



St. Luke Lutheran Church
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St. Luke Lutheran Church

Connect, Grow and Serve.

Parish Times November 2020



The Pastor's Perspective...

"You, Lord, keep my lamp burning; my God turns my darkness into light." –Psalm 18:28

There is a lot going on these days for everyone. All of us feel the darkness and struggle of what each day brings. We cannot talk to anyone without the topics of COVID, upcoming election, racism or sexism, poverty, unemployment, on-going fires out West, weather or the dynamics going on within our congregations. As I write this, the skies are dark yellow, the ground has snow, there is hail and rain falling and sounds of thunder echo all around. There is an eeriness, and it seems to be reflective of the unsettled feelings we are living with every day.

And yet.....God keeps our lamps burning, always. Even if it is dim and low and we can barely see, there is still a flame that carries us through.

One of my favorite things to do as a pastor is to visit with older members who have lived long lives and have much wisdom to share. I always ask them, "What words of wisdom do you have to share concerning our current situation?" Something that made me smile was when one person said, "Well, we've been through this sort of thing before, but we got through it. God was faithful, but as soon as we were on the other side, we seem to have forgotten. The only way we can move forward is by doing it together. What is it with people these days? I just don't understand it. We need to be kind. That is the only way."

And yet.... God keeps our lamps burning, always. Even if it is dim and low and we can barely see, there is still a flame that carries us through.

These days are changing our neighborhoods, churches, communities, nation and world. Walls are crumbling and we are being brought to our knees. I never imagined eight months ago we would be where we are today. I never imagined that our country and even our congregations could be so polarized. I never imagined that people could be so hateful. I never imagined that conversations could be so ugly, disrespectful and shaming. I never imagined that racism and sexism still exist in the ways they do. I never imagined driving along the Mississippi would show me the tents where literally thousands of people live because they are homeless. I never imagined doing worship on Zoom. I never imagined COVID coming as close as it has and grieving the loss of so many who have died and live with the effects of it. I never imagined wearing a mask whenever I go out in public. I never imagined the number of suicides that have occurred and are close to me. I never imagined how important our mental and physical health needs to be so we can be resilient. I never imagined how sad, exhausted, tired and weary our souls have become. I never imagined any of it.

And yet..... God keeps our lamps burning, always. Even if it is dim and low and we can barely see, there is still a flame that carries us through.

In this darkness, God is working, next to us, within us, around us and through us. We are not alone. We have the power to be the people of God and be the change that is required for a new world to be birthed. Now is the time for reckoning within ourselves and communities. What is it that we need to let go of? What do we need to hold onto? If we used our imaginations (which by the way, a large percentage of people cannot see anything other than what is in front of them), what might be possible in the future?

I would like to imagine the following:

~Our nation coming together, recognizing diversity, listening with respect and working so that ALL people may have housing, food and education.

~Our congregations listening to one another in a process of discernment that honors where the other is coming from, respects, encourages and loves people for who they are, not what they want or assume for them to be.

~Continued conversations around restorative justice, with a focus on white supremacy and care for our Indigenous, Black, Asian, Pacific Islander, Latino, and multi-ethnic brothers and sisters.

Continued on page 2.



November Birthdays

- 8 Gary Nelson
- 10 Hugo Ruiz
- 14 Joshua Vigdal
- 17 Dwight Paulson
Joan Wilson
- 18 Bruce Magnuson
- 23 Christine Salaba
- 25 Ben Vigdal
- 26 Janell Walter
- 30 Robert Herrmann



November Anniversaries

- 9 Tracy & Kevin Arndt: '91
- 12 Larry & Junella Litzkow: '60
- 26 Jack & Joan Holtz: '60

Saint Luke Appreciates Your Continued Offerings

Even though church services are currently suspended, you can still give to St. Luke to help support our mission to serve the people in our congregation and in our community. A new "Ways to Give" page on St. Luke's website explains how you can give in three ways—by mail, online, and using a mobile app.

You can make electronic offerings using a credit or debit card or by withdrawal directly from a bank account (EFT transaction). EFT transactions are preferred because the fees are lower. For more information, go to saintlukechurch.org and click "Ways to Give" at the top. Your gifts are appreciated!



GIVE FROM THE HEART

THANK YOU!

Dear St. Luke Friends,

Thanks to every one of you for supporting the St. Luke's Farmers' Market this season. It was a season like no other.

