

Hark! The Herald

Volume 21 Number 2 The Newsletter of St. Luke's Anglican Church, Merced, CA February, 2015
A Welcoming Family...Worshipping Christ...Sharing His love with others.
Serving Jesus Christ since 1879

From the Pastor's Desk

"St. Luke's Anglican Church: A welcoming family, worshipping Christ and sharing his love with others."

Dear Friends in Christ,

Everybody has those moments when a long-dismissed idea suddenly refuses to be ignored; a truth about who we are, about what we've done or what we've should have done; the realization of a regret, a mistake or an admission that a long-held selfish belief no longer works for us.

At its root, the word "repent" simply means to change one's mind. The primary biblical use of the word, of course, is in regard to sin. When we repent of a particular sin, we must first change our mind about it, namely to accept that the action was inexcusable and dishonoring to God.

Repentance is so foundational to our relationship with God, that this is the first thing Jesus preaches about when he begins his ministry: "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

It's been said that rationalization covers a multitude of sins. Sometimes this rationalization is intentional and willful. Often times, it is a result of our self-deception, because our hearts are deceitfully wicked above all things. And so, the very first sign that repentance has occurred is the willingness to acknowledge full responsibility for our words, thoughts and actions, without blaming someone else.

Reluctance to accept responsibility for the consequences of our actions is probably the number one obstacle to repentance. That's because it's often such a painful thing to do. But it's the very thing we need to do if we want not only to be reconciled with God, but also to have a growing relationship with him and others.

While it may take a while for the Holy Spirit to break through the emotional, mental and spiritual barriers that prevent genuine repentance, when it does happen, it's usually immediate, pronounced, and results in some sort of action. That's what John the Baptist meant when he said, "bear fruit in keeping with your repentance."

Repentance is the foundation of a healthy relationship with God and with others. When Jesus preached repentance, he wanted his hearers to change their minds about their sin, their mistakes, their regrets and even the direction of their lives. He wants us to do the same.

As we prepare for the Lenten Season, let us commit to beginning each day with an attitude of repentance and readiness for action.

May Christ, the Son of God, be manifest in you, that your lives may be a light to the world.

Yours in Christ's love,
Father Ron+

Celebrating St. Luke's Babies

On January 18, we thanked God for twelve precious babies, born in 2014, who are connected to families in St. Luke's parish. We remembered them by name in our prayers and then presented "The Toddler Bible" to their family connection during Coffee Hour.

Thank you, Linda Parry, for organizing this event and arranging for a special cake in their honor. May these little ones come to know Jesus through the faithful witness of grandparents and great grandparents.

Christian Nurture at St. Luke's

Sundays

Children's Church meets in Norvell Hall during the worship service and is for children in the primary grades. They follow a liturgy designed for them that is based on the gospel lesson for that Sunday.



The Rector's Forum – “The Message of Romans”

Come join us after Coffee Hour in Saint Ann's Hall.

The Rector's Forum does not meet on the first Sunday of each month.

Wednesdays

10 a.m. Bible Study in St. Ann's Hall

Topic – “The Book of 2 Peter”

Class meets in Saint Ann's Hall; everyone is welcome.

6:30 p.m. Evening Prayer and Healing Service.

Every Wednesday night, except during Lent, we gather for worship, to offer intercessory prayer for our nation, church, city, family, and friends. We also provide a time for anointing with oil and the laying on of hands for healing. Everyone is welcome to attend. The service lasts about 30 minutes and is led by our licensed Lay Readers.

Fridays in Lent Starting February 20th

Noon – The Way of the Cross (Stations of the Cross)

The devotion known as The Way of the Cross is an adaptation to local usage of a custom widely observed by pilgrims to Jerusalem: the offering of prayer at a series of places in that city traditionally associated with our Lord's passion and death. The number of stations, which at first varied widely, finally became fixed at fourteen. Of these, eight are based directly on events recorded in the Gospels. The service lasts about 20 minutes and is led by a Lay Minister. Please consider making this a part of your Lenten Discipline.

Fr. Ron will be available to hear your confessions throughout Lent.

Please call to make an appointment.

Wednesdays in Lent Starting February 25th

Lenten Bible Study – “The Seven Last Words from the Cross”

Jesus spoke seven sentences, or seven words as we call them, in those six hours while on the cross. The first three words (Forgiveness, Salvation, and Relationships) were spoken in behalf of others, thus giving the final fulfillment and demonstration to what he had taught throughout his public ministry. The last four words (Identification, Suffering, Fulfillment, and Triumph) were spoken concerning his own feelings and his own work—they were personal.

We will meditate on the first six words during our weekly Lenten Bible Studies and then on Good Friday, we will meditate on the seven and final word, Triumph.

10 a.m. Lenten Bible Study in St. Ann's Hall – “The Seven Last Words from the Cross”

5:30 p.m. Soup Supper and Lenten Bible Study – “The Seven Last Words from the Cross”

There is a sign-up sheet in Norvell Hall for those who would like to bring soup, salad, or bread for the suppers. Only those who sign-up to provide the meal for each Wednesday are required to do so.

