

# 2013 Annual Report



*St Mark's*  
LUTHERAN CHURCH



# God's Work Our Hands

## Lead Pastor

PASTOR ELIZABETH EKDALE

*"For the love of God urges us on"*

2 Corinthians 5:14

In 2013, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America celebrated 25 years of ministry - a significant milestone. I rejoiced to celebrate the 25th anniversary of my ordination in March. I am deeply grateful that I celebrated this anniversary as your Lead Pastor serving St. Mark's for 16 years. I continue to have a sense of humility, adventure and wonder serving alongside you, our staff, and the many communities we serve in Christ's name.

The theme for the ELCA's 25th anniversary is "Always Being Made New". As I reflect on this past year, I recognize that there have been accomplishments and disappointments, growth and loss that have changed us as a congregation. Our annual report, written by the members and staff of St. Mark's, describes these events, ministries, and challenges which have shaped and transformed us this past year. I commend these reports to you as a description of our life together in Christ. I also encourage you to find a ministry that you are passionate about and go for it! Become involved by volunteering your time and sharing your gifts in order to make a difference in the world. There is a place for you at St. Mark's to be yourself and to grow at your own pace as a disciple of Christ.

This past year, we welcomed two groups of new members through our wonderful Journeys in Faith ministry. In their journey toward Affirmation of Baptism, we prayed for them in worship and welcomed them to share their gifts and talents for service to God. We received an especially creative and dynamic group of disciples into the Body of Christ at St. Mark's this past year. Please make an effort to reach out to visitors and new members, welcome them, and help them find a place at St. Mark's where they can use their gifts. I also invite you to be an ambassador for our Journeys

in Faith ministry. If you know of someone who has worshiped at St. Mark's regularly but hasn't yet joined, invite them to consider participating in the next Journeys in Faith (JIF) group. Our JIF groups are a safe place to ask real and tough questions about faith, life, and discipleship. Everyone, not only someone considering membership at St. Mark's, but everyone is welcome to participate in a JIF group.

We welcomed new people into our midst and we have also bid "Farewell and God-speed" to those who moved away. This is the dynamic in an urban congregation. We also lost dear friends to tragic deaths. In the painful aftermath of one in particular, I saw this congregation come together to grieve, care for the family, and support one another in profound ways. We did not ignore or deny the depth of our pain. We acknowledged it and allowed the tender love of God to draw us deeper into God's embrace. We embodied St. Paul's words, "for the love of God urges us on", in our caring, listening, and being present with one another. This poignant time of grief and loss brought out the best of the St. Mark's community. It has also sharpened our awareness of the fragility of life and deepened our appreciation for our health and our love toward one another.

In the midst of it all, we welcomed our new Associate Pastor, Bekah Davis. After an interim of two plus years in which we assessed staffing needs, we called a very talented, well-traveled and bright "millennial" who will focus her energy on

youth, family and young adult ministries, outreach and evangelism, expanding social ministries, confirmation and pastoral care. I am delighted to serve alongside Pr. Bekah, learn from her, and turn her loose with her enthusiasm for ministry in San Francisco. I very much appreciated her leadership while I was away on sabbatical.

I am profoundly thankful for our dedicated staff and lay leaders, numerous volunteers and all of you who "show up" to do the work of ministry in this time and place. In worship, we are fed by the love of God and experience the grace of Jesus Christ in Word and Sacrament. "All our work flows from being a church first, foremost. At the center of our life together is worship and at the center of our worship is the crucified and risen Christ," Presiding Bishop Eaton of the ELCA exclaims.

I cannot agree with her more. St. Mark's is a community of disciples called together to love and serve the world with the inclusive and radical love of Christ. This is who we are as Lutheran Christians. Let us name it, proclaim it, and celebrate it.

With Gratitude,  
*Pastor Elizabeth Ekdale*

Pr. Elizabeth



## Associate Pastor PASTOR BEKAH DAVIS

"The myriad angels raise their song. O saints, sing with that happy throng; lift up one voice; let heaven rejoice in our redeemer's song!" –Hans Brorson, Behold the Host Arrayed in White.

Thank you for the privilege of serving as associate pastor here at St. Mark's. It was exactly one year ago that I found myself waiting with great anticipation for the phone to ring. Specifically, I was waiting to hear from Randy Schieber, the chair of the call committee, to tell me the results of the annual meeting vote on whether to extend a call. What a full year it has been since then! My time here began with my ordination and installation, followed by the Easter season, Pr. Elizabeth's sabbatical, Vacation Bible School, the start of a new confirmation class, a delegation to El Salvador, Advent/Christmas, and now the start of Epiphany.

Together we have experienced baptisms and memorial services, welcome rites and God-speed farewells, weddings and a blessing of the animals. This coming year, I am eager to delve more deeply into our youth and young adult ministries as well as our outreach and marketing efforts. Here at St. Mark's we are bridging the analog and digital divide with the launch of our new smartphone app. You will be able to connect with parish life, listen

to archived sermons, and pray our prayer wall with the touch of a screen. This app is to enhance our life and ministry together! This is also a chance for growth and trying new ways of connecting to our neighborhood community. At our council retreat last spring, we began an on-going conversation about challenging sacred cows. What is your sacred cow at St. Mark's?

This summer, I began working with St. Mark's youth including our Vacation Bible School program and our confirmation class. What a joy it has been to share in the faith formation of our youngest members. Our confirmation class, youth ministry, and young adult ministries are now in my purview. I look forward to deepening these connections. You might have also noticed some new faces among our acolytes and assisting ministers. You, dear reader, might soon get a tap on your shoulder yourself! I delight in helping parishioners discern their personal gifts in helping to lead worship.

I cherish my time with you, the people in the pews: getting to know your life stories, hearing about your faith journeys, and experiencing our ministry together. One of my favorite parts of this job is sitting down with parishioners over coffee to get to know each other better. Let's connect!

*Bekeh Davis*

# CHURCH COUNCIL



**President**  
**SUZANNE SMITH**

## An Advent Year

Therefore, in order that taxes may be properly collected, the Emperor orders all men, with their wives, to return to the town where they were born. There they must be counted and listed. And Joseph said to Mary: "We have to go to Bethlehem. It will be a long and difficult journey. It will be especially hard because the Baby will soon be born. But we must go anyway."

Saying this, Joseph went to the barn. He put the reins on the donkey. Then he shoveled oats into a bag so that the donkey would have nourishment on the trip.

Mary went to the kitchen and packed a big basket of food for the journey. She also packed some warm baby clothing and diapers in a blue sack.

These words and the prints from days 7 & 8 of my advent calendar started me thinking about advent and what it means to prepare. In this old European telling of the Christmas story, much is made of the everyday preparing for living in the world. Joseph must have oats for his donkey and Mary has a blue diaper bag. Often we look to the event (a birth) but forget the preparation that must come before (blue diaper bags) and that it takes time (nine months for growth in darkness) before the event can happen. I am struck that the past year at St. Mark's was an advent year.

We are moving into 2014 with vision, energy and joy. The preparation and work of 2013 has laid the



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*Mary went to the kitchen and packed a big basket of food for the journey. She also packed some warm baby clothing and diapers in a blue sack.*

groundwork for an active and meaningful year.

Our Pastor Elizabeth has had "a time apart" on her sabbatical and is committed to leading us into the future on the Square and the greater Bay Area. We have called an Associate Pastor, Bekah Davis and look forward to her gifts for our future. The organ now has all its stops and "Our Tim" Zerlang is planning events so that we can celebrate and share with the community music this coming year. Our intern, Eric Huseh, prepared us to be ready to welcome another intern, should one appear from PLTS.

A new phone system in the office, new low flush toilets in the apartments in Martin Luther Tower and the good work of the property committee now make it possible for better and cheaper work to be done on the Square. Signs can now appear so that folk may find their way and those who would cause mischief or harm are warned off. Our seasoned staff know us well and are dedicated to helping forward our mission in every way.

