



# HARK! THE HERALD

The Newsletter of St. Luke's Anglican Church, Merced, CA

April 2017



From the Pastor's Desk

We are nearing the end of Lent and the arrival of Easter. Having prepared our hearts and minds throughout this season, we will soon come to the season of great rejoicing in the work of our Lord Jesus Christ. We will focus on gratitude for the gift of salvation. As we do, let us remember that this is a gift to “us,” rather than a gift to “me.” Each of us must accept Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior. However, we are guilty sometimes of putting far too much attention on our individual salvation, rather than remembering that we are saved into the body of Jesus and into the family of God (two biblical images for the same truth). We can think about salvation as if it is a bit like medical insurance. I am glad that I have coverage, and I hope you have it too. However, it does not really matter to me if we have the same medical insurance, and I certainly do not feel a sense of identity or commitment to people based on whether they are “Blue Shield people” or “Kaiser people.” When we think of salvation as if it is an individual gift (coverage for your spiritual needs), the fact that others have received the same gift does not seem to mean very much.

Salvation, however, is not a thing that we get. Salvation is being brought into an everlasting relationship with God and His family. One of the images used throughout Scripture is that we are adopted by God the Father. In that image, we become brothers and sisters because the same Father adopted us into His family. Jesus is the only “natural” Son, but He joins the Father in welcoming us to the family and sharing all the rights and privileges and love with His new family. Recently, our nephew Andrew was adopted by Juliet's sister after spending 1500 days in foster care. What an incredible moment, to finally have a family that will stay with him for the rest of his life.

Here at St. Luke's, we want to live out that sort of commitment to each other. We want to be a family that loves each other through all of life. Recently, I have heard several moving testimonies to that love in action, particularly from those who lost loved ones. However, love isn't always easy. I am taken aback sometimes when people who have had decades of experience with the challenges of loving spouses, children, and the other members of their families seem shocked to finding that loving fellow church members is also hard. Relationships are messy and difficult and take work. Here are a few things to remember:

John Gottman, one of the leading experts on marriage, teaches that simply liking each oth-

er makes more difference than just about anything else in a relationship (and this includes more than just marriage). There are all sorts of helpful techniques for improving communication and working through problems, but they don't help much if you don't like each other. Meanwhile, people who like each other a lot can work through all sorts of shortcomings. Fortunately, "liking each other" is something we can work at and grown in. "Liking each other" grows as we spend time together, and when we learn more about each other (especially when we go deep to learn about how another person thinks and feels and what that person values). Spend time at coffee hour, First Friday, Men's Night or Women's Lunches, and you will be investing in growing relationships. That's just the beginning though. Find opportunities to spend time with one or a few people from church. Ask questions, and seek to slowly grow closer. This is an investment in living out the Gospel.

One of the greatest benefits of "liking each other" is that we naturally tend to think better of those we like. You're in line at coffee hour, and someone points at the last cookie and says, "are you going to eat that?" If you like and think well of the person, you hear, "I would really like that cookie. Is it okay, if I have it, please?" If you do not like and trust the person, you hear, "I bet you're going to steal the last cookie. After all, you are a terribly selfish person. Also, I've been watching what you eat, and it's no wonder you are so overweight!" The person said one thing, but very different messages were heard! Did you say "hello" as you walked by someone at church, and that person did not respond? She was distracted because she was thinking about something very important. Or did she hear you perfectly well and chose to snub you? When we build up relationships of liking and trusting each other, it becomes natural to assume the best of each other.

Often, however, love takes practice. When someone says something hurtful, begin by thinking - really thinking carefully and vigorously - if you might have misheard or misunderstood what that person said. Use your imagination and your empathy to explore what might have been going on inside this person. Was he having a hard day? Was she trying to be funny (in an awkward attempt to connect)? Try writing down what the person said, then see if you can read it different ways to give it different meanings. This is especially helpful with notes and emails, but it is even helpful with things we hear because our faulty memories can sometimes add subtle details that weren't really in what someone said. This may seem like too much work or too artificial. However, I have seen too many end relationships based on a mistaken impression or even a misheard sentence. I promise this is much easier than being upset for a single day over what someone said!

