



The Evangel

In the heart of the city for ministry to the world

A Reconciling in Christ Congregation

March—April 2009

Lent, Holy Week and Easter at St. Mark's

Wednesdays, March 4—April 1

6:00 pm Lenten Supper

7:00 pm Lenten Vespers

Sunday, April 5

9:00 am Palm Sunday Worship

11:00 am Palm Sunday Worship

Monday & Tuesday, April 6 & 7

7:00 pm Holy Week Compline

Wednesday, April 8

7:00 pm Holy Week Tenebrae

Thursday, April 9

7:00 pm Maundy Thursday

Friday, April 10

12:00 pm Stations of the Cross

7:00 pm Good Friday Service

Saturday, April 11

8:00 pm Great Easter Vigil

Sunday, April 12

9:00 am Easter Sunday Worship

11:00 am Easter Sunday Worship

8:00-10:30 am Pancake Breakfast

10:15 am Easter Egg Hunt

The Season of Lent

By Kyle Schiefelbein

"And the Spirit immediately drove [Jesus] out into the wilderness. He was in the wilderness forty days, tempted by Satan; and he was with the wild beasts; and the angels waited on him." (Mark 1:12-13)

This is a part of the gospel reading for the First Sunday in Lent, although the season of Lent begins on Ash Wednesday. This text gives us the traditional themes for the season: 40 days, fasting and fighting against temptation, all in preparation for Easter. One might assume that the season of Lent originated as an attempt to pattern the liturgical year after the life of Christ, but the gospels tell us that Jesus accomplished quite a bit between his 40-day excursion and his entrance into Jerusalem.

As I mentioned in my article about Epiphany, it is difficult to definitively state how the liturgical year originated. There exists no mention of Lent, as we know it, prior to the fourth century. Different practices started in different regions. The Egyptian church had a 40-day fast in commemoration of Jesus in the wilderness, but this fast began after the commemoration of Jesus' baptism and had no connection to Easter. In the North African and Roman churches, a three-week period of baptismal preparation happened just prior to Easter for baptisms to take place at the Easter Vigil. Some scholars speculate that these two traditions fused around the time that the date of Easter was solidified. The merger of these two traditions brings about Lent's multiple meanings. Lent was a time for final preparation of catechumens for baptism and of those undergoing public penance for reconciliation on or

(cont. on p. 2)

Bishop Holmerud at St. Mark's, March 1st

We welcome our new bishop Mark Holmerud, on Sunday, March, 1. Bishop Holmerud will preach at both services, and will meet members at a special Adult Forum in Heritage Hall at 10:00 a.m.



Bishop Holmerud pictured at his Installation in July, 2008.

The Season of Lent (cont.)

before Easter. Once infant baptism became the norm in the fifth century, the latter meaning won out, which is why present-day Lent has a penitential character. The retrieval of the baptismal catechumenate, like here at St. Mark's, has helped in recovering Lent's two-fold meaning.

Because Lent is the traditional time for final baptismal preparation, more rites related to the catechumenate are scheduled at St. Mark's:

- Ash Wednesday: Calling the Baptized to Continuing Conversion – this rite calls all the baptized, especially those who are preparing for Affirmation of Baptism, to die daily to sin and to walk in newness of life;

- First Sunday in Lent: Enrollment of Candidates for Baptism – those who wish to be baptized at the Easter Vigil make public their intentions at this rite;

Second Sunday in Lent: Blessing of Candidates for Affirmation – this rite keeps those preparing for Affirmation in the prayers of the congregation;

- Third, Fourth and Fifth Sundays in Lent: Blessing of Candidates for Baptism – those preparing for baptism are presented with the Creed and the Lord's Prayer, and renounce evil, while keeping them in the prayers of the congregation;

Maundy Thursday: Preparation for the Three Days – those preparing for Affirmation of Baptism are reminded of their Christian call to service by participating in the washing of feet.

A note about the numbering of days in Lent: the number of calendar days from Ash Wednesday to the Easter Vigil is 46. Since each Sunday is a festival of the resurrection (mini-Easter), Sundays are not counted as days of Lent (hence why they are called Sundays in Lent and not of Lent); thus, the number equals 40.

