



## Lead Pastor's Report

**Pastor Elizabeth Ekdale**

### **We are a church that is deeply rooted – and always being made new.**

*"And for anyone who is in Christ, there is a new creation. The old order has passed away; now everything is made new! All of this is from God, who ransomed us through Christ – and made us ministers of that reconciliation . . . this makes us Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making the appeal directly through us." 2 Corinthians 5:17 – 20*

#### **For anyone who is in Christ . . .**

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America celebrates its 25th Anniversary in 2013 – a significant milestone! Though we are still comparatively new as a church body, our roots are much deeper than our 25 years together. We are deeply rooted in God's word of forgiveness and the promise of God's enduring and steadfast love. We are grateful to the formative witness of the 16th century reformers and their writings, to the Scriptures and word of Christ. Our life together is centered in Jesus Christ.

#### **. . . there is a new creation**

We are being made new every day – through the gift of baptism, we are reborn as Children of God. We live out our baptismal promises each and every day listening to the Holy Spirit and called to serve our neighbor. Ours is an active and vibrant faith! We have much to be thankful for as a community of faith. The annual reports in the following pages describe how lives are touched and transformed by the love of Christ. You will see evidence of how the people of St. Mark's are living out their baptismal calling. You are invited to deepen your own faith by wor-

shipping regularly, serving faithfully, and receiving the gifts of renewal and mercy that God offers you each and every day.

In today's culture of pervasive violence, the ministry of reconciliation is needed more than ever. As St. Paul said, we are ambassadors for Christ in all that we do or say. We are committed as a congregation to grow more deeply in our understanding of sharing God's peace and healing to all.

St. Mark's is alive with the love of Christ. Come and receive. Come and serve. Come and give.

God's peace!

Pr. Elizabeth

## President's Report

**Suzanne Smith**

*May Christ dwell in your hearts through faith, so that you, being rooted and grounded in love, will be able to grasp fully the breadth, length, height and depth of Christ's love and, with all God's holy ones, experience this love that surpasses all understanding, so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. Ephesians 3:17-19*

As we reflect on 2012, we can see the marks of Christ's love being rooted and grounded in the community of St. Mark's. With the cross of the stewardship campaign this year, "Forward in Faith – Living in Gratitude," we were able to physically begin to name all that we have and all that we can share. Through the year, we have been able to grasp some of the breadth, length, height and depth of Christ's love manifest to us and in turn

through us to the world. Here are some images of these expressions of love.

**We have deep gratitude for the breath of love shown through the people caring for us:**

- Pastor Ekdale's steadfast leadership with Interim Pastors Brenner and Witschorik's support, the Gospel preached, sacraments celebrated, people in pain consoled, challenges to follow the way of Christ
- The Council, Staff, our intern Eric Huseth & teaching parish students Maria Anderson & Maggie Falenscek, the Call Committee, Ministry Teams, all the volunteers, those passing by with a word of peace or thanks

**We have deep gratitude for the length of love shown to strengthen our community:**

- Worship on Sundays and Wednesdays with piano & organ, pageantry & silence, choir & guitar, sermons for children & adults, St. Mark's & St. Mary's choirs singing together
- Advent, Christmas, Epiphany, Lent, Easter & Pentecost festivals with much feasting & Seasons of Creation, Blessing of the Animals, Oktoberfest, the Thanksgiving luncheon
- Experiences of learning in Sunday School, Bible studies, Adult Forums, Wednesday nights, Journeys in Faith, WELCA Gatherings, Parents with Kidlettes, the Endowment Seminar
- Repaired leaks to the roof of the ULC, installation of the Nativity Window, the new Facilities Guide, Christmas trees, clean bathrooms, dishes done
- Confirmation Camp at Mt. Cross, the Congregational Retreat, "Shalom: God's Peace, Justice and Mercy"

**We have deep gratitude for the height of love shown to our local community:**

- Martin Luther Tower seniors, MLT taskforce on Redevelopment for the Square
- The struggle to compassionately work with the homeless on the Square, hosting the Interfaith Homeless Shelter for 4 weeks
- Working in the Food Pantry & with Bernal Gateway, knitting hats, scarves & blankets for Central Gardens, the Night Ministry & the Shelter
- St. Mark's Day Camp, money from Lenten boxes shared with the Women & Children's Community Center in the Tenderloin
- Pancake breakfast at Easter, Oktoberfest, Senior lunches and produce market
- Hosting the SF Interfaith Council, honored for "Going Green" by the SFIC
- Space for AA groups, weddings, musical groups, many organizations & activities

**We have deep gratitude for the depth of love shown to the world:**

- Pr. Ekdale's first year on the ELCA's Church Council,
- Pr. Ekdale's visit to Israel/Palestine, Claire Anastas' visit from Bethlehem, planning for a St. Mark's trip to the Holy Land in April
- Practicing accompaniment with our St. Mark's group visiting with our sister parish Cordero de Dios, in El Salvador

- The ELCA Youth Gathering in New Orleans – worship and work done
- Giving to all the 2nd Mile Giving projects
- Money from Lenten boxes shared with Lutheran World Relief for safe water systems in Africa
- Working to match the \$25,000 anonymous gift to the ELCA malaria campaign

Over and over again I have realized how grateful I am for the opportunity to be part of St. Mark's at this time and how privileged to have served this year as president of the Council. God is at work in and through St. Mark's as we move forward in this next year to plumb more deeply the love of Christ and embody that love to all.

Thanks be to God.

Respectfully submitted,  
Suzanne Smith, Council President

## Treasurer's Report

### Aron Bohlig

#### 2012 Operating Results of St. Mark's Lutheran Church (SMLC) and the Urban Life Center (ULC)

Overall, we had an operating surplus of approximately \$65,000 in 2012. The primary contributors to the surplus were:

The following income surpluses:

- ~\$8,000 more than budgeted for general giving
- ~\$13,000 more than budgeted for building use and other income for the Church and the ULC

And the following expense variances:

- Staff compensation and benefit expenses were roughly \$42,000 under budget, as we did not employ two pastors

#### Did Not Complete Audit in 2012

It is our practice to have an outside accounting firm audit our practices every two years. We do this every two years in order to reduce costs and because our practices do not change significantly from year to year.

In 2011, we contracted with a firm to do the audit. The firm delayed the start of the audit multiple times before informing us in November that they would not be able to do the audit because they were too busy. We tried to find a new provider in 2012 and failed to do so. We have a modest budget of \$2500 and are now seeking an individual CPA as it seems we are "too small" for firms to be interested in our account.

#### Balance Sheet Commentary

The majority of the 2012 income surplus went into our operating account. We will be contributing \$10,000 to our endowment fund.

