



# HARK! THE HERALD

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

January 2018



From the Pastor's Desk

Dear St. Luke's Family,

Happy New Year, and a continuing Merry Christmas, as we continue celebrating on our way toward Epiphany. Let me take a moment to share with you a bit about our future plans at St. Luke's. While making "New Year's Resolutions" is an American tradition, making new plans for our church owes more to the busyness of the preceding season. For the past few months, our calendars have been very full. Again and again, I found myself saying, "we're looking forward to that in January." So, now that we have reached January, we can begin starting some new plans and activities. However, let us keep an eye on the calendar while we do this. Lent begins very early this year, with Ash Wednesday on February 14 (unlike Valentine's Day dinners, no reservations are necessary for Ash Wednesday!). So, we'll be moving into another busy season soon. Still, now is the time to plan and prepare.

First, let me share *your* opportunity to plan, prepare, and create events and programs at St. Luke's. For several years, we have had a very active Growth Commission. The primary mission of that group has been to organize events that invite or introduce non-members to St. Luke's. While pursuing that mission, they have also led many of our social events for fellowship between church members. They have done a great job in this mission, but there have been a few obstacles in the way of their work. First, there were many activities and ministries that St. Luke's members might be interested in organizing that go beyond outreach. We need a way to encourage everyone to get involved and offer ideas and activities of many kinds. Second, some church members may have thought that they had to be members of the commission (attending each meeting) in order to get involved in the church, while we are actually eager to have everyone participate. Third, monthly meetings can sometimes form a "bottleneck" for action. Someone has a great idea, but they need to wait until the next meeting to present it. They get feedback and might need to revise the idea, which means waiting another month. At the next meeting, there is more planning, which leads to a longer wait. Sometimes, great ideas are delayed for long periods or dropped altogether because we are stuck in "meeting mindset."

My hope is that we can free up your creativity and participation, by chang-

ing the way we work. In place of our old structure, we will have periodic meetings to brainstorm and collaborate on events and other activities. However, those meetings will be to support your work, and they won't be required. Instead, if you have an idea for an activity, program, or ministry at St. Luke's, come talk with me or with any vestry member (who will also keep me informed). I will keep track of the calendar to make sure we aren't planning events that compete with each other and that all events fit with the values and mission of our church. However, I want to encourage you to be creative and active, rather than depending on a few people to organize all events. If you have an idea or want to assist with an event, but you don't want to be the person "in charge," we can help with that too. We would love to help you pair up with others to plan and run events. Again, talk to me or to any vestry member to get started, and we'll help you connect with others who can help.

Also new at St. Luke's, we are working on revising our children's ministry. For the past several years, we have had a paid attendant for children during our Sunday services. This ran into two problems. First, our safety procedures require having two adults with children. Second, some necessary budget cuts made it difficult to maintain one (much less two) paid staff offering this service, particularly since we very rarely had children taking advantage of this ministry. However, what about the future? How can we plan now for having a church hospitable to guests and new members who have young children? In almost all cases, parents keep children with them in the service on their first (and often first few) visits to a new church. Still, we need to be ready to offer help to families in the future.

My hope is that we can form a team of "on call" volunteers in our church, who would be ready to serve on a rotating basis. Each volunteer would need to be approved through "live scan," a simple form of background check required by our diocese. We would also like to offer some basic training and orientation, which could be done in one day. Then, each week, there would be two volunteers on the calendar. With our current attendance, those volunteers would not need to leave the service most weeks. However, they would be "on call" to serve with children if necessary. If we had 8 volunteers, each one would only need to be available to serve every four weeks, and each might need to miss part of the service much less often than that. If you are interested in serving in this ministry, please contact me (or any vestry member).

This year I would also like us to think about children's ministry more broadly. We should never confuse ministry to our young children or our teens with giving them an alternative activity during Sunday morning service. That would be a double mistake. We want children to attend service with their church family as early as they are able to (which their parents or guardians will determine). In fact, while some churches work to keep young children out of their services, I usually hear joy and excitement from you whenever a baby or toddler is present. Our service is for the whole family, and we want everyone

who comes to St. Luke's to be a lifelong Anglican (and hopefully, lifelong St. Luke's member). The other mistake in confusing children's ministry with Sunday mornings is to limit it to that time. Our mission as Christians is to disciple each other (that is, help each other grow into maturity as followers of Jesus Christ), and it takes a lot more time and effort than we can offer on a Sunday morning. One of the most important callings of parents and guardians is to disciple the children God has entrusted them with, and one of our most important callings to help with that discipleship (remember the promises we all make as a church family each time someone is baptized). So, we need to work together to serve our children and their families this year.

This year, we hope to offer catechism classes for our teens. If you would like to join with Juliet and me in that ministry, please talk to me. How else can we serve our youth and children? Please let me know.

Finally, what other hopes do you have for St. Luke's this year? My hopes include offering another series of catechism/confirmation classes for adults (as well as the series for teens). That's a hope that will require some of you asking to be confirmed, though! I am also hopeful that we will have several baptisms and at least one more wedding in 2018. Finally, I am also hopeful that we will have more Bible study in 2018. That was a ministry I offered a few months back, but at that time there was too little interest (especially from hosts and leaders). If you are interested in participating, please talk to me soon. I am hoping to offer one or more in Lent.

Blessings,  
Fr. Ryan

## Up-Coming Events

Jan 1—Office Closed

Jan 5—First Friday

Jan 7—Epiphany Service  
Sisters of Prayer  
meet

Jan 9—Men's Night Out

Jan 18—Vestry

Feb 2—First Friday



See Cheryl Mayo  
to coordinate  
bringing food for  
coffee hour.

## Tote Bags

St. Luke's tote bags  
are available for \$10  
each. Contact Nancy  
384-8034,  
nan-  
mausmith@gmail.com

# First FRIDAY

**January 5th from 6—8 PM. Location to be announced.**

## **Sign-Up Sheets Available**

2018 Sign-Up Sheets are now available in the conference room for Altar Flower sponsorship, First Friday Family Fellowship and Men's Night Out.

## **New Candles**

There are now electronic candles at the back of the church. If you wish to light a candle for a loved one, please do so before the service. After worship, please turn them off using the switch on the bottom of the candle. We cannot use real candles because of fire concerns. Cheryl Waite or Sylvia Bankson will be available if you have any questions.

## **Annual Holiday Gift Bag Project**

*Bringing Christmas to women in the Central California Women's Facility*

Many thanks to parishioners who donated items and money to this worthy project! Dave Hetland, who coordinates overall through many churches in the area, sends his heartfelt thanks. In fact, I am happy to report that I was able to deliver six boxes of needed items to Dave. Blessings for your kindness.

Shirley Vaughn-Hulbert



# PRAY MERCED

## ***Fridays at Noon***

*Join us in prayer for our community leaders and workers,  
our neighbors, our businesses, our churches, our schools,  
our families and opportunities for healing and growth.*

*Pray for God's mercy to be upon our city.*

Love INC of Greater Merced and the Pray Merced Initiative

**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; Max Dalrymple, Jr. Warden

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

Class of 2019  
Mrs. Cheryl Mayo, Mrs. Karlyne Paul, Treasurer; Mrs. Victoria Schuller  
Mrs. Nancy Tapia, 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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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**

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