



The Evangel

In the heart of the city for ministry to the world

A Reconciling in Christ Congregation

July –August 2009

The Incredible Presence of Lutherans in Rwanda, El Salvador, Zambia and South Carolina

In these summer months, we have deepened our relationships with Lutherans from around the world – Pr. John Rutsindintwarane and Robin Strickler from Rwanda and Pastor Norma Castillo from El Salvador. We listened and learned about life and ministry in these countries and have been humbled by their witness of abiding faith in very difficult circumstances. Both countries have experienced violence and trauma in recent history. The Lutheran Church has been vital in bringing healing and reconciliation to those who were harmed. These specific Lutheran communities in which Pr. John and Pr. Norma serve became places of sanctuary, healing, hope, and safety

Each of these congregations has taken to heart the words from Isaiah: “Your ancient ruins shall be rebuilt; you shall raise up the foundations of many generations; you shall be called the repairer of the breach, the restorer of streets to live in.” One parishioner commented after listening to Pr. Norma describe the vital ministries at Cordero de Dios Lutheran Church, “They don’t just play at their faith, they really live their faith”. They live their faith by



Pastor John Rutsindintwarane from Rwanda with Mary Ritter and Margaret McLean during his visit to St. Mark's in June.

entering into the brokenness of their community and offering the good news of Christ. Now, good news can be disguised in many forms. Good news can be food and shelter. Good news can be vocational training and education. Good news can be jobs and clothing. Good news isn't something that is dispensed at worship once a week. Good news is shared when one member of the body of Christ serves another or walks with another in love and humility.

There are many ways to **be** the good news to the world. In our own community at St. Mark's, we have parishioners who are sick and in need of prayer. We have parishioners who have lost their jobs and are hoping to find work. We have parishioners who are struggling with paying the rent and other necessities. Can you be good news to your brother or sister? Can you live your faith by reaching out to someone in need, welcoming a visitor, listening to a stranger, praying for your neighbor?

There are many ways to be good news to the world. I hope and pray you will discover your own unique and God-given way to do so.

In these summer days, we have deepened our relationships with Lutherans from around the world.
(cont. next page)



Confirmands Sigi Ocker, Ariana Baum, Davia Schendel and Kilian Benson on Pentecost Sunday.

What a gift we have received as we discover how to live our faith here in San Francisco.

In Christ,
Pastor Elizabeth

P.S. - Through the presence of Whitney Wolfe, our youth intern, we have discovered that Lutherans also speak with a Southern drawl! She has been a gift to us and our youth planning activities, leading bible studies, and organizing servant events. In mid-July she will return home to South Carolina and resume her second year of college at University of South Carolina. Thank you Whitney!

P.S.S. - We have received a wonderful letter from our ELCA missionaries, Pr. Arden and Susan Strasser, who serve in Zambia. I encourage you to read about their creative and life-giving ministry in Zambia. A portion of the letter and link information appears in the adjacent column.



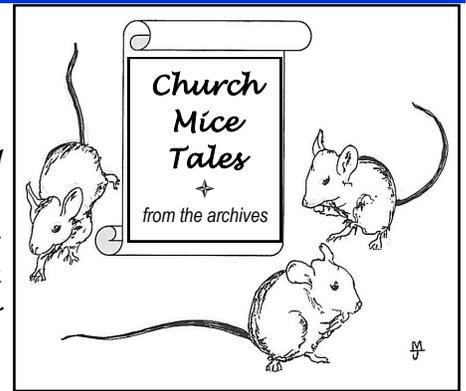
"TOUR DE REVS" 100 DAYS FOR HUNGER

The Tour de Revs - 100 Days for Hunger - is making its way around the United States, and will be in Northern California in July. The Tour de Revs is a group of three ELCA pastors who are using sabbatical time to ride a bicycle built for three to raise money for world hunger. They plan to appear in all 65 synods of the ELCA.



For more information about their appearances July 11-12 in Northern California, click on the following link, which is posted on the Synod website: <http://www.tourderevs.org/tdr/Welcome.html>.

Soon after our present church building was closed in 2005 for extensive restoration work, a worker discovered a time capsule



under the church's foundation. A strongbox was found in a large sandstone block, snuggled under an arched brick niche.

Anticipation grew, and on October 9, 2005, the box was opened to find exciting glimpses into our past. The fragile water-damaged contents included newspapers dated 1863 in German and English, a German hymnal, a German copy of the Augsburg Confession, and an 1863 silver U.S. half dollar coin minted in San Francisco. What a surprise to discover that this time capsule dated 1863! It must have been brought from the earlier church located on Union Square and stored in the new church in 1894. Our archives indicate that somewhere there is another time capsule sealed in 1894, probably still encased within the cornerstone.

- M. Jencks

A Letter from Pastor Arden

Dear St Mark's Lutheran Church,

As your ELCA missionary in Zambia, I send you greetings from my family here. The days shorten now and the temperatures drop as we enter winter in southern Africa, but we still experience our "built-in" northerner feelings of anticipation for a summer vacation and less busy schedules, like you do.

