



HARK! THE HERALD

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

June 2017



From the Pastor's Desk

What does it mean to be a growing church?

I was at a gathering of pastors recently, and we talked about evangelism. We talked about how important it is to share the gospel with people and help them commit to following Jesus Christ. This is something I fully agree with, and we have emphasized that here at St. Luke's through our recent Lenten study and other conversations and teaching times. However, there was something about the discussion that I had a problem with, and it is a problem that I come across often. It was the idea that "getting saved" is simply asking Jesus to forgive your sins, an action item to accomplish in an instant. It is hoped that this will lead to some changes in peoples' lives, and they might even want to join a church themselves. However, things like a re-orientation of your life to follow Jesus and joining with the body of Christ in a local family seem like additions to the gospel, rather than organic and essential pieces. On this view, a growing church is one in which attendance goes up because people pray to accept God's forgiveness, and some of those people decide to join the church to express their gratitude to God and learn more about Him.

Forgiveness of sins is an essential element of the Christian life. It removes the obstacles and ends the estrangement between God and ourselves. However, forgiveness is a means to an end, and the end is an everlasting community in relationship with God. Living a transformed life is a necessary consequence of salvation, and it is both a gift from God (formed in us by the grace of God) and an invitation to work with God (responding to the ongoing work of the Holy Spirit in and through us). Rather than thinking of church attendance as a nice optional element of being a Christian, we see ourselves as having joined an everlasting community and therefore needing to live out that reality now by sharing Word and sacrament, friendship and faithfulness, prayer and service, and all the realities of that everlasting community that we can taste now.

On this view, a growing church means more than attendance

numbers. It means:

We grow in loving God
We grow in becoming who God wants us to be
We grow in loving the people of God
We grow in sharing the invitation to join the people of God

Are we at St. Luke's a growing church? That is a question we can answer, but not with a number. We are growing in that we gather together to worship God, and that many of you have a continuing growth in your own love for God. We are not always growing in our love sometimes grows cold and we sometimes allow ourselves to be distracted from God. We are growing in that we see brothers and sisters in our church family becoming more godly and faithful, and yet we must admit that this does not describe all of us all the time. We grow in loving each other as we bless, encourage, and comfort each other with words and actions. We also fail sometimes, giving in to impatience, gossip, distrust, or other forms of cruelty and coldness. We grow in that we are talking to people about God, sharing what we have received from Him, and inviting others to join His family. We are seeing evidence of this, as new people have both visited and joined us in the past few months. Still, we miss opportunities, we lose faith that the Holy Spirit might save even the unlikely people we know, and we focus too much on ourselves and our own needs.

In terms of attendance numbers, we are staying about the same these days. We have high weeks and low weeks, but our average is pretty steady right now. However, there is a whole story behind those numbers. Because of our average age, we frequently grieve the deaths of members, and we also suffer the quieter loss of those who are still part of our family but can no longer attend on Sundays due to health issues. So, our numbers mask a growth of new members joining us. However, there is an equally important growth behind this. Our serving and comforting each other through loss is growth that God desires for us. Our sharing life together as God's family in all of the challenging and blessed circumstances we have is growth.

I pray regularly that St. Luke's will grow in many ways. I hope that one of the ways God answers that prayer is with more people coming to follow Jesus, and particularly following Him as members of St. Luke's. However, that is not the only way He is answering this prayer that many of you are also praying. Let us grow together.

Fr. Ryan

Up-Coming Events

- JUN 2**—First Friday 6-8 pm @
the Bankson's, 3255 Leaf
Dr. 722-8596
- JUN 4** —Sisters of Prayer meet
@ 11am
- JUN 13**—Men's Night Out 6-8
pm, Fireside Room
- JUN 18**—Father's Day
- JUN 22**—Vestry 5:30 pm
- JUN 25**—Farewell to John &
Linda Meyer
- JUN 26**—Office Closed



See Cheryl Mayo
to coordinate
bringing food for
coffee hour.

St. Luke's at the Merced Fair

Please join us for the opening night of the Merced County Fair. Wednesday, June 7 we will be enjoying the fair together. Carpooling either from the church or sharing rides from your homes is encouraged. Admission to the fair is free for seniors (that night only). There will also be a food drive with free admission for those who bring 5 cans of food. Otherwise, tickets are \$8 at the door or \$6 in advance. Plan to explore the fair with friends from St. Luke's, or simply to greet familiar faces while enjoying all the fair has offer. This is a great opportunity to invite friends and introduce them to people from St. Luke's.

First Aid Training

Are you interested in receiving training in first aid? The growth commission is considering sponsoring a CPR/ First Aid class open to the local community. If you might be interested in attending, please let Karlyne or Victoria know.

You can register for Summer Camp now!

Elementary Camp (grades 4-6): \$275, Wednesday, July 19 – Sunday, July 23, Registrations Due: July 10, 2017

Junior High Camp and High School Camp: \$325, Sunday, July 23 – Friday, July 28, Registrations Due: July 17, 2017

Register or get more information at <http://campsanjoaquin.com/anglican-summer-camps/>

Scholarships are available. Please talk with Fr. Ryan if you are interested.

First FRIDAY June 2nd

at the Bankson's home, 3255 Leaf Dr., Merced. Bring an appetizer and your beverage. Please RSVP 722-8596.



Office Closed the week of June 26th

The church office will be closed while Patti is on vacation the week of June 26th. You may leave a message on the office voicemail or email the office for things that are not urgent or time sensitive. If you have something urgent during that week, please email Fr. Ryan at rector@stlukesmerced.org. For an emergency, please call Fr. Ryan's cell phone. His cell number is listed in the church directory for emergency calls.

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

**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

Diocese of San Joaquin De- fense 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

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
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

Office Business Hours:
M - Th 8 am - 2 pm
Friday 8 am—Noon

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Web site:
www.stlukesmerced.org

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ARTICLE DEADLINE FOR
HARK! THE HERALD IS THE
20TH OF EACH MONTH.

Send articles to:
office@stlukesmerced.org

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

St. Luke's Anglican Church

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Merced, CA 95340

Address Service Requested

PLACE
STAMP
HERE



June 18th!