

# MARKER

ST. MARK'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

FEBRUARY 2012

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*'Do not remember the former things, or consider the things of old. I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?'* Isaiah 43:18-19, NRSV

You probably have heard the saying that the only thing that is constant is - change. Things are always in flux. There is growth and decay, new life and death, circumstances change. Even the Bible acknowledges this fact. 'To everything, there is a season,' it says in Ecclesiastes 3:1. Nothing ever stays the same. God is not a static God, but a God who brings about change. We do not only hear about God bringing about new things in Isaiah, but the promise of a change for the better (or the best) is one of the last promises we hear in the entire Bible; in Revelations 21:1-5, God speaks about eradicating all suffering and tears, death will be no more, and God says, 'See, I am making all things new.'

As Christians, and especially Christians of a tradition as long and proud as the Lutheran one, we feel the pull between the old and the new. We have traditions and rites which are rich and meaningful to us, but those may not be cherished as much (or at all) by a new generation searching for God. We are facing the challenge of responding to the needs of the world while keeping our identity.

And so we may know we have to make changes and try new things - though at the same time our hearts may grieve the loss of something we cherish.

This Lenten season, St. Mark's will try something new. Not simply for the sake of change, but because the way we have been doing certain things hasn't been overly suc-

cessful in recent years. This Lent, we will offer mid-week Lenten services together with Hillcrest Congregational Church. The St. Mark's Worship and Music Committee hopes these joint services will spark a renewed interest in this part of the Lenten journey. My hope is that, through the sharing of resources between the two congregations, the people of St. Mark's and Hillcrest will have a richer spiritual experience, and maybe even create new friendships.

These mid-week services will be held on 2/29 and 3/7 at 7 p.m. at Hillcrest, and 3/14, 3/21, and 3/28 at 7 p.m. at St. Mark's. Pastor Fred Weidmann and I will mainly share in the leadership of these services. On 2/29, there will be a soup supper held at Hillcrest at 6 p.m. On 3/28, St. Mark's will host a soup supper. BUT - there will be no soup suppers on the Wednesdays in between. This way, the first and last Wednesday of the Lenten season will be reasons to come together and especially celebrate the fellowship between our two churches.

As you can see, we want to preserve some traditions and elements that have been meaningful to us - but at the same time try something new. I want to invite you to give the joint service with Hillcrest a chance - and also invite you to give an honest feedback about your concerns and your new experiences.

May our Lenten journey be blessed!

Pastor Kerstin



## Lenten Mid-week Service Schedule

**Wednesday, 2/29**, 7 p.m. at HILLCREST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, Gregory Lane

Service with communion

Soup Supper at 6 p.m., hosted by Hillcrest

**Wednesday, 3/7**, 7 p.m. at HILLCREST (no soup supper)

**Wednesday, 3/14**, 7 p.m. at ST. MARK'S (no soup supper)

**Wednesday, 3/21**, 7 p.m. at ST. MARK'S (no soup supper)

**Wednesday, 3/28**, 7 p.m. at ST. MARK'S

Service with communion

Soup Supper at 6 p.m. hosted by St. Mark's



## Young Moms' Bible Study



The Young Moms' Bible Study is generally the fourth Tuesday of each month, but plans are **only** solidified for the next date, time, and place at the prior meeting.

Contact Pastor Kerstin if you are interested in attending!

We hope to see you there!

# Social Ministry

## Monthly Outreach Emphasis for February

### Lutheran Social Services (LSS)

“Lutheran Social Services responds when people are vulnerable because of homelessness, mental illness, drug addiction or disaster. Providing support services and compassionate guidance, we help individuals and families to stabilize their lives and become self-sufficient.

“Responding to the biblical mandates of compassion and justice, LSS affirms the inherent worth of all people and strives to prevent and alleviate human suffering.”

(From LSS brochure)

A guest speaker will be with us during both worship services on February 26<sup>th</sup> and will also facilitate the Adult Forum that Sunday. Please come to the Forum and learn about this important ministry of our larger church. If you wish to support LSS, issue your check to ‘St. Mark’s’, designate LSS. Unable to stretch your dollars more? Time and Talent is a valuable resource; maybe volunteering is for you?