Through worship, education and social ministries we have prepared ourselves to follow the light of Christ in our church, our neighborhood, our city and our world. A short list of the activities of 2013 that helped us to grow and prepare for an exciting year of worship, learning and service in 2014 are:

"Before I die I want to \_\_\_\_\_", Sacred Geography: History & Reality in the Land Called Holy," 25 years of Homeless Shelter,

growing knitting ministry, an expanding Sunday School, the successful match of the Malaria Campaign challenge, a moving Easter Vigil, Journeys in Faith, women's groups studying Scripture and books like Behind the Beautiful Forevers, growing Summer Day Camp, Sister Parish covenant with Cordero de Dios, Pilgrimage for 19 to the Holy Land, Summer Season of Creation, Support of Faith and Action in Rwanda, Oktoberfest, the congregation retreat, focus on being a Welcoming Community, All Saints Day's remembrance of those who have died this year and certainly our Rally Day of Service. These and so many more experiences along with our prayers both spoken and unspoken bind us together as church --- a family continuing on the journey to which we are called and for which we are prepared.

The event is 2014 and St. Mark's is prepared to do God's Work with Our Hands.

I have been blessed with the privilege of being your church president for two years and look forward to new folk leading me/us in facing the challenges of 2014. Thanks to all who have served so well this past year and to our ministry team leaders, pastors and staff for all the support that you have given me. Most of all, thanks be to God for the people of St. Mark's.



## Treasurer

### ARON BOHLIG

#### 2013 Operating Results of St. Mark's Lutheran Church (SMLC) and the Urban Life Center (ULC)

Overall, between SMLC and the ULC, we had an operating surplus of approximately \$26 thousand dollars in 2013. This amount goes into our unrestricted reserve or contingency fund, which was \$82,243 as of December 31, 2014.

In this report please find details of the major positive and negative income and cost variances. The primary contributors to the surplus were:

#### The following income surpluses:

##### SMLC

\$(7,513)	.....BUILDING USE: Weddings down; concert bookings up
\$(3,937)	.....INVESTMENT GAIN/LOSS: Drop in market value of Alex Brown accounts
\$(3,003)	.....RELIGIOUS FESTIVAL OFFERINGS: Religious festival offerings down
\$(1,447)	.....MISCELLANEOUS CONTRIBUTIONS: Thrivent Choice dollars down
\$560	.....LOOSE PLATE OFFERINGS: Loose plate offerings up
\$7,480	.....GENERAL FUND ENV OFFERINGS: General Fund offerings up

##### ULC

\$(573)	.....PARKING INCOME: Vacant parking spaces (now filled)
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#### And the following expense variances:

##### SMLC

\$(10,130)	.....BUILDING USE-STAFF: Paid less wedding staff, more building attendants
\$(8,088)	.....CONTINGENCY: Contingency not spent
\$(5,095)	.....FACILITIES COORDINATOR: Job performed in 70% less time
\$(5,034)	.....STRATEGIC PLANNING GOALS: Spent<planned (no Stephen Ministry)
\$(3,715)	.....HOSPITALITY SUPPLIES: Spent<planned (events); Oktoberfest donations up
\$(3,073)	.....ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT: Worked less hours than budgeted
\$(2,855)	.....PROPERTY MINISTRY: Spent<planned (some projects deferred)
\$(1,070)	.....ENDOWMENT: Spent<planned (no endowment event)
\$1,011	.....SOCIAL MINISTRY: Unbudgeted: \$1,000-Bright Stars donation
\$1,496	.....WATER: Boiler pump leak (fixed); broken irrigation timer (fixed)
\$1,998	.....TELEPHONE: New phone system installation/hosting
\$2,119	.....MUTUAL MINISTRY: Unbudgeted: 25th Ordination Anniversary expenses
\$7,309	.....SALARIES-OTHER (INTERN): Extended employment & auto expenses

##### ULC

\$1,239	.....UTILITIES: Electricity usage up vs previous year
\$(1,591)	.....ELEVATOR: Previously mandated elevator service revoked
\$(1,732)	.....FACILITIES COORDINATOR: Job performed 70% less time
\$(2,903)	.....WATER: MLT toilet replacements = ULC water savings

#### Overall Commentary on SMLC and ULC

**Income** givings exceeded expectations. Good job to all! The decline in weddings is unfortunate. We have adjusted our pricing and believe we are competitive, and the staff continues to actively monitor "the market" to make sure we can increase our bookings.

**Expense** typically the contingency amount is spent to repair ULC building damage (e.g. break-ins, weather related events, equipment failures). We were fortunate in 2013 that we had... none of these except a boiler repair that was booked to a separate line. The staff also did a good job in operating more efficiently, taking less time to handle building rental/management related tasks and reducing general expenses where possible. I expect the Hospitality supplies number to go up in 2014, we had a changing of the volunteer ranks, and while they appear to be very thrifty, Lutherans like coffee and parties, so I expect we'll see some restocking and a return to a slightly higher expense level.

#### Did Not Complete Audit in 2013

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. We have budgeted to complete the audit in 2014 and this needs to be a priority for the staff to fulfill and follow through on the audit.

#### 2014 Major Budgetary Assumptions

The assumptions below represent budgeted changes relative to the 2013 budget. Due to the number of changes in staff and programs, it is hard to identify each individual change and its impact on the budget, but I have tried to highlight the most material changes below, and the report has additional details:

## St. Mark's Lutheran Church

### INCOME \$28,107 ↑ vs 2013 Budget

\$36,524	.....GENERAL FUND ENV. OFFERINGS: Increase in pledges versus 2013
\$1,597	.....MLT PASTORAL CARE: MLT Board approved 10% increase
\$886	.....MLT SENIOR CENTER: MLT Board approved 10% increase
\$600	.....LOOSE PLATE OFFERINGS: Loose plate offerings up
\$(1,400)	.....MISCELLANEOUS CONTRIBUTIONS: Thrivent Choice dollars down
\$(3,000)	.....RELIGIOUS FESTIVAL OFFERINGS: decreased by ~50%
\$(7,500)	.....BUILDING USE: # of booked weddings down; concert bookings up

### EXPENSE \$27,388 ↑ vs 2013 Budget

\$(10,100)	.....BUILDING USE-STAFF: # of booked weddings down
\$(4,571)	.....FACILITIES COORDINATOR: Job performed in 70% less time
\$(950)	.....HOSPITALITY: Fewer events, increased Oktoberfest support
\$(700)	.....EQUIPMENT MAINTENANCE: Reimbursed copy costs
\$(500)	.....CONFERENCE & TRAVEL: Synod Assembly is local
\$600	.....MAINTENANCE: Deferred maintenance
\$600	.....EQUIPMENT RENTAL: Copier lease & property tax
\$720	.....PUBLICITY-ADVERTISING: Yellow Pages, Banners, Church App
\$860	.....CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES: Nursery consultant
\$1,075	.....ENDOWMENT COMMITTEE: Special Endowment celebration
\$1,213	.....PASTOR'S CONTINUING ED: "First Call" gathering (Pr Bekah)
\$1,500	.....WATER: Rate increase
\$1,500	.....TELEPHONE: Higher rates for "hosted" system installed in 2013
\$2,000	.....CONTINGENCY
\$2,400	.....LEGAL AND PROFESSIONAL FEES: Audit by outside firm
\$3,115	.....STAFF BENEFITS, PAYROLL TAXES: Proportional to salaries
\$3,600	.....SOCIAL MINISTRY: Rwanda-\$1k, accompaniment-\$1k; BAOC-\$2k
\$3,653	.....SYNOD MISSION SUPPORT: 10% of General Fund Offerings
\$5,000	.....MUSICAL EXPENSES: Planned organ celebrations
\$15,228	.....STAFF SALARIES: Increases using Synod guidelines & 3% COLA

- In 2014 we plan for a 3% cost of living adjustment and pastoral compensation increases i with Synod guidelines
- Pastor Bekah employed a full year in 2014 vs a partial year in 2013
- We have a pastoral intern budgeted, but not identified

## The Urban Life Center

### Income \$3,750 ↑ vs 2013 Budget

\$3,750	.....BUILDING USE: Increased office rents and space rental fees
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### Expense \$1,524 ↓ -vs 2013 Budget

