Matthew's story of the magi from foreign lands who follow the light of the star and thus "see" Jesus as Christ. Their gifts are symbols: gold, because they honor Jesus as the king; frankincense, because they worship Jesus as divine; and myrrh, because they are readying for his death. Come celebrate this ancient festival of the church, Epiphany, on Wednesday, January 6 at 7 pm in the sanctuary.

Just as the magi brought gifts, we ask that you, too, bring gifts, specifically white socks. We will donate all socks collected to Lutheran Social Services for distribution to those in need here in San Francisco.





Christmas at St. Mark's

O Come, Let Us Adore Him!

All are welcome

Christmas Eve

Thursday, December 24

5:00 pm

Christmas Pageant

7:00 pm

Carols, Communion, and Candlelight

10:00 pm

Festive Music for Christmas

featuring

Das Newgeborne Kindelein (The Newborn Little Child)
by Dietrich Buxtehude

with the St. Mark's Choir and Strings

Johann Pachelbel's beloved Canon in D

Christmas Carol favorites with Brass and Organ

10:30 pm

Festive Choral Communion

with

Carols and Candlelight

Christmas Day

Friday, December 25

10:00 am

Festive Holy Communion

Winter Concerts at St. Mark's

Saturday, December 12, 2:00 PM

Sunset Youth Orchestra -

[http://www.sunsetyouthorchestra.com/Holiday Concert](http://www.sunsetyouthorchestra.com/Holiday%20Concert)

Saturday, December 12, 8:00 PM

SF Choral Artists - <http://www.sfca.org/>

Tales from Wales: A British Christmas

Sunday, December 13, 4:00 PM

San Francisco Early Music - <http://sfems.org/>

J.S. Bach: Mass for Advent

Saturday, December 19, 8:00 PM

Voices of Music - <http://voicesofmusic.org/>

Virtuoso Italian Concertos

Saturday, January 9, 5:00 PM

Ensemble SF - <http://ensemblsanfrancisco.com/>

New Music 2.0

Saturday, January 16, 4:00 PM

New Esterhazy Quartet - <http://www.newesterhazy.org/>

Haydn & His Students VIII

Saturday, January 16, 8:00 PM

Wellesley College Choir -

<http://www.wellesley.edu/music/ensembles/choralmusic2/ensembles/choir>

TBD

Sunday, January 17, 3:00 PM

Symphony Parnassus - <http://www.symphonyparnassus.org>

Bach, Mendelssohn, Beethoven

Sunday, January 24, 4:00 PM

American Bach Soloists - <http://www.americanbach.org>

Saturday, January 30, 8:00 PM

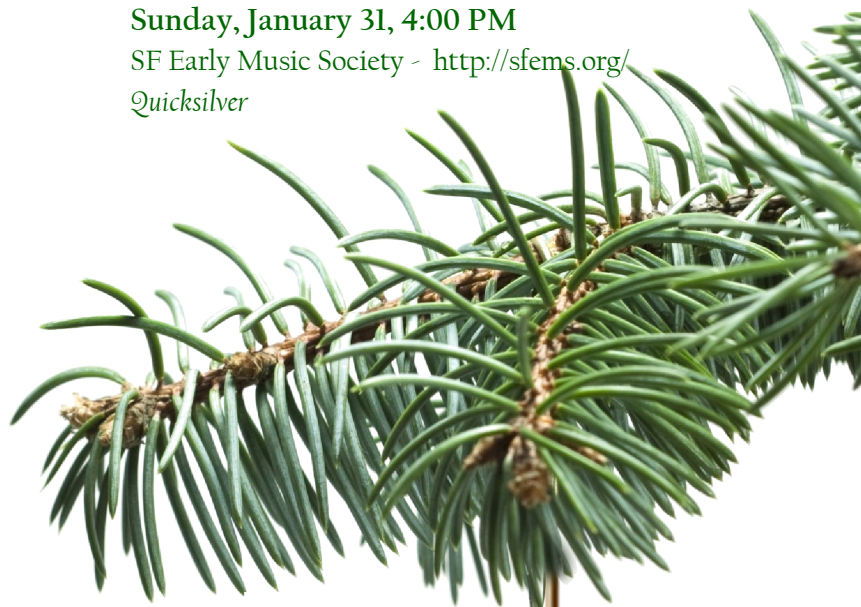
Voices of Music - <http://www.voicesofmusic.org/>