### **Save the Date:**

**Saturday, February 18: Mardi Gras/Fasching Celebration**



- \* 5:30 pm Service
- \* 6:00 pm Potluck
- \* 7:00 pm Talent Show

# St. Mark's Women's Retreat

## *Life - A Maze or a Labyrinth?*

Friday, March 2 through Sunday, March 4

Lafayette Ridge

All women are invited to attend our third annual women's retreat. This year, it will be held in a gorgeous vacation rental in Lafayette, which offers a private sauna and hot tub.

Come for the whole weekend, or come for a day. Enjoy renewal of body, mind, and spirit.



Projected cost for two-night stay, including meals: \$200

Projected cost for Saturday day retreat: \$40, including breakfast and lunch.

Scholarships are available.

For more information, or to register, please contact Pastor Kerstin at

[pastorkerstin@gmail.com](mailto:pastorkerstin@gmail.com)

### **W-ELCA: Martha Circle – Tuesday, February 7, 2012**

Please join us in the meeting room at church at 1:30 p.m. All are welcome!

We will continue the study with the Book of Mark, specifically Mark 10:1-52.

In the next session, the questions asked of Jesus will focus more on the time of his suffering in Jerusalem. His public ministry is coming to an end.

Bible study leader: Lis S.

Refreshments: Norma B.

# Pastor's Report: January 2012

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## Summary:

The weeks since the last council meeting have been mainly filled with preparations for the Christmas season. During the week 'between the years', I tried to do some strategic thinking for the coming year. I believe that 2012 will be a defining year in many regards for St. Mark's. Our numbers (member and income wise) show us that we need to be more creative in the ways we follow God's word and 'do church'. Hopefully we will have a productive council retreat this spring.

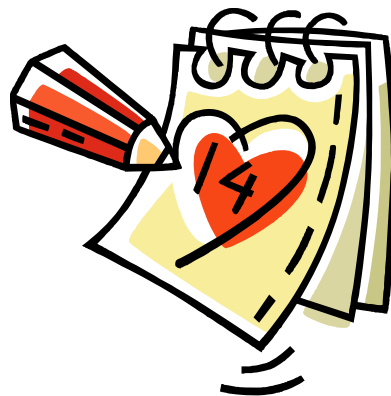
## Christmas:

Attendance for our two English language services was lower than in previous years (which I expected, since quite a few of our regular attendees were out of town this year). However, attendance for the German language service soared in 2011; we were able to welcome almost 140 people to that service (partly due to the fact that Trinity Lutheran didn't offer a German language service last year and gave us their database, which we used to invite people). It was a wonderful service, and very much appreciated by the German speaking community. Thanks to Laurie and Steve Stevahn for greeting and ushering, and to Karen Klingelhafer and Laura Bathel for helping with the German fellowship. Btw, Laurie Stevahn was so blown away by last year's attendance that she said, 'We don't need just a couple of greeters, we need 15 greeters before and 15 greeters after the German service! This is a great outreach opportunity, and we even already have the people here!' I second this observation. What can we as a faith community do to further invite the German speaking population?

We had our worship service at 10 a.m. on Christmas Day. As was to be expected, attendance was low that day; the same can be said for the worship service on the 1st Sunday after Christmas, 1/1/12, which was led by Pr. Berni Fricke.

## Lent:

Since attendance at our midweek Lent and Advent services has been rather low, I would like to discuss the possibility to have joint Lent midweek services with another church (Hillcrest would be a 'natural' choice). Details would have to be worked out; I think that, since our midweek services have not been attended by visitors, it would be okay to invite folks to possibly attend midweek services at a different church.



## Office Transition:

I am very pleased to announce that we have hired a new office administrator (thanks to the hiring committee for their hard work). Her name is JoHanna Gratz, and she will be staffing the office during the regular hours between 8:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. Please welcome her warmly!

## Restructuring of Mutual Ministry and Other Committees

This is the year we seriously have to look into the change of our bylaws and the restructuring of our committees and task forces. I suggest once the new council has been established, we designate a sub group to deal with this issue.

## Baptism:

On 1/29, we will welcome Adam Grage into the family of God.

## Upcoming Events:

Sunday, 1/22, between services: Congregational Meeting Part II

Sunday, 1/22, 4 p.m.: High Tea Fundraiser for 'Younger Moms' Study Group

Saturday, 2/18, 5:30 p.m.: Mardi Gras Celebration

Wednesday, 2/22: Ash Wednesday Services at 12 noon and 7 p.m.

