



HARK! THE HERALD

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

November 2016



From the Pastor's Desk

The basic teaching of the New Testament is that all we are and all we have belongs to God. This is not only because He is our creator. It is also because God is our Lord, our King. We give ourselves wholly to Him, and it is His gift to accept us. More than that, our very act of giving ourselves to Him is only possible because He has first given Himself to us. We can only say "yes, Lord" to Him because His grace has already blessed us.

One application of this truth, that all we are and have belongs to God, is in how we use money. All of the money in our wallets and in our bank accounts belongs to God. All of our property belongs to God. Even our very ability to earn money belongs to God.

Please notice that I am not writing that all of our property belongs to the Church. We are called to steward the resources God gave us. If you gave all your money to St. Luke's, then you could not pay your bills, that would not be an act of faithful stewardship. If you gave all your money to missionaries, but you could not feed your own children, that would not be an act of faithfulness.

Please do not miss this important point: When you care for your family, when you make wise decisions about matters like saving money for retirement, when you avoid unnecessary debt, those are all stewardship decisions. Those are acts of godly wisdom. God cares about more than the money you give to church. He cares about what you do with all your resources. Even deciding to go out to dinner with a friend or spouse or grandchild can be a godly use of money. My hope is that you will not think about the money you give to St. Luke's as "God's" and the rest of the money He has entrusted you with as "yours." Nor will you think of the money you give away as "spiritual" and the rest of it as "selfish." My prayer for the members of St. Luke's is that we will more and more see all of our resources as belonging to God, and we will see Him leading and blessing us as we spend His money wisely and faithfully in all circumstances.

So, if we can serve God with our money even when we do not give it to a church, why commit to giving to St. Luke's? The simple reason is that our local church is an essential part of following God and living out our faith. Church is far from the only place we love and serve

God, but it is a necessary one. We are commanded in Scripture to gather together for worship, for biblical teaching, and for sharing the Eucharist. We are commanded to live out the life of God's family by gathering with fellow Christians for support and encouragement, for practicing patience and forgiveness, and for celebrating and serving each other. This mission and community needs financial resources, and the Apostle Paul (among others in the New Testament) is not shy or apologetic in asking believers to give those resources. He models for us an openness about asking Christians to support their local church, their clergy, and others who can serve God better with financial backing.

So we are again asking that you make a financial commitment to support St. Luke's in 2017. As you are probably aware, the traditional commitment is 10%. This is the literal meaning of the word "tithe," and it is inspired by several different tithes found in the Old Testament law. Jewish believers of the Old Testament era were required to give at least 19% and sometimes more because there were two yearly tithes, plus a periodic one. I do not believe that the New Testament commands us to give a specific percentage. However, as Anglicans, following tradition is usually a great place to start.

So, I encourage you to look at your budget for the year, and see what the effect would be if you gave the traditional 10% to St. Luke's. Ideally, that is a challenge, but one you can meet. If you find that you cannot give 10% because that would prevent you from paying debts or meeting the needs of those you are responsible for, I encourage you to make a smaller commitment this year, while also taking any steps you can to change those circumstances (such as eliminating debt). On the other hand, if you find that giving 10% is easy, I would like to ask that you pray and consider the possibility of giving more. The more could be to St. Luke's, or it could be to a missionary or another ministry. However, please give in a way that stretches you.

Only you know your circumstances. You may have very little, so that even a small commitment to give will take sacrifice. Please remember the widow that Jesus talks about, whose tiny gift was a great act of faith and faithful-



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

The Church Growth Commission will meet again on Saturday, November 12th, 10:00am in Norvell Hall.

Call Shirley for more information or just join us!

Coffee Hour

NOV 6—Sign Ups Needed

NOV 13—Shirley VH, Lee Ann Mercurio, Wanda Pehl

NOV 20—Darlene Clouse, Loretta Stuart, Cheryl Mayo, Susan

NOV 27—Maria Laurel, Suzanne Miles

Up-Coming Events

- Nov 4**—First Friday 6 pm
Norvell Hall
RSVP Shirley
722-4782
- NOV 8** —Men's Night Out
6 pm John Meyer
257 W. Donna Dr.
RSVP 726-0534
- NOV 12** —Growth
Committee 10 am
- NOV 17**—Vestry 5:30 pm
- NOV 20** —Sisters of Prayer
11 am
- NOV 23-25**—Office Closed
- NOV 28-30**—Clergy Retreat

ness. God knows your circumstances, and He celebrates your giving as it reflects your commitment to Him. If you have greater financial resources, giving may also feel very challenging. It can be easy to maintain a commitment (either a fixed amount or a percentage) and come to barely notice your own giving anymore. Pledging becomes your opportunity to think again about your finances and priorities, then make a new commitment.

