



ST. MARK'S IN-THE **VALLEY**
EPISCOPAL CHURCH & PRESCHOOL
2901 NOJOQUI AVENUE • POST OFFICE BOX 39
LOS OLIVOS, CALIFORNIA 93441

THE REV. RANDALL C.K. DAY
PRIEST AND RECTOR

The Day of Pentecost, May 28, 2023

Dear St. Mark's and Community Friends,

By the grace of God, I am retiring from full-time parish ministry and looking forward to enjoying with you my final Sunday as Rector on **October 1, 2023** (my 15th anniversary at St. Mark's). As planned with our **Wardens and Vestry** and our Bishop, **The Rt. Rev. John Harvey Taylor**, Bishop of Los Angeles, and his Canons (key staff), these final months together will economically resolve key transition work and remaining earned leave time.

Last year I recognized emerging interests were drawing me away from the focused work in the parish that I have enjoyed through **38 years of ordained ministry** and **15 years here**. I have enjoyed a final Advent and Christmas, and a final Lent, Holy Week and Easter with you. This impending change was the impetus to move to a **single Sunday service together (which will continue)** as it will be easier for everyone to support going forward (and, potentially, brings the parish as a whole into closer connection).

As I'm sure some realized, all of my preaching in Lent and Easter seasons have spoken to this departure, letting go, and embracing both the challenges and the joys of Easter and a New Day, which are always God's loving gifts.

It is no secret that Christianity generally and expressions of institutional churches are changing at a rapidly accelerating pace and I am committed to that ongoing evolution. Together we have embraced being a public church that is in the world that God so loves, not a private holy club, the old model of church now failing everywhere. **I have had plenty of time to explore with you all elements of this open, welcoming stance** that embodies the welcome of God, and to redesign our campus, especially the SYV Community Kitchen, to provide an open context in which all ages can roll up their sleeves, join with neighbors, form deep relationships working together, and serve as Jesus called those who follow him to serve. **As with all of our community service, what we do in the world, by God's grace, is our focus** – and, goodness knows, many churches are quite superficial and do very little.

At the same time, **we have enjoyed the richness of shared communal life**, formation and nurture in faith, many special events and experiences, and spiritual growth and inspiration to be and do what God is calling us to embody and to express as the living, active Body of Christ.

We are also aware of the stresses now being placed on St. Mark's by the post-lockdown emptying of the churches and by continuing polarization of our society (global and local) through anxious rhetoric and divisive actions. With a hundredth anniversary of the gathering of this faith community that became St. Mark's coming up in 2026, we can imagine

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this living organism, while vulnerable to threat and undermining actions, has some significant resilience to allow it to sustain this challenging season. **I hope that is the case.**

Bill and I plan to **move to Santa Barbara, grateful for the people and gifts of the Santa Ynez Valley** and all we have been privileged to enjoy here.

I am **thankful for all the growing, vibrant years at St. Mark's and the mutual ministry of gifted and generous lay leaders and active participants** in our faith community and wider community together.

The work of **St. Mark's profoundly dedicated and effective staff** has been critical to all of our many successes and to my work as Rector. Grateful for their intelligence, skills, and ministry of presence, I cite, especially, **Leslie Zuller** (Business Manager), **Yvonne Lowe** (and **Greg Lowe** [volunteer]) (Preschool Director and many behind-the-scenes projects done with no fanfare), **Beverly Staples** and **Nichole Dechaine** (Music), **Oscar and Maria Andrade** (Sexton, buildings and grounds maintenance), **Silvia Lucatero** (Community and Parish Programs), **Brittany Ramirez, Erika Ray, Marina Sanchez** (Preschool Teachers), and **Lupe Loreto** (buildings maintenance). None of our work would have found success without the experienced professional communications skills of **Laura Kath** (RIP) and **Valerie Cantella**. **Robert Cassidy's** work as Artistic Director of our SYV Concert Series has been transformative. Previous staff members **Tasha Morphy** (Christian Formation) and **Amy Derryberry** (SYV Community Kitchen) made important contributions to our communal life, both as leaders and individuals, as did **Rose Knoles**, in laying the groundwork for our love of outstanding music in worship and in the gift of our concert series in the community.

Bishop Taylor, The Rev. Canon Melissa McCarthy (Canon to the Ordinary), and **The Rev. Canon Thomas Quijada-Discavage** (Missioner for Formation and Transition Ministry) will work with our **Wardens and Vestry** on the steps St. Mark's will take after October 1. I will be sure everyone sees the Diocesan **"Leaving Well Policy of Understanding"** that would have been so helpful to my predecessor, Fr. Stacy, and to St. Mark's years ago, and that will be helpful to us now in having clarity about expectations in this transition and going forward.

For now, our focus on a very successful **Summer Classic on Saturday, June 24** is a key element of St. Mark's financial strength and ongoing community service. **Everyone can help** by encouraging friends and neighbors to attend, and by gathering sponsorships and auction packages. **Please encourage anyone who loves and cares for St. Mark's and our SYV Community to come together, join in, and be part of building the future.**

Share with me a simple prayer from Dag Hammarskjöld's *Markings*: **"For all that has been, thanks. For all that will be, yes."**

...and with **every blessing,**

