



# St. Mark's-in-the-Valley Episcopal Church & Preschool, Los Olivos, California

## Parish Profile 2025

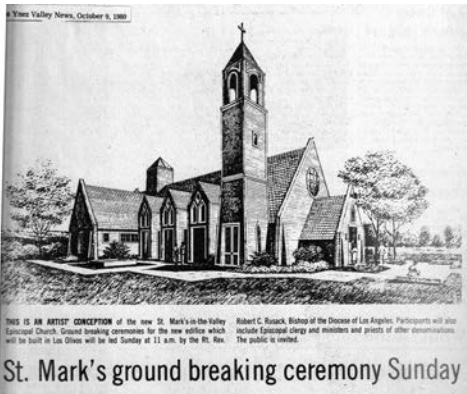
Dear Future Rector of St. Mark's in-the-Valley Episcopal Church:

Welcome! We are filled with joy and gratitude that the Holy Spirit has led us to each other. We can't wait to start the next chapter of our faith community's life with you.

But, before we write that chapter, we'd like to share with you some earlier parts of the book of St. Mark's:

## Our History

In the early 1920s, the Santa Ynez Valley was predominantly ranch and farmland with small townships including the Danish village of Solvang, Santa Ynez, Los Olivos, and Buellton. The Catholic Mission and the Danish Lutheran communities of Solvang were the main faith communities.



Around this time, a group of Episcopal families began to meet in homes and quickly formed our own small mission church consecrated by the Bishop of Los Angeles in 1948. We finally outgrew our home in downtown Solvang and in the late 70s, on land gifted by a parish family, St. Mark's-in-the-Valley moved to our current home in Los Olivos.

The church and the two adjacent buildings, Stacy Hall (our parish hall) and Firestone Hall (our administrative building), the memorial gardens and play area now serve as home to an active parish, a vibrant preschool, a beloved gathering spot for the local community, and a beautiful example of modern California architecture. All the buildings are fully funded, and St. Mark's continues to flourish in this stunning setting.

## Our Mission

At Saint Mark's in-the-Valley Episcopal Church, our mission is to create a place of worship that reflects the Spirit and love of God and our interdependence with God's creation. We seek to serve as a resource in and of the community and to be open and welcoming to people of all faiths or none.

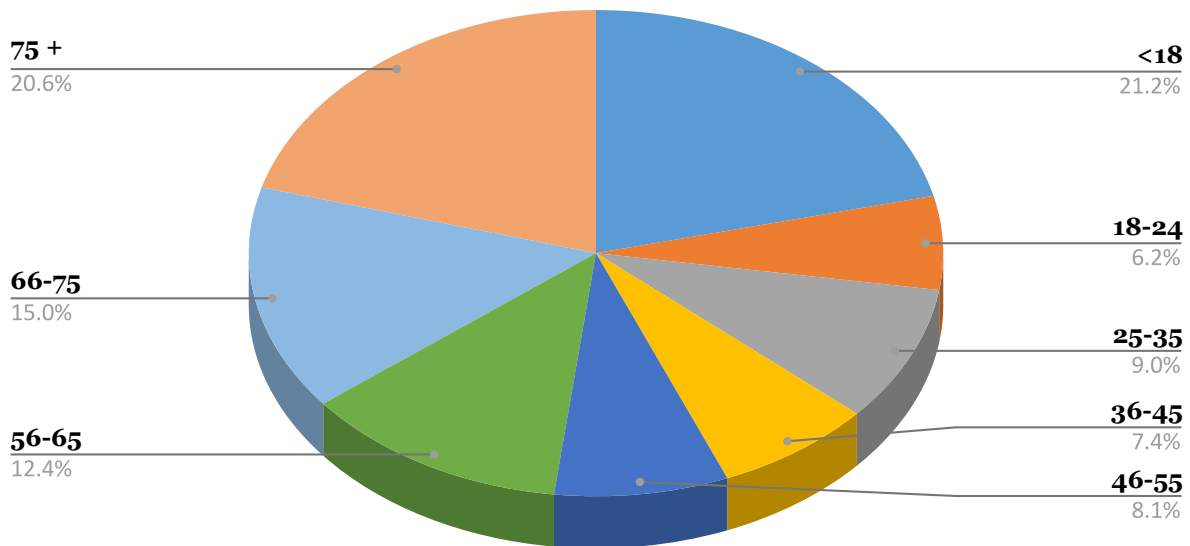


## A Closer Look at the Church and Our Community

Our main church building houses the altar, sanctuary, chapel, choir area, organ, baptismal font, bell tower, narthex, and sacristy. Stacy Hall includes classrooms, a licensed community kitchen, and a large meeting room. Firestone Hall houses administrative offices, public restrooms, and a smaller meeting room. Above our memorial garden stands our historic Great Cross, a gift from the brothers of Mount Calvary monastery, formerly of Santa Barbara, California.

