

The Evangel

March-April 2007

St. Mark's Lutheran Church ✦ *In the heart of the city for ministry to the world*

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LENT, HOLY WEEK, AND EASTER 2007

MIDWEEK LENTEN WORSHIP

February 28 (*Reconciling in Christ Vesper Service*), March 7, 14, 21 and 28

12:00 pm Worship followed by Lunch

6:00 pm Soup supper followed by

7:00 pm Worship



APRIL 1, 2007 - SUNDAY OF THE PASSION/ PALM SUNDAY

9:00 & 11:00 am Procession with Palms & Holy Eucharist



APRIL 5, 2007 - MAUNDY THURSDAY

7:30 pm Foot Washing, Choral Eucharist, and Stripping of the Altar



APRIL 6, 2007 - GOOD FRIDAY

12:00 pm Stations of the Cross

7:30 pm Liturgy of Good Friday "Passion According to St. John"; St. Mark's Choir



APRIL 7, 2007 - EASTER VIGIL

7:30 pm Service of Light, Service of Readings, Holy Baptism & Renewal of Baptismal Vows, Affirmation of Baptism for Confirmation Students, First Eucharist of Easter; Festive Reception to Follow



APRIL 8, 2007 - EASTER DAY

9:00 am Festive Communion Service

8:00-10:30 am Pancake Breakfast

10:15 am Easter Egg Hunt

11:00 am Festival Choral Eucharist

12:15 Farewell Coffee for Pastor Ekdale



Organ News

Sunday, March 25, 10:00 am

(NOTE SPECIAL TIME OF SINGLE LITURGY)

CHORAL EUCHARIST AND DEDICATION LITURGY

for St. Mark's New Taylor & Boody Pipe Organ. Join us as we thank God and ask his blessing on this magnificent instrument Music by Johann Sebastian Bach, Jan Bender, & others



Friday, March 30, 8:00 pm

DEDICATION RECITAL BY DAVID HIGGS Chair of the Organ Department, Eastman School of Music. World-Renowned Organ Recitalist. Suggested Donation: \$20 or \$35 for preferred balcony seating (No one turned away for lack of funds)

Complimentary Wine and Cheese Reception to follow in Heritage Hall.

(See article on page 2 for more information!)



Sunday, April 29, 2:00 pm

RECITAL BY RODNEY GEHRKE

St. Mark's Director of Music and Liturgy \$20 Suggested Donation

(benefits Organ Recital Series)

(No one turned away for lack of funds)

Mr. Gehrke plays music of Bach and Buxtehude on the finest instrument in San Francisco for this music

Reflection from Pastor Ekdale

Resurrection . . . new life . . . rejoicing in God's steadfast love . . . joy . . . new understandings of old words and truths . . . a fresh vision of inclusiveness – these are some of the themes we will encounter during the 50 days of Easter celebration.

In what ways do you see new life bursting forth within and around you? How might God be calling you to participate? What new understandings of old truths have occurred to you?

I am eager to ponder these questions and will be doing so while on sabbatical which begins a few days after Easter Sunday on Wednesday, April 11. It is my hope and prayer that I too will experience new life and new energy in my call to serve you as pastor with the gift of this Sabbath time.

Our sabbatical includes the following:

- ☞ *Reading, retooling and studying at various local retreat centers for several weeks*
- ☞ *Traveling to France with Hans and Grace – visiting Paris, Provence and the Taize community – biking through the Loire Valley*
- ☞ *Spending time with family*
- ☞ *Worshipping at different congregations in the Bay Area with my family – sitting together in the pews!*
- ☞ *Reflecting on what it means to refocus our energies at St. Mark's from being "building-focused" to "mission-focused".*

Your time will include:

- ☞ *A small group book study with every parishioner receiving a book from our Sabbatical grant fund*
- ☞ *Reflecting on who we are as a congregation and where God is leading us*
- ☞ *Experiencing in new ways the gifts of our lay leaders and staff*
- ☞ *Receiving the leadership of Pastor Christian Jennert and Pastor Lyle Beckman. Pr. Beckman currently serves as the San Francisco Night Minister and has been a member of St. Mark's for several years. He will be providing 15 – 20 hours a week of leadership – working alongside Pr. Christian, staff and lay leaders in my absence.*

Upon the conclusion of our sabbatical, we will rejoice and share with one another the new insights and understandings we will have discovered.

