



2014 Annual Report

ST. MARK'S LUTHERAN CHURCH



Lead Pastor

Pastor Elizabeth Ekdale



Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

I love to read and a colleague has recommended a relatively new book by Malcom Gladwell, *David and Goliath – Underdogs, Misfits, and the Art of Battling Giants*.

He writes, “What I like about this book is the inspiration and guidance that it gives to people who have been “called” by God to undertake a task that at times appears to be *daunting and overwhelming*. And yet, each time God calls someone to do a new and amazing thing, God gives the resources, the raw materials and the energy to do God’s work.”

If you don’t have time to read the book, I encourage you to view the 15 minute TED Talk by Gladwell where he creatively retells the David and Goliath story. You will be both surprised and inspired by Gladwell’s insights into this beloved Bible story that many of us have not revisited since our Sunday School days.

My colleague ends his book review with this grateful note: “Thank you for being like David in hearing and answering the call to step forward and to resolutely and courageously go forward following God’s plan and protection.”

I want to extend a similar thank you to those of you, who like David, hear and answer the call and step forward at St. Mark’s. We are blessed with faithful volunteers who serve in ways too many to number. Thank you for serving and giving and volunteering though all of our varied ministries at St. Mark’s.

I want to invite and gently challenge those of you who have not yet discovered your niche at St. Mark’s, to do so in the upcoming year. Faith communities like St. Mark’s will thrive and grow only through the active efforts of ALL of our members and friends. Feel free to speak with Pr. Bekah or myself or anyone on the council about how your gifts can be used in our various ministries at St. Mark’s.

For there is deep meaning and joy in teaching a child about the love of God, bagging groceries at the food pantry, singing in the choir, bringing Holy Communion to the homebound or mentor-

ing a new member. Your faith will grow and your love of God and neighbor will expand. This is most certainly true, to paraphrase Martin Luther!

The prayer for the Baptism of our Lord graciously reminds us:

Holy god, creator of light and giver of goodness, your voice moves over the waters. Immerse us in your grace, and transform us by your Spirit, that we may follow after your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God now and forever. Amen.

Immerse us in your grace... so that we may follow.

We are a community centered around the grace and mercy of God through Jesus Christ. We need to be fed and nourished in order to serve and volunteer whether at St. Mark’s or in the wider community. I invite you to worship frequently – at least once a week! If you are unable to worship on Sunday at 9:00 and 11:00 am, come and experience the Wednesday evening service at 6:45pm. A simple community dinner is served at 6:00 and Holy Communion is served at 6:45. If you are feeling overwhelmed by all of life’s challenges, participating in worship can center and refocus you on the sacred essentials – grace, acceptance, peace, forgiveness.

Our Annual Report describes all of the *immersing and following* we have done in 2014. It has been a busy year of active ministries, staff transitions, welcoming new members, saying goodbye to others, baptizing, celebrating and growing together. The prayer for Baptism is helpful in reminding us what comes first.

We immerse ourselves in God’s grace – through worship, prayer, bible study, play, devotion, sacred discernment, silent retreats, reflections on the cross . . . I could go on and on. This is where we start. We begin with grace.

Thank you for participating in our life at St. Mark’s. I have heard from more than a few of you that it was the church building which first attracted you to St. Mark’s and it was the people – the community – which made you stay. Thank you for being the people of God at St. Mark’s Lutheran Church.

With gratitude,
Pastor Elizabeth Ekdale

Associate Pastor

Pastor Bekah Davis



Greetings Members and Friends of St. Mark's,

2014 marked my second year with you in ministry. Some of the highlights of this year include:

- Participating in a church council retreat at St. Columba's in Inverness
- Attending a Stephen's Ministry overview workshop
- Organizing a spring San Francisco Conference Assembly Gathering
- Leading confirmation youth in the Winterfaith Shelter Walk around Lake Merritt
- Completing rounds 3 and 4 (6 in total) of my First Call Theological Education
- Serving as co-chaplain for the Sierra Pacific Synod Assembly
- Visiting our sister synod in Rwanda
- Attending confirmation camp and middle school weekend camp at Mt. Cross
- Assisting with St. Mark's elementary school day camp
- Inaugurating our St. Mark's tech "genius bar" between high school youth and adults
- Attending Western States Youth Gathering with high school youth
- Organizing an overnight lock in at St. Mark's for middle and high school youth
- Collaborating for the World AIDS day service at St. Mark's
- Playing the harp for the December WELCA gathering and MLT Christmas Banquet
- Participating in the Lessons and Carols joint Lutheran and Catholic service with Pr. Elizabeth and Msg. Tallesfore

I am grateful for our ministry together. Thanks to each of you on your participation in the life of our congregation and for your presence today at the annual meeting.

Director of Music

Tim Zerlang



In 2014 I completed my fifth year as Director of Music here at St. Mark's. It continues to be an honor and a pleasure to serve alongside Pastor Ekdale and Pastor Davis among you, and I thank them both for the collegiality and support. 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. I am thankful too, for the wise stewardship of St. Mark's facilities undertaken by the St. Mark's community, and for the work that continues to be done in order to make St. Mark's an attractive venue for community events.

As I look back on 2014, many events come to mind, but one in particular stands out — the Hymn Festival with David Cherwien that we hosted in September. Not only was the worship led by David from the Taylor and Boody organ beautiful and inspiring, but the entire community came together in a wonderful way to support a very worthy cause (the Salvadoran Lutheran Church Pastors Endowment Fund) at the auction that followed. Many thanks to Matt and Allana Helland who organized the event and to all the many volunteers that made it happen.

This past summer I attended the Western Regional Conference of the Association of Lutheran Church Musicians in Portland and will attend the National Conference of ALCM together with the ELCA Worship Jubilee in Atlanta this coming summer. I recently began serving a three term as a Member-at Large on the board of SFAGO (San Francisco American Guild of Organists). I also continue my teaching appointment in the Music Department at Stanford University and continue to serve as Stanford University Carillonneur.

Summary for 2014

- 104 Sunday Services
- 50 Wednesday Evening services
- Hymn Festival with David Cherwien
- Organ recital and workshop by Charles Rus, co-sponsored with SFAGO
- 10 Additional services (Christmas Eve, Christmas, Triduum, etc.)
- Advent Vespers with St. Mary's Cathedral Choir
- World Aids Day service

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(Continued from page 3)

- Weddings
- Memorials
- 40 Choir rehearsals
- 600+ Hymns played
- 140+ Choir anthems and psalms prepped and offered in worship
- Johann Pachelbel's cantata Christ lag in Todesbanden on Easter with orchestra
- Johann Schelle's Vom Himmel kam der Engel Schar on Christmas Eve with orchestra
- ~ 130 organ voluntaries (preludes, postludes, etc,)

Special Thanks to:

- Susan and Jeff Sall, for their years of dedicated service to the Sunday School Chapel
- Ralph and Charlene Loen, for their on-going service to the Sunday School Chapel
- Elizabeth Lowry, for her work with the Sunday School children
- Lin Cerles, for her continuing musical support at the 9 am service
- Stacy Cullison, for her willingness to fill in for me at the piano when I am away
- Gary Schilling, for his willingness to fill in for me at the organ when I am away, and for accompanying the choir
- Kata Rabl, for her willingness to fill in for me at the organ when I am away
- Instrumentalists in the St. Mark's Community who donate their time and talent
- the dedicated volunteer singers that make up our choir, for their hard work throughout the year

Dr. Timothy Zerlang
Director of Music

CHURCH COUNCIL

President

Jeremy McClain



Welcome to the 2015 Annual Meeting for St. Mark's Lutheran Church. It is my honor to serve St. Mark's as the President of its Congregational Council. During this past year I have focused most on observing, listening and learning how to be a good steward of the many resources that bless our community.