La Bella più Bella

Sunday, January 31, 4:00 PM

SF Early Music Society - <http://sfems.org/>

Quicksilver



Christmas Decorations

Once again this year, we are asking for contributions to St. Mark's Christmas decorations in honor of, or in memory of, a loved one. Look for a bulletin insert in the coming weeks which will have more details. The insert may be completed and mailed to the church office or dropped it in the offering plate on Sunday morning. Your donations are put toward the cost of Christmas trees and poinsettias.

Thank you for your holiday generosity!

Waiting but Ready

By Rev. Tita Valeriano

Expecting and hoping have been important movements of my life from the very beginning. These are some of the themes of Advent, and so perhaps it would be a good way to introduce myself.

I was born in the Philippines and the youngest of twelve. So you could imagine the wait in my daily life as growing up in a large and extended family; the long line at the bath, my mother's unique and long call for lunch and supper, and even the line at school having a surname that starts with "V". My mother faithfully brought us to a Lutheran congregation, Immanuel, founded by Missouri Synod missionaries and pioneered by my paternal grandparents. Being a third generation Lutheran in a predominantly Roman Catholic country, I learned early on the uniqueness of this church. When I was in my youth, Immanuel became the fastest growing Lutheran congregation in the Philippines, with many outreach mission stations; a few of them became congregations on their own. We were trained to be evangelists and went to remote communities where there were no churches. But despite my deep desire to become a pastor, I learned that the only way I could serve the church as both my career and vocation was to become a musician, as the Lutheran church in the Philippines does not ordain women.

It was very hard for my father to accept this big change – he had wanted me to be an accountant -- so I fulfilled his dream for me first and then made my first big decision as a young adult: to leave a very good job as an accountant and pursue my first loves, music and the church. Despite having no previous formal music training, I received a scholarship at a unique ecumenical international school focused on contextualizing music and liturgy in Asian cultures, the Asian Institute for Liturgy and Music. My time at AILM changed me – deepened my faith, widened my relationships, and most especially awakened my critical thinking as a Filipino Christian, bringing me to listen and call to the call to God's justice.

The opportunity to migrate here to the United States, as ambivalent as I felt about it, opened the possibility for me to be able to finally say yes to God's calling to ordained ministry. I graduated from Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary. God's call brought me to many different cities and communities: I served as a pastor at a congregation in the Central Valley, as the Secretary for Youth/Young Adults in Church and Society in the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) in Geneva, Switzerland, as a campus pastor at the University of Southern California, as LWF Regional Officer for North America based in Chicago, IL, and my most recent call as a Mission Developer/Assessor in the Bay Area. Each experience gave me the opportunities to visit many cities and countries, to encounter diversified people, and most especially learn and act on challenging issues the church faces locally, churchwide, regionally and globally.

And I also believed that it prepared me for another unexpected but the most amazing "call" in my life: to be a spouse to Jennifer, and full-time mother to our son, Taal, for the last two years. Jennifer currently works at the Church Divinity School of the Pacific as the Director for Extended Learning and Assistant Professor in Practical Theology. I am so blessed to have a partner in life and ministry who also loves and enjoys music, traveling, cooking and anything about the church (church nerds!). We also love to have friends for dinner and you could imagine amazing talks happen during a meal of global cuisine. Taal is a bundle of joy, living up to the meaning of his Tagalog name, a beautiful volcano and a peaceful lake in the Philippines, which Jennifer, an avid hiker, and I hiked in 2009. He is bi-lingual and loves global church music – one of his favorites to sing is the Carribean "Halle, halle, Hallelujah" while playing hand drums.

After being a full-time mom for two years, I am ready to serve the church again more formally. The faithful remnant of the mission assessment project I led from 2010-2012 now meets at our house every Sunday evening, as a non-residential intentional community. This opportunity that St. Mark's has offered is what I have been waiting for, as I gradually transition back to ministry now that Taal is ready for pre-school and needs playmates other than "Nanay" (mother in Tagalog). What a blessing to serve you during these times of waiting and expecting as a community. Truly, we can both pray, "Come, Lord Jesus!"





