



**st. mark's**  
 UNITED METHODIST CHURCH  
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Periodicals  
 Postage Paid  
 Permit 1623

Time Value Material  
Date Mailed: November 22, 2016

*Postmaster:*  
*Please deliver by December 1, 2016*

Address Label

**Advent Season Sermons**

November 27 Isaiah 2: 1-5  
*God Stretches the Nations*

December 4 Isaiah 11: 1-10  
*God Stretches Relationships*

**God Stretches History**

December 11 Luke 1: 46-55  
*God Stretches Social Possibilities*

December 18 Matthew 1: 18-25  
*God Stretches Every Human Idea*

**Christmas Services at St. Mark's**

The following services will be offered at St. Mark's  
 on Thursday, December 24, Christmas Eve. All are invited.

**5:00pm: Family Service**

**9:00pm: Candles, Carols and Communion Service**

**Christmas Day: One service only at 10:00am**



# Markings

Published by St. Mark's United Methodist Church December 1, 2016 Volume 68, Number 12

## MOON LECTURE FALL 2016 SERIES

### LAURA NIRIDER

Clinical professor of law and co-director of the Center  
 on Wrongful Convictions of Youth at Northwestern University of Law in Chicago  
 and profiled on Netflix Global Series: *Making a Murderer*.

**FRIDAY, DECEMBER 2, 7:00PM**

Laura Nirider is a Clinical Assistant Professor of Law and Co-Director of the Center on Wrongful Convictions of Youth (CWCY) at Northwestern Pritzker School of Law in Chicago. Nirider represents individuals who were wrongfully convicted of crimes when they were children or teenagers. Her clients have included Brendan Dassey, whose case was profiled in the Netflix Global series *Making a Murderer*, and Damien Echols of the West Memphis Three, whose case was profiled in the documentary *West of Memphis*.

In addition to her courtroom work, Nirider regularly publishes scholarly and practitioner-focused articles on interrogations and post-conviction relief.



In partnership with the International Association of Chiefs of Police, she has co-authored one of the only existing juvenile interrogation protocols. She is also a frequent presenter on interrogations at defender and law enforcement training conferences around the country and has been featured in film and television programs as an expert on interrogations. Recently, she co-authored an amicus curiae brief that was cited by the U.S. Supreme Court in *J.D.B. v. North Carolina* for the proposition that the risk of false confession is "all the more troubling...and all the more acute...when the subject of custodial interrogation is a juvenile."

For tickets or more information, visit [www.stmarksumc.com/upcomingmoon](http://www.stmarksumc.com/upcomingmoon).



**TICKETS**

General \$30  
 Student \$20

Reflections from Rev. Alan Jones, Pastor



The season of Advent is starting... a time of preparing ourselves for the birth of the Christ child at Christmas. The retail culture wants us to "get in the spirit" and celebrate Christmas throughout the month of December. The wisdom of the church designated the four weeks before Christmas as a season of prayer of fasting, going back, at least, until the fifth century, and maybe much earlier.

Our Advent theme as a congregation is focused around the ways in which God "stretches" our experience of life and faith. God is always calling us to stretch our understandings and our experiences. The Spirit of God works in us, enabling us to develop new understandings and new behaviors in response to changing circumstances. The spiritual climate in which we are operating is calling out new commitment in all of us to counter the negative forces of prejudice and exclusion and to build up the forces of compassion and care. So much cruel language has been in the air in recent weeks and we know that words of tenderness and kindness are the words of the God we know in Jesus Christ.

As Christmas approaches, I am aware that there is often a "spirit in the air" of kindness and compassion. People who usually don't listen or don't care around Christmas day find themselves listening and caring in ways they don't the rest of the year. Our goal is to make Christmas spirit a year-round spirit. Our goal is to help all of God's people live without fear and live with tenderness towards each other.