Our family at St. Mark's consists of 344 active members, the largest groups of whom are under 18 and over 75 years of age. Our average weekly attendance is 92, with Christmas and Easter services welcoming an average of 293 and 172 worshippers, respectively.

**St. Mark's Age Distribution**



We are situated in the unique town of Los Olivos, one of five communities within the Santa Ynez Valley, approximately 35 miles northwest of Santa Barbara, California. Our population is approximately 24,500 and is projected to grow by 2.5% by 2033. 25% of our population has a college undergraduate degree, with 16% having a graduate or professional school degree. Our ethnic mix is 70% White, 23% Hispanic, 2% Asian, 1% Black and 4% all other ethnic groups, with a median age of 44. The median home price in the Santa Ynez Valley in 2024 is \$1,600,000.

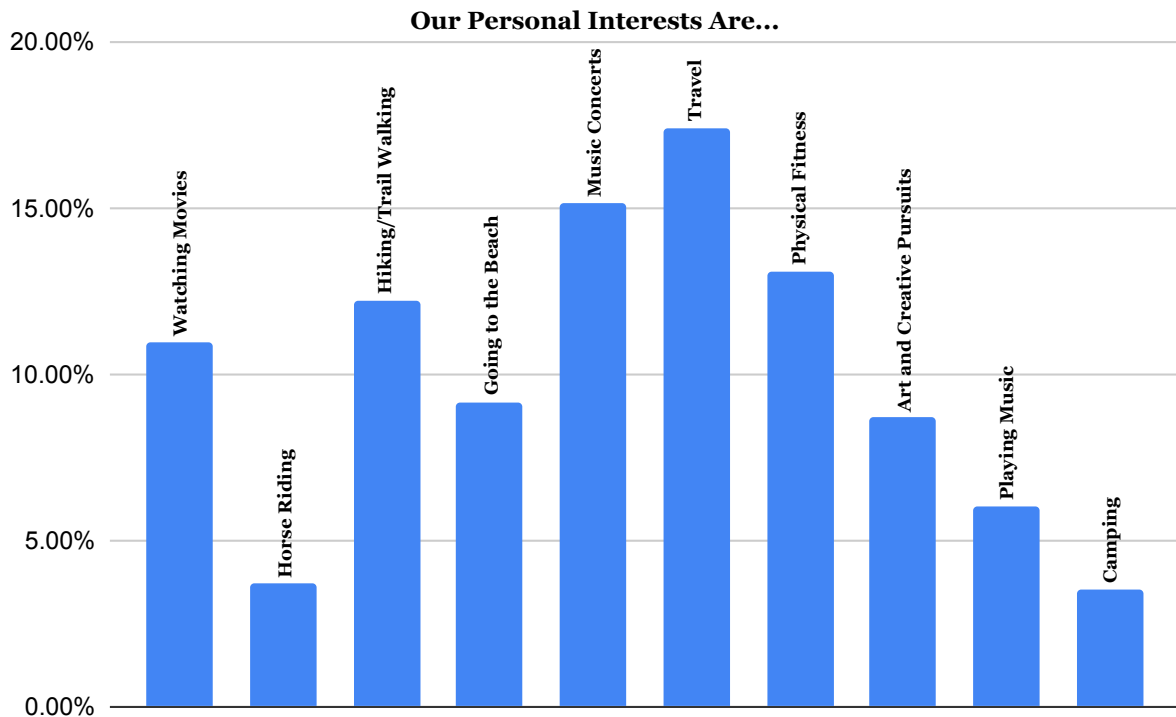
We also provide a 2,100-square-foot, 3-bedroom, 2-bathroom rectory as a home for you and your family. Located approximately 1/2 mile from the church, near the center of Los Olivos, the rectory resides within the Los Olivos School District and the Santa Ynez Valley Union High School District.



