

# St Mark's LUTHERAN CHURCH VOICE

QUARTERLY JOURNAL OF REFLECTION & NEWS



## CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES

Saturday, December 24

5:00 pm

**ENTER**

Enter the Wonder of Childhood Again with the **Children's Christmas Pageant**.  
Favorite Carols, Candle-lighting, Youthful Exuberance.

8:00 pm

**RESTORE**

Restore your Spirit with a **Peaceful Service** of Sacred Readings, Carols, Candle-lighting, Holy Communion.

10:30 pm

**EXPERIENCE**

Experience the Heavenly Beauty of the Orchestra and Choir  
Bringing to Life **J. S. Bach's Christmas Cantata**,  
"Unto Us a Child is Born!"

11:00 pm

**CONNECT**

Connect With the Sacred in a **Classic Midnight Mass**.  
Joyous Music, Centering, Candle-lighting, Holy Communion.

## CHRISTMAS DAY SERVICES

Sunday, December 25

**CELEBRATE**

9:00 am Holy Communion and Carols

11:00 am Festive Holy Communion

enter  
**restore**  
*Experience*  
**CONNECT**  
**celebrate**

## Advent Reflections

Pastor Elizabeth

*"Thank you God for one more day of life..."*

We heard many heartfelt prayers from the young people of Cordero de Dios in El Salvador and almost every prayer began with this phrase. The youth of El Salvador know all too well the fragility of life. Thank you God for one more day of life – what a beautiful and moving way to begin every prayer uttered from our lips.



The season of Advent helps us to "reorder" our lives toward the coming of God's reign in Jesus Christ. Our Advent lessons are like a list of "best practices" for shaping our faith. Keep awake. Be enriched and strengthened. Lead lives of holiness. Wait patiently. Be at peace. Prepare the way of the Lord. Repent. Rejoice always. Pray without ceasing. Give thanks. Do not be afraid. Let it be.

Advent is a rich and hope-filled season of the church calendar. There is a quiet joy which permeates our worship services – from the lighting of the Advent wreath to the singing of traditional Advent hymns. We rediscover God's peace and hope by participating in worship . . . peace which the world can not give to us.

Come and be fed, comforted, and challenged this Advent season . . . and together with gratitude we will pray, "Thank you God for one more day of life."

### Sunday Worship

9:00 am and 11:00 am

### Wednesday Midweek Worship Holden Evening Prayer

6:45 pm | December 7, 14 & 21



### Fling Wide the Doors Celebration Morning Worship

During both the 9:00 and 11:00 liturgies, we will fling wide the church doors once again in remembrance of the 5th anniversary of reopening our church doors after the retrofit. Worship will include special music, rededication of our sacred space, the unveiling of the illumination and more! Come and fling wide the doors!



### Little Town of Bethlehem Screening 1 PM | Heritage Hall

The documentary film "Little Town of Bethlehem" (EMG Films) will be shown on Sunday, December 11 from 1:00 - 3:00 in Heritage Hall following Coffee Hour. The film reveals how three men - an Israeli Jew, a Palestinian Christian and a Palestinian Muslim - find common ground today in the on-going nonviolent struggle for peace and an end to violence in tension-filled contemporary Palestine. (Please NOTE: This film is PG-13, for some violence and disturbing images.)

### Advent Lessons & Carols 3:30 pm | St. Mary's Cathedral

Featuring St. Mary's & St. Mark's  
Choirs under the direction of  
Christoph Tietze

This year's Advent Lessons and Carols, again a collaboration with the St. Mary's Cathedral, community, will be at St. Mary's (across Gough from St. Mark's) on Sunday, December 11, at 3:30 pm. Sacred readings and meditations on the Advent of Our Lord will be interspersed with congregational song and music from our combined choirs. The choirs' repertoire will include: "And the Glory of the Lord" from Messiah - G. F. Handel, "Laetentur coeli" - Hans Leo Hassler, "Ave Maria" - Robert Parsons, "Rejoice in the Lord Always" - Henry Purcell, "E'en So, Lord, Quickly Come" - Paul Manz, and "Dixit Maria" - Hans Leo Hassler.

## December Concert Events at St. Mark's

For more information, please visit the group's website.

**December 2, 8:00 pm**

California Bach Society | [calbach.org](http://calbach.org)

**December 3, 8:00 pm**

Volti | [voltisf.org](http://voltisf.org)

**December 10, 8:00 pm**

International Orange Chorale | [iocsf.org](http://iocsf.org)

**December 17, 8:00 pm**

San Francisco Choral Artists | [sfca.org](http://sfca.org)

**December 18, 7:30 pm**

San Francisco Early Music Society | [sfems.org](http://sfems.org)



## Organ Recital Happy 450<sup>th</sup> Jan!

Dr. Timothy Zerlang

January 15, 2012 at 1 pm

In 2012, we celebrate the 450th anniversary of Jan Pieterszoon Sweelinck's birth. This Dutch composer spent most of his career in Amsterdam where he was an extremely influential musician, widely admired as a composer, keyboardist, and teacher. Among his students are many of the organists and composers that come to be known as the North German Organ School, and his influence can be traced through those students to Buxtehude, J.S. Bach, and beyond. This recital will feature works by Sweelinck himself and two of his students, Samuel Scheidt and Heinrich Scheidemann.