We are well, and hope you are also. Thankfully, we have not experienced serious health crises over the past year. We still have erratic water & electricity, which are annoying, but on the other hand, Leopard's Hill Road, where we live, has been tarred. (continue reading Pastor Arden's letter at http://www.stmarks-sf.org/News/Pastor_Arden_June_2009.htm).

Recession Response Food Pantry Call for Volunteers

Old First Presbyterian has responded to a request from the San Francisco Food Bank and will host and staff a Recession Response Food Pantry. We'll need a dozen volunteers each time – please participate! Bring your small group, youth group, family, or just yourself! The Pantry operates every Saturday morning through December from 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon. (Food distribution in 9:00 to 11:00 a.m.) Old First Presbyterian Church is located at 1751 Sacramento St (at Van Ness.) Parking is free for volunteers in the Old First Garage. To volunteer, call 415-776-5552 or e-mail foodpantry@oldfirst.org.

The annual fund raiser AIDS Walk San Francisco will take place in Golden Gate Park on Sunday, July 19. Contact Dana Utz or Chuck Lewis if you would like to be a part of this important fundraiser.



SMART dines out a la Salvadorena!

Council highlights

from the May / June Church Council meetings:

May

Council passed a motion to commit to a process of strategic planning to commence with the Council Retreat in February 2010. Rev. Roy Oswald will facilitate this retreat and the planning process. Roy Oswald has guided many congregations through strategic planning and is highly recommended.

The St. Mark's Director of Music selection committee is preparing to conduct 8-9 interviews per phone and will conduct live interviews in June.

After a presentation by the Columbarium Committee, the council approved the creation of a Columbarium to be located in the landing behind the chancel on the western side of the church, contingent on the receipt of pledges to fully offset the costs.

June

The Past President's Council met for the first time on Wednesday, June 17. Discussion touched on a variety of opportunities and challenges facing St. Mark's. There was energy and excitement around the Strategic Planning process.

Due to the resignation of the Facilities Coordinator, Jun has assumed the responsibilities. There are three main responsibilities: scheduling, marketing and administration. Jun is looking into options for replacing this position.

In November, 2009 there will be a Sister Synod event in El Salvador. The council approved to support asking the congregation to financially support a trip for two individuals to the Sister Synod Event.

IT IS UP! TAKE A LOOK!

The Council Bulletin Board is located in the hallway, across from the nursery. The Council minutes will be posted each month.



Baptism Sundays at St. Mark's

The church has established a series of Sundays throughout the year to be celebrated as "Baptism Sundays." Here are the dates of St. Mark's Baptism Sundays for the following year:

- Sept. 6, 2009
- All Saints' Day, Nov. 1, 2009
- Baptism of our Lord, January 10, 2010
- Easter 2, April 11, 2010
- May 30, 2010 (Memorial weekend)



Please contact one of the pastors to schedule a baptism for one of your children or yourself.

Save the Date:

Founders' Day 2009

at Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary

Dr. Martin Marty will be the keynote speaker at Founders' Day, September 23, 2009. We also gather to celebrate and remember the important history of Seminec. Please join us!

Registration details to follow.



Summer School at PSR

This year Pacific School of Religion and Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary in Berkeley are offering 1-week courses for people from all walks of life for audit, continuing education units, or academic credit. We offer LGBT & religion courses, Lutheran courses, and much more. Classes begin July 6th. Please visit www.psr.edu/summer to view course offerings and to register.

New Security Gate

A new parking gate has been installed at the entrance of St. Mark's Ellis Street parking lot. The purpose of the gate is to enhance security on the Square and restrict the lot's use to authorized members and guests of the St. Mark's and Martin Luther Tower communities. The gate will be open on Sunday mornings for folks worshipping at St. Mark's. It will be closed and strictly enforced at all other times.



Annual Giving 2009

Forward in Faith

Three year pledge (2009-2011)

No. of pledges	110 out of 235
Pledged	\$527,963
Received thru 5/31	\$88,221

General Fund

One year pledge (2009)

No. of pledges	128 out of 235
Pledged	\$331,592
Received thru 5/31	\$184,430

Income vs. Expenses

	Jan-May 09	Actual	Budget
Income	\$199,913		\$192,429
Expense	\$207,455		\$209,439
NET		-\$7,542	-\$17,010

Church Summer Hours and Office Closures

Please note that the Church Office will be closed on Friday, July 3...Happy 4th of July!

Summer office hours continue through Monday, September 7 (Labor Day.)

Summer hours are:

Monday-Thursday,
9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. and
Friday, 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon.

Highlighted Activities for July and August

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

July

2	12:00 PM	MLT Independence Day Barbecue
3		CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED
5	10:00 AM	Summer Book Study begins Summer Inquirer's Gathering begins
17	8:00 AM	Senior Trip to Benbow Inn
19		CLU Sunday

AUGUST

14	10:00 AM	Senior Ferry Ride to Jack London Square
20	12:00 PM	Senior Center Luncheon

* Contact Church Office: 415.928.7770 ** Contact MLT office: 415.885.1084



The Mumeya clinic built by people in the Mumeya congregation in Rwanda. This is the congregation St. Mark's has been praying for over the last several months.

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



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July - August 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 ELIC (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 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