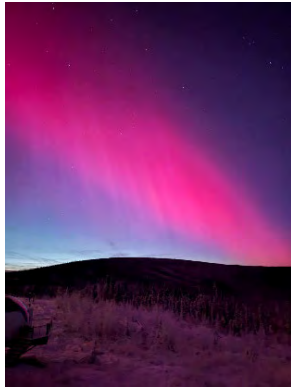




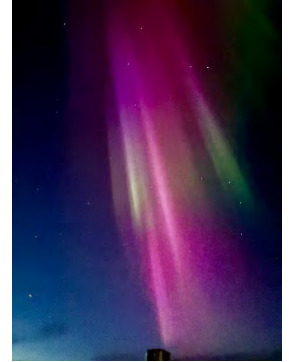
ST. MARK'S
LUTHERAN CHURCH

December 2025



The Power and Majesty of God

December is a month of holiday preparations and celebrations of all kinds. As Christians we celebrate "God With Us" – a baby born in a cattle stall – a Savior. The power of God in all its fullness. In November, June Johnsen and I (along with some of her traveling friends) witnessed the power and majesty of God first person – up close and so very, very real!!! When I watch the Aurora



Borealis (Northern Lights) moving changing, dancing, colorfully transforming the sky second by second tears came to my eyes as I witnessed God's power. Yes, there is a "scientific explanation" of why the lights exist, but I believe God's power is evident in the science, too.



I've always wondered about the awe the shepherds felt when the sky lit up and angels sang and spoke to them. The Northern Lights may be the closest thing I'll ever experience that can compare.

Maybe the Hebrew Bible writers witnessed it when they wrote: "¹The heavens are telling the glory of God, and the firmament proclaims his handiwork. (Psalm 19:1)" Or perhaps Job understood God's majesty more than we do: "Out of the north he comes in golden splendor; God comes in awesome majesty." Most assuredly in the Gospel of John: ¹⁴And the Word became flesh

and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth." Now that is "power and majesty" to the nth degree.

May your holiday season be filled with awe.

Pastor Karen



Worship With Us This Season

(Please mark your calendars!)

Sundays in Advent

In this Advent series, we are reminded that Christ is born in us spiritually today and every day. He enters into us daily to strengthen and support us, save us and renew us. We are changed by his presence within us as we become more and more like him in the living of our lives.

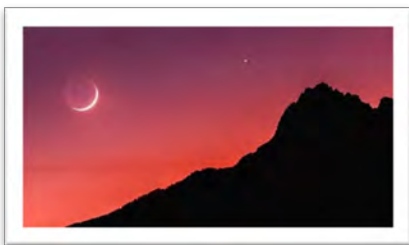


Midweek Zoom Gathering



There are so many beautiful songs written to celebrate this time of year. Some of them come right out of the pages of scripture. Each Wednesday evening we will explore one of the biblical songs. Join us on Zoom at 7:00 p.m. for Holden Evening Prayer and conversation. [Zoom link Songs of Advent](#)

Seeker's Circle will Host Midweek Advent Devotions



Wednesdays: December 3, 10, 17
Noon-1:00 p.m. in the Lobby/Narthex

The group will gather around a light lunch at noon; a 30-minute devotion will follow. All are welcome to attend; if possible, please contact Diane Metz, dlmetz6@gmail.com so adequate food can be prepared.

The devotions will be following a theme of Practicing Advent Imagination. We cannot build a new future that we cannot imagine. The long nights of Advent gift us with time to dream. This study will offer us ways of imagining God's future for us and all creation.



Festival of Santa Lucia

December 14, 2025

We will once again celebrate the festival of Santa Lucia! Girls dressed in crowns of light and “star boys” in pointed hats will process through the worship space handing out saffron buns. We will remember the ways in which Santa Lucia served others throughout her story.

Blue Christmas

This service recognizes the emotional state of those in our community who have lost loved ones or who are living with life-altering circumstances. Here we will provide a time and place of solace during the often-frenetic days surrounding the celebration of Christmas. Not everyone feels like celebrating. Grief, illness, aging, depression, loneliness, unemployment, and loss are magnified. Even those who are not struggling with losses may feel the stress of preparations and expectations around Christmas.



We never get enough Christmas Carols!