## Interfaith Food Pantry for 2012

The Interfaith Food Pantry is held every Saturday at the Old First Presbyterian Church, and is a collaborative effort of five local churches: Calvary Presbyterian, First Unitarian Universalist Society of San Francisco, Old First Presbyterian, St. Luke's Episcopal and St. Mark's. The churches take turns hosting the pantry once every six weeks. The sixth week is a shared effort of all the churches. Food is purchased from the San Francisco Food Bank and delivered fresh on Saturday mornings.

**St. Mark's dates for the 2012 Pantry are as follows: Jan. 7, Feb. 18, Mar. 24, May 12, June 23, July 28, Sept. 15, Oct. 27 and Dec. 1.**

## Lent Begins with Ash Wednesday February 22, 2012

**Worship Services:  
12:00 noon and 7:00 pm**

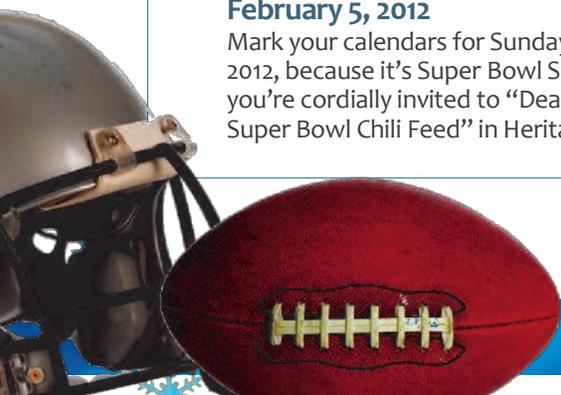
## San Francisco Interfaith Council Monthly Breakfast

The San Francisco Interfaith Council has for 20 years brought people of different faith traditions together, bringing spiritual comfort at times of crisis, building understanding among various religious traditions, celebrating our diversity, and coordinating services to the citizens of San Francisco. The Council's breakfasts are held on the second Thursday of each month from 8:00 am to 9:30 am in Heritage Hall. All are invited and encouraged to attend this monthly breakfast.



## Super Bowl Chili Feed February 5, 2012

Mark your calendars for Sunday, February 5<sup>th</sup>, 2012, because it's Super Bowl Sunday... and you're cordially invited to "Dean & Bertie's Super Bowl Chili Feed" in Heritage Hall.



# Adult Forum

Sundays at 10:10 am | Fireside Room

DECEMBER 4

## Current Challenges & Opportunities for the Church as It Responds to People with Developmental Disabilities

**Dr. Jim Fruehling**

We will discuss how the Lutheran church has responded to people with developmental disabilities, and some of the current challenges and opportunities that the church, related agencies and people with disabilities are facing. Dr. Fruehling is a psychologist licensed in Arizona and Nebraska, and has worked for more than thirty-five years with people who have disabilities. On behalf of Mosaic, he has been involved with setting up programs in England and Latvia, and has worked as a consultant in fifteen states. He is currently studying for his M.Div. at Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary.

DECEMBER 11

## Thomas Merton: Mystic, Monk, Reformer and Poet

**Maria Anderson, Parish Teaching Student**

Thomas Merton was a Trappist Monk who was well known for his writings about contemplation, social action and his interest in Eastern religions. Although he died tragically in 1968, his writings and poetry are still widely read and appreciated. During this Adult Forum we will explore how these writings inform our own spiritual lives through reading excerpts, poetry and discussion.

DECEMBER 18

## Report from the El Salvador Trip The St. Mark's Delegation

Come and hear about the trip that members of our congregation made over the Thanksgiving week to visit El Salvador and our sister congregation, Cordero de Dios in Soyapango.

DECEMBER 25 & JANUARY 1

**NO FORUM**

JANUARY 8 & 15

## Genetics: What's a Lutheran to Do? Dr. Margaret McLean

In August, the Church-wide Assembly adopted the statement on genetics, "Genetics, Faith, and Responsibility" with a 95.5% rate of affirmation, the strongest support ever for a social statement. The ELCA appears to be the first faith community to develop a comprehensive ethical framework for addressing genetic technology in agriculture and medicine. Lead by ethicist Dr. Margaret McLean, we will explore this distinctly Lutheran framework and its implications for private medical decisions and public policy regarding medical genetic testing and diagnosis, the genetic engineering of humans, and the genetic modification of food.

JANUARY 22

## Church Council Candidates & Budget for the Annual Meeting Church Council

Come and learn about the agenda and issues and Council candidates being presented at the congregational meeting the following Sunday.

