



January 2016-July 2017 Annual Report

St. Mark's Lutheran Church by The Narrows
Tacoma, WA

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2017 Theme: One Great Song

**A billion voices in one great song,
now soft and gentle, now deep and strong,
in every culture and style and key,
from hill and valley, with sky and sea,
with Christ we praise you eternally: Soli Deo Gloria!*

A congregation is composed of many individuals. We are unique voices with unique gifts to offer. When the Spirit unites us in the Body of Christ, we become a choir. Together we sing One Great Song of praise to the God who has created us, redeemed us, and sustains us from day to day, year to year. The Church has been singing this song across the globe, in a rich variety of languages, for 2,000 years.

This Annual Report records just a measure of that song. You will find an assortment of reports from staff and ministry teams that span January 2016-June 2017. In addition, you will find the congregation's financial report from fiscal 2016-17. The timing of this report (August) reflects a change in our fiscal year, which ends in June, as well as the desire to report on ministries at the end of the program year (also June).

All of these ministries, from packing backpacks to studying scripture to faithfully stewarding finances—all of the ministries of this congregation express our gratitude for God's grace and represent our efforts to sing Christ's song in the world. Thank you for being part of this particular chorus of voices—St. Mark's Lutheran Church by The Narrows. Soli Deo Gloria—to God alone be the glory.

*ELW #878, text and tune by Marty Haugen



A Greeting from our Council President *Janet Grant*

Reflecting back on 2016-17 under our theme “Let All Creation Praise,” as a congregation we certainly have plenty for which to give praise! When Pastor Ruud approached me about serving as your Council president for the upcoming year my first thought was “How could I refuse with the church in such good shape!?” Indeed, great thanks goes to Anna Ahrens who served as Council president this past year as well as the dedicated Council members who worked with her.

During this past year, this team along with the staff guided our congregation in a capital campaign, “Blessing in Abundance,” that surpassed our hopes.

Gratitude not only goes to them but all congregation members who have been able to participate. The mortgage retirement will enhance our mission over time and allows us to support our beloved ministries to greater extent! A note of gratitude also to the Stewardship Committee who have emphasized that our gifts to the ministry of St. Mark’s are treasure AND talent. No matter what you can give, you are appreciated!

Personnel work has contributed to the professionalism of our church and allows our staff to grow in their call to serve. Even now, as I write this, Pastor Ruud is in the midst of his sabbatical from which we trust he will return renewed to continue his service through the ministry at St. Mark’s. We are also blessed to have Pastors Shjerven and Rue, the dedicated staff and the willing volunteers who seem to work joyfully to advance the ministries of St. Mark’s. Take time to offer your gratitude to them.

I continue to be proud to be part of a congregation that worships deeply, honors one another’s gifts, challenges us to grow and serve more faithfully and provides a place of God’s grace.

So, out of this productive and uplifting year “Let All Creation Praise!” It seems fitting that we move into a new year with our 2017-18 theme of “One Great Song.” May the song in our hearts continue to offer praises for God’s love for us and work among us.

Soli Deo Gloria!
Janet Grant

Church Council June 2016-June 2017		Church Council June 2017-June 2018	
President:	Anna Ahrens	President:	Janet Grant
Vice President:	Bill Klancke	Vice President:	Oscar Espinosa
Secretary:	Laura Oellerich	Secretary:	Laura Oellerich
Treasurer:	Barbara Meyers	Treasurer:	Barbara Meyers
Peace & Justice:	Kathleen Campbell	Peace & Justice:	Deborah Herforth
Children & Youth FF*:	Bennett Fors, III	Children & Youth FF*:	Janai Isaacson
Adult FF*	Steve Ilyko	Adult FF*	Steve Ilyko
Stewardship:	Katie Cootsona	Stewardship:	Birger Nelson
Outreach:	Lisa Daniels	Outreach:	Susan Newsom
Congregational Care:	Barbara Holme	Congregational Care:	Barbara Holme
Worship & Music:	Sharron Bonea	Worship & Music:	Sharron Bonea
Finance & Operations	Pete Indahl	Finance & Operations	Pete Indahl

What Kind of Root System do we Lutherans have?

By Bishop Rick Jaech

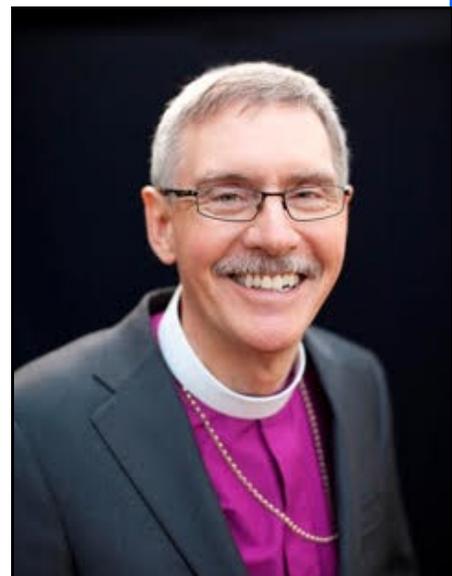
How do trees stay standing even in a windy storm? They are anchored by their roots, of course. But different trees are rooted in different way. Some trees have deep roots going straight down called taproots. White oaks, hickory and walnut trees have some of the deepest taproots. Among evergreen trees, the roots of pine trees go down the farthest, providing that providing that the soil is deep. When the winds blow, these trees are strongly anchored. Their deep, extending roots also enable them to seek water until they find it.

Sequoia and redwood trees have a different kind of root system. One would think that these tallest of trees would also need the deepest of roots to stay standing. The General Sherman tree, located in Sequoia National Park in California, is the world's tallest living tree. It is 275 feet tall, 36 feet in diameter at its base and is estimated to be 2500 years old. A California Coast redwood tree, cut down in 1940, was closer to 400 feet tall. Surely a tree that tall would need the deepest of roots.