On the First Sunday of Christmas we “tell the old, old story” through scripture and song. Our 9:30 a.m. Service will be filled with music.





We nurture our discipleship when we care for and celebrate one another.



We are praying for...

Our members:

Ivonne Bradford, V-Anne Chernock, Elsie Edgeman, Richard Ehman,

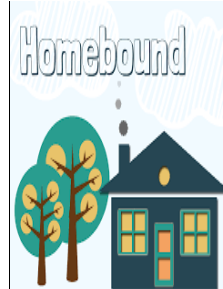
Sarajane Hakenen, Gabby Hansen, Jim Hanser and family, Cheryl Hurd, Pamela Lyons, Robert McGee, Karen Mullin, Marilyn Nelson, Gerda Reid, Stu Reid, and Josie Traugher.

Our homebound

Janet Benson, Kathy Doty, Judith Eckhart and Shirley Quinn.

Our friends and loved ones

Kim Arnold, Bruce Atkinson, Zoe Barrett, Makita Bond, Adrian Butler, Roxanne Costan, Dave Eubanks, Kyle Forristall, Dave Frogget, Ed Goldberg, Rob Hakenen, Nicholas Hanson, Shaman Houpt, Joe Inguanzo, Craig Jimenez, Phil Ladiero, Sonja Maclay, Rene Maddox, Mike Michaelson, Rev. Kirsten Moore, Helen Powell, Cheryl Rassmussen, Jo Reed, Sharon Sanderson, Toni Scarrott Collins, Bob Stevenson, Rhonda Stokes, Tammy Stone, Nardos Tesfaye, Weldon Tunnell, Lorna Walter, Suzanne Wilson, and Laurie Ziegler.



Our homebound Members

Janet Benson
3305 Hartford Ave
Fairfield, CA 94534

Kathy Doty, Magnolia Court Senior Assisted Living, 111 Ulatis Dr, Room 204, Vacaville, CA 95687

Judith Eckhart, 3760 Upland Drive, Auburn, CA 95602

Shirley Quinn, 11 Lemon Tree Cir., Vacaville CA 95687

Please remember them with your cards, visits and calls. They soooo appreciate it!



New Addresses:

Please make a note of these changes. If you would like a current directory, please be in touch with Kim in the office.

Mike Chernock

1465 S Novato Blvd, Room 202
Novato, CA 94947

Pastor Karen Stetins

1625 Woodcreek Drive, Apt. #28,
Fairfield, CA 94534



We celebrate you!!!

Charlotte Rivers 12/02

Diane Metz 12/03

Sharon Hermosillo Magaña 12/5

Charlie Thoma 12/5

Jackie Marroli 12/21

Les Johnsen 12/22

Dan DiSano 12/25

Tressa Ladiero-Marroli 12/31



Malyssa and Kyle Johnsen 12/17

Gerda and Stu Reid 12/27

Victor and Diane Metz 12/27



Olive Kathleen

Aperans arrived

November 10th

Her proud parents are
Jonathan and Miranda

Aperans. Blessed grandparents are Sue
and Jerry Aperans.

Offering Envelopes

Box sets of Offering Envelopes are
available on the table in the narthex.

Please feel free to pick one up. If you
would like a set mailed to you, please let
Kim know (office@stmarksfairfield.org)



Thank you to the team of folks who
assembled Hygiene Kits for the **CAN**
Thanksgiving Event.

Thank You Nominating Committee

Thank you to the 2025 Nominating
Committee for their work on a slate of
candidates to be elected at our annual
meeting in 2026. They are Ann Hefner-
Gravink, Janelle Jolley, Dennis Digman
and Stu Reid.

We are still looking for people to serve
on next year's Nominating Committee
and Voting Members (and alternates) to
the Synod Assembly. If you are willing to
fill these positions, please contact [Ann
Hefner-Gravink](#) or [June Johnsen](#).

I can't tell you all what a
blessing it is for a pastor to
feel comfortable taking time
away knowing that the lay
leaders are faithful and able
that will carry on and carry
on you did – very well!!



Special thanks to
Stu Reid, Worship Leader, Toni
McCallum, Assisting Minister, Karin
MacMillan our Preacher and Jacqueline
Marroli reader and Children's message.
As Jacqueline always says, "it takes a
village." We all appreciate you!