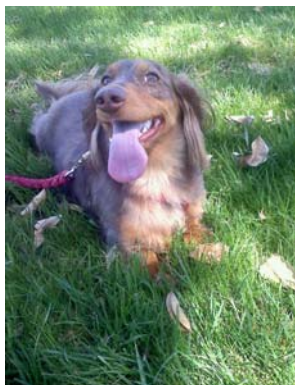
Friday, 3/2 through Sunday, 3/4: Women's Retreat in Lafayette



In the name of all the staff members at St. Mark's, I would like to thank you for the staff gifts we received for Christmas. We truly appreciate your generosity!

May God bless you, Pastor Kerstin

## JoHanna Gratz: Office Administrator



Hello St. Mark's Lutheran, my name is JoHanna Gratz and after one month on the job, I've started to settle in and learn all the intricacies of the church. I live in Danville with my husband, Evan, who is the High School pastor at Community Presbyterian Church, and our two dachshunds and chihuahua; Martin, Hans, and Ludia. Aside from the work I do at St. Mark's, I am a Book Editor for a publishing company based in Arizona. I've been in the publishing industry for six years and enjoy the work very much. I also teach writing and English classes a few evenings per week. My husband and I have been in the Bay Area for two years now, after living in Southern CA for five years. We were married in Dana Point, CA and recently celebrated our fourth wedding anniversary. I am active in the High School small group ministry at CPC where I am a small group leader for sophomore girls. I also started and currently lead a ministry called "Scarves for Strength" where women of all ages come together to crochet or knit scarves based on a pattern I designed, then those scarves are donated to women who have been victims of abuse. My husband and I love being outdoors and spending time at the beach is our favorite activity, as well as traveling. I look forward to meeting many of you as the year goes on.



HILLCREST  
CLOTHING  
ROOM



Have you ever look in your closet and think wow, I haven't worn that shirt in days, weeks, or even months?

If you've ever done that, take the opportunity to donate those unused items that may be lying around and bring them to the Hillcrest Clothing Room located at 404 Gregory Lane.

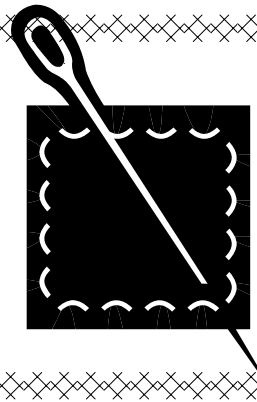
Donations are accepted at the following times:

Monday thru Friday --- 9-12:00 noon

Monday thru Friday --- 1-2:30 pm

Call 925-689-8260 if you need more information.

## Crafty Ladies is Back!



Starting Wednesday, February 1, Crafty Ladies will resume meeting from 10:00-2:00 p.m. in St. Mark's Center. This schedule will continue until the Fall Craft sale in November.

Check out Garrison's new book: *Life among the Lutherans*

Based on Garrison Keillor's Lake Wobegon monologues, *Life among the Lutherans* is a collection of stories about the struggles of ordinary people in an imperfect world, the life and work of the pastor who leads them, and the church to whose high standards they aspire in the small town they call home. The stories in *Life among the Lutherans* reflect everything Keillor fans have come to expect of him. Some are familiar, including the quintessentially Lutheran "95 Theses" from Lake Wobegon Days. Others are more recent.

Laugh out loud about the church directory filled with photos that are just plain awful. Share the moment when Pastor Ingqvist receives a leatherbound copy of his sermons. Keillor's telling of every little detail of life in Lake Wobegon is bound to entertain, surprise, and make readers (even even those who aren't Lutheran) feel right at home in the mythical community "where all the women are strong, all the men are good looking, and all the children are above average."

([www.prairiehome.publicradio.org](http://www.prairiehome.publicradio.org))

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(925)934-6114 • www.sm-lc.net • officeadmin@sm-lc.net  
Pastor Kerstin Barnes: (925)330-2289 pastorkerstin@gmail.com

## Church Staff

Pastor: Kerstin Barnes

Office Administrator: JoHanna Gratz

Directors of 2<sup>nd</sup> Service Music/Worship & Music Chair: Sherry & Mike Doyle

Choir Director: Derrick Clark

Organist: Shu Hwei Peng

Pianist: Lisa Farnitano

Parish Teaching Student: Cary Bass



We are the Body of Christ, called to bear the Good News of God's reign of love and justice in our words and deeds.