\$1,418	.....STAFF SALARIES: Salary increases using 3% COLA
\$1,200	.....UTILITIES: Rate increase
\$1,000	.....MAINTENANCE: Deferred maintenance
\$725	.....STAFF PAYROLL TAXES: increase in proportion to salaries
\$(1,524)	.....FACILITIES COORDINATOR: Job performed in 70% less time
\$(1,600)	.....ELEVATOR: Previously mandated elevator service revoked
\$(2,900)	.....WATER: MLT toilet replacements = ULC water savings

## Exciting commentary regarding 2014 budget and accomplishments in 2013

**The budgeted giving figure is up this year 7% relative to our expected 2013 figure.** Congratulations to all of us, and to our hard-working Stewardship team. While givings are not the only measure of a healthy congregation, they do signal expanded engagement and support of our ministries. As a result this year we are able to support our two full time pastors for the entire year, add an intern, support budget increases for education, Sunday school, nursery, social programs, music & worship, property, senior programs, the list goes on and on. Much of our budget is related to upkeep and management of the buildings and providing the "basic services" – having an extra 7% means we can really increase the budgets for the high engagement activities that are enjoyed by the diverse demographics we have within the congregation.

**Endowment Fund team is actively increasing our endowment.** This will be covered elsewhere but getting over \$100k is a big milestone.

**The elevator fund will grow to over \$100k** this year. We have been contacted by an anonymous donor who will be giving \$100k to the elevator fund. This, combined with the \$33,552 in the fund as of December 31, 2013 put is in the position of having a good start on what will probably result in an Elevator Capital Campaign. We'd previously estimated it would cost \$25,000 for an initial design and budgetary plan, and at least \$500,000 to purchase and install the new elevator. We are seeking leaders to help drive the capital campaign, and other associated activities necessary to complete this final piece to our buildings upgrade!

## Other liabilities

We have made necessary accruals for bi-annual audit and for Pastoral sabbaticals. We **have not made** contributions to, or an analysis of expected long term repairs necessary (e.g. for replacement of the roof, boiler or other major components with a fixed lifespan).

## Boring, but important administrative comments.

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 Cheryl Garcia at [garcia@stmarks-sf.org](mailto:garcia@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.

## MARTIN LUTHER TOWER

### President

#### JON MOELLER



A longtime ministry of St. Mark's, Martin Luther Tower (MLT, [www.mlt-sf.org](http://www.mlt-sf.org)) has been an independent, affordable community for seniors for nearly 50 years. MLT's scope encompasses the 121-unit tower, the Urban Life Center (ULC), and St. Mark's Square other than the church itself.

MLT offers affordable rents, a friendly and effective staff, an

active Residents Association, and a convenient location. Services provided for MLT's residents include: an on-site social worker and chaplain several days per week; a weekly Bible study; laundry facilities; a computer lab; a lounge stocked with DVDs and games; monthly luncheons and field trips; a well-appointed, reasonably-priced guest suite (also available for St. Mark's members; to reserve, contact MLT below); and a non-profit produce market every Wednesday at 11 am (all are welcome!).

Several MLT residents are St. Mark's members and interested potential residents over 62 should fill out an application in order to be placed on the waiting list. Please call the MLT office to receive an application or download one from MLT's website.

The MLT Board of Trustees consists entirely of St. Mark's members. The Board works closely with St. Mark's to coordinate services and provide significant financial and other support to St. Mark's.

#### 2013 Highlights

1. 100% retention of onsite management team
2. Enhanced security protocols
3. 100% occupancy rates for improved rental cash flow
4. Active Board committees, including Property (long-term capital plan) and Tenant (social services)
5. Pastor Bekah integrated into MLT
6. Vastly improved water and energy efficiency
7. Another successful joint Oktoberfest with St. Mark's
8. Continuing diligence to develop St. Mark's Square and affordable housing

The Board notes John Stewart Company's (JSCo) excellent team managing MLT, including Jeff Kohler, VP; Justine Minnis, Director; JM Lapeyrade, Property Manager; John Hunter, Maintenance

Supervisor; Tan Trinh, Maintenance Technician; Sonia Jimenez, Receptionist; and Hannah Bennett, Resident Services Coordinator (Episcopal Senior Communities).

The Board also thanks the following:

Pastor Ekdale and Pastor Bekah for their work in the Senior Center, continuing to enrich residents' lives through planned activities and field trips

Jun Ranches for his outstanding management of the Urban Life Center and overall support of MLT

Jeremy McClain for his work as Church Council liaison to MLT and on the Development Task Force; and MLT resident Dean Atkinson for cooking and entertaining at MLT and St. Mark's events  
The MLT Residents Association, especially its 2013 officers: Rose Priven, President; Penny Small, Vice President; Diana Rhodes, Secretary; and Elizabeth Howell, Treasurer

Personally, I also thank the 2013 MLT Board members, particularly for their committee and task force contributions: Omer Voss, Vice President; Brad Hubert, Treasurer; Steven Krefting/Barbara Bock (also an MLT resident!), Secretary; Pastor Elizabeth Ekdale; Adrienne Brown, Jo Chadwick (also an MLT resident!); Lin Cerles; Barbara Engmann; Jonathan Ocker; and Scott Taylor.

MLT contact information: Office 415-885-1084 (TDD: 800-735-2929) and website [www.mlt-sf.org](http://www.mlt-sf.org).



# CHURCH STAFF

## Director of Music

DR. TIMOTHY ZERLANG



The year 2013 saw the completion of my fourth year as Director of Music at St. Mark's and the completion of the Taylor and

Boody organ. Music in our worship here at St. Mark's is very generously supported not only with our community's financial resources but with the time and talent of many dedicated volunteers, for which I am very grateful.

Sometime in the past year, it dawned on me that my career as Organist/Director of Music had passed the 35-year mark. As

startling as that realization was for me, it was also very satisfying to note that the last four years at St. Mark's have been the most meaningful, exciting, interesting, challenging, and ultimately fulfilling; meaningful because I have found in the St. Mark's community a place in which I continue to grow spiritually and musically, exciting and interesting because the vibrancy of our congregational song enables me to try new things and (I hope) energizes us all, and challenging because there is so much to do to prepare for our musical worship and limited time in which to do it.

The Taylor and Boody organ continues to be an inspiration to me as I accompany and lead musical worship here at St. Mark's. The organ's completion this past fall is a huge accomplishment for which you all should be congratulated: not only every member of the St. Mark's congregation and larger community, but particularly your very dedicated Organ Committee, who dreamed a dream years ago and saw that dream magnificently realized in the

balcony of our retrofitted sanctuary. This past spring, I sat in a pew in our sanctuary and listened to a recital played on our organ by prize winners in the Junior Bach Festival and was content to know that young people like them would be playing that organ for generations to come because of the wise investment made by this community.

When I asked the choir recently what I should write in this report, the immediate response was "we're having fun." While making music, and making music in worship in particular, can be cathartic, helping us express our deepest sorrows, our greatest joys, our heartfelt longings, and our thanks and praise to our Creator, enabling us to say things for which there are no words, I believe it can and should be fun as well. So when these hard-working volunteer musicians that help lead our worship each week say that fun is "being had," I think something is being done right "here in this place."

## Director of Church Administration and Operations

JUN RANCHES



### A Place for Ministry

Throughout 2013, 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 center of ministry within San Francisco. With activities scheduled every day of the 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

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 one-third 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 2013, St. Mark's and the ULC:

- Accommodated 108 groups and individuals, including 35 music groups, 32 individuals and community groups, 8 twelve-step recovery groups, 13 overnight youth groups, 14 faith-based organizations, and 9 ULC office tenants
- Witnessed 8 wedding ceremonies
- 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
- Supported the ministries of the Friendship Banquet, the Night Ministry, the San Francisco Interfaith Council, and Thrivent

### Administration and Operations

Working behind the scenes, the staff strives to meet the ever-changing administrative and operational needs of the church. In 2013, we...