We have a small elevator fund. The expectation remains that the overall cost for an elevator installation project will exceed \$500,000. We first need leaders to step forward to develop a

plan about how to finance the overall amount (e.g. through grants or fundraising). Once we have a plan to finance the overall amount, the current fund can be used as "seed capital" to pay for design and associated startup costs.

The -\$65,000 shown in the housing fund amount represents amounts "borrowed" from restricted funds to pay off the Thrivent note. As we have a sufficient contingency balance, we will "combine" these – eliminating the accounting negative balance. There is no cash change here, just an accounting one. I mention it as having the negative balance is likely a little confusing (although fine from an accounting point of view).

At this point, we do not have sufficient reserves to pay for long-term maintenance on certain items (e.g. the roof of the Church). Over time, we should seek to project the likely amounts for these expenses and accrue sufficient funds to pay for them. This does not represent a problem in the foreseeable future, but accruing these reserves is a best practice.

### **2013 Major Budgetary Assumptions**

The assumptions below represent budgeted changes relative to 2012 actuals.

#### **SMLC**

- \$7,000 decrease in contributions  
This is based on current pledge totals. Many members give but do not pledge. Pledges enable us to build a ministry plan for the year and are very important for the staff and volunteers who run the different programs.
- MLT taking social services "in house" – reducing "MLT support" by \$24,000, and reducing certain staff expenses

- Plan to add an associate pastor starting March 1, 2013
- In 2013 we plan for a ~2% COLA consistent with Synod guidelines, and all of our pastoral staff will be paid consistent with Synod guidelines

#### **The ULC**

- Forecasting revenue and expense as roughly flat for the ULC
- The benefits item looks like it is increasing. In 2012 we received a one-time grant that offset certain staff benefits – we may receive this in 2013, but do not plan for it.

With the planned hiring of a new associate pastor, we will be making a substantial commitment and substantially increasing our fixed costs. We expect that the additional ministry programs that the associate will lead will help grow our ministries and grow the givings we receive to support those ministries. However, we will need to increase the givings amount by 2014 in order to support our staff and programs.

Receiving pledges is critical to our ability to commit to the payment of salaries of our staff and of maintaining our community programs. If you haven't made a pledge yet and would like to you can still fill out a pledge card or make a pledge by sending an email to Jun Ranches at ranches@stmarks-sf.org.

I also want to encourage you all to consider the Simply Giving program. This program lets you schedule automated withdrawals on a weekly or monthly basis, saving your time and the time of our volunteers.

In closing, I want to highlight my belief that St. Marks is in a strong and improving financial position. I am delighted that we

are taking on additional programs and responsibilities. If you are a Thrivent participant, please remember to direct your givings to St. Marks again – it really makes a big difference to many different programs.

Thank you again to the congregation, Pastors, staff and Council of St. Mark's for their faith and support. Once again I would like to recognize the hard work of Jun Ranches, Director of Church Administration and Operations, and Cheryl Garcia, St. Mark's Bookkeeper.

As you may know, we have "term limits" on council and I have "termed out." After seven years, this is my final act as treasurer. I appreciate the trust and confidence you have placed in me for the last seven years. It has truly been a pleasure and an honor to be called to serve in this fashion. I am moving on to the Synod finance committee and looking for other Board-level volunteer options in San Francisco (in case you know of any organizations seeking such).

Aron Bohlig  
Treasurer

## Martin Luther Tower

### Jon Moeller

Martin Luther Tower (MLT) is a 121 unit, 13-story apartment building, located at 1001 Franklin Street. MLT website is at [www.mlt-sf.org](http://www.mlt-sf.org). Built in the sixties as a mission of St. Mark's, today MLT provides affordable, independent community for seniors.

St. Mark's continues that mission today in the form of activities, pastoral care, and corporate oversight, and MLT has provided significant support for St. Mark's over time. A few MLT residents are St. Mark's members and the MLT Board of Trustees consists entirely of St. Mark's members.

MLT offers affordable rents, a friendly and effective staff, an active resident's association, and a convenient location. Services provided for MLT residents include an on-site social worker and chaplaincy several days per week; a weekly Bible study; laundry facilities; a small computer lab; a lounge stocked with DVDs and games; monthly luncheons and field trips; a guest suite; and a non-profit produce market every Wednesday at noon (all welcome!).

Interested potential residents should fill out an application in order to be placed on the waiting list. Please call the MLT office at 415-885-1084 to receive an application or download one from MLT's website.

Residents must be 62 years of age to qualify.

2012 was a year of progress!

1. Barbara Engmann joined the board, adding perspective and development experience
2. Under The John Stewart Company (JSCo), MLT's new property management company, the building thrived with high

resident satisfaction - most of the building staff was retained, which pleased residents.

3. Established relationship with Episcopal Senior Community, which recruited Hannah Bennett as MLT's new, and well-received, resident social services coordinator
4. 100% occupancy rates by year-end
5. Improved water efficiency
6. A great Oktoberfest!
7. Last but not least, significant diligence with prominent developers into expanding St. Mark's and MLT's mission on St. Mark's Square

Specifically we would like to note JSCo's smooth handling of MLT's transition and are grateful to Justine Minnis, Property Supervisor, JM Lapeyrade, Property Manager; John Hunter, Maintenance Supervisor; Tan Trinh, Maintenance Technician; Sonia Jimenez, Receptionist; and Hannah Bennett, Resident Services Coordinator.

The Board also thanks the following:

- Pastor Ekdale and Eric Huseth through their work in the Senior Center, continue to enrich residents' lives through activities and field trips.
- Jun Ranches for his outstanding management of the Urban Life Center and overall support
- St. Mark's members Dean Atkinson for cooking and entertaining at St. Mark's events, and Jeremy McClain for his work as liaison with the Church Council.
- The MLT Residents Association, especially its 2012 officers: Rose Priven, President, Bernard Griesel, Vice President, Tom Berg and Diana Rhodes, Secretary and Sonnie Willis, Treasurer
- Specifically I would like to thank the 2012 MLT board members, particularly for their contributions during the transition: Adrienne Nelson Brown, Vice President; Brad Hubert, Treasurer; Omer Voss, Secretary; Pastor Elizabeth Ekdale; Barbara Bock; Jo Chadwick; Lin Cerles; Barbara Engmann; Steven Krefting; Jonathan Ocker, and Scott Taylor.

## Director of Music

### Dr. Timothy Zerlang

The year 2012 saw the completion of my third year as Director of Music at St. Mark's.

Early in the year, I moved into a new office space large enough to contain the choir music library, which has made both the continuing reorganization of the library and music planning for worship much easier. Many thanks to Jun Ranches for suggesting that the move be made and working out the details involved.

The Taylor and Boody organ is an inspiration to me as I accompany and lead musical worship here at St. Mark's. I am thrilled to quote George Taylor's recent note "We're busy making your pipes & look forward to bringing them to you!" Those pipes he mentions are the four remaining stops (sounds) originally planned for the instrument but not included in the initial installation. I think we all look forward to the completion of this magnificent instrument some time in 2013 with great anticipation.