St. Mark's is designed to be a safe place where everybody can feel at home and know that they are loved. This is the reason why the Christ child came into the world. Advent is a season of hope. Hope is not just a sentiment it is also a plan, a commitment to do things differently so that the world will be more hospitable and caring. The Christmas story is a story rooted in a history of political cruelty and local hospitality. No room at the inn became we can work something out... there is a place for you, come on in.

For me, this year, Advent will be a season of healing for my body. But because I will be less active, it will also be a special season of spiritual renewal. A time for reflecting, praying and breathing deep. You will be in my prayers during this season. I will be reflecting on our ministries during the year ahead and seeking God's direction for how we should proceed. I invite you to join me in this process. St. Mark's has been created by God to be a community of kindness and compassion, a community of faith and healing. How can we communicate this gospel to our neighborhood and region in such a way that we can "transform the world" around us with the healing love of Jesus Christ?

And so, I wish you a holy Advent. Please don't rush to Christmas. The gift will still be there on Christmas morning... don't rush it! Take time, breathe, listen and allow God to stretch your soul mind and body in ways you never imagined.

ADVENTURE  
MAKE & TAKE CRAFT FAIR

An afternoon full of crafts, music, goodies, fun and a soup lunch.



Sunday, November 27  
12:30 - 4:00pm  
in MacMurdo Hall



Choose from more than 20 tables to make decorations for yourself or gifts for friends and family. Music will fill the air, and there will be fun for everyone - all for free! All ages are invited to join in the fun.

Please bring a can of food for our food closet and a goodie to share at the snack table.

Prayer Requests

Ginny Baldauf  
Gerry Fenimore  
Naomi Halm  
Hinshaw Family  
Holop Family  
Sean Kuhl  
Bill Livesay  
Mary McCullough  
Marshall Family



Steve Mitchell  
Vivian Noble  
Jim Peterson  
Becky Rule  
Avalee Skow  
Celeste Slaughter  
Snow Family  
Thomas/Tice Family

Stewardship Campaign for 2017

Commitment Sunday was November 13<sup>th</sup>. Many in the congregation turned in pledge cards that day. Perhaps you weren't here or needed more time to pray and think about the commitment. The Finance Committee makes plans for the coming year based on the pledge commitments. Please turn your pledge card in as soon as you are able.



With Sympathy



Please extend love and sympathy to the families of these who recently died:  
...Betty Holop, who died October 19. A memorial service was held on Saturday, November 19, at 3:00pm, in the Sanctuary. Please keep her family in your prayers.  
...Rev. Larry Hinshaw, who died November 13. Larry was active and beloved part of the congregation for many years, and part of the staff in 2009-2010. A memorial service was held on Sunday, November 20, in the Sanctuary. Please keep Doreen and the rest of the family in your prayers.

Super Seniors

Super Seniors will Celebrate the Christmas Season on December 8, beginning with a potluck lunch at 12:30pm, and followed by frosting Christmas cookies to share with visitors to the St. Mark's Food Closet. All are invited to bring a dish to share, your own table service, and join in the fun!



Holiday Help for Women and Children



For the last 30 years, Wellspring Women's Center has provided a place for women to socialize and take classes, in the Oak Park area. Over the next few weeks, Church Women United will be collecting items to deliver to Wellspring.

Their "Holiday Wish List" includes the following: women's new socks and underwear and travel-sized toiletries (shampoo, conditioner, soap, hand-sanitizer, lotion). Also needed are deodorant and small tissue packets. For the children: disposable diapers in sizes 4, 5, 6 and pull-ups. Baby items: wipes, wash, lotion, shampoo, blankets and bottles. Food items: instant oatmeal, peanut butter, paper towels, toilet paper and Kleenex.

Please bring items to the Lobby on Sunday, November 27, and place them in the marked container. The items will be delivered on Friday, December 2. Thank you for providing these needed items for women and children.

Sleeping Bag Drive for Winter Shelter

The Winter Shelter Program in Sacramento County is starting November 21. Although St. Mark's will not be hosting guests until the weeks of March 6 and March 20, sleeping bags are needed right away. If you would like to contribute a new or gently used sleeping bag, we will be collecting them at St. Mark's in the next few weeks.