Women's Monthly Study Gatherings

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

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

All women are invited to gather on the first Tuesday of the month from 6:30pm to 8:30pm in the Fireside 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:

December 1 – *The Testament of Mary* by Colin Toibin

January 5 – *In the Bleak Midwinter* by Julia Spencer-Fleming

February 2 – *A Walk at Midnight* by Catherine M. Wanjohi

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 winter study is on the book of

Philippians. Our program topics are:

December 8 – Annual Christmas Luncheon (contact Pam Ruh at 415/292-4496)

January 12 – “Confidence in God’s Beginning and Ending”

February 9 – “Servant-shaped Soldiers”

NEW - Third Sundays Bible Study from 10:10 to 10:50 in the Conference Room

All women are invited to come for Bible study from the Women of the ELCA’s *Gather* Magazine. Our winter study is on the book of *Philippians* and our monthly topics are:

December – NO MEETING

January 17 – “Confidence in God’s Beginning and Ending”

February 21 – “Servant-shaped Soldiers”

If you have any questions, please contact Suzanne Smith at 415.285.7438
or suzathome@comcast.net.

Annual Stewardship Appeal for the General Fund and Capital Campaign

Forward in Faith... What a dramatic and bold way to live our lives!
Lifted by Love... God's promise to those who live their lives in faith!



Each year our stewardship team deliberates over choosing just the right campaign theme that will best represent the spirit and intention of our stewardship efforts. This year's theme expresses an intent to move forward in our lives with faith, commitment and joy.

On a practical level our stewardship committee is tasked with raising funds to support and sustain our community of faith; on a deeper, more spiritual level our committee's intent is to promote and encourage Christian generosity, faith and charity.

This year's fall campaign has two component parts; it combines an annual stewardship pledge drive with a capital campaign. The first part of the campaign consists of our annual stewardship pledge drive which focuses on raising funds to support the mission and ministry of St. Mark's throughout the 2016 calendar year. Pledges to this portion of the campaign provide the bulk of funding for the church's general fund. The second part of this year's appeal is a capital campaign that will provide funding to install an elevator in the church building, install new hardwood floors in the sanctuary and maintain and restore the stained glass windows in the sanctuary.

Our stewardship campaign began on October 18th. Over the following four Sundays, members of our community of faith gave temple talks and shared their unique perspective and personal comments about our campaign and its goals. Words and phrases such as "provide accessibility to all", "promote openness" and "increase safety" were recurring themes throughout all of the temple talks. On October 25th our committee hosted an advance gathering event at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music to further promote the campaign. Pledge packets were distributed to the congregation on November 22nd and 29th and pledge cards were requested to be returned on Commitment Sunday, December 6th. This year, for the first time, pledges could also be made online at St. Mark's website. Our committee has designated January 24th as Celebration Sunday, at which time pledge results will be announced and the congregation will be invited to join us for a special luncheon after the 11:00 service.

Our committee would like to express its gratitude to all of the St. Mark's members and friends who have made a personal commitment to this campaign. If you have not already done so, we encourage you to prayerfully consider making a pledge of support to both the annual stewardship appeal and the capital campaign. Together, we will go "Forward in Faith".

Roger Ostrem & Greg Jahnke
Capital Campaign Committee, Co-chairs





WHO WILL GOD SEND?

From the Call Committee:

Let us pray, “*Lord our God, our future is not yet known. Help us see which way we should go, and whom you will send to us as pastor. Your presence is very much needed. Help all of us involved in this change to look for the light of your Son, Jesus the Christ, that the Way may become clear, and your will may be done. Amen.*” (Sierra Pacific Synod Call Process Manual)

Shortly after Pr. Bekah resigned to concentrate on her health challenges, St. Mark’s entered into the Call Process. We moved into a time of transition, of discovering once again who God wants us to be and discerning what type of leader can help us to become everything God is calling us to be.