This past year, I have hosted visitors that contacted me specifically to see, hear, and play the T&B organ from Germany, Sweden, England, and elsewhere. More local interest also continues; most recently two visits from Grace Cathedral musicians.

I appreciate very much the enthusiastic song of the entire St. Mark's community, and the wonderful support the music program here enjoys. In particular, I am thankful for the dedicated volunteer musicians that support our worship throughout the year.

**Summary for 2012**

|   |      |
|---|------|
| Sunday Services   | 104  |
| Wednesday Evening services  | 50   |
| Additional services   | 10   |
| Weddings  | 13   |
| Memorials   | 5    |
| Choir rehearsals  | 40   |
| Hymns   | 600+ |
| Choir anthems and psalms  | 140+ |
| Organ Recital   |      |
| Advent Lessons and Carols with St. Mary's Cathedral Choir         |      |
| Bach's Cantata Christ lag in Todesbanden (BWV 4) on Easter        |      |
| Buxtehude's Das newgebohrne Kindelein (BuxWV 13) on Christmas Eve |      |

**Special Thanks to**

- Pastor Ekdale and all the staff for making St. Mark's such a wonderful place to work
- Our choir for all their dedication and hard work

- Susan Sall for her wonderful work with the Sunday School children
- Joleen Caron and Lin Cerles for their instrumental support at the 9 am service
- Kevin Miller and Greg Gomez for their help organizing instrumentalists for special occasions
- Jeremy McClain and Kathy Lautz for their help with the music library
- Gary Schilling for his willingness to accompany the choir and fill in for me when I am away

**Director of Church Administration and Operations**

**Jun Ranches**

Throughout 2012, St. Mark's Square, which includes Martin Luther Tower (MLT), St. Mark's Lutheran Church, and the Urban Life Center (ULC), served as an active hub of ministry within San Francisco. With activities scheduled around the clock, 7 days a week, the Square faithfully accommodated St. Mark's ministries and events, as well as those of other churches, performing artists and music groups, overnight youth groups, community and non-profit organizations, and more.

**Facility Use**

Renting space on the Square is an important component of St. Mark's operations, which contributes greatly to the livelihood of the church. Revenue generated through weddings and meeting, parking, and office space rentals comprises roughly 31% of the total annual income of St. Mark's and the ULC combined. This income provides significant financial support to St. Mark's vital ministries.

In addition to the fiscal benefits, renting space provides St. Mark's the opportunity to extend its reach by bringing the outside in and spreading the church's mission beyond the congregation. Performances by outside groups support our music ministry. Weddings support our worship ministry. The homeless shelter supports our social ministry. By opening our doors, we welcome folks who might not otherwise come on the Square, and extend the possibility of ministry to folks in the wider community.

#### **In 2012, St. Mark's and the ULC opened their doors and:**

- Accommodated 89 outside groups, including 27 music groups, 24 individuals and community groups, 13 twelve-step recovery groups, 8 overnight youth groups, 6 faith-based organizations, and 11 ULC office tenants
- Married 13 wedding couples
- Provided space for recurring MLT activities like the Produce Market, exercise classes, community interest meetings, podiatrist appointments, and Senior Center luncheons
- Hosted a community-wide Oktoberfest
- Hosted a week long Summer Day Camp
- Hosted the Interfaith Winter Shelter for 4 weeks in November-December
- Supported the ministries of the Friendship Banquet, the Night Ministry, the San Francisco Interfaith Council, and Thrivent

#### **Administration and Operations**

Interacting with church members, wedding couples, music groups and more, St. Mark's staff works diligently to help keep the Square running smoothly. Faithfully working behind the scenes, the staff strives to meet the ever-changing administrative and operational needs of the church.

#### **2012 Accomplishments**

- Introduced new visitor pew cards and visitor tracking system
- Created new Easter outreach materials
- Upgraded the church member database
- Updated Employee Manual
- Created new Facilities Use Guide
- Installed new No Trespassing signage
- Remodeled church offices
- Moved choir library
- Installed new security gate & grill behind church ramp
- Filled all office vacancies
- Provided interim coverage of MLT social services like the Produce Market
- Created part-time office space for MLT Social Services Coordinator

It has been a privilege to be a part of this church and community the last eight years. I am so thankful to work with such great people and blessed to report to Pastor Elizabeth (the greatest boss ever!). I am grateful for the kindhearted support of the church leadership and inspired by the faithful dedication of everyone at St. Mark's who volunteers her or his valuable time to support the work of the church. I look forward to another exciting year together.

#### **2012 Patrons**

545 Express  
 Alcoholics Anonymous  
 American Bach Soloists  
 Audio Engineering Society, Inc  
 Bay Area Coalition of Welcoming Congregations  
 Bethel Lutheran Church  
 California Bach Society  
 Chanticleer Youth Choir  
 Church of Latter Day Saints  
 City & County of San Francisco Elections  
 City Church of San Francisco  
 Clef Divers  
 Clerestory  
 Deckinger Meditation  
 Episcopal Community Services  
 First United Methodist Church  
 Free Farm Stand  
 Freedom in Christ Evangelical Church  
 Industrial Areas Foundation  
 International Orange Chorale  
 Kapalaliko Hawaiian Band  
 Katherine Burke School  
 League of Women Voters  
 Lutherans Concerned  
 Magnificat Baroque  
 MLT Exercise Group  
 MLT GLBT Group  
 MLT Podiatrist  
 MLT Produce Mkt  
 MLT Resident Assoc. Yard Sale  
 Montana State University  
 Musae  
 Narcotics Anonymous  
 New Esterhazy Quartet  
 Noe Valley Chamber Music  
 Palestinian Arts Festival Planning Team  
 Paula's Meditation  
 People Place Services  
 Portland State University  
 Presence Meditation  
 Reiki Energy Healing  
 Rice University  
 Ride Against AIDS  
 San Francisco Choral Artists  
 San Francisco Early Music Society  
 San Francisco Girls Chorus  
 San Francisco Interfaith Council  
 San Francisco Lyric Chorus  
 San Francisco Night Ministry  
 San Francisco School of the Arts  
 San Francisco Sinfonietta  
 San Francisco Women's Rehab Foundation  
 Stanford University  
 Stepping Stones  
 Summer Day Camp (Mt. Cross)  
 Sunset Youth Orchestra  
 Synod Anti-Racism Team  
 Talmidin Bible Study  
 The CG Jung Institute  
 Thrivent Board  
 University of the Pacific  
 Vanderbilt University  
 Vedic Meditation  
 Voices of Music  
 Volti  
 Weston Noble Alumni Choir-Luther College  
 Wilfredo Pasamba Concert  
 Young Women's Choral Project