Each night, guests receive a sleeping bag to take with them to the host church or synagogue as they find refuge from the cold, wet weather. The bags are laundered nightly and wear out quickly, so the program can use as many as they can gather! Please bring your sleeping bag to church on one of the next few Sundays. Contact Cheryl Fuller, 961-2029, if you have questions.



Sermons Available

A reminder: Printed copies of the sermons are available in the Lobby on the table on the right wall as you exit the Sanctuary. Look for past sermons and pick up the sermon from the previous week as you leave

Volunteers Needed

There is a need for volunteer Church Office telephone coverage on Tuesday and Friday afternoons. If you enjoy front desk work and are available, please call the Church Office, 483-7848.



## Everything You Ever Wanted to Know about St. Mark's, and Lunch, too

*Exploring St. Mark's* is a 5-part class series open to anyone and everyone interested in finding out more about St. Mark's. The next class series begins Sunday, January 22. The class will meet in Room E-21, on the second floor of the Education Building, right after the 11:00 service, about 12:30pm. A light lunch is provided and childcare is available if needed.

The topics for the five sessions are: *Living Faith and Worship*; *Methodist History and Tradition*; *the Quadrilateral and Preventive Grace*; *the Social Principles*; and *Ways to be Involved in St. Mark's*. Each class has a different discussion leader.



All are welcome—newcomers, folks wanting a refresher and those who are just curious—the more the merrier! For more information contact Jim and Barb Eychaner at [jbeychaner@gmail.com](mailto:jbeychaner@gmail.com). Sign up by contacting the Church Office at 483-7848.

## Interfaith Homeless Memorial Service

An interfaith homeless memorial service is being planned to remember our homeless neighbors who died in 2016. Reflections for the evening will be offered by Mayor Steinberg; Supervisor Kennedy; Rabbi Alfi, Congregation B'Nai Israel; Jessica Bartholow, Western Center on Law & Poverty; Angel Blue, Lakota, Lower Brule Tribe; Pastor Joy Johnson, Higher Hope Christian Church and Board Chair, and representatives from Area Congregations Together (ACT) and the Catholic Diocese of Sacramento. It will be held on Monday, December 19, at 7:00pm, at Trinity Episcopal Cathedral, 2620 Capitol Ave., Sacramento. Parking: Sutter Community Parking, 2701 N. Street (entrance on 27<sup>th</sup> – between Capitol and N St.). Tell the attendant you are parking for the event at Cathedral.

Sponsored by



## Let Us Not Rush to the Manger submitted by Wyn Cane

Let us not rush to the manger! We are granted approximately nine months to prepare for the birth of a child. Advent grants us the four weeks between Thanksgiving and December 25—four Sundays and the biggest shopping day of the year with some stores opening at midnight! There is not even time to digest the last bite of pumpkin pie or the last sip of coffee before rushing out to overload our shopping carts and credit cards.

Let's not rush to the manger! Yes, there are obligations. It is the season of giving and sharing our wealth, spreading the message; but not at the expense of the health of the journey or our spiritual well being.

There is perhaps the invitation to spend some time with Mary and Elizabeth. There are riches and treasures to discover, uncover, and celebrate in the first chapter of the Gospel of Luke. What does it mean, when faced with mystery or a daunting task, to hear, "Do not be afraid"! Or, "Let it be unto me according to your word". Or, "For with God nothing is impossible". Or, "...my soul magnifies the Lord". (To magnify, to bring closer, to illuminate, to make larger so as to discern color and detail.) What might God be inviting you to consider or do this Season of Advent?



How do we perceive this period of **waiting**? What is its texture, color, smell, taste and feel? How can I make this **wait** a time of waiting for God to reveal Himself to me?

What did Mary and Elizabeth do during their three months together? How did they spend their days? Consider the age difference between them and how this might have influenced their relationship.