St. Mark’s is taking the first steps in the process of calling—*not* hiring—a new leader who, together with Pr. Elizabeth, can help us move towards our vision of where God is leading us. The call process is not a simple matter of hiring a new employee. It is not so much about resumes and recommendations, as important as they are. Rather, the call process relies on opening ourselves to the movement of the Holy Spirit who will guide, prod, stir, and comfort us as we move into a future not yet known.

We are not alone on this journey but are moving forward in faith in partnership with the Sierra Pacific Synod. Our first step is to develop a Ministry Site Profile, a document that tells others who we are and who we are becoming. Your Call Committee is prayerfully considering who God is calling this congregation to be as we respond to questions about our congregational demographics and surrounding community; about what excites us and what challenges us about our visions and our gifts.

The Call Committee cannot vision our future without you! Please pray for us; please talk to us; please tell us your hopes, your dreams. And, please watch this space and the Sunday bulletin for updates on our progress.

St. Mark’s Call Committee

Gretchen Armstrong
Pr. Elizabeth Ekdale
Laura Evenson
Philip Krikau
Margaret McLean, Chair
Lew Randall
Cora Rose
Andrew Sallach

Walking with the Salvadoran Lutherans at Encuentro 2015

Liv Beck and Mary Ritter joined Lutherans from El Salvador, the United States, Europe and South America at the Encuentro of companions of the Salvadoran Lutheran Church, and to remember the work of our dear Pastora Norma Castillo from Cordero de Dios.



We heard stories from Bishop Medardo Gomez and other pastors of the Salvadoran Lutheran Church about their work toward peacemaking with gangs, working with immigrants and others displaced by gang activity, and finding opportunities for school and training for children, youth and women in the communities they serve.

We look forward to continuing work and communication with Salvadoran Lutherans and partners in Cross of Life/Cruz de Vida and St. Peter's Lutheran Church, both Wisconsin Lutheran churches who are also companions with Pastor Rafael Menjivar and Cordero de Dios Lutheran Church in Soyapango, El Salvador.



Sacred Events at St. Mark's

Baptisms: Vivian May Lee, Jacob Dickinson

Lands of Luther Trip 2015



St. Mark's and Martin Luther Tower Senior Center Christmas Dinner

Friday, December 11 at 5:00 pm in Heritage Hall

Join us on December 11th for holiday cheer!

Join MLT residents, the MLT board, staff, pastors, friends and family for a wonderful evening of holiday cheer.

Signup at the MLT Office, 415.885.1084.

All Seniors Welcome!

Interfaith Homeless Shelter at St. Mark's

Dec 12-Dec 16, Jan 17- Feb 7

St. Mark's will be participating in the San Francisco Interfaith Council Winter Shelter program.

Please consider volunteering for this very worthwhile ministry. Volunteers will be needed for both Breakfasts and Dinners. Please contact John Elford at 415-490-7966 if you would like to participate in this ministry, which helps so many people in need at this time of the year.

Missionary Pastor Kate Warn in Rwanda

Here is an update from our ELCA Missionary Pastor Kate Warn, the coordinator of the Young Adults in Global Mission (YAGMs) in Rwanda in 2015-2016. Pastor Warn is our St. Mark's missionary. We look forward to hosting her for a visit during her homestay in the United States in 2016. Enjoy the story about her and the YAGMs!

— St. Mark's Social Ministry

NEWS FROM RWANDA, October 2015
Rev. Kate Warn, Country Coordinator
Young Adults in Global Mission (YAGM)
kate.warn@elca.org
PO Box 5692 Kigali, Rwanda



ELCA Global Church Sponsorship
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.



Three weeks to begin to learn a difficult new language; 3 weeks to explore what it might mean to be an American living in Africa; 3 weeks to build a community of support. That is the challenge of orientation for YAGM's in Rwanda each year, and my job to coordinate.

In late August, another awesome group of young adults from the US came together in Kigali for 3 weeks, plunged into all the unknowns of this place, filled their brains with new words and ideas, and went forth to their new homes still smiling. It is a blessing and a privilege to accompany these young people on a pilgrimage of learning and growth during their YAGM term. Pilgrimage was a theme as we considered the difference between being a tourist and a pilgrim. "A tourist has new experiences, but remains the same person. A pilgrim experiences new places and is transformed by them."