- Welcomed Pr. Bekah
- Celebrated the 25th anniversary of Pr. Elizabeth's ordination
- Worked with MLT on security issues on the Square
- Worked with MLT and Carillon Tower to host first ever neighborhood watch meeting
- Installed new fixtures and improved overall exterior lighting
- Replaced outdated phone system
- Redesigned the website
- Redesigned/redecorated the church office
- Replaced worn folding tables and chairs
- Oversaw the midweek suppers



Special thanks to Ann Dayton and Cheryl Garcia for their superb management of the church calendar and facilities schedule as they respond to the needs of the church, wedding couples, music groups, overnight youth groups and more.

Thanks also to our office volunteers who faithfully gave their time in and around the church office: Marcia Spillane, Tai Mamoe, Eunice Childs, Geri Bailey, Jeremy McClain, Jane Borg, Bertie Brouhard, Marlo Tellschow, Marge Jencks, Suzanne Smith, Phyllis DeSpain, Sig Sigafos.

Thank you for the opportunity to be a part of this active church and community. I am grateful to work with a wonderful staff, the church Council, MLT Board, Ministry Teams and other leaders of this caring faith community. I am inspired by the faithful dedication of everyone at St. Mark's who volunteers their valuable time to support the work of the church. I look forward to another exciting year together.

### 2013 Patrons on St. Mark's Square

3rd Space  
Alcoholics Anonymous  
American Bach Soloists  
Bay Area Organizing Committee  
Bay Area Rainbow Symphony  
Bethel Lutheran Church of Shoreline  
bikeandbuild.org  
Bright Stars of Bethlehem  
California Bach Society  
CG Jung Institute  
Chanticleer  
Chanticleer Youth Choir  
Clackamas Community Choir  
Clerestory  
Colorado University Denver  
SF Safe  
Covered California  
Cynthia Espinoza Pre School  
Deckinger Meditation Group  
Deutsche Musikverein  
Dialogue Training Session  
Dignity SF  
Ebene Quartet Concert  
ELCA-LCMS Reunion  
Elektra Women's Choir  
Emmaus Campus Ministry  
Face AIDS  
Freedom in Christ  
Humboldt State University

Interfaith Young Adult Network  
International Orange Chorale  
Jarring Sounds  
Junior Bach Festival  
Kapalaliko Hawaiian Band  
Katherine Delmar Burke School  
Katona Twins  
Kountze Memorial Lutheran Church  
Magnificat Baroque  
MLT Exercise Class  
MLT Podiatrist  
MLT Produce Market  
MLT Resident Super Bowl Party  
MLT Social Services  
MLT Spirituality Group  
Montana State University  
Mount Cross  
Mount Cross Lutheran Church  
Musae  
Narcotics Anonymous  
New Esterhazy Quartet  
NexGen Advisors  
Noe Valley Chamber Music  
Omni Foundation for the Performing Arts  
OpenHouse Senior LGBT  
Overeaters Anonymous  
Pacific Mozart Ensemble  
PLTS Student Group  
Portland State University  
Purple Orchids Quartet  
Ragazzi Boy's Chorus & Sine Nomine  
ReconcilingWorks

Rice University  
SF Boys Chorus  
SF Choral Artists  
SF Conference Clergy  
SF Conservatory  
SF Department of Emergency Management  
SF Early Music Society  
SF Estonian Society  
SF Free Farm  
SF Girls Chorus  
SF Interfaith Council  
SF Conference  
SF Lyric Chorus  
SF Night Ministry  
SF Paratransit  
SF Performances  
SF Sinfonietta  
SF Women's Rehabilitation Foundation  
Sinfonietta Chorus  
St John's Lutheran Church Youth  
St Matthews Lutheran Church  
St Paulus Lutheran Church  
Stanford University  
Sunset Youth Orchestra  
Thrivent Board  
United Religions Initiative  
Urban School of SF  
Vanderbilt University  
Voice of Music  
Volti  
WELCA  
Winnemucca United Methodist Church  
Young Women's Choral Project

## MINISTRIES & COMMITTEES

### Education - Adult Forum

#### SUZANNE SMITH



At the moment the Adult Forum Planning Committee is being reconstituted as St. Mark's evaluates its educational offerings for the adult community. This past year there were a variety of educational events on Sundays at 10:00 am.

In 2013 our scriptural and theological studies focused on "Living Lutheran during Lent: in the ELCA, in an Interfaith World, in Life and Death, in War and Peace, in the Holy Land and in Liturgy." Thanks to Pr. Ekdale, Eric Huseeth, Greg Jahnke, Rev. Kelly Denton-Borhaug, Dale Loepp and Kyle Schiefelbein for a most stimulating program. Before Lent we heard about life in Palestine and studied the Kairos Document.

In the spring on Sunday mornings we looked at "Giving Beyond your Lifetime" with St. Mark's Endowment Committee and "Dreamtending: Deeping your Spiritual Journey through your Dreams" led by Kirsten Maier Smith. Our Intern, Eric Huseeth led us in "Understanding Buddhism."

Pastor Elizabeth Ekdale reported on her sabbatical and we were introduced to our new Associate Pastor Bekah Davis and our Parish Teaching Student - Brach Jennings. All were deeply moved with the story that Marty Brounstein shared with us in the forum and in his book, "Two Among the Righteous." It is the story of a Dutch Christian couple who saved the lives of over two dozen Jews from the Nazis.

We learned about activities from those in our own congregation which included reports from the Sierra Pacific

Synod Assembly and Churchwide Assembly in Pittsburg. We also heard from St. Mark's delegation to visit our sister congregation, Cordero de Dios, in Soyapango, El Salvador and from the St. Mark's group that Pr. Ekdale led to the Holy Land. Congregation member Renata Kiefer shared her love and involvement with the Cynthia Espinoza Ministry in Paraguay.

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. Please support those looking at adult education at St. Mark's in the future.



## Education - Confirmation

### THE REV. BEKAH DAVIS

Our confirmation class is in full swing! This great group of 6th, 7th, and 8th grade youth meets weekly, Sundays at 10:10 am, to explore our faith and Lutheran

identity. Upcoming programming: February 2nd we will have an outing to St. Gregory of Nyssa Episcopal Church. Later this summer, we will attend Shalom Camp at Mt. Cross on July 13-18th as part of our confirmation class. Interested in joining this cycle of confirmation at St. Mark's? Contact Pastor Bekah.



## Education - Sunday School

### JENNY HART

Attendance: Our attendance for Sunday School this academic year is up. Our average attendance for September-December is 18 students!! Last year's average was 15 students per Sunday.

We have seen a big growth in the number of students in our 4-6th grade class, which Gail Culp teaches. Our 4-6th grade class has regular attendance of 12 students. Of these children, 10 have been attending Sunday School at St. Mark's since preschool! It is very rewarding to see the older students grow in faith and fellowship with one another.

Volunteers: Our Sunday School volunteers were devastated this year by the unexpected death of Shauna Malone-Kemp. Shauna was a dedicated Sunday School teacher, who brought joy and love to all. Her spirit is alive in all of us and we are making a banner for Sunday School which will be a visual reminder of her beautiful spirit!

We continue to have a strong volunteer team: Susan and Jeff Sall, as well as Ralph Loen, lead our children in song during Chapel time. Our teachers who dedicate every Sunday morning to teaching our children are:

- Charlene Loen- Preschool
- Adrienne Brown- Kinder, 1st, 2nd and 3rd grade
- Gail Culp- 4th-6th grade

We are very lucky to have 3 distinct grade levels for our lessons, as it keeps our students engaged in their learning.

Curriculum: Preschool through 3rd grade classes still use Augsburg Fortress "Spark" curriculum. This is a familiar program that we have used for a few years now. The older students have adopted a new curriculum from Augsburg Fortress called, "Connect: for quirky tweens" (!! ) The new curriculum has been enthusiastically received.