I will miss you while I am away – **April 11 to August 1**. I will hold you in my prayers and look forward to our reunion in August. I will pray for your renewal and refreshment, as I know you will be praying for my family and me.

Warmly, Pr. Elizabeth Ekdale,
Lead Pastor

THE 40 DAYS OF LENT

A preparation for Holy Baptism

Traditionally, the 40 days of Lent were reserved in the ancient church for inquirers of the Christian faith interested in baptism and so-called *catechumens*. The height of this Lenten journey is the reception into the community of Christ by holy baptism at the Easter Vigil service.

If you desire to be baptized into the Christian faith or know someone who is interested, please contact or Pastor Christian Jennert at Jennert@stmarks-sf.org for further information. We will gladly walk with you on this journey of baptism.

Women's Grief Support Group Reunion Meeting, April 22

All those who participated last year in the St. Mark's Women's Support Group on coping with grief, are invited to the 6-month reunion meeting we discussed. We will meet Sunday, April 22 at 12:45 pm, after coffee hour. Please notify Lynette Brohm or Jo Chadwick asap if you have a conflict.

Sacred Acts at St. Mark's

Join us in commemorating the recent sacred event in our parish:

Wednesday, 1/31
Funeral of Betty Wilshusen

Organ Dedication Recital

March 30, 2007, 8:00 pm

David Higgs, Chair of the Organ Department of the Eastman School of Music, New York, will play the organ dedication recital on the new Taylor & Boody organ in St. Mark's Lutheran Church.



You can see photos of the new organ by visiting the website for Taylor & Boody at

www.taylorandboody.com and clicking **Instruments** and then clicking **Opus 37**.

The church has just finished an extensive seismic renovation and restoration. The beautiful sanctuary has been restored to its 1894 original colors, cream, gold, pale blue, natural wood, with Victorian (modern) lighting fixtures. The organ, designed to match the architecture of the church, is a "Tracker" organ in the style of older organs in Europe.

Mr. Higgs has performed throughout America, and elsewhere, and is renowned as one of the finest organists of this era. He has dedicated dozens of organs world-wide and will demonstrate our instrument to its fullest.

All are welcome. There is no charge for the concert; however, we ask that those who can make a donation will please do so.

Reservations may be made by sending a check to St. Mark's Lutheran Church, 1111 O'Farrell Street, San Francisco, CA 94109. St. Mark's requests a \$20 donation for general admission, or \$35 for preferred seating of organ aficionados in the balcony to observe Mr. Higgs more closely during his performance. (The organ is in the middle of the balcony at the rear of the church.) The church will keep a record of the donations, but no tickets will be issued and your returned check will be your receipt.

Please plan to attend this unique event, and tell others of the concert!

WELCA (*Women of the ELCA*)

An Invitation to all women

Tuesdays, March 13 and April 10

WELCA ladies meet the second Tuesday of every month at 11:00 a.m. in the Fireside room of the Urban Life Center. After our discussion we enjoy lunch and fellowship. Please bring a sandwich. Refreshments and dessert are provided. Watch weekly Parish Announcements for details.