Report from the Church Growth Commission

A Church Growth Commission has been created as requested by the Bishop. We have already met for an introductory meeting during January. Our next meeting will be Saturday, February 21, at 11:30 a.m. in the Emma Hunt Room. We would like to invite any members of the Congregation to join us for brainstorming and discussion.

To bring you up-to-date, there is an Agenda and Overview of January meeting on the bulletin board. Please talk to Shirley Vaughn-Hulbert or Max Dalrymple if you plan on attending.

Thanks, Shirley Vaughn-Hulbert

Up-Coming Events

February 4 – The Presentation of Christ in the Temple (trans)

We will celebrate this Holy Day with an Evening Prayer Service at 6:30 p.m.

“Almighty and everliving God, we humbly pray that, as your only begotten Son was this day presented in the temple, so we may be presented to you with pure and clean hearts by Jesus Christ our Lord; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. *Amen.*”

February 7 – First Friday Family Fellowship, 7:00 – 9:00 p.m.

Hosted by Darby Minturn, and Jim and Kathy Hill in Norvell Hall

Bring your favorite appetizer and beverage.

February 10 – Men’s Night Out, 6:00 – 8:00 p.m.

Hosted by Rob Mercurio, 1257 Panorama Point Court, Merced [726-7994]

The men of the parish gather on the second Tuesday of each month for food, fellowship, building relationships, and planning events when necessary. We always close our gatherings with Compline. All the men of the parish are welcome to attend and invite a friend. Please let the host know your intentions. Thanks.

February 16 – President’s Day, Office is Closed

February 17 – Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper.

5:00 to 6:30 p.m. in Norvell Hall

Suggested donation is \$5

February 18 – Ash Wednesday Services

Imposition of Ashes and Holy Eucharist: 7:00 a.m., Noon, and 6:00 p.m.

February 20 – The Way of the Cross (Stations of the Cross) in the Church @ Noon

February 24 – Saint Matthias the Apostle

We will celebrate this Holy Day with an Evening Prayer Service at 6:30 p.m.

“Almighty God, who in the place of Judas chose your faithful servant Matthias to be numbered among the Twelve: Grant that your Church, being delivered from false apostles, may always be guided and governed by faithful and true pastors; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. *Amen.*”

The following Sign-up Sheets are posted in Norvell Hall

2015 First Friday Family Fellowship [March, August, September, October, November, and December are open.]

2015 Men’s Night Out [March, July, August, September, October, November, and December are open.]

2015 Flower Chart [A number of Sundays are still available.]

Clerk of the Vestry for 2015

Linda Cometta has been elected by the Vestry to serve as Clerk for 2015.

Thank you, Linda, for your willingness to Christ in this manner.

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 appeal process.

News from the Diocese

News from the diocese may be found at: www.dioceseofsanjoaquin.net.

Shrove Tuesday

Shrove Tuesday is the day before Lent starts. It's a day of penitence, to clean the soul, and a day of celebration as the last chance to feast before Lent begins.

Shrove Tuesday is sometimes called Pancake Day after the fried batter recipe traditionally eaten on this day.

But there's more to Shrove Tuesday than pigging out on pancakes. The pancakes themselves are part of an ancient custom with deeply religious roots.

Shrove Tuesday gets its name from the ritual of shricing that Christians used to undergo in the past. In shricing, a person confesses their sins and receives absolution for them. When a person receives absolution for their sins, they are forgiven for them and released from the guilt and pain that they have caused them. This tradition is very old. Over 1000 years ago a monk wrote in the *Anglo-Saxon Ecclesiastical Institutes*:

“In the week immediately before Lent everyone shall go to his confessor and confess his deeds and the confessor shall so shrive him.”

Shrove Tuesday is a day of celebration as well as penitence, because it's the last day before Lent. Lent is a time of abstinence, or giving things up. So Shrove Tuesday is the last chance to indulge oneself, and to use up the foods that aren't allowed in Lent.

In the old days there were many foods that observant Christians would not eat during Lent: foods such as meat and fish, fats, eggs, and milky foods. So that no food was wasted, families would have a feast on the shricing Tuesday, and eat up all the foods that wouldn't last the forty days of Lent. The need to eat up the fats gave rise to the French name Mardi Gras (“fat Tuesday”). Pancakes became associated with Shrove Tuesday as they were a dish that could use up all the eggs, fats and milk in the house with just the addition of flour.

Ash Wednesday

Ash Wednesday marks the beginning of the penitential season of Lent. Lent is intimately related to Baptism, which in the early Church was performed on Easter Eve. The candidates for baptism undertook fasting and other ascetical experiences along with their general instruction, and the period for these exercises eventually became regularized at forty days (excluding Sundays and feast days) in the Western Church. As the custom of administering baptism on Easter Eve declined, so also did the original linking of Lent to the Resurrection (Easter) event. Instead, the forty days of Jesus' fast in the wilderness was noted, and much was made of his trials and sufferings. The penitential nature for the season had been established.