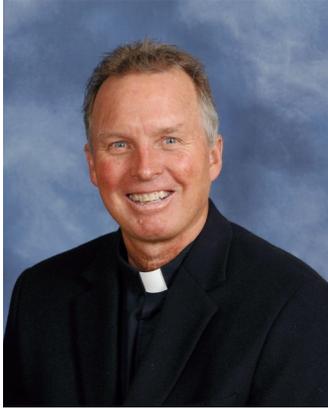
However, the root systems of redwoods and sequoias are typically only five or six feet deep. What keeps them standing is that they send out a dense system of roots that spread one hundred feet in every direction around them. They live closely together in groves, which means that their root systems become tightly interwoven and interlocked. Like marchers in a parade tightly interlinking their arms with people on either side, the redwood and sequoia trees hold onto each other underground and keep each other standing, even when stress and storms come. Plus, with their roots spreading out close to the surface in every direction, they are able to drink in the coastal mist and rains that fall. Often positioned in ravines or along riverbanks, their roots seek out the creeks and rivers that flow nearby.

What kind of root system do we Lutherans have? Both! We spread our roots down and we spread our roots outward. With the help of the Holy Spirit, we sink our roots deep into the love and grace of Christ, who is our source of living water and our anchor in the storm. "Here I stand," said Luther.

But, we do not stand alone. Christ gathers us into a holy community where we reach out and share out faith, strength and wisdom with one another. Our roots become interwoven, first with the members of our congregation, then with the 90 congregations of our Southwestern Washington Synod, and then with the 9,000 congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. This interlinked communion of saints is the Holy Spirit's gift to us that keeps us anchored and nourished.



Pastor Jan Ruud



The year 2017 marked the 500th anniversary of the reformation movement that started when Martin Luther posted 95 theses calling his church back to the central things of our Christian faith. For people around the world, and for us at St. Mark's, this provided a good opportunity to remember what those central things are and to re-dedicate ourselves to living them out in trust and in hope.

First and foremost, we remembered that the central message of the Gospel we proclaim is **grace**. Of course, this is reflected in the first sentence of our own mission statement, when we say that "we are a people and a place for God's grace," but it was good to wade deeper into those waters as we worshipped and served together. That same theology of grace led us to choose the theme of "Blessing in Abundance" for our capital appeal that was launched in early 2017.

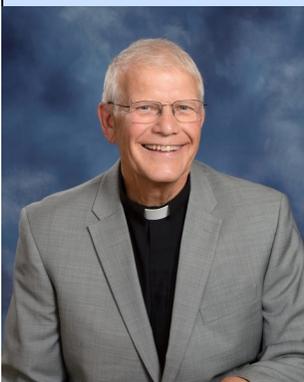
Our goal was to raise \$1 million to reduce mortgage debt and strengthen ministry at St. Mark's and in the community. The fact that we went over and above that goal was a sign that "Blessing in Abundance" was much more than a nice phrase to put on a brochure. For all who gave generously, it was a chance to celebrate God's abundant grace which is given so freely and generously to everyone!

Along with the central message of grace, we remembered Martin Luther's insistence on the **Vocation of all the Baptized**. This was evident on Pentecost Sunday, when people came streaming forward during worship with response forms indicating how they wanted to learn and serve and grow in the new year. But even more than that, it was evident in the countless ways that these things were faithfully done throughout the year. We certainly have material wealth to share, but I am continually amazed by the astonishing wealth of talent and experience and vision that God has given to the people of this congregation.

When it came to choosing a theme that would connect this wealth of personal gifts with our deep gratitude for God's grace, we were drawn to words from a contemporary hymn that echoes the spirit of the reformation movement that is still evolving in the church of Jesus Christ. With an inspired vision of what it looks like when we all join together in praising God with the unique gifts we have been given, the hymn writer imagines "a billion voices in one great song." We sang those words many times throughout the year as we explored what it means to be a part of **One Great Song** in the Body of Christ.

In the end, I am personally drawn to the title of that hymn as I consider the gift of being a pastor among you for yet another year. It is the same Latin phrase that Lutheran musicians like Johann Sebastian Bach often put at the end of their work, in place of their name: **Soli Deo Gloria!** In English, we might say "Glory to God Alone!" That says what it is my heart, and it gives me new energy for the common mission we share as the people of God at St. Mark's Lutheran Church by The Narrows.

Pastor Phil Rue



The Vision Statement for our congregation reads, "St. Mark's is a place in which every person is spiritually nourished;" and "St. Mark's is a congregation in which all persons are active in our mission."

Under the section titled Our Ministry, it is written, "We share God's story and our stories to witness to God's love—we encourage each person to reflect on ways in which faith is central to his/her life."

The circumstances of life may change, but some aspects of our life of faith remain vital: the need to be spiritually nourished, and the need to share our stories and reflect on how our stories and God's story continue to intersect.

Pastor Rebecca Shjerven

The gospel texts we read in worship throughout the summer help us imagine the kingdom of God. It is like a sower tossing seed, a woman baking bread, a mustard seed, a treasure. Jesus' descriptions of the reign of God never fail to excite me. With the seed of Christ alive in us, we grow in faith and bear fruit that nourishes God's hungry world. I can think of no more meaningful way to spend my life!

As one of your pastors I have a ringside seat for watching this miraculous growth. St. Mark's is a community in which the fruit of faith is abundant. This past year I have witnessed your care for both friend and stranger. The Caregiver Support group is a circle of encouragement for those engaged in caring for a loved one. Your tender care for each other is a sign of the kingdom. The "Take-Them-A-Meal" program continues to match generous and willing cooks with those who, due to surgery or other interruptions, need an extra hand with meals. You welcome and continue to offer support to families who have come to Pierce County as refugees. Some of these new neighbors have become friends. These are just a sample of the new ministries that have taken root and grown in the last year. These new ministries, along with our established ministries, are able to flourish because of your generosity. The way you share your time, talent and treasure is a sign of the reign of God among us.