#### **Office Support**

Thank you to the following volunteers who faithfully supported the church office's work as office volunteers and/or money counters in 2012:

|                 |                 |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| Barbara Bock    | Jim Bridgman    |
| Bertie Brouhard | John Manoyan    |
| Cheryl Garcia   | Kathy Tyrell    |
| Dana Utz        | Marcia Spillane |
| Eunice Childs   | Marge Jencks    |
| Geri Bailey     | Marlo Tellschow |
| Jane Borg       | Martin Thompson |
| Jeremy McClain  | Suzanne Smith   |

## **Pastoral Intern**

### **Eric Huseth**

Greetings and blessings to all of you at the start of 2013! It has been an absolute privilege to learn and grow at St. Mark's for the past six-months as your intern. I have been very fortunate to have the competent leadership of Margaret McLean as chair of the Internship Committee along with helpful input from mem-



bers Marcia Spillane, Jeremy McClain, Marge Okuley, and Jim Delange. This internship would also not be a success without the incredible wisdom and mentorship of Pastor Elizabeth Ekdale. I am so grateful for all of their hard work and intentional commitment to my formation as future pastor and leader in the ELCA.

One of the most powerful experiences of this internship so far was spending time with our brothers and sisters at Cordero de Dios in San Salvador, El Salvador. The relationship between our two congregations is strong and vibrant and it was humbling to help discern how it can develop further. This experience was life changing for me and I hope that St. Mark's continues sending delegations to El Salvador as well as make it possible for future interns to join in.

The relationship between the San Francisco Interfaith Council and St. Mark's has also been strengthened in a large part to this internship. With 60% of my time officially at St. Mark's and 40% at the SFIC, the two organizations have interacted in multiple new ways. One example of this fruitful partnership was my planning of the Interfaith World AIDS Day Service that took place on November 28 at St. Mark's. This service became a unique opportunity for St. Mark's members and members of other faith communities to come together and form new relationships, which will model peace, respect, and justice across San Francisco. I am also working with both St. Mark's and membership congregations of the Interfaith Council in discerning spiritual needs and questions of young adults across all faith traditions within the Bay Area. My hope is that this effort can be a new frontier for this congregation in welcoming others into our faith family.

I continue this internship into 2013 with the expectation of many new discoveries and experiences to come. May this New Year be one of joy and learning for all of us.

Your Pastoral Intern,  
Eric Huseth

## Education – Adult Forum

### Suzanne Smith

The Adult Forum Planning Committee arranges for a variety of educational events on Sundays at 10:00 a.m. from September through June. We aim to create an environment that presents adults with opportunities to grow in a vibrant relationship with God and God's creation and to serve and witness as Christ's disciples. We have presentations on Scripture, theology and ethics, church activities, social ministries and other topics relevant to our life and times.

In 2012, our scriptural and theological studies focused on "Lent: Experience the Flow of God's Grace" led by Pastor Elizabeth Ekdale, "How Lutherans Look at the Bible" with Dale Loepp and "The Gospel of Luke" with Pastor Ekdale. The forum also focused on the liturgical cycles with Kyle Schiefelbein and "Powerful Sermons" led by Pastor Chuck Witschorik.

Pastor Hans Hoch reviewed the ELCA's proposed social statement on criminal justice with "Crime and Its Aftermath" and the appropriate response. We also were led in looking at "Genetics: What's a Lutheran to Do?" by Dr. Margaret McLean and again looked at "Racism" with Dr. McLean and Mary Ritter. Our Parish Teaching Student, Maggie Falenschek led us in looking at



“Domestic Violence and Faith Communities” and Bertie Brouhard shared with us her journey in “Queer at Last” and “Think Like (and Act Like) A Woman.”

Our Pastor Ekdale reported on her trip to Israel/Palestine and planted the idea of a St. Mark’s group traveling to the Holy Land. We pondered how to do this in a series on “Accompaniment – El Salvador, Palestine & Closer to Home” led by Mary Ritter. As another group from St. Mark’s prepared to visit our sister church, Cordero de Dios in El Salvador, Dr. Margaret McLean led us in thinking about liberation theology and President Stephen A. Privett from the University of San Francisco gave a fulsome history of El Salvador before and during the Salvadorian Civil War.

Congregation members reported on various activities including the Sierra Pacific Synod Assembly and the St. Mark’s delegation to visit our sister congregation, Cordero de Dios, in Soyapango, El Salvador.

Our Intern, Eric Huseth, introduced himself and his internship year with the SF Interfaith Council and us.

Thank you to everyone participating in our forums. St. Mark’s is blessed with so many people who give of their time and share with us their knowledge and concerns.

We are looking forward to more interesting learning opportunities in 2013.

Respectfully submitted,  
Suzanne Smith

## Education – Sunday School

### Jenny Hart

**Attendance:** As of September 2012, our numbers are up. Sunday School average attendance is **15** students per Sunday. However, we would certainly welcome more students. All children ages 3 and older are welcome at Sunday School.

**Volunteer Teachers:** We are very fortunate to have **8** committed adults to lead Sunday School at St. Mark’s:

- Charlene Loen: Preschool and Kinder class
- Shauna Malone: grades 1-2
- Gail Culp: grades 3-6
- Anna Hurley: Assistant for older grades
- Jenny Hart: Sunday School Coordinator
- Susan and Jeff Sall: Chapel leaders
- Ralph Loen: musical accompaniment

**Curriculum:** For all of 2012 we have used Augsburg Fortress “Spark” curriculum. We have used this familiar program for a few years now. We supplement the program with traditional activities that we have enjoyed at St. Mark’s for years:

- Stockings for the Homeless
- Valentines for MLT residents
- Mardi Gras party before Lent
- Seder Meal
- Reformation Sunday /Halloween party

- Christmas Pageant
- Classes led by the Pastor on Baptism, Communion and Prayer

For many years, Sunday School has supported El Cordero de Dios in Soyapango, El Salvador with our weekly offering from Children’s Chapel. The children and their families support this mission on a weekly basis.

We continue to use the internet as a means of communication. If you would like to be added to our e-mail list, please let us know at hartx4@hotmail.com.

Submitted by Jenny Hart

## Education – Youth and Family Ministry

### Pastor Elizabeth Ekdale

We rejoice that St. Mark’s has four confirmation students who meet weekly with our Teaching Parish student, Intern and Pastor. We reflect on our faith and the joys and challenges of living out our faith in our daily lives. We study scripture, read the Small Catechism and ask questions about God in our lives.

When we are not studying and reflecting together we are out exploring, serving, and having fun! For example, our confirmation students volunteered at the Homeless Shelter and Interfaith Food Pantry. They participated in worship at Central Gardens Nursing Home. They worshiped at Glide Memorial and walked with Tenderloin with Rev. Lyle Beckman, SF Night Ministry. The highlight of confirmation is attending a weeklong confirmation camp at Mt. Cross.