Of all the resources at our disposal, our people are at the top of the list. I am continually amazed and humbled by the

dedication and devotion the people of St. Mark's – our members, volunteers, staff and clergy – give to our mission and ministries.

In particular, I give heartfelt thanks for two members of the Council whose terms end with this Annual Meeting: Liv Beck and Cora Rose. Liv has served on the Council for six years, taking the lead in many service and educational opportunities and providing invaluable behind-the-scenes support. During her term on the Council, Cora has never hesitated to offer her assistance and leadership, particularly with adult education and social media matters.

St. Mark's would be sadly diminished without our volunteers. I encourage everyone to turn in an updated Time and Talent Survey. It is included in the handouts today, and available online at <http://tinyurl.com/n96kxhf>. This information is crucial for us to engage more volunteers, something that is necessary to sustain our human resources.

Speaking of human resources: 2015 presents St. Mark's with a great opportunity to reconfigure our office staff. Jun Ranches and Ann Dayton no longer work for St. Mark's. Cheryl Garcia has given notice although she will continue to do our books and help train her replacement. We solicited ministry leaders and other volunteers for their input on how we may make the most of this opportunity, and to take a deliberative approach to staff St. Mark's for growth.

Financial Report

Shelly Taylor



2014 Operating Results for St. Mark's Lutheran Church (SMLC) and the Urban Life Center (ULC)

Summary:

For 2014, we were able to fund staffing needs and ministry programs while achieving a combined operating surplus of approximately \$32K. Both SMLC and the ULC finished the year with positive net incomes of \$17K and \$14K, respectively. A deficit result of \$2K had been expected for SMLC for 2014. Total consolidated income (revenues) of \$753K was about 1% over the consolidated budget. Consolidated expenses ran about 3% below budget, primarily due to underspending in SMLC Program Expenses.

The Council is working on deepening our relationships with each other and with members of the congregation. In 2014 we initiated a plan for relational meetings, engaging members in one-on-one discussions to gain a deeper sense of what our members want from St. Mark's. This program will continue in 2015.

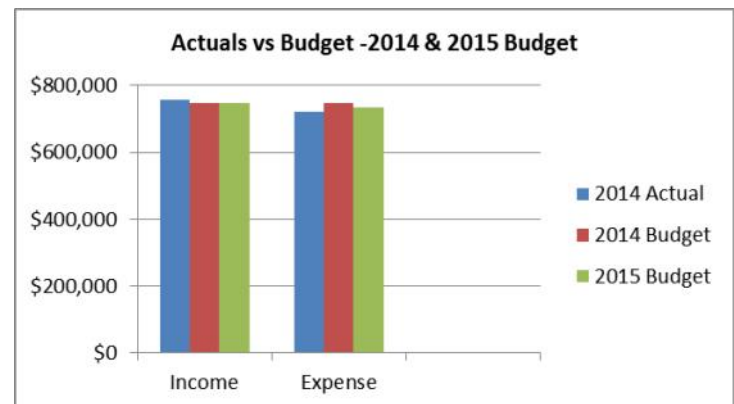
Another resource I know members appreciate but sometimes take for granted: our buildings. Take a look at our online calendar sometime and I promise you will be impressed by the activity that takes place in St. Mark's Square throughout the week. St. Mark's made a commitment to our neighborhood when Martin Luther Tower was built. We continue our commitment by providing reasonably-priced space for offices, meetings and rehearsals. We continue to explore ways to use St. Mark's Square to provide much-needed affordable housing and other community services.

2015 will be a year for planning two large projects for St. Mark's church building. Thanks to a generous gift from an anonymous member and other member contributions to the elevator fund, we are in a position to engage an architectural firm now, and a general contractor later in 2015, to evaluate elevator options and begin the preconstruction work.

When the physical work to install the elevator is under way, we plan to reinforce the floors in the Sanctuary and Chancel. After being sanded twice, the connections between the boards' tongue and groove are dangerously thin. It makes sense to take advantage of the anticipated capital campaign and the period of construction to address this issue.

There is one more building maintenance project which is dear to me, but which is too expensive to include in the upcoming capital campaign. It's past time to repair the stained glass windows in the Sanctuary. This work should be done every 100 years, so we're 20 years behind schedule. The estimate for performing the work is over a quarter of a million dollars. There is a stained glass fund in St. Mark's books. Please consider giving to the fund either through plate offerings or as part of your estate planning.

2015 is going to be an exciting year filled with opportunities and challenges. I look forward to meeting them with your help.



2014 Income Highlights:

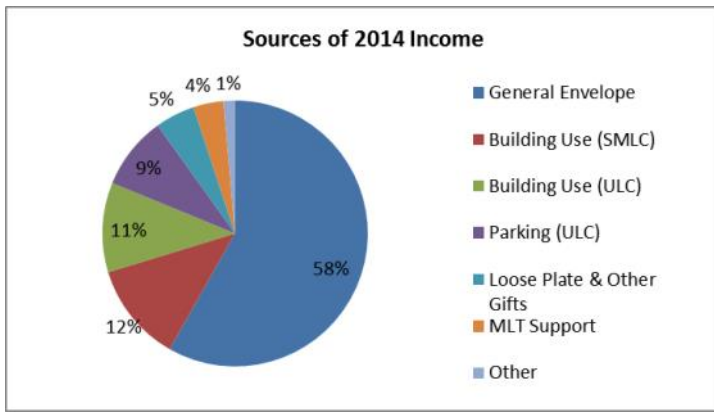
- The overall positive variance in SMLC income was due primarily to General Envelope Offerings and Building Use Income, both of which exceeded expectations.
- The budget for General Envelope Income, our main revenue source, is based on pledges received.
- Building Use, which includes SMLC and ULC facility rentals and parking, represented about 32% of 2014 revenues.
- SMLC income accounts that fell short of their budgets included Friends & Visitors and Loose Plate Offerings, and the Investment Gain/Loss (the market valuation adjustment on investment accounts), which is difficult to project.

2014 Expense Highlights:

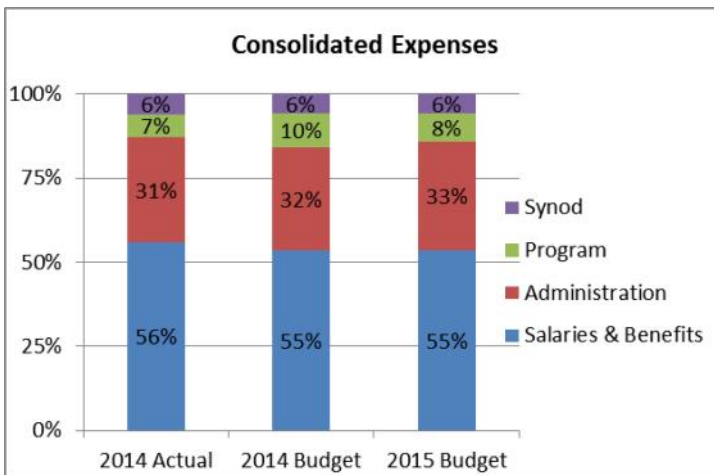
At a summary level, expenses were in line with budget, and were approximately 3% below budget for the year in total.

- SMLC expenses were under 5% while ULC expenses were about 2% over budget.

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- Salaries & Benefits and Administrative Expenses, which comprise about 88% of total expense, ran modestly over budget. These overages were offset by underspending in SMLC Program Expenses, 32% below budget, largely due to deferral of spending by several of the ministry committees.
- Some of the staff position costs are allocated between SMLC and ULC, in proportion to activities performed for each entity. Salaries expense overall was slightly over budget due to an SMLC intern, which was able to be funded during 2014. Within Salaries & Benefits overall, that overage was offset somewhat by below budget expense for the Admin Assistant role, due to fewer hours worked than had been budgeted for 2014.



- Administration expenses include costs relating to the church property and general operations such as repairs and maintenance, utilities, insurance, telephone, office equipment rentals and supplies. Also within this category are staff fees related to building use, which were above budget, in parallel with higher building use income. SMLC maintenance, insurance and telephone expenses were over their budgeted amounts.

- Program Expenses represent mostly the costs of the various parish life committees including costs related to worship, music and evangelism. As part of the budgeting process, the committees submit detailed budget proposals for the following year. Those requests are factored into the overall budget plan. For 2014, there was a \$5,500 budget for Strategic Planning which was largely unused, as that initiative has been completed.
- Synod Mission expenses were in line with budget.
- We also had a contingency budget expense of \$10,000 which was not used and is being reduced in the 2015 budget.

2015 Budget

The council and I are pleased to present the 2015 budget, which shows that the church has enough income to support all the various programs and ministries that are important to the congregation. The proposed 2015 budget is included in the materials for the annual meeting and is being presented for approval by the congregation. As in prior years, we have used prior year actuals as a baseline and included increases or decreases as appropriate.

- Pledges are the primary driver of income, and to date, 2015 are running slightly below 2014.
- On the expense side, we have left the staffing expenses and allocations between SMLC and ULC as in 2014 as are still working on the new staffing structure. Salaries include a COLA adjustment; the pastors' salaries are set by the Synod.
- We have also restored Program spending to a level closer to the 2014 budget in anticipation that the deferred expenditures will be made during 2015.
- Because this is an operating budget, it does not include larger projects (i.e. non-operational) expenses, such as a plan for significant kitchen upgrades by the Property Team. We would propose that this type of expense be funded out of one of our reserve funds.

Overall, 2014 was a good year financially for SMLC, in large part owing to the generous support provided by all of you. I also want to acknowledge the fine work done by the staff, especially Jun Ranches and Cheryl Garcia, our bookkeeper, and members Marisa Louie and Jeremy McLain who were instrumental in helping with the budget development. I am also grateful for the support and guidance of the Church Council, especially the Executive Committee.

MARTIN LUTHER TOWER

President

Jon Moeller



Martin Luther Tower (MLT) has been an independent, affordable community for seniors for nearly 50 years. MLT includes 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 services coordinator;

chaplancy services by the St. Mark's clergy; 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 in ULC (all are welcome!). We also have the Dr. Walter E. Bock Tenant Emergency Assistance Fund to provide rental help when residents experience temporary financial hardship.

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.

2014 Highlights

- 100% occupancy rate = overall happy residents
- Tenant Relations Committee welcomed William Foster as a well-received Residents Services Coordinator
- Pleased to welcome Phil Hunter as Head of Maintenance
- Refurbished the main floor, lobby, Brockie lounge, guest suite, fence and parking lot
- Installed free Wi-Fi in Brockie Lounge and first floor!
- Property Committee reviewing heating audit and ways to improve heat retention
- Continued water and energy efficiency, including energy efficient lighting
- Another successful joint Oktoberfest with St. Mark's, and Christmas Party for MLT's residents

- Beat budget profit plan by 50%+; reviewing MLT's finances and Investment Policy
- Continuing diligence to develop St. Mark's Square and affordable housing
- Improved security of MLT's and the Square's lighting and cameras
- Passed compliance audits with flying colors

The Board notes John Stewart Company's (JSCo) excellent team managing MLT, including Steve McElroy, VP, Jeff Kohler, VP; JM Lapeyrade, Property Manager; Lydia Lau, Assistant Property Manager, Phil Hunter, Maintenance Supervisor; Tan Trinh, Maintenance Technician; Sonia Jimenez, Receptionist, and William Foster and Sylvia Karl of 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; and Jun Ranches for his outstanding management of the Urban Life Center and overall support of MLT. We would also like to thank Jeremy McClain and Andrew Sallach for their work as Church Council liaison to MLT and on the Development Task Force; Amy Brendel for participating on the rental assistance committee; MLT resident Dean Atkinson for cooking and entertaining at MLT and St. Mark's events (thanks Dean, and we'll miss that great food!); as well as the MLT Residents Association, especially its 2014 officers: Joe Klecha, President; Randy Hicks, Vice President; Genie Kinney, Secretary; and Kathi Sparks, Treasurer.

The accomplishments above took significant time and thoughtfulness, and we are all grateful to the 2014 MLT Board members, particularly for their committee and task force contributions: Omer Voss, Vice President; Scott Taylor, Treasurer; Jun Ranches/Barbara Bock (an MLT resident), Secretary; Pastor Elizabeth Ekdale; Adrienne Brown, Jo Chadwick (an MLT resident); Lin Cerles; Barbara Engmann; and Jonathan Ocker.

If you would be interested in furthering MLT's mission to seniors, please contact either me or Pastor Ekdale, chair of our nominating committee, before February 15, 2015 for a conversation!

MLT contact information: Office 415-885-1084 (TDD: 800-7352929), 1001 Franklin Street, and website www.mlt-sf.org.

Jon Moeller, President

Administration and Operations

Jun Ranches



A Place for Ministry

Throughout 2014, 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 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 2014, St. Mark's and the ULC:

- Hosted more than 950 events
- Accommodated 111 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 10 wedding ceremonies
- Provided office space for a Social Service Coordinator for MLT and meeting space for recurring MLT activities like the Produce Market, Senior Luncheon, exercise classes, community interest meetings, podiatrist appointments and more.

Thank You and Farewell

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

Special thanks to Pastor Elizabeth... the best boss ever.

As I transition to a new job in Santa Clara, I carry with me fond memories of my ten years serving as Director of Church Administration and Operations at St. Mark's.

Every Lent, Easter, Advent and Christmas...
Every wedding ceremony, memorial service and baptism...
Every staffing change, copier jam and roof leak...
Every celebration, sorrow, and challenge...
Every minute of my time at St. Mark's has been an opportunity to learn, grow, minister and be a part of something truly special.

Thank you for having me. It has been a privilege. I will miss you all.

MINISTRY TEAMS & COMMITTEES

Education – Sunday School

Jenny Hart



Attendance: Our average attendance for January-June was **13 students**. Then in June we graduated five, 5th and 6th grade students. As of September, our average Sunday attendance is **14 students**. So, even though we graduated 5, our numbers are growing, as we've managed to keep our average attendance.

Our attendance breakdown is even across all the grade levels, Preschool has 11 students on the roster, K-2nd has 11 students and, 3rd-5th has 12 students on the roster. However, our weekly attendance numbers vary drastically by grade level. One week we may have nine preschool students and two K-3rd grade students, then three 3rd-5th grade students. The next week these numbers could be reversed. Regular attendance is very hard to anticipate.

Volunteers: The big change this year was in Children's Chapel. Susan and Jeff Sall have dedicated the last 6 plus years to leading our children in song every Sunday. With both Mila and Tayte no longer in Sunday School, they retired from leading Chapel. **Elizabeth Lowry** graciously stepped forward to take over the position. She is a gifted singer and musician, she fills the Chapel with joy and enthusiasm. **Ralph Loen** has continued to volunteer during Children's Chapel with his ukelele. It's been wonderful to have him provide the continuity during the transition in Chapel. Together Elizabeth and Ralph make Children's Chapel a meaningful and fun time.

We have another new volunteer teacher in Sunday School, Kate Knickerbocker. Kate is Sarah and Charlie's mom. We are so fortunate she stepped forward to volunteer. She co-teaches the K-3rd grade class with Adrienne. Two busy moms of young children, finding time teach Sunday School!!

Here are the current Sunday School teachers:

- Charlene Loen: Preschool
- Adrienne Brown & Kate Knickerbocker: Kinder - 3rd grade
- Gail Culp: 4th-6th grade

We are very lucky to have 3 distinct grade levels which keep all of our students engaged in developing their faith.

Curriculum: Preschool through 3rd grade classes still use Augsburg Fortress "Spark" curriculum. This is a familiar program that we have used for a many years now. The older students are using another curriculum developed by Augsburg Fortress, called "Connect".

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

- Rally Day Community Service
- Stockings for the Homeless
- Valentines for Central Gardens 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, hartx4@hotmail.com

Submitted by Jenny Hart, Sunday School Coordinator

Education – Confirmation

Pastor Bekah Davis

This year at St. Mark's, we have a large confirmation class of seven students. Together with Seminarian Maggie Falenschek, we gather on Sunday mornings to discuss our Lutheran heritage, Luther's writings, Bible stories, and current events. We have visited two congregations – St. Gregory of Nyssa and Resurrection Lutheran in Oakland – as a compare and contrast of worship styles. In the fall, we attended a middle school retreat at Mt. Cross. We also had an overnight lock-in at St. Mark's that included a tour of the sanctuary overcroft (very exciting!) and the boiler room (a little creepy) and a meaningful walk with Pr. Lyle and the Night Ministry. We have continued getting to know each other and working with First United Lutheran/St. Cyprian's on programming, a pizza party, and other activities together.

Education – Youth

Pastor Bekah Davis

The high school youth had a grand adventure this summer attending the Western States Youth Gathering at California Lutheran University in Thousand Oaks. We partnered with the East Bay Lutheran Youth Group and Advent Lutheran in Morgan Hill to attend WSYG as a unit. We have continued our fall activities planning for the Detroit National Gathering in July 2015. On Sunday mornings, you can find the high school youth participating in the St. Mark's "Genius Bar" where high school youth help as tech gurus for people who'd like to learn more about their tablets, iPhones, and other electronic devices.

Education – Women's Gatherings

Suzanne Smith



The women's *Gatherings* study group continues to meet on the first Tuesday from 6:30pm to 8:30pm. All women are invited to come for study, dessert and fellowship. This year we read and discussed a variety of books including *Women, Spirituality & Transformative Leadership: Where Grace Meets Power* by Kathe Schaaf et al and J Denny Weaver's *Nonviolent Atonement*. Bonnelle Strickline's *Dreaming about the Divine* led us to sharing

and looking at our dreams.

We read mysteries that explored the cultures of Canadian villages in *Still Life* by Louise Penny and the Navaho/Zuni in *Dance Hall of the Dead* by Tony Hillerman. We read about politics from the view of President Jimmy Carter in *A Call to Action* and Senator Elizabeth Warren in *A Fighting Chance*. *Proof of Heaven* by Eben Alexander provoked much discussion.

All women are invited to join with us. For February we will read *City of God* by Sara Miles and in March, *Zealot: The Life & Times of Jesus of Nazareth* by Reza Aslan. If you have any questions, please contact Suzanne Smith.

Education - Adult Forum

Liv Beck



As the Adult Education ministry team has been in transition, a committee was formed to consider various opportunities and challenges for adult education at St Mark's. In June of 2014, this committee submitted a report to church council. We thank the members of this committee: Cora Rose and Viknesh Silvalingam, with special thanks to Debby Halladay for her work in researching, writing, and presenting this report on behalf of the committee. The report

affirmed the wealth of knowledge and experience in our congregation and the challenges of a busy congregation. It offered council several considerations and recommendations with the first inviting the congregation to affirm the importance lifelong Christian learning. How do the members of St Mark's continue to learn and grow in our faith? Hopefully in worship, in service, in our lives, in reading the Word of God, and not just in an hour set aside for adult education. Yet, it is important to set aside time to learn together. We look for opportunities to learn from each other. Having time set aside Sunday morning reminds us and tells visitors that we value Christian education. After a year of occasional Adult Forums, in the fall of 2014, Adult Forum returned to the St Mark's regular Sunday morning schedule, providing an opportunity between worship services to learn and grow in our faith.

Thanks to all who led Adult forums in the fall, helping us examine issues of faith and ministry in local and global contexts. We learned more about local ministries with a conversation with PLTS Director of Seminary Relations, Brian Stein-Webber, and with a presentation by Pastor Lyle Beckman in celebration of the 50th anniversary of San Francisco Night Ministry. We welcomed Father Innocent Rugaragu, a Jesuit priest from Rwanda, to teach from his experiences in Rwanda and we welcomed home St Mark's travelers returning from Rwanda and El Salvador to bring us their experiences of accompaniment. We considered ministry with refugees with Pastor Davis. Kyle Schiefelbein helped us explore the particularity of a Lutheran understanding of worship and the sacraments. Pastoral Intern Rebecca Swee asked us to consider the question, "what is the Gospel?" Pastor Elizabeth led a book study on the Beatitudes, challenged us to Reformation Jeopardy, and helped us get ready to hear the Gospel of Mark in Advent. We look forward to more Adult Forums in the Spring. We encourage the development of even more opportunities for nourishing faith and the life of the baptized.

Education – WELCA

Geri Bailey



In 2014, 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.

In January, we continued our bible study with: In Good Company: the Stories of Biblical Women. This has been a very interesting theme and we have enjoyed learning about these biblical women whom

are lessor known.

In February, Nadine Robinson reported on the progress of the Sierra Pacific W-ELCA Board of Elections. The elections had taken place and Nadine announced that she had been elected Vice-President. She will also attend the church-wide Triennial Convention as a delegate. The convention is in Charlotte, North Carolina, at the end of July.

At the March meeting, Nadine announced that the Sierra Pacific W-ELCA Retreat will take place on October 11th in Concord and to be sure to save the date. The service project for this retreat will be making blankets. It was also announced that the Knitting Ministry would be having a gathering of knitters at St. Mark's on Saturday, May 10th.

Our Knitting Ministry continued. The Knitting Ministry, this year focused on scarfs and hats for the homeless, distributed by the San Francisco Night Ministers. The ministry continued to knit prayer shawls for members & friends of St. Mark's who were ill, suffered a loss or needed comfort.

During the April meeting, Pastor Elizabeth reported on her recent trip to Chicago for the ELCA Board Meeting during which she met several W-ELCA board members. Nadine reported that the October retreat would be held at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in Concord. The church's space and location should be welcoming to all those attending the retreat.

In June, Nadine reported on the Synod Assembly which she attended as a representative for W-ELCA. W-ELCA had an information table exhibiting activities & projects of groups in the Synod. Over 40 attendees signed up the W-ELCA newsletter.

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 2014 thru May 2015 bible study is: Transforming Life and Faith. At the September meeting Nadine Robinson and Marlo Tellschow, who also attended, reported on the Triennial Convention held in July in Charlotte, North Carolina. Marlo and Nadine were privileged to get to hear Bishop Eaton and they were favorably impressed. They attended excellent work shops and films on human trafficking as well as gang issues in Central America that have their roots in the United States. There was also a showing of an excellent film by Jennifer Newson on the Medias handling of women and girls that encourages eating disorders and other negative outcomes for women and girls.

The 12th Biennial Sierra Pacific W-ELCA Retreat was held October 11th Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in Concord with over 50 women attending. Over 50 blankets were put together along with 50 hygiene kits. Donations of 275 pairs of socks were also gathered. Pastor Lyle Beckman was guest speaker and Rebecca Swee lead the bible study.

Our annual Christmas luncheon and program was held in December. The theme was Christmas with Luther. Kyle Schiefelbein was the guest speaker. He discussed passages from Luther's Christmas sermons as well as other events and thoughts at the time the sermons were written. The luncheon and program was enjoyed by all attendees.

In 2014 we gave benevolence gifts to the following groups, with each receiving \$100.

- Kerry's Kids
- Salvadoran Lutheran Church Pastors Endowment Fund
- San Francisco SafeHouse for Women
- 1000 Days Project of the ELCA
- Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary through the W-ELCA Project to Support Women Students

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

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.

Submitted by:

WELCA Co-Presidents: Geri Bailey & Nadine Robinson

Endowment Committee

Margaret McLean and Debra Varian



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 InFaith Community Foundation (previously called the Lutheran Community Foundation, a non-profit organization) enabled the awarding of our first grants in support of St. Mark's and its mission and ministries. Gratitude to 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 InFaith Community Foundation, promoting gifts to the Endowment Fund, educating and informing the Congregation about the Fund, managing the grant solicitation and recommendation process, and reporting Fund financial information to the Congregation annually. Members of the 2014 Endowment Committee were Stacy Cullison, Greg Jahnke, Marisa Lou-

ie (Council Liaison), Margaret McLean (Chair), Robert Rathmell, Randy Schieber, Shelly Taylor, and Debra Varian (Secretary & InFaith Advisor). The Committee is blessed with an abundance of good spirit and expertise. Please thank the members for their faith-full service.

As was the case in 2013, much of 2014 was dedicated to continuing work on policies related to the Endowment Fund. In anticipation of the awarding of our first grants, the *Endowment Fund Distribution & Allocation Policy* was drafted and approved by Council. In addition, this and the *St. Mark's Gift Acceptance Policies and Guidelines* and the *Policy Regarding the Appropriation of Bequests (Testamentary Gifts) and Other Types of Deferred Gifts Received Following the Death of a Donor* underwent positive review by legal counsel.

The Endowment Committee received 2 applications for funding during our inaugural grant cycle—one from the El Salvador Committee of St. Mark's Social Ministry Committee and the other from the Bay Area Lutheran Volunteer Corps (LVC). We reviewed these applications and formulated a recommendation for funding, which was subsequently approved by Council. The El Salvador Committee was awarded \$1,500 in support of their

Gala to raise funds for salaries for Salvadoran Lutheran pastors. LVC received \$500 for volunteer training in conjunction with Seminary of the Street. A wonderful side-effect of our persistent announcements about the availability of grant funds has been an increased awareness within the congregation of the Endowment Fund and the ministry possibilities it offers, including laying a foundation for new relationships as it did this year with the LVC. We hope to be able to increase the available funds for grants during 2015 so start thinking about how the Endowment can bring more good news.

The Endowment Committee held a celebration of reaching the \$100,000 balance milestone and our first year of grant-making on All Saints Sunday. Hosted by Stacy Cullison and Greg Jahnke, "Calling All Angels" was a wonderful celebration of the angels who have gone before us and remembered St. Mark's Endowment Fund in their estate plans.

The Endowment Committee will be reporting 2014 financial information to the Congregation. At the time this report was written, the final information for 2014 was not available from the InFaith Community Foundation. When all the numbers are in, we look forward to sharing with you more details about recent gifts and 2014 Fund activity.

On the Endowment Committee's agenda for 2015 are: funding a second set of grant requests, considering the establishment of restricted funds within the Endowment Fund, and, once again, "calling all angels" on All Saint's Sunday to celebrate the ministries supported and to lift up "all the saints" who have given to St. Mark's Endowment Fund— propelling us, once again, forward in faith to build and strengthen relationships.

For additional information about the St. Mark's Endowment Fund and how you can participate, please contact the church office by phone at (415) 928-7770 or by email at endowment@stmarks-sf.org.

Respectfully submitted,

Margaret R. McLean, Chair
Debra Varian, Secretary

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 Matt Helland (chair), an attorney who represents employees in workplace disputes, Pr. Ekdale, Kurt Putnam, and Becky Burad. 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.

As 2014 rolls into 2015 there are big staffing changes on the horizon for St. Mark's. This December, we bid farewell to Jun Ranches, our Director of Church Administration and Operations. After ten years of faithful and tireless service to St. Mark's, Jun has moved on to the next stage in his professional career. We wish him all the best and thank him for all he has done for St. Mark's.

Also leaving our employment this year was Ann Dayton, Parish Administrator. Ann was a fixture in the St. Mark's office for 9 years, and her presence will be missed. We wish Ann the best in her future endeavors. Cheryl Garcia added the role of Events

Administrator to her bookkeeping duties in 2013, but in late 2014 returned to simply handling book keeping duties.

With all these staffing changes, St. Mark's has entered a period of discernment over the future composition of the staff. Pastors Ekdale and Davis have held many conversations with St. Mark's lay leaders and office volunteers to ensure that the our future staffing structure meets the needs of parishioners and St. Mark's ministries.

In the interim, we are blessed to have Patricia Morales serving in a temporary role as Office Manager. St. Mark's members Marisa Louie and Jeremy McClain have also assisted in the office on a part time, short term basis. We are thankful to have these wonderful employees on board to assist us in our staff transitions.

Other St. Marks' staff remains with us in very important roles. Dr. Tim Zerlang, St. Mark's Director of Music, has been with St. Mark's for over 5 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. Elvira Markov and Johanna Najera are the primary Nursery Attendants. The nursery committee is exploring adding additional back-up nursery staff.

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

Mutual Ministry Report

Susan Sall



The purpose of St. Mark's Mutual Ministry Committee is to support the partnership between the pastors and parishioners in living out our baptismal calling. We look for developing trends within the congregation, listen to the needs of members, and provide recommendations to the pastors and Church Council to help calibrate the mission of our congregation at large. This year's committee members are: Jo Chadwick, Jerrold Allen, Marge Okuley, Brian Richards,

Pastor Elizabeth, Pastor Bekah and Susan Sall, who serves as Committee Facilitator.

A highlight this year was Clergy Appreciation during the month of November when wall banners were created for each of our Clergy by members of St. Mark's. We shared our individual written good wishes, thank yous, stories, pictures, and gratitude to show our collective appreciation.

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 advocate for that staff member.

We strive 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 Committee

Brandee Marckmann



St. Mark's nursery committee works hand-in-hand with the nursery attendants and pastors to ensure that our nursery is a safe and welcoming ministry for children ages 6 and under. The committee is comprised of Aaron Greig, Joe Haller, Cristin Owens, and Brandee Marckmann (chair). We are thankful for the partnership we have our safe congregation training leaders Mary Ritter and Margaret McLean. We encourage parents of children who are served by nursery and as well

as all members of the congregation to seek us out with any questions you may have about the nursery.

In 2014, the nursery was open during Lenten and Holy Week services to make worship accessible to parents with young children.

This past spring, St. Mark's retained a nursery consultant, Mechele Pruitt. Mechele is the director of the San Francisco's Parents Place, which is a program of Jewish Children and Family Services. Mechele came and observed St. Mark's nursery and made recommendations regarding our nursery procedures and

activities. She also provided training to the nursery attendants on choking prevention and nutrition.

Nursery committee members conduct monthly toy audits to ensure that none of the nursery toys pose as choking hazards to small children.

With a goal of providing better communication to the parents who use the nursery, in late 2014 the nursery committee began sending out a monthly newsletter that will be issued on a quarterly basis in 2015. Included in the newsletter were earthquake and fire procedures developed by the nursery attendants and our nursery consultant.

The committee appealed to the congregation for funds that will allow us to purchase more books with Bible themes that will help nurture the nursery children's spirituality. We are deeply grateful for the gifts we received toward this effort.

In 2015 the nursery committee is looking forward to developing more specific protocol that reflects our commitment to love, care for, and ensure the safety and spiritual development of each child who is served by our nursery. Specifically, we look forward to working with other members of the congregation to work with us on developing congregation-wide earthquake and fire safety procedures.

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

Worship

Richard Boyle



In *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language* (15th ed. 2011) worship is defined as "the reverent love and devotion accorded a deity . . . religious forms by which this love is expressed." We worship in loving response to the living action of God's extravagant grace with gives life

and breath to every sentient being in creation. This life- and breath-giving grace can be seen as an innate call to community since this gift has been given equally to all. All are included.

At St. Mark's we are blessed with a rich and robust worship life built upon our Lutheran catholic traditions. The Holy Eucharist is central to our corporate worship experience as a community of faith in Jesus Christ in this place, in our city and in our world. We meet around the holy Table to offer our "sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving" (*Book of Common Prayer*, 1989) simply because "it is right to give our thanks and praise." We and all that we do in Christ's name is fed and nourished at this Table; so in turn our lives can become immersed in worship, a continuing sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving. While worship is more an affair of the heart than of activities, our human

Parents with Kidlettes

Lara Dickinson



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.

Some of the activities St. Mark's Parents with Kidlettes shared together in 2014 included:

- Monthly gatherings after the 9:00 am Sunday service. We meet the first Sunday of each month to share coffee 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 holiday planning, school choices, and new babies. We have also had presentations on Nursery safety, the St. Mark's Church Counsel, and supporting our sister parish activities in El Salvador.
- Semi-Annual Toy and Book Swap. We had Toy and Book Swaps in April and December for the past three years. 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 Fourth annual St. Mark's Camping Trip in August 2014 at Butano State Park in San Mateo Mountains. Eight families joined together to share a weekend of good food, nature walks, campfires, and even our own Sunday worship together. We already have our reservation for our camping trip at Bothe National Park in Napa in August 2015.
- 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.
- Parents' 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.

Property Ministry

Gary Schilling



The Property Ministry Team is perhaps the most Martha-ish (in the Mary and Martha analogy) of all St. Mark's minis-

tries. We are definitely doers, but as good Lutherans, we know that although our works won't give us a fast pass through the pearly gates, they certainly help to assist and support our congregation's many other programs and ministries. Our team of 6 to 12 volunteers gathers on Saturday mornings every 6 to 8 weeks to take on special projects inside and outside of the church building. Please join us for coffee and pastries, conversation and camaraderie, as we tackle projects in 2015! It's both fun and rewarding!

Our 2014 project included:

- Anchoring the shelving unit in the Nursery to the wall
- Staining and sealing the plywood panels used by performance groups to protect the Chancel floor
- Re-lamping and focusing the theatrical lighting instruments in the church to brighten the room for Holy Week and Easter
- Organizing storage areas
- Sprucing up the Sanctuary and Heritage Hall
- Weeding the planting beds in front of the church and tidying up the grounds at St. Mark's Square
- Painting the mirror frame in the Vestry

- Prepping and painting pipes in the storage area to hang altar frontals and other paraments
- Coordinating the ordering, installation, decorating and un-decorating of the Christmas trees
- Soliciting bids for replacing the kitchen flooring and improving the church kitchen
- Leading efforts on "God's Work – Our Hands" Sunday that included:
- Picking up trash in the neighborhood
- Maintaining and improving the community garden on the south side of the church

As a special addition to our inventory of tools and materials, Marge Jencks donated many of the tools of her late husband, John, to St. Mark's. John was a dedicated member who helped on many property items. Most visibly, he built the sign in front of the church building. Thank you, John and Marge, for your years of support and the collection of tools that will help us with future projects!

There are many St. Mark's members who have helped the Property Team this past year, but I especially want to recognize the efforts of our team members who have made our Saturday morning projects possible: Brandon Battaglia, Cal and Gail Culp (who painted the vestry mirror frame), Pastors Elizabeth Ekdale, Hans Hoch and Grace, Sharon Furiosi, Charles and Dianne Jacobs, Philip Krikau, Mary Carlton Lull, Marge Okuley, Elise 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 who was an invaluable Property Team partner for nearly a decade. Thank you, everyone!

Gary Schilling, Property Ministry Chair

Stewardship

Roger Ostrem



The Stewardship Committee at St. Mark's has attempted to realize several objectives during this past

year. The first objective is practical in nature with a goal of raising the necessary financial resources to support the missions and ministries of our congregation of faith throughout the next fiscal year. The Stewardship Committee holds a fall pledge drive, pledges of financial support are received from our members during the pledge drive and the accumulated pledges are designated for use through the church's general fund. The second objective of the Stewardship Committee is to promote a sense of personal stewardship amongst our members; to encourage the idea that stewardship should, and can, become a fundamental part of Christian life.

The Stewardship Committee at St. Mark's commenced its six week annual pledge drive on October 19th centered on a campaign theme of Forward in Faith...Strengthening Relationships. Our campaign theme led us to focus on several important relationships. First, the campaign highlighted the importance of maintaining and supporting one of our most important relationships, the existing relationship with our own clergy. The following week our emphasis shifted to a nearby faith community, the First Unitarian Uni-

versalist Church. We invited the Reverend John Buehrens, from this neighboring congregation, to speak to us. Reverend Buehrens responded in kind to our theme of strengthening relationships by inviting our congregation to join their congregation for an advent luncheon, which was attended by a significant number of St. Mark's members. Next, the campaign focus turned its attention to the on-going relationship that we have with residents of Martin Luther Tower. A retired Episcopal priest and MLT resident accepted our invitation to speak to the congregation and provided insight and confirmation of our on-going efforts to strengthen and maintain this important relationship. Lastly, we brought attention to the relationship that exists with our Sunday School kids, a relationship that is cherished and nourished by our members.

A review of pledges received as of 01/22/2015 indicates that \$397,860 has been pledged by 58% of member households. There are a small number of late pledgers in our congregation who have not yet turned in pledge cards; additionally, some members who utilize our electronic method of giving have not yet returned pledge cards, but are expected to do so. As these additional pledges are collected, this year's final pledge total will likely increase moderately. Last year's final pledge total amounted to \$408,376 with 63% of member households submitting a pledge.

The Stewardship Committee would like to thank all of the members and friends of St. Mark's for their personal gifts of stewardship. Thank you as well for your on-going involvement in strengthening relationships that exist within our community of faith, our neighborhood and beyond.

The 2014 Stewardship Committee consists of Mary Birkel, Jane Borg, Greg Jahnke, Roger Ostrem and Omer Voss.

Social Ministry

Mary Ritter



First, thanks to the congregation for the support of our many projects for the hungry, poor and needy in 2014.

Social Ministry will continue to minister to those in need here in San Francisco as well as throughout the country and around the world in 2015.

- We continue to provide 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 10:30am. 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. At the time of this writing, we are seeking a volunteer to be primary coordinator and communicator for this team. Let us know if you are interested in this position over the next 6 to 12 to 18 months.
- St. Mark's will again host the **Interfaith Homeless Shelter** in January 11–February 1, 2015 in cooperation with other churches in The City. 60 to 70 men will share our space for dinner, a warm safe place to sleep, and breakfast 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 are knitting scarves for the men. Our guests will have colorful scarves around their necks this winter!
- We continue our accompanying relationship with our sister parish, **Cordero de Dios in El Salvador**. In November 2014, sixteen St. Mark's members, including six youth and our seminary intern, 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! Think about making the trip with the delegation in the future, and keep Cordero de Dios in your prayers.
- We held a very successful fundraising **Gala for the Salvadoran Pastors Endowment** in September 2014. After a delightful HymnFest with nationally known Lutheran musician David Cherwien, we hosted a dinner and silent auction and raised \$21,000 for the endowment which will someday provide a salary for all the pastors in the Salvadoran Lutheran church. A good cause and a lot of fun!
- We continue to include prayers for **Middle East Peace in our St. Mark's Midweek Worship** on the third Wednesday of the month. Events associated with our partners in ministry of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land are prayerfully lifted up throughout the year.
- We continue to advocate with Bread for the World for the poor and hungry. On "God's work Our Hands Sunday" in September, 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 completed our sponsorship of ELCA Pastor and Missionary **Pr. Arden Strasser and his family in Zambia**. They have returned to the USA after many years of good service.
- We have now begun sponsorship of **Robin Strickler, founder and Program Director of the Rwamagana Lutheran Secondary School in Rwanda**. The school has completed five years of providing secondary education to many children, especially girls, who wouldn't have been

(Continued from page 17)

able to attend school otherwise. Pastor Bekah Davis and Mary Ritter visited Robin and the school in August 2014. We look forward to Robin's annual visits to St. Mark's to share news of the good work being done at the school.

- We continue to support the work of Rwandan Lutherans with **People Improving Communities through Organizing in Rwanda (PICO-Rwanda)**. Pastor John Rutsindintwarane and Jesuit Father Innocent Rugaragu work with the poorest of the poor in Rwanda, walking with them, providing them dignity and helping them establish livelihoods. The people have built a clinic in Mumeya, so that pregnant women with problematic labor and delivery and other very ill patients will no longer need to be carried on foot by gurney over ten miles through rivers to medical care in Tanzania. Hundreds of former prostitutes and illegal street vendors in Kigali now have legitimate jobs and their children can go to school. Former street children in Kirehe are learning to weld so they can work in the construction industry. Poor people in illegal thatch-roofed homes in Nyange have learned to make tiles for safer homes, and also to sell. Pastor Bekah Davis and Mary Ritter visited Rwandan Lutheran Pastor John and Jesuit Father Innocent and several PICO Rwanda projects in August 2014. Fr. Innocent visited St. Mark's in November 2014 to talk about the work of PICO Rwanda. St. Mark's will begin a Donor Circle in 2015 to support the work of PICO Rwanda. We give and receive much from our relationships with people all over the world!
- Our 2014 **Lenten Box offering was designated for Lutheran Social Services (LSS) of Northern California**. LSS does amazing work in San Francisco, mostly to keep formerly homeless people in housing. They also work to support "aging-out" foster children. Several St. Mark's members visited the new LSS site and office in the Tenderloin on "God's Work Our Hands Sunday" in September to learn about their work. Several other members of St. Mark's shared a party and gifts with families at the LSS site in Bernal Gateway in December 2014. Watch

for continuing ways to share and participate in our partnership with LSS.

- **St. Mark's knitters** have made scarves and lap robes and prayer shawls and baby blankets for Central Gardens, San Francisco Night Ministry, our Winter Homeless Shelter guests, and a variety of recipients in San Francisco and El Salvador. Our "Knitting Retreats" are a joy for experienced as well as novice knitters. All knitters are welcome to participate! If you are interested, contact Marge Okuley or Mary Ritter.
- 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. We are pleased to be joined by the St. Mark's Eucharistic Ministers.
- Our **community garden project** continues to grow quietly on the sunnier south side of the sanctuary. If you are interested in volunteering in the garden, talk to Mary Ritter or John Elford.
- We went a "2nd Mile" in 2014, 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:
 - +Lenten Box Offering – Lutheran Social Services
 - +Mt. Cross Lutheran Camp
 - +San Francisco Night Ministry
 - +San Francisco Food Bank (partner with our Interfaith Food Pantry)

Journeys in Faith

For the church to grow and continue as a community of faith in mission, it must be open, affirming and supportive of newcomers and members asking the questions of faith and our times. Journeys in Faith is a team-based ministry of accompaniment for those seeking Baptism or affirmation of Baptism. While most participants in Journey in Faith are also simultaneously discerning deeper incorporation into St. Mark's parish life, 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 to continually welcome new people into our congregation and deepen our connections as part of the Body of Christ.

During 2014, thirteen people participated in the Journeys in Faith process and affirmed their baptism either at the Easter Vigil or at The Reign of Christ service in November. 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 4, 2015.

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' team member, you help us in remarkable ways. We are also especially grateful to all those who have served as sponsors for Journeyers during this past year.

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

Strategic Plan Goals Update

Goal #1: Broaden Opportunities for Adult Education

(Cora Rose and Liv Beck)

Members of St Mark's continue to demonstrate interest and support for Adult Education opportunities. There is a tension between full schedules and desire to participate in lifelong faith learning. In the Spring of 2014, a committee formed to look at adult education at St Mark's submitted a report reviewing strengths and challenges of adult education at St Mark's and offering recommendations for future options. The report affirmed both the variety of existing opportunities for Adult Education and offered suggestions for broadening opportunities. While there continue to be several opportunities for Adult Education at St Mark's outside of worship, including adult forums on Sundays between services, occasional speakers on Wednesday nights, Bible studies, book studies, and Journeys in Faith, the potential remains for much more. There is space and opportunity for creative ideas and energy from congregational members.

Goal #2: Create Lay Ministry Program

(Lisa Gray, Ana Hurley, Clovis Curl, Bill Mooney, Jeremy McClain)

We explored joining Stephen Ministry. It was determined the additional cost and administrative duties necessary to make the program a success were more than St. Mark's can commit to. Looking to find other ways to expand lay ministry opportunities, we started a lay eucharistic ministry, which takes the Eucharist to members who cannot attend worship on Sundays. The lay eucharistic ministry also supports the ministry to Central Gardens.

Goal #3: Improve Support for Clergy and Staff

The Mutual Ministry Team's work supports clergy and staff; we thank them for their service and refer you to their report.

Goal #4: Reinforce Healthy Communication

(Kimberly Hamilton-Lam and Marisa Louie)

The Communications Survey at the January 2014 annual meeting provided a lot of great feedback for staff and Council to consider about how members receive news from the church and improvements we can make to methods of communication. Other opportunities and forums for feedback this year included the Adult Education task force's input meetings and the staffing discernment meetings in the fall.

Goal #5: Expand Local and Global Ministry with Mission Partners (Matt Helland and Mark Semonian)

Thanks to the dedicated work of our Social Ministry Committee, we are strengthening existing relationships with ministry partners and we are identifying ways in which we can support the ongoing work of new partners. In addition to continuing to participate in local activities such as the food pantry and the San Francisco Interfaith Council Winter Shelter, we visited and learned about programs run by Lutheran Social Services of Northern California during our annual God's Work Our Hands Sunday in September. St. Mark's members also made visits to Rwanda, bringing back greetings from our synodical partners there, and we also sent the largest delegation yet to visit Iglesia Luterana Cordero de Dios in Soyapango, El Salvador, during our annual Thanksgiving accompaniment trip. This year's visit was all the more meaningful as we had just held a hymn festival and reception fundraiser for the Salvadoran Lutheran Church Pastors Endowment Fund, which raised \$21,000 towards the \$2 million fund goal.

We encourage you to join in and support these activities, and to become involved in the planning and coordination work of the Social Ministry Committee.

Goal #6: Create A Marketing Strategy

(Andrew Sallach and Jane Borg)

The Strategic Goal to create a marketing strategy consisted of six demographics. Progress made on each demographic is noted below.

- **Neighbors living near St. Mark's:** Once again, all MLT residents were invited to participate in Oktoberfest. In addition, Oktoberfest flyers were placed in several nearby businesses, as well as in The

Sequoias and the Carillon to hopefully attract the interest of those residents. A bicycle rack was installed outside of doors into Heritage Hall.

- **People with an interest in classical/liturgical music:** Announcements for upcoming special musical performances are on the table in the Narthex.

- **Families with children:** Continued with a week long summer camp for a third year. Continued trying to attract other children beyond those in the St. Mark's community - this year a few friends of St. Mark's children and a few members' grandchildren attended.

- **LGBT Community:** Continued publicity and welcoming language in weekly bulletin and St. Mark's again staffed a booth at the Castro Street Fair with ReconcilingWorks.

- **Seniors:** MLT, The Sequoias and Carillon residents were all invited to attend the St. Mark's Oktoberfest; St. Mark's Council members attended and assisted in serving food and drink at the annual MLT Christmas dinner. Many MLT residents routinely attend worship services at St. Mark's or attend adult forum.

- **Groups using St. Mark's and the ULC facilities:** Groups that used St. Mark's facilities for special events and/or weddings were mailed the card announcements for Oktoberfest and the Christmas services.



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Statistical Summary

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Baptisms	8	4	9	9	5
Confirmations	2	4	0	2	0
Weddings	11	24	13	8	11
Deaths	1	0	2	3	3
New Members Received	26	14	21	16	19
Baptized Members	403*	407	425	438	451
Confirmed Members	317*	322	332	341	349
Average Worship Attendance	178	202 [†]	190 [†]	196 [†]	187 [†]

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

[†] Includes Midweek Worship Attendance figures