I'd like to offer a particular word of remembrance and thanksgiving for Arthur and Bernice Bowers. The bequest they left to St. Mark's has already blessed our congregation. The money they dedicated to scholarships allowed 13 students to receive awards this year, nearly double that of past years. An Endowed Scholarship Fund was established with the ELCA which will assist college students for many years to come. In addition, as a congregation we were able to donate \$18,000 to Synod Scholarships for seminary students. What a gift! We give thanks to God for the generosity and insight of the Bowers family.

On a final note, it was such a joy to celebrate my 25th ordination anniversary with you. Thank you for the cards, the kind words, the amazing reception and most of all, for being my companions in faith. I look forward to seeing where the Spirit leads us in the year to come!

God's Peace,
Pastor Rebecca Shjerven

Thank you for allowing me to be the vanguard of this ministry of St. Mark's for members of our faith community who for one reason or another are not able to be as active in our congregational life as they once were. On your behalf, I and members of our Visitation Team are able to bring them the nourishment of Word and Sacrament that is shared weekly in communal worship here. We are privileged to hear and encouraged by faith stories shared of God's faithfulness in past years, and especially of how God's faithfulness rings true in new challenges of diminished abilities or illness. The good courage of these good souls in our midst is most amazing. They bear witness to us that the promises of God are sustaining, even for some to the time "when evening comes and the busy world is hushed, and the fever of life is over, and our work is done...and there is peace at the last." It is high honor to walk with such saints.

And it is high honor to serve with you, to be embraced by your gifts and stories, and to do so as a partner with a gifted and dedicated staff. Thank you for your vision. Thank you for this partnership.

Rev. Phil Rue, Visitation Pastor

Our Mission, Vision, and Ministry

Our Mission:

We are a people and a place for God's grace, claimed and called by Jesus Christ to worship, witness, learn, serve, and reach out with words and deeds of love.

Our Vision:

- ◆ St. Mark's is a place in which every person is spiritually nourished.
- ◆ St. Mark's is a congregation in which all persons are active in our mission.
- ◆ St. Mark's is a church that is connected to the larger, more diverse human community in which we both offer and receive gifts.

Our Ministry:

We provide a place for God's grace.

- ◆ *We encourage each person to steward the gift of our facility through hands-on care and financial support.*
- ◆ *We nurture a congregational culture of hospitality, creating gracious space for people to grow in relationship with God and with one another.*
- ◆ *We share our facilities with the broader community, in fitting with our mission.*

We invite all people to receive the gospel of Jesus Christ and the fullness of God's grace through worship where we are gathered, nourished and sent to be Christ's body in the world.

- ◆ *We encourage each person to develop a practice of weekly worship and daily prayer.*
- ◆ *We provide engaging, renewing worship for all generations, connected to opportunities for hospitality and fellowship.*
- ◆ *We extend hospitality to all who come to worship, with particular attention given to those who are not members of our congregation.*

We share God's story and our stories to witness to God's love.

- ◆ *We encourage each person to reflect on ways in which faith is central to his/her life.*
- ◆ *We nurture a congregational culture of holy listening and storytelling.*
- ◆ *We share our stories of faith in the broader community, and listen to the diverse stories of those outside the walls of our church.*

We learn by providing opportunities for all generations to explore their diverse stories in light of God's story in order to answer Christ's call.

- ◆ *We encourage each person to be intentional about his/her continued formation in the Christian faith.*
- ◆ *We nurture a congregational culture that honors and enriches the faith formation of children, youth and adults through cross-generational experiences.*
- ◆ *We learn from the skills and stories of those in the broader community, and provide opportunities for congregation and community to learn together*

We serve God by generously giving our time, talent, treasure and by sharing all the resources God has given us.

- ◆ *We encourage each person to prayerfully consider how he/she will serve God by sharing his/her gifts.*
- ◆ *We nurture a congregational culture of generosity and humble service.*
- ◆ *We care for our broader community and the world God made by living out our baptismal calling in all aspects of our daily life.*

We reach out to one another with words and deeds of love.

- ◆ *We encourage each person to extend care to those in need, and to receive care during time of need.*
- ◆ *We nurture a congregational culture of loving care by providing both formal and informal opportunities to connect to each other in times of sorrow and in times of celebration.*
- ◆ *We commit to being a public presence in our community in order to share the love and justice of God with all people.*

Pastoral Acts January 2016-June 2017

Baptisms	Funerals	Funerals Continued
Phoebe Rose Martin	Thelma Laird	Lavonne Dorothy McClellan
Liam James Mahugh	Shannon Merchant	Norma Borgford
Camden Karl Mahugh	Michael Trygstad	Rick Coover
Amanda Minnis	David Ostrander	Volly Grande
Inara Minnis	Hazel Lund	Ed Bushnell
Silas Minnis	Hilde Filar	Jeanne Forseth
Tyler McLeod	Virginia Faye Zoutte	Doris Larsen
Ali Corinne Jacobson	Paul Theodore Burton	Dennis Hulbert
Andi Leigh Jacobson	Arthur Bowers	Marvin Peterson
Beau Lynn Jacobson	Susan Zatkovich	
Jonathan Gregory Amen	Betty Meyers Gloyne	Wedding
Mack Anderson	Steve Rodning	Hunter Blakney and Drew
Langley Ann Kaga Shearer	Genevieve Hedman	Clement
Reeve Michael McGregor	Eve Rajecki	
Kelcie Lynn Marie Pedee	Bertha Dobbe	
Maisy James Baylor	Randy Mosher	
Emilie Binja	Gilbert Comstock	
Jon Larsen		

In our desire to answer Christ's call, St. Mark's Lutheran Church by The Narrows remains committed to ministry in the areas of Peace and Justice, Outreach, Congregational Care, Worship and Music, Stewardship, Finance and Operations, Faith Formation with Children and Youth, and Faith Formation with Adults. Throughout 2016/17, each of these ministry areas flourished, thanks to the generous sharing of time, talent, and treasure by many people! The next several pages contain updates from each ministry area.

