

Hark! The Herald

Volume 22 Number 1 The Newsletter of St. Luke's Anglican Church, Merced, CA January, 2016
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.”



In preparation for Bp. Eric's February visitation, I would like to share with you about the blessings of confirmation. For many of you, this will be a reminder of a gift you received many decades ago. For others, however, this may be new. It may even be news of a gift you did not know you were waiting to receive!

Our Lord both offered to us, and commanded us to receive, two sacraments (outward signs of His grace working in us): communion and baptism. However, there are many other ways in which God strengthens and matures our faith. Five practices are traditionally held up as being especially important. Marriage and ordination are both life-changing events in which God offers the grace to live out a special calling. Anointing of the sick (with oil) is something we offer each Sunday at St. Luke's during communion, as well as on pastoral visits, and what many people refer to as “last rites” is primarily just a special instance of this anointing and prayer. Confession with absolution is another practice we offer each week during the “general confession” in the service, but the opportunity to confess particular sins to a priest, and to receive as a response the assurance of God's forgiveness, is a special blessing.

Finally, this takes us to confirmation. It is normal in our church to baptize infants, which goes back to the early years of the Christian church, and is even alluded to in the Bible, in which the Acts of the Apostles describes entire households coming to faith and being baptized (which would include children of all ages). We entrust these infants to God's grace, inviting God to draw them to Himself. When an adult is baptized, the adult makes a public commitment to follow God (and we each re-affirm our vows at each baptism we attend). For those baptized as infants, confirmation becomes their opportunity to agree with the commitments made by their parents when they were too young to make those commitments. Confirmation classes beforehand help make it clear what we mean by committing to follow God. At confirmation, those baptized as infants are able to stand before the community of the church and say, “this is what I believe and how I commit to live.” It is a significant moment of becoming an adult in the faith.

However, confirmation is about more than affirming your faith, and it is a gift even for those baptized as adults. In Anglicanism, the bishop serves as the primary pastor under Jesus for each area, and it is ultimately the relationship between bishops that weaves together the Anglican Communion. My role as your rector is to provide day-to-day pastoral care, while regularly teaching the Word of the God and administering the sacraments. When it comes to confirmation, I do my best to help prepare those who are interested, with the help of others in our church, and I essentially tell the bishop that I think these people are ready. However, because it is the bishop who offers confirmation, this becomes a moment of joining in with the Anglican Communion throughout the world, as well as coming into a more intentional relationship with the spiritual authority of our bishop. It becomes a way of receiving a powerful blessing, as well as a symbol of unity with the millions of Anglicans around the world.

Let me also mention a few practical matters. Some of you may have been confirmed in other traditions, such as Roman Catholicism. Anglicans do consider this valid as confirmation. However, you still have the opportunity to be “received.” “Reception” covers all of the relational pieces of confirmation (connection to the worldwide Anglican Communion and to our bishop and diocese), while acknowledging the spiritual meaning of your prior confirmation. “Reception” can be received from the bishop on his visit, at the same time as others receive confirmation. Others may have been “confirmed” in denominations that do

not have bishops or that do not have a connection reaching back to the early church (a connection shared by Roman Catholics, Eastern Orthodox, and Anglicans). In those cases, you have the opportunity to be confirmed as an Anglican, since the connection of Anglican bishops stretching back to the Apostles is a unique blessing. Finally, if you have been confirmed in any diocese within the Anglican Communion, you do not need to be confirmed or received again. This includes our own Anglican Church in North America (ACNA), the Episcopal Church (where many of you were confirmed before we moved to the ACNA), the Church of England, and scores of other provinces throughout the world.

Becoming confirmed makes several special ministries possible in our church. Those who are confirmed are able to serve on vestry, become Lay Readers (including leading morning and evening prayer at the church), serve as Lay Eucharistic Ministers (helping administer communion), and even take communion to our shut-ins as a Pastoral Lay Eucharistic Minister.

If you are interested in being confirmed or received, particularly on Bp. Eric's next visit in late February, please let me know as soon as possible, preferably by email: rector@stlukesmerced.org. When you contact me, please let me know which days or times would be best or worst for you for confirmation classes. These classes will involve going through the Anglican Church in North America's catechism together, which is available for free on the ACNA website in digital form <http://anglicanchurch.net/?/main/catechism> or for purchase on Amazon under the title *To Be A Christian: An Anglican Catechism*. I will shape the frequency, length, and format of the classes to those who want to attend. Those who have already been confirmed are, of course, also welcome to attend.



Thank you to everyone who made Christmas Eve such a lovely service, including our amazing altar guild, choir, and organist. We would also like to thank those of you who invited friends, family, and others to attend.

Fr. Ryan would like to announce his engagement to Juliet San Nicolas. Fr.