The challenge and the wonder of the YAGM program is the opportunity it affords for transformation. Entering a new culture, letting go of the familiar, rubbing up against different ways of doing and being – these are hard and transformational things. Sometimes I am astounded that anyone would choose such a thing, but that's YAGM! Please join me in praying for Chad, Savanna, Stephanie, Laura and Ben as their YAGM pilgrimage unfolds this year. This month I will be visiting them at their new homes and your prayers for traveling mercies are welcome too.

Follow the 2015 Rwanda team on Facebook at **YAGM Rwanda**, and at:

Chad Nelsen in Cyangugu:

www.ramblingsfromrwanda.wordpress.com

Savanna Sullivan in Rwamagana:

www.savyagm.blogspot.com

Stephanie Engel in Kibungo:

www.rolickinginrwanda.wordpress.com

Laura Hermanns in Butare:

www.peaceonourwings.wordpress.com

Ben Warner in Rukira:

www.beninrwanda.blogspot.com



Would you go barefoot in Rwanda?

One of our devotions during YAGM orientation was based on Exodus 3, the story of Moses' encounter with God at the burning bush. "Take off your shoes," God tells Moses, for he is on holy ground. We pondered the grace and the risks inherent in this command, even as we remembered that "Our first task in approaching another people, another culture, another religion, is to take off our shoes and walk gently, for the place we are approaching is holy and we may find ourselves treading on another's dreams. More serious still, we may forget that God was there before our arrival." (Author unknown)

Pastor's Update

Congratulations to St. Mark's!

St. Mark's Lutheran Church is one of the Top 10 congregational supporters of the ELCA Malaria Campaign. The goal of the Campaign was reached - \$15,000,000 this fall. Thank you to all St. Mark's members and friends who contributed to the campaign. We thank Brandee Marckmann who coordinated our efforts and the efforts of the Sierra Pacific Synod in support of the campaign.

Serving on the ELCA Church Council

I was elected to a six year (non-renewable) term at the Churchwide Assembly meeting in August of 2011. It has taken me several meetings to begin to understand the complexities and workings of our church and all our varied ministries!

The Church Council meets twice a year at the Lutheran Center in Chicago and is the board of directors of the ELCA. We engage in conversation, deliberation and prayerful consideration as we together discern God's direction for this church. We recently met, Nov. 12 - 15, and centered our work around daily worship, frequent prayer and personal reflections on faith.

There are 39 voting members on the council including the Presiding Bishop, Vice-President, Secretary and Treasurer of the church along with the chair of the Conference of Bishops. The rest of the council is folks from across the E.L.C.A. serving in various capacities. There is a wheat farmer from South Dakota, a neurologist from the Mayo Clinic, several retired people, two young persons, rostered leaders, and a stay-at-home parent. We are diverse in our backgrounds which creates lively debate and generative conversation. Each time we gather, I am inspired by the dedicated work of our ELCA staff and the care and commitment of each council member to be engaged with the issues and challenges before us.

During this past meeting, we covered many items in preparation for next summer's Churchwide Assembly in New Orleans. Below are some of the items we took action on during our meeting:

- + adopted the document titled "Gender-Based Violence" as a social message of the ELCA
- + recommended action to the CWA which would unify the three existing official rosters of laypersons
- + recommended action to the CWA to amend the Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the ELCA
- + affirmed Bishop Eaton's Future Directions and Priorities of the ELCA process design
- + received the report and referred the recommendations of the Ministry to and with Same-Gender Couples and Their Families Working Group to the appropriate churchwide staff for implementation
- + affirmed the extensive efforts by the Presiding bishop to call the entire church to confront racism and to include those efforts in a broader, comprehensive strategy towards becoming a racially and ethnically diverse church
- + received the Theological Education Advisory Council (TEAC) report, created a comment period to provide feedback on this report, and appointed a working group to craft implementing strategies

This is your Church Council and we serve on your behalf. I look forward to questions, comments, and conversation with you about the work of the ELCA, your staff, and your Church Council. It is an honor to serve on it and I always leave each meeting energized and invigorated by our ministries around the globe and in our neighborhoods.