PK



We nurture our discipleship when we
use our gifts to serve



Council met on Thursday, November 6, 2025 at 11:30 a.m. in Pastor Karen's office. Here are some highlights from that meeting.

- Minutes were approved without change.
- Financial Secretary reported that our non-pledged offerings are significantly lower than last year at this time. General Fund balance was less than \$2,000. Council voted to transfer \$10,000 from Building and Capital Assets Reserve Fund to the General Fund. Hopefully, November and December will make up the deficit.
- Pastor asked for a volunteer to wrap the CAN dinner utensils in napkins before the event. June has a couple of people looking for volunteer hours. She will ask them to take care of it.
- We agreed to set up the Youth Director's telephone message as a Food Pantry Information so people calling in can just push the extension and get the information.
- The Annual Meeting was set for Sunday, January 25, 2026.
- We discussed audio versions of the Monthly Newsletter and Weekly

Updates. We have asked the Social Media Chairs to think about how this would work (what platform to use, etc.)

- Outreach Team's reported a letter writing campaign for World Hunger.
- Food Pantry reported the numbers of people coming for food each week is increasing.
- Voted to recommend additional Constitution/Bylaw/Continuing Resolution changes to the congregation at the January, 25, 2026 Annual Meeting. The proposed changes will be linked to the email with this newsletter.
- Agreed to email the updates to Chapters 1, 3, and 4, of the Operations Manual, a chart of changes to Chapter 5 Personnel Policies and a full electronic copy of the Chapter 5 Personnel Policies to members in December. (Note: Chapter 2 Constitution and Bylaws will be updated after above changes are voted on. Chapter 6 is currently being updated by Preschool Board; Chapter 7 Youth Ministry will be updated when needed.)

Our next meeting is Thursday, December 11 at 11:30 a.m. in Pastor's Office.

Stewards of God's Love are empowered by Grace

Making a financial pledge to the congregation might be likened to a road trip. In fact, taking such a trip last month reminded me of that similarity. In mid-November, the solar storms were brewing. Pastor Karen, June Johnsen, and their friends were leaving for Alaska to see the gorgeous Northern Lights. On the spur of that particular moment, we decided to see them too. We set out, not knowing where exactly where we'd end up. [I think making a financial pledge seems like that too at times; we say, we'll give a certain amount to support the congregation but we're not certain of our financial situation because we think, *what if?*].

We ended up in Winnemucca, Nevada and did not see the Northern Lights along the way. But we found a lithium mining operation had turned the town upside down in terms of available lodging. We visited ten hotels before the *Inn at Winners Casino* finally said yes—"there's lodging for two plus a dog!"

Certainly, we felt much like Mary and Joseph setting out into the unknown, and not finding lodging. In the morning, we realized that the environment was not unlike the area they'd traveled too. But we had been guarded and guided by God as we traveled.

We also realized we were only 4 hours away from our son's home, so after some very positive interactions with folks in Winnemucca, we headed to Boise area. These pleasant interactions were, in my view, God's grace, giving us energy to set out on a new direction with a new goal, just like when challenges come about with pledged giving. We ended up seeing, hugging and being



guided by Kris and Dawn over the next few days. We were anxious about getting home because of the recent storms, but with support

(God and family), we made the trek to the summit (sunny there) and home safely, though not without a few challenges, especially fog!

Fog is something that prevents clear vision and again, the pledges we make seem like that at times. But with God's grace, we set forward on the prescribed route and safely reached the goal of being in our home again just like one makes a financial goal and trusts God's grace and love will protect and help them reach their goal. In the process, confidence grows.

As I write this article (11/23/25), thirty-eight pledges have been received providing \$240,000 towards the St. Mark's Lutheran Church congregation's 2026 budget for the congregation. The congregation is immensely grateful for your projected support in 2026. Thank you!

In 2024, we had 40 pledges totalling \$261,000. Thus, we have \$20,000 less projected income than last year. Last year, commitments grew by 7.5%; this year they have diminished but we have 5 more weeks of the year, and Advent is a season of Hope! I pray that other pledges will come forth as we await Christ's birth once again.