For further reading: Paul F. Bradshaw, *The Search for the Origins of Christian Worship*, 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002); Maxwell E. Johnson, *The Rites of Christian Initiation: Their Evolution and Interpretation* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1999).



Geri Bailey, Omer Voss, Bob Brouhard and Pam Ruh devote time to SF Interfaith's Winter Homeless Shelter during the two weeks it was held at St. Mark's.

The Audacity of Faith

By Margaret McLean

Tuesday January 20th was one of those days—like Pearl Harbor, D-Day, Kennedy's assassination, 9/11—where, if you remember it at all, you remember everything about it—where you were, what you were wearing, what you had for breakfast—one of those days

that is seared into our collective consciousness, that changes us, and possibly the world, forever.

We heard words of encouragement, from our just-sworn-in President as he implored us to choose “hope over fear”—not a sunny Hallmark hope, but a hope that requires us “to set aside childish things” and to reclaim our values—“hard work and honesty, courage and fair play, tolerance and curiosity, loyalty and patriotism” in “this winter of our hardship.”

As Christians, we resonated with the President's allusion to I Corinthians 13 and realized that, as a people of faith—an audacious faith that claims that God

became just like us—we are called to do more than hope, to risk more than hope. We are called “to set aside childish things” and replace them with a love that “bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things” (I Cor. 13:7). We are certainly called to hard work and honesty and courage and fair play; but, as Christians we are to do all of this not because it will ease the winter of our hardship—although, with time, it may—but because we are first called by Jesus to risk loving the neighbor.

Lutheran theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer describes how we meet the neighbor: “Jesus stands at the door and knocks . . . He asks for your help in the form of a beggar, in the form of a ruined human being in torn clothing. He confronts you in every person that you meet. Christ walks on earth as your neighbor as long as there are people” (DB, 1st Sunday of

Advent, Barcelona, December 2, 1928).

Christ walks on the earth as our neighbor gracefully enabling us to build up the body of Christ by building up this community of faith. We can risk change in our worship life—even when we've never sung that ELW hymn before; we can risk "welcoming all"—even when it makes us uncomfortable; we can risk deliberation, discussion, disagreement, and decision about things that really matter because we agree on the one thing that ultimately matters—the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus the Christ. Only the audacity of our faith can let us risk it all in becoming who God created us to be, in becoming who we could not be otherwise—a community of grace and hope, building up relationships with honesty and courage and fair play and a love that is so much more than mere tolerance—forging relationships across this carpeted aisle and across land and sea to El Salvador, Zambia, Rwanda, and the Philippines.

The ritual of the Catechumenate ministry regularly reminds us that it is Jesus who stands at our door and knocks . . .

- † Seeking to be baptized
- † Seeking to be affirmed in faith
- † Seeking to join in worship and ministry, a ministry whose measure is taken by how we treat those who have no other voice, no other hands but ours.

During 2008, our voices, hands, and hearts did God's work—

spreading the Gospel, feeding the hungry, welcoming the stranger, singing God's praises, mourning those who died, teaching children and adults, sheltering the homeless, planting camellias and crabapple trees, supporting our missionaries, knitting for the streets. We welcomed new members and

whose 6 years on Council—a couple of those as Treasurer—are ending today. We are grateful for your careful thinking and attention to detail—attributes that will be put to good use as you continue to chair the Endowment Committee, about which we will hear later.



Some of San Francisco's working homeless enjoy a hot meal prepared by St. Mark's members and served in the ULC Auditorium.

new staff. We accomplished much—please read the Annual Report to see just how much. I thank the Parish Life and other committee Chairs and each of you who opened yourself to the neighbor. I thank our staff for your unflinching support of our ministry and our pastors for keeping the Gospel and the neighbor ever before us.

Shortly, we will elect new leaders to Council. Now, I want to thank the 2008 Council for an extraordinary year of service—for their deep concern for the well-being of this congregation. Our gratitude to those of you who have completed 3 years of faithful service and are running for re-election today—Geri, Dean, and Jerrold. I specifically want to recognize Debbie Varian

Jesus knocks and we are called to follow—not to retreat or to retrench—but to put aside childish things and step out boldly with honesty, curiosity, loyalty, hard work, courage, fair play and, as Lutheran Christians, with the audacity of a faith active in love.

(Originally presented at St. Mark's 2009 Annual Meeting on January 25.)