JANUARY 29, FEBRUARY 5, 12 & 18

## Becoming an Anti-Racist Church St. Mark's Multi-Cultural Cohort

Using the book by Joe Barndt, *Becoming an Anti-Racist Church*, we will explore and discuss racism today.

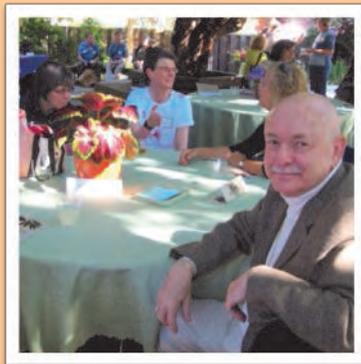
- |             |  |
|-------------|--|
| January 29  | The Past: Racism and Resisting Racism in Church History                                |
| February 5  | The Present: Racism in the Church Today  |
| February 12 | The Future: Shaping an Anti-Racist Church  |
| February 19 | How Can St. Mark's be a Model of Anti-Racism in the Sierra Pacific Synod and the ELCA? |



Pastor Raheb and Pastor Elizabeth



McLean and Ritter perusing Palestinian handicrafts



Sigafus, Ritter and McLean at Grace Lutheran Palestinian Festival



Rev Raheb with musicians Georges and Antoine Lammam at Grace LC's fundraiser for Palestine

Learning more about the Holy Land. St. Mark's welcomes Rev. Mitri Raheb, pastor of Christmas Lutheran Church in Bethlehem, Palestine and founder of Dar Al-Kalima College.

# Celebrating 50



Rev. Chuck Lewis celebrates 50 years of ordained ministry.



The Wentker's celebrate 50 years of membership at St. Mark's.

## St. Mark's Oktoberfest 2011

The congregation of St. Mark's and residents of Martin Luther Towers held a joint Oktoberfest on the evening of October 22nd, in Heritage Hall. Celebrants feasted on a variety of sausages, sauerkraut, potatoes with cheese sauce, and bread, all washed down with cold beer, wine and soft drinks. A bountiful potluck dessert buffet provided a wide array of sweets to complete the meal.

Following dessert, members of St. Mark's were updated on the progress made on St. Mark's Strategic Planning Goals and on the discernment process undertaken by Interim Associate Pastor Paul Brenner. An interval of The Chicken Dance to break up the presentations restored blood flow and gave all an opportunity to shake their "tail feathers."



## LIVE From St. Mark's Kitchen - Above and Beyond A Success



Aaron Greig, Liv Beck, and the planning team behind Friday, November 11's benefit event would like to express their immense gratitude to the people of St. Mark's for their generosity and gifts of abundance to the Greig-Beck family. As of November 14, we have raised over \$15,000 - plus an additional \$1,600 match from Thrivent Financial for Lutherans - to assist the family as Aaron undergoes treatment for leukemia. Donations continue to arrive at St. Mark's from around the country.

The weekend after the benefit, Aaron wrote on his CarePages website: "This past Friday, I had one of the most overwhelming, amazing and sacred experiences of my life... Liv and I are grateful beyond words for the organizing of the event and for the St. Mark's community. The benefit included a wonderful dinner, a silent auction and incredible music performed by members of the church. Thank you to everyone that came and a special thank you to everyone that helped make the benefit possible. We were deeply, deeply touched."



The Night Ministry's annual Fall fundraiser, held in St. Mark's Heritage Hall and the Urban Life Center

# Walking with Cordero de Dios in El Salvador

Mary Ritter

Eleven travelers from St. Mark's were blessed to be able to "walk with" our sisters and brothers – adults and children, pastors and parishioners – through the barrios of Cordero do Dios in Soyapango, El Salvador. Pastor Elizabeth Ekdale and daughter Grace, Teaching Parish student Maria Anderson, and church members Allana and Matt Helland, Greg Jahnke, Linda Krauskopf, Kathy Lautz, Jeremy McClain, Mary Ritter and Marlo Tellschow spent a week there in November and have many stories to tell – just ask them! Here are a few:



**Holy Procession:** Walking in "holy procession", we joined Pastora Norma Castillo as she visited parishioners in homes with concrete or dirt floors, hammock beds, bare wires or no electricity at all, cinder block or tin walls (or few walls at all) and some with where running water was just being installed. A candle was lit - the Light of Christ - and given to the family members in the house along with a blessing of oil, a prayer for their safety and care, songs, introductions, listening to brief quiet stories of their lives, and our promise to remember them in prayer at St. Mark's. "Vaya con Dios (Go with God)" came from strangers watching our procession from simple homes along the way.