Next, practice forgiving lightly and easily. We all make mistakes. Honestly, we all make mistakes many times a day. A psychology professor once told me about "good enough parenting," which is the idea that if someone succeeds at parenting a third of the time, they are able to raise basically healthy and mature children. If children can handle parents making mistakes two out of three times, we should be able to overlook at least that many faults as adults in relationship with each other. Jesus commands us to forgive our brothers and sis-

## Up-Coming Events

**APR 2**—Sisters of Prayer 11 am

**APR 7** —First Friday 6-8 pm  
Location TBA

**APR 11**—Men's Night Out 6-8 pm,  
1257 Panorama Point Ct.  
Rob Mercurio 726-7994

**APR 13**—Maundy Thursday  
Service 6 pm

**APR 14**— Good Friday  
Service 6 pm

**APR 20**—Vestry 5:30 pm

**MAY 1—3** Clergy Conference

### Lenten Study and Soup Suppers

Wednesdays, through  
April 5

5:30-7:00

Location: to be announced



**Coffee Hour**

**April**

**APR 2**— Juliet San Nicholas de Bradley

Sign—ups needed.  
See Cheryl Mayo

ters who repent of their sins, even when it is difficult. However, if we show the same love to others that we wish they would show to us, then we discover far fewer sins that are difficult to forgive. Most of the things that upset us are pretty minor. Far more of them are quirks than faults, and most of the faults are accidental. Apart from actions that are always wrong and dangerous (such as physical or verbal abuse), the vast majority of things that get in the way of loving each other could be easily overlooked if we just assumed the best of each other and were quick to forgive.

So, as we head into Easter, rejoice in the gift of God's adoption - of you and of your brothers and sisters. Let us love each other well by liking each other more and more. Give each other the benefit of the doubt. Forgive quickly. Let our rejoicing in Christ help us enjoy being together as God's family at St. Luke's.

## Church Growth Commission

*Needed: New Chair for Church Growth Commission.*

Responsibilities are.....

1. Schedule Meetings (presently 10:00am on 2nd Saturday of the month) We have a meeting place!
2. Communicate via email, phone, Hark the Herald
3. Create an Agenda
4. Conduct a One-Hour Meeting
5. Take notes - present Minutes to Vestry on 3rd Thursday - through liaison

Call or email Shirley Vaughn-Hulbert if you are interested. [Luke22936@aol.com](mailto:Luke22936@aol.com) 722-4782

## ***Planning Ahead***

9th ANNUAL EASTER EGG HUNT AT ST.LUKE'S

WHEN: After the Easter Sunday Service  
(11:45am)-APRIL 16TH

WHO: St. Luke's' children ages 0-12, including  
their family & friends

ENJOY: Special Refreshments, a visit from the  
Easter Bunny with photos and a drawing for  
our favorite Easter Bunny (have to be present  
to win)- Don't forget your EASTER BASKET.

HELP NEEDED: Provide filled plastic Easter eggs  
and refreshments

SIGN-UP SHEET AVAILABLE During Coffee Hour.

If you can help, contact Shirley Vaughn-Hulbert -  
722-4782 - [Luke22936@aol.com](mailto:Luke22936@aol.com)

Blessings--Shirley and the Church Growth  
Commission

## **Tote Bag Project**

We have St. Luke's tote bags in stock. They are a very versatile, quality bag for your shopping and other needs.

See, call or email Nancy Wickstrom at 384-8034,  
[nanmau29@gmail.com](mailto:nanmau29@gmail.com)

## **Diocese of San Joaquin Defense Fund**

Make check payable to St. Luke's Church, earmarked for the Defense Fund. By representing the Diocese, they are representing us. Remember them in your prayers during the final process.

News from the Diocese may be found at:  
[www.dioceseofsanjoaquin.net](http://www.dioceseofsanjoaquin.net)





## Weekly Services

Sundays  
10:00 am Holy Communion

### Church Staff

The Most Rev. Dr. Foley Beach, Archbishop,  
Anglican Church in North America  
The Rt. Rev. Dr. Eric Vawter Menees, Bishop  
The Rev. Ryan Bradley, Rector, E-mail: [rector@stlukesmerced.org](mailto:rector@stlukesmerced.org)  
Mrs. Mady Montague, Choir Director; Mrs. Marian McFarland, Organist  
Mrs. Patti McClain, Administrative Assistant

### Members of the Vestry

Class of 2017  
Mr. Mike Waite, Sr. Warden; Mr. Rob Mercurio, Mrs. Linda Meyer

Class of 2018  
Mr. Ed Gardner, Mrs. Kathy Hill

Class of 2019  
Mrs. Cheryl Mayo, Mrs. Karlyne Paul, Treasurer; Mrs. Victoria Schuller  
Ms. Darby Minturn, Clerk

### Diocesan Convention Delegates

Karlyne Paul, Mike Waite; Richard Blank, Kathy Hill, Sylvia Bankson alternates.

## Contact Us

St. Luke's Anglican Church

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M - Th 8 am - 2 pm  
Friday 8 am—Noon

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ARTICLE DEADLINE FOR  
*HARK! THE HERALD* IS THE  
20<sup>TH</sup> OF EACH MONTH.

Send articles to:  
[office@stlukesmerced.org](mailto:office@stlukesmerced.org)

**A Welcoming Family...Worshipping Christ...Sharing His love with others**

### St. Luke's Anglican Church

435 W. 21st Street  
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