



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



*Advent
Christmas
and
Epiphany
2016 - 2017*

*Christmas
at
St Mark's*
LUTHERAN CHURCH

From Heaven Above

December 24, 2016

5:00PM

Christmas Pageant

*St. Mark's brings the Christmas story to life with
costumes, carols and candles*

7:00PM

Carols, Candlelight Communion

Fresh expressions of the ageless story

10:00PM

From Heaven Above

J.S Bach's gorgeous variations for organ choir and brass

10:30PM

Traditional Christmas Worship

A Festive Celebration of God's Gift from Heaven Above

December 25, 2016

9:30AM

Sing your favorite Christmas Carol

10:00AM

Christmas Festival Eucharist

We celebrate God's Word from heaven above

ADVENT MIDWEEK SERVICES WEDNESDAY, NOV. 30, DEC. 14 & 21

Holden Evening Prayer will be used throughout Advent on Wednesday evenings. Holden is a lovely, candlelit liturgy with Advent and Christmas images. Come and nourish your spirits during the season of Advent.

6:00PM-Community Dinner

6:45PM-Candlelit Worship



Special Advent Vespers, Wednesday, Dec. 7 at 7:00PM

Featuring J.S. Bach's Cantata Cel. "Savior of the Nation, Come" with the combined choirs of St. Mark's Lutheran and St. Mary's Cathedral with instruments. Refreshments served afterwards.

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

By: Dr. Timothy Zerlang, Director of Music

Happy new church year, that is. With the first Sunday of Advent on November 27, we begin a new liturgical year; Year A in our three-year lectionary cycle, and the year in which we will commemorate the 500th anniversary Martin Luther's ninety-five thesis and the beginning of the Lutheran Reformation, and a year in which I would like to explore the rich hymnody and music we inherited from Luther and other early reformers.

I recently read a brief essay in which a Lutheran seminary professor's answer to the question "What makes Christian worship specifically Lutheran?" was quoted. This question was posed in response to a lecture in which various forms of Christian worship were discussed and similarities between them highlighted. He answered: "I suppose it is the way Lutherans sing in Christian worship. But by 'the way we sing,' I do not mean necessarily the fervor of our singing or the grand repertoire of song available to us, or even the amount of music we sing in each service. I mean the purpose of our song..."

That phrase "the purpose of our song" (and for me musical instruments 'sing' as well as voices) started me thinking. Do we make music in worship to worship God, to praise God, to make an offering to God, to pray, to meditate, to contribute to a 'worshipful' environment, to soothe ourselves, to stir ourselves up, to enhance our experience of and understanding of scripture and the preached word, to teach, to remember, to wax nostalgic, to entertain? Probably all of the above and more (but I hope not so much of the last and more of everything else).

Let's consider "to teach." I don't know about you, but to this day, if I have to say the alphabet to myself (trying to alphabetize the choir library, for example) I find myself singing the alphabet song I learned as a very small child. We know from sad experience, that sometimes when loved ones suffering from dementia seem to have forgotten everything else, songs learned long ago remain. Music appears to write things on our memories in ways that scientists are only beginning to understand. As a musician and teacher, Martin Luther understood this. With the hymns he wrote and the melodies he adapted or composed, Luther embedded scripture, tropes on scripture and his catechism, and yes, propaganda, in the memories of his followers.

ADVENT VESPERS WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 7, 7 PM

The choirs of St. Mark's Lutheran Church and St. Mary's Cathedral will again join forces for what has become a highlight of the Advent season. This year the service will be at St. Mark's and will feature music J. S. Bach (settings of Nun komm der Heiden Heiland for organ and his cantata BWV 61 based on the chorale scored for choir, soloists, and strings), a new work by John Michael Trotta (Veni, Veni, Veni, 2015), Johann Eccard's lovely setting of "Maria Went to the Hills", and Jakob Handl's masterful setting of the Lord's Prayer.

This service promises to be a wonderful escape from the hectic pace of the work-week, and a wonderful opportunity to contemplate the meaning of Advent in our lives. Join us for the service and the reception afterward in Heritage Hall, where we will engage with our neighbors from the Cathedral, and enjoy the photo exhibit installed there.

INTERFAITH WORLD AIDS DAY WORSHIP, DEC. 4

Since St. Mark's initiated this powerful commemoration and call to action many years ago, we cannot let fatigue, fading memories, decreasing infection neither decreasing people dying of AIDS stop us from coming together to pray and unite in our work and ministry to fight this pandemic. This year the Interfaith Service for World Aids Day will be held at Congregation Sha'ar Zahav, 290 Dolores St. (@16th St.) on December 4th at 4:00 pm. We will gather around the theme "Where our hope is" reflecting on our past and renewing our commitment towards the future with hope. We hope that you are able to come with your friends and families. If you are also a Thrivent member and is willing to use your Volunteer Action Team benefit, please contact Pastor Tita as we need your partnership to make this event more successful.



