



St. Mark's Lutheran February Newsletter



You are invited to attend St. Mark's annual President's day Luncheon

Monday, February 20th at Noon
Location: St. Mark's Social Room
(Elevator access available)

Please RSVP to St. Mark's office, 503-777-1443 or
office@smpdx.org by February 19th. Please provide
the number of kids included in your group.

Enjoy lunch, conversation and presidential trivia at
this multi-generational social function.
Sponsored by St. Mark's "Connection" program.

This event is free of charge but guests are encouraged to bring a
donation to the food pantry. Suggestions: jam or jelly, packaged
meals like hamburger helper, top ramen, soup, tuna, oil.



March 1st is Ash Wednesday

Ash Wednesday begins
Lent with a call to pay
attention to the gap
between how we are
living and God's way of
wholeness and life.

As part of
acknowledging the
reality of sin and death, we will put ashes in the
shape of the cross on each others' foreheads, while
saying "Remember you are dust, and to dust you
shall return" — in other words, life is short and the
time for change is now.

10am: In the 2nd floor community room of the
Courtyard's Park building (6323 SE Division St.)

12:00pm at Holy Trinity Lutheran Church with
refreshments following. (7220 SE Cesar E Chavez)

2pm: In the library of Powell Valley Assisted
Living (4001 SE 182nd Ave)

7pm in the St. Mark's sanctuary.



Lent will begin with Ash Wednesday on March 1st. Lent is a time set aside to focus on our journey together as God's people to the foot of Jesus' cross (Good Friday) and, ultimately, to the Easter Resurrection. To help us keep our focus, congregations traditionally have gathered for an additional worship service each week in Lent. Our current plans are to gather for soup and conversation each Wednesday evening, beginning March 8th at 6:30 in the coffee room. Worship will begin at 7pm in the sanctuary; we'll use "Unfailing Light," which is an evening setting of Holy Communion by the same people who crafted Holden Evening Prayer.

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St. Mark's is beginning the Reconciling in Christ process, a planned step by step process to become a more welcoming church to people of all sexual orientations, all genders and all gender identities.

During Sunday worship you were asked to identify people who are good listeners. From your recommendations we put together a team of 9 people who will be contacting a sampling of our members to get an idea of what people think about this idea of being welcoming to gays and people of all genders and sexual orientations

The Reconciling in Christ process includes understanding how our members feel about this, doing education on being welcoming and -- depending on how our conversations go -- eventually writing a welcoming statement and voting on whether we accept and support this statement.

Beginning after Feb 1 you may get a call or an email from one of the members of the team to schedule a 30-45 minute conversation about this. If you aren't contacted and want to express your opinion please feel free to contact any of the team.

The listeners are:

| | | |
|--------------|--------------|-----------------|
| Al Bowen | Sally Durham | Madeline Grimm |
| Mary Karter | Amy Larsen | Dolores Morelli |
| Jenny Winter | Dean Winter | Brenda Richards |



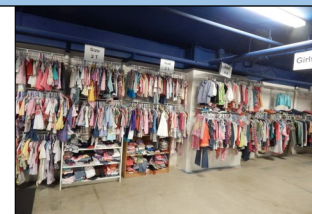
Beginning February 5th the Adult Bible Study class will consider antisemitism, its scope and its origins, particularly as they arose in Christianity. "The Holocaust of six million Jews in Nazi-controlled Europe was the greatest outpouring of evil in the history of the planet."



We did it! St. Mark's and Bethlehem donated the \$2,500 so a community can have a well via ELCA Good Gifts. In fact, we did more than that: we raised \$2817.11. We voted with stickers where to send the additional

\$317.11 The votes are in: feed a family of refugees for 6 weeks.

Bethlehem Children's Clothes Closet Continues to Grow.
Next Workday Scheduled for Saturday, 2/18 at 10am



The picture on the left is the Bethlehem Clothes Closet when it started in Bethlehem's old building where twelve banquet tables set up every month and clothes put out. And then clothes packed up, tables taken down and all of it packed away until the next month. Notice the little table signs. Boys 0-2, 3-5, etc. and shoes lined up on the old pews against the wall.

The picture on the right is a recent one of the set-up in the St. Mark's basement. As Deb Schulz said: It's SO MUCH EASIER now! And SO MUCH NICER. I am very thankful for how St. Marks has taken this on and carried it forward.

Pastor Elizabeth and SE Portland Respond to Church Invasions

A week after worship was disrupted at Access Covenant Church and worshipers were heckled as they went to mass at St. Peter's Roman Catholic Church, much of Southeast Portland turned out to show encouragement and support to the two congregations. Pastor Elizabeth went to noon mass at St. Peter's; she introduced herself to Father Raul Marquez Parish Priest of St. Peter's and Father Ron Millican of Our Lady of Sorrows. Father Raul invited her to process with them (she'd been planning to sit quietly in the back) and so she found herself up front.