Remember, that your pledge can be adjusted at any time as life circumstances

arise. Remember, too, that If you have not yet made a financial pledge, there is not minimum requirement. If you can pledge \$10 (or less) per month in 2026 and faithfully fulfill that pledge, it is God's grace that empowered you to make that commitment and to grow in your giving. Pledges are always confidential and can be made by putting a pledge card in the offering plate or entering your pledge online. If you have questions, talk to Financial Secretary, Linda Frogget or Financial Officer, Stew Irwin.

Go now as stewards of God's abundance; remembering the many ways that God has come to you; celebrate all that God has entrusted to your care; and do justice for the sake of the neighbor both near and far. As stewards of God's love, each of us is empowered by grace!

Diane Metz



Will be
meeting on
Thursday,
December 11th
in the Digerud
Room

beginning at 9:30 a.m. with fellowship and business meeting. We will start the lesson with this video: December 2025: "Practicing Advent imagination" video supplement

Their lesson will continue the saga of Practicing Advent Imagination before the group assembles Christmas Cheers plates to be distributed by Care and Kindness Ministry Team members. Please bring items to add to the plates. The group will adjourn by 11:30 a.m.

Quilting News

The Quilters have continued to cut, piece and stitch new quilts. Two more quilts were finished in November with more awaiting further work for the 2026 collection. Interested in helping? The group meets on Wednesdays from 10:00 to 1:00 p.m. No previous skills are necessary; teachers are available and willing to teach all aspects of quilting. Donations of cotton fabric or flat twin dark colored sheets welcomed. Contact: Diane Metz at dlmetz6@gmail.com if you have questions about donations or how to get involved.

A special thank you to Pastor Karen for donating a cupboard for quilt storage and to Les Johnsen and Tom Lingel for picking up the cupboard and bringing to the Quilt Room.



Christmas Bags for our neighbors

Please bring non-perishable food, calendars, greeting cards, and wrapping paper to help us fill 200 Christmas bags. Please place your items in the black bin in the narthex by December 15. See Janelle if you are available to help sort and fill on Friday/Saturday, December 19/20 or to help with distribution on Monday, December 22.



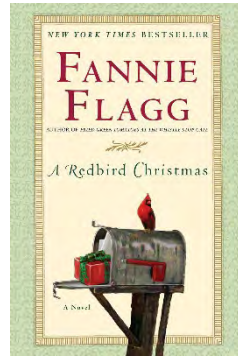


We nurture our discipleship when we
worship and study together

Tuesday Book Study

The Tuesday group is starting back up on December 2 when we will start reading/discussing, "A Redbird Christmas" by [Fannie Flagg](#).

Everyone is welcome to join us at any time. In person or on Zoom. If you would like a few laughs, pick up this book!
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88381121677>



Here's what's happening in December

December 7 – Food Pantry update by Tom Lingel.

December 14 – Come sing your favorite Christmas Carols.

December 21 – Congregational Christmas Party

December 28 – Holiday break

Zoom link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85397371644>

Email Ann at drannhg@sbglobal.net for more information. Everyone is invited to join us and offer their ideas for events, classes, etc. Our next meeting is Thursday, January 15, 2026 at 1:00 p.m. (Zoom)



Wednesday Bible Study 6:30 p.m.

This is a great way to learn more about the scripture readings for the coming week. You'll talk about what they might have in common (or not!) and get a more in-depth understanding of the readings. Contact Jim Hanser (hanserjames@comcast.net) for more info.

Choir Rehearsals

The choir rehearses every Tuesday at 11:30am and Sunday at 8:30am. They enhance the Worship Service with their anthems on the second and fourth Sundays of the month.





St. Mark's Preschool has an **Amazon wish list**. Many past and current parents, friends, and church members have asked us what we need so we created the list so it can be accessed anytime.

[Click for Amazon Wish List](#)

The Preschool wants to **thank you** for the generous donations of coats, socks, etc. for the military ingathering. (See picture below).



Preschool families collect items for "Operation Care and Comfort"

<https://occ-usa.org/> for a Veteran's Day project.

Our annual Advent Fair will be on Friday, December 12 from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. in the Fireside Room. This is a **FREE** event for our preschool families and it's a fun way for you to do crafts with your children.



Feeding more
and more
people each
week!

The Pantry would like to thank our regular weekly donors: Target and Sprouts in Vacaville as well as Raley's on North Texas and on Travis in Fairfield.