INTERFAITH HOMELESS SHELTER AT ST. MARK'S

St. Mark's will be participating in the San Francisco Interfaith Council Winter Shelter program and will be hosting Dec. 12th-Dec. 17th and Jan. 15th-Feb. 4th.

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



CHRISTMAS DECORATIONS


You are invited to contribute to St. Mark's Christmas decorations in honor, or in memory of, a loved one. Look for a bulletin insert on Dec. 4th, for more details. The insert may be completed and mailed to the church office or dropped in the offering plate on Sunday morning. Your donations will go towards the cost of Christmas trees and poinsettias.

Thank you for your holiday generosity!

Please send all donation information by Dec. 19

CALLING ALL ANGELS AND SHEPHERDS!

It's already time to begin casting for our special Christmas Eve Pageant at St. Mark's. This family-friendly narration of the events surrounding the birth of baby Jesus includes a wonderful cast of angels and shepherds of all ages and wise men and their assistants. The Christmas Pageant will be on Christmas Eve, December 24th at 5pm. There will be two rehearsals on Saturday, December 10th at 9am and December 17th at 9am. Be sure to mark your calendars! There are many roles available including stage crew and costuming. If you are interested in being a part of the Christmas Pageant, then please email Mari Tuominen at maridesigns@earthlink.net.



WE HAVE TWO GIVING OPPORTUNITIES FOR ST. MARK'S MEMBERS DURING THE CHRISTMAS SEASON. PLEASE CONSIDER SUPPORTING THE FAMILIES OF GRACE LUTHERAN IN RICHMOND AND THOSE FAMILIES LIVING IN BERNAL GATEWAY APARTMENTS.

BERNAL GATEWAY CHRISTMAS PARTY, DEC. 16

Bernal Gateway is an apartment complex located in the Mission District in which our own Lutheran Social Services provides support services for the families of this complex.

St. Mark's members are invited to donate wrapped toys for children between 6-14 years of age. Take a tag from the Giving Tree and return the gift by Dec. 15 either by placing the gift under the tree or bringing the gift to the church office (located at 1031 Franklin St.). We need 25 gifts for the children of Bernal Gateway apartments.

Other donated items that would be appreciated are Family Gift baskets which would include Christmas Candy, Movie Gift Cards, or Grocery Gift Cards. Please mark these baskets for Bernal Gateway and place them under the Giving Tree or bring to the church office by Dec. 15. Many thanks for your generosity during the Christmas season.

CHRISTMAS GIVING TREE MORE THAN SHARING

Last year, one way of living out the Christmas spirit of sharing was through a giving tree. Cards with names of girls and boys and their ages from Grace Lao Lutheran Church in Richmond, one of our synod's mission church, were hung on the giving tree for us to pick and be able to buy appropriate gifts. We gathered and shared more than 30 gifts with these children who received them with excitement. Pastor Doris Ng and the congregational leadership expressed their deep appreciation. But the most exciting part of this ministry is its mutuality. We also received their gift to us: joy. Our giving tree is more than about sharing, it is about building relationship in Christ and strengthening a community of hope amidst a city with high poverty rate and unemployment are prevalent.

We share in partnership with the Grace Lao community outreach in their neighborhood. As our siblings in Christ, we are happy to receive their gifts to us again this year as we participate generously in our Christmas Giving Tree. Look out for our giving tree this coming November 27th, the first Advent Sunday and start bringing the gifts to be placed by the tree during worship. We will gather gifts until December 18th. This ministry is truly an exchange of gifts. Contact Pastor Tita for more information.

WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR?

By: Pastor Tita Valeriano, Interim Associate Pastor

I have always emphasized the meaning of Advent during this time of the year. However, the theme that seems to dominate is only about waiting when the meaning of Advent is closely intertwined with John the Baptist prophecy “Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight paths for him” (Mark 3:1). This echoes Isaiah’s prophecy, “A voice is calling, ‘Clear the way for the Lord in the wilderness; Make smooth in the desert a highway for our God” (Isaiah 40:3).

I have observed throughout the years that our waiting has been focused more on the time than its meaning. Why not, we are living in a culture of instant gratification. We want it now. Not tomorrow, NOW. But Advent means arrival, emergence. This Latin word *adventus* is the translation of the Greek word *parousia* which is used to refer to the Second Coming of Christ. How do we prepare in Christ’s coming, not only on the second coming, but over and over again in our life? Advent is not only about patient waiting. It is about hope and expectation amidst the chaos, grief, conflict, and the commercial madness of the season that drowns us into consumerism for a short relief. Singing advent hymns no matter how we are tempted to sing Christmas songs already I believe is an important spiritual practice and faith expression. It does not only teach us patience but a way to respond to John the Baptist’s invitation to prepare for Christ. Looking through some Advent hymns, I realized that a non-advent song is my respond to John’s invitation.



