

*Joyous
Wonder*

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



*Advent
Christmas
Epiphany
2018-2019*

Christmas
at
St Mark's
LUTHERAN CHURCH
Joyous Wonder

December 24, 2018

5:00PM

Christmas Pageant

Characters in the Christmas story brought to life with costumes, carols and candles

7:00PM

Candlelight, Communion, Carols

A Christmas Celebration with Lessons and Carols

10:00PM

*Choral variations on "Lo How a Rose E're Blooming"
from The Christmas Story by Hugo Distler*

10:30PM

Christmas Choral Eucharist

A Festive Celebration of God's Gift of Joyous Wonder

December 25, 2018

10:00AM

Christmas Festival Eucharist

*We celebrate God's Good News with Joyous Wonder
The community of Calvary Presbyterian
will be joining us.*

CALLING ALL ANGELS AND SHEPHERDS!

Calling all angels and shepherds for St. Mark's special Christmas Eve Pageant! 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 24 at 5pm. There will be two rehearsals - one on Saturday, December 15 beginning at 9am and one on Sunday, December 23 beginning at 10am. Be sure to mark your calendars! There are many more roles available including stage crew and costuming. If you are interested in being a part of this tradition, then please email Matt Helland at helland@nka.com.



ADVENT MIDWEEK SERVICES WEDNESDAY DEC. 5, 12 & 19

Dec. 5

Annual Advent Vespers with St. Mary's Cathedral

6 pm - Community Dinner

7 pm - St. Mark's Sanctuary

The combined choirs of St. Mark's and St. Mary's will again join in an Advent service of music and contemplation. The featured musical work this year will be Hugo Distler's lovely cantata *A Little Advent Music*, which is based on the beloved Advent hymn, "Savior of the Nations, Come."

Some of the other music featured will be:

Psalm 121 by Peter Hallock

Machet die Tore weit by Andreas Hammerschmidt,

O lux beatissima by Michael Helvey

Dec. 12

Holden Evening Prayer

One of our favorite evening liturgies - always meaningful

6 pm - Community Dinner

7 pm - St. Mark's Sanctuary

Dec. 19, 5:00 pm

"The Longest Night Contemplative Service"

We will worship at Calvary Presbyterian Church joining their congregation for the 5:00 – 6:00 service. Drive the cold winter away! Make room for the light soon reborn. Celebrate the coming of the Longest Night of 2018. Sing in the solstice with candlelight meditation, prayer, and stillness in the community of other human beings. A fireside reception will follow.

Childcare provided by reservation made before 12/14 by contacting alisonfaison@calpres.org

Note the location of this service is at
2515 Fillmore St. in Pacific Heights.

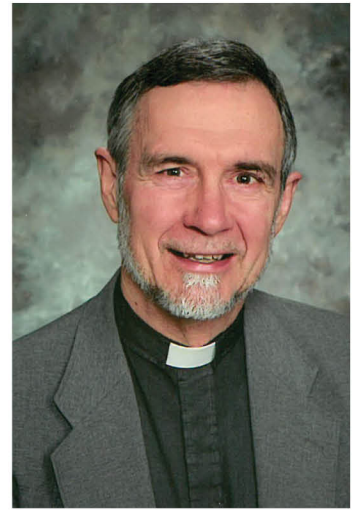
JOYOUS WONDER

To wonder can take us in so many different directions in our lives from the most mundane of circumstances to the most serious and profound situations. I wonder if the sun will shine tomorrow. I wonder if we will have a pop quiz in class tomorrow. I wonder if I will succeed in making that sale at work. I wonder if I will get what I asked for at Christmas. I wonder if my child will grow up to be a healthy and strong individual. I wonder if homelessness will ever go away. I wonder if we will ever be able to reverse the negative impact of global warming.

Building on the theme of our stewardship journey this fall—Joyous Generosity—we enter into these Advent, Christmas, and Epiphany seasons with an expectation that something wonderful is going to happen in terms of evoking greater joy in our lives. This expectation is not unfounded as we read in the first lesson assigned for the first Sunday in Advent, “The days are surely coming when I (Yahweh) will fulfill my promise . . .” and as we hear the author of the Gospel of Luke declare on the day after Jesus’ transfiguration, “And all were astounded at the greatness of God.”

Everything in between these two readings gives us pause to wonder with great joy about all that we have seen and heard, just as the shepherds responded on the night that they went to Bethlehem to see with their very own eyes this child who was wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger. Who was this child born of Mary and Joseph? Why is he referred to as being a savior of the world? What will Jesus reveal to us about how the salvation of the world will happen? What is the significance of Jesus’ baptism in light of our own baptism? When will Jesus fulfill his own announcement about the liberation of those who are oppressed and the implementation of the year of God’s favor?

Picking up on the old familiar carol, “I Wonder as I Wander,” I ask the question, “When and how will God fulfill the promise that was made at our baptism when we were called by God to turn from our evil ways (repentance), to become faithful disciples of Jesus, our Christ, to proclaim the good news of God’s beloved community, and to strive for justice and peace in all the Earth?” Every aspect of this calling may be a source of some fear and trembling in our lives. However, every time that we take another step in fulfilling any dimension of this calling, we also can count on experiencing some of the joy that Jesus promises to all of those who are willing to walk in this way of God’s love and peace that Jesus joyfully dedicated his life in revealing for the salvation of the whole world.



CHRISTMAS DECORATIONS



You are invited to contribute to St. Mark’s Christmas decorations in honor of or in memory of, a loved one. Look for a bulletin insert on Dec. 2, for more details. The insert may be completed and mailed to the church office or dropped in the offering plate on Sunday morning or online at: www.stmarks-sf.org/giveagift/. Your donations will go towards the cost of Christmas trees and poinsettias. Thank you for your holiday generosity!

Please send all donation information to the church office by Dec. 17

Senior Adults

SENIOR ADULTS FIELD TRIP – TUESDAY, DEC. 4

Let's go to Half Moon Bay! Please join Pr. Elizabeth for lunch at Barbara's Fish Trap in Half Moon Bay and then shopping in the quaint downtown shopping area. You will need money for your lunch and any shopping you might want to do. We will enjoy the beautiful drive along the coast and the views of the Pacific Ocean along the way.

Please sign up by calling the Martin Luther Tower office (415) 885-1084 or the church office (415) 928-7770. We will leave at 10:00 a.m. and return by 4:00 p.m.

ST. MARK'S CHRISTMAS PARTY FOR SENIORS – DEC. 7, 5:00 PM, IN HERITAGE HALL

All St. Mark's seniors are joyfully invited to an evening of delicious food, entertainment and holiday festivities along with the residents of Martin Luther Tower. This evening is free to St. Mark's members. If you would like to bring a guest, the cost is \$10.00 per guest. Please call the Martin Luther Tower office (415) 885-1084 to reserve your spot.

SENIOR LUNCHEON IN HERITAGE HALL, JANUARY 17 AT NOON

All Seniors are welcome from St. Mark's and Martin Luther Tower for a delicious hot lunch. Please call the Martin Luther Tower office (415 885-1084) to reserve your spot. Friends are always welcome too!

CHRISTMAS GIVING TREE

The Christmas Giving Tree at St. Mark's will be filled with tags for gifts that will be going to the children and youth at Bernal Gateway Apartments where Lutheran Social Services provides support services for the residents. They will be having a Christmas Party at the apartments for the families on Wednesday, December 12, and St. Mark's will be providing \$12 - \$15 gifts for the children and youth. Look for a tree in the narthex and Heritage Hall. Each tag on the tree will list the gender and age of a child at the apartments. Please take one or more tags, purchase a gift(s) that is age-appropriate, and put your gift (unwrapped) in one of the boxes in the narthex or Heritage Hall by Sunday, December 9. **Be sure to affix your tag securely to the gift.** Join in this Advent service and you will bring lots of joy to these children and youth.

BERNAL GATEWAY CHRISTMAS PARTY, DEC. 12

Members of St. Mark's will be assisting with the Christmas Party at Bernal Gateway Apartments (Mission & Cesar Chavez) on Wednesday, December 12, 5:30 – 7:00 p.m. The party will include a potluck meal by the residents and an offering of gifts from St. Mark's (see the Giving Tree article) for the children and youth who live there. If you would like to help with this event—setting up, serving at the meal, making a pie for the meal, or distributing gifts—please contact Jane Borg.

ADULT EDUCATION

SUNDAYS, 10:00 AM IN THE FIRESIDE ROOM

Every Sunday you are invited to grow in faith through Adult Education at St. Mark's. Forums are located in the Fireside room in the Urban Life Center unless otherwise noted.

DECEMBER FORUMS

Dec. 2 – 15 members of St. Mark's will share their experiences of visiting our Sister Parish, Cordero de Dios Lutheran Church, in El Salvador. Come and hear about their time with our brothers and sisters at Cordero de Dios. Location: Heritage Hall

Dec. 9 – Gisela and Doug Daetz are active Bay Area Lutherans and have recently visited Palestine/Israel. Come and hear about their experiences in the Holy Land.

Dec. 16 – Experience the joyous wonder of Advent and Christmas through carols, cookies and cider. Bring baked cookies to "exchange" with others! Sing a carol and enjoy this wondrous time together in Heritage Hall. Note – Dr. Tim Zerlang will lead us in caroling! Location: Heritage Hall

JANUARY FORUMS

Jan. 6 – Celebrate the Festival of Epiphany with Suzanne Smith and Pr. Elizabeth, camels, pageantry and King's Cakes! Learn about this festival and enjoy the celebration.

Jan. 13 – Should St. Mark's become a sanctuary congregation? This forum is the third opportunity to discern together this question.

Jan. 20 – Prepare for the Annual Meeting on the following Sunday by receiving your annual report, meeting nominees for Church Council, asking questions, and meeting leaders from St. Mark's ministries.

Jan 27 – No adult forum – come to the Annual Meeting at 12:15 in the Sanctuary

ST. MARK'S ANNUAL MEETING JANUARY 27

IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING THE 11:00 WORSHIP SERVICE IN THE SANCTUARY

We encourage all members and friends of St. Mark's to participate in this meeting by asking questions, voting on the annual budget and council members, hearing about the Annual Vision of Ministry for 2019, and celebrating our mission and ministries.

- Elect Council Members
- Reports and updates on Development, Governance work, Martin Luther Tower, and more.
- Receive the Annual Report from leaders and staff
- Adopt a mission plan (budget) for 2019
- Learn about St. Mark's impact in the community
- Vote on whether St. Mark's should become a Sanctuary Congregation

YOUTH AT ST. MARK'S

CONFIRMATION

We have 5 youth participating in our Confirmation ministry and have had a good start to this year with our exploration of the life and ministry of Jesus and the origin of the early Christian Church based upon Dan Erlander's book, "Manna & Mercy." As we begin the New Year, we will begin our examination of The Lord's Prayer and learn how each petition of this prayer is relevant for our lives.

HIGH SCHOOL YOUTH

The high-school youth continue to meet on a monthly basis on Sunday mornings at 10:00 a.m. as schedules permit. Erin Scheller coordinates this ministry and guides the youth in conversations whereby they get to know each other and discuss various topics relevant to their faith in daily lives.

A retreat sponsored by the Youth Committee of the Sierra-Pacific Synod will be held over the weekend of February 22 – 24. The retreat runs from Friday evening to Sunday afternoon, and will focus on the theme, "Light Shines in the Darkness." The keynote speaker is Desta Goehner, the Director of Congregational Relations at Cal Lutheran, who has spent much of her career in youth ministry and outdoor ministry. The cost of the retreat is \$140. Registration until January 30 is \$140. After that, the cost is \$175. Registration closes on February 14. Our high-school youth are encouraged to register for this retreat by going to www.spsyc.org.

SUNDAY SCHOOL SCHEDULE

December 2: Big Group: Advent activity.

December 23 and 30: No Sunday School

January 6: Big Group Community Service: Stockings for the Homeless

February 10: Big Group: Valentines for MLT and Lenten Box art.

March 10: Big Group: Mardi Gras/Lent observance.

March 24: Big Group: Pastor led lesson on the Sacraments

April 14: Big Group: Palm Sunday lesson and activity.

April 21: Easter: No Sunday School

April 28: Big Group: Passover meal and lesson.

May 19: Bay to Breakers, no Sunday School

May 26: Last day of Sunday School PARTY!!



St. Mark's Sunday School

PASTOR RON AT EN CUENTRO

Every three years, the Lutheran Church in El Salvador invites its global partners to come to El Salvador to assess how well the partnership has done in fulfilling the goals of the previous years, to hear about the current challenges to the church in El Salvador, and to decide upon the priorities of the partnership for the next 3 years. Pastor Ron participated in this conference known by the name of En Cuentro on behalf of St. Mark's as well as the Sierra-Pacific Synod. At least 50 people from 4 ELCA sister Synods, from sister congregations in the U.S., and from the Lutheran Church in Germany and Finland were present along with about 30 Salvadorans from their Synod and individual congregations in El Salvador.

The situation in El Salvador is dire. The government is plagued with corruption. Wealth is concentrated in the hands of 5 prominent families. Gangs control much of the economy, and are the source of so much extortion and violence throughout the country. The Church speaks out against the gangs, but then suffers the consequences. The Church also is trying to resist the privatization of water. The country is faced with repeated natural disasters, necessitating a proactive approach to deal with the traumatic impact on humans.

The goals of the Church include training and educating pastors and forming pastoral teams that include evangelists, deacons, presbyters, and therapists; focusing on youth and families; addressing the prevention and treatment of HIV; coordinating with 9 government agencies to address the humanitarian crisis; dealing with the trauma as the result of the previous war and current violence; and addressing the challenge of taking care of the Earth. We heard these priorities expressed at both the synodical level and the congregational level.

We spent a whole day brainstorming and narrowing down priorities for the next 3 years (2019 – 2021). A “writing team” will take all of these suggestions, consolidate them, get feedback from the participants, and then put together a final draft. These priorities were generated in three main categories: challenges for our partnership; best practices for staying connected; and strategies for a sustainable Church.

I was impressed at the vitality of the Church in El Salvador—so much energy, enthusiasm, and effort going into keeping the Church vibrant and relevant in a situational context that could be very defeating and depressing. Our sister relationship with Cordero de Dios is but one small piece of this partnership. For me, seeing all of the dedication of so many other congregations to this partnership was inspiring to me, along with the resilience of the people of El Salvador who have such a strong sense and commitment to being the presence of Christ's love in their land.

ST. MARK'S NEIGHBORHOOD GROUPS

By now, several of the neighborhood groups have met and have talked about future gatherings in terms of frequency and activity. The Outreach Team will continue to monitor this new emphasis, and offer support for those coordinators who would like some assistance in carrying out the intent and purpose of these groups which are fourfold: 1) creating an opportunity for people in their group to get to know each other; 2) assisting individuals who may need support during a crisis in their lives; 3) providing transportation for people who may need a ride to church; and 4) inviting friends to participate in your neighborhood gatherings as a way of introducing them to St. Mark's.

INTERFAITH HOMELESS SHELTER

St. Mark's will be participating in the San Francisco Interfaith Council Winter Shelter program and will be hosting January 13 to February 2.

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.



ST. MARK'S MEMBERS CELEBRATE 40 YEARS IN THE SAN FRANCISCO PRIDE PARADE

St. Mark's members participated in the annual San Francisco LGBTQ Pride Parade this summer: our 40th year witnessing to God's inclusive love! Marchers included adults, families with kids in tow, and clergy, all who donned colorful accessories, made their way from St. Mark's after first service through the crowds to line up for the parade downtown, arriving just in time to step off! We distributed high fives, smiles, and cards to thousands of observers as part of the contingent of the Sierra Pacific Chapter of ReconcilingWorks: Lutherans for Full Participation.

Our contingent's special guests for the 2018 parade included our own Bishop Mark Holmerud, Pacifica Synod Bishop Andy Taylor, and Southwestern California Bishop R. Guy Erwin, who waved to the crowd from atop a convertible driven by St. Mark's member Rommel Schiefelbein-Guerrero. Many in the crowd expressed their appreciation at pastors and bishops participating so visibly.

One of our marchers, Grace Ekdale-Hoch, looked around at the many ways contingents can interact with the crowd, and caught a vision to share the message of God's reconciling love and full inclusion in an even bigger, bolder way next year. Inspired by this vision, she applied for and was awarded a St. Mark's Endowment Fund grant to make her dream come to reality. Looking ahead to Pride Parade 2019, we anticipate an extra-colorful, extra-welcoming, extra-fun 41st year of participation! You are welcome to join us!



RECONCILINGWORKS! AT ST. MARK'S MINISTRY FAIR

St. Mark's Reconciling In Christ congregation status was on display at the ministry fair in September, with candy, buttons, rainbow-cross temporary tattoos, and literature for the congregation. If your ministry or neighborhood group would like materials to use in the community or for study and discussion, please contact Rev. Chuck Lewis, Dr. Kyle Schiefelbein-Guerrero, or Cora Rose. And if you meant to sign up as a Reconciling Lutheran as a member of the Sierra Pacific Chapter of ReconcilingWorks in 2018, there's still time to get in touch with any of us or check out www.reconcilingworks.org/membership (indicate "Sierra Pacific Chapter" as your chapter).



SANCTUARY TASK FORCE: SHOULD ST. MARK'S BE A SANCTUARY CONGREGATION?

Members of St. Mark's are talking with the Sanctuary Task Force and sharing information and thoughts at "Town Meetings". Here are some of the questions we are asking.

1. What does Sanctuary look like in the 21st century?
2. We are an ELCA AMMPARO Welcoming Congregation. What would be the difference if we were a Sanctuary Congregation?
3. Would we house immigrants or protect them from deportation?
4. What are the legal issues of Sanctuary?
5. Can we work with other Sanctuary Congregations or immigrant resource agencies, or would we be a Sanctuary Congregation alone?
6. What are the financial costs?
7. What are the staffing and volunteering requirements?

Here is a discussion of Sanctuary in the 21st century and possible roles of Sanctuary Congregations.



EVERY HUMAN PERSON IS SACRED ACROSS ALL BORDERS

What does Sanctuary Look Like Today?

A public, corporate commitment to walk alongside immigrants, mixed-status families, refugees and other targeted communities to uphold the dignity, due process and full acceptance and participation of all people in our society through protection, support and advocacy. Congregations can write their own statement of sanctuary to reflect what they specifically will do.

Here are 4 ways Congregations are demonstrating their commitment to Sanctuary:

Advocacy:

- Advocate at the Local, State and National level for policies that protect the due process of immigrants and promote their full dignity and integration into our local communities.
- Advocating for policies which help to prevent mass deportation and fear by creating clear separation between ICE and local law enforcement and civic institutions, for example strong sanctuary city and county policies.
- Engage in local public actions and activities to shift public discourse towards immigrants, Muslims, and refugees, and bring attention to our responsibility to address root causes.

Accompaniment of Immigrant Families or Youth:

Individuals and congregations can immediately help accompany immigrants in urgent situations and need of accompaniment. This can include newly arrived migrant families, unaccompanied minors, people facing deportation crisis, those just released from detention centers. Trained volunteers can help to provide courtroom accompaniment, access to services, and concrete and emotional support and/or transitional housing to help those in a period of crisis.

Networks of Protection & Rapid Response:

- Join a Rapid Response Network to respond to ICE workplace raids, home raids or other enforcement activity.
- Connect with targeted communities to help develop relationship and networks of protection.

Physical Sanctuary for someone facing Final Deportation:

- Discern if your congregation would be willing to offer Sanctuary for a person facing final deportation orders in a humanitarian emergency. These are often people who have been long-term residents, already have children, family, and community ties to the area, and have exhausted all other legal options to remain in the United States.
- By offering Sanctuary, your congregation is willing to offer physical sanctuary on *religious property*, as a way to protect them from the reach of ICE. Your congregation would be supported by other congregations and community groups committing to be part of a local network of Sanctuary by assisting with hospitality, protection, and advocacy.
- Provide hospitality housing in your home or congregation to a newly arrived immigrant or asylum seeker so that they can get on their feet and seek due process.

For more information contact sanctuary@im4humanintegrity.org

Sanctuary Page & Map of Sanctuary Congregations: www.im4humanintegrity.org/sanctuary

National Sanctuary Resources & Legal Toolkit: www.sanctuarynotdeportation.org

ACLU Sanctuary FAQ: tinyurl.com/ACLUsanctuaryFAQ

Sign or adapt the national sanctuary pledge: bit.ly/sanctuarypledge

Continue to prayerfully consider and share your thoughts about the possibility that St. Mark's would become a Sanctuary Congregation.

St. Mark's Sanctuary Task Force

Laura Evenson

Kimberly Hamilton Lam

Jason Jennings

Pastor Ron Moe-Lobeda

Mary Ritter

Cora Rose

ST. MARK'S CHURCH LIBRARY CATALOG DIGITIZATION

Did you know that St. Mark's has a church library? It's housed in the Conference Room in the Urban Life Center, and thanks to the efforts of some fellow member book-lovers, you'll soon be able to browse the catalog and request books for borrowing. Volunteers sorted, scanned, and stamped hundreds of titles at a library spruce-up work party in September. A Thrivent Action Grant provided the software and labeling supplies, including our nifty scanner. Now that the catalog is digitized, a couple members are setting to work creating spine labels and sorting by the Dewey Decimal System - just like at your school or community library! Once the titles are labeled and ready for check-out we'll host a library open house with recommended titles for children and adults.

- Can't wait for the project's completion to borrow something? No problem! Ask Cora Rose or Marisa Lee - either library volunteer can let you in and mark the book as borrowed.
- Have an "overdue" book to return? Please pass it to Cora or Marisa, or place on the piano with a note, so we can scan and appropriately shelve. No late fines will be assessed - there's abundant grace!
- Want to donate a title? We appreciate your desire to share a book or resource. Before bringing items to church, we ask that you please check in with Marisa and Cora about the item. We'll cross-check the catalog and confer with library volunteers about whether there's a place for it in the St. Mark's library, or suggest other faith-based collections that may be able to provide a home for it.



WHAT'S HAPPENING IN THE HOLY LAND IN 2018?

Our national news has been full of the disruptive and destructive events in Jerusalem and Gaza, but the “little town of Bethlehem,” where the majority of Christians live, warrants little or no mention by the media. In the Church, however, especially at Advent, we pay special attention to Bethlehem, the birthplace of Jesus and our Christian faith.

St. Mark's participates locally with fellow Lutherans and other faith communities in nonviolent actions and educational events to build justice, advocacy and peace in the Holy Land through groups such as Bright Stars of Bethlehem, Churches for Middle East Peace (CMEP), Friends of Sabeel in North America (FOSNA) and the ELCA's “Peace not Walls.” Just how can people of St. Mark's take part personally? Everyone is welcome at any and all events, and to pursue learning at home and online. In our church community, let's start with our Adult Forums:

Last May, Pr. Tita Valeriano, who had visited Palestine/Israel in 2017 on an in-depth study tour with FOSNA-SABEEL, opened our eyes with her slides and presentation about the on-going and relentless construction of walls by the Israeli government throughout occupied Palestine, and other efforts to handicap the economic and cultural survival of the Palestinian people, exclude them from sharing the biblical land, and pressure them to emigrate - which Palestinians stubbornly refuse to do. On **December 9** the Adult Forum welcomes Gisela and Doug Daetz, fellow Lutherans who participated in a recent Holy Land tour by Bright Stars of Bethlehem. Their slides and report on life in Palestine may well tweak your curiosity about travelling there yourself!

For a thought-provoking visual treat, take time to walk to Clarion Alley in the Mission District between 17th and 18th Streets and between Mission and Valencia. Muralists from Indonesia and San Francisco in an international exchange program have created three impressive and powerful murals dedicated to victims in Gaza and to Palestinian leaders in their long quest for peace in the Holy Land.

St. Mark's partners with Bright Stars of Bethlehem (BSB), a nonprofit organization that educates and fund-raises for Dar al Kalima University College of Arts and Culture in Bethlehem. Palestinian Lutheran pastor Dr. Mitri Raheb founded this college (DAK) following the 2003 construction of the Separation Wall surrounding Bethlehem today. His vision was to inspire hope for the future and strengthen students' pride in their Palestinian identity and culture; its motto is “HOPE IS WHAT WE DO!”

In November Dr. Raheb was featured speaker at the Pacific School of Religion in Berkeley, reporting on Bright Stars' October conference held in Houston: “Jerusalem: What Makes for Peace?” Many local church people heard Dr. Raheb in person, and the full report and many interviews with this internationally renowned leader are available at mitriraheb.org or www.brightstarsbethlehem.org

St. Mark's participates with Bright Stars of Bethlehem/Bay Area in raising scholarship funds for the students of Dar al Kalima College. This year's goal is \$50,000 from Bay Area churches and individual donors (\$100,000 nationally), to be raised through donations and a raffle of wonderful prizes. The **Advent To Epiphany** campaign culminates at Berkeley's Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary (PLTS) with a joyful celebration on **Sunday, January 6**. Your contribution of any amount makes you a Wise Man or Wise Woman of the West, bringing hope to Bethlehem youth! Details will be forthcoming in Sunday bulletins and Facebook; and you can follow all the college's exciting developments in Bethlehem at www.brightstarsbethlehem.org.

So if you are wondering about Palestine, and looking for ways to do something positive, ask to be added to our **Palestine-Israel group mailing list** for on-going information and news. Check out the events mentioned here, our St. Mark's Sunday Adult Forums, the above organizations and their websites to continue to LEARN, discover how and what to ADVOCATE for, and then consider how you personally might SUPPORT fellow Christians in Palestine and Israel with your dollars, time, talents and prayers – or even a visit!

The Holy Land Ministry

WELCOME THE STRANGER --REFUGEES, PEOPLE ON THE MOVE ESCAPING VIOLENCE AND WAR

Reading the Christmas story in the Bible about the Holy Family fleeing to Egypt to escape death by the Emperor's edict, we are reminded of the huge number of refugees in our world. We are inspired to welcome and assist them in their quest for safety and a new beginning. With the unending need, we participate in ecumenical efforts to make a difference where we can.

Thus St. Mark's became involved with our Synod's AMMPARO program (see the report elsewhere in the VOICE); and we are also active in **San Francisco Interfaith Refugee Welcome Committee**. One of the ways that SF Interfaith Welcome has acted is to partner with Zion Lutheran Church in sponsoring a concert series (four per year) to benefit refugees being resettled in the Bay Area by two of the national resettlement agencies: IRC and HIAS. (Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service (LIRS) does not work in the Bay Area so we work with these other similar agencies.).

The money from these concerts has served refugee middle school girls in Oakland from diverse countries, and also destitute refugees who are stuck in refugee camps on the island of Lesbos, Greece. Donations to Interfaith Welcome reach the refugees either through the IRC or overseas through the Sea of Solidarity, a nonprofit started by a young woman of Silicon Valley. You can learn more about her nonprofit at www.seaofsolidarity.org. Join us to help plan these concerts and other ecumenical projects to benefit refugees here and abroad! Call the church office or drop a note in the collection plate at worship to indicate your interest. Watch for announcements about the next two concerts at Zion Lutheran in 2019, and plan to support this very worthy cause of relieving human suffering among some of the world's most needy people.

ST. MARK'S DELEGATION VISIT TO CORDERO DE DIOS, NOV. 20-25



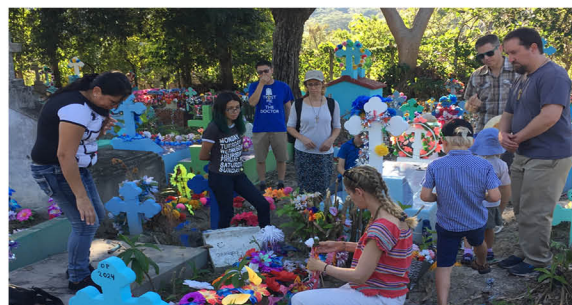
Relationship building at Cordero de Dios Lutheran Church



St. Mark's delegation coming home after our visit with Cordero de Dios congregation in El Salvador



Archbishop Romero continues to influence the people of El Salvador. He was assassinated March 24, 1980



Decorating the grave of Wendy - a member of Cordero de Dios who was killed a few years ago.

2018 ST. MARK'S ENDOWMENT GRANTS ANNOUNCED

The St. Mark's Endowment Fund was established in 2011 as a way to give donors the ability to create a long-lasting legacy in support of the ministry and mission of St. Mark's. To date, the St. Mark's Endowment Committee has awarded more than \$23,000 in grants for initiatives benefitting St. Mark's and the broader community.



The Committee is pleased to announce the following recipients of 2018 grants from the St. Mark's Endowment Fund:

- St. Mark's Community Garden to support its refurbishment
- ReconcilingWorks Sierra Pacific to increase the group's visual identity as they march in the SF Pride Parade
- St. Mary and Martha Lutheran Church in San Francisco to support their program providing assistance to immigrants
- Mariposa Lutheran Church in Mariposa to support their after-school program for high risk, low income and LGBTQ children and youth
- Christ Lutheran Institute of the Performing Arts (CLIPArts) in Visalia, CA to support their performing arts program for low-income, at-risk children
- Advent Lutheran Church in Morgan Hill, CA to support their Beloved Community Arts Center providing a youth music program in partnership with the local LatinX community
- Asociacion para la Diversidad Sexual en El Salvador (ALDES) to support media training in El Salvador for local journalists to provide tools and raise awareness on reporting that is sensitive to the LGBTQ community
- Rukundo Foundation in Rwanda, to support providing basic school supplies to street children

These, and all previous Endowment grants, were made possible by the generous gifts of former and current members of the congregation to the Fund. When you are considering your charitable giving or estate planning, we hope you will keep the St. Mark's Endowment Fund in mind as a way to support creative, innovative and new ideas to further St. Mark's mission long into the future.

ST. MARK'S FOOD PANTRY

This ministry at the host site, Old First Presbyterian Church, is an excellent opportunity for members of St. Mark's on a Saturday morning to participate in the distribution of food at least 8 times throughout the year to people who are in need of supplementary food. The food is provided by the SF/Marin Food Bank and is delivered on Saturday morning to be distributed to over 300 patrons on any given day.

Serving at the Food Pantry also is a good opportunity for members of St. Mark's to be in fellowship with one another and to know that they are in this ministry together. St. Mark's volunteers have the opportunity to serve during 3 shifts:

- | | |
|--------------------|--|
| 7:30 – 9:00 a.m. | Unload the palettes of food into the distribution room |
| 9:00 – 10:30 a.m. | Distribute the food to patrons in six 15-minute shifts |
| 10:30 – 11:30 a.m. | Clean up |



St. Mark's distribution dates for the first half of 2019 are: Jan. 26, March 9, April 13, & June 1. People of all ages, including children and youth, are welcome to participate. If you would like to volunteer for any Saturday or have your name put on the contact list, you may contact Diana Gomez at dianamrgomez@mindspring.com or (415) 533-5205.

ST. MARK'S ADOPTS UPDATED WELCOME STATEMENT

St. Mark's is among hundreds of Reconciling in Christ congregations and ministries that have extended a specific invitation to LGBTQ people to participate fully in the life of the church. (Learn more at www.reconcilingworks.org) In fact, St. Mark's was among the first congregations to adopt a welcome statement! ReconcilingWorks national asked our congregation to revisit our "legacy" welcome statement this year to ensure that people of all gender identities and sexual orientations were included. Council approved the updated version provided by Reconciling in Christ ministry members in June 2018:

As a community of the people of God, we are called to minister to all people of our world, knowing that the world is often an unloving place. Our world is a place of alienation and brokenness. Christ calls us to reconciliation and wholeness. We are challenged by the Gospel to be agents of healing within our society. We affirm with the apostle Paul that in Christ "there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female" (Galatians 3:28). Christ has made us one. We acknowledge this reconciliation extends to people of all gender identities and sexual orientations. Because lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender persons are often scorned by society and alienated from the Church, we wish to make known our caring and concern. It is for this purpose that St. Mark's Lutheran Church affirms:

- People of all gender identities and sexual orientations share the worth that comes from being unique individuals created by God;
- People of all gender identities and sexual orientations are welcome within the membership of this congregation upon making a common, public affirmation of faith; and
- As members of this congregation, people of all gender identities and sexual orientations are expected and encouraged to share in the sacramental and general life of this congregation.

MLT UPDATE

The long hoped for window replacement project has begun at MLT. Double-paned new windows will replace the 50-year old single-paned window, in a project that will take about three years to complete. This will provide sound reduction and better weather protection for the tenants. Vents in all the apartments were recently cleaned to improve air quality and safety within the apartment building. New spacers between pavement section have been added to the Plaza, removing the hazard presented by missing and rotten ones. Tree thinning on the Square and gutter cleaning for ULC are also major maintenance items in process for improvement at our great property. Senior lunches are always a great draw. All seniors and MLT residents should put the Christmas Party on December 7 on their calendars...food and music always a good idea!

The MLT Board continues to work alongside the St. Mark's Council to improve their governance and how they can work more effectively as organizations for the future of St. Mark's Square.

Do you know someone in the church who might make a great trustee for MLT? Talk to Pastor Ekdale if you would like to know more or if you have suggestions.



CAPITAL CAMPAIGN UPDATE – FINISH STRONG!

On Sunday, September 20, 2015, at a special meeting of the congregation, St. Mark's members approved a 3-year Capital Campaign to raise money for installing an elevator, replacing flooring in the sanctuary, and restoring the stained art glass windows in our sanctuary. In addition, we voted to tith 10% of monies received to the ELCA Always Being Made New campaign.



Here we are, three years later, at the end of our three-year campaign. We have a newly installed elevator, restored windows, and new flooring in our sanctuary. Thanks be to God!

As we conclude the campaign and pay our final bills to our contractors and vendors, we invite everyone who made a commitment to the campaign to fulfill their pledge. Currently, we have \$76,781 dollars still outstanding from commitments made by members and friends. PLEASE fulfill your commitment so we can conclude the campaign, pay our bills, and be able to finalize our income and expense report for the Congregational Meeting on January 27, 2019.

Thank you to everyone who contributed to the success of our Capital Campaign. THANK YOU!

A NOTE REGARDING YOUR END OF YEAR GIVING AND 2019 FINANCIAL COMMITMENTS

As the end of the year approaches, we invite you to fulfill your 2018 commitment to St. Mark's ministries. If you are in the position of making a end of year gift to St. Mark's ministries, we will make good use of it! We thought this might be a good time

- Checks must be dated within the current year AND the envelope the donation is mailed in must be postmarked no later than December 31, 2018 to be counted as a 2018 donation.
- Credit and Debit Card donations must be marked with a December 31, 2018 processing date to be considered eligible for a 2018 tax deduction.

If you plan on making a Stock Donation in 2018, please contact us at the St. Mark's Accounting email (accounting@stmarks-sf.org).

Thank you to those who have turned in your 2019 Financial Commitment. If you haven't done so yet, please turn in your commitment card by placing it in the offering plate, mailing it to the church office or filling it out online at www.stmarks-sf.org/giveagift/.

Thank you for your generous and continued support of St. Mark's Lutheran Church. All gifts are welcome!

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.

Women's Book Group on the First Tuesday from 6:30pm to 8:30pm in the Conference Room or alternately on Saturday from 10:00am to noon in the Conference Room. Refreshments will be served. We will meet to discuss on:

- Tuesday Dec. 4 at 6:30pm – *Stories from a South African Childhood* by Trevor Noah
- Saturday, Jan. 12 at 10:00am - *The Circuit: Stories from the Life of a Migrant Child* by Francisco Jimenez
- Tuesday, Feb. 5 at 6:30pm – Bring and Share your Favorite Novel

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 study will center on the Gospel of John.

- Dec. 11 – Christmas Luncheon
- Jan. 8 – Come and See: Seeking and Finding Faith
- Feb. 12 – By Night and Day: Coming to Faith in Jesus

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

ST. MARK'S CHURCH COUNCIL HIGHLIGHTS FOR FALL/WINTER 2018

- St. Mark's council retreated to Mercy Center in Burlingame, CA in September for discernment and formation of 3 annual goals for St. Mark's Lutheran Church and 3 Open questions for further congregational exploration. This important fall planning is the start of the Annual Cycle of planning to assist with the Budget, Ministry and Staff goals.
- Council has implemented many recommendations from our Governance consultant and established a more efficient meeting structure focused on one vote for consent agenda items to allow more in depth discussion time for Discussion agenda items.
- Thank you to Steve Ernst for all his hard work, humor and dedication in his role of treasurer during the past few years; he will complete his term in January.
- Council has supported the decisions of the Endowment Committee for the many meaningful grants that St. Mark's Lutheran Church Endowment Fund was able to provide.
- Council reviewed policies and approved the updates of our Employee handbook to be in compliance as an employer in San Francisco.
- Council, and especially Kate Knickerbocker, have worked closely with attorney Erin Bradrick of NEO law firm for our church body (e.g. protecting of non-profit status, working relationship with Martin Luther Tower inc.).
- Council members were nominated to serve on the Nominating Committee to assist in vacant council positions. A special thank you to: Jane Borg (current council member), Steve Ernst (outgoing council member) and Pastor Ekdale who serve on this committee. Council and the committee are in search of a congregational member at large to complete the committee. Please consider service on Council as able; this is a very important and meaningful time to serve. Please speak with any Council member if you have questions about service.
- Please view meeting minutes at the end of each month on the Council bulletin board outside of the nursery or e-mail cristinowens@gmail.com.

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



WINTER CONCERTS AT ST. MARK'S

Cal Bach Society

Fri, Nov 30, 2018 • 8:00pm

Buon Natale: *Five centuries of Italian Christmas music*
www.calbach.org

New Esterhazy Quartet

Sat, Dec 1, 2018 • 4:00 PM

Kati Kyme and Lisa Weiss, violin; Anthony Martin, viola; and William Skeen, cello. Schubert's Epic Song Cycle *Die Winterreise*, arranged for strings. With Paul Max Tipton, baritone, and Kristin Zoernig, double bass.

www.newesterhazy.org

SF Early Music Society

Sun, Dec 2, 2018 • 4:00pm

CAPPELLA SF: Neither from Heaven nor from Earth: Works of Schütz, Josquin, Couperin, and Allegri

Ragnar Bohlin, Director

sfems.org

St. Mark's Lutheran Church: Advent Vespers with St. Mary's Cathedral

Wed, Dec 5, 2018 • 7:00pm

www.stmarks-sf.org

Musae

Sat, Dec 8, 2018 • 3:00 PM

Dancing Day!

Musae celebrates Christmas with John Rutter's traditional cycle of carols, *Dancing Day*, in collaboration with harpist Anna Maria Mendieta. Alongside these joyful carols, Musae will present Renaissance motets by Handl and Victoria and settings of the Song of Songs by Estonian composer Tõnu Kõrvits. These songs celebrating joy and love will leave you with your heart open to the wonders of the season.

www.musae.org

Ana Vidovic, Solo Classical Guitar

Sat, Dec 8, 2018 • 7:30pm

Croatian guitarist Ana Vidovic is an extraordinary talent known for her beautiful tone, precise technique, well-defined phrasing and thoughtful artistry. Always a fantastic performance!

Presented in association with Omni Concerts and San Francisco Performances.

omniconcerts.com

SF Choral Artists

Sun, Dec 9, 2018 • 4:00pm

[Jingle! Angels! Silent! Merry!](#)

Celebrate the holidays by decking the halls with new traditions! Beloved seasonal music from around the world, from sublime to silly, old to new, and with (optional) audience singing. Works by Grieg, Howells, Taverner, Hassler, Puerling, Willan, Praetorius, Conte, Poulenc and others and new favorites for the years ahead. Introducing our *Composers-in- and Not-in-Residence*, [Jean Ahn](#) and [Robinson McClellan](#).

www.sfca.org

Sunset Youth Orchestra

Sat, Dec 15, 2018 • 3:00pm

sunsetyouthorchestra.com

International Orange Chorale

Sat, Dec 15, 2018 • 7:30pm

[Freshly Squeezed: San Francisco Concert](#)

Save the date for our third Freshly Squeezed concert series! Freshly Squeezed is a regular feature of IOCSF's concert schedule in which our programs focus on newly written (world or area premiere) choral music from upcoming choral composers. This season's program will feature pieces by Stacy Garrop, Nathan Hall, Gordon Hamilton, Bo Holten, Frank LaRocca, Jonathan Posthuma, Mike Roberts, Mike Sheppard, Patricia Van Ness, and IOCSF's 2018 Composer-in-Residence, Mari Esabel Valverde.

www.iocsf.org

Sacred and Profane

Sun, Dec 16, 2018 • 4:00pm

HEAVENLY SPHERES: SACRED MUSIC OF THE NIGHT SKY

Gaze into the stars with Sacred and Profane as we sing sacred works about the night sky. This ethereal program will feature works by Hildegard, Victoria, Lange-Müller, Grieg, Olsson, Kverno, and Poulenc. We will also sing exciting pieces by living composers, including Shawn Crouch's *The Light of the Common Day*, Nico Muhly's *Bright Star Carol*, and Jonathan Dove's *Seek Him That Maketh the Seven Stars*. We are thrilled to be joined by the renowned organist Jonathan Dimmock for this moving holiday concert.

www.sacredprofane.org

Voices of Music

Sat, Dec 22, 2018 • 8:00pm

Virtuoso Baroque Trumpet and Violin

Concertos: Dominic Favia, Lisa Grodin, Katherine Heater, Kati Kyme, Augusta McKay Lodge, Carla Moore, Farley Pearce, Hanneke van Proosdij, David Tayler, Tanya Tomkins, William Skeen, Amy Wang, Gabrielle Wunsch & Alana Youssefian

www.voicesofmusic.org

San Francisco Early Music Society

Sun, Jan 13, 2019 • 4:00pm

ARS LYRICA HOUSTON CHAMBER PLAYERS

Semper Phantasticus!

Semper Phantasticus explores that most avant-garde mode of music-making among German composers of the 17th and early 18th centuries, with extravagant works for violin, viola da gamba, and harpsichord. All three instruments are featured individually and in combination on this program, in sonatas by Dietrich Buxtehude and Heinrich Ignaz Franz Biber, two of the best-known exponents of the “fantastical style,” alongside free works by August Kerzinger, Philipp Heinrich Erlebach, Johann Jakob Walther, and Johann Sebastian Bach.

ARS LYRICA HOUSTON CHAMBER PLAYERS: Matthew Dirst, *Director*; Elizabeth Blumenstock, *baroque violin*; Mary Springfels, *viola da gamba*; Matthew Dirst, *harpsichord*

sfems.org

Polina Rushinsky Piano Recital

Sun, Jan 20, 2019 • 2:00pm

Voices of Music

Sat, Jan 26, 2019 • 8:00pm

Musical Crossroads: The sounds of Western and non-Western instruments playing music from 14-18 centuries from America, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Ireland, Bulgaria, Quebec, Scotland and Slovenia, as well as a new work by Dutch-American composer Hanneke van Proosdij. Cheryl Ann Fulton, harps; Imamyar Hasanov, kamancha; Peter Maund, percussion; Laura Risk & Alana Youssefian, fiddle and baroque violin; William Skeen, viola da gamba; David Tayler, lute; Hanneke van Proosdij, recorder and harpsichord.

www.voicesofmusic.org

New Esterhazy Quartet

Sat, Feb 2, 2019 • 4:00 PM

Music by Georg Reutter, Nicola Porpora, JJ Fux, CPE Bach, & Haydn

www.newesterhazy.org

NEXT VOICE DEADLINE

The next Voice deadline is Jan. 21, 2019, and will cover February, March, April, and May. The issue will contain highlights from the Annual Meeting, and information about Lent, Holy Week, and Easter. Please send all submissions to Stefani at lawrence@stmarks-sf.org by Jan 21 to include your submission in the Newsletter. Thank you!

SACRED ACTS AT ST. MARK'S

Memorial of: Elbert “Sig” Sigafos



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

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 - 9:00AM to 5:00PM

415-928-7770

Staff

Extension

Email

The Rev. Elizabeth E. Ekdale, Lead Pastor	2300	ekdale@stmarks-sf.org
The Rev. Ron Moe-Lobeda, Associate Pastor	2460	moe-lobeda@stmarks-sf.org
Dr. Timothy Zerlang, Director of Music	2330	zerlang@stmarks-sf.org
Winnie Heslin, Director of Operations	2250	heslin@stmarks-sf.org
Bob Martinez, Property Manager	2270	martinez@stmarks-sf.org
Stefani Lawrence, Communications & Media Coordinator	2260	lawrence@stmarks-sf.org
Deidre Rettenmaier, Events Administrator	2290	events@stmarks-sf.org
Bookkeeper/Accountant	2320	accounting@stmarks-sf.org
Mark Semonian, Council President		semonian@stmarks-sf.org
Edda Mai Johnson, Nursery Coordinator		nursery@stmarks-sf.org
Delia Whitfield, Nursery Attendant		
Carl Storey, Security		
Jenny Hart, Sunday School Coordinator		
The Rev. Chuck Lewis, Visitation Pastor		

Reconciling in Christ

St. Mark's Lutheran Church is a Reconciling in Christ congregation. We are one of over 800 worshipping communities, 29 synods, and nine organizations across the ELCA and 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.

Other Important Numbers

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