From our gifts and projects in 2006, WELCA has been able to donate funds to support the work of seven organizations. These are:

- Evangelical Lutheran Church in America's work with Women and Girls
- Iglesia Luterana Cordero de Dios
- Kerry's Kids
- Living Waters Lutheran Church
- The Rwanda School Project
- San Francisco Network Ministries Safe House for Women
- Salem Lutheran Home

Donna Dindia and Nadine Robinson, Co-Chairs
email: WELCA@stmarks-sf.org

FIRST SISTER PARISHES ENCOUNTER

- FROM JULY 17 TO JULY 19 2007 -

As part of the efforts to strengthen the Salvadorian Lutheran Synod and taking into account the recommendations of improving our Sister relationships, we are convocating for the First Sister Parishes Encounter which will take place during **July 17, 18 and 19 of 2007**. This invitation is for all the churches, agencies and friends that have a Partnership with any of the Congregations of the Salvadorian Lutheran Synod, in Germany, Canada, USA, Finland, Norway and other foreign countries. Each church should send 1 or 2 persons who represent it and each church will have to cover their traveling expenses. Also, the Sister Parish Program is asking for an offering from each delegate which will be used to cover food, hosting and other expenses during the event.

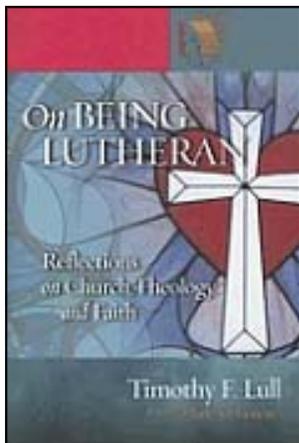
Pastor, Norma Castillo, Sister Parish Program
 Salvadorian Lutheran Synod

If you are interested in attending this Encounter, please contact Mary Ritter for more information.

MARCH 4, 11, 18 and April 1

On Being a Lutheran

“On being Lutheran—Reflections on Church, Theology and Faith” by the late



Timothy Lull focuses on topics such as: The Lutheran Church Confessions, the resilience of Lutheranism, rebuilding Lutheran piety, what it means to be “evangelical”, and more. With bubbling enthusiasm, intellectual joy and unceasing curiosity, this little book will make the Lutheran tradition meaningful and alive and help us grow in what it means to be

a Lutheran today. Who would expect anything different from Tim Lull?

APRIL 15 and 22

Chasing Down a Rumor

In “Chasing Down a Rumor” Robert Bacher and Ken Inskeep examine six “rumors” on the decline of mainline Protestant denominations in the U.S. Using historical trends and current statistical information, they analyze the current situation and point to vital lessons, potential problems, and key challenges. They also offer helpful strategies and provide examples of what denominations are doing that show potential. Moreover, Bacher and Inskeep argue that a fundamentally American form of mainline denominationalism can and will endure, despite the rumor of its decline.

MARCH 25 and APRIL 8

No Adult Forum

APRIL 29

Report on Synod Assembly

Pastor Jennert will report on this year’s Sierra Pacific Synod Assembly



Saturday, April 21
11:00 am to 2:00 pm
“Fair on the Square”,
A Family Celebration
A Fling Wide Event

Come one, come all—
kids, families, singles,
seniors. This community fair will bring the delights of a day filled with games, activities and, of course, good food!



A comparison is often made between "giving" and "tipping." Wouldn't it be great if people would give as much as they tip? In the following article, **Pastor Steve McKinley** contrasts the two and discusses why one is appropriate for church and one is not.

Are You A Tipper?

You've had dinner at George's Steak House, Good Company, Applebee's or Vince Lombardi's, and the bill comes. It's probably more than you thought it should be, but then you add on 15-20 % for the tip, a personal reward to your server. (Incidentally, the word "tip" is an acronym for "to improve performance.") Some of us are old enough to remember when the accepted level for tipping was 10 %, but that's another story. If you're like me, you usually just pick out some round number that represents between 15-20 % of your bill.

