So far, we haven’t made a big deal out of it, but 2014 marks the 65th anniversary of the founding of St. Mark’s. It is a reason to celebrate, for God has been present in and through the people of this community of faith for all those years. This faith community has made a difference in the lives of many – in the lives of those who have gathered here, but then also for those countless many who have been the recipients of acts of charity coming from this place. Mark your calendars: on Pentecost Sunday, June 8th, we will have a joint celebratory worship service at 10 a.m., followed by a birthday party to which everyone is invited. Let’s celebrate God’s goodness!

Any anniversary is a great opportunity to stop for a moment and to reflect on the past as well as on the hopes for the future. We don’t have too many records and witnesses from 65 years ago, but we have one old bulletin from the year 1950, in which we find the sermon title “Rivers of Living Water”. I reflected on this theme 5 years ago, as we celebrated St. Mark’s 60th anniversary, but would like to go back to those reflections, since they are as relevant (maybe even more relevant) as they were 5 years ago.

“Rivers of Living Water” - I’d be very interested in what the pastor had to say about those living waters in this place almost 65 years ago. How did he understand God’s hopes and vision for this place and the people here? What was he hoping for, as this young church started God’s ministry in this place?

The image of the river of living water, rolling on, is a beautiful image. The essence of a river, the living water, is always the same; fed by glaciers, snow melt, rain, and smaller creeks and brooks, the river flows, teeming with life, giving life. However, the flow of a river changes over time. There may be obstacles in the way that cause the waters to find a detour. We sometimes see it on a smaller scale, in creeks and small rivers, for example when a tree falls and blocks the usual flow of the water. But then we also have this phenomenon on a much bigger scale: Look at the Grand Canyon: the Colorado River carved out this enormous river bed over millions of years, aided by major tectonic changes. The look and flow of a river change. It’s natural. But the essence of the living water is always the same.

Many may be here today and dwell in memories of the good old days of St. Mark’s. As the Community Task Force came together to develop a vision and goals for St. Mark’s over the last months, and as we gathered as a community for table talks, many stories were shared about St. Mark’s past: stories of Sunday school classes bursting at the seams, of potluck celebrations, of days when this church had several women’s circles, of large Luther League youth groups; stories of days when you just had to open a church in a neighborhood, and the people would come. This is part of St. Mark’s history, and we see the living waters gushing, dancing, quenching the thirst of many.

It is one thing to look back at those days with thankfulness; it is another to wish for those days to return to this place. In essence, St. Mark’s is still the same as it was 65 years ago: a congregation of believers, followers of Jesus Christ, experiencing God in the communion of the saints, the breaking of the bread, and the hearing of God’s word. A community of faith that strives to serve God and the neighbor. The living water is still to be found in this place, we receive it, and it springs forth from our hearts, spilling over into the world.

However, the way that river flows has changed, as is its nature. The culture around us is much less homogeneous than it was 65 years ago. Technology plays a much bigger role in today’s life than it did 65 years ago. Family structures have changed. Even spirituality has changed. People are much more open to the wisdom and practices of others and sisters of different faiths, exploring different avenues to find meaning for their lives.

And in all of this, here we are, St. Mark’s, after 65 years in this place. And often we seem to be rather confused by what’s going on around us, not knowing how to respond to all the changes around us. The danger is to try to ignore the environment around us, and to just try to let the living waters flow in their old and comfortable river bed instead of paying attention to the moving of God’s Holy Spirit. Maybe God has a point in changing the flow of the river, so that those whose thirst hasn’t been quenched yet now have a chance to access those waters. Maybe we should ‘let go and let God’ more, and ‘go with the flow’ rather than work against it.

We have nothing to lose. Rivers of living water have streamed in this place for the last 65 years. It is our honor, our joy, and our responsibility to be the vessels for this living water from God. Today, we stand in awe of all the living water that has passed through this place in the last 65 years. My prayer is that it will continue to flow freely, in riverbeds God carves out for it, through us and generations to come.

Pastor Kerstin
Sharing Social Ministry

Outreach for May—Rainbow Community Center

*The Rainbow Community Center of Contra Costa County began in 1992 as a satellite office of the Berkeley-based Pacific Center and became an independent nonprofit organization in 1996. Our programs are designed to promote community involvement through volunteerism and service.

Vision Statement
The Rainbow Community Center of Contra Costa County envisions a society that embraces acceptance, safety and equality for all, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity.

Mission Statement
The Rainbow Community Center of Contra Costa County (RCC) builds community and promotes well-being among Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, and Questioning (LGBTQ) people and our allies.* * from RCC website

St. Mark’s is a Reconciling in Christ congregation and supports the Vision and Mission statements of the Rainbow Community Center. A Forum regarding this ministry is planned for May 18th. Details to follow.

More.....
Youth Homes, our Outreach for April, is holding an open house and exclusive tour of its program on Friday, May 2, 10a.m. to 11:30 a.m.
Contact Leslie Harman at 925 933-2627 or e-mail her at leslieh@youthhomes.org for reservations. More information will be given after your confirmation.

And then....
Each year your Social Ministry Committee designates different monthly non-profit entities to which time, talent or monies may be donated. Support one, two or all agencies with your thoughts and prayers – let your heart decide where your personal efforts and monetary gifts should go....
If you have suggestions for different outreach emphases, please contact the church office.
Council News: Highlights from the April meeting

The Treasurer’s report shows we are up to date on all bills and there is no borrowing from savings.

Pastor Kerstin reported on her attendance at an excellent Synod workshop titled “Worshiping during the Ordinary Time”.

Pastor Kerstin will attend the Sierra Pacific Synod Assemble on Burlingame from May 30-June 1. Guy Erickson will also attend as our congregational Voting Member, with Marilyn Erickson as a visitor.