Warmly,
Pr. Elizabeth



YOU DREAMT IT; IT'S HAPPENING NOW!

“Dream it! Make it happen!” was the theme for this year’s Endowment Committee grant cycle, extending St. Mark’s reach in doing God’s work with our hands in San Francisco and around the world. Because the Endowment supports projects not funded by the congregation’s annual budget, we are able to serve our community in new and creative ways.

In this our second year of grant giving, the number of grant requests doubled from two to four. With an increase in available funds from \$2000 in 2014 to \$3600 this year, we are able to support three impactful projects, all of which deepen the congregation’s existing local and global relationships. Amazing! Grace!

Here are dreams coming true because of generous giving to the Endowment Fund from “people like you”:

Kigali Lutheran Parish, Rwanda received \$2000 to support the building of a learning and worship space for children of the parish. “When we are ready to hear the sermon on every Sunday, the children are driven out of the church” into a narrow dirt alley. “St. Mark’s financial gift to Kigali children would be engaging parents, youth and volunteers in Rwanda and St. Mark’s to form a partnership that is based on empowering family and children ministry.” The funds would be used to partially fund the building of a “children’s worship room” by clearing the land, purchasing rocks and cement, and constructing the foundation in 2016. An additional \$100 was added to cover bank fees associated with transferring funds to the Lutheran Church of Rwanda.

St. Mark’s Global Mission Ministry was awarded \$1000 to support a “home visit” by our sponsored ELCA missionary, Pr. Kate Warn. Every two years, ELCA missionaries return to the States for a “home visit” during which time they visit their sponsoring congregations. “St. Mark’s has committed to a covenant relationship with ELCA Missionary Kate Warn, the Young Adults in Global Mission (YAGM) Coordinator in Rwanda. We pray for her and her work and would like to meet and greet her and thank her personally.” The grant will be used for travel expenses associated with Pr. Warn’s visit to San Francisco and St. Mark’s in spring 2016.

St. Mark’s Music Ministry was given \$500 to fund a choir retreat in early 2016, including bringing in a professional vocal coach to assist in “vocal production, blending of vowel sounds, and vocal health.” Their wish is “to grow our community, using traditional sacred music, as well as opening our sights to other musical traditions. Responding to God’s compassionate love, we will reach out in song to the community and the world . . . and build understanding through music.”



Council Meeting Minutes

June

- Council heard a presentation from Tim Bohan, chair of the Elevator Committee, about the committee's meetings with general contractors for the elevator and sanctuary floor repair projects. Following the committee's recommendation, Council approved entering into a contract with Plant Construction for the renovation work.
- Council received an update about the capital campaign in advance of a special congregational meeting. Council concurred with the recommendation to use The James Company's consultant services and to tithe a portion of the funds raised to the Campaign for the ELCA.
- Two staff, Stefani Lawrence (Communications and Media Coordinator) and Chiara DeJoy (Events Administrator) have been hired in the church office and a third position (Accountant/Office Manager) is being filled.
- Council approved the establishment of a pastoral support fund that can assist with Bekah Davis' medical and living expenses.
- Council agreed with the decision to put the Summer Day Camp and God's Work Our Hands Sunday on hold for this year.
- Council approved revisions to the employee handbook to apply a PTO (paid time off) cap to pastors' accrual. The practical effect of this is that Pastor Ekdale will no longer accrue vacation until her "above the cap" vacation days are used. It was expressed that it was generous and benevolent of her to agree to this, as it is challenging to find time to take vacation.

August

- Council heard a presentation from Greg Jahnke, co-chair of the Capital Campaign Committee, about the theme, goals, and plans for the capital campaign to raise funds for the construction of the elevator, replacement of the sanctuary floor, and restoration of the art glass windows.
- Council appointed Margaret McLean, Philip Krikau, Laura Evenson, Cora Rose, and Andrew Sallach to the Call Committee.
- Housing developer Crescent Heights is in discussions with the Martin Luther Tower (MLT) Board and the Redevelopment Task Force to place an inclusionary housing development on the site of the Urban Life Center.
- Tim Bohan provided an Elevator Committee report and a rough timeline for the permitting and construction process.
- Council member Clovis Curl spoke about her experience at the ELCA Youth Gathering in July.