Community Service: Every week, at Chapel, our students gather offering for our Sister Parish, Cordero de Dios Lutheran Church in Soyapango, El Salvador. Other community service projects we did this year:

- Stockings for the homeless. We stuffed 70 pairs of socks with goodies for the men in our winter shelter.
- Students learned all about Malaria and the Malaria Campaign at St. Mark's. We made an informational video, which we shared with our families.
- Valentines were made for the residents at MLT.
- Approximately 80 Lenten Boxes were made for the Lenten offerings.
- For Rally Day the children made Birthday Cards for the homebound. We sent the beautiful cards we made to Meals on Wheels and they were delivered to their clients.

Big Group Activities: About once a month we gather all classes together and meet as one large group for the following activities:

- Stockings for the Homeless
- Valentines for MLT residents
- Mardi Gras party before Lent
- Seder Meal
- Reformation Sunday /Halloween Haunted House
- Palm Sunday celebration in Heritage Hall
- Classes led by the Pastor on Baptism, Communion and Prayer.

We welcome all children over the age of 3, or younger with a parent. We are truly blessed at St. Mark's with a wonderful Sunday School program. If you're not currently on our e-mail list and want to be, please let us know, hart@stmarks-sf.org.



## Education - Tuesday Evening Women's Gathering

### 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 The Buddha in the Attic by Julie Otsuka, Elaine Pagels' Revelation: Visions, Prophecy & Politics in the Book of Revelation and Geraldine Brooks' People of the

Book. We looked at stories from the poor of India in Katherine Boo's Behind the Beautiful Forevers: Life, Death and Hope in a Mumbai Undercity and the history of America's racism through the lens of Home in Anita Hill's Reimagining Equality: Stories of Gender Race & Finding Home. We learned about owls in Stacey O'Brien's Wesley the Owl and explored the mysteries of Brother Cadfael in books by Elizabeth Peters and got a new slant on Mary from Diane Schoemperlen's Our Lady of the Lost & Found.

All women are invited to join with us. For February and March we will read Women, Spirituality & Transformative Leadership: Where Grace Meets Power by Kathe Schaaf et al. If you have any questions, please contact Suzanne Smith.



## Education - Women of the ELCA (W-ELCA)

### NADINE ROBINSON

In 2013, The Women of the ELCA of St. Mark's and St. Paulus continued their monthly meetings. The meetings are held on the 2nd Tuesday of each month. It is a time of bible study, prayer, singing and friendship. Our study continued in

January with our Bible Study: Gathered by God.

In January, a W-ELCA Epiphany Luncheon and program was held. This event was in lieu of our Christmas Luncheon which was cancelled due to unavoidable circumstance. Also in January, we experienced the loss of Mary Ferguson, a beloved member of W-ELCA and St. Mark's. She is missed. During this month, three Regional Day Retreats were held. The retreat for our region was held in Cupertino. Pastor Lyle Beckman, SF Night Ministry was the guest speaker.

Our Knitting Ministry continued. The Knitting Ministry, this year, focused on prayer shawls for members and friends of St. Mark's who were ill, suffered a loss or needed comfort. Hats & scarfs were also knitted for the homeless.

In March, we gave a memorial gift of \$50.00 to the St. Mark's elevator fund in memory of Mary Ferguson.

The month of April brought the sad news of the death of Jan Vreim, a past member of our W-ELCA group. A \$50.00 memorial gift was given to the St. Mark's elevator fund in her name. Our co-

President, Nadine Robinson announced that she will represent St. Mark's as a delegate to the Sierra Pacific Synod Assembly as well as a representative of the Synod W-ELCA board. At the April meeting we discussed the disbursement of funds for our benevolent giving. The benevolent funds were disbursed to the following: Cordero de Dios, Malaria Fund, Kerry Kids, Kindergarten-Paraguay, SF Safe House for Women, 1000 Days ELCA Project and the W-ELCA Synod Project-PLTS.

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 2013 thru May 2014 bible study is: In Good Company: Stories of Biblical Women. The women featured in these bible studies are lesser-known, such as Hannah, Abigail and others.

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.

The 11th Biennial Sierra Pacific W-ELCA Convention was held October 4th & 5th at St. John's Lutheran Church in Sacramento. Eight women from St. Mark's attended. Joanne Chadwick, a St. Mark's member, was a guest speaker. This convention celebrated the 25th anniversary of W-ELCA.

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 Telschow, Program Coordinator.

Our annual Christmas luncheon and program was held in December. Advent was the theme of the program. This was presented as an Advent Calendar, reviewing the 24 days of Advent. The luncheon and program was enjoyed by all those attending.

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 your 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.



## Education - Youth

### THE REV. BEKAH DAVIS

I am reminded on a consistent basis what a great group of youth we have St. Mark's! I have enjoyed getting to know our youth of all ages this year. Whether it is speaking with Sunday school youth about

prayer, leading confirmation class, or working with our high school acolytes, I am moved by the faith of our youngest members. Mark your calendars for Vacation Bible School June 30th – July 4th here at St. Mark's.



## Endowment

### DR. MARGARET MCLEAN

The St. Mark's Endowment Fund, established with a \$25,000 opening balance in 2011, reached the remarkable \$100,000 milestone in 2013. Having over \$100,000 held in an account at the Lutheran Community Foundation (the LCF, a non

profit organization) will enable the awarding of small grants during 2014 in support of St. Mark's and its mission and ministries. Gratitude abounds for those who have made a gift to the Endowment Fund either directly or through their estate plans.

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. We thank David Lam for his time on the committee and welcome the continuing service of Stacy Cullison, Brad Hubert (LCF Advisor), Greg Jahnke, Robert Rathmell, Shelly Taylor, and Debbie Varian (Secretary) for 2014.

In April, we facilitated two Adult Forums on estate planning. Much of this past year was consumed with our continuing work on policies to guide donations to the Endowment Fund. We drafted and Council approved a bequest policy. In 2014, we will concentrate on developing policies to manage disbursements from the Fund in support of St. Mark's ministries.

The Endowment Committee is planning a celebration of the \$100,000 milestone and our first year of grant-making and to offer more opportunities for informing people about the Fund and promoting giving to the Fund. We will publicly thank those who have made contributions to the Endowment Fund over the years.

The Endowment Committee will be reporting financial information about the Fund to the Congregation. At the time this report was written, the final information for 2013 was not available from the LCF. The Fund has been the beneficiary of generous gifts in 2013, which now provide us with the unprecedented opportunity to extend God's work with our hands in new directions. 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 2013.

The Endowment Committee is blessed with abundant technical expertise and support from its membership. 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 and our ability to extend the congregation's actions in support of community.



## Human Resources

### 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.

This was an exciting year for staff development at St. Mark's. We were very happy to call Pastor Bekah Davis as a full time associate pastor in February. Pastor Davis and Pastor Ekdale have worked throughout the year to refine each pastor's roles and responsibilities in St. Mark's ministries. Staff roles and responsibilities have also continued to develop, with administrative staff taking on more responsibilities.

There are currently three full-time and fifteen part-time employees of St. Mark's: Lead Pastor (full-time), Associate Pastor (full-time), Director of Church Administration and Operations (full time), Director of Music, Parish Administrator, Bookkeeper/Events Administrator, a security monitor, three nursery attendants, and eight on-call event staff. 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 9 years and is the key manager of operations, administration, and financial functions. He monitors, coordinates, and participates in many church activities, including financial oversight, financial reports and statements, fundraising, the capital campaign, budgeting, property management, website, newsletter and publicity design, and network and IT support.

Ann Dayton, Parish Administrator, has been at St. Mark's for over 8 years. Ann gathers appropriate information for various publications and produces worship bulletins, announcements, flyers, brochures and posters. Additionally, she sends out weekly e-blasts, updates the church database, handles church-related facility scheduling and overnight groups, and provides general administrative support.

Cheryl Garcia, Bookkeeper and Events Administrator, has been at St. Mark's for 10 years. As bookkeeper, Cheryl tracks and processes accounts receivable and accounts payable, working closely with Jun and the church treasurer. In 2013, Cheryl took on the role as Events Administrator and began managing wedding and community events.