Confirmation is for youth who are in the 6th, 7th and 8th grades. New youth are always welcome to join anytime. This is a special time in the life of our young people – confirmation ministry supports them in their walk of faith not only here at St. Mark’s but out in the world.

Please keep our confirmands in your prayers:

Mila Sall  
Nora Hurley  
Clovis Curl  
Katherine Lam

### Parent with Kidlettes

We meet regularly together for support and sharing on Sunday mornings. We also plan fun events for families at St. Mark’s. Everyone is welcome.

## Endowment

### Debbie Varian

The St. Mark’s Endowment Fund, which was established with a \$25,000 opening balance in 2011, is held in an account at the Lutheran Community Foundation (LCF), a non-profit organization. The LCF invests and holds the Endowment Fund for the benefit of St. Mark’s and its mission and ministries.

The Endowment Committee is responsible for monitoring the role of the LCF, as well as promoting gifts to the Endowment Fund, educating and informing the Congregation about the Fund, and reporting fund financial information to the Congregation annually. In addition, by the third year anniversary of the establishment of the fund (2014) or when the fund reaches a balance of \$100,000, whichever comes first, the Committee will be responsible for recommending (for Council approval) the charitable beneficiaries that will receive disbursements from the Fund as well as the amounts each will receive.

In anticipation of this 2014 milestone, the Endowment Committee is planning more opportunities for informing about the Fund and promoting giving to the Fund. Last year, the Committee sponsored and held an Estate Planning Seminar on a Saturday in May in Heritage Hall. In 2013, the Committee has scheduled two adult forums in early April, and throughout the year, will be distributing materials about estate planning and endowment giving in general.

In addition, the Endowment Committee will be reporting financial information about the Fund to the Congregation. At the time this report was submitted, the final information was not finalized by the LCF. The Fund has been the beneficiary of some generous gifts in 2013 and therefore has grown from its initial balance. When all the numbers are in, we look forward to sharing more details about these gifts and the other financial activity of the Fund for 2012.

The Endowment Committee meets quarterly. The Committee is currently comprised of the following members: Stacy Cullison (Secretary), Brad Hubert (LCF Advisor), David Lam, Greg Jahnke,

Margaret McLean, Robert Rathmell, Shelly Taylor, and Debra Varian (Chair). The Committee is blessed with abundant technical expertise from these faithful servants. Please join me in thanking them all for their dedicated service. On behalf of the Committee, I can say we look forward to the coming year, living in gratitude for the St. Mark's mission and vision that the Endowment Fund will help sustain into the future.

## Human Resources Committee

### Matt Helland

The primary responsibilities of the Human Resources (HR) Committee are to advise and assist the pastors on human resources issues and make recommendations to Church Council. The HR Committee is comprised of Pr. Ekdale, Matt Helland, an attorney who represents employees in workplace disputes, Kurt Putnam, and Jeremy McClain, a Church Council member. Matt Helland is the HR Committee Chair. The HR Committee meets every 3 or 4 months or as needed to address employee issues, such as staffing needs, job descriptions, hiring, human resources policies, personnel issues, California and federal employment laws, compensation, and employee benefits.

There are currently two full-time and eight part-time employees of St. Mark's: Lead Pastor (full-time), Director of Church Administration and Operations (full-time), Director of Music, Parish Administrator, Bookkeeper, Wedding and Events Administrator, a security monitor, and three nursery attendants. In addition, a pool of volunteers provides office support during the week, working designated shifts and assisting office staff and pastors.

Jun Ranches, Director of Church Administration and Operations, has been at St. Mark's for 8 years and is the key manager of operations, administration, and financial functions. He monitors, coordinates, or participates in many church activities, including financial oversight, financial reports and statements, fundraising, the capital campaign, budgeting, website and newsletter design, network and IT support.

Ann Dayton, Parish Administrator, has been at St. Mark's for 7 ½ years. Ann gathers appropriate information for and produces the worship bulletins, announcements, newsletters, flyers, brochures and posters. She helps update the website, sends out weekly e-blasts and assists in maintaining the church database. She also handles church-related facility scheduling and overnight groups.

Cheryl Garcia, Bookkeeper, has been at St. Mark's for 8 years. Cheryl, tracks and processes accounts receivable and accounts payable, working closely with Jun and the church treasurer.

Elizabeth Baldrige, Wedding and Events Administrator, has been with St. Mark's for two years. Elizabeth manages wedding inquiries and all of the administrative tasks related to reserving wedding ceremonies at St. Mark's Lutheran Church. She also handles community and music-related facility scheduling.

Dr. Tim Zerlang, St. Mark's Director of Music, has been with St. Mark's for 3 ½ years. Tim works under the supervision of St. Mark's pastors and with lay leaders to design and coordinate St. Mark's music ministry. Tim serves as the organist and pianist for the 9:00 a.m. and 11:00 a.m. Sunday services; Wednesday night worship; and directs the adult choir. Tim is also a Professor of Music at Stanford University.

Carl Storey is responsible for security during Sunday mornings.

Elvira Markov, Johanna Najera, and Shirley Liu are the primary Nursery Attendants.

Staff members received annual evaluations from his/her supervisor. Agenda items for the HR Committee during the past year included: reviewing various handbook policies, providing pastoral and staff support during the interim pastor and call process, and reviewing staff compensation.

On behalf of the congregation, the HR Committee would like to thank all our wonderful staff for their service to St. Mark's!

## Journeys in Faith

### Dale Loepp

"Hospitality is not simply being 'chronically nice' to strangers. Instead, it is offering others a gentle space where people can feel welcomed for who they are right now." (Robert Wicks, *Everyday Simplicity*)

Journeys in Faith is a team-based ministry of accompaniment for those seeking Baptism or Affirmation of Baptism. While most participants in Journeys in Faith are also simultaneously discerning membership at St. Mark's, Journeys in Faith groups are open

to anyone who desires to renew and grow in their faith. As part of our overall mission, Journeys in Faith also works to encourage all congregants of St. Mark's to welcome everyone into our midst continually.

During 2012, a number of people participated in the Journeys in Faith process, resulting in one adult Baptism and eight people who affirmed their baptism at the Easter Vigil on April 7. Currently, five additional people are discerning membership at St. Mark's and their Affirmation of Baptism at the Easter Vigil, 2013.

In addition, notable for 2012 is the fact that St. Mark's Journeys in Faith ministry is highlighted along with three other U.S. congregations in the new Augsburg Fortress publication, *Go Make Disciples: An Invitation to Baptismal Living*. Our place as a model program reminds us that Journeys in Faith could not exist without the hard work and commitment of the pastoral staff and the entire congregation.