The hymn is “Porque el entro (Tenemos esperanza)” by Federico J. Pagura (lyrics, Argentina) and Homero Perera (music, Uruguay). Perera used the most beloved style of music in Argentina, tango, a very sensual kind of music where movement of your whole body is required to really embody the music. I believe that Perera embedded the theology of Incarnation in the music itself. Federico J. Pagura is not only a lyricist but a known theologian and church leader. He was a Methodist Bishop who relentlessly worked for justice and peace in Latin America. He heard the voices of God’s people and wrote this music for them to participate with hope that Christ’s coming has meaning and impact in their lives then and in the future. Advent invites us to ask why and not only when. Here is an excerpt from *Tenemos Esperanza*:

Because he came into our world and story, because he heard our silence and our sorrow;
Because he filled the whole world with his glory; and came to light the darkness of our morrow;
Because his birth in a darkened corner, because he lived proclaiming life and love;
Because he quickened hearts that had been dormant, and lifted those whose lives had been downtrodden

Refrain:

So we today have hopes and expectation, so we today struggle with conviction,
So we today trust we have a future so we have hope in this world of tears,
So we today have hopes and expectation, so we today struggle with conviction,
So we today trust we have a future so we have hope.

(from *Agape, Songs of Hope and Reconciliation*, The Lutheran World Federation)

So we have hope...this is what we are preparing for. This is what we wait for actively. This what we celebrate. Jesus brings our salvation that is hopeful and life-giving in his birth and over and over again as our heart becomes the manger, his home.

So during this Advent, as wait for Christ’s arrival and the emergence of God’s reign in his becoming human like you and me, may we be filled with hope and expectation.



Savior of the nations Come

FROM HYMNAL COMPANION TO EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN WORSHIP, BY PAUL WESTERMEYER

This is one of the longest-running hymns in the church. It has generated a huge repertoire of music. The text scans the whole story by taking us to the manger while assuming the victory of the cross and resurrection. The result is to make “Come” refer to Advent’s paradox: Christ’s first coming, second coming, and coming to us here and now.


This hymn can pretty certainly be attributed to Ambrose of Milan (340-397). He wrote it in Latin as “Veni, Redemptor gentium.” Martin Luther was among those who translated it into German, probably for Advent 1523.

Ambrose is called the “father of church song” or at least of Latin hymnody, not because he was the first to write hymns but because his hymns were the first ones the church found worth keeping. In December 374 he was baptized, ordained, and made bishop of Milan. Though Ambrosian (Milanese) chant is named for Ambrose, he wrote texts, not music. Martin Luther, in addition to his reforming activities, translating, teaching, writing, and work as a pastor, wrote hymns and tunes. He can be viewed for German hymnody as what Ambrose was for Latin. He was remarkably able to take stock of the church’s heritage and then craft texts and music that were genuinely congregational.



FESTIVE CHRISTMAS AND HOLIDAY PARTY FOR ALL ST. MARK’S SENIORS AND MLT RESIDENTS

Join MLT residents, the MLT board, staff, pastors, friends and family for a wonderful evening of holiday cheer. Dec. 9, Friday at 5:00 in Heritage Hall, Cost: \$5.00. Sign up in the Martin Luther Tower office or call 415-885-1084. Please bring your \$5.00 to the office by Dec. 5 in order to reserve your spot.



DREAM IT! MAKE IT HAPPEN!

The St. Mark's Endowment Committee is excited to announce the recipients of 2016 grant funding!

For the 2016 funding cycle, the Committee received 6 grant applications requesting more than double the \$4,000 of available funding. We were pleased by the enthusiastic response to the request for proposals, although this did mean we were not able to providing funding to all deserving projects.

In 2016, the four projects that are receiving grant funding from the St. Mark's Endowment Fund are the following:

- **Rwanda Women's Ministry:** The Lutheran Church of Rwanda Women's Ministry will be undertaking a comprehensive assessment of women's ministry in the Rwanda Lutheran Church to identify strengths, weaknesses and potential future leaders to build a strong network for future action
- **Cordero de Dios Facilities:** The Cordero de Dios Lutheran Church in Soyapango, El Salvador, will be building an exterior wall between the church property and the street to increase security for the children and youth who come to the church and make the church more of a presence in the community
- **WELCA Saturday Morning Workshops:** Leaders of the Women of the ELCA, St. Mark's and St. Paulus, will be creating a series of Saturday morning workshops to discuss various aspects of the ELCA's Women and Justice draft social statement
- **"Humans of Palestine" photography exhibition:** In partnership with Dar al-Kalima University in Bethlehem and Bright Stars of Bethlehem, a photo exhibition is being created by the youth of Palestine, and will be displayed throughout the Bay Area and at St. Mark's in the coming months

We would also like to take this opportunity to express our deep gratitude to members of the Endowment Committee who will be completing their terms in 2016. Gregory Jahnke and Debbie Varian were an integral part of the original vision and establishment of the St. Mark's Endowment, and we are grateful for their many contributions to this important work. Please thank them when you get the chance.