Additionally, giving something regularly is an important spiritual discipline that helps us remember that all we have belongs to God. It also creates a sense of investment. One of the greatest dangers for contemporary Western Christians is to see ourselves as consumers of Christianity and customers at church. Faithful, regular giving reminds us that we are all at church to serve God and each other. If your ability is to give a dollar a week, putting that dollar in an offering envelope each week may be a great aide to your spiritual growth.

Blessings,
Fr. Ryan

Pantry News

Please remember the pantry and its work by donating to the Pantry Fund. Simply, place your cash or check in an envelope marked "Pantry Fund" and place it in the offering plate during Mass. During this season of Thanksgiving, know that your help is greatly appreciated and that you are held in grateful prayer.

Happy Thanksgiving and Blessings!

First Friday Family Fellowship

Parishioners and friends please join us for First Friday Fellowship on November 4th, 6:00pm in Norvell Hall.

This will be a family fellowship, so everyone is welcome, especially youngsters and teens. Please bring a hearty appetizer, and drink of your choice. Lemonade will be available. Co-hosts for this event will be Shirley & Norm Vaughn-Hulbert, Judy & Howard Smith and Kenny Birdsong.

As many of us do not drive at night or perhaps do not have a car, please let Shirley (722-4782) know if you would like transportation. Also, it is important to know how many people will attend, so please RSVP Shirley or Norm.

*God Bless Our
Military*



Moving Forward

On October 20, the vestry of St. Luke's voted to move forward with renting Our Lady of Mercy as our new home. Many representatives of the church, including the vestry, have toured the building, and we believe it will be a wonderful place for us to worship and serve God. Our rental agreement will include use on Sunday mornings, as well as the opportunity to use the church at many other times for special services (such as Holy Week). We will also be able to use two offices and a storage room next door, as well as sharing a large conference room for classes.

We will be working on the details of the contract before voting again for a final approval. The date of our move will depend on several factors, including coordinating with our bishop (who wants to be at our final service at our current location). However, we think a January move is likely.

The clergy and other leaders of St. Patrick's/OLM are very excited to welcome us to their building. They are incredibly supportive of us, and are practicing hospitality in every possible way.



St. Nicholas Day

On December 4, 2016, we will be celebrating St. Nicholas Day. We will be needing the following items:

Drinks, snacks, desserts, 10 gift bags and small goodies for the bags.

Look for the signup sheet in Norvell Hall. If you have any questions, please call Cheryl Waite at 261-4896 or Victoria Schuller at 631-2590.

Let's make this the best Christmas to remember for the youth of our parish!

Women's Fellowship

The Women of the church are meeting once a month for lunch and Fellowship. We met in September and October at Paul's Place in Merced. We had a wonderful turnout. Everyone is welcome to join us.

Next month we will be meeting on November 18th at 11 am at Paul's for lunch and conversation. The plan is to try Sizzler's in December. Hope to see everyone there. For information talk to Kathy Hill.

ANNUAL GIFT BAG PROJECT

I am still collecting items for gift bags for inmates of the California Women's Facility.

Deadline for collection is November 19th.

Dave Hetland, who is the facilitator at the Methodist Church, informs me that bags will be filled in Fresno on December 3rd.

Thank you friends of St. Luke's for your kind donations at this time! If you want more information, detailed information is on the bulletin board in Norvell Hall.

Thank you,

Shirley Vaughn-Hulbert/
Church Growth Committee

Tote Bag Project

Tote bags are still available in Norvell Hall for \$10.00 each. See Nancy Wickstrom, Linda Meyer or Shirley Vaughn-Hulbert. These make great Christmas gifts!



Daylight Saving Time Ends

Sunday, November 6th

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.



AlphaPHC.com

**MERCED COUNTY FAIR
GROUNDS PAVILION**



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. Marian McFarland, 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

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

Mrs. Karlyne Paul, Treasurer; Mr. Jim Hill, Clerk

Diocesan Convention Delegates

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

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

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

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

PLACE
STAMP
HERE