And what about the source of the messages? Who better than the angel Gabriel to be the voice of God—to Zachariah, to Joseph, and to Mary? (Angels, another mystery to ponder in our hearts; angels who appeared in Genesis through Revelations.) How might God's voice be spoken and heard here in the 21<sup>st</sup> century?

It is a long journey from conception to birth, and we must fit it all into four short weeks. Let us not rush to the manger, but "Wait on the Lord."

Be not afraid of slowing down to prayerfully read the first chapter of Luke. Rush not to the manger. Walk the path with intention. We know the destination. Let's not miss the significant signposts and messages or encounters along the way.

*Wait on the Lord; Be of good courage, and He shall strengthen your heart; Wait, I say, on the Lord. (Psalm 27:14)*

*...those who wait on the Lord, shall renew their strength; They shall mount up with wings like eagles, They shall run and not be weary, They shall walk and not faint."*  
(Isaiah 40:31)

## Cataracts by Pam Taylor, R.N., Faith Community Nurse

Recently I learned that more than half of all Americans have had a cataract by the time they reach 80 years of age. This is a common event and has impact on people's ability to see. Here is some information about cataracts.

### What is a cataract?

It is a clouding of the lens in the eye that can occur in one or both eyes. It does not spread from one eye to the other.

### What is the lens?

The lens is a clear part of the eye that helps to focus light or an image on the retina. The retina is a light sensitive tissue at the back of the eye. From the retina, it transfers to a nerve signal to the brain. For this image to be clear when it transfers, the lens needs to be clear.

### What causes cataracts?

The lens is made up of proteins and water. As we age, some of the protein may clump and start to create a small cloud in an area of the lens. This is the beginning of a cataract. Over time, the cataract may enlarge. As it covers more of the lens, it makes it harder to see. Researchers do know that smoking and diabetes are contributory factors for developing cataracts. Also, prolonged exposure to ultraviolet sunlight. You don't have to be a senior citizen to have a cataract. People can have an age-related cataract in their 40's and 50's, but because the cataract is small, it doesn't affect vision.

### What symptoms are present with cataracts?

The most common symptoms are cloudy or blurry vision, fading of colors, glare of light, poor night vision, double vision or multiple images in one eye, frequent prescription changes in glasses.

These symptoms can be an indication of other eye problems, so be sure to have your eyes evaluated by your eye doctor if you have any of these symptoms.

### How are cataracts detected?

A thorough eye exam that includes how well you can read an eye chart, dilation of the pupil so the retina can be evaluated and measuring the amount of pressure in the eye.

### What is the treatment for cataracts?

Initially, when the cataract is small, vision may be improved with new eyeglasses, brighter lighting, anti-glare sunglasses, or magnifying lenses. Once the cataract is larger, surgery is the only treatment for improving vision. Surgery involves removal of the cloudy lens and replacing it with an artificial lens.

A cataract should only be removed when it is interfering with everyday activities including driving, reading, and watching television. Sometimes a cataract should be removed even if it is not causing vision problems. Some examples are if a cataract is preventing examination of the eye, or interferes with treatment of a different eye problem such as age-related macular degeneration or diabetic neuropathy.

### How effective is cataract surgery?

Cataract removal is one of the most common surgeries performed in the U.S. It is effective in about 90% of the cases resulting in improved vision after the surgery.

### What are the risks associated with cataract surgery?

There are risks with any surgery such as infection and bleeding. Precautions such as not rubbing the eye, hand washing before touching the area around the eye or administering eye drops, and using the medications that have been prescribed. Serious eye infections can result in vision loss.

Cataract surgery does increase the risk of having a detached retina. A retinal detachment is a medical emergency and should be evaluated as soon as possible. Some symptoms include a sudden increase in flashes or floaters (specks that float in your field of vision.) There is no pain associated with a detached retina. Early treatment can prevent permanent loss of vision. The sooner treatment is begun, the better the chances of restoring vision. Even prompt treatment may result in vision loss.