Randy Schieber
Chair, St. Mark's Endowment Committee

WINTER CONCERTS AT ST. MARK'S

Dec 2 - 8 pm

"A Scandinavian Christmas"
California Bach Society (<http://www.calbach.org/>)

Dec 3 - 7 pm

"Brush Up Your Shakespeare" & "Happy Holidays"
SF Lyric Chorus (<http://www.sflc.org/>)

Dec 4 - 5 pm

"Brush Up Your Shakespeare" & "Happy Holidays"
SF Lyric Chorus (<http://www.sflc.org/>)

Dec 10 - 4 pm

"The Morning Star"
Musae Women's Ensemble (<http://www.musae.org/>)

Dec 10 - 8 pm - FREE CONCERT

Program TBA
International Orange Chorale (<http://www.iocsf.org/>)

Dec 17 - 8 pm

"Vivaldi, Corelli & Telemann"
Voices of Music (<http://voicesofmusic.org/>)

Dec 18 - 4 pm

"Light in Winter"
SF Choral Artists (<http://voicesofmusic.org/>)

Jan 7 - 4 pm

Program TBA
New Esterhazy Quartet (<http://www.newesterhazy.org/>)

Jan 7 - 7:30 pm

"The Boar's Head Festival - A Celebration of 12th Night"
San Francisco Renaissance Voices (www.SFRVoices.org)

ADULT EDUCATION IS BACK!

10:00 AM, SUNDAYS IN THE AUDITORIUM

After a summer hiatus, Adult Education at St Mark's is back! There is an exciting line-up of forum topics to take us through the rest of 2016 and into the new year. As we head into the 500-year anniversary of the Reformation, many of the forums will allow us to learn more about who we are as Lutherans and to delve into important social issues facing the 21st Century ELCA.

This fall, we begin with a 6-week series titled "Introducing the Lutherans". Over Advent we will host Reverend Mark Stanger and our own Linda Krauskopf for insight into "Christians in the Holy Land". As the new year begins, we will explore the ELCA's strategy for Accompanying Migrant Minors with Protection, Advocacy, Representation and Opportunities (AMMPARO), based on the Spanish word "amparo" which means the protection of a living creature from suffering or damage. Other early 2017 topics will include an introduction to the ELCA's anti-racism initiative, a Small Catechism study, and a congregation-wide conversation on Faith, Sexism, and Justice - part of an initiative by the ELCA Task Force on Women and Justice.

Mark your calendars for 10:00AM every Sunday and join in the learning!



Dr. Kyle Schiefelbein teaches one of St. Mark's Adult Forums

TOP REASONS TO INVITE A FRIEND TO ST. MARK'S

If you appreciate the diversity and eclectic people of the Bay Area and especially San Francisco, you will be at home here at St. Mark's.

There are many different "ministries", that is to say areas of interest. Whether it is youth, seniors, cooking, flower arranging, decorating, yard work, all sorts of activities welcome your talents.

The people you will meet at St. Mark's are from all walks of life and all kinds of backgrounds.

The parishioners are welcoming and really enjoy meeting new people.

The Sunday school and nursery are great--kids are most welcome here and they are well looked after.

The pastoral staff are devoted to shepherding the flock--you will find them open minded, caring, interested in you and willing to listen.

My favorite event at St. Mark's to invite friends and family to is the Christmas pageant. You're asked to step into the spirit of Christmas Eve right as you walk in the door, when ushers give you a candle to hold and a homemade tinsel halo to wear. From wandering little angels to a glowing Holy Family to dancing starbearers, the Christmas pageant reflects the love and community among St. Mark's members and families.

The type of religion practiced here, Evangelical Lutheran, is at its core open, direct, and straight from scripture--no fancy pants diversions, pomp and ceremony get in the way here.

“PALESTINE: UNLIMITED” PHOTOGRAPHY EXHIBIT IN HERITAGE HALL

“O Little Town of Bethlehem....Within thy dark streets shineth the Everlasting Light. The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight!”

St. Mark's has partnered with Bright Stars of Bethlehem, Grace Lutheran Church/Palo Alto and University Lutheran Chapel/Berkeley to sponsor “PALESTINE: UNLIMITED”, a photographic exhibit by Palestinian media artists and students from Dar al-Kalima University College of Arts and Culture in Bethlehem. Dar al-Kalima, supported by Lutherans and other communities of faith, offers a positive setting for Christian and Muslim young people to study together, grow in knowledge, skills and empowerment to pursue positive life goals.



Throughout December St. Mark's is proud to launch this display of prize-winning photos from the first Karimeh Abboud Award photographic competition. With this exhibit we celebrate the creative work of these young Palestinians who, despite the extreme limitations imposed on them by the Separation Wall and brutal, illegal occupation by the State of Israel, reveal their hopes and aspirations for future dreams fulfilled. Come, enjoy and ponder. See Bethlehem and life through their eyes: “PALESTINE: UNLIMITED”.