September

- Council approved the Endowment Committee's 2016 grant disbursement recommendation: \$2,000 (plus an additional \$100 for administrative fees) to Kigali Lutheran Parish in Rwanda for creation of a children's worship space; \$1,000 to St Mark's social ministry committee for home visit of ELCA Missionary, Pr. Kate Warn; and \$500 to St. Mark's Music Ministry to fund a choir retreat.
- Council appointed Gretchen Armstrong and Lew Randall to the Call Committee.
- Council approved the tithing of 10% of funds raised through the Capital Campaign to the Campaign for the ELCA.
- Council will meet with the MLT Board on September 20 to discuss the redevelopment project.

October

- Council welcomed interim pastor Tita Valeriano and teaching parish student John Barton.
- Council provided feedback on this year's Sunday afternoon Oktoberfest celebration.
- The office staff configuration has changed due to the termination of the office manager/accountant. St. Mark's are now contracting with ADP for payroll services and for brokering employee benefits, and with Rachel Friedland for bookkeeping and accounting. Council and pastoral staff are discerning how to fill the gap left in not having an office manager.
- Bill Mooney, Lisa Gray, and Liv Beck are the nominating committee members who will seek Council nominees for 2016.
- Council retreat has been announced for February 27-28, 2016.
- Council decided to put the Summer Day Camp on hold in 2016, pending the calling of a new associate pastor.
- Council approved contracting with nursery consultant Michelle Pruitt to assist us with hiring a Nursery Supervisor.
- Council reviewed bids for kitchen renovation work. Jeremy McClain and Marisa Lee will provide additional information about the renovation work and costs before Council votes by email.
- Jeremy McClain is receiving bids for a contractor to protect our vulnerable Rose Window from the looming rainy season, which will also protect the organ from water damage.

Important Votes at St. Mark's Annual Meeting January 31st

As a member of St. Mark's you are encouraged to attend our annual congregational meeting on Sunday, the 31st of January, starting immediately after the 11 o'clock worship service. A quorum is necessary to vote on several important items.

During this meeting the congregational council will present a proposal for the scope of work to be undertaken with the funds raised from the 2016-2019 Capital Fund Drive. There will also be votes to approve the 2016 operating budget and to elect members of the congregational council.

The Adult Forum at 10:05 AM on the preceding Sunday, January 24th, will focus on the operating budget and the proposed projects for the capital campaign. This will be an opportunity for you to learn and ask questions about St. Mark's missions and ministry for the coming year and into the years to come.

Grace Lao Tree: The gift of giving and receiving

Grace Lao is not an individual person's name but the name of a Lutheran Congregation comprised of Lao people in Richmond, CA. They were a mission start twenty years ago and continue to thrive while also face the challenges of poverty, language and generational barriers, threat of gang violence and inclusion among other things. Under the leadership of Rev. Doris Ng for the last seven years, the congregation moved to a new facility a couple of years ago and now enjoy a bigger space to hold several children's programs throughout the year.

Truly, the children are one of the best gifts they have as a community.

This Christmas season, we hope to share the spirit of giving and receiving with them. The Grace Lao tree is set up in front of the sanctuary for you to get an ornament where name, age and gender of a child are written on. Some of them may not include a name as the gifts will also be shared as part of the congregation's neighborhood outreach. Let the giving begin by buying an age appropriate gift, bringing them to the church and placing them at the foot of the tree during (or after) the next two Advent Sunday worship services (December 6 and 13). The Grace Lao's Christmas Children's Program will be held on December 19, 2015, so we plan to deliver all of the gifts on or before December 18th.

And who said that by giving we do not receive anything? We already did – the generosity of our God to us and the beginning of a wonderful relationship with our Lao sisters and brothers who are only on the other side of the bay.

Pr. Elizabeth hosting Mosaic television show Sunday, Dec. 20 @ 5:00 a.m. KPIX

Set your alarm and grab a cup of coffee in order to watch Pr. Elizabeth host the Mosaic Christmas show on television.