With or without cataracts, it is important to have regular eye exams. Usually a complete annual eye exam is a good place to start. If more frequent care is indicated, or referral to an eye specialist, your eye doctor can advise you.

Source: National Eye Institute - NIH



## St. Mark's Annual Crab Feed "Classic Hollywood" - February 25

Although it's only December, the St. Mark's Annual Crab Feed is just around the corner. This year, the event will be on Saturday, February 25, at the La Sierra Community Center in Carmichael. Similar to previous years, this will be an "all you can eat" crab (or alternative entrée) with pasta, tossed salad, bread and dessert. Beverages



will be available for purchase. Ticket prices will be \$60 presale. Get together a group of 8 and purchase a VIP table for \$520. These special VIP tables will have a dedicated wait staff, complimentary tickets for beverages, a special dessert, preferred seating, extra door prize tickets and a special "gift". There will be only 10 VIP tables again this year, so start getting your group together over the holidays! Ticket sales will begin from the Church office and from the St. Mark's website on Tuesday, January 3, and at church on Sundays beginning Sunday, January 15. Last year 325 people attended so you'll want to get your tickets early! This year's theme is **Classic Hollywood** and will feature food, donations, and an "environment" around that theme. Come dressed in theme (just image the fun you can have dressing as your favorite actor or movie hero), or come as you are! There will be door prizes, themed music, a photo booth, and food galore!

Again this year, a silent and live auction will be one of the highlights of the evening! Can you donate an item for the auction? Suggestions might include a special handmade gift or a special service you could provide... like house cleaning, lawn mowing services, window washing? Maybe you can give singing or piano lessons. Perhaps you could create a "Hollywood lunch party" for a group, or a gift card or gift basket with a Hollywood theme? Non-themed items will also be accepted. Of special need are items of larger value that can be auctioned off "live". These might be timeshare or vacation properties, antiques, art work, or other items that might have special interest. Be creative!! Beverage donations are also needed! Donation forms will be made. Donations will be accepted beginning in January, so watch for details in the January Markings and in Sunday's re-Mark's bulletin notices in December.

Please mark your calendar for the evening of Saturday, February 25, and plan to partake in the fun, family, and food! Don't forget to invite your neighbors and other folks not necessarily associated with St. Mark's. It will be an event you won't want to miss!

All proceeds from this event go to support the ministries and missions of St. Mark's. We thank you very much, in advance, for your generosity and your participation!

## United Methodist Women: A Time to Celebrate with the Strathdees

On Tuesday, December 13, the members of St. Mark's United Methodist Women (UMW) will celebrate the successes of the current year and the pleasures of the Christmas season with music by Jim and Jean Strathdee. The meeting will begin at 10:00am, in MacMurdo Hall, and will be followed by a potluck luncheon. Members may bring their favorite dish to share. Newcomers are always welcome at the general meeting and luncheon following. Sally J. Weinland at 489-1039 will arrange for child care, if requested in advance.

UMW members will anticipate the adventures of a new year with the Installation of 2017 UMW officers. The officers for the coming year are Sylvia Roberts, President; Dolly Quevedo, Vice President; Johanna Brownell, Secretary; and Ginny Romero, Treasurer. Mission Coordinators will be Nancy Landrum, Education; Joann Bryan, Spiritual Growth; Cynthia Lawrence, Social Action; and Lola Halligan and Boni Fields, Membership Nurture and Outreach.



Jim and Jean Strathdee were music directors at St. Mark's beginning in 1990 and continuing into the next century. The Strathdees lively and theologically rich music includes songs and hymns they have written as well as compositions by other musicians. Churches, organizations and just plain folks in Canada, Nicaragua, Honduras, Cuba, New Zealand, India, and throughout the United States have heard and loved the Strathdee music. Jim and Jean have shared the platform with many theologians and activists who speak for justice and peace. "Artists in Residence" at the World Council of Churches in Vancouver, BC, worship/song leaders at National Council of Churches conferences in this country and Nicaragua and providing music leadership at many national conferences of mainline churches fills out their resume. Local concerts with participation by the audience often have standing room only.