OPENING RECEPTIONS in Heritage Hall: Sunday, December 4: 12:00-3:00 PM following our morning worship service: Palestinian treats, music, fellowship and viewing. A reception also follows Choral Advent Vespers with the choirs of St. Mark's and St. Mary's Cathedral on Wednesday evening, December 7.

The exhibit will be on view each Sunday this month from 12:00 to 3:00; on Wednesdays from 4:00 to 6:00 PM prior to Wednesday evening Community Dinners and Advent Worship; and following all public events.

EXHIBIT CLOSES: Sunday, December 25 at Noon, following the 10:00 Christmas Day Worship and Festive Coffee Hour.

The Karimeh Abboud Award Competition is named after the first professional woman photographer in Palestine, who worked in the 1920s and 1930s with studios in several cities throughout the Holy Land. A video documenting her historical contributions to Palestinian culture accompanies the exhibit.

SUNDAY MORNING ADULT FORUMS feature the Holy Land:

Sunday, December 11 – “Christians in the Land of the Holy One”:

We welcome The Rev. Mark Stanger, Episcopal priest at Grace Cathedral, who has recently returned from two + years in Jerusalem working with groups of Pilgrims visiting the Holy Land. He will discuss the Episcopal Church's work there and his own experiences from multiple trips to the bible lands of Israel-Palestine.

Sunday, December 18 – “Palestinian Christians: Lost in World Events?”

The Rev. Mitri Raheb, Pastor of Christmas Lutheran Church in Bethlehem, joins us

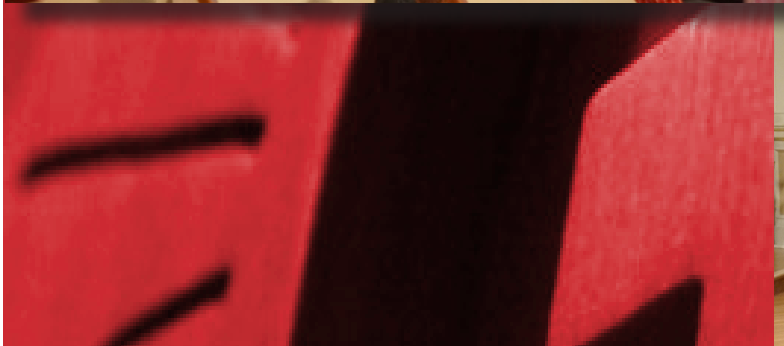
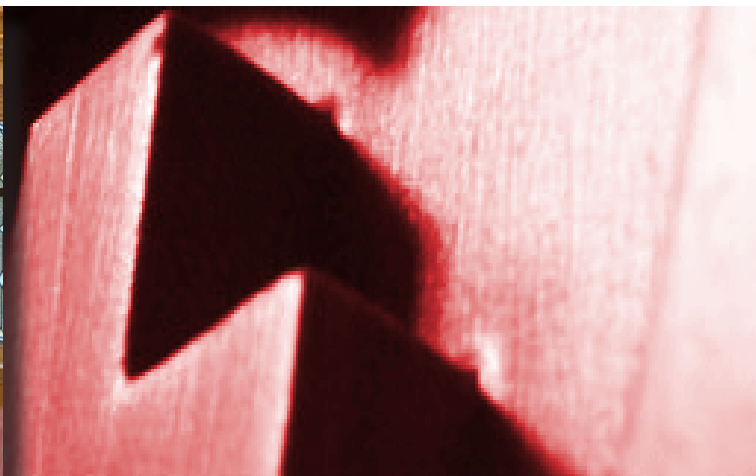
in a panel discussion via video from the National Press Club in Washington, D.C. He and Dr. James Zogby, Advisor to the President on Middle Eastern Affairs, discuss the important role of Christianity in the Holy Land in our lifetime and challenges to its future there.

Here are some other actions we can take to spread the Advent/Christmas Light:

Write a tax-deductible check to Bright Stars of Bethlehem for student scholarships at Dar al-Kalima University. Donation details for this will be on hand at the exhibit. Learn also about how to support our Lutheran schools within the ELCJHL (Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land) and the work of August Victoria Hospital in Jerusalem. At the exhibit, find out ways to advocate as an American citizen for justice and peace in the Holy Land .

Follow related activities at: www.stmarks-sf.org, www.ELCA.org/peacenotwalls,

REFORMATION SUNDAY AT ST. MARK'S, OCT. 30, 2016



Guest musician Jonathan Rundman



FORWARD IN FAITH, LIFTED BY LOVE!

Stewardship Temple Talk

By: Mary Ritter

Let me tell you a story of some women who have been lifted by love.