After a long period of involvement, including a number of years serving as co-chair, team member Kyle Schiefelbein has recently stepped down to concentrate on his academic endeavors. All of us on the team wish to thank Kyle for his long commitment in building up this vital outreach to those who are wishing to grow in discipleship. Nate and Kacie McDonald have also taken time off to welcome a new addition to their family—Adeline Rose, who was born Christmas Day, 2012. Journeys in Faith is always looking for new team members to replace those who have moved on, so if you are interested, please contact us at [journeys@stmarks-sf.org](mailto:journeys@stmarks-sf.org).

Finally, we wish to express grateful appreciation to all those who have served as sponsors for our journeyers during this past year and those who have agreed to be sponsors for our current group. Your role is truly vital—we couldn't do this without you!

Current Team members are Dean Atkinson, Geri Bailey, Liv Beck, Dale Loepp and Suzanne Smith

## Mutual Ministry

### Shelly Taylor

The St. Mark's Mutual Ministry Committee concentrates on promoting and supporting healthy relationships among staff, pastors and parishioners with the goal of helping the church to stay focused on mission and ministry. We scan the congregation for developing trends, listen to the needs of members and provide recommendations to the pastors and Church Council to help calibrate the mission of congregation at large. The Committee members are Jo Chadwick, Marge Okuley, Brian Richards, Susan Sall, Pastor Elizabeth, and Shelly Taylor, who serves as Committee Facilitator. Each member of the church staff is assigned to a Committee member who acts as a sounding board and advisor to that staff member. We strive to continue in our mission to support church staff and listen to the members of St. Mark's on an ongoing basis. Please seek us out - we're here to listen and to represent you in respect to our larger faith community.

## Property Team

### Gary Schilling

The building and grounds of St. Mark's Lutheran Church support and enhance the congregation's worship, education and service ministries for residents in nearby neighborhoods as well as the greater Bay Area. In addition to St. Mark's worship and ministries, the property is regularly used by other faith communities and outside organizations; is the setting for many special events (weddings, receptions, fundraisers, etc.); and is a preferred performance venue for both choral and instrumental musical groups.

Along with other active faith communities in San Francisco, St. Mark's has demonstrated a commitment to good stewardship of the environment. In November, the San Francisco Interfaith Council honored St. Mark's as a "Green Congregation" for conserving natural resources through both the renovation/recycling of our historic building and for our ongoing incorporation of sustainable practices in operating our facilities.

The Property Ministry Team is responsible for the maintenance and stewardship of St. Mark's physical property. The team, a group of 6 to 12 volunteers, gathered on six Saturday mornings in 2012 to maintain the church building and adjacent grounds and complete special projects. Fortified with coffee and pastries, we have a lot of fun interaction and conversation as we work together. You are welcome to join us in 2013!

In 2012, our team completed a wide range of projects:

- Painted the doors and added new push plates, kick plates and door holders at the Heritage Hall doors as well as new locking hardware at Heritage Hall windows

- Painted the new picture rail moldings at Heritage Hall installed by a local contractor
- Installed and painted a picture rail at the hall near the Nursery
- Installed a new doorbell at the exterior door near the Kitchen
- Installed two new light sconces at the north wall of the balcony and a new sconce at the west alcove of the Narthex
- Constructed a cross for Holy Week services made from the trunk of last year's Christmas tree
- Maintained the church grounds, regularly weeding the planting beds, sweeping the walks and picking up trash
- Planted a new Japanese maple tree on the east side of the building, as well as new camellias and ground cover plants
- Coordinated and assisted with Christmas holiday decorations including the installation and removal of a 14' silver-tip fir at the Chancel and a 12' tree in front of the church building
- Assisted Jun Ranches with the design of a new security enclosure to limit access to the well between the ramp and the Northwest tower of the church façade
- Consolidated and organized construction photographs from the 2005-2006 renovation onto DVDs and in albums as part of the St. Mark's Archives

In 2012, with the help of a professional contractor, we were able to complete a very special project: relocating the Nativity window from its temporary location in the ULC Auditorium to the window opposite the Columbarium at the southwest corner of the church building. The window, designed by former St. Mark's member and artist Walter Schmidt (who now resides in Burnaby, British Columbia, where he will celebrate his 100<sup>th</sup> birthday on

February 24, 2013), was originally made of tissue paper in the 1960's and hung in front of the Ascension Window in St. Mark's Chancel every Christmas season for at least a decade. In the 1970's, Mr. Schmidt recreated the much-loved design in stained glass. The new installation includes frames above and below the window for future glass panels to complement the Nativity window. Its location is especially meaningful to the Property Team. It now brings beautiful light and enhances the sacred atmosphere of the columbarium that houses the ashes of our long-term friend and helper Art Michel and other St. Mark's members. I want to thank Marge Jencks for her correspondence with Mr. Schmidt and her long-term commitment to realizing this project. We plan to rededicate the window in the early months of 2013.

There are many St. Mark's members who have helped our Team with these many projects and we appreciate your assistance. I especially want to recognize the efforts of our team members who have made our Saturday morning projects possible: Cal and Gail Culp, Diane Haavik, Hans Hoch, Michael Horne, Philip Krikau, Mary Carlton Lull, Adolfo Ponce, Mark Semonian, Sig Sigafos, Viknesh Silvalingam, Gordon Stevenson and Omer Voss. I also want to thank the church staff for their attentive maintenance of the building, especially Jun Ranches; Jun keeps our facilities running year-round, and even in the craziest of times, his enthusiasm and dedication make him an invaluable resource and inspiring partner in ministry.

*Respectfully submitted by:*  
Gary Schilling  
Property Ministry Chairperson

## SMOP

### Tom Benson, Steven Krefting

"St. Mark's Our Planet" (SMOP) is our St. Mark's hiking and environmental service group that has been active for many years under the leadership of Steven Krefting and Tom Benson. SMOP hikes and service projects provide St. Mark's members with opportunities to explore the natural scenic beauties of the Bay Area and to contribute to natural habitat restoration efforts as part of our Christian stewardship and worship. In the past year, our habitat restoration event was at Muir Beach, where Redwood Creek enters the Pacific Ocean. We cheerfully removed invasive plants and planted new ones that were meant to be there.

Hikes included:

- A stunning Spring trek in Mitchell Canyon on the slopes of Mt. Diablo
- A blistering hot hike at Sibley Volcanic Regional Park in the East Bay (it was the sun, not the extinct volcanoes)
- An invigorating hike up Gerbode Valley in the Marin Headlands to see breathtaking views of the Bay Area and an incredible ocean sunset (you had to be there!)

The SMOP group invites all members, including families with children to join our events. For more information, or to be included on the SMOP e-mail list, contact [smop@stmarks-sf.org](mailto:smop@stmarks-sf.org).