Photos courtesy of El Centinela.



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Council President's Annual Report to the Congregation

In 2016 St. Mark's continued to grapple with how best to fulfill our mission of being servants to Christ the Servant in the face of budget shortfalls and as a small congregation. Over the past several years we have increasingly depended on our savings and a continuing stream of memorial gifts to cover the shortfall between the financial needs of our various missions and funds available from general and special offerings of our members. At our January 24, 2016, annual meeting the 2016 budget was approved with the proviso that the council explore how to match missions with resources. The result of these discussions was a list of six options (which are not necessarily mutually exclusive):

- Conduct an extended stewardship campaign

- Merge with another congregation

- Develop a "mission-focused" merger with other congregations and organizations that would increase resources of both funds and people to perform our missions

- Form a community based on the Leaven Community/Salt and Light model of the former Redeemer Lutheran congregation in NE Portland

- Sell our building and move to smaller premises

- Move to a half-time pastor and continue to draw on savings and memorial funds until those funds are exhausted and then dissolve

Our discussion group felt that a stewardship campaign was needed no matter what was decided regarding the other options. On June 12th members met to consider options 2 through 6. Members felt that item 5 did not meet the goal of sustaining our mission. And item 6 was soundly rejected as a slow death spiral for the congregation. Members wanted more information of items 2, 3, and 4, however, and

so we began to study possible details what a merger and mission merger might entail with reports planned to the congregation at the 2017 annual meeting. To get more information on the Leaven Community model, LaVeta Gilmore Jones from Salt and Light met with members over several Sundays in December 2016 and January 2017. The results of the stewardship drive were modest, at best.

On a more positive note, however, we did reduce slightly our dependence of savings to fill the budget gap. This was done by a combination of reduced expenses and the added income from the new Montessori program that began his past August. In the coming year we will look to increase our income from programs that use the church buildings, but this presents only a modest potential.

Also on a more positive note, through the use of memorials and gifts, we were able to repair the leak in the roof in the education wing. We have begun repair of the men's restroom, have contracted for a new message sign in front of the church and will install new sanctuary carpet this spring. None of these expenses have come at the expense of our general operating fund.

In addition we are moving ahead with the Reconciling in Christ program by setting up a program of individual meetings with members to listen to their hopes and concerns about this process. A group of "good listeners" have been identified and trained through Synod resources and the results of this exercise will be reported to the congregation in the next few months.

As we look to this new year, we have work to do. We need to continue to explore innovative ways to accomplish our mission and faithfully look at how we can support the mission.

Yours in Christ, Dean Winter, Council President



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Pastor's Annual Report to the Congregation

¹⁹ I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth,
do you not perceive it?
I will make a way in the wilderness
and rivers in the desert.

²⁰ The wild animals will honour me the jackals and
the ostriches; for I give water in the wilderness,
rivers in the desert, to give drink to my
chosen people,

²¹ the people whom I formed for myself so that they
might declare my praise.

Isaiah 43:19-21

Dear members and friends of St. Mark's Lutheran:

What a year 2016 turned out to be!

Portland Eastside ministries reached the end of its life-span and dissolved.

Brenda Richards and Sally Durham bravely took on the task of bringing the St. Mark's constitution up to date.

We switched from a paper monthly newsletter to weekly e-mail news. The upside is that we can get news out a lot faster, save significantly on mailing, and a lot less staff time is devoted to the mechanics of the newsletter. The struggle is that keeping in touch with our less-electronic friends has been, at best, hit and miss.

Classical Up Close packed in 300 people to the St. Mark's sanctuary: the Portland Chamber Music concert on Nov. 12th brought in 100.

Mary Karter became the Mt. Tabor cluster to the Oregon Synod council.

After many inspections and much hoop-jumping, Kael Montessori preschool moved into Unit #2 of the education wing over the summer.

A sudden health crisis meant we had to say goodbye to our administrative assistant, Joyce Nance, in May. Thanks to the hard work of our personnel committee, Dolores Morelli, Dean Winter, and Traci Fajardo, we welcomed Dennis Bridges as our administrative assistant in August.

Jenny Winter took on the task of coordinating the rummage sale, and organized a week-long blitz in the social hall.

Wednesday, Nov. 2nd the bishop gathered Pastor Kelle Nelson from St. Paul, Pastor Andrew Rickel from Holy Trinity, Pastor Andrew Yong of Heavenly Peace, myself, Bonnie Beadles-Bohling, and Katy Rustvold to talk about an area mission strategy for SE Portland. Bonnie and Katy will be working with our congregations to help build ties to the wider community and one another. Their work will be funded by money from church wide and the synod. I'm very excited about this.