ADULT FAITH FORMATION

As a team, the Adult Faith Formation Standing Committee strives to facilitate a variety of faith formation opportunities ranging from fellowship to formal studies. Faith formation offerings are facilitated by a combination of pastors and congregation members. If you are interested in facilitating a class or study, please contact Pastor Shjerven or Mary Jo Larsen. We look to congregation member interests and passions when planning series. If you have a passion for a particular formation activity or group, please contact us for ideas on moving forward.

AFF continued to sponsor/host several Bible studies, classes, and formation activities throughout 2016-2017. In the Fall, as part of the Care of Creation series, we welcomed **Dr. Kevin O'Brien, Religion Profession from PLU**. He presented an Adult Forum session on environmental justice and a lunch session on the cloud of witnesses we can learn from in striving for environmental justice including Martin Luther King Jr and Cesar Chavez. Throughout the year Pr. John Rosenberg led a monthly Adult Forum on **the communion of Faith and Science**. A new Bible Study, **"Crossways"** joined the rotation of our regular studies, led by Dr. Traci Drake. Small groups met during the weeks of winter for spiritual growth and friendship. St. Mark's reads was extra popular this year as we read and discussed "Healing the Heart of Democracy" by Parker Palmer. Thank you to all who lead ongoing studies and those who volunteer their time and talent to host particular topics and sessions. We look forward to a new year of growing in faith together.

PEACE AND JUSTICE

With all the generous contributions of the members of St. Marks, it seems like the whole congregation belongs to the Peace and Justice Ministry Team. We have helped to provide guidance, coordination and leadership for our very active faith community.

Globally

- Sewing quilts and donating supplies for Lutheran World Relief personal, baby care, and school kits that reach people in areas of great need, like Syria.
- Sending mission teams to build homes Mexico and Guatemala as well as supporting a woman's shelter in Nepal.
- Selling fair-trade products, on the first Sunday of every month and at the Holiday Bazaar, to provide a sustainable wage and income to people across the globe.
- Participation in Habitat for Humanity builds in various countries by St. Mark's members.

Nationally

- Advocating on hunger issues through Bread for the World and the lobbying efforts of the ELCA.

Locally

- Providing lunches through the DeLong backpack program and providing companionship through DeLong's Lunch Buddy program.
- Tutoring at the Peace Community Center in Tacoma's Hilltop.
- Providing shelter and food in partnership with the Family Housing Network; increased to hosting three weeks per year
- Through Empowering Life, hosted "St. Mark's Lutheran Worship" at WA Correction Center for Women (WCCW – Purdy). Provided backpacks and school supplies for Mission Creek Correction Center for Women (Belfair) and WCCW moms. Empowering Life also provided "Confident Parenting" Family Renewal Retreat and "Grief, Loss and Life Change" classes.
- Participation in home builds of Habitat for Humanity. St. Marks has teams of 10 – 15 volunteers participating in 3 dates during the year.
- Lending refugee resettlement support by providing 44 bathroom supply kits to refugee families in our community. Supported a Congolese family of 5 with two months of temporary housing, helping furnish their apartment, providing transportation for medical and other appointments, mentoring the adult children to secure employment, and welcoming them into membership and participation in youth and adult activities at the church.
- Participation in the local food bank including serving on its leadership board.

Financially

- Contributing directly to many of the ministries detailed here including Habitat for Humanity and Bread for the World through individual member and congregational contributions.
- Collecting additional funds weekly in the hunger basket (\$8,406.00 for 2015) and distributing it to global and local ministries to alleviate the pain of going hungry.

Members of the Peace and Justice Team, Herman Diers, Joan Nelson, Catherine Terrill, Elizabeth Skarshaug, Ron Kempe, Paula Friedman, Kathleen Campbell, Tom Geary, Ben Summerour, Rebecca Shjerven, and John Avery thank the congregation for all its support through prayer and action and for its generosity.

STEWARDSHIP

The Stewardship Committee and the Campaign Committee was very active in this 2016-2017 fiscal year. While our fiscal calendar shifted to a July 1 - June 30th calendar, we began to carefully monitor what that might do for our cyclical funding that had in the prior years been a calendar year.

The committee focused this year on building an annual calendar of stewardship activities, messages, and temple talks that not only lifted up the financial gifts of our congregation but also highlighted the time and talent that often times are quiet or unnoticed but, nevertheless, critical to our mission and operations. We continue to have a year-round discussion about what stewardship can look like and feel like in our church and in our community.

The Blessing in Abundance Campaign was a demonstration of the commitment our church has not only to strengthening our programs and ministry, but also an extension into our community through a 10% tithe this campaign will make toward Peace Community Center and Rock City Church. We are beyond grateful that the campaign exceeded our 1-million-dollar goal and thank God for the abundance in all of our lives that will now result in so many additional blessings that these funds will provide.

The budget for annual giving was increased this year and with the additional challenge of shifting the fiscal year timing, we experienced some gaps toward our goal nearing the end of the fiscal year. However, we were also blessed by two very generous bequests which were cause for reflection and thanksgiving for the lives of those who had served God in our church and who continue to serve through planned giving.

The Learn, Serve and Grow forms were distributed this spring and the stewardship committee intends to connect year-round with those groups who provided time and talent through their service in the programs of the church. In June, the committee had a retreat to begin to plan the 2017-2018 year and become more synergetic with the activities and themes of the church year.

As always, thank you for your generosity through your time, talent and treasures for St. Marks.