Initially, I was not sure we could open during COVID-19. Thankfully, the Minnesota Farmers Market Association offered training to help us open safely. Nothing would have been possible without this Association, which we have been a member of since 2015.

Once we had the information, we had to figure out how to implement it. Without the help of Doug Klein, it never would have happened. His is the big brain that figured out how to lay out the Market, fence it, and control entry/exit with handwashing stations. And he was there every Saturday to ensure the Market was set up and taken down properly. This is a big shout out to you, Doug. The Market could not have happened without you.

I also want to thank all the other volunteers who enabled the Market to occur this summer. Setting up and taking down was a much bigger task than it has been in the past, requiring twice the number of volunteers every week. Many of you volunteered multiple Saturdays. We also had volunteers from St. Mark, and two from the neighborhood. I specifically want to mention Patrick Kelly who volunteered to open almost every Saturday morning, and Conie Borchardt who volunteered multiple Saturdays. I am forever grateful for everyone's willingness to help.

Did any of this matter? YES, IT DID! We had a record number of attendees, with as many as 328 on one Saturday! We had many new customers, and they were more diverse. Over time, the market felt like a real community with returning customers who stopped and chatted with one another and with the vendors (socially distanced, with masks). Our vendors also were great. We even had a new vendor: Saints & Sinners (spice rubs and barbeque sauce). The Market was truly my "happy space" all summer.

Finally, I want to thank Laurie and Rob Herrmann who are my partners and co-managers of this Market. They were present virtually every week and offered ideas/strategies for how we could be a better market during these COVID-19 times. This is NOT an individual effort. It takes all of us to support the Market each year. This season was like no other, and I hope it will be easier next year. If not, we now know how to do this during COVID-19, and I am confident we can do it again because of your support. THANK YOU SO MUCH!

Wishing you good health and my best,
Wendy Bjorklund

Pastor's Perspective continued from page 1.

~Support, care and love for those who identify as LGBTQIA.

~Recognizing the need for equal rights and breaking down the misogynist attitudes about and towards women.

~An effort to raise awareness about global warming, its impacts and reaching out to those who suffer from great disasters due to the changing climate.

~The concerted effort by everyone to wear a mask because we care about our neighbor, always.

~To include those who cannot be physically present with us in worship, I hope that the church will always look different, as to embrace people everywhere. And, seeing the church not as a building, but as the people at work in the world wherever we live, work and have our being.

~On-going support and love for those who struggle every single day with mental health issues and being a listening ear for those whose lives are touched and continue to grieve the loss of a loved one by suicide.

~Seeing the huge need for grace, grace and more grace for one another, so that we judge less, embrace more and give space to see one another as children of God.

What would you like to imagine our future to look like?

"You, Lord, keep my lamp burning; my God turns my darkness into light." - Psalm 18:28.

As always, you remain in my thoughts and prayers as we continue to navigate these days together.

In Christ, Pastor Emily



We are a strong church family who needs to pull together right now. I will repeat the information Bishop Lull and I have shared at meetings in this newsletter because it reaches more members who may still be unclear about our immediate future. If St. Mark votes to end our Parish Agreement and Call on Nov. 22, all will end for St. Luke at the same time. In that event, Bishop Lull has asked the Council to create the Interim Part-Time Pastor Covenant. This interim will be with us for about 4 months while we form a call committee and hopefully call our next permanent part-time pastor. Not only does a covenant or call letter include the duties we need from our pastors, it also includes some promises we, as the congregation, make to the pastors. By Nov. 23, Bishop Lull will have our new interim covenant, and she will offer it to Pr. Emily first. Pr. Emily then can say "yes", she would like to be considered and the Council will meet with her and make a decision. Or she may say "no" because she is ready to look for another permanent position. The Synod would assign us a new interim; however, it may take some time due to the current lack of candidates for a 4-month interim part-time pastor position. What I would like to share with you is YOUR part in the covenant. While the Council and Parish Board worked long and hard in 2019 on an MSP (describing St. Luke), Parish Agreement (with St. Mark) and Call Letter (for Pr. Emily), very few congregation members read the signed documents. These signed documents made a promise that WE would help the pastor get to know us and our St. Luke traditions. Not easy to do when our pastor had to leave after our service to serve St. Mark. It is clear that the Council and Parish Board had duties that were missed. There were mistakes made on both sides of the covenant. It is this Council's job to see that the congregation has access to, understands, and reads the covenant to see the duties of the congregation. You cannot be faulted for what you did not know. The new covenant for the interim and the permanent pastor will need much more of our help in this pandemic. Zoom is not personal, but it does allow us to worship regularly together, and put a name with a face. The interim and permanent pastor will not be a shared pastor, so we will have time after services (or in the case of Zoom, small chat rooms) to visit with the pastor on a social basis. More ideas of how to get to know each other in a pandemic will be shared with the congregation, and the congregation will be asked for ideas. We want St. Luke to continue as a supporting member of our community (Farmers' Market, Bun Run, food collections for Francis Basket), in addition to the mission work we do outside our community (Loaves and Fishes, school supply collections, The Drawer), and world missions (KIVA and Xmas Child boxes), but always being a welcoming church family to visitors who may become new members. Yes, the pandemic has touched all of our lives in various ways. It created a loss of that very meaningful in-person Sunday service to worship together in praise and prayer; our social coffee hour to catch up and share news, make plans, or meet guests, letting our children interact, and allowing groups to use our church building. No one expected it to last this long. No one thought it would last into 2021, but it will. Our Safe Team continues to monitor various sites and share information and purchase supplies we will need to open again. If we do not pull together now, if we do not get through all that is challenging us right now and into 2021, we have something much larger to lose: St. Luke Lutheran Church. We have been sharing God's word and love for over 100 years. Now is not the time to hesitate or stop. Together, we can find a way to maintain and then to grow. Keep all of us in your prayers so that we have St. Luke Lutheran Church ready to reopen sometime in 2021 with the help of all our current church families. We can do this.