But, much to the consternation of my family, there have been those times when I have left a much smaller tip as a reflection of my dissatisfaction with the service I have received. Once or twice I have been so appalled at the service and the behavior of the server that I have left only some small token amount as the tip. Leave nothing and the server might think you just forgot. Leave a dollar, and they will know you were very unhappy. And, yes, there have been times when I have been so impressed by the service that I have left much more than 20 %.

Tipping is an accepted social practice. But sometimes I worry that there are church people who view their giving to the church as something like giving a "tip" to God for good service. If I feel like God has been particularly good to me this week, if the weather was good and the work wasn't too much of a hassle and I've been feeling good and the Packers are playing well and the kids stayed out of trouble, I'll give generously. But if God has not served me well this week, if it rained every day and the boss was grouchy and my bum knee has been killing me and we got called in for a meeting with the teacher and maybe, just maybe, Brett Favre really is over the hill, then the church better not count on me to put much in the offering plate.

It's no way to run a railroad or a church or a life. That offering you put in the plate or mail to the office or transmit via "Simply Giving" is not a tip. It is your commitment made out of gratitude to God in thanksgiving for the gifts that surround you and hold you up every day. You don't give because God needs the money. The author and owner of the universe really doesn't depend on your offering. You give because you need to give. Giving touches a need in you to express your gratitude for the blessings of life. It's not a tip given in the hope that God will treat you better. It's your thanksgiving for what God has already done.

December Giving		Year to date 2006
Income	\$65,590.00	\$490,281.00
Expense	<u>\$52,33.00</u>	<u>\$465,233.00</u>
Net	\$13,257.00	\$25,048.00

January Giving		Year to date 2007
Income	\$37,495.00	\$37,495.00
Expense	<u>\$40,677.00</u>	<u>\$40,677.00</u>
Net	\$(3,182.00)	\$(3,182.00)



New IRS Ruling Impacts Charitable Giving

Beginning last August, and pertaining to the 2007 tax year, those who are over 70 and a half years of age can donate a portion of IRA funds to a charity without having to pay taxes on that portion. This new legislation means financial benefits for both the donor and non-profit organizations. If you would like to have more information on this you may contact the church office or speak to Pastor Ekdale.

Also, the IRS is now requiring receipts as confirmation of charitable gifts. This means that cash gifts have to be recorded by our congregation, and we need to know who the donor is so that we can give you a written confirmation of your gift. Dropping cash in the offering plate and not putting it in an envelope with your name on it will no longer be considered a valid contribution in the event you are audited. The best strategy is to be sure you have your own "book" of envelopes for 2007 so that we can give you quarterly and annual written confirmation of your donations. Contact the church office if you need offering envelopes.

**San Francisco
Flower and Garden Show
Wednesday, March 21**

Spring begins March 21 — Join St. Mark’s Senior Center to a visit to the **San Francisco Flower and Garden Show** at the Cow Palace. We are leaving at 2:45 pm to visit this incredible exhibit. The display gardens are the heart and soul of all



world-class flower shows. You will never forget the

beautiful arrangements and exquisite landscaping. Price: **\$13.00** (reduced). If you want an afternoon treat, the Cow Palace operates several food and beverage concessions during the Show.

UPCOMING SENIOR LUNCHEONS

There are no Senior Center Luncheon during the month of March. All MLT residents and St. Mark’s seniors are invited to join us for a simple soup luncheon in Heritage Hall following the 12 noon Midweek Lenten Worship on March 7, 14, 21 and 28.

**The next Senior Luncheon will take place on
Wednesday, April 25**

Please sign up early to reserve your seats! Sign-up sheets are available at MLT offices or

All tours and trips start from the lower (Ellis Street) parking lot unless noted otherwise. The trips are open to residents from Martin Luther Tower and seniors from St. Mark’s Lutheran Church, on a first come, first-served basis. Times are subject to



change. Please check posters and weekly announcements for the latest information. To reserve your seat, please sign up at the MLT sign-in sheet or call Pastor Christian at 415.928.7770 x. 226.