Her guests include Pr Maggi Henderson from Old First Presbyterian Church in SF and Mr. Larry Sly Director of the Contra Costa and Solano Counties Food Bank.



St. Mark's Worship Schedule

Sundays

9:00 am.....**HOLY COMMUNION** with Children's Time
10:00 am.....Refreshments and Fellowship Hour
11:00 am.....**CHORAL EUCHARIST**
12:15 pm.....Refreshments and Fellowship Hour

Wednesdays

6:45 pm.....Mid Week Worship

Check our weekly Parish Announcements

(<http://www.stmarks-sf.org/blog/>)

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

Church Office Hours

Monday through Friday 9:00 am to 5:00 pm

Staff

The Rev. Elizabeth E. Ekdale, Lead Pastor...x 2300...ekdale@stmarks-sf.org

The Rev. Tita Valeriano, Interim Pastor...x2460...valeriano@stmarks-sf.org

Dr. Timothy Zerlang, Director of Music...x 2330...zerlang@stmarks-sf.org

Rachel Friedland, Bookkeeper/Accountant...x 2320...friedland@stmarks-sf.org

Stefani Lawrence, Communications & Media Coordinator...x2260...lawrence@stmarks-sf.org

Chiara DeJoy, Events Administrator...x2290 dejoy@stmarks-sf.org

Carl Storey, Security

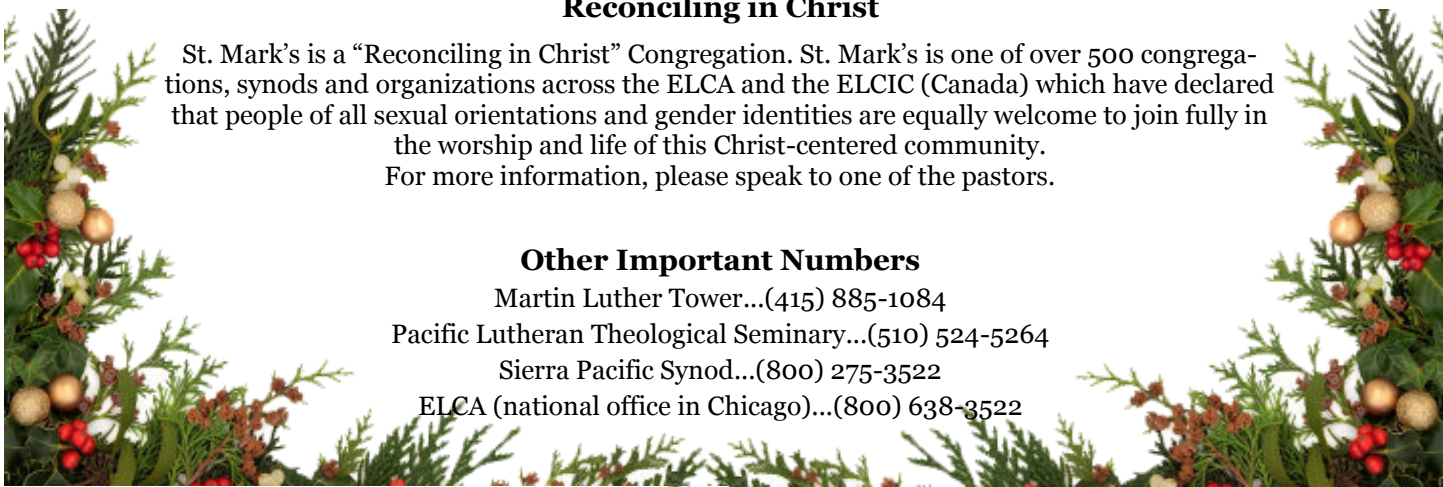
Elvira Markov & Johanna Najera, Nursery Attendants

Jenny Hart, Sunday School Coordinator

The Rev. Chuck Lewis, Visitation Pastor

Jeremy McClain, Church Council President...mclain@stmarks-sf.org

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

Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary...(510) 524-5264

Sierra Pacific Synod...(800) 275-3522

ELCA (national office in Chicago)...(800) 638-3522