Be safe and well,
Sue McNeill

IMPORTANT UPDATES:

Actions: At our October 18 congregational meeting, the motion to accept the 8 Constitution changes was passed. The motion to sign a contract to have the parking lot repaved also passed. We were unable to schedule the project for this fall, but it will be first on the contractor's list for the spring.

Church Directory: Yes, we are still planning on a church picture directory for St. Luke. One of our team members relocated to Oklahoma and is still getting systems up and running for the picture section. As soon as we have a proof-read copy, we will look for a way to make copies.



Notes From the Music Director

Music is a balm for the soul. As we move into seasons where we are used to gathering and joining together, I am keeping this in the front of my mind. I want to lean into the music in the coming season to help bring a feeling of comfort and familiarity. I will continue to host a time of music on the first Sunday of the month at 7pm. I am working with the choirs to have pre-recorded music for us in our services. I am thankful for all the photos for our offering video each week. Even on a hard day, those shared photos and messages bring a smile to my face. And I feel so grateful to be able to work with Pastor Emily in this time as we collaborate on services together. If you play an instrument or sing and would like to contribute to services but are unsure how, please contact me, and we can find a way to make it happen. I would also like to create a musical collage of voices for December, it will only take a pair of headphones, a Zoom call or sending me an audio file, and singing along to a song. It doesn't matter how well you sing; your voice will just blend into the overall sound. Email me, bunkamade@gmail.com, if you are interested in participating. Be safe, be well,
Rebecca Ruiz

FALL BACK! Don't forget to set your clocks one hour back on Saturday night, October 31st.



Thanksgiving Food Gift Cards

In the tradition of Thanksgiving benevolence at St. Luke, this year we will be collecting donations for Thanksgiving Food Gift Cards, which will be distributed to members of our community. Donations will be accepted through Sunday, November 22. Please mail your donation to St. Luke Church, 1807 Field Avenue, St. Paul, MN 55116, and indicate "Thanksgiving Gift Cards" on the memo line of your check. Thank you.



SM/SL FOOD COLLECTION The St. Paul Area Synod is encouraging churches in the east metro to collect/raise \$50,000 worth of food between now and the end of 2020 in response to the increased need of our residents during this pandemic time.

ST. MARK will be collecting food items and donations at their church on the following Saturdays from 10am to 12pm: November 14 and December 12.

ST. LUKE will be collecting food items and donations at their church on the following Sundays from 1pm to 3pm: November 15 and December 13.

All donations will go to St. Francis Basket, our neighborhood food shelf. You may bring food or financial donations on the appointed days (we'll wear masks and be socially distanced). Or, you may choose to give a financial donation by mailing a check to church. You also may give online through Vanco, where there now is a Food Shelf option for giving. We have a few people who have volunteered to help the "collection Sundays," but could use a few more. If you'd like to help, please contact Jo Klein at secretary@saintlukechurch.org.