Our Sierra Pacific Synod is a partner of the Lutheran Church of Rwanda. Pr. John Rutsindintwarane is Assistant to the Bishop of the Rwandan Lutheran church, and primary organizer of People Improving Community through Organizing – better known as PICO Rwanda. Many of you have met Pastor John when he visits St. Mark's from Rwanda. Pastor John tells this story.

Regina Pacis is a lovely large Catholic Parish in Kigali, the capital of Rwanda. Why are we talking about a Catholic church in Rwanda? Well, they had a problem. Many of the church members came to the parish priest to complain about the women in the church's neighborhood who were making some kind of living by selling everything from fruit on their head without a license, to prostituting their own bodies. The women of the parish were concerned that their husbands and sons were tempted by the women on the street, so they asked the parish priest to do something about it. The priest wasn't sure he knew what to do, but he put out a notice inviting women to come to the parish for help.

Well, 150 women responded. Now the priest had to do something! So he turned to Pastor John R. and Father Innocent Rugaragu from PICO Rwanda. The PICO organizers met with the women, helped them talk about their lives, and asked then what they wanted. The thing they wanted most of all was to do something to make sure their children were safe and healthy and went to school and didn't end up being prostitutes. I imagine the discussion might have been like our Stewardship questions:

How would you like to spend your life?

How would you like to spend your time?

What are your blessings?

The pastors of PICO Rwanda worked with the women to help them identify their skills and to develop new ones.



Crafts made by women in Rwanda



Bags made by women in Rwanda

Well, as many of you know, my Monday to Friday job is to provide medical care to children who have been sexually abused. When I visited Rwanda in 2014 and 2015, I had the privilege to meet many of these former prostitutes at Regina Pacis. Many of them, like my patients, had histories of terrible things happening to them in their childhoods. Now, 75 of the original 150 had completed training – some had learned to set up booths in a local market and were selling produce, others had gone to cosmetology school and learned to style hair and do manicures. Some learned to do maintenance and clean at the market. Some learned to sew and make various crafts – animals, jewelry, bags and toys.

They were happy and proud. They described hard lives and hard work, but their eyes lit up when they talked about things they were now able to do for their children. They told their stories, then danced and sang. They had been empowered and lifted by God's love.

The Stewardship team and I have gathered things the women of Regina Pacis have made. Take them home and remember these women whose life and time were blessed by God's love.

CAPITAL CAMPAIGN PLEDGE UPDATE

Pledges/Gifts/Bequests
\$1,108,384

Amount Received To-Date
\$492,263

Campaign Pledge Status
Ahead of schedule

Progress is being made on our capital campaign funding goal, which is aimed at providing funds for three major projects: (1) the installation of new hardwood floors in the sanctuary, which has now been completed, (2) the repair and restoration of stained glass windows in the sanctuary, and (3) the installation of an elevator.

The Capital Campaign Committee will continue to provide quarterly updates on the status of campaign pledging. Total project funding consists of pledges, gifts, and bequests received as of November 3, 2016. Thank you to all of the members and friends of St. Marks 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 two years remaining (2017-2018). All pledges, whether large or small, are greatly appreciated and much needed. Pledges can be made by submitting a pledge card during the fall stewardship pledge drive, or by filling out an on-line pledge card at www.stmarks-sf.org, or by contacting the church office at 415-928-7770.



FORWARD
IN
FAITH
...lifted by love²

NOTES FROM THE ACCOUNTING OFFICE REGARDING YOUR YEAR END GIFTS...

As the end of the year is quickly approaching we thought this might be a good time to review IRS rules regarding end of year donations.

- Checks must be dated within the current year AND the envelope the donations is mailed in must be postmarked no later than December 31, 2016 to be counted as a 2016 donation.
- Credit and Debit Card donations must be marked with a December 31, 2016 processing date to be considered eligible for a 2016 tax deduction.

If you plan on making a Stock Donation in 2016 and would like more information please contact us at the St. Mark's Accounting email (accounting@stmarks-sf.org).

Thank you for your generous and continued support of St. Mark's Lutheran Church.

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 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 6 – I'm Listening as Fast as I Can: The Night Ministry in San Francisco by Don Stuart

January 3 – Thirteenth Night: A Medieval Mystery by Alan Gordon

February 7 – Resilient Reformer by Timothy Lull & Derek Nelson

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. This winter our Bible study will center on "Galatians: Christian faith and Christian freedom." Our program topics are:

December 13 – W-ELCA's annual Christmas Luncheon

January 10 – "No other Gospel"

February 14 – "Children of God through faith"

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

HIGH SCHOOL YOUTH (GRADES 9-12) UPCOMING EVENTS

Monthly Lunch and Fellowship, Dec. 4 at 12:15

We have met in the last couple of months. Our luncheon fellowship is more than building friendship, it is more of supporting our faith expressions and journey. We gather at 12:15ish after 11:00 am service for lunch, continue to know and support each other in our spirituality and service. Imagine!