## Social Ministry

### Mary Ritter, John Elford

First, thanks to the congregation for the support of many projects for the hungry, poor and needy in 2012.

Social Ministry looks forward to many ways to minister to those in need here in San Francisco, as well as throughout the country and around the world in 2013.

**W**e provided lovely fresh food to nearly 300 San Francisco households at the Interfaith Food Pantry. A team of 15 to 20 people volunteers one Saturday a month from 7:30 am to 10:00 am at Old First Presbyterian Church in San Francisco. St. Mark's purchases \$250 of healthy food – fruits and vegetables, protein and packaged foods – to be distributed to many households of working poor in the neighborhood. It is an amazing project! All members of the congregation are encouraged to help.

**S**t. Mark's hosted the Interfaith Homeless Shelter in November 2012 for four weeks. We hosted 60 men for dinner, a warm safe place to sleep, and breakfast in the morning before they headed out for their day, some of them to work. Thanks to the many of you who provided breakfasts and suppers as well as monetary support. The Sunday School prepared socks filled with toiletries, which they gave the men along with scarves which were "Knit for the Streets" by members and friends of St. Mark's. Our 60 guests will have colorful scarves around their necks and new warm socks this winter!

**W**e continue our accompanying relationship with our sister parish, Cordero de Dios in El Salvador. In November 2012, five St. Mark's members and three seminarians, Intern Eric Huseh and parish students Maggie and Nikoli Falenschek made another wonderful visit to Cordero de Dios in Soyapango. There was again much sharing of ministry, music and love. Plans are being made for continued conversation about our relationship throughout the year. Watch for information about continued engagement with our Sister Parish! Look for a separate report about this our relationship with Cordero de Dios.

**W**e continue to advocate with Bread for the World for the poor. St. Mark's is Bread for the World Covenant Congregation.

**W**e continue our support of Pr. Arden Strasser and his family in Zambia, and of the Rwanda Lutheran Project of the Lutheran Church of Rwanda. We give and receive much from our relationships with people all over the world!

**W**e continue to remember congregations in Rwanda, especially Mumeya as they complete a health center and the work of the Rwanda School Project as they complete third year of educating secondary school students, including many girls. We pray for them. We support their work with People Improving Communities through Organizing in Rwanda (PICO-R) as they built a clinic, then engaged local government to help them so that they are now completing a community health center which will be staffed by doctors and nurses and will function as a hospital. Pregnant women with problematic labor and delivery and other very ill patients will no longer need to be carried on foot

by gurney several kilometers through rivers to medical care in Tanzania. What a blessing!

**L**ocally, we continue to support our Lutheran Social Services partners at Bernal Gateway. We sponsored a Christmas party for the residents on December 14, including food and gift cards.

**O**ur 2012 Lenten Boxes offering totaled approximately \$1,000. It was split between Lutheran World Relief Water Projects and the Bay Area Women and Children Cooperative in the Tenderloin. The 2013 Lenten Box offering will go to the ELCA Malaria Campaign.

**S**t. Mark's knitters continue to complete the lap robes from knitted squares for the residents of Central Gardens Nursing Home in San Francisco. We also continue to knit scarves and caps for the men we host in our winter Homeless Shelter and the clients served by San Francisco Night Ministry. Our new special project is knitting caps for women and children at Bay Area Women and Children's Cooperative (BAWCC) in the Tenderloin. All knitters are welcome to participate!

**S**everal St. Mark's members prepare a worship service and communion for the Central Garden's Nursing Home community on the second Sunday of every month.

**O**ur community garden project continues to grow. St. Mark's members and residents of Martin Luther Tower and neighborhood volunteers have worked to maintain the community garden. The garden provides food, a safe community space and, and a welcoming place for all, including the marginalized. Watch the area on St. Mark's Square just south of the kitchen and Nursery – things are growing! If you are interested in volunteering in the garden, talk to Mary Ritter or John Elford.

**W**e went a "2nd Mile" in 2012, adding our support to several of the Sierra Pacific Synod's ministry partners, as well as St. Marks' San Francisco ministry partners. Individual members of St. Mark's supported with gifts to the following:

|  |           |
|--|-----------|
| St. Marks' Homeless Shelter                | \$2492.15 |
| ELCA Hunger – Syria                        | 340.00    |
| Lutheran Advocacy Ministry Nevada          | 200.00    |
| Mt. Cross Lutheran Camp                    | 150.00    |
| San Francisco Night Ministry               | 358.92    |
| ELCA Disaster Response - Hurricane Relief  | 20.00     |
| Lutheran Office of Public Policy           | 200.00    |
| Lenten Box offering to LWR Water and BAWCC | 1011.89   |
| Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary      | 100.00    |

**U**ppcoming plans include a trip to Israel and Palestine in April 2013 by several members of the congregation and Pastor Elizabeth. We will travel with Bright Stars of Bethlehem and include visits to Lutherans and other Christians in Bethlehem as well as important sites throughout Israel. Before the trip, the congregation and many of the travelers will study the issues faced by people in these areas, including discussion of the Kairos document prepared by religious leaders in Palestine.

**S**t. Mark's has been challenged by an anonymous donor to match a \$25,000 gift to the ELCA Malaria Campaign. Watch for opportunities to help the ELCA provide \$15 million by 2015 to put an end to worldwide malaria. Malaria kills a person every 60 seconds!

Thanks to all who help with this work!



## Sister Parish Relationship: Cordero de Dios and St. Mark's

### Mary Ritter

St. Mark's has a sister parish relationship with Cordero de Dios Lutheran Church in Soyapango, El Salvador. Cordero de Dios is a vibrant, energetic community of faith, serving a local community burdened by poverty, violence, and limited economic opportunity.

This sister parish ministry is one of accompaniment. Many members of St. Mark's have visited Cordero de Dios in recent years, and there were two separate visits in 2012. In early November, Jeremy McClain attended a synod-wide assembly in San Salvador led by Pastora Norma – the pastor of Cordero de Dios and also the Salvadorian pastor in charge of sister parish relationships for the Salvadorian synod. Over Thanksgiving, eight travelers from St. Mark's visited Soyapango to walk with members of Cordero de Dios and build upon the relationships forged in previous delegations.

Our visits to Cordero de Dios have been deeply moving and spiritually fulfilling. In the true spirit of accompaniment, we have realized that St. Mark's gains as much from the relationship as it gives. This ministry is not limited to those who have visited – we hope to involve the entire congregation in this relationship! We hope to meet monthly in 2013 to discuss and develop this ministry. Please keep your eye open for announcements about these meetings and join us when you can!

## Stewardship

### Roger Ostrem

The philosophical and spiritual objective of the Stewardship Committee is to promote a sense of stewardship amongst our members, encouraging the idea that stewardship should, and can, become an essential part of everyday Christian life. The practical objective of the Stewardship Committee is to raise funds for the church's general fund. The general fund provides the financial basis necessary to support the various missions and ministries of St. Mark's throughout the next fiscal year.