Respectfully Submitted on Behalf of the Stewardship Committee, Amy Wigstrom

OUTREACH

The goal of outreach ministry at St. Mark's is to develop and strengthen relationships with people in our neighborhood and in the diverse community of our city. The neighborhood Block Party that we hosted in 2016 brought many folks together, and we are always looking for new opportunities to do events like that. Monthly Theology on Tap gatherings for young adults were held at a local brew pub, and we are planning to expand that into a partnership with two other churches in the Fall of 2017. We also plan to offer an additional Theology on Tap gathering for adults of every age. The monthly Interfaith Encounters that we organized and led with other Christians, Jews, and Muslims in Tacoma were well attended and they led to additional opportunities for relationship building. A good example of that has been the regular gatherings of women from St. Mark's, Temple Beth El, and the Islamic Center. As we consider how God is calling us to stand with vulnerable people in our community, such as refugees and immigrants, we have sought to develop more partnerships with local faith communities and with partner organizations such as Associated Ministries. With all that needs to be done, we look forward to deepening those ties in the months and years ahead.

CONGREGATIONAL CARE

The Congregational Care Committee has undertaken several projects over the past year to enhance support for our members:

Take Them A Meal is a web based program to assist in the organization and delivery of meals. Almost 30 volunteers have signed up to be available to take meals to members who have had a hospitalization or other family issue. In this first year, 12 families have been served. Pastors identify families who could benefit from meals. These families are contacted to determine needs, food preferences and times of delivery.

Prayer Shawl Ministry has been developed to provide shawls to members of the congregation who are undergoing medical issues or experiencing other difficult situations in their lives. Anyone can request a prayer shawl and give it to a friend in need. A new brochure and prayer tags for each shawl have been developed. Over 20 shawls were blessed at a church service in January. In addition, a monthly knitting group has been established for knitters/crocheters to come together for fellowship. Shawls are kept in a closet in the church office. A clipboard recording of giving indicates a steady ministry of ongoing distribution.

Caregiver Support Meetings have been established to provide fellowship and support for members who are caring for a loved one. Meetings, led by Pastor Shjerven are held twice a month in the Upper Fireside Room.

PARISH NURSES

The Parish Nurse Ministry continues to offer blood pressure screening on the last Sunday of the month. A Parish Nurse is available to visit with or to consult with interested members and to provide health counseling and information or information on community health resources. Through the Ruth Saathoff Memorial Fund, this program has provided \$100 dollar annual scholarships to members of the congregation enrolled in a school of nursing. The Memorial Fund is also available to those nurses who complete the Faith Community Nursing Course and who are interested in volunteering at St. Marks in this way. Health Ministry can be as varied and diverse as the congregations they serve. Please contact Pastor Shjerven if you are interested in serving or have ideas for programs and service at St. Marks.

STEPHEN MINISTERS

St. Mark's together with University Place Presbyterian Church will be having another Stephen Ministry Training Course. The classes will be held on 15 Saturdays between September 2017 and April 2018.

Stephen Ministers are congregation members trained by Stephen Leaders to offer high-quality, one-to-one Christian care to people going through tough times. A Stephen Minister usually provides care to one person at a time, meeting with that person once a week for about an hour. Stephen Ministers also gather as a group with their Stephen Leaders for supervision and continuing education. Current Stephen Ministers are: Lori Clark, Ginny Conley, Linda Durant, Jerry Foss, Char Leone, Judy Rucker and Ronda Shelton. Any of them can give you more information and answer questions you have about the Stephen Ministry program.

To find out more about Stephen Ministry and the dates and topics of the Stephen Ministry training contact Sarah Callow 253 566 9233.

"Bear one another's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ" (Galatians 6:2)

CHILDREN & YOUTH FAITH FORMATION

The **Children and Youth Faith Formation Committee** engages in the formation of disciples by providing opportunities for children, youth and their families to be nurtured by God's word and to engage in activities and worship that will encourage Christian growth.

Team Members: Char Leone (Children's Faith Coordinator until September 2016); Celesta Smith (Sunday School Coordinator as of September 2016); Bennett Fors III (Council Rep. until December 2016); Janai Issacson (Council Rep. as of June 2017); Mary Jo Larsen (Adult Faith Formation Rep.); Anne Zimmerman (Preschool); Linda Wimberley (Parent Rep); Carl Steingrebe (Confirmation); Julie Milasich(Parent Rep.); George Meers (Parent Rep. until August 2016) Ingelaurie Lisher (Director of Children, Youth and Family Ministry); and Pastor Rebecca Shjerven (Pastoral Staff)

Highlights of the year: July 2016-June 2017

- In September, we said goodbye to Char Leone who stepped down from her role as Children's Faith Coordinator, and welcomed Celesta Smith as our Sunday School Coordinator.
- Milestone events for children 3 years to 5th grade and their parents were held throughout the year: Welcome to Sunday school (3-year-old—September); 1st Communion (early elementary--October); Lord's Prayer (1st grade children--February); Bibles (3rd graders--April); Created in God's Image (5th grade—June).
- Sunday, October 30th , Twelve 9th grade youth Affirmed their Baptisms at the 11am service.
- Eleven youth received their graduation quilts from the congregation on June 11th.
- 17 youth and 7 adults headed to Flathead Lutheran Bible Camp in Montana for a week of service.
- 85 children and many adult and youth volunteers attended VBS August. 1-5. Thanks to all the leaders and teachers for your hard work and support.
- Wednesday Evenings for Children includes Holy Moly for ages 5-8 and Music programs for preschool to 4th grade.
- Thanks to Amy Wigstrom, Cooper Sherry and the Praise Band under the direction of Darren Kerbs for directing the K-5th grade Christmas program and to the Sunday morning preschool teachers and Diane Busch for leading the preschool Sunday school children in their program at 11am.
- The Steingrebe's, Wascher's, Reynolds' and Smith's continue to support the youth by hosting the Epiphany Event and Music on the Lawn fundraisers, which were well attended and the additional support for the youth and children's programs is greatly appreciated.
- Youth Group and Youth Choir for grades 6-12th meets on Thursday evenings throughout the school year.