Pastor Andrew R, Pastor Kelle and myself planned for and launched a joint study together of the proposed ELCA social statement on women and justice.

A troop of Brownies and a troop of Girl Scouts joined us in the building in the fall; they have been such fun to collaborate with.

And . . . we're not done. We're never done. God keeps calling us forward, into new adventures that weren't precisely what we planned or expected. Empowered and emboldened by God's love, we continue our efforts to be faithful to our calling, "Servants of Christ the Servant."

Rev. Elizabeth A. Larsen



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St. Mark's Food Pantry

The St. Mark's Food Pantry opened on Epiphany in 2006. Since then thousands of people have received food to feed their families. Faces change over time but some families are from our original group. Same with the volunteers.

During 2016, 1,374 families received food. There were 4,596 people in these families. These numbers would very closely reflect the numbers from 2015, if we hadn't had the two snow closures in December. We get most of our food for distribution from Oregon Food Bank. Most is free. Sometimes we buy food elsewhere to supplement what we need to provide healthy meals for our participants.

A crew picks up and shelves food on Thursday mornings. We average five to six thousand pounds a month. A crew of five gives out the food on Fridays based on the number of people in each family, what food we are able to get, and any special needs they may have. Each month we average about 25 volunteers and about 150 volunteer hours. Some are St. Mark's members, many aren't. This year we have been blessed with two individuals who come almost weekly to help. Also, we've formed a relationship with Passion Impact, a group of high school and college students who come as a group to help. This allows some of our older volunteers to work a shorter shift.

We again thank St. Mark's members for their support financially and/or time wise of the pantry. The families coming in are very appreciative of the good food given to them by loving volunteers. Participants enjoy coming in to hot soup or sandwiches. We are blessed with continuing support from John, our "oatmeal and jelly guy."

This ministry is very time intensive – but immensely rewarding. Please look at your calendar and see if you can volunteer. We work hard but have a lot of fun in the process!

The Pantry Committee: Madeline Grimm, Dolores Morelli and Mary Karter

St. Mark's Community Basket

On the fourth Saturday of each month, volunteers arrive at St. Mark's to set up for Community Basket. This is a free food giveaway using food just from Oregon Food Bank. We were averaging 65 families coming each month until a huge uptick in numbers in July. Word got out to a new group of people, raising our numbers by 20 more families each month. Over the year food was given out for just over 2,000 individuals.

Thanks to the reliable crew from St. Mark's – and beyond – who show up to make this ministry happen. Once we get set up and the OFB truck arrives, people move through quickly and are very happy with the food they get for their families.

Bethlehem Children's Clothes Closet

The Bethlehem Children's Clothes Closet, which moved to St. Marks in August of 2012 is still going strong. During the 2016 year we helped 186 families with 527 children!

There are now enough donations from our neighbors, clients and Sweet Peas children's consignment shop, that we've been able to store summer clothes during winter and winter clothes during summer.

Our volunteer roster has also increased with some very enthusiastic Girl Scouts and Brownie troops that now meet at St. Marks, as well as several clothes closet clients. In addition, the Schools Uniting Neighborhoods workers at Creston grade school have been handing out flyers to parents telling them about this ministry.

We look forward to 2017, where I hope to enlist a teen resale shop to donate to us, as that section is usually pretty sparse. I look forward to getting our electronic reader board sign installed as the advertising will help us reach many more people.

Respectfully submitted, Brenda Richards



Lutheran World Relief

The quilting group completed 20 quilts for LWR. Many thanks to the helping hands who cut, sew, tie and complete these beautiful creations. The quilting group meets the fourth Thursday of the month to tie quilts. Anyone is welcome to join. All materials are donated except the batting which is purchased from a designated memorial provided by the family of Mary Zielsdorf.

76 backpacks were filled with school supplies donated by generous St. Mark's members. Thanks to the many members for their time sewing and purchasing the needed school supplies.

Respectfully submitted,
Sally Durham

Wholly Love

Each Sunday Wholly Love is held for the younger children during the sermon portion of the worship service. Volunteers from the congregation meet with the children and either prepare a short program or use the Celebrate pamphlet as a guide. Volunteers this year were Jon Cheskin, Madeline Grimm, Sally Durham, Lynda Kennedy, and Dolores Morelli. A big thank you to these volunteers who continue to help with this program.

Respectfully submitted,
Dolores Morelli

The proposed St. Mark's Bylaws and Constitution were sent on to the Synod for approval and are available for review in the church office.

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Property Committee

Leaks from the flat roof continued to be a problem this past year. We hope the repairs made this last fall will prevent further leaks. This roof will most likely need to be replaced in 5 years.