**Thanksgiving in Soyapango:** On Thursday November 24, the "holy procession" moved to the home of Suyapa for blessing and greeting. She and her family provided lunch of chicken, vegetables, tortillas and rice. After a "siesta", Greg, Kathy and Mary taught 13 recorder "flautists", 3 chirping toddlers and one guitarist to play a verse of Mary Had a Little Lamb – the "Concerto de Soyapango" was performed for the entire group to wild acclaim! Allana, Linda, Matt and our translator Moises taught young women and teens to make beautiful jewelry while Grace and Pr. Elizabeth led a lively group of children making colorful necklaces and bracelets. Then a procession followed Rosa with a basin of soaked corn on her head through the barrio to the miller for grinding, then back for Suyapa and Gladys to demonstrate pupusa-making. Several St. Mark's members learned to make bean and cheese pupusas for all to enjoy. The biggest excitement of the afternoon was when a housedog chased a family chicken onto the hot pupusa grill – twice!!

**Praying In Graveyards:** We visited Universidad Centroamericana (UCA) to see and hear stories of the brutal murders of Archbishop Oscar Romero, six Jesuit priests, their housekeeper and her daughter, and four Maryknoll nuns during the Salvadoran Civil War in the 1980's. The next day we stood barefoot, connected to the very place behind the altar where Romero was saying Mass when he was assassinated. We visited mothers of children who drowned or who were shot in their own homes. Later, we stood at the gravesites with the mothers and spread flowers and wept and asked for God's blessings on these families. We listened as the youth thanked God "for another day" – they see that life can be so short!

**Sacred Chaos!** More than 42 people – 28 teens and youngsters and 14 adults – boarded a bus built for 21 and drove to the Cerro Verde Volcano National Park. There was singing and games and laughing, lovely views and also views of poverty and washed out bridges and damaged crops. Worship at the park was led by our Teaching Parish student Maria, and Araceli and other Cordero de Dios youth around a cross made of lovely chocolate boxes from the lunch supplies. We prayed and sang in Spanish and English, then shared our names and expectations. We ate and played and hiked and rested while taking in the spectacular views of the steaming volcano, lush green forest, squawking blue jays and the Pacific Ocean in the distance. This was the first time many of the Salvadoran youth had been to the Park. An amazing joyous trip for all!

**Worship:** In addition to our daily worship experiences, we enjoyed Sunday morning worship at Cordero de Dios Lutheran Church in the newly repaired "Iglesia" with songs by youth and St. Mark's, colorful dancers, homily by Pr. Elizabeth – "Who is our neighbor?", the Good Samaritan story. We closed the Sunday service with "Joy to the World" at the Salvadorans' request, and repeated it once again before we left, again at their request. They asked for "that Christmas song" whenever we sang anywhere!



**Daily Joy and Daily Sorrow:** We heard the stories of students celebrating graduations and birthdays – markers of another year of survival and progress. We heard the story of Carol Melisa, whose diabetes was undiagnosed until she began to lose her eyesight. Our hearts were filled with the unbridled joy and abundance pouring out from children with few earthly possessions. Our hearts ached with the sorrow of uncured illness and needless loss of life. Our brothers and sisters at Cordero de Dios constantly reminded us that, through it all, God was present.

**More Stories?** Ask the travelers about "the trench", the nightly devotions, Romero's little car, "the Wall" in the park, cows and bombs on the side of the road ...

**Come and walk with our Salvadoran brothers and sisters.** Please join us on December 18 for a special Adult Forum, when the travelers from St. Mark's will share pictures and stories of their inspiring journey in El Salvador. Join in the blessings of the walk!

## Council Highlights for July and September

### July 21, 2011 Council Meeting

- ☑ Reported that the Endowment Fund Account with Lutheran Community Foundation is now active. Brad Hubert is primary contact. St. Mark's Endowment Committee Chair Debbie Varian will also serve on the long established St. Francis Endowment Committee, which will be beneficial for our newly formed Endowment Fund.
- ☑ Announced that Pr. Nancy Nelson, Bishop's Associate at Synod, will preach July 24.
- ☑ Extended thanks to Council for helping at Interfaith Food Pantry. More volunteers are needed for future food distributions.
- ☑ Announced plans to review relationship between the MLT ministry and St. Mark's Church, including existing policies and memorandum of understanding.
- ☑ Reported ongoing deterioration of ULC building and need for repairs.
- ☑ AMPCO may be relieved of parking management to save costs.

- ☑ New gate planned for niche between entry ramp and church.
- ☑ Discussed need for extra custodial services, especially on weekends.
- ☑ New coordinator of money counters, Jeremy McClain, will seek more volunteers from congregation.
- ☑ Interim Associate Pastor Brenner, leader of Assessment Meetings, will consolidate the resulting ideas and discussions, create report, and make brief presentation at Oktoberfest.
- ☑ Announced plan to pay off Thrivent loan by end of year, anticipating fulfillment of Forward in Faith Capital Campaign pledges and allowing us to celebrate being debt-free five years post-renovation. New slogan is "Finish Strong".

### September 15, 2011 Council Meeting

- ☑ Announced plans for sequel to original 2006 "Fling Wide the Doors" celebration on December 11, 2011 to commemorate the 5th anniversary of our return following renovation of the church.

