



# HARK! THE HERALD

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

January 2017



## *From the Pastor's Desk*

January is often a time for new beginnings. Here at St. Luke's, that has never been more true. On January 22, we will move from our current location to our new home at Our Lady of Mercy downtown. That day will be our last service on Yosemite Ave, and we will end by traveling to our new location together. Bishop Menees will be with us that day. As I have said before, mourning the loss of property, as we remember decades of church family life there, is appropriate. However, focus must be on where God is calling us to in this next season.

Already, God has provided for us with a generosity that is amazing. We will be worshipping together in a beautiful building that will serve us well. We have office space that will allow St. Luke's to do the work we have been called to do throughout the week. Along the way, we have gained a new sense of Christian unity with our local Roman Catholic brothers and sisters, who have been so generous to us.

The move also opens up new opportunities. It is often easier to invite people to join something new, and people are much more open to accepting the invitation. That is why new churches often attract new Christians (and those on their way to becoming new Christians). We are not a new church. We are the same St. Luke's who has been serving God in Merced for nearly a century and half. However, we will feel new to many in town. A new location will raise interest, both among those who have heard of St. Luke's and those who wonder about the new activity at OLM on Sunday mornings. Now is our best opportunity to invite people to visit us and get to know us. We are going to be busy with the move, but let us all commit to making the effort to invite friends and neighbors to church as we move. Let us also make the commitment to be good hosts when visitors join us.

Last month, I asked for your thoughts about moving the time for our service to 10AM. I suggested that the later start time would make it easier for families with young children, college students, and other groups we want to invite into St. Luke's. At the same time, I was concerned that a change of time might make coming to church more difficult for those already at St. Luke's. We want to invite new people into our church family, but we do not want to trade the people we already love.

The response has been surprising and definitive. While there were a few people who preferred to stay at 9AM, the overwhelming majority of those who communicated with me wanted to move to 10AM. Several current members were already having difficulties coming to the 9AM for a variety of reasons. Of those who preferred the 9AM, it was truly a preference (rather than a need) that they communicated. Meanwhile, many of you expressed excitement at the possibility of new people joining us at a time that is more hospitable to them. In fact, many of you made it clear that you wanted to be flexible and to pick whatever time worked best for others.

Again, a change of time is an opportunity to invite others. Do you know someone who has told you in the past that our church service is just too early for them? This is the perfect time to talk with them. Tell them that starting on January 29, we will be meeting at 10AM, and

(cont.) we are making that change for them! Do you know people who used to attend St. Luke's or have talked about possibly visiting someday? The change of time is a perfect opportunity to start a conversation with them about our church. I hope to even print up new invitations to St. Luke's that we can all pass out to friends and family, with our new address and time.

Finally, I think that our greatest challenge when we move will likely be the loss of a fellowship hall. This too is an opportunity. We will look for ways to have coffee together after service, but we will not be able to eat together at the church in the same way that has become such a central piece of our life as a church community. Instead, we will need to discover new ways of practicing fellowship with each other and welcoming visitors. If we do not find these new ways, St. Luke's will lose something very important. We do not want to become a church where people show up for a service but do not know each other. However, new ways of practicing fellowship can push us to deepen our friendships.

We already have meals together in homes once a month, can we do more of that? It does not always have to be a formal event. Maybe our new church home means that we need to invite each other to our "other" homes more often. Maybe Sunday after church becomes a time to visit each other. Maybe we start going out to lunch together on Sundays. Maybe every time we have a visitor, a few St. Luke's members could invite the visitor to go to lunch at a nearby restaurant. Instead of hoping they will join us for coffee hour, we can make the extra effort to get to know them over a meal.

I am also hoping that we move toward having more Bible studies and small groups in homes. Meeting at someone's house is both more welcoming for visitors (who often find church a little foreign at first) and helpful for building deep friendship. We feel that we know people more when they welcome us into their homes, and we are more likely to share our thoughts and feelings while relaxing in a living room than at a table in a hall. Losing Norvell Hall will force us to invite people into our homes, and hopefully into our lives.

Please join me in praying for our move. Pray especially for timely communication and a cordial relationship with the Episcopal Church as we turn over property. Pray that no one would be "left behind," but that all members of St. Luke's would feel valued and encouraged this new season. Pray for the details of the move, as we work out all the procedures of what we can take and how to move things. Pray especially for those who may join us, the Christians who need a church home and the non-Christians who need Jesus.

## Church Growth Commission

The Growth Commission will meet again on FEBRUARY 11th, 2017 at 10:00 am. The location to be determined. Call or email Shirley if you would like to join us:

722-4782 -  
[Luke22936@aol.com](mailto:Luke22936@aol.com)



### Sign Up in Norvell Hall

2017 Sign-Up Sheets are now posted in Norvell Hall for Altar Flower sponsorship and First Friday Family Fellowship.



### January

**JAN 1**— Coffee Only

**JAN 8**— Linda Meyer

**JAN 15**— Jani Clarke

## Up-Coming Events

**JAN 2—Office Closed**

**JAN 6—First Friday 6-8 pm**  
Location to be announced.

**JAN 10—Men's Night Out**  
Location TBA

**JAN 19—Vestry 5:30 pm**

## Tote Bag Project

Yes, we still have MORE!

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

## Bringing Christmas to 3000 Women

Thank you again for the numerous needed items and money donations given for the *Annual Holiday Gift Bag Project*, sponsored by the Inmate Family Council at the Central California Women's Facility in Chowchilla. Many different churches in the area have contributed annually to this needed project. Dave Hetland, Facilitator at the Methodist Church, sends his heartfelt thanks!  
Shirley Vaughn-Hulbert

## 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  
9:00 a.m. 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; Mrs. Sue Linardos, Sexton

### Members of the Vestry

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

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

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

### Diocesan Convention Delegates

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

## Contact Us

St. Luke's Anglican Church

Office Business Hours:  
M - F 8:00 am - 2:00 pm

Phone: (209) 383-1888  
FAX: (209) 383-4935

Web site:  
[www.stlukesmerced.org](http://www.stlukesmerced.org)

E-mail:  
[office@stlukesmerced.org](mailto:office@stlukesmerced.org)

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)

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[www.stlukesmerced.org](http://www.stlukesmerced.org)

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

**St. Luke's Anglican Church**  
350 W. Yosemite Ave.  
Merced, CA 95348

Address Service Requested

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