WORSHIP & MUSIC MINISTRY

The Worship and Music Ministry Team continues to support the most important focus of our church life together, our Worship Experience along with the Music that supports that experience!

We have a very strong Ministry Staff here at St Marks and our goal is to support that staff. We have worked to have our committee representative of all three worship services and Wednesday's service. To that end, with Pastor Jan's input, we changed the name of the Wednesday Compline Service to Evensong to represent a wider scope of worship experience that we can develop. During the Winter season, the team attended all three services on the same Sunday in March. It helped both the team and staff (who prepare and lead those services). The team saw the work and continuity that goes into providing our congregants with meaningful services presented diverse ways for different worship experiences, but with the same core message. It helped staff as team could provide feedback the services and if any part could use refining.

We have great appreciation for all the volunteer staff who provide support for all the services: ushers, greeters, communion bread bakers, communion servers, lectors, on the list goes. The office staff diligently works juggling all those schedules and we thank them. Cooper and Darren are on our team and regularly attend meetings to share and receive our input.

WOMEN OF ST. MARK'S

The Women of St. Mark's are an active group doing the work of Jesus in our hearts, our Church and in the community.

During the summer of our fiscal year beginning in July of 2016, the women participated in "Craft Nights". These are monthly gatherings to share our talents and time in creating items to sell at our annual Bazaar. We worked on several different items including Wooden Gift Tags, Snowman Chocolate Bars and Christmas Garlands.

In November we held our annual Bazaar. Over 100 members participated, and we raised over \$10,000, 50% of which went out into the community.

December began with our Advent Brunch led by Barbara Meyers. Sharon Bonea charmed us with an Angel Play and all had the opportunity to create clothespin angels. We were sustained with a hearty breakfast provided by the Wascher's and served by the men.

In April of 2017 we concluded with a Spring Luncheon attended by over 50 women. We were enchantingly entertained by the musical talents of Cooper Sherry and Daren Kerbs. All participants were able to make a handmade card for a special occasion.

We are encouraged by the participation in all the activities of the Women of St. Mark's and look forward to a promising new year.

REPORTS FROM PROGRAM DIRECTORS



Celebration Ensemble (8:30 Worship) continues its ministry of living into the role of “liturgical hosts” through music. The choir seeks to enhance the spirit of worship and the song of the congregation by means of diverse music from traditions around the world. As such, emphasis remains on eclectic music from many countries. It has maintained a vital membership, with 15-20 members singing regularly in worship.

Canticle Choir (11:00 Worship) has developed into a robust, yet small choir of talented singers that provides traditional SATB anthems and psalms for the 11:00 worship service. There are 8-12 members at a typical rehearsal, and the group has come to be made up primarily of worshippers native to the late service. The group consists of many professionally trained singers and accomplished musicians, compensating for its small membership with vocal expertise and the ability to learn challenging music very quickly.

St. Mark’s Chorale was begun in the last decade in an effort to provide an opportunity for members to participate in “big choir” anthems which our 3-service structure normally makes difficult to achieve. In this choir, attendees of all three services are encouraged to participate in this choir that welcomes people of all ages and all levels of talent and experience regardless of which service they might normally attend. The choir has met to sing once per quarter, often involving children and youth as well as adults.

Wednesday Night Children’s Choirs, between Jubilation Choir (grades 3-5,) Joyful Noise Choir (grades K-2,) and Little Angels Choir (ages 3+) there are around 50 elementary-aged children who have been involved with the choir programs at St. Marks, 33 of whom who participated regularly in 2016. The curriculum grows from the bottom up, focusing on music reading, choral technique, community and team building, and God’s love for and through all members. Each of the choirs have sung in worship throughout the year, and all had the chance to be a part of our Christmas Musicals in December and our Easter Vigil last Spring. This year, we ended with a Spring Concert which featured favorite songs from throughout the year.

Youth Choir continued its development this year, with the 6-12th grade members focusing on higher-level singing and choral skills, as well as leadership skills for worship music. The group sang throughout the year at various services, and joined with the adult choirs for an inter-generational mass choir for Good Friday. Youth Choir also participated in the end-of-the-year Spring Choir Concert.

The Bells of St. Marks have enjoyed a year blessed by the joyful and expert direction of Karen Moats, who continues her ministry with this group. Anthems at all three services were offered by the bells nearly each month of the year, with special inclusion for Christmas Eve and Holy Week services. Karen has offered a skill development and exploration series throughout the Summer months. New members are always sought after, so please contact Karen Moats if you have any interest in ringing.

Additional Ministries:

Marimba Camp (Summer): Cooper and local guest artist Jeff Brahe teamed up for a weeklong experience with Zimbabwean singing, dancing, and marimba playing with the children and youth of St. Marks. Elementary aged children met in the morning and Jr. and Sr. High aged children met in the afternoon. Concerts were given at the end of the week along with a coffee hour expo the following Sunday.

Music on the Lawn (Summer): Many youth performers took place in this annual fundraiser event which gives performers the chance to offer non-sacred musical performances for attendees. Preparation for the event gives performers a chance to work one-on-one with Cooper for a month or so in advance of the day of the show to develop their skills.

Children’s Christmas Musical (Advent): Volunteer director Amy Wigstrom again provided expert organization and leadership for this beloved annual event in which all Sunday-school children and children’s choir members are able to put their talents and hard work into action.

Cooper Sherry, Director of Music Ministry

REPORTS FROM PROGRAM DIRECTORS



Praise Team

The Praise Team continues to enjoy its weekly role as musicians and worship leaders at the 9:45am service on Sunday mornings. The group is richly blessed with talented vocalists and instrumentalists as we rotate these musicians over an eight-week schedule. I personally enjoy the collaborative creativity as we blend styles of contemporary Christian music, sacred hymns, gospel and global selections, and how we are able to customize and tailor this music as much as possible.

As I reflect on my tenure at St Mark's, I'm fortunate to experience who we are to each other as individuals, the talents we are able to share with each other and other congregants, our continued journey to improve and grow as musicians, and what lies ahead for us as worship leaders. If anyone who attends our service has comments or suggestions for me - I'd love to hear!

Darren Kerbs, Director of Music for Contemporary Worship



While reflecting over the 2016 year, I am continually amazed and blessed that I am called to serve this congregation and walk alongside children, youth and their families. Not surprisingly each year I find that something changes in my area of ministry—the youth graduate, job titles change, and staff members step down and others are hired on.

It was with hesitation that I accepted Char Leone's resignation this past fall as she stepped down from her role as Coordinator of Children's Faith Formation. Char served in this role for many years and helped shaped the vision and mission of our current Sunday morning preschool-4th grade children's ministry milestone program—and for this and her ministry and I am truly thankful. In October, we invited Celesta Smith to serve as our Sunday School Coordinator on a temporary basis for the school year. As of June 2017, I am happy to say we have offered her this position on a more permanent basis, serving 30 hours per month on a 10-month contract. I look forward to serving alongside her as she grows in this area of ministry.

Over the past year, there have also been a couple changes to my job title as well. In the fall, Children's ministry was added to my title to reflect my current job description and director's role more accurately. Then in January, the ELCA adopted one Word and Service roster, and I officially became a Deacon in the ELCA. Which basically means other being called an Associate in Ministry (AIM), nothing else has changed in my area of ministry or job description.

In the summer of 2016 the youth experienced a change in the location for the Montana service trip. After 7 summers of the middle school youth going to the Rocky Boy reservation we headed to Flathead Lutheran Bible Camp near Kalispell for a week of service learning in the Kalispell Community, camp activities and faith formation. This was a great experience and we are headed there again this year.

In addition to my time here at St. Mark's I continue to serve the larger church and currently serve as the Region 1 representative for a synodical youth leadership team of the ELCA.

As life continues to change and my call evolves, I want to thank everyone for your continued support of the ministry in which I serve. I am truly blessed by each of you who step up and say YES to volunteering with Sunday School, VBS, overnight trips, youth group nights and events, fundraisers and so much more. I could not do this job without you.

ST. MARK'S PRESCHOOL

***Learning, growing, and sharing
in God's love is at the heart of
St. Mark's preschool philosophy.***

Anne Zimmerman
Preschool Director



Budget Report 2016-17

Beginning Balance (9/1/2016) \$11057.33

Income

Fundraising/Donations	9349.62
Tuition/Registration	83630.84
Total Income	\$92980.46

Expenses

Curriculum/class supplies	3847.42
Donation to St. Mark's Church	3600.00
Event/Fundraising Expenses	2444.71
Field Trips (reimbursed)	1054.38
Furnishings/Maintenance	678.39
Marketing & Memberships	727.60
Miscellaneous	44.19
Office Supplies	902.57
Payroll	60799.72
Pet Care	353.19
Snacks & cleaning supplies	401.25
Staff development	855.68
Teacher /Student gifts	99.28
Total Expenses	\$75808.38

Grand total + \$17172.08

Ending Balance (6/30/17) \$ 28229.41

This past school year, St. Mark's Preschool had 41 students enrolled in classes for ages 2.5 years to age six. Seventeen percent of our preschool students are part of St. Mark's congregation and the other 83% are from our surrounding communities including Gig Harbor, Tacoma, University Place, Bonney Lake and Midland.

We have been working hard this year to generate funds for new playground equipment. Our first St. Mark's Preschool Golf Fundraiser was a huge success, not only for raising money, but for bringing together families from the preschool and the congregation and for mixing generations.

Our kids get a great mix of art time, play time, and learning time while they are here in the mornings. The pastors of St. Mark's lead chapel in the sanctuary for our older students each Wednesday. We have continued to make monthly visits to the Tacoma Lutheran Retirement Community this year as well. Our field trips out into the community this year included time at the Pumpkin Patch, Tacoma Glass Museum, the Vashon Ferry, and Tacoma Musical Playhouse, and Tacoma Nature Center amongst others.

Our staff attended an overnight ELEA conference in Everett, WA this year and continue to work hard to make the experience of the children and their families at St. Mark's Preschool a positive one. Thank you so much for the opportunity to serve as the Director of this special children's program!

Respectfully, Anne Zimmerman

GENERAL FUND

Fiscal year 2016-2017 (FY16-17) ended on a positive note financially, with *actual* bottom line numbers matching the annual *budget* for our combined General and Mortgage (i.e., operating) Funds. Annual income was \$1,056,980 while expenses were \$1,056,888 - yielding net growth to the General Fund of \$92. Although we lagged budgeted income each month since August 2016, our expenses were commensurately below budget. While the net numbers are rather benign, it is worth looking at the details in order to better understand what happened throughout the year.

Offerings for FY16-17 were \$1,047,901. This was \$36,206 below budgeted offerings, but \$15,392 (or 1.5%) greater than total offerings for the prior fiscal year. The year-over-year growth in actual offerings is a testament to the commitment and generosity of the members and friends of St. Mark's, and we are indeed very grateful for your gifts. The fact that actual offerings significantly lagged budgeted offerings reflects our collective "stretch" in growth from one fiscal year to the next. While we did not fully meet our targeted growth in income, we have been richly blessed while implementing our ministry goals and have tempered next year's budget to ease our reliance on growth. If actual offerings continue to grow in FY17-18 as they have been, we will be able to accomplish even more together, spreading the love of Christ through our pastoral teaching and other ministries.

Expenses for FY16-17 were \$1,056,888. This was \$35,677 below budgeted expenses, but \$71,768 (or 7.3%) greater than total expenses for the prior fiscal year. The significant "under-spending" versus budget can be largely attributed to four main factors. **First**, there were several major staffing changes during the first quarter of the fiscal year, which led to savings versus budget during the transitional periods. Additionally, at the end of March 2017, the Office Coordinator and Receptionist position moved from full-time to part-time in an employee-initiated change, which meant meaningful savings in benefits costs over the remainder of the fiscal year. **Second**, we were fortunate to have volunteer cooks for Wednesday dinners at the beginning of the year and for Sunday lunches throughout much of the year. **Third**, there are always differences between actual and budgeted numbers when projecting building expenses, mid-year provider-mandated benefits changes, etc. **Finally**, your staff and ministry team leaders have demonstrated strong fiscal management and stewardship of our collective resources.

It is important also to highlight the significant growth to our balance sheet in FY16-17 both from generous bequests and the launch of "Blessing in Abundance," our mortgage principal retirement campaign. We received more than \$760,000 in total designated and undesignated bequests from the Arthur and Bernice Bowers and Nina de Rek estates. We also received nearly \$200,000 in donations directly to Blessing in Abundance.

Reaching Out by Sharing Our Gifts

As part of our commitment to Christian stewardship, St. Mark's joyfully gives out of our General Fund offering income to support dozens of mission partners at home and around the world. For Fiscal Year 2016-17, this General Fund benevolence giving totaled \$81,574. In addition, offerings to the Hunger Basket and various fundraisers throughout the year also provide significant support to other worthy causes.

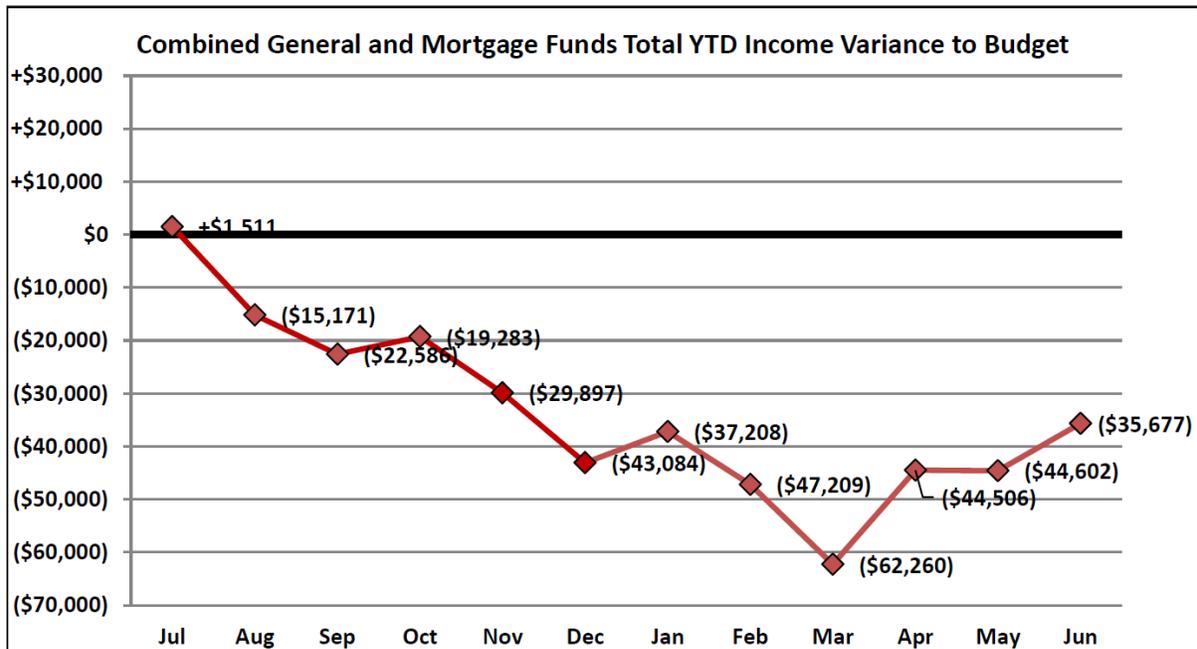
Mission partners for Fiscal Year 2016-17 General Fund and Hunger Basket benevolence included: The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Southwestern Washington Synod Campaign, Pacific Lutheran University, Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary, Lutheran Community Services, ELCA World Hunger Fund, Living Stones Congregation at the Shelton Prison, Lutheran World Relief, Rock City Mission Congregation, Lutheran Immigration & Refugee Services, Peace Community Center, Salishan Mission, Lutheran Volunteer Corps, Tacoma Lutheran Retirement Community, Associated Ministries of Pierce County, Bread for the World, Habitat for Humanity, Emergency Food Network, L'Arche Community, Tacoma Community House, Holden Village, Tacoma Rescue Mission, Rocky Boy Mission, Nativity House, China Connect, FISH Food Bank, Empowering Life, Family Housing, Greater Tacoma Peace Prize, and WPPC in Nepal.

**St. Mark's Total Income and Expense - General and Mortgage Funds Combined
FY 2016-17 thru June Actual vs. Budget**

	Jul-Jun Actual	Jul-Jun Budget	Var. from Budget
Income:			
Offerings	\$1,047,901	\$1,084,107	(\$36,206)
Other Income	9,079	8,550	529
Total Income	\$1,056,980	\$1,092,657	(\$35,677)
Expense:			
Ministry/Benevolence	\$112,718	\$124,673	(\$11,955)
Facilities/Admin	138,426	145,760	(7,334)
Mortgage	191,793	191,793	0
Staff	613,951	630,339	(16,388)
Total Expense	\$1,056,888	\$1,092,565	(\$35,677)
Income vs. Expense	\$92	\$92	\$0

Mortgage Details:	Jul-Jun Payments		Balance at 6/30/17
	Interest	Principal*	
	\$100,228	\$191,565	\$2,126,823

* includes \$100,000 additional principal payment in Dec 2016.





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