Check out the photo gallery at www.stmarks-sf.org!

Bach Organ Recital

St. Mark's is pleased to announce an organ recital in commemoration of J.S. Bach's 324th birthday, on Sunday, March 22 at 3:30 p.m. Our guest organist will be the renowned Jonathon Dimmock. A free will offering will be greatly appreciated. The program mirrors a concert given by Mendelssohn in Bach's honor (2009 is Mendelssohn's 200th birthday!) Featured pieces include the Prelude and Fugue in A minor, the Passacaglia and Fugue in C minor, the Pastorella, and chorale preludes.

Greg Jahnke
named 2008 LCF Voice in
Philanthropy

Greg Jahnke, Thrivent Financial for Lutherans representative and St. Mark's church member, has been recognized as a 2008 Lutheran Community Foundation Voice in Philanthropy (VIP) .

Greg was selected for his dedication to making charitable planning a significant part of his work. His efforts help support a wide variety of charities and causes that are important to his clients and the community.

He was honored in January at a gala held in the new California Academy of Sciences in Golden Gate Park.

"Greg exemplifies generosity in all that he does. As co-chair of our Capital Campaigns, his passionate commitment to the ministry of St. Mark's has inspired us all. WE are so grateful for his vital contributions to the life of St. Mark's.

The event at the Academy of Sciences was classy, hospitable and lovely. It was the place to be that evening if you were Lutheran!" said Pastor Ekdale.

Thrivent Financial for Lutherans is a Fortune 500 financial services membership organization helping millions of members achieve their financial goals and give back to their communities. For more information, visit www.thrivent.com.



Greg Jahnke speaking at the Voice in Philanthropy event in January.



Jerrold Allen and Jan Charter share a light moment at the 2009 Church Council Retreat in February.



Council highlights
from the January and February Council
meetings:

January

- The 2009 St. Mark's budget was approved and forwarded to the congregation
- A resolution in support of the creation of an endowment was approved
- Proceeds from Lenten boxes were designated to be split between the New Lutheran School in Rwanda and the San Francisco Food Bank

February

- Officers were elected for the 2009 Council session, including President Randy Schieber, Vice-President Jan Charter, Treasurer Aron Bohlig, Secretary Geri Bailey, and Member-at-Large Susan Sall
- St. Mark's Safe Congregations Policy was reviewed and updated
- A bequest from the estate of Evelyn and Westy Westberg was designated towards the purchase of two additional organ stops



On June 4, 1995, we had a visitor from Lake Wobegon. While in the Bay Area for a live broadcast of "A Prairie Home Companion", Garrison Keillor packed St. Mark's sanctuary with a special benefit performance to launch the first major fundraising campaign to restore the church. The fantastic musical combo "Lutheran Lounge Lizards" entertained from the chancel while we awaited Mr. Keillor's entrance. As he strolled slowly down the center aisle, gazing all around to great applause and foot-stomping enthusiasm, we knew it would be a delightful performance and a memorable day. One member said, "This is a real morale boost. If we can get Garrison Keillor to help, perhaps anything's possible." AND IT WAS!

Note: This is the second in a series of historical tales from the archives.

Adult Forums

Members and friends of St. Mark's meet Sunday mornings at 10:00 in the Fireside Room of the Urban Life Center. We welcome all to join in learning and exploring together. Our forums for the coming Sundays are:

Meet Sierra Pacific Bishop Mark Holmerud ✦ March 1

Saints for Your Lenten Journey

Pastors Ekdale and Jennert

March 8 ✦ Teresa of Avila

March 15 ✦ Julian of Norwich

March 22 ✦ Hildegard of Bingen

March 29 ✦ John of the Cross

Triduum

April 5 ✦ Palm Sunday

Pastor Ekdale

EASTER ✦ April 12

No Meeting

Church Office Closures

Please note that the Church Office will close at noon on **Good Friday, April 10**, and be closed on **Monday, April 13**.