Here is a list of most needed items: sardines, beets, buckwheat, cabbage, sugar, meat, eggs, milk, fresh produce, dried prunes, oil, peanut butter, jelly, dish soap, shampoo/conditioner, razors/shaving cream, feminine hygiene products, body soap, baby items.

Now Thank We All Our God!

Join us on Thanksgiving Eve (Nov. 25 at 7pm) for a time of worship and reflection. We will also have a short time of gratitude on Thanksgiving morning (Nov. 26 at 9:30am) to connect with each other in gratitude and prayer as we begin our day. Zoom invites will be emailed to you a few days before Thanksgiving. Hope to see you there!





Be sure to attend our congregational meeting on Sunday, Nov. 15 at 4pm via Zoom. The agenda items will include ratifying the 8 Constitution changes and voting for the 5 council positions that are opening. We are looking for candidates for President, Vice President, and Secretary. Each of these positions are one-year terms. You must have served on the council at least once to run for an officer position. There are two members-at-large openings. These council members serve two-year terms. We will announce the Nominating Committee very soon and you can contact the Committee to be put on the ballot. Please consider serving.

St. Luke Mitten and Hat Tree During the Advent season there will be a Christmas tree placed in the front entryway where we will be collecting hats, mittens, and scarves. The neighborhood will watch the tree become colorfully decorated as we place the donations on the tree. Please drop off your donations at St. Luke on Saturday, Dec. 5 from 9am to 10am, or Saturday, Dec. 12 from 9am to 10am. If neither of these times work for you, call Jo Klein at 651-343-9317 and a time will be arranged. Or you may donate hats and mittens during the Food Drives at St. Luke. Nov. 15 and Dec. 13, 1pm to 3pm. Or you may tie a scarf to our Little Free Library or put a pair of mittens or hat in the Library for anyone who might be in need in our neighborhood. At the end of this drive, we will then donate all the hats, mittens and scarves to Naomi Family Residence, a local homeless shelter for women and children. Thank you for participating in this worthy cause!



Book Club

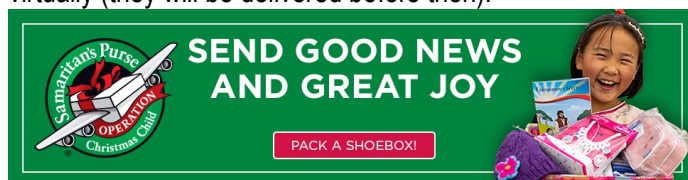


Our next SM/SL Book Club is Monday, Nov. 23 at 6:30pm! We will be discussing "Where the Crawdads Sing" by Delia Owens: "Delia Owen's gorgeous novel is both a coming-of-age tale and an engrossing whodunit." All are welcome....do join us!

November Scripture Readers

- 1 Jen Fredrickson
- 8 Bonnie Jellinek
- 15 Lyndi Fabbrini
- 22 Christine Olson
- 29 Wendy Bjorklund

OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD: Once again, SL/SM will be collecting shoebox presents for Operation Christmas Child. This is a time to pack a shoebox with presents for a boy or a girl somewhere around the world who normally wouldn't receive a Christmas present. It is something we ALL can do...it is a fun and feel-good way to do your part for a worthy cause. Please pack your shoebox and bring it to your church at St. Mark: Nov. 14, 10am to noon during food drive or St. Luke: Nov. 15, 1pm to 3pm during food drive. Please remember to include a \$9.00 check made out to Samaritan's Purse with Operation Christmas Child in the memo line. For ideas of what to pack, go to www.samaritanspurse.org and click on the Shoebox link. **On Sunday, Nov. 22**, the boxes will be blessed by Pr. Emily virtually (they will be delivered before then).



PLEASE NOTE

Pastoral Contact Info

Pastor Emily is always available if you have pastoral care needs and need to connect. If you would like to get in touch with her via phone, please call the church office (St. Luke @ 651-698-9443 or St. Mark @ 651-224-0228) and leave a message. These messages are checked daily, and she will get back to you as soon as possible. If you would like to contact her via e-mail, her address is: pastoremi@gmail.com.

If you or your loved one is in the hospital, please contact the church office as soon as possible, for they do not notify the pastor or congregation due to confidentiality issues. Lastly, if you would like to be on the prayer list for the coming Sunday, please let us know. You can contact Pastor Emily at the above numbers or leave an e-mail message for the administrative secretary, Jo Klein at: secretary@saintlