



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

*Gloria*

Advent

Christmas

Epiphany

**2019 – 2020**



CHRISTMAS AT  
*St Mark's*  
LUTHERAN CHURCH

*Gloria*

## December 24, 2019

5:00 p.m.

### CHRISTMAS PAGEANT

The Christmas story brought to life with a "live" pageant, carols, and candles

7:00 p.m.

### CAROLS, COMMUNION, CANDLELIGHT

A Christmas celebration with lessons and carols

10:00 p.m.

### PRE-SERVICE MUSIC

Christmas favorites old and new for choir, brass and organ

10:30 p.m.

### CHRISTMAS CHORAL WORSHIP

A festive celebration of God's glory incarnate in the Christ Child

## December 25, 2019

10:00 a.m.

### CHRISTMAS FESTIVAL EUCHARIST

We celebrate God's Word made flesh in Jesus Christ



## Calling all Wise Ones, Angels, Shepherds, and Production Assistants!

St. Mark's has a longstanding tradition of celebrating Christmas Eve with a one-of-a-kind Christmas Pageant at the 5:00 pm Christmas Eve Service. This multi-generational production provides an opportunity for all members and friends of St. Mark's to help tell the Christmas story. We are looking for cast members—from Sheep to Shepherds to Wise Ones—and are also looking for behind-the-scenes help. We would love to have you as part of the production! Rehearsals are **Saturday, December 14** from 9:00 a.m. until 12:00 p.m. and **Sunday, December 22** from 10:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m. Lunch will be served on Sunday, December 22. If you are interested, please contact Matt Helland at [helland@nka.com](mailto:helland@nka.com).

## Annual Advent Vespers

**Sunday, December 8, 4 pm, St. Mary's Cathedral**

We are all invited to participate in this wonderful liturgy of music and scripture, contemplating the advent of Our Lord as dusk settles around us in the beautiful environment of St. Mary's Cathedral, our neighbor across Gough Street. Our very own St. Mark's choir will join the musicians of the Cathedral under the direction of Chris Tietze, Director of Music at St. Mary's. This seasonal tradition is not to be missed—mark you calendar today!

## Midweek Advent Worship and Fellowship

For three Wednesdays in Advent (**December 4, 11, & 18**), we will be gathering around an evening meal in Heritage Hall (**6:00 – 6:45 p.m.**), followed by worship at **7:00 p.m.** We will be using Holden Evening Prayer (Vespers) for our liturgy, which will include a Scripture reading and brief reflection. We will gather for cider and cookies afterward as people transition to choir rehearsal and **Journeys in Faith at 7:30**. You may want to consider joining the choir for the Advent/Christmas season or participating in Journeys in Faith and renewing your faith as a member along with others who are pursuing their desire to become members of St. Mark's.

## Midweek Worship and Fellowship in Epiphany

Our midweek fellowship will continue in the new year on **Wednesday evenings** as we gather for an evening meal (**6:00 p.m.**) and simple worship service (**7:00 p.m.**), followed at 7:30 by Journeys in Faith, choir rehearsal, and other educational opportunities (TBD). We want to continue and bolster our offerings on Wednesday evenings in order to build up this body of Christ that we know as St. Mark's. If you have any suggestions about what you might be interested in exploring or discussing, please let Pastor Ron or Pastor Elizabeth know. Plan to make these Wednesday evenings a renewed priority in your life and join in the celebration of the Epiphany season!





# Gloria



Pastor Elizabeth Eckdale

"And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, 'Glory to God in the highest and peace to all people on earth!'" Gloria to God or Gloria in excelsis (Latin) is a response of praise and wonder and awe to the angel's announcement of good news. The angels are guiding us this Christmas season—to respond to the good news of Christ's birth with praise and thanksgiving. This is the response of the faithful—from hearts yearning to receive this good news of great joy. Gloria! Nothing else is asked of us but to respond with praise. Gloria!

Now, the world tells us something different. 'Tis the season of shopping, gift buying, over-indulging, commercialism, and acquiring more. Where is the praise in fighting the crowds at the mall in order to purchase one more something? Who experiences thanksgiving while shopping anyway?

I invite you during this upcoming Christmas season to find a way to praise God for the good news of great joy born in Jesus. Shouting "Gloria" from the rooftop may not be for you. How do you give praise to God for what God has done in the birth of Jesus? Let's follow the shepherds after they heard the angels sing their glorias:

"Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place." ... So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger.... The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen."

The shepherds didn't keep this good news of great joy a secret—for "all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them." They shared this good news—they spoke about what they saw in the manger, they told the story again and again of the heavenly multitude appearing to them—to them! Lowly shepherds! God's good news of great joy was delivered first to shepherds and the shepherds could not help themselves but give praise and glory and honor to God.

I encourage you to be more shepherd-like in your response to this good news of great joy. Spend time in your Christmas preparations and the 12 days of Christmas, glorifying and praising God through worship, giving generously of your time and financial gifts to worthy causes, shopping less and being more present with your loved ones, teaching your children about the true meaning of Christmas, modeling kindness and compassion as Jesus embodied, and living a life of service in Jesus' name. Praising God can occur in a multitude of different ways—your own unique way as you respond to the angel's glorious announcement, "For unto you is born this day in the City of David a Savior, Christ the Lord." And let the entire heavenly host chime in together, "Gloria"!

Peace,

Pastor Elizabeth

# New Goals and Open Questions for 2020

The Congregation Council met in October for our Annual Planning retreat. This retreat is an opportunity to reflect on the 2019 Open Questions and Goals and to discern new questions and goals for 2020.

During our Annual Congregational meeting on January 26, 2020, the congregation will receive a report on the Open Question conversations and Annual Goals for 2019. In addition, the Council will present to the congregation these three new goals and open questions for 2020.

Your input, participation, and reflection on these goals and questions are welcome and appreciated as we focus the congregation's energy and vision on these goals and questions.

## 2020 Goals

- 1 Increase the financial stability of St. Mark's by maximizing the use of its facilities through housing of non-profit organizations.
- 2 Provide opportunities for members to be known and deepen connections in order to build up the Body of Christ.
- 3 Create educational opportunities to study racism in our society and the church in order to support our mission of bowing welcoming to all people.

## 2020 Open Questions

- 1 How will we attract existing and new members to regular attendance in worship and active participation in ministries?
- 2 What is our vision for the use of space designated to St. Mark's in future development per our church council's guiding principles?
- 3 To what ministry with youth and children is St. Mark's called in years to come?

# Annual Meeting

January 26, 2020, immediately following the 11:00 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 2020, and celebrating our mission and ministries.

As a congregation, we will also:

- 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 2020
- Learn about St. Mark's impact in the community
- Vote to amend the St. Mark's constitution

# Senior Ministry

## ST. MARK'S AND MARTIN LUTHER TOWER CHRISTMAS PARTY

- **Date & Time:** Friday, December 6 at 5:00 p.m.
- **Location:** Heritage Hall
- **Cost:** \$5.00

## SENIOR LUNCHESES

All Seniors are invited to a tasty, warm meal!

- **Date & Time:** Thursday, January 23 and February 27 at 12:00 noon
- **Location:** Heritage Hall
- **Cost:** \$2.00

Call the Martin Luther Tower office to RSVP: 415.885.1084

# Youth Ministry

## SUNDAY SCHOOL

Sunday School meets most Sundays at **9:45 a.m.** All children—preschool through middle school—are welcome!

Sunday school is safe place where our children build friendships with peers and our best friend, Jesus. We learn stories from the Bible and goof around and eat goldfish crackers, but more importantly, we learn about God's unconditional love for us and the enormous gift of grace.

For us adults, fostering and nourishing Sunday School is our sacred responsibility. God calls us to share the good news with our children. The greatest gift St. Mark's has to offer our children is the faith passed down through the generations. If you are interested in teaching or supporting St. Mark's Sunday School, please contact Adrienne Brown at [adriennenelson@yahoo.com](mailto:adriennenelson@yahoo.com).

## YOUTH LOCK-IN – SATURDAY, JANUARY 4

The St. Mark's youth (Middle School and High School) are having a Lock-in at church on **Saturday, January 4, beginning at 6:00 p.m.** This gathering will be a great way to end the holiday vacation and usher in the New Year. Also, our Pastoral Intern, Sonja's last Sunday is January 5 and we will have an opportunity to express our gratitude to her for her leadership with the youth during this past year. Please let Pastor Ron know if you are planning to attend this Lock-in.

## HIGH SCHOOL SYNOD YOUTH RETREAT AT MT. CROSS

The Youth Committee of the Sierra Pacific Synod is sponsoring a High School Youth Retreat at Mt. Cross the weekend of **February 21 – 23** (Friday evening – Sunday noon). All youth in grades 9 – 12 are invited to participate in this exciting weekend with youth from throughout our Synod under the theme, "Love & Trust Over Fear Equals Faith." The keynote speaker for the weekend is Rev. Hazel Salazar-Davidson, a campus pastor at California Lutheran University. The cost of the weekend is \$140 (prior to February 4) and \$175 thereafter until the registration deadline of February 14. Grace and Halle from St. Mark's serve on this Youth Committee and our participation will support them in this ministry. Please let Pastor Ron know if you are interested in going.

## MT. CROSS SUMMER CAMP

Registration for Mt. Cross summer camps is now open!! If you have a child in elementary school, middle school, or high school, there is a week of camping experience just waiting for your child at Mt. Cross. There is half-week camp for Explorers (completed grades 1 – 3), 3 different weeks for Pathfinders (grades 3 – 5), a couple of weeks for Trailblazers (grades 6 – 8), a couple of weeks of Surf 'n' Turf (grades 6 – 8), and a week for Voyagers (grades 9 – 12), along with specialized camps throughout the summer. The theme for the summer is "From Generation to Generation." The cost for a full week runs \$450 - \$550. For an early-bird discount, register prior to May 1, 2020. For more information or to register, go to [mtcross.org](http://mtcross.org).

# Adult Ministry

## Adult Education

Sundays, 10:00 AM in Heritage Hall

### DECEMBER FORUMS

**December 8** - Hear first-hand from those who traveled to El Salvador and visited with our Sister Parish, Cordero de Dios. St. Mark's members spent Thanksgiving week in El Salvador and we will hear their stories and be drawn into their experiences with our brothers and sisters from the Lutheran Church in El Salvador.

**December 15** - We will continue learning and exploring about issues in Bethlehem. Why focus on this "little town"? It is the place where Jesus was born and the Christian witness to his life, death and resurrection is lived out under very challenging circumstances. Pr. Elizabeth and Linda Krauskopf will facilitate this forum.



**December 22** - It is time to sing carols and celebrate the gift of Advent/Christmas music! Join Pr. Elizabeth and our Director of Music, Timothy Zerlang, as we gather around the piano and sing. You can choose your favorite Christmas hymn from our hymnal to sing while we enjoy cookies and cider during this festive and joyful adult forum.

### JANUARY FORUMS

**January 12** - Today we celebrate the Baptism of Jesus—how do we celebrate our own baptism each and every day? What are practical ways we can "remember our baptism" and live into our Baptismal covenant with God? Come and join Pr Elizabeth for reflection on spiritual practices which can transform and shape our daily living around our baptismal identity.

**January 19** - 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.

**January 26** - No adult form; come to the Annual Meeting at 12:15 p.m. in the Sanctuary.

## Parents' Group

The parents of toddlers and children will meet on **Sunday, February 2 at 10:00 a.m.** in the Fireside Room to continue our conversation about ways that we can engage our children in the development of their faith and understanding about God and the Church. Come and join in this conversation as a way of nurturing our relationships and brainstorming about ways that we can get together as families in other social and recreational venues.

## 20s/30s Fellowship

Maggie and Carson Moseley have invited St. Mark's members/friends in their 20's and 30's to their home in the Lower Haight District of San Francisco on **Saturday, January 18 at 12:30 p.m.** for a potluck brunch and great conversation. Afterwards, those who wish will walk to a local pub for continuing conversation and fun times. If you are interested in this gathering and want to indicate what you will be bringing to the potluck, please contact Maggie at (205) 799-6055 or [maggiemoseley@gmail.com](mailto:maggiemoseley@gmail.com).



## 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.

### BOOK GROUP

**When?** Second Saturdays, from 10:00 a.m. to noon

**Where?** Conference Room

**Info:** Refreshments are served.

■ **Dec. 14** – *The Great Believers*  
by Rebecca Makkai

■ **Jan. 11** – *A Better Man* by Louise Penny

■ **Feb. 8** – TBD

### STUDY GATHERING

**When?** Second Tuesdays from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

**Where?** Heritage Hall

**Info:** Bring a sandwich or salad for lunch/fellowship at noon. Drinks and dessert are provided. Our study is on "We Are Called!" by Kathryn A. Kleinhans

■ **Dec. 10** – Christmas Luncheon

■ **Jan. 8** – "Hearing God's Call"

■ **Feb. 11** – "The Call of Jesus"

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

# Community Ministry

### CHRISTMAS PARTY AT BERNAL GATEWAY APTS.

Members of St. Mark's will be assisting with the Christmas Party for the families at Bernal Gateway Apartments on **Monday, December 16, 4:30 – 7:00**. The party will include an evening meal and an offering of gifts from St. Mark's (see the Giving Tree article) for the children and youth who live at the apartments. Lutheran Social Services provides support services for these residents and coordinates this party for these residents. If you would like to help with this event—either by serving at the meal, distributing gifts, or making pies for dessert—please contact Jane Borg at [janeborg@att.net](mailto:janeborg@att.net).

### 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 children on Monday, December 16, and St. Mark's members will be providing \$12 - \$15 gifts for the children and youth, 10 – 17 years of age. Recommended gifts for those who are 13-17 years old would be gift cards for movie theaters, i-tunes, etc. You also could purchase a Safeway gift card(s) that will be raffled off to a few families. 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 it (unwrapped) in one of the boxes in the narthex or Heritage Hall **by Sunday, December**

**15. Be sure to affix your tag to the gift.** Join in this Advent ministry and you will bring lots of joy to these children and youth. Also, if you would like to assist at the Christmas Party, please contact Jane Borg.

### ST. MARK'S WINTER SHELTER: JAN. 19 TO FEB. 9

St. Mark's has been a leader in providing shelter and meals for people who are homeless as a part of the San Francisco Interfaith Council since 1985. We will continue this winter, welcoming 60 people, and for the first time both men and women to the Urban Life Center. St. Mark's will host this shelter for three weeks, **beginning on Sunday, January 19**. We need 3 – 4 volunteers every morning to prepare and serve a hearty breakfast and 2 – 3 volunteers at dinner time to support other congregations and organizations that come to prepare and serve the evening meals.

Being in ministry with our St. Mark's peers, other congregations, the Episcopal Community Services staff, and the shelter guests is an invigorating experience as we provide food and shelter for so many of our brothers and sisters in Christ. The love and compassion that we share goes both ways as we try to understand better who some of the unhoused people in San Francisco are and how we might learn how to accept, welcome and engage with our guests. If you are interested in participating in this meaningful ministry, **please contact John Elford** and sign up for a time(s) when you would be willing to prepare and serve breakfast or assist in serving an evening meal.

## Journeys In Faith

### What is the place of your faith in the new year?

Raise your hand if you feel like December is often a blur of filled calendar notices and to-do lists. What gift would you like to give yourself to help deepen your faith in the new year—either the new church year (starting in Advent) or the calendar year? You can join us for Journeys in Faith. Maybe you are interested in joining St. Mark's? learning more about the Lutheran faith and tradition? or exploring your own faith? You are invited to join Journeys in Faith. Whether you are wanting to learn more about St. Mark's or already are a member of St. Mark's and want to be a part of this renewal, you are invited. We also invite people who feel called to accompany someone going through Journeys in Faith as a sponsor.

**When do we meet?** On Wednesday nights during Advent, enjoy a simple supper in Heritage Hall beginning at 6:00 p.m., center yourself in a midweek worship service, and stay for an opportunity to deepen your faith life. We take a break for Christmas and continue our weekly Wednesday night gatherings until Easter.

**What do we do?** We come together as a group because as Christians we experience the Christian life in community—we interact, learn and grow in our faith together. We come with our questions, and every gathering centers around a central faith question. A typical Journeys in Faith gathering has a fairly simple structure. We open with some time for focus and prayer. We then proceed with what we refer to as "Dwelling in the Word" where we read and discuss a reading from the Bible (usually the Gospel reading) from the previous Sunday. We have a discussion. We then close with prayer. Along the way, we invite participants to reflect on baptism and receive blessings and prayers of support from the congregation. We match participants with sponsors. If you have never been baptized, Journeys in Faith helps you prepare for baptism at the Easter Vigil service. If you have already been baptized, Journeys in Faith prepares you to affirm your baptism at the Easter Vigil.

For more information, contact Journeys in Faith team member Liv Beck ([beckliv@gmail.com](mailto:beckliv@gmail.com); 415.205.3292).

## Council Highlights

Please visit the council bulletin board (across from the nursery) to read the approved Council minutes. New postings will be added toward the end of each month.

Council welcomed, Emma Grey, youth member, to council in 2019 and Rick Seefeldt as Treasurer. The following members were elected to the executive board: Mark Semonian (President), Dr. Kyle Schiefelbein-Guerrero (Vice President), Cristin Owens (Secretary) and Nadine Robinson (member at large).

Council began each meeting with a meaningful devotion prepared by a different member each month. Topics this quarter has included: reflections on the voice of God in the Earth, Christian literature readings such as a passage from Teilhard de Chardin "Trusting in the Slow Work of God," and passages from "The Message" by Pr. Eugene Peterson. Also included, talks about justice not yet realized and the inspiration for the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. memorial in Yerba Buena Center.

Council welcomed Cora Rose to our April meeting for an educational session about legal issues related to Sanctuary.

Council continues partnership work with the St. Mark's Square Development Committee and supports the Guiding Principles document that provides a Lutheran framework for development. Boldt (developer) spoke at the MLT Inc. board meeting and provided a plan for development that is hopeful and supports the mission and ministries of St. Mark's Lutheran Church.

Council continues review of Financial reports, which note low cash due to quarterly payments to Plant and low giving this quarter. Expenses remain low (15% below expected.)

Council diligently prepares to host many events to explore with the congregation our 2019 Open Questions. The first event was a Global Café between each service on June 9, followed by an interactive sermon and fall forums on the open questions.

Respectfully Submitted, Cristin Owens, Church Council Secretary

## Stewardship

### An invitation regarding your end-of-year giving and 2020 Financial Commitments

We invite members and friends of St. Mark's to fulfill your 2019 financial commitment to St. Mark's and consider making an additional gift to St. Mark's. All gifts, large and small, are appreciated and will strengthen our ministries and programs.

#### PLEASE REMEMBER THESE GUIDELINES:

Checks must be dated within the current year AND the envelope the donation it is mailed in must be postmarked no later than December 31, 2019 to be counted as a 2019 donation.

Credit and debit card donations must be marked with a December 31, 2019 processing date to be considered eligible for a 2019 tax deduction.

If you plan on making a Stock Donation in 2019, please contact us at the St. Mark's accounting email ([accounting@stmarks-sf.org](mailto:accounting@stmarks-sf.org)) as soon as possible.

The church office will be open until noon on December 31 in order to assist you.

Finally, we are thankful to those who have turned in their 2020 Financial Commitment and Time & Talent Commitment. If you haven't done so, please turn in your commitment by placing it in the offering plate, mailing it to the church office or filling it out online at [stmarks-sf.org/give](http://stmarks-sf.org/give).

## Christmas Decor

We invite you to consider a special donation toward Christmas decorations. Your donation will help purchase Christmas trees, wreaths and poinsettias. You can make a donation in honor, or in memory of, a loved one. Please complete and submit the Christmas decor donation form by December 15th. The online donation form can be found here: <http://bit.ly/xmasdecor19>



## 2019 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 \$32,000 in grants for initiatives benefiting St. Mark's and the broader community.



The Committee is pleased to announce the following recipients of 2019 grants from the St. Mark's Endowment Fund:

- \$300 to St. Mark's Sunday School to purchase games and equipment for the children to play with during the period immediately before Sunday School begins
- \$2,000 to St. Mark's Sanctuary Team for legal, bilingual speakers to assist with accompaniment of immigrants
- \$500 to the 2019 Sierra Pacific Synod Delegation to Rwanda to assist with travel expenses
- \$500 to the Friday Night Group of Christ Church Lutheran in San Francisco to provide the supplies for hygiene kits to be sent to girls in Tanzania and Guatemala
- \$1,000 to Lutheran Social Services of Northern California to support breakfast gatherings at the Folsom Dore supportive housing site for formerly homeless individuals in San Francisco
- \$3,000 to Farming Hope to support the job training program that increases economic opportunity and self-sufficiency for formerly incarcerated and homeless community members in San Francisco
- \$1,200 to the Garuna (Grace) Foundation to support school transportation of students from underprivileged families in Cambodia

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.



## Reflection from Pastoral Intern Sonja Pilman

My internship at St. Mark's is almost over. I cannot believe the year is almost up. When I look back at the beginning of the internship, it seems like it was more than a year ago. I got to know so many of St. Mark's worshippers, friends, visitors, believers, and beloved members. We went through the journey of Lent, explored our fears in the adult forum series I lead this summer, and shared our challenges as the generation of Millennials in the Evenings of Serenity series. It was great to be with the youth at the youth group a few times or at the Mt Cross camp. I enjoyed going to the Aging and Spirituality group at MLT and visiting the WELCA group.

And I loved preaching for you. We thought about forgiveness and the meaning of discipleship and many other things together in my sermons.

I am still in awe how readily I was accepted and welcomed by all of you! Thank you for making me feel like I belong quickly and genuinely. Thank you all for your encouragement and support! I got helpful feedback from many of you and felt like I could grow; I felt safe to make mistakes and learn from them and try again. All this goes also for Pastor Elizabeth, who has been my supervisor in this year. Her advice and trust helped me form my own pastoral ministry and I am so grateful to her, and Pastor Ron who guided me in the time of Pastor Elizabeth's sabbatical.

I cannot believe the year is almost up because I will miss working for and being part of St. Mark's. I have come to know this church as a church full of people who care about Christ and their fellow humans.

On January 5, 2020 I will be preaching my "end-of-internship-sermon" and I want to invite all of you to come and be a part of my last day as a pastoral intern. I originally called it a "goodbye-sermon" but that is not accurate. I am not saying goodbye yet. I plan to worship with you every once in a while as long as I am waiting for my own call. The next steps for me are the candidacy committee interview on January 17, 2020. Then on March 4, 2020 is the bishop's conference where I will be assigned to a region. My husband, Markus, and I are not restricting the area for my assignment so it could be anywhere in the US. If everything goes well, look for an invitation to my ordination in 2020.

Again, thank you for having me as your intern this year and I wish you, the country, and the church all the best for 2020! May God bless you all!

– Sonja

## Scholarship Thank You

Dear St. Mark's community, thank you for supporting me as a deacon (Minister of Word and Service) student at Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary through the Congregational Partners in Education scholarship. Your generosity was matched by California Lutheran University to cover textbooks and other costs for this year—such a blessing! I am enjoying my studies immensely; particular highlights for me this semester are taking Christian Ethics as "Radical Love Embodied" with Dr. Moe-Lobeda, and reading the Pauline Epistles with PLTS Rector Dr. Ray Pickett. I'm buoyed by your accompaniment of me through encouragement and this scholarship. Thank you! Please keep in touch: [crose@ses.plts.edu](mailto:crose@ses.plts.edu).

– Cora Rose



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# Finding Our Way to Bethlehem

Advent—a time of preparation for receiving God’s greatest gift to us: Jesus, born in Bethlehem to bring Light and Love into our world.

We begin the month focusing on Bethlehem—its importance long ago and still today, even for us on the other side of the world.



Wikimedia Commons

In the Adult Forum on December 1, **Dr. Victoria Rue**, Lecturer at San Jose State University, presented her work as a Fulbright Scholar to Occupied/Colonized Palestine 2018-2019 in Bethlehem. We reflected with Dr. Rue on the significance of Mary/Maryam for our own lives in our world today.

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In the Adult Forum of **December 15** we will continue learning and exploring issues in Bethlehem. Why focus on that “little town”? It is the place where the majority of Christians in Israel/Palestine now live; though that “majority” has become a tiny minority of about 2% overall in Israel/Palestine, reduced from 60% since the state of Israel was created in 1948. Since Israel constructed the Separation Wall around Bethlehem in 2003, life behind the Wall is becoming ever more of a struggle for existence, forcing many to emigrate or at best struggle to exist. But many Christians are adamant and stubborn, resisting the pressures to leave, and working in faith to remain as a Christian presence in the birthplace of Jesus Christ.

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**More good things and positive work** are also found there as Palestinians tirelessly work toward building peace in their land. Let’s look at and support some of these:

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The family of **Claire Anastas** - an individual Christian family which is working with craftspeople and artisans of Bethlehem to help them market their beautiful handicrafts of olive wood carvings, traditional and modern embroidery and silver jewelry. St. Mark’s members know Claire Anastas from her previous visits to the Bay Area over several years.

Through Claire’s work, needy families and individuals in Bethlehem can market their crafts and gain modest income for their households. [For information about these handicrafts, how to order them for holiday gifts or how to volunteer to assist in this aspect of ministry, email Linda Krauskopf at [jklnk@comcast.net](mailto:jklnk@comcast.net) (write “Bethlehem Ministry” in the subject line).

Claire Anastas and her family are also offering their **Anastas Family bed & breakfast guest house** to visitors seeking the unique experience of staying just inside the infamous Wall (surrounding their B

& B on three sides) and learning first-hand the Wall’s history and the feeling it imparts. The Anastas family provide personal, warm Palestinian hospitality to individuals or groups. Interested in traveling to Bethlehem? Check out their website: [www.AnastasWalled-In.com](http://www.AnastasWalled-In.com) for photos and details, and for help in planning your Bethlehem visit.

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**Bright Stars Of Bethlehem** continues to educate Americans and raise money in support of Dar Al-Kalima’s outstanding academic work and its outreach to seniors and youth.

2019 marks the 15th anniversary of Bright Stars’ (and Founder Dr. Mitri Raheb’s) visionary work in support of Palestinians in Bethlehem. Major very successful fund-raising events took place in Chicago and Denver, while the major Bay Area fund-raiser for Bright Stars of Bethlehem took place on September 22 at Grace Lutheran Church/Palo Alto, with travel writer and Bright Stars supporter **Rick Steves** as featured speaker. His most recent book *Travel as a Political Act* contains a significant chapter on the Holy Land, as well as other major conflict areas of the world. Steves encouraged travelers to leave their cultural baggage and preconceptions” behind and travel with open eyes in order to achieve greater understanding and possible solutions for political, religious and cultural conflicts. The highly successful event raised much awareness as well as funds in support of Dar Al-Kalima University College of Arts and Culture. (Donations are always welcome and put to positive use immediately! Details of these programs are available, and fascinating to follow as they build **hope** in Bethlehem: visit [www.brightstarsbethlehem.org](http://www.brightstarsbethlehem.org).)

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**Another interesting perspective** on the Holy Land is featured as cover article in the summer issue of Smithsonian magazine: “A New Way to See the Holy Land,” by Geraldine Brooks. The reader follows a tour through Israel/Palestine with two tour guides, one Israeli Jew and one Palestinian Arab - friends and colleagues in travel who freely discuss their different points of view on various issues as visitors travel with them to and around holy sites.

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U.S. policies toward Israel and Palestine have changed significantly in 2019, very unfavorably for Palestinians. U.S. aid for Augusta Victoria Hospital in Jerusalem was withdrawn; the U.S. Embassy was

moved from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem (stimulating increased demolitions of Palestinian homes, more controls on movement and more violent incidents). Our Administration endorsed Israel’s annexation of the occupied Golan Heights; and the U.S. proposal for economic development of Palestine was put forward without any involvement by Palestinians (so was rejected by Palestine). Most recently our U. S. Administration declared that the continuing construction of Jews-only settlements on confiscated Palestinian land in the West Bank is **not** illegal under International Law (although it IS in fact illegal). This pronouncement effectively divorces the U.S. from support for Palestinians in any future negotiations, aligning the U.S. only with Israel.

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These many decisions underscore the need for much more intensive and widespread education regarding the Holy Land, if it is to in fact remain as the Holy Land for all three major religions: Christian, Muslim and Jewish.

**Calls for action** come regularly from organizations trying to pursue peace and justice in the Holy Land. A current one is this: Join with ELCA’s “Peace Not Walls”, Churches for Middle East Peace (CMEP) and SABEEL/FOSNA in urging our Representatives in Congress to support and PASS H.R. 2407: “Promoting Human Rights For Palestinian Children Living Under Israeli Occupation Act”, i.e., for children, who are detained, prosecuted and incarcerated by the Israeli military in the West Bank, a common phenomenon. On United Nations

Universal Children’s Day (November 20) Rep. Betty McCollum (Dem.-Minn.) hosted a public meeting in Washington, D.C. on this issue, along with the Faith Forum on Middle East Policy and Churches for Middle East Peace (CMEP), of which the ELCA is a member. See ELCA’s Action Center for full details. Please write or call your Representatives to urge their support for this legislation, and thank them if they are already doing so. Rep. McCollum also deserves our thanks for sponsoring this bill, which addresses a heart-rending, on-going - and un-holy - situation in the Holy Land.

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As we enter Advent 2019, may we especially open ourselves through prayer and action to the message of Love and God’s Light and inspiration as we experience once again - but always anew - the birth of the Christ child in our lives and for the world.

God’s blessings to you in this Advent season and beyond!

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**Please Note:** If you wish to join the group Palestine-Israel@stmarks-sf.org to receive forwards of emails relevant to Holy Land issues from various sources both locally and abroad, and be informed of related Bay Area activities, let the church office know. Or if you wish to unsubscribe, let the church office know this too. Thank you!

## St. Mark’s in El Salvador

Our delegation recently returned from a week-long visit to Cordero de Dios, our sister parish in El Salvador. Learn more about their journey of accompaniment at the adult forum on December 8, 10 a.m. in Heritage Hall.



Members of the St. Mark’s delegation enjoy time on the bus.



The women of the delegation pray with Lydia.



Allana and Mary accompany a grieving family.



The youth of Cordero de Dios with the St. Mark’s kids.



# Winter Concerts at St. Mark's

## SOLO CLASSICAL GUITAR RECITAL: XUEFEI YANG

Presented by Omni Foundation for the Performing Arts

Xuefei Yang is acclaimed as one of the world's finest classical guitarists. Following the Cultural Revolution she was the first guitarist in China to enter a music school and became the first internationally recognized Chinese guitarist on the world stage. "... feisty virtuosity, impeccable technique and sensitive musicianship" – New York Times

**Sat, Dec 7, 2019 7:30pm**

[omniconcerts.com](http://omniconcerts.com)

## SACRED & PROFANE // WINTERLUDE: SONGS OF SLEEP AND REPOSE

Recognizing that winter is often a time of reflection and restoration, this concert features sacred and secular music from all eras on the theme of rest and repose. In addition to work by English Renaissance madrigalist John Wilbye, we will celebrate the holiday season with Christmas lullabies by composers from around the world: Herbert Howells (England), Henryk Górecki (Poland), Abbie Betinis (United States), and the world premiere of Sleep, Baby, Sleep by Tina Andersson (Sweden). We round out the program with a selection of secular pieces on the theme of sleep. In keeping with our love for Scandinavian music, we will sing Gunnar Eriksson's Norwegian Lullaby and Jocelyn Hagen's arrangement of the dark Icelandic lullaby *Sofðu unga ástin mín*. We are excited to sing the Russian-American composer and pianist Lera Auerbach's Lullaby, composed with a unique modal musical voice. We will also perform Sean Crouch's Lullaby, a setting of a poem about an Afghan father soothing his son to sleep during wartime, and Eric Whitacre's *Sleep My Child*. Finally, we are thrilled to present the world premiere of Jack Curtis Dubowsky's *Sleep*.

**Sun, Dec 8, 2019 4:00pm**

[sacredprofane.org](http://sacredprofane.org)

## CALIFORNIA BACH SOCIETY // CHRISTMAS IN THE AMERICAS

Villancicos, motets, and carols from Peru to Canada

Annual holiday concert will feature music written by composers from North, Central, and South America. From the cathedrals of Lima, Cuzco, and Mexico City we present villancicos and motets by Juan de Araujo and Juan Gutierrez de Padilla—music whose rhythms and dance idioms reflect the influence of the indigenous cultures on the early Spanish colonialists. From North America, we perform Christmas pieces by William Billings and other 18th-century New England composers, and Canadian works based on old French tunes. In addition, we will present lovely contemporary carol arrangements by Paul Flight. The 30-voice chorus is joined by Paul Psarras, guitar; Tim DeCillis, percussion; and Yuko Tanaka, keyboard.

**Fri, Dec 13, 2019 8:00pm**

[calbach.org](http://calbach.org)

## INTERNATIONAL ORANGE CHORALE // EAST BY SOUTHEAST: SAN FRANCISCO CONCERT

Join IOCSF for their fall concert featuring contemporary compositions from the Philippines, South Korea, and Indonesia. Composers include Excelsis Betil-Viña, Fidel Calalang Jr., Ryan Cayabyab, Saunder Choi, Francisco Feliciano, Gregorio Responso Labja, Slamet Sjukur, Mary Katherine Trangco, and Hyo-Won Woo.

**Sat, Dec 14, 2019 7:30pm**

[iocsf.org](http://iocsf.org)

## SAN FRANCISCO CHORAL ARTISTS // FROM POLE TO POLE: CHRISTMAS IN THE THREE AMERICAS

From Anchorage to Tierra del Fuego, holiday traditions are expressed through singing. SFCA's celebration will stretch across 9,149 miles and 500 years – sampling the rich musical offerings of ancient Peru, modern-day Canada, Baroque Mexico, early New England, and contemporary California. With spirituals, carols, hymns, lullabies and stories – the music of islands and mountains, of dazzling snow and sizzling sun.

Including a special guest performance by The Crowden Chamber Singers!

(SF performance only)



**Sun, Dec 15, 2019 4:00pm**

[sfca.org](http://sfca.org)

## NEW CENTURY CHAMBER ORCHESTRA

With Mezzo-Soprano Anne Sofie von Otter

Johann Sebastian Bach: "Bereite Dich" from The Christmas Oratorio, BWV 248

Antonio Vivaldi: "Vedro con mio diletto" from *Giustino*

Thad Jones: A Child is Born

Irving Berlin: White Christmas

Robert Wells: The Christmas Song

Traditional: O Tannenbaum

Traditional: Koppången, Anne Sofie von Otter, mezzo-soprano

Antonio Vivaldi: Winter from The Four Seasons, Daniel Hope, violin

Handel: Concerto Grosso in D minor, Op. 6 No. 10, HWV 328

Arcangelo Corelli: Concerto Grosso in G minor, Op. 6 No. 8 "Christmas Concerto"

**Thu, Dec 19, 2019 7:30pm**

[ncco.org](http://ncco.org)

## VOICES OF MUSIC // VIRTUOSO ARIAS AND CONCERTOS

Music by Handel, Locatelli, Platti and Vivaldi

Christopher Lowrey, countertenor

**Sat, Dec 21, 2019 8:00pm**

[voicesofmusic.org](http://voicesofmusic.org)

## IMPROMPTUSF

**Sat, Jan 18, 2020 6:30pm - 10:30pm**

[impromptusf.org](http://impromptusf.org)

## AMERICAN BACH SOLOISTS

Aryeh Nussbaum Cohen "possesses a remarkable gift for intimate communication ... combined with a voice of velvety gentleness." - The New York Times

Named after Orpheus, these concerts present countertenor Aryeh Nussbaum Cohen in a program of deeply moving works that affect the soul from joyful compositions by Buxtehude and Hoffmann to Vivaldi's brooding *Stabat Mater*, along with a stunning Bach triple concerto and the rich sonorities of Muffat's *Concerto Grosso*.

**Sun, Jan 26, 2020 4:00pm**

[americanbach.org](http://americanbach.org)

## CLERESTORY

Begin 2020 by celebrating the centennial year of the 19th Amendment with Clerestory. Their concert *Suffragette* is all about trailblazing women, from innovative female perspectives in modern composition, to suffrage songs that women sang beginning in the late 1800s as they fought for the right to vote.

**Sun, Feb 2, 2020 4:00pm**

[clerestory.org](http://clerestory.org)

## VOICES OF MUSIC // STYLUS PHANTASTICUS

Music by Biber, Castello, Farina, Merula, Schmelzer and more.

Join Voices of Music for a program of virtuosic Italian and German music of the 17th century. The cornetto is back! The sounds of historical brass and strings will fill the hall as an all-star cast presents a fascinating program of music from Italy and Germany, in the exuberant style known as *Stylus Phantasticus*.

Doron Sherwin, cornetto; August McKay Lodge, baroque violin; Eva Lymenstull, baroque cello; Greg Ingles, Mack Ramsey and Erik Schmalz, sackbut; Hanneke von Proosdij, harpsichord and organ; David Tayler, archlute

**Sat, Feb 15, 2020 8:00pm**

[voicesofmusic.org](http://voicesofmusic.org)

## SF EARLY MUSIC SOCIETY // MUSICA PACIFICA: AIRS OF CALEDONIA

David Greenberg, baroque violinist and Cape Breton-style fiddler extraordinaire, joins *Musica Pacifica* for a program of

exciting 18th-century Scottish traditional and baroque music. In this high-energy, foot-tapping program, Cape Breton's driving strathspeys and reels, soulful airs and merry jigs are heard alongside more studied compositions of Purcell, Barsanti, and Matteis and The Division Violin. The music of ancient Scottish composers James Oswald, "Red Rob" Mackintosh, and Niel Gow will delightfully blur distinctions between classical and folk music. Greenberg has been praised as both "one of the most impassioned folk-fiddlers you'll ever hear," (*Winnipeg Free Press*) and "the best baroque violin soloist in Canada, if not North America" (*Halifax Mail-Star*).

Judith Linsenberg, recorders; Ingrid Matthews and David Greenberg, violin; William Skeen, cello; Peter Maund, percussion; Charles Sherman, harpsichord

**Sun, Feb 16, 2020 4:00pm**

[sfems.org](http://sfems.org)

## NEW ESTERHAZY QUARTET

**Sat, Feb 22, 2020 4:00pm**

## CALIFORNIA BACH SOCIETY // 20TH C. BRITISH MASTERS: HOWELLS AND VAUGHAN WILLIAMS

Join California Bach Society as they present two British masterworks inspired in part by the revival of the Renaissance polyphonic style of such composers as Thomas Tallis and William Byrd. Ralph Vaughan Williams's beautiful *Mass in G minor* is written in a modal style that evokes the past, while Herbert Howells's sublime *Requiem* employs impressionistic sonorities to achieve its overwhelming emotional effect. These two works, like those of their predecessors, envelop the listener in a unique sound world shaped by the pure choral timbre that reverberated through the soaring architecture of Britain's many cathedrals and chapels.

**Fri, Feb 28, 2020 8:00pm**

[calbach.org](http://calbach.org)

## CLASSICAL GUITAR RECITAL: BANDINI-CHIACCHIARETTA

Presented by Omni Foundation for the Performing Arts

Decca recording artists Giampaolo Bandini and Cesare Chiacchiaretta, guitar and bandoneon duo, currently celebrate their 15th year anniversary of music making and deep commitment to present Argentina's music through the charm and magic of its most

representative instruments. Regularly invited by festivals and theatres around the world, they have toured over 50 countries and have annual or biannual tours to the United States and Canada, receiving outstanding critical and audience approval. Following the consistent success and popularity of the duo, Recent invitations took them to perform in Berlin, Budapest, and Toronto, in addition to collaborations with Deutsche Grammophon artist and mandolinist Avi Avital. New tours in Mexico, China, Hungary, Kosovo, Germany, Korea, Poland, Austria, and USA are part of the duo's schedule for the coming seasons.

**Sat, Mar 7, 2020 7:30pm**

[omniconcerts.com](http://omniconcerts.com)

## BAY CHORAL GUILD // MENDELSSOHN'S ELIJAH

Mendelssohn's powerful oratorio *Elijah* is a masterpiece of the Romantic period inspired by the passions and oratorios of Bach and Handel. Choristers and attendees of our 1986 and 1999 performances of *Elijah* still cite them as among our most memorable concerts, and those who attend this 2020 performance will be similarly rewarded.

**Sun, Mar 8, 2020 4:30pm**

[baychoralguild.org](http://baychoralguild.org)

## SACRED & PROFANE // LUMINOUS RESONANCE: MUSIC FOR CHORUS AND STRINGS

This concert will feature music for choir and string orchestra, in collaboration with the Bay Area-based Circadian String Quartet and ten additional local string players. This ambitious program will include Beethoven's *Elegiac Hymn* (in honor of the 250th anniversary of the composer's death); local composer David Conte's reverent *September Sun*, composed in memory of those who died in the September 11th attacks; and the popular American composer Eric Whitacre's *Three Hebrew Love Songs* for choir and string quartet. We are also delighted to present the US premiere of Karin Rehnqvist's exuberant *Day is here!* for choir, soloists, and strings. Recently premiered in Stockholm, *Day is here!* is the companion piece to *Songs from the North*, the four-movement setting of poetry from the Arctic that we commissioned for our fortieth-anniversary concert in May 2018.

**Sat, Mar 14, 2020 8:00pm**

[sacredprofane.org](http://sacredprofane.org)

Check the church calendar for additional listings.  
For tickets, visit the groups' websites.



# Worship Schedule

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

# Church Office Hours

**MONDAY THROUGH FRIDAY - 9:00AM TO 5:00PM**

## Staff **1.415.928.7770** Email

- The Rev. Elizabeth E. Ekdale, Lead Pastor . . . . . x2300 . . . . . ekdale@stmarks-sf.org
- The Rev. Ron Moe-Lobeda, Associate Pastor. . . . . x2460 . . . . . moe-lobeda@stmarks-sf.org
- Dr. Timothy Zerlang, Director of Music . . . . . x2330 . . . . . zerlang@stmarks-sf.org
- Winnie Heslin, Director of Operations . . . . . x2250 . . . . . heslin@stmarks-sf.org
- Deidre Rettenmaier, Events Administrator . . . . . x2290 . . . . . events@stmarks-sf.org
- Accountant/Bookkeeper . . . . . x2320 . . . . . 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
- Adrienne Brown, Sunday School Coordinator
- Carl Storey, Security
- The Rev. Chuck Lewis, Visitation Pastor
- Sonja Pilman, Intern . . . . . pilman@stmarks-sf.org

# Other Important Numbers

- Martin Luther Tower . . . . . (415) 885-1084 . . . . . mlinc.org
- Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary. . . . . (800) 235-7587 . . . . . plts.edu
- ELCA (national office in Chicago). . . . . (800) 638-3522 . . . . . elca.org
- SF Interfaith Council. . . . . (415) 474-1321 . . . . . sfinterfaithcouncil.org

**For more events and activities at St. Mark's, check our weekly Parish Announcements and our Facebook page:**

- [stmarks-sf.org/blog](http://stmarks-sf.org/blog)
- [facebook.com/stmarkssf](https://facebook.com/stmarkssf)

# 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. Learn more at [reconcilingworks.org](http://reconcilingworks.org).

# Sanctuary Congregation

St. Mark's is a sanctuary congregation. We are committed to a ministry of continuing education about the plight of immigrants in this country, to serve as people who will accompany those in the process of seeking asylum, and to advocate for those whose lives are oppressed or endangered by this process.

The ELCA is a sanctuary denomination. Learn more at [elca.org/sanctuarychurch](http://elca.org/sanctuarychurch).



**1111 O'Farrell St. | San Francisco, CA | 94109**  
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