Annual Giving 2009

Pledges

Number of pledges - out of 235

General Fund	109
Forward in Faith	126

Amount pledged

General Fund	\$332,172
<i>(one year pledge)</i>	
Forward in Faith	\$525,635
<i>(three year pledge)</i>	

Actual versus Budget

<u>JAN 2009</u>	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Budget</u>
Income	\$33,431	\$34,591

Forward in Faith

Pledged	\$525,635
Received	\$57,663

Your Gifts at Work

Your ongoing financial gifts to St. Mark's enable us to participate in the Interfaith Shelter program. During the winter, four shelter sites were used - Trinity Episcopal Church, St. Mary's Cathedral, St. Mark's Lutheran Church and 1st Unitarian Universalist Church. Total number of beds filled was 8,427. Meals were provided by 23 congregations. The 2008-2009 shelter program began Sunday, November 23 and will continue until February 28, 2009. At this juncture 31 congregations and groups have volunteered to provide meals.

Your gifts make a difference!



St. Mark's new Church Council President Randy Schieber at the 2009 Church Council Retreat.

Highlighted Activities for March and April

For information on these activities, visit our website at www.stmarks-sf.org, and watch our weekly announcements!

Lent, Holy Week and Easter

Date	Time	Event
Sunday, March 1	9:00 & 11:00 am	Bishop Holmerud Visit
Wednesdays, March 4, 11, 18, 25 & April 1	6:00 pm 7:00 pm	Lenten Midweek Supper Lenten Vespers Worship
Saturday, March 28	9:00 am	Men's Lenten Retreat
Sunday, April 5	9:00 & 11:00 am	Palm Sunday Worship
Monday, April 6	7:00 pm	Holy Week Compline Worship
Tuesday, April 7	7:00 pm	Holy Week Compline Worship
Wednesday, April 8	7:00 pm	Holy Week Tenebrae Worship
Thursday, April 9	7:00 pm	Maundy Thursday Worship
Friday, April 10	12:00 & 7:00 pm	Good Friday Worship
Saturday, April 11	8:00 pm	Great Easter Vigil Worship
Sunday, April 12	8:00 - 10:30 am 9:00 & 11:00 am 10:15 am	Pancake Breakfast Easter Sunday Worship Sunday School Egg Hunt

And...

Date	Time	Event
Sunday, March 8	2:00 pm	Bread for the World Gathering
Thursday, March 12	6:30 pm	S.M.A.R.T. dinner at Alaturca
Friday, March 13	10:00 am	Senior Bay Cruise*
Thursday, March 19	12 pm	Senior Center Luncheon**
Saturday, March 21	9:00 am	Choir Retreat
Sunday, March 22	3:30 pm	Jon Dimmock Organ Recital
Saturday, March 28	9:00 am	Men's Lenten Retreat
Sunday, March 29	10:00 am	Parish Life Fair
Thursday, April 16	11:30 am	Senior Picnic to Marin*
Friday, April 17		S.M.A.R.T. Event (tba)
Thursday, April 23	12:00 pm	Senior Center Luncheon**
Saturday, April 25	5:00 pm 6:00 pm	St. Mark's Day Dinner St. Mark's Day Worship

* Contact Church Office: 415.928.7770

** Contact MLT office: 415.885.1084

The Evangel

March - April 2009

St. Mark's Lutheran Church
1111 O'Farrell Street
San Francisco, CA 94109

Church Office Hours

9:00 am to 5:00 pm, Mon-Fri
Phone: 415.928.7770

Fax: 415.928.8534

www.stmarks-sf.org

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 or 415.826.3124 or speak to one of the pastors.

Staff

The Rev. Elizabeth E. Ekdale,
Lead Pastor

The Rev. Christian Jennert,
Associate Pastor

Jun Ranches,
Director of Church Admin. & Oper.

Ann Dayton,
Administrative Assistant

Tina Haner,
Facilities Coordinator

Cheryl Garcia,
Bookkeeper

David Auerbach,
Interim Organist/Choir Director

The Rev. Chuck Lewis,
Visitation Pastor

Stacy Cullison,
9:00 am Pianist/Organist

Duc Huynh,
Buildings and Grounds Supervisor

Carl Storey,
Security

Elvira Markov & Tanya Chanthavong,
Nursery Assistants

Jenny Hart,
Sunday School Coordinator

Valerie Taft,
Teaching Parish Student

Randy Schieber,
Church Council President

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. Steve Sabin, Dean, San Francisco Conference

Sister Parish

Cordero de Dios Lutheran Church in Soyapango, El Salvador