Dr. Tim Zerlang, St. Mark's Director of Music, has been with St. Mark's for over 4 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 am and 11:00 am 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. Shirley Liu, Elvira Markov, and Johanna Najera 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, reviewing the HR committees roles and responsibilities, providing pastoral and staff support during Pastor Elizabeth's sabbatical 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 LOOPP

In her recent book entitled, *Wide Welcome*, pastoral theologian Jessica Krey Duckworth uses the metaphor of building a sandcastle to talk about what it's like to build a parish community. Like sandcastles, churches are constantly shifting and changing—nothing we do or construct is

truly permanent, even though we might very much like to think so. And like building sandcastles, a great deal of the joy in experiencing parish can come from the process of creating and being re-created by forces we do not control. For the church to truly be church, the community must always be open to receiving newcomers into the congregation as a part of this creative process of the Holy Spirit. Rather than dreading change or clinging tightly to what may comfortable (but which is also passing away) the congregation should instead look toward embracing what St. Mark's is continually becoming.

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 deeper incorporation into parish life 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 continually welcome new people into our congregation and deepen our connections as part of the Body of Christ.

During 2013, sixteen people participated in the Journeys in Faith process. Of these, thirteen people affirmed their baptism either at the Easter Vigil or during this past summer. At the present time we are currently excited about forming the next Journeys in Faith group who will be invited to affirm their baptism at the Easter Vigil on April 19, 2014.

None of this would be possible without the entire congregation working together to welcome new people into our midst. Every time you greet someone new or refer someone to a Journeys in Faith team member, you help us in remarkable ways. We are also especially grateful to all those who have served as sponsors for our journeyers during this past year.

Current Team members are: Liv Beck, Dale Loopp and Suzanne Smith. We would love to have you join us in this ministry.



## Mutual Ministry

### SHELLY TAYLOR

The St. Mark's Mutual Ministry Committee supports the partnership between the pastors and parishioners in living out our baptismal calling. 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 2013 committee members are: Susan Sall, Jo Chadwick, Marge Okuley, Brian Richards, Pastor Elizabeth, Pastor Bekah and Shelly Taylor, who serves as Committee Facilitator.

The Committee meets regularly with the pastors and checks in individually with all the members of the staff. Each member of the church staff, including the pastors, is assigned to a Committee member who acts as a sounding board and advisor to that staff member. During 2013, the Committee coordinated the celebration of Pastor Elizabeth's 25th Anniversary of Ordination. In addition, the Committee honored all clergy affiliated with St. Mark's at Clergy Recognition Sunday, celebrated in January 2014. This event is intended for us

to publicly recognize and express our gratitude for their commitment to God's service.

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.



## **Nursery** **BRANDEE** **MARCKMANN**

St. Mark's nursery committee works hand-in-hand with the nursery attendants, Pastor Elizabeth Ekdale, and Director of Church Administration & Operations Jun Ranches to ensure that St. Mark's nursery is a safe and

welcoming ministry for infants and young children. The committee is comprised of Aaron Greig, Joe Haller, Cristin Owens, and Brandee Marckmann (chair). Committee members were recruited during the summer of 2013 and met for the first time in November. We encourage parents of children who are served by the nursery as well as all members of the congregation to seek us out with any questions you may have about the nursery.

All of the committee members, nursery attendants, and pastors have taken part in St. Mark's safe congregation training, which outlines policies and procedures with the goal of preventing any instances of abuse of vulnerable members of our congregation.

The committee has developed a task matrix to begin working on in early 2014. We are looking forward to recalibrating our current nursery guidelines and developing more specific protocol that reflects our commitment to love, care for, and ensure the safety of each child and family who is served by our nursery. We are thankful for the partnership we have with both the St. Mark's human resources committee and with our safe congregation training leaders Mary Ritter and Margaret McLean in designing these policies.

The nursery committee would like to express our gratitude to all who devote their time and energy to this important ministry at St. Mark's.

## **Parents with Kidlettes**

### **LARA DICKINSON**

The community of parents and children at St. Mark's is growing and each year we find new ways to build fellowship and support each other.

St. Mark's Parents with Kidlettes is a community of parents at St. Mark's who gather together to support each other and engage in community-based projects. This year we welcomed many new babies and parents into our community. The more experienced parents love holding those new babies and also sharing support and wisdom with new parents.

Some of the activities St. Mark's Parents with Kidlettes shared together in 2013 included:

Monthly gatherings after the 9:00 am Sunday service. We meet the first Sunday of each month to share coffee, donuts and conversation while our children attend Sunday School or enjoy time in the nursery. Our time together is a chance to visit, plan activities, and share experiences about parenting. We have great conversations on everything from how to set up an allowance for our children that intrinsically motivates them to save and share as well as spend; to whether or not to support the "princess phase" with girls.

Semi-Annual Toy and Book Swap. We had Toy and Book Swaps in April and December this past year. This is a great way for older parents to cleanse and for newer parents to receive gently loved hand-me-downs. Our own girls have really enjoyed the beautiful wooden puzzles, dolls and books and other treasures that come out of these wonderful swaps. Leftover items are offered to our Nursery.

St. Mark's Camping Trip. We held our third annual St. Mark's Camping Trip in August 2013 at Big Basin in the Santa Cruz Mountains. Nine families joined together to share a weekend of good food, nature walks, campfires, and even our own Sunday worship together. We are planning our 2014 trip this month so look out for invitations to this wonderful weekend together. It has been a real highlight for families and the kids just love it!

St. Mark's Annual Summer Pool Party. Each summer parents and kids spend a summer afternoon in the pool at the Fosters' house. It is a great opportunity to get out of the city and have kids see their Sunday School and Nursery friends in a new play environment.

Oktoberfest. St. Mark's parents and kids love our Oktoberfest celebration with wonderful food, music, bouncy houses, face painting and more. We even have some very festive lederhosen-wearing dads helping us celebrate.

Christmas Pageant rehearsals and reception. We typically host a small champagne and cookie reception after the wonderful St. Mark's Christmas Pageant each year.

We would love to invite new and prospective members into this rich, nurturing community. We are also looking for support in helping to grow this community. We particularly need parents who would like help us in the following ways:

Meal train point person. Someone to help organize meal trains for members with new babies or who are in need.

Parent's activity organizer. We would like to organize another outing with parents only this year and let the kids gather at the nursery for craft making and fun. If you would like to help organize this event, please let us know!

Monthly gathering co-host. Please let us know if you would like to host a particular topic during our monthly gathering or invite in an outside speaker.

Thanks to all for helping create and grow this wonderful community!

Contact: dickinson@stmarks-sf.org



## Property GARY SCHILLING

As a vibrant faith community, we at St. Mark's rightly focus our attention on worship, education and service, but many of our programs would be severely compromised or not possible without the physical spaces and facilities in our church building, the Urban Life Center and on the grounds of

St. Mark's Square. The Property Ministry Team, charged with the maintenance and improvement of our facilities, is a group of 6 to 12 volunteers who gather on Saturday mornings every 6 to 8 weeks. Fortified with coffee and pastries, we enjoy conversation and camaraderie as we tackle routine as well as special projects in support of St. Mark's mission. You are welcome to join us in 2014!

Completing the installation of the Nativity Window near the Columbarium was a highlight for the Property Team this past year. The window was relocated in 2012, but several volunteers, most notably Gail and Cal Culp, worked to clean the window, paint the new wood frame and touch up the paint on the window. On May 12, Mothers' Day, we rededicated this luminous tribute to the Holy Family and expressed our gratitude to the window's creator, artist and former St. Mark's member, Walter Schmidt. Mr. Schmidt, who celebrated his 100th birthday in 2013, was not able to join us, but we were honored to have his daughter Maria Balentine and granddaughter Elisabeth of Seattle join us for the dedication liturgy and see the newly installed window. I want to especially thank Marge Jencks for her continued commitment to this project. Marge has frequently communicated with Mr. Schmidt and kept the project moving forward for several years. Her enthusiasm even inspired Walter to create replacement panels for two panes that were damaged in recent years, and her research was the source of a newly framed history of the window that now hangs near the art glass. Thank you, Marge!