Ryan proposed in the St. Luke's sanctuary on Monday 28, by candlelight and Christmas lights. They are planning a June wedding in Southern California (where both their families live). St. Luke's members willing to make the drive will be eagerly welcomed, but a reception in Merced will also be planned.

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.



Church Growth Commission

Please join us for our first meeting of the year -- Saturday, January 16th - 10:00am in the Emma Hunt Room.

Add yourself to Shirley's email list-Luke22936@aol.com or call at 722-4782.

Shirley

2016 Pantry News

Here is a list of food items for the Pantry that you might want to remember during the coming year: cereal, canned meats and fish, soup, crackers, spaghetti and sauce, boxes of hamburger or tuna helper, rice and beans. You can also donate money to the Pantry Fund. Simply put your money in a church envelope, mark it "Pantry" and place it in the collection plate. Please pray for the success of keeping the Pantry full and ready for families, who come to us for help. May you be blessed richly during 2016!

Monica

2016 Sign-up Sheets

The 2016 lists for First Friday, Men's Night Out and Altar Flowers are posted on the bulletin board in Norvell Hall.

Coffee Hour Ministry

Sister's in Service Coffee Hour Ministry sign-ups will begin January 3. We will try a new scheduling arrangement, asking each woman to sign up for 3-5 times throughout the year, keeping three (3) women per Sunday to bring refreshments. If you don't have the opportunity to sign-up, or forget, we will contact you when a Sunday spot is open for help needed. One additional Coffee Hour person is needed for January 10 & 24. Call Linda Meyer if you would be willing to help. We are also going to go a little "lighter" in the refreshment department. There should be plenty of food, but not the large variety we have been spoiled with these past several months. If you have any questions, please call Linda Meyer, 726-0534.

Annual Meeting Update

Elected to the Vestry Class of 2018: Ed Gardner, Kathy Hill, and Maria Laurel. Elected as delegates to diocesan convention 2016: Norman Montague, Calvin Nixon, and Shirley Vaughn-Hulbert. Karlyne Paul was elected as the alternate.

St. Luke's Faithful Servant 2015

Congratulations to Linda Meyer, St. Luke's Faithful Servant award-winner for 2015. Linda has offered excellent leadership as senior warden, as well as consistently humble service in a variety of ministries (including many hours of service seen by few). She was particularly generous with her time in the period between rectors, as well as in helping orient Fr. Ryan to St. Luke's.

Up-Coming Events

January 12 – Men's Night Out 6:00 – 9:00 p.m. in Norvell Hall. Mike Waite, 756-4441

January 16 – Growth Commission Meeting 10:00 a.m. Emma Hunt Room

January 21 – Vestry Meeting 5:30 p.m.

January 29-31 – Vestry Retreat at ECCO

Save the Date



February 10: Ash Wednesday

February 21: Bishop's visitation

Wednesday night soup suppers throughout Lent

Temporary New Address:

Jack Clarke

San Joaquin Valley Rehabilitation Hospital

Room 205B

7173 N Sharon Ave.

Fresno, CA 93720



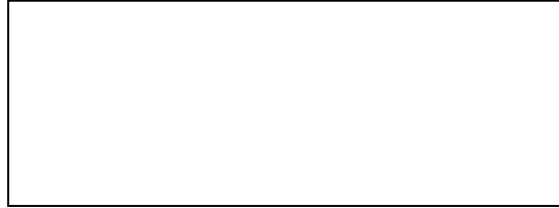
Diocese of San Joaquin Defense Fund
Make check payable to St. Luke's Church, earmarked for the Defense Fund.
By representing the Diocese, they are representing us.
Remember them in your prayers during the appeal process.
News from the Diocese may be found at: www.dioceseofsanjoaquin.net

St. Luke's Anglican Church
350 West Yosemite Avenue
Merced, CA 95348



Address Service Requested

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St. Luke's Anglican Church
Office Business Hours: Monday - Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.
Phone: (209) 383-1888 FAX: (209) 383-4935
Web site: www.stlukesmerced.org
E-mail: office@stlukesmerced.org

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

Visit us at our website: www.stlukesmerced.org

Weekly Services

Sundays

9:00 a.m. Holy Communion [Children's Church meets during the Service]

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
Mrs. Mady Montague, Choir Director; Mrs. Marilynne Isenberg, Organist
Mrs. Patti McClain, Administrative Assistant; Mrs. Sue Linardos, Sexton

Members of the Vestry

Class of 2016
Mrs. Sylvia Bankson
Mr. Richard Blank
Mr. Fred Dutton
Mrs. Karlyne Paul, Treasurer

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

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

Diocesan Convention Delegates

Norman Montague, Calvin Nixon, Shirley Vaughn-Hulbert; Karlyne Paul, alternate.