The name “Ash Wednesday” arose from the custom in the medieval Church of distributing ashes to penitents, who would appear at church on Wednesday to have cast upon their heads the ashes from burned palms from the preceding Palm Sunday.

Our Prayer Book provides a special liturgy for Ash Wednesday, which includes the imposition of ashes. The collect for that day summarizes the meaning of the day and of Lent: “Almighty and everlasting God, you hate nothing you have made and forgive the sins of all who are penitent: Create and make in us new and contrite hearts...”

The Weekly Lectionary

The Lessons appointed for the Season of Lent are intended as background and preparation for Easter. The Old Testament Lessons present a synopsis of the history of salvation from Creation to the Captivity in Babylon. The Gospels, beginning with the Third Sunday, consist of the great Johannine Signs which illuminate the Church's understanding of Holy Baptism.

Pantry News

"Love is patient, Love is kind.....(1Corinthians 13) St. Paul's words are certainly part of our St. Luke's family attitude toward those in need. Thank you for your continuing donations in January. We could use cereal, breakfast bars, peanut butter, soups, crackers, canned fish or meat as well as boxed dinners like Hamburger Helper. We have a good supply of rice and beans but are always looking for spaghetti and pasta sauce.

Blessings to you and yours. You are the best and most generous Valentines ever.

The Five R's of Contentment

"Let every one lead the life which the Lord has assigned to him, and in which God has called him. This is my rule in all the churches." 1 Corinthians 7:17

Learning to be content is one of life's major challenges. In 1 Timothy 6:6, Paul wrote these words to the young man, Timothy: "godliness with contentment is great gain." The word "godliness" is defined as: Holy living. Holy living is an attitude that acknowledges God's claim on your life and a life style that seeks to live in accordance with God's will.

In other words, "godliness with contentment" means to be free from any distraction that will keep you from your single purpose of pleasing the Lord.

1. Resist comparing yourself to others.
This is a joy sucker. Comparing always leads to coveting; which is greed's close cousin.
2. Rejoice in what you do have.
Appreciate what you've got and be grateful to God. Count your many blessings; name them one by one.
3. Release what you have to help others.
God doesn't want to just bless you for your own benefit. He wants you to share it and to help other people with it.
4. Refocus on what's going to last; give your attention to permanent values.
Reorganize your life around eternal priorities.
4. Remember who you are.
You are not your own, you belong to God; you were bought with a price; do not become slaves of anyone or anything; except Jesus your Lord.

Serve God in your Life's Calling or Vocation, wherever you may be, in whatever you may be doing; and Be Content. Amen.

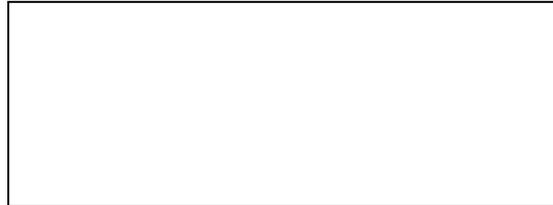


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Address Service Requested

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ARTICLE DEADLINE FOR *HARK! THE HERALD* IS THE 20TH OF EACH MONTH.
Send articles to office@stlukesmerced.org

Weekly Services

Sunday: 9:00 a.m. Holy Communion [Children's Church meets during the Service]
11:15 a.m. Adult Bible Study after Coffee Hour
Wednesday: 10 a.m. Adult Bible Study; 6:30 p.m. Evening Prayer/Healing Service

Church Staff

The Most Rev. Dr. Foley Beach, Archbishop, Anglican Church in North America
The Rt. Rev. Dr. Eric Vawter Menees, Bishop
The Very Rev. Ron Parry, Rector (Home: 385-0677), E-mail: rector@stlukesmerced.org
Mrs. Mady Montague, Choir Director; Mrs. Marilynne Isenberg, Organist
Mrs. Patti McClain, Administrative Assistant; Mrs. Sue Linardos, Sexton

The Herald Staff

Mrs. Wanda Pehl, Mrs. Sue Dutton, Mrs. Winnie Mitchell,
Mrs. Linda Herlitz, Mrs. Ann Bean, Mrs. Trudy Holck

Diocesan Convention Delegates: Mrs. Sylvia Bankson, Mr. Juan Laurel, Sr., Mrs. Carolyn Reed;
Mr. Max Dalrymple, Alternate

Members of the Vestry

Class of 2015
Mr. Max Dalrymple, Jr. Warden
Mrs. Shirley Vaughn-Hulbert
Mrs. Karlyne Paul, Treasurer

Class of 2016
Mrs. Sylvia Bankson
Mr. Richard Blank
Mr. Fred Dutton
Mrs. Linda Cometta, Clerk

Class of 2017
Mrs. Linda Meyer, Sr. Warden
Mr. Frank Reed
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