In addition to the Nativity Window, we completed a wide range of projects in 2013:

- Installed new bicycle racks outside Heritage Hall
- Installed additional shelving for choir members' music and generally improved storage facilities throughout the church building

- Spruced up the church interior by regularly dusting and cleaning windows, doors and hardware
- Maintained the church grounds, regularly weeding the planting beds, sweeping the walks and picking up trash
- Coordinated and assisted with Christmas holiday decorations including the installation and removal of a 15' silver-tip fir at the Chancel and a 12' tree in front of the church building
- Worked with Decker Electric to complete several long awaited improvements to the building's electrical system including:
  - Repairing the existing exterior light fixtures thereby improving site security
  - Installing motion detectors to activate lighting in the north-east and northwest stairwells
  - Installing new conduit and an outlet for the building's Wi-Fi router
  - Installing three new dedicated circuits for the coffee urns in Heritage Hall
  - Installing a new outlet and time for a soon-to-be installed light that will illuminate the rose window at night

There are many St. Mark's members who have helped the Property Team with these many projects and we appreciate your assistance, but I especially want to recognize the efforts of our team members who have made our Saturday morning projects possible: Cal and Gail Culp, Pastors Elizabeth Ekdale, Hans Hoch and Grace, Charles and Dianne Jacobs, Philip Krikau, Mary Carlton Lull, Bill Mooney, Marge Okuley, 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 who is a valued partner in all of our projects and keeps St. Mark's running smoothly on a day-to-day basis. Thank you, everyone!



## SMOP ("St. Mark's Our Planet")

TOM BENSON

SMOP has been leading Bay Area hikes and environmental service projects for many years under the leadership of our resident naturalist Steven Krefting and the assistance of Tom Benson. As we launch into our new year, we plan to offer a series of wonderful hikes and service events, and look forward to the participation of many St. Mark's members. As SMOP

has always provided a wonderful learning experience about our natural world and environmental service in a Christian context, we especially encourage the participation of families with children.

Here is an overview of the SMOP events during 2013:

- January 21 MLK Holiday - We pulled weeds and worked on beautifying parts of the Presidio near the Rob Hill Camp-ground.
- March 24 Palm Sunday - A vigorous hike to see the "Lilies of the Field" in the Marin Headlands above Tennessee Valley
- May 11 - Habitat restoration (removal of non-native species) near Mountain Lake in the Presidio
- May 12 - Refurbishing and upgrading the St. Mark's Community Garden
- October 20th - An amazing hike on the slopes of Mt. Diablo during which we observed the silent circling of a Golden Eagle.

If you would like to be added to the SMOP "early warning" e-mail list for the next year, contact Tom Benson at [benson@stmarks-sf.org](mailto:benson@stmarks-sf.org).



## Social Ministry

### MARY RITTER

First, thanks to the congregation for the support of many projects for the hungry, poor and needy in 2013.

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 2014.

We have provided lovely fresh food to nearly 300 households at the Interfaith Food Pantry every six weeks on Saturday mornings at Old First Presbyterian Church in San Francisco. A team of 12 to 15 people volunteers from 7:30 to 10 o'clock. St. Mark's purchases \$300 of healthy food from the San Francisco Food Bank – fruits and vegetables, protein and packaged foods – to be distributed to many households in the neighborhood. It is an amazing project! All members of the congregation are encouraged to help.

St. Mark's will host Interfaith Homeless Shelter in January 2014 for three weeks in cooperation with other churches in the city. We host 60 men for dinner, a warm safe place to sleep, and breakfast in the morning before they head out for their day, some of them to work. Thanks to the many of you who provide breakfasts and suppers as well as monetary support. Again, St. Mark's knitters have made scarves for the men. Our 60 guests will have colorful scarves around their necks this winter!

Eighteen St. Mark's members and friends made a trip to Israel and Palestine in April 2013 with Pastor Elizabeth. We traveled with Bright Stars of Bethlehem and included

visits to Lutherans and others in Bethlehem, Ramallah, Masada and the Dead Sea, Jerusalem including the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, and Augusta Victoria Hospital and Lutheran World Federation on the Mount of Olives, Galilee and Tiberius, the Jordan River as well as important sites throughout Israel. Before the trip, the congregation and many of the travelers studied the issues faced by people in these areas, including discussion of the Kairos document prepared by religious leaders in Palestine. Upon return from Israel and Palestine, several have supported the work of Augusta Victoria Hospital and LWF by the purchase of oil pressed from the olives of their trees on the Mount of Olives. We continue to include prayers for Middle East Peace in our St. Mark's Midweek Worship on the third Wednesday of the month. St. Mark's members supported the September visit of dance troupe and art festival from Dyar Kalima of Bethlehem. Bethlehem's Christmas Lutheran Pastor Mitri Raheb was the featured speaker at the opening reception.

We continue our accompanying relationship with our sister parish, Cordero de Dios in El Salvador. In November 2013, eight St. Mark's members, one friend of St. Mark's, and seminary parish student 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!

We continue to advocate with Bread for the World for the poor. On Rally Day, St. Mark's members wrote letters, signed petitions, did online advocacy, and learned about telephone advocacy. St. Mark's is a "Bread for the World Covenant Congregation".

We continue our support of Pr. Arden Strasser and his family in Zambia. We give and receive much from our relationships with people all over the world!

We 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 their fourth year of educating secondary age students, including many girls. We pray for them. We supported the work of Rwandan Lutherans with People Improving Communities through Organizing in Rwanda (PICO-Rwanda) 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. Lutheran Pastor John Rutsindintwarane and PICO Rwanda are now working with communities supporting themselves by making and selling tile for roofs, and former prostitutes who are now earning a living and supporting their families with small safe businesses via micro-loans. What a blessing!

Our 2013 Lenten Boxes offering was designated for the ELCA Malaria Campaign. This money was added to gifts from other churches in the Sierra Pacific Synod to match an anonymous \$25,000 gift, for a total of over \$50,000 to fight malaria. 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! Many lives in Africa will be saved!

On Rally Day in September, St. Mark's knitters took lap robes from knitted squares and knitted slippers to the residents of Central Gardens Nursing Home in San Francisco. We also took knitted scarves and hats for the clients served by the San Francisco Night Ministry. We continue to knit scarves. Our new special project is knitting prayer shawls and baby shawls for people who need our prayers. All knitters are welcome to participate!

Several 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.

Our 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.

We went a "2nd Mile" in 2013, adding our support to several of the Sierra Pacific Synod's ministry partners, as well as St. Mark's' San Francisco ministry partners. Individual members of St. Mark's supported with gifts to the following:

St. Mark's El Salvador Travel Reserve	\$350
ELCA Malaria Campaign	\$4,854
San Francisco Night Ministry	\$970
ELCA Disaster Response – Flood Relief	\$800
Lutheran Social Services	\$350
St. Mark's' Homeless Shelter	\$1,100

ship in each of our members and to encourage all of us to incorporate stewardship into our lives and recognize it as an essential part of everyday Christian life.

This year's fall stewardship campaign began on October 20th and ended on Celebration Sunday, November 24th. We began the fall season of stewardship by introducing our campaign theme, Forward in Faith...Celebrating Community. The community of St. Mark's is actually a wonderful tapestry of many different communities, all of which are woven together to form a community of faith. During the six week fall pledge campaign, our committee highlighted several important communities that make up our community of faith, including the San Francisco Interfaith Council, the San Francisco Night Ministry, Lutheran Social Services, our sister church Cordero de Dios and of course our own parish community of St. Mark's. Each Sunday throughout the pledge drive a representative of one of these communities spoke to the congregation, providing us with further insight and understanding of their importance. Near the end of the pledge drive, the Stewardship Committee gave members of the congregation a small gift of gratitude in the form of a Salvadoran folk cross, made by members of Cordero de Dios.

A recap of pledging results as of 01/23/2014 indicates that a total of \$404,092 has been pledged by members and friends of the congregation. This represents an increase of \$36,765 over last year's pledge total of \$367,327. The number of pledgers increased to 59% of member households this year compared to 53% last year. The increase in the percentage of pledges received is partially explained by the removal of non-participating members from the congregation roster, but the uptick is nonetheless encouraging. There are a small number of late pledgers in our congregation who have not yet turned in pledge cards and as these pledges are collected, the final pledge total will likely increase moderately.