At the November UMW meeting Special Mission Recognition was awarded to three members of St. Mark's who have served the church and their community. Lori Bishop has shared her talents as a teacher and companion. Miriam McCormack has served as Church and Society Chair and participates in many justice and social advocacy events. Jim Munro has led participation in the international work of missions.

Preceding the general meeting, the Executive Committee and activity group leaders will meet at 9:00am in Room E-5 (Library).

## Update from SPRC

It is with deep sadness that we share the news that Matt Rothstein is leaving his position as Contemporary Music Director at St. Mark's as of November 27. Matt has begun classes towards a Master's degree in Business Administration at Sonoma State University in Rohnert Park. This endeavor, with commute, and his full-time job have many demands. Matt has found it difficult to do it all. This was not any easy decision for him.

In his nearly four years with St. Mark's, Matt has brought great music and creative leadership to our community. From the Christmas jazz concert for the homeless, to the artful meld of musical genres at Eastertime, to his work with his wife, Jill, with the Children's Choir, Matt and Jill have enriched our worship experiences.



Please keep Matt and Jill in your prayers in this transition. Also pray for guidance for the committee in the discernment process of what is best for the 11:00 service and worship services at St. Mark's. In the interim, Cath Fenimore-Brown, Director of Music, will plan and lead both services with the assistance of our organist, Robert Rouch.

## Family Promise Guests at St. Mark's

Thanks to all that helped with Family Promise in October. St. Mark's housed and fed four homeless family for a week as part of the National Interfaith Hospitality Network. St. Mark's will be hosting four families again December 11-18.

Family Promise is a national non-profit organization that has mobilized Faith Communities to help homeless families regain their independence. Family Promise provides shelter, social services, parenting classes, after school tutoring, financial literacy and workforce development programs. Guests stay at the Day Center during the day which is by Loaves & Fishes. The children can go to Mustard Seed School.

St. Mark's UMC is part of Family Promise of Sacramento which is composed of 29 local congregations that host or assist in hosting up to four homeless families four times a year by providing dinner, overnight shelter, & companionship.

St Mark's will host the families in Grace Café. It takes at least 45 disciples to make the week happen. We need people to prepare meals, serve dinner, entertain children, help with homework, do laundry, stay over night. Please call Sally Weinland (916 483-0548) or Joyce Estes (916-481-0418) for more information.



## Christmas Cabaret

The congregation is invited to join with choirs and instrumentalists of St. Mark's for a Christmas Cabaret on Sunday, December 18, at 4:00pm. This holiday event will include singing favorite carols and hearing others performed, all while enjoying the treats of the season while seated around tables in MacMurdo Hall.



Individuals or families are also needed to decorate tables or bake/make goodies for the event. If you are interested in decorating a table or making goodies, please contact Cath at cbrown@stmarksumc.com. Plan now to celebrate the season at this gala event. Bring your friends and family!

## Knife & Fork Group Holiday Luncheon

The Knife & Fork group annual holiday luncheon at the Casa Garden Restaurant will be held on Friday,



December 2, 1:15pm seating. Meet in Room E-5 (Library), at 12:15pm, to carpool to the restaurant. Cost is \$19. This includes entree, beverage and dessert, plus tax and gratuity. All gratuities benefit the Sacramento

Children's Home. Menu includes Lemon Chicken over rice with Caesar Salad, with Chocolate Mint Sin for dessert. RSVP and payment are necessary. Please join in this holiday outing. RSVP to Joyce Estes, 481-0418.

## Church Directory

A new pictorial church directory will be available starting November 27, one per household, please. They will be in Wesley Hall, each marked with the family name, so be sure to pick up the one for your family.

When directories are provided by a professional directory company, the company provides them free of charge. The church has published this directory at a cost of approximately \$3 per copy. If you want to make a donation for your directory, please place it in the receptacle by the directories or note it on your giving envelope as "Church Directory." Any donation will be appreciate and applied to the printing/publishing cost.