Our fall pledge drive at St. Mark's consisted of a six-week campaign that started on October 14 and ended on November 18. The actual involvement of the Stewardship Committee extended both before and after these dates. The fall season of stewardship was guided by our committee's campaign slogan, "Forward in Faith...Living in Gratitude". We certainly have much to be grateful for at St. Mark's and this year's fall campaign attempted to highlight a few of the many things that deserve our gratitude. In order to promote a theme of gratitude, our fall pledge drive started out by teaching the congregation a gratitude-oriented song, which was then sung at each Sunday service throughout the campaign. One line of our theme song clearly stated the campaign's spiritual objective: May we show gratitude in the way that we live, move forward in our faith and be God's hands. Each Sunday throughout the pledge drive, a committee member gave an announcement and highlighted the objectives of the campaign. We drew attention to a young member's experiences vol-

unteering at our winter homeless shelter program. We highlighted the Sunday School children, who joined in by singing a gratitude song to the congregation. We displayed a banner depicting the image of a cross-filled with a long list of items for which we are grateful. We expressed gratitude to the clergy and staff for their on-going contributions to the spiritual well-being of our community of faith. The Stewardship Committee gave the congregation a small gift of gratitude in the form of a tote bag, with the hope that our members would fill it with gratitude. Pledge packets were created and distributed and pledges were later received from the congregation on Celebration Sunday. Following the 11:00 service on that day, we celebrated the season with a wonderful Thanksgiving luncheon.

The results of our fall pledge drive reflect the on-going challenges that most churches and non-profit organizations are facing. The somewhat uncertain economic conditions that surround us have resulted in a dampening effect on pledging results. To date, the congregation has pledged a total of \$357,607 to the general fund. This amount compares with \$360,864 pledged last year. Those persons who submitted a pledge last year increased their pledge amounts by 5.7% this year. The total number of people who pledged last year was 53% of the congregation compared to 52% this year. We are aware there are a number of "late pledgers" in our congregation and we encourage them and all other members of our congregation to join in support of the church that we love.

The 2012 Stewardship Committee consists of Greg Jahnke, Roger Ostrem, Omer Voss, Mary Birkel and Jane Borg. Our Stewardship Committee encourages the members of St. Mark's to go forward faithfully and to live in gratitude.

## Women of the ELCA

### Geri Bailey, Nadine Robinson

In 2012, The Women of the ELCA of St. Mark's and St. Paulus continued their monthly meetings. The meetings are held on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of each month. It is a time of Bible study, prayer, singing and friendship. Our Bible study continued in January with our Bible Study: The Gospel of Mark.

In January, Jan Charter, who led us in song during our meetings, retired and relocated. Her generosity of time and talent was very much appreciated. During January, after sending our financial contribution to the Sierra Pacific Synod, we also contributed to other organizations. It was decided that our benevolence gifts for 2012 be given to the following groups, with each receiving \$100.00:

- Kerry's Kids
- Iglesia Luterana Cordero de Dios
- San Francisco Safe House for Women
- Pacific Lutheran Seminary through the W-ELCA Project to Support Women Students
- The ELCA's 1000 Days Project

Our Knitting Ministry continued. This year the Knitting Ministry focused on prayer shawls for members and friends of St. Mark's



who were ill, suffered a loss or needed comfort. Hats and scarfs were also knitted for the homeless.

Our "WELCA Celebrates Summer" Luncheon was held in July at Eliza's Restaurant where we experienced wonderful Chinese dishes. This luncheon is an annual event.

After our August summer break, we resumed our WELCA activities in September. September begins the new Bible study year. The September 2012 - May 2013 Bible study is "Gathered by God". The nine sessions explore some of the reasons or purposes for which we are "Gathered by God".

Nadine Robinson continues to be a representative on the Synodical Board of the Women of the ELCA. She is a strong presence on the board and we are very pleased to have the women of St. Mark's represented.

In November, we had our election of officers. The officers are Nadine Robinson and Geri Bailey, Co-Presidents, Pam Ruh, Secretary, Suzanne Smith, Treasurer and Marlo Tellschow, Program Coordinator.

December 2012 was unusual for W-ELCA as the Christmas program and luncheon was postponed due to unavoidable events. It was decided to have an Epiphany Luncheon and special program in January 2013. Christmas was celebrated during our regular monthly meeting.

The women of St. Mark's and St. Paulus meet from 11:00 am to 1:00 pm the second Tuesday of each month. The meeting is held in the Fireside Room in St. Mark's Urban Life Center. Please bring you sandwich or salad for lunch. Dessert and coffee is provided. Please join us for prayer, Bible study, fellowship and fun. If you would like more information, please contact Nadine Robinson or Geri Bailey.

## Women's Gatherings

### Suzanne Smith

The women's *Gatherings* study group continues to meet on the first Tuesday from 6:30 pm to 8:30 pm. All women are invited to come for study, dessert and fellowship. This year we read and discussed a variety of books including Elizabeth Johnson's *Quest for the Living God*, Marcus Borg's *Speaking Christian*, and Gary Macy's *The Hidden History of Women's Ordination* on theology. We looked at stories of African women facing civil war in Ilibagiza's *Left to Tell* and Leymah Gbowee's *Mighty Be Our Powers*. Moreover, we read Sandy Tolan's *The Lemon Tree: An Arab, a Jew and the Heart of the Middle East* along with the mysteries of Sister Fidelma by Peter Tremayne.

*Gatherings* has also used Lisa Dahill's *40 Days with Julian of Norwich* as its guide for meditation and discussion through the year.

All women are invited to join with us. For February, we will read *The Buddha in the Attic* by Julie Otsuka and in March & April, we will discuss Elaine Pagels' *Revelation: Visions, Prophecy & Politics*

*in the Book of Revelation*. If you have any questions, please contact Suzanne Smith.







## statistical Summary

|                            | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 |
|----------------------------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Baptisms                   | 4    | 14   | 13   | 8    | 4    |
| Confirmations              | 4    | 0    | 4    | 2    | 4    |
| Weddings                   | 12   | 18   | 15   | 11   | 24   |
| Deaths                     | 2    | 6    | 3    | 1    | 0    |
| New Members Received       | 20   | 22   | 14   | 26   | 14   |
| Baptized Members           | 523  | 537  | 532  | 403* | 407  |
| Confirmed Members          | 443  | 444  | 435  | 317* | 322  |
| Average Worship Attendance | 190  | 194  | 187  | 178  | 174  |

\* In 2010, 15 baptized & 136 confirmed members were removed from the Parish Register by status adjustment.

## St. Mark's Lutheran Church

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#### 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

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**Evangelical Lutheran  
 Church in America**

God's work. Our hands.