The beautiful Santa Ynez Valley is a popular Southern California tourist destination and is home to many vineyards, wineries, and orchards, as well as thoroughbred horse and cattle ranches. Located towards the southern end of California’s stunning Central Coast, the Santa Ynez Valley enjoys a generally mild climate with dry summers and an average of 20 inches of rain during its winter months. Summer temperatures range from occasional daytime highs around 100° F with evening lows of 50°F. Winter temperatures can range from daytime highs of around 65°F with occasional frosts at night.

We are among the northernmost parishes within the Diocese of Los Angeles, one of the largest in the United States, which includes portions of six counties in Southern California, and serves 65,000 Episcopalians in 136 congregations.

Our faith community at St. Mark’s includes many leaders in local volunteer organizations. Like the community at large, we are energetic, interested, and eager to find a way to share God’s love.





## **Our Abundance of Blessings**

Our church maintains a budget of approximately \$855,000 per year. Of that amount, \$250,000 is given as yearly pledges from 101 households. The remainder of the church's yearly income is received as gifts, plate offerings, building use donations, and proceeds from our yearly fundraiser, the Spring Classic.

Our preschool is a state-licensed self-supporting pre-kindergarten program for 2 1/2 to 5-year-old children with a typical enrollment of 24 children. A state-registered nonprofit entity, the preschool has an annual budget of \$172,850.00.

We also maintain an Endowment Fund of approximately \$943,000, which exists to help the church maintain its property and structures, as well as provide annual distributions to the church's operating budget.

We are current on payments towards a \$150,000 Economic Injury Disaster Loan from the Small Business Administration, and a \$150,000 loan from our Endowment Fund.

## **Our Ministry to Our Neighbors**

Community Outreach is one of the primary ways we share our blessings and seek to exemplify Christ's love. Through our "open door" policy we happily share our beautiful campus with all who wander our way - whether it be to use our clean and well-supplied restrooms, find solace in our sanctuary, find shade and rest in the courtyard, reflect while thoughtfully walking the labyrinth or simply to use our free wi-fi.



Our "open door" policy extends deeper into our community by offering our space as a community and arts center for the greater Santa Ynez Valley - hosting concerts, art exhibits, films, and community meetings.

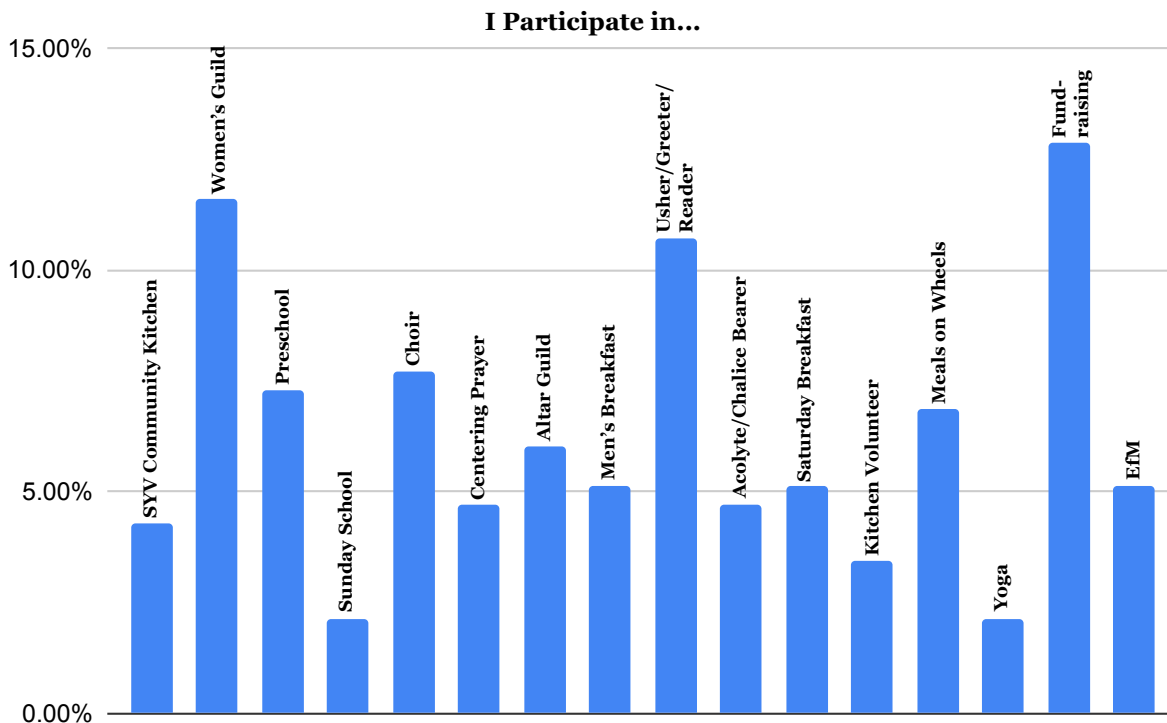
We provide the use of our buildings and equipment to non-profit and community-based groups on a no-fee basis for meetings and events. We are also home to the Santa Ynez Valley Jewish Community who uses our church and hall for services and celebrations.

Our preschool offers an environment that supports and encourages children to grow, learn, and respect themselves and others. We welcome all children in the community, regardless of religious affiliation.

## How We Participate in Our Ministries

Members of our faith community have many opportunities to serve one another by offering their time and talents while serving on the vestry, or on the finance, stewardship, or endowment committees. During worship services, many of us enjoy serving as lectors, chalice bearers, acolytes, altar guild members, ushers, or Sunday school teachers. We have a wonderful music program led by a professional music director and an accomplished organist, both of whom lead our thriving, joyful choir.

To serve our neighbors, we enjoy volunteering in various outreach ministries like our community kitchen, Meals-on-Wheels, the Gardening Guild, Women's Guild, Men's group, EfM, Transportation Guild, weekly food offerings, SYV Christmas baskets, and collecting warm clothing for Santa Barbara Rescue Mission.



## Our Celebrations During the Year

In the Episcopal tradition, we enjoy a celebration. Our church year begins with the Women's Guild Christmas Luncheon, which is popular with the ladies of our community and beyond. At this catered event the gentlemen of the church serve as waiters, and it always includes music and holiday songs plus a spirited raffle.

Our Preschool hosts Gingerbread Wonderland on the first Saturday of December. A popular event for the whole valley, we transform Stacy Hall into a gallery for one-of-a-kind gingerbread houses, which are sold in a silent auction to go home with eager holiday nibblers.



The Posada is a favorite Christmas Eve tradition when our Holy Family walks from inn to inn in search of lodging, until finally, everyone proceeds to the church and the first service of the Christmas season takes place. A traditional Christmas Eve service follows later in the evening, capped by a late-evening reception in Stacy Hall.

The Holiday season concludes each year with the Boar's Head Dinner, which is held on the Sunday nearest

Epiphany. The parish gathers with a great deal of pageantry and singing, including a bagpipe band and our yearly host, the Ruler of Misrule.

Lent offers us a period of prayerful anticipation of the central festival of our year: Easter. With an abundance of music, Easter egg hunts, and chocolate, the service concludes with a parish-wide sing-along of the "Hallelujah Chorus" from Handel's *Messiah*.

St. Mark's Spring Classic is our primary fundraiser, attended by parishioners, family, and friends of St. Mark's from throughout the community. On this evening, we enjoy a catered dinner, live auction, and silent auction with the goal of raising funds to support our community outreach programs.



The Blessing of the Animals is held on the Sunday closest to the Feast Day of St. Francis of Assisi. Pets and animals of all sizes gather for a joyful and sometimes chaotic celebration of our furred and feathered co-inhabitants of God's creation.

Our church year concludes with an interfaith Thanksgiving service when we partner with our neighboring faith communities for a celebration of the abundance we all share. It is an opportunity to worship with our brothers and sisters from other Christian denominations as well as from the Jewish, Buddhist, Muslim, and Chumash communities.



## **What We Celebrate About You, Our Next Rector**

We hope this deluge of information hasn't been overwhelming. There is so much more about our community and ourselves that we'd like to share with you, but we'll have to let time and the Holy Spirit guide us on when to finish that. In the meantime, we'd like to celebrate some of your qualities that are most precious to us:

Your love for engaging the youth of our community, from our preschool students to our teenagers, is matched only by your desire to reach out to and support our growing families.

Our dedicated staff appreciates your gentle, organized management style and your reassuring, dependable presence on our campus.

We are pleased that you enjoy a close-knit and energetic community and are looking forward to your leadership.

We love your embrace of scripture, tradition, and reason, and your willingness to lead us in our growth and understanding of God's love for us.

We are so grateful that our times of discernment have led us to each other, and we look forward to writing the next chapters of our shared history together!

With much gratitude for God's love for us all,  
The Vestry and Transition Committee