Western States Youth Gathering 2017: BIG DREAM

We invite all our high school students including incoming freshman for 2017 to participate to this amazing events with fantastic speakers and musicians; learning and small group times, worship that leads in new director, immersion in Los Angeles, and lots of fun to be had all in the beauty of Southern California. The registration to the WSYG 2017 opened last October 3rd and we hope to participate in this large high school triennial youth gathering which is also a preparation to the National Youth Gathering in 2018. The event will be held in California Lutheran University from June 28 to July 2, 2017. Registration fee is \$425.00 (this price is until January 2, 2017). For more information, visit their website: www.wsyg.com. We would like to be able to register by January 2nd if possible and please do not let the registration fee be a hindrance to your participating. Let us have Big Dreams!

Sierra Pacific Synod High School Retreat

Our Synod has a vibrant youth community who plan and lead this synod ministry themselves. Truly a ministry for and by them. The next retreat where officers and committees are elected will be on February 24 at 7pm and end February 26 at 12pm at Mt. Cross. The registration fee is \$140.00 (on January 31, 2017 the cost will go up to \$ 175.00.) Learn and share what it means to be a Lutheran Youth in the city with others. You may visit their website at www.spyc.org

You may contact Pastor Tita Valeriano for more information about our High School Fellowship.

FROM THE CALL COMMITTEE:

If I could today become king or emperor, I would not give up my office as preacher. —Martin Luther

On Clergy Appreciation Sunday (October 23rd) as you were savoring orange and purple cake, your Call Committee—including our well-appreciated Lead Pastor—was thinking hard about who of our candidates for Associate Pastor to invite to St. Mark's for an on-site interview. Although we are now experts at Skype, we are so looking forward to moving from screen to Square with three gifted candidates.

As you recall, October was Clergy Appreciation Month in the ELCA. And, as if we weren't well-blessed by the clergy who already minister and mingle with us, your Call Committee continues to seek one more clergyperson for us to appreciate as our Associate Pastor.

During October, the Mutual Ministry Committee invited and cajoled us to respond to two questions: (1) What does the word "Pastor" mean to you? and (2) What is it that our Pastors have done that you would like them thank for?

We jotted our answers on index cards. "Pastor" equals: "leader, faithful, caring, given so much time and energy to this community; tear down walls and open doors; deep gifts in pastoral care, giving God's gifts of love, grace, friendship and presence; teacher; someone who cares and reaches out to us from the pulpit and in conversation; open to hear what we care about, thoughts, struggles, joys; a caretaker, loving and caring for the congregation and community, leading us to take care of others; one who tends the flock, guides us through births, baptisms, divorce and beyond, never ending service they provide; comfort after a death; sincerity and passion; visiting the sick, making connections, being present; true sisters and brothers in Christ; challenging us to live out our faith." We thank and appreciate them for all this and more.

But, whew, what a job description! No wonder it has taken us more than a year to reach the on-site interview stage of the call process!

The Call Committee has taken to heart an old African proverb that goes something like: "If you want to go far, it's probably best to go together, and slowly." Now, begins our slow, thoughtful walk together with each candidate—a walk across the Square, through the neighborhood, within the congregation. A walk that will give each of them the opportunity to be with us, to fellowship with us, to talk with us.

Your Call Committee—Pr. Elizabeth Ekdale, Laura Evenson, Greg Jahnke, Philip Krikau, Margaret McLean, Cora Rose, and Andrew Sallach—has placed St. Mark's future in God's hands, remembering the words of Martin Luther: "I have held many things in my hands, and I have lost them all; but whatever I have placed in God's hands, that I still possess."

Rejoice and pray as we walk together in faith with each candidate.

CLERGY APPRECIATION SUNDAY

October has been designated as Clergy Appreciation Month and is a special time that congregations set aside each year to thank and honor their pastors and their families for the hard work, sacrificial dedication and multiple blessings provided by these special people. It is also important to remember that appreciation, affirmation and prayer support of our spiritual leaders is appropriate throughout the entire year.

The Mutual Ministry Committee was very excited to help our congregation recognize each of the Clergy who are part of our community here at St. Mark's: Pastor Elizabeth, Pastor Tita, Pastor Hans, Pastor Chuck and Pastor Lyle.

The Mutual Ministry Committee would like to thank you all for making this a great "Clergy Appreciation Sunday."

Elise Semonian, Brian Richards, Fred Blicke, Jo Chadwick and Marge Okuley (chair)



Dear Members of the St. Mark's Lutheran Church Congregation and Community,

As I enter the last couple week of the semester, I am also coming to the close of my time here at SMLC. I have learned much over the last three semesters: from individuals and the congregation as a whole, from adults and youths, and from both lay and clergy members. It has been an honor to be a part of the whole experience that is St. Mark's. All of your faithfulness and care has helped to form me into a better equipped leader of faith.

The path ahead of me in my seminary education has a few steps left. I have next semester as my final piece of my in class education. During that time I will also be interviewing with various possible internship congregations where I will spend the next school year. I will find out the confirmed site in April, 2017 and will be sure to pass on the information for an update for all of you. During internship I will endeavor to further form my pastoral identity and become engrained in the ways of a church leader from the clergy side of things. Finally, towards the end of internship, I will go for Approval, the final stage of candidacy and then will graduate and begin the First Call process.

All of your thoughts and prayers through the years to come are much appreciated. My thoughts and prayers will be with you all. I want to thank the members of my lay member committee, the confirmation students, and the worship lay leaders for letting me learn from all of them, hopefully I was able to teach you all something as well! Pastor Elizabeth and Pastor Tita, thank you for guiding and showing me in how to walk the walk as well as talk the talk of being a pastor. And thank you to every single person of this congregation who has welcomed me to St. Mark's and supported me, it means a lot. And now, just as I was really settling into the congregation, my time as teaching parish student comes to an end. Thank you and until-next-time!

Sincerely,

John Barton



John Barton's last Sunday at St. Mark's was November 20, 2016



SACRED ACTS AT ST. MARK'S

Memorial Service of Carl Velleno, November 6, 2016

SENIOR LUNCHEON IN HERITAGE HALL, JANUARY 12 AT NOON

All Seniors Welcome from St. Mark's and Martin Luther Tower. Cost: \$5.00

Please call the MLT office to reserve your place: 415 885-1084

Bring your \$5.00 to the MLT office prior to January 12 in order to reserve your spot.

The menu will include: Caesar salad, Chicken and dumplings, String beans, rice pilaf with grilled vegetables/tofu (for vegetarians), and an apple crumble for dessert.

COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

August 2016

- Received report from Jeremy McClain and Pr. Ekdale about their participation in the Grace Gathering and triennial ELCA Churchwide Assembly; they recommended that we watch the webcast by Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton (<https://youtu.be/0KhBWJKTmTc>)
- Passed motions to hire Winnie Heslin as Office Manager [title later amended to Director of Operations] and J. Jeff Badger as Events Administrator
- Approved recommendation of the Endowment Committee to fund four grants for the 2016 Endowment funding cycle: (1) \$2,000 to the Cordero de Dios Wall Construction Project, (2) \$800 to the Social Ministry/Holy Land Ministry Photography Exhibition, (3) \$700 to the Lutheran Church of Rwanda Women's Ministry, and (4) \$500 to the WELCA Saturday Morning Workshops
- Made amendments to language in the Safe Congregation Covenant, following feedback from well-attended trainings in June and July
- Appointed Greg Jahnke to the Call Committee

September 2016

- Approved recommendation of the Human Resources Committee of a 6% contribution rate to staff 403(b) funds
- Accepted the proposal of the Social Ministry Committee to sponsor and support the Humans of Palestine photo exhibit during Advent 2016
- Decided to support the Social Ministry Committee in exploring the work of the AMMPARO ("Accompany Migrant Minors with Protection, Advocacy, Resources and Opportunities") Initiative, which was approved by the ELCA at Churchwide Assembly in August
- Amended Pastor Tita Valeriano's contract to increase her weekly hours to 25 hours (50% FTE)

October 2016

- Previewed the new sanctuary floor and restored stained glass windows
- Recappped Oktoberfest and provided feedback for next year's event committee
- Received report from the Call Committee and passed motion allowing for up to \$5,000 of travel expenses for Call Committee interviews
- Received report from new Director of Operations Winnie Heslin regarding her vision for staff and status of some property projects, and from Stefani Lawrence about the columbarium

ST. MARK'S ANNUAL MEETING JANUARY 29TH

All members of St. Mark's are encouraged to attend the annual congregational meeting on Sunday, the 29th of January, starting immediately after the 11 o'clock worship service. A quorum is necessary to vote on several important items.

Some of the topics that will be discussed during the meeting include: an update on Call Committee, an update on installation of elevator in the church building adoption of 2017 budget, election of council members, St. Mark's involvement in AMMPARO ("Accompanying Migrant Minors with Protection, Advocacy, Representation and Opportunities") and many other ministry initiatives. Please do come and participate in the life and direction of our ministries together.

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/

www.facebook.com/stmarkssf/

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

Church Office Hours

Monday through Friday 9:00 am to 5:00 pm
415-928-7770

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

Winnie Heslin, Director of Operations...x2250...heslin@stmarks-sf.org

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

Jeremy McClain, Interim Events Administrator...x2290 events@stmarks-sf.org

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

Carl Storey, Security

Edda Mai Johnson, Nursery Coordinator

Elvira Markov & Johanna Najera, Nursery Attendants

Jenny Hart, Sunday School Coordinator

The Rev. Chuck Lewis, Visitation Pastor

Matt Helland, Church Council President...helland@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