The Community Task Force recommendations were reported by Valerie Cookson, a Task Force Liaison and Council member. These were discussed briefly, and will be studied and prayed over. The Task Force members will attend our May 11th Council meeting for an in-depth discussion on the recommendations and action plans.

The Worship and the Fellowship committees will be planning for the St. Mark’s 65th anniversary celebration to be held on June 8th – Pentecost Sunday. There will be one service at 10:00 am followed by a potluck lunch.

A call was made to the police on Saturday morning ((April 5th) that the Puppets of Praise trailer had been broken into. The police responded, but it was not known if anything was missing.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>March Financials</th>
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<th>Budget</th>
<th>YTD</th>
<th>YTD Budget</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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<tr>
<td>Facility Use Donations</td>
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<td>2125.00</td>
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<td>Monthly Outreach Giving</td>
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<td>2071.00</td>
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</table>

Current financial statements and council minutes are available in the binder on the shelf in the back of the sanctuary.
The community Outreach Task Force has concluded the main part of its work. We met since September of 2013. We conducted table talks with members and researched our community. We came up with ideas on how to move forward, which will be going before council in May. Action steps will start happening by the fall of 2014. Thank you for your input. The council and the members of the task force continue to be available for any comments/suggestions that you may have. If you aren’t sure who to contact about a particular idea, please use the suggestion box in the back of the sanctuary or contact the office.

**2014 Graduates?**

If a child in your family is graduating this year (preschool, elementary school, middle school, high school, college, graduate school), please let us know. On Sunday, June 8, we will honor all our graduates during our worship service. If you have a picture of your graduate (which would be included in a slide show that Sunday and the June Marker), please send it to us. Electronic format is preferred.
Did you know?

87% of adults use the internet
71% of online adults use Facebook

*Facebook is used most often over other types of social media.*

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**Social media sites, 2012-2013**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social Media</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2013</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Facebook</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LinkedIn</td>
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<td>Pinterest</td>
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<td>21%</td>
</tr>
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<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instagram</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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**Goals:**

- Create a space online for our community to connect with each other and the community at large.
- Connect people to the church throughout the week

If you’d like to be on Facebook too, but don’t know how, contact the church office.
In the May Bible study, … two women are featured, but they are very different. Rahab has influence and uses her wits to save herself and her family, but the woman accused of adultery depends on Jesus to save her from the crowd.

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

Bible study leader: Sherris H. Refreshments: Lis S.

Adult Education Sunday mornings 9:40 in the meeting room

5/4 and 5/11 based on the study from The Lutheran magazine; “Tradition: New Life for Old Practices”

5/18 Representative from The Rainbow Center, the social ministry outreach for May

Congratulations to the Mendez-Alm Family on their new addition. Samantha Larkin was born on the Saturday before Easter!
Property Clean-up Party

The Property Committee hosted a work party on Saturday, July 12\textsuperscript{th}. Joining in the efforts were Steve Bachofer, Judy Brown & nephew Mathew Waid, David Englund, Guy & Marilyn Erickson, Dayton, Nick & Adam Grage, Don & Lois Hickson, Alan & Ann Klingelhafer, and Frank Zablocki. (If we’ve missed anyone, please accept apologies!).

The chief task was weeding - due to the warm weather and rains earlier – but many hands made for short work. Other tasks included removing cobwebs from the narthex, fixing some tripping hazards on the patio, cleaning both fountains, and pruning climbing vines. Two days later (Monday) the “Back-Forty” was rototilled. Thanks to all of the workers for their efforts!

Rent a Space and Join Our Parking Lot Sale on Saturday, May 10, 2014
Where: First Lutheran
4000 Concord Blvd
Concord, CA
Time: 8am-3pm
Cost: $25 one space 9’x18’
$45 two spaces 18’x18’
Limited number of tables $10
Questions or to Reserve your space (925) 405-6670

If you just want to shop at the parking lot sale, please come.
Our crafty ladies will be there.
Approx. 50 vendors expected

100% of monies from space rental will support “Giving Thanks” a free Thanksgiving Day dinner at First Lutheran
May Friendship Day
Church Women United

Celebrating God's Gift of Friendship
We are in God's Hands
and
We are God's Hands

Victoria Bommarito, Guest speaker
Habitat for Humanity
Music Provided by Singing Messengers

Friday, May 9, 2014
Congregational Church of Christ
1225 Court Street, Martinez

Coffee Fellowship 10:30 a.m.
Program 11:00
Pot Luck Salad Luncheon 12 Noon

All are welcome!

For more information or to reserve child care, call Lori at 788-3599
Celebrating 70 years of Family Farming

Family farmers have long been the foundation of thriving communities and societies. We believe it is no different today: they hold the solution to ending hunger and poverty.

Saturday, May 3, 2014, 1:00 - 4:00 p.m.
Wombats' Farm
2059 Curry Lane, Napa, CA 94558

Join us for a special celebration of Heifer International’s 70 years of creating a more just and sustainable world, while enjoying the beauty of Wombats' Farm. Walk among exhibits and displays spread throughout the gardens, enjoy fun and educational activities for the whole family, meet some local farm animals and listen to engaging speakers.

Ongoing activities, with a group presentation scheduled for 2:00. Local schools, teachers and students will be honored for their contributions to Heifer.

Register today at www.heifer.org/communities or call 877.243.4337 (877.HEIFER)
For more information, call 550-948-1621
#beyondhunger
St. Mark's Lutheran Church

For Prayer & Visitation
We pray for Greg Valentino, Ruthie Wagner (of Lutheran Bible Translators), the cousin of Laurie, wife of Lupe, Lee Larson, Betty Klettenberg, friends of the Waids

If you would like to be included in the prayer chain or if you have a prayer request, you can email the office at: officeadmin@sm-lc.net

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.