**Journey to Fort Ross
Thursday, April 26**

Join us for a trip to Fort Ross State Historic Park. Fort Ross is one of the oldest historical park units in the California State Park System. Fort Ross is a wonderful place to visit for its outstanding scenic beauty, recreational opportunities, and to learn about local, California, or world trade history. The settlement of Ross, the name derived from the word for Russia (Rossia) was established by the Russian - American Company, a commercial hunting and trading company chartered by the tsarist government, with shares held by the members of the Tsar’s family, court nobility and high officials. This park has been established to benefit the people by preserving, restoring, and interpreting the cultural and natural history of this place, and to make the resources accessible to all people. Today the fort has been partly restored to its former appearance.

We are leaving at 9:00 am and will return no later than 5:00 pm.



SMART Dinner at "Home"

Friday, March 9 at 6:00 pm

Home Restaurant was created under the guiding principle that simple, classic comfort food can be prepared in a way that dazzles your taste buds, evokes the emotions from a wonderful home-cooked meal and goes easy on your wallet.

Home chefs seamlessly blend gourmet intricacies with a comfort menu, amazing value and the casualness that Home Restaurant is well-known for. Enjoy unbeliev-



able pastry creations that will make you wish you'd left more room for dessert. Foodies can't pick just one thing that makes Home so special: Macaroni and cheese labeled by some as the "Best in the West," melt-in-your-mouth pot roast or Home's killer banana bread pudding. Approved by St. Mark's staff, join SMART for a night out in March!

HOME Restaurant is located at the corner of Market and Church Streets in San Francisco's Castro District, at 2100 Market Street.

Coming Soon!

SMART & Habitat for Humanity Fundraiser Event

Watch for details in April or May for a SMART night out to Chevy's Fresh Mex restaurant for fellowship, food and raising funds for our 2007 Habitat for Humanity House.

Please check your evites and weekly announcements for exact date, time and restaurant location in April!



ONE THE CAMPAIGN TO MAKE POVERTY HISTORY



Become a ONE Lutheran - actively engaged in advocacy on hunger and justice issues.

What is "advocacy"?

Advocacy is to plead the cause of another together with them and on their behalf.

Why do we do advocacy?

Advocacy is one way we see to love our neighbor in response to God's love given us in Jesus Christ. When we work for public and corporate policies that advance justice, peace, human dignity, and care for the earth, we are serving people who are living in poverty and suffering.

How do we advocate?

Learn more about issues of poverty, hunger and justice. Go to www.elca.org/advocacy or www.bread.org and email Senators and Representatives. Sign the declaration at www.elca.org/advocacy. Identify and write to your elected officials.

The Evangel

March - April 2007

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

NON-PROFIT
ORGANIZATION

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www.stmarks-sf.org

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

St. Mark's is a growing Christian community rooted in tradition and open to new expressions. Responding to God's compassionate love, we reach out in service to the community and the world. With openness of heart and spirit we welcome all.

Please contact us if you wish to be removed from our mailing list.

St. Mark's Lutheran Church

Staff

The Rev. Elizabeth E. Ekdale, Pastor
The Rev. Christian Jennert, Associate Pastor
Rodney P. Gehrke, Director of Music and Liturgy
Jun Ranches, Office Manager
Ann Dayton, Administrative Assistant
Cheryl Garcia, Bookkeeper
Duc Huynh, Buildings and Grounds Supervisor
Carl Storey, Weekend Custodian
Elvira Markov and Gladys Pozo, Nursery Assistants
Gail Culp, Sunday School Coordinator
Chris Ode, Teaching Parish Student

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

The Rev. Mark S. Hanson, Presiding Bishop
The Rev. David Mullen, Bishop, Sierra Pacific Synod
The Rev. Daniel Solberg, Dean, San Francisco Conference

Sister Parish:

Cordero de Dios (Lamb of God) Lutheran Church in
Soyapango, El Salvador