We encourage you to frequent these stores. We would also like to thank Tenbrink Farms for their regular contributions of produce.

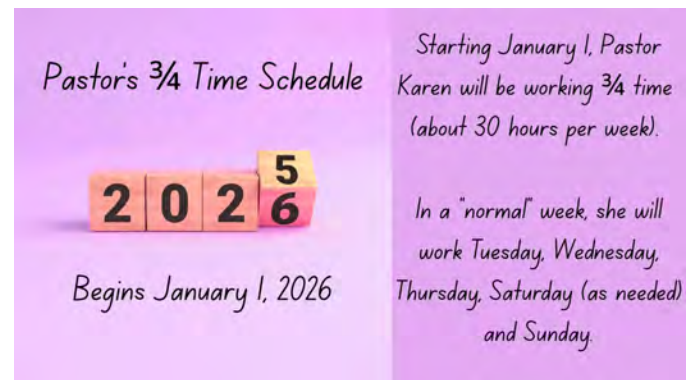
October Stats: Total Served	3,350
Total Families Served	767
Weekly Average Served	838
Average Families Served	192
YTD Total Served	37,313
YTD Families Served	8,207
Volunteer hours:	740



To: All Committees, Task Forces, and Elected Leaders

Annual Reports (to be included in the Book of Reports) are due by **Monday, January 5, 2026.**

Please email them (*print ready*) to office@stmarksfairfield.org.





We nurture our discipleship
when we serve others

What is Happening in the ELCA

Click the link for December events and to sign up for the ELCA newsletter.

[Congregational Happenings — Sierra Pacific Synod](#)

Gift Giving Time is Coming Soon—

Consider an ELCA Good Gift
Congregational Resources: A variety of free resources are available to help you share ELCA Good Gifts with friends and members of your congregation. Order by visiting the ELCA e-store or by calling 800-638-3522. Need help planning an event in your congregation? Contact us!

ELCA Good Gifts catalogThe 24-page



ELCA Good Gifts catalog features more than 60 different gift-giving options that support the ministries of the ELCA. The catalog is a must-have for any congregation! Order | Download
ELCA Good Gifts order

form: Download and print extra copies of the order form.

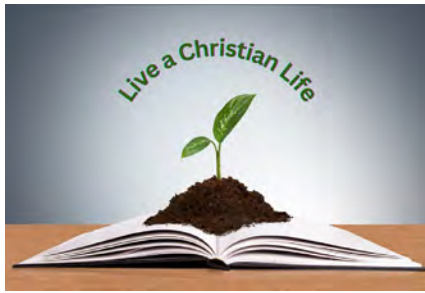
[Download Catalog](#)

Fairfield Community Foundation
You Are Awesome!



Thank you for all the work you did to get a grant from the California Municipal Finance Authority for **\$45,000** for our Food Pantry. You are fantastic partners! SMLC Friends – Whenever you see an opportunity to support the foundation, please do what you can!





We nurture our discipleship In the community



Monday and
Wednesdays
at noon
Digerud Room

Al-Anon (meaning Alcoholics Anonymous) is a mutual support group for people who have been affected by a loved one's drinking. Alateen is a similar family group that supports young people who live with or who have been affected by alcohol.



Senior Food Program

Location: St. Mark's Food Pantry
Dates: First and Third Wednesdays
Time: 9:30 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.



Fairfield News

Join neighbors and friends supporting our community.



Annual Holiday Tree Lighting Friday, December 5

at 6:00 p.m.

Location is at the corner of Texas and Jefferson Streets in downtown Fairfield

Click here for the latest local events:
[Fairfield Weekly](#) | [Latest News](#) | [Fairfield, CA](#)
[Fairfield Weekly Newsletter](#)



There are a number of great things happening in our Synod! Please sign up for their newsletters and participate in conversations, special worship services, education opportunities and more. Go to <https://www.spselca.org/> and click the button in the upper right corner to stay informed.