The 2013 Stewardship Committee consists of Greg Jahnke, Omer Voss, Mary Birkel, Roger Ostrem, Jane Borg and Wendy Figliuolo. The Stewardship Committee would like to express our gratitude to all of the members and friends of St. Mark's who made a financial pledge of support to the ministry and missions of this community of faith. Thank you to all of the good stewards at St. Mark's. We encourage you to continue to celebrate community.



**Stewardship**  
**ROGER OSTREM**

The practical objective of the Stewardship Committee at St. Mark's is to raise the necessary financial resources to fund the missions and ministries of our congregation through the next fiscal year. These funds are generously donated through member pledges and are designated for

use through the general fund. The philosophical objective of the Stewardship Committee is to foster a sense of personal steward-



## **Worship** RICHARD BOYLE

"Let nothing be preferred to the work of God".

So wrote St. Benedict in his rule. Though we are not Benedictines, at St. Mark's it is clear that we take the worship of God very seri-

ously. Indeed all the good works we do in the church and in the world for the sake of Christ have their roots in our worship.

On the inside back cover of our weekly announcements leaflet you will see a list of names and particular ministries within our worship experience. This gives a pretty clear picture of the importance of our worship at St. Mark's, and that the vigor of our ritual life calls on many talents and abilities. It takes a lot of prayerful thought, planning, follow through, and people to keep the rich expression of our worship the treasure that it is, to be faithful to our Lutheran catholic way, to direct our focus toward God the giver of this amazing gift so utterly central to our common life as followers of Christ. It's our call to worship which is the gift.

We can all agree that God has lavished us with a multitude of gifts and talents both individually and as a community of faith. What are your gifts? Perhaps there's one (or more) you'd be willing to share by way of enhancing our worship life. Speak up. Let us know if you feel called to serve as part of St. Mark's worship team. Some "hidden" talent or ability might seem insignificant. Not so. No gift God has given us is insignificant when offered for the worship of our extravagantly generous and loving God.

Speak with Pr. Ekdale or with Pr. Davis or with Richard Boyle if you feel called to service as part of St. Mark's worship team. Music makers should speak with Tim Zerlang.

# STRATEGIC GOALS UPDATE

## **Strategic Goal #1: Broaden Opportunities for Adult Education**

LIV BECK

There is strong congregational interest and support for Adult Education opportunities.

While there continue to be several opportunities for Adult Education at St Mark's, including occasional forums on Sundays between services, speakers on Wednesday nights, various Bible and book studies, there is not currently an individual or committee in charge of overseeing, or scheduling and organizing these efforts. There is still room and desire for more Adult Education opportunities.

Eric Huseth, former parish intern, helped to schedule some of the Wednesday night speakers. He also facilitated a conversation about the challenges and gifts for adult education at St Mark's. Out of this conversation, a committee was formed to continue the discussion come up with options for new models of Adult Education at St. Mark's. This group will submit recommendations to the Church Council by May of 2014 with the hope of helping our congregation live out our mission in a stronger way through Adult Education.

## **Strategic Goal #2: Create a Lay Ministry Program**

LISA GRAY & JEREMY MCCLAIN

St. Mark's was considering implementing a formal, structured program offered by Stephen Ministry to address this need. This would require a program coordinator to train ministers, oversee implementation and report back to Stephen Ministry. We put these plans on hold while searching for a new Associate Pastor.

In the interim, Martin Luther Towers has hired a part-time social worker addressing the needs of its residents. This has reduced the number of ministry requests and their urgency to the point we would like fresh discernment on the appropriateness of using a program with many financial and infrastructure impacts.

This Lent we will expand our lay ministry to St. Mark's members offering training for a Eucharistic ministry, taking communion to our members who are shut in or hospitalized or otherwise unable to attend services on Sundays. Those who have expressed interest in participating in Stephen Ministry are encouraged to take this training.

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

SUZANNE SMITH

Council has worked to support the HR Committee and the Mutual Ministry Committee to provide assistance on such matters as work-life balance and the celebration of significant events in the lives of our pastors and staff. Examples of these are:

- Yearly evaluations and recommendations for salary increases and work-life balance according to Sierra Pacific Synod guidelines – Pr. Ekdale's sabbatical in 2013
- Recognition of both birthday and service milestones – Celebration of Pr. Ekdale's 25th anniversary of Ordination
- Yearly public clergy appreciation celebration
- Regular pastor and staff evaluations and individual assignment to a committee member for support and advice
- Support of Pr. Davis involvement in all the First Pastor's activities in the Synod

## Strategic Goal #4: Reinforcing Healthy Communication

MARISA LOUIE & NATE MCDONALD

To support healthy communications at St. Mark's, those involved with this strategic plan goal have: (1) designed and launched the "Navigating" brochure racks in the narthex and in Heritage Hall, (2) distributed surveys at past annual meetings and disseminated results to Council, pastors, and other leaders, (3) proposed signage projects on the Square, and (4) studied how Time and Talent surveys are collected and disseminated. We are currently launching an app for mobile devices to improve communications with members and outreach for visitors. These projects illustrate the breadth of this strategic plan goal. In the coming year, as we work towards the conclusion of the current strategic plan, we hope to revisit the Time and Talent survey and to improve awareness about our numerous ministry teams and committees. We welcome your feedback and involvement around these projects.

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

KIMBERLY HAMILTON-LAM & LIV BECK

For this strategic goal St. Mark's.....

- continues relationship with the Interfaith Council
- continues to host Winter Shelter for Homeless men
- became a member of BAOC, the Bay Area Organizing Committee

- participates in the Interfaith Food Pantry
- continues accompaniment with sister parish Cordero de Dios in El Salvador, including delegations which travel to our sister parish participated in ELCA Malaria Campaign

## Strategic Goal #6: Create a Marketing Strategy

MARGE JENCKS & ANDREW SALLACH

Six demographics are selected in our marketing and outreach approach. This provides a framework to focus our resources. This is a partial list of some of the marketing and outreach ideas for these groups. Anyone with ideas or how would like to help is encouraged to contact Andrew Sallach or Robert Dickinson.

**Neighbors living near St. Marks:** We have been sending promotional material for special services to local mail addresses; invited the local community to Oktoberfest; a possible project is to install a labyrinth in an area accessible to the community.

**People with an interest in classical/liturgical music:** information about the St. Mark's community is available for those who attend concerts in the sanctuary, and we should continue to explore ways of sharing who we are with concert goers; we plan to promote upcoming organ concerts.

**Families with children:** St. Marks has held a week long summer camp for the past two summers, we continue to working on ways to encourage children beyond the Lutheran community to attend summer camp; a potential project is to host a Girl Scout or Boy Scout Troup at St. Mark's facilities.

**Gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender community:** publicity and weekly bulletins include welcoming language such as "this is a Reconciling Congregation", or "all are welcome"; we staffed a booth at the Castro Street Fair with Reconciling Works; could put ads for special services in newspapers serving the LGBT community.

**Seniors:** hold joint MLT/St. Mark's events; a project idea is to provide transportation from local senior communities and for members who would like help with transportation.

**Groups using St. Mark's and Urban Life Center facilities:** those who were and are planning to marry in the church have been invited to Oktoberfest; inspirational and spiritual messages have been posted in the ULC common areas, and could be restarted.



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**Jenny Hart**  
Sunday School Coordinator

**Brach Jennings**  
Teaching Parish Student

**Suzanne Smith**  
Church Council President

## STATISTICAL SUMMARY

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Baptisms	14	13	8	4	9	9
Confirmations	0	4	2	4	0	2
Weddings	18	15	11	24	13	8
Deaths	6	3	1	0	2	3
New Members Received	22	14	26	14	21	16
Baptized Members	537	532	403*	407	425	438
Confirmed Members	444	435	317*	322	332	341
Average Worship Attendance	194	187	178	202**	190**	196

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

\*\* Includes Midweek Worship attendance figures

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