During 2016, in addition to routine maintenance, we took steps to improve our restrooms. New air flush toilets were purchased for one of the women's restroom. We had difficulty securing a contractor to remodel the much needed men's restroom. A contract has been signed and we are hoping this project will be completed in early 2017.

St. Mark's continued to contract with Mario Saldana for landscaping services. In addition to mowing, he has been keeping up with needed trimming of our shrubs. We are thankful for his help.

Thank you to Brian Etzel and Gary Lippert who keep our lights shining bright.

Our previous cleaning service went out of business this past year. We are now contracting with Vanguard Cleaning Systems of Portland.

New carpet for the sanctuary has been ordered and will be installed before Easter. This project is funded by memorials and donations. Plans are in the works for a new digital sign out front with funds received from a trust.

I want to thank Buck Johnson and Tom Rutger for the many years of service on the property committee. Also, thank you to all members who donate their time to keep the grounds and interior of our church running smoothly. Additional volunteers are always appreciated.

Respectfully submitted,
Sally Durham

The approved Budget and other Financial reports are available for review in the church office.

**AS SERVANTS OF CHRIST THE SERVANT,
WE ARE CALLED BY GOD TO:**

- Spread the Word of God through worship, prayer, discipleship and education
- Spread God's love by example through service, advocacy and community
- Be spirit-led stewards of our time, talents and money

Servant Fund

The Servant Fund was established in 2004. It continues to provide funds for New Ministries, Education and Community Outreach.

2016 Endowment Grants

| | |
|----------------------------|------------|
| Outreach postcard mailings | |
| to our neighbors: | \$1,201.69 |
| Hospitality: | \$860.23 |
| Noisy Offerings match: | \$2,675.00 |
| Operation Nightwatch: | \$750.00 |
| Educational and Conference | |
| Grants (Pastor Larson): | \$2172.18 |
| Creston Dental Program: | \$500.00 |
| Synod Assembly: | \$991.49 |
| ELCA Good Gifts: | \$500.00 |
| Piano Repair: | \$875.00 |
| Oregonian Advertisement: | \$334.32 |

In addition to endowment funds the Servant Fund board also oversees the expenses of the memorial funds, the scholarship and campership funds and manages the memorial expense account which can be accessed to provide assistance for memorial receptions. Funds for this account generally come from donations made by family members.

The St. Mark's Endowment Fund remains healthy. The board encourages grant requests from committees and members in keeping with the Servant Fund mission statement.

Thank you to Laura who served as board secretary and Dolores as board treasurer. Laura has served two consecutive terms on the board and according to the by-laws is not eligible for re-election. I want to thank all the board members for their service and dedication this past year.

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In keeping with St. Mark's goals, the Servant Fund board members strive to be spirit-led stewards of the fund we oversee.

| Board Members | Term Expires |
|----------------------|---------------------|
| Laura Donnelley | 2016 |
| Madeline Grimm | 2017 |
| Dolores Morelli | 2017 |
| Mary Karter | 2018 |
| Jenny Winter | 2018 |

Respectfully submitted,
Madeline Grimm

Designated Memorials

Memorial gifts were given in loving memory by friends and family of:
Ceil Libke and Pauline McNeff.

Memorial purchases:

Donations to St. Mark's Food Pantry from Shirley Osborn & Gene Olson memorials.

The following memorials were dedicated to the food pantry and will be disbursed in January of 2017: Joann Brady, Wayne Jackson and Dorothy Trimble.

Gifts given in memory of Grace Fadness, Sally Hallum, Ralph Johnson, Gale Teeters, John & Lois Turner, Gail Walsh, and Dick Welk were used to purchase new sanctuary carpet.

A gift from the Wright Family Trust is dedicated to fund a new digital sign.

Dedicated memorials for future use:

Dolores Berard for fellowship room improvements
Bonnae Lindley Hoeff and Gerald Long for organ/piano upkeep & repair
Wayne Jackson and Chester Schink for building
Ed Thiringer to help those in need
Toni Wyfells to Bethlehem Clothing Closet

Respectfully submitted,
Sally Durham



St. Mark's Lutheran Church

5415 SE Powell Blvd.

"Servants of Christ the Servant"

Pastor: Pr. Elizabeth Larsen

Heavenly Peace Ministry Pastors:

Pr. Andrew Yong & Pr. Terry Yang

Organ/Piano: Arlan Evensen

Administrative Assistant: Dennis Bridges

All God's Children are invited to Sunday Worship

8:30 a.m. Bible Study

9:30 a.m. Worship with Communion Every Sunday

10:45a.m. Coffee Fellowship

11:00 a.m. Choir Practice

11:30 a.m. Mandarin Chinese Worship

3:00 p.m. Asamblea Apostolica

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