[Sign Up For The Newsletter!](#)



What's Happening at St. Mark's

December 2025

Recurring Calendar of Events

Sunday

- 8:30 a.m. Choir Rehearsal
- 9:30 a.m. SMLC Worship (Worship Center/Live Streaming)
- 10:30 a.m. Fellowship (Worship Center)
- 10:45 a.m. Sunday Connections (Digerud/Zoom)
- 11:00 a.m. Pentecost Temple (Comm. Cen.)
- 2:30 p.m. Ministerios Ebenezer (Community Center)

Monday

- 12:00 p.m. Al-Anon Meeting (Digerud Room)

Tuesday

- 9:30 a.m. Preschool Chapel
- 10:30 a.m. Book Study (Zoom)
- 11:30 a.m. Choir Rehearsal
- 2:00 p.m. St. Mark's Food Pantry Distr.

Wednesday

- 9:30 a.m. Preschool Chapel
- 9:30 a.m. Solano Food Bank Senior Program (Food Pantry 1st & 3rd Wednesday)
- 10:00 a.m. Quilter's gathering (Quilt Rm)
- 12:00 p.m. Midweek Advent (Narthex)
- 12:00 p.m. Al-Anon (Digerud Room)
- 6:00 p.m. Bible Study
- 7:00 p.m. Midweek Advent (Zoom)

Thursday

- 5:30 p.m. Contemporary Music Team Rehearsal (Worship Center)

Friday

- 7:00 p.m. Ebenezer Mission (Comm Center)

Additional Events

Tuesday, December 2

- 10:00 a.m. Budget Meeting
- 5:30 p.m. Worship & Music Comm.

Wednesday, December 3

- 10:00 a.m. Bible Study at Magnolia Court

Monday, December 8

- 11:30 a.m. Widow's Lunch @ Mimi's

Wednesday, December 10

- 5:30 p.m. Solano Symphony Board

Thursday, December 11

- 9:30 a.m. Seeker's Circle
- 11:30 a.m. Council Meeting

Friday, December 12

- 6:00 p.m. Preschool Advent Fair

Saturday, December 13

- 5:00 p.m. Food Pantry Volunteer Dinner

Tuesday, December 16

- 10:00 a.m. Capitol Valley Conference Mtg
- 12:15 p.m. Preschool Board

Friday/Saturday December 19/20

- Food Basket Distribution Prep

Sunday, December 21

- 4:00 p.m. Blue Christmas Service

Monday, December 22

- 3:00 p.m. Christmas Basket Distribution

Wednesday, December 24

- 7:00 p.m. Christmas Eve Service

Thursday, December 25

- Christmas Day Office Closed

Join us for worship every Sunday
9:30 a.m. for in person & live streaming service
on YouTube at <https://www.youtube.com/@SMLCFairfield> (or click [HERE](#))

St. Mark's Mission: To Nurture Discipleship, Communicate the Gospel and Serve the Community.

St. Mark's Vision: To transform each church member into Christ-led disciples, nurtured and equipped by God's Word, whose purpose is to build up the Body of Christ in Solano County and the world.

St. Mark's Welcoming Statement: Adopted January 19, 2020

"We are St. Mark's Lutheran Church where everyone is welcomed and everyone is loved. We invite all into the grace, love and acceptance we have from God. We welcome YOU: who you are, as you are.

- All who are single, married, partnered, divorced, with or without children
- All sexual orientations, gender identities and gender expressions
- All racial, ethnic, and social backgrounds
- All who are homed or homeless
- All who are struggling with addictions or other personal hardships
- All ages and levels of physical and mental health and abilities
- All faith backgrounds, those questioning their faith and those new to faith

We invite you to fully participate in the life and ministry of St. Mark's Lutheran Church where we seek to share God's love and grace through word and action."



St. Mark's Lutheran Church
1600 Union Avenue, Fairfield, CA 94533
707-422-4741
office@stmarksfairfield.org;
www.stmarksfairfield.org



Sierra Pacific Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Rev. Karen Stetins, Senior Pastor
Kim Worthen, Office Administrator
Semyon Lohss, Accompanist, Choral Director
Lucille Bowers, Preschool Director
Michelle Aas, SMLC's bookkeeper

Council Members

June Johnsen (President), Dan DiSano (Vice President), Jacqueline Marroli (Secretary),
Stew Irwin (Finance Chair), Toni McCallum and Josephine Traugher (Members at Large).

Elected Leaders

Linda Froggett (Financial Secretary), Les Johnsen (Treasurer)
Victor Romualdi, Personnel Committee Chairperson