- ☑ Announced the election of Pr. Ekdale to ELCA Church Council.
- ☑ Discussed continuing explorations into the development of ULC property and possible partnerships.
- ☑ Discussed treasurer's report and the budget process.
- ☑ Initial funds received for elevator will be directed to feasibility and design studies. Donations toward construction of new elevator will be gratefully accepted.
- ☑ Nominating Committee is being formed to select Council nominees for election of new members at Congregation Annual Meeting in January. Committee will consist of one outgoing Council member, one continuing member, and one person from congregation.
- ☑ Plans continue for trip to visit Cordero de Dios congregation in El Salvador by ten St. Mark's members during Thanksgiving week.
- ☑ Cost beyond the amounts generously donated for purchase of Sauter piano will be paid from Music Fund and bequest monies.

### Staffing Update

The Council received an extensive staffing assessment report from Pastor Brenner prior to our October meeting (an abbreviated version was distributed to the congregation shortly thereafter). After reviewing the report, we convened a committee to discuss how to move forward with our staffing process. At this time, we are exploring various staffing scenarios focused on the ministries identified for growth during the assessment period: Family, Youth, and Young Adult Programs; Outreach and Evangelism; and Stephen Ministry. The next steps will be to work with the Sierra Pacific Synod to create a ministry site profile about St. Mark's. If you have any questions, please speak with a council member. We will keep the congregation posted each step of the way. Thank you.

### Annual Congregational Meeting

January 29, 2012 at 12:15 pm

Please plan to attend our annual congregational meeting on Sunday, January 29, following the 11:00 am service.

Important actions at this meeting include

- the approval of the 2012 budget,
- the election of new Council members
- reports by the Pastor and the President
- updates on the many activities and ministries occurring at St. Mark's

## Update on St. Mark's Strategic Planning Goals

As part of the 2011 Oktoberfest celebration, team leaders updated members about the progress made on our Strategic Planning Goals. Following is a distillation of that discussion.

### Goal 1: Broaden Opportunities for Adult Education

Dan Pharr took over Adult Forum in 2011, and expected to put together a committee to work on adult education. Unfortunately, Dan had to leave St. Mark's to be with his mother who is ill. A prospective chair for an adult education committee has been approached. That person is interested but wants more time before accepting.

Once established it is anticipated the committee will provide:

- Adult Forum continuing on Sundays scheduled between the services on Sundays
- Bible Study meeting at the church on Sunday mornings or Wednesday evenings
- Guest speakers by associating with established speaker series, using St. Mark's as a venue
- Films utilizing the television in Heritage Hall, followed by a group discussion
- A book club meeting on a regular basis. The Adult Education Committee will provide an initial reading list, but the book club will be free to explore other books and other avenues of interest
- Introductory-level courses from Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary (PLTS) could be scheduled at St. Mark's if there is adequate interest. At a minimum, information on such PLTS courses will be made available to members.

### Goal 2: Create a Lay Ministry Program

The members working on this goal are considering Stephen Ministry as a means to help us establish a lay ministry program. Stephen Ministry is "a system for training and organizing lay people to provide one-to-one Christian care to the bereaved, hospitalized, terminally ill, separated, divorced, unemployed, relocated and others facing a crisis or life challenge."

Several members of St. Mark's attended workshops that introduced the Stephen Ministry program. There were also meetings and discussions on how Stephen Ministry could be applied at St. Mark's with members who have participated in Stephen Ministry through other congregations.

Stephen Ministry requires a coordinator within a participating congregation to administer the program. This is one of many issues to be addressed in the Council's deliberations on future staffing. The position could be paid or volunteer. The Council is planning on proceeding with joining Stephen Ministry and beginning training in 2012.

### Goal 3: Improve Support for Clergy and Staff

The Mutual Ministry Committee has developed a list of service anniversaries and birthdays for St. Mark's clergy and staff so that along with celebrating in October our clergy, we can remember all those who serve us through the year.

### Goal 4: Create Healthy Communications

A committee of St. Mark's members and representatives from the Council was created to address internal communications. The committee surveyed members during the 2011 Annual Meeting. It also created a new set of brochures called "Navigating St. Mark's." These brochures describe the many service and ministry opportunities at St. Mark's and provide contact information for those interested. The committee is currently revising the Time & Talent survey process.

### Goal 5: Expand Local and Global Ministry with Mission Partners

The Goal 5 Committee, working with the Social Ministries Committee, is supporting local programs, such as the Interfaith Food Bank, and global programs. A delegation from St. Mark's is visiting Cordero de Dios, our sister parish in El Salvador, in late November. The delegates will meet members of our sister parish, learn about the challenges they face, and the programs they offer to address these challenges. The delegates and members of Cordero de Dios will explore ways St. Mark's can assist and support these programs.

### Goal 6: Create a Marketing Strategy

A new marketing team has formed and is being led by Robert Dickinson. Its strategy is to improve outreach within the larger community and to increase attendance. Tactics planned in support of the strategy include:

- A survey within St. Mark's asking what is working and what is not working, asking for suggestions, and identifying communities within St. Mark's
- Competitive analysis of what other churches are doing and its effectiveness
- Partnering and networking with community organizations
- Signage along Starr King to take advantage of a busy and highly-visible intersection, drawing attention to St. Mark's and its ministries.

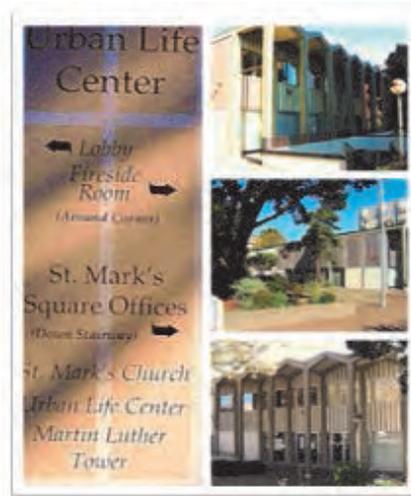
### Goal 7: Renew Commitment to Install an Elevator

The structure of our church building is such that it would be very difficult, if not impossible, to integrate an elevator within the building. Constructing a new structure to the West side of the building is the best option under consideration.

Initial estimates for such a structure have come in at \$495,000. This project will require a new capital campaign. We are presently approaching the end of a 3-year capital campaign. At the advice of people who specialize in fund-raising and capital campaigns, St. Mark's is not starting a new capital campaign in 2012. In the meantime, we will investigate alternative ways to raise money such as private and governmental grants.

## Development on the Square

As you know, St. Mark's Square is blessed with three buildings – our church, our Martin Luther Tower residence, and our Urban Life Center, affectionately known as the ULC. When the Mayor's office announced that it wanted the California Pacific Medical Center to contribute \$108 million toward affordable housing, it seemed that the time was right to begin exploring the possibility of developing additional affordable housing, including improved offices and community group space, on the ULC site. Representatives of the MLT Board and Church Council have had introductory meetings with various developers, as well as the Mayor's Office of Housing, to gather information as to available funding sources, what the critical housing needs are, construction costs, timeframes, etc. We are being assisted in this effort, on a pro bono basis, by a knowledgeable development consultant and an experienced real estate attorney in the San Francisco law offices of Orrick.



This is all extremely exploratory, and no decisions have been made or necessarily will be made. It is important, however, that the congregation and MLT residents know this is being considered, and we welcome input from interested congregants and residents. A main consideration is what sort of affordable housing would best serve

St. Mark's Square and the community, keeping in mind St. Mark's mission to serve those in need. Some possibilities being considered are affordable housing for families, veterans, or seniors. Any new building would, of course, include space for church offices and church functions, as well as upgraded offices and space for community groups and meetings in order to continue to meet the current and future needs served at the ULC.

St. Mark's members who have ideas to offer should direct them to Jan Charter, Council President ([charter@stmarks-sf.org](mailto:charter@stmarks-sf.org)). MLT residents should direct their ideas to Jon Moeller, MLT Board President ([jon\\_moeller@hotmail.com](mailto:jon_moeller@hotmail.com)).

It is exciting to think about a new building on the square. We hope you will give this your prayerful and thoughtful consideration.

In Christ's service,  
Jan Charter and Jon Moeller

## Congregational Advocate

### Are you the person we've been looking for?

- Do you love helping people – especially when it means meeting the needs of people within the congregation?
- Do you recognize a new face in our congregation and welcome him or her warmly?
- Do you enjoy participating in fundraisers or hands-on projects that benefit organizations or individuals in need within our community?
- Are you a Thrivent Financial for Lutherans member?

If you said yes to most of those questions – you're the one! We're looking for people just like you to be a Thrivent Financial for Lutherans Congregational Advocate for your congregation.

### As a Congregational Advocate, you can:

- Build relationships with congregation members and leadership, and with Thrivent Financial members and financial representatives.
- Understand the needs and ministries of the congregation and help find the right charitable, social and educational solutions to meet those needs and then help make them happen in the congregation.
- Support and promote educational, charitable and social programs offered through Thrivent Financial to bring members together in the congregation.

### Interested in helping?

Contact your Lutheran Engagement Team, Linda Waage at 916-342-9692 or Mary Morey at 209-551-5528 for more information.



## Fall Stewardship Campaign

Fall is traditionally a time of stewardship at St. Mark's. Although stewardship is an essential part of everyday Christian life, it is during this significant time of year when congregation members are asked to make a financial pledge to support the ongoing missions and ministry of our parish. Our stewardship slogan this year is "Forward in Faith... Finish Strong". As we move forward in our efforts to carry out God's mission, we pledge our financial resources to the church's general fund and the work that it supports. And we also look back in an attempt to "finish strong" by completing the pledges we have already made to the church's building fund.

Our stewardship campaign began on October 16th and ended on November 20th. Each Sunday members of the Stewardship Committee addressed the congregation and encouraged them to prayerfully consider the importance of good stewardship. Three members of our congregation, Hans Hoch, Maria Anderson and Chuck Lewis, presented their personal views on stewardship by giving temple talks. Pledge packets were created and given to members of the congregation on November 6th. The following Sunday, a symbolic gift that reinforced our campaign slogan was given to members as they entered the church for Sunday services. A package of strong coffee was given to each member to help them "finish strong". Finally, pledge cards were collected on November 20th, Celebration Sunday. Following the 11:00 service that day, we did indeed celebrate with a Thanksgiving dinner in Heritage Hall.

As the fall season blends into the Christmas season, the Stewardship Committee asks you to please join us as we respond to God's call for Christian stewardship. Join with us as we go "forward in faith". And thank you for helping us to "finish strong".

Roger Ostrem  
Stewardship Committee Chairperson



*Plant Seeds of Joy  
Grow Gifts of Faith*

## Living Heritage

Do you care about the mission and ministry of St. Mark's? Is it important to you that the ministry of St. Mark's continues long after you've passed? Take steps today to ensure you leave a "Living Heritage" that sustains St. Mark's ministries in perpetuity.

Anyone can leave a Living Heritage. Include St. Mark's Evangelical Lutheran Church Endowment Fund in your will or trust, or name the endowment fund as the beneficiary of your IRA, 401(k), or 403(b).

For more information or suggested language for estate planning documents, contact one of the following:

- Debra Varian, Chair of the Endowment Committee (415-310-3786 or [endowment@stmarks-sf.org](mailto:endowment@stmarks-sf.org)),
- Pastor Elizabeth Ekdale, or
- The Lutheran Community Foundation where our endowment fund is held (800-365-4172 or see [www.thelcf.org](http://www.thelcf.org))

## Your Gifts at Work

### Annual Giving 2011

#### Forward in Faith

Three year pledge (2009-2011)

No. of pledges	108 out of 211 possible
Pledged	\$ 547,554
Received thru 10/31/11	\$ 439,622

#### General Fund

One year pledge (2011)

No. of pledges	128 out of 211 possible
Pledged	\$ 366,739
Received thru 10/31/11	\$ 306,937

#### Income versus Expenses

<u>Jan-Oct '11</u>	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Budget</u>
Income	\$ 451,751	\$ 419,918
Expense	\$ 419,559	\$ 428,463
NET	\$ 32,192	-\$ 8,545



## St. Mark's & MLT Senior Center Christmas Dinner

Friday, December 16 at 5 PM in Heritage Hall

Join us for holiday cheer!

Connect with MLT residents and St. Mark's seniors for a wonderful evening of holiday cheer. We will hear beloved carols and sing along to familiar tunes. Enjoy a wonderful meal in the spirit of the season. Signups, as always, will be taken at the MLT Office.

## Senior Center Luncheons

Senior Center Luncheons take place in Heritage Hall every third Thursday of the month from 12 noon to approximately 1:00 pm. Cost: \$4. To RSVP for lunches please call the MLT Office at 415.885.1084.

Upcoming Lunch dates:

**January 19 & February 16**

## Senior Center Trips

Senior Trips depart from the Brockie Lounge at Martin Luther Tower. All trips are offered on a first-come, first-served basis. The number of participants varies depending on drivers' availability. The trips generally take place on a Friday, and the usual departure time is 10 am unless indicated otherwise. Cost: \$3 (transportation fee). To RSVP please call the MLT office at 415.885.1084.



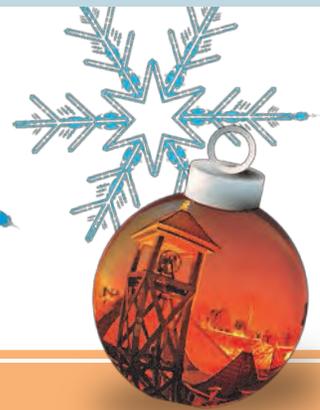
## International Christmas Crèche Exhibit, Palo Alto Tuesday, December 6

Beginning in the 17th century, families in Naples, Italy welcomed friends and neighbors into their homes each December to share beloved crèches they had made and collected. In many countries this practice lives on. Echoing this tradition, all are invited see the crèches of different times and places.



## After-Christmas Shopping in Fairfield Friday, January 13

Join MLT and St. Mark's seniors for an after Christmas shopping expedition to the Westfield shopping mall in Fairfield. A wide variety of stores are waiting for you... for a complete list, visit [www.westfield.com/solano](http://www.westfield.com/solano). We will have an inexpensive lunch there.



## Senior Trip to the Winchester Mystery House Friday, February 24

The Winchester Mystery House was once the personal residence of Sarah Winchester, the widow of gun magnate William Wirt Winchester. The Queen Anne Style Victorian mansion is renowned for its size and utter lack of any master building plan. According to popular belief, Winchester thought the house was haunted by the ghosts of the people who fell victim to Winchester rifles, and that only continuous construction would appease them. The trip will depart from the Brockie Lounge at MLT, and there will be a \$3 transportation fee.

## Sacred Acts at St. Mark's

Join us in commemorating recent sacred events:

### Memorials

- October 19, 2011 – Samuel Joseph Santora
- October 19, 2011 – Howard Montgomery Grayson
- November 12, 2011 – Phyllis Williams Gomez

## Christmas Decorations

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

## Goodbye to Duc Huynh

After 22 years in St. Mark's service, our Supervisor of Facilities and Grounds, Duc Huynh, has decided that he needs a career change. His last day with us was October 31. At Duc's request, we did not have any official farewell celebration for him, although the St. Mark's staff feted him with gifts and lunch, and he also received a gift from the Council on behalf of the congregation. And we all remember the wonderful celebration we had to commemorate Duc's 20th anniversary with us. We wish Duc well in his new endeavors. He remains part of the St. Mark's family, and we hope to see him in the future.



The custodial service we had been using on weekends will fill in full-time until we find a regular replacement.



## St. Mark's Christmas Pageant



The St. Mark's archival collection includes many photos and programs relating to various church events that have occurred over the years. An event that has packed the church each Christmas Eve for nearly 20 years is the ever popular intergenerational Christmas pageant. Christmas after Christmas children and older folks have excitedly performed in the annual pageant depicting the story of the Christ child—the old Christmas story as told in the Gospels of Luke and Matthew, which never fails to please.

A cast of 60 reenacts the story told by a narrator, with all participants in full costume, some magnificently hand-made. New babies in the congregation seem honored to portray the Baby Jesus, and sometimes live pets take part, such as parrots and doggies dressed as sheep.

It's all there—the trip by donkey of Mary and Joseph to Bethlehem to await the birth of Jesus in a manger, shepherds in the field watching their flocks by night, the appearance of wicked King Herod with designs on his new rival, the three wise men following a star in the east bringing gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh, and angels of all ages high in the balcony resplendent in angel wings and halos joyfully singing, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth, peace and good will toward all."

The audience gets in the act, too, by singing familiar Christmas carols amid the glow of candlelight, warming the hearts of all with hope, love, memories, and the promise of Christmas. Joy to all!

*This is the 14th in a series of Tales from the Archives by Marge Jencks.*

## Staff

### The Rev. Elizabeth E. Ekdale

Lead Pastor  
ekdale@stmarks-sf.org

### The Rev. Paul Brenner

Interim Associate Pastor  
brenner@stmarks-sf.org

### Dr. Timothy Zerlang

Director of Music  
zerlang@stmarks-sf.org

### Jun Ranches

Director, Church Admin & Ops  
ranches@stmarks-sf.org

### Ann Dayton

Administrative Coordinator  
dayton@stmarks-sf.org

### Cheryl Garcia

Bookkeeper  
garcia@stmarks-sf.org

### Elizabeth Baldrige

Wedding Coordinator  
baldrige@stmarks-sf.org

### The Rev. Chuck Lewis

Visitation Pastor

### Carl Storey

Security

### Shirley Liu

Elvira Markov

Johanna Najera

Nursery Attendants

### Jenny Hart

Sunday School Coordinator

### Jan Charter

Church Council President

*St Mark's*  
LUTHERAN CHURCH

1111 O'FARRELL STREET, SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94109  
(415) 928-7770 PHONE | (415) 928-8534 FAX

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



## St. Mark's Worship Schedule

### Sundays

9:00 am HOLY COMMUNION w/Children's Time  
10:00 am Sunday School  
10:00 am Adult Forum  
11:00 am CHORAL EUCHARIST  
12:15 pm Coffee and Fellowship Hour

### Wednesdays

6:00 pm Midweek Supper  
6:45 pm MIDWEEK HOLY COMMUNION  
7:30 pm Choir Rehearsal

## Church Office Hours

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

## Church Office Closures

Monday, December 26  
Monday, January 2  
Monday, January 16 (Martin Luther King Day)  
Monday, February 20 (Presidents' Day)

### St. Mark's is a "Reconciling in Christ" Congregation

St. Mark's is one of over 315 congregations, 22 synods and 12 organizations across the ELCA and the ELCIC (Canada) which have declared that lesbian and gay people are equally welcome to join fully in the worship and life of this Christ-centered community. For more information, please contact Steve Krefting at [krefting@stmarks-sf.org](mailto:krefting@stmarks-sf.org) or 415.826.3124 or speak to one of the pastors.

### St. Mark's is a congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

The Rev. Mark S. Hanson, Presiding Bishop  
The Rev. Mark W. Holmerud, Bishop, Sierra Pacific Synod  
The Rev. Susan Strouse, Dean, San Francisco Conference  
Sister Parish: Cordero de Dios Lutheran Church in Soyapango, El Salvador



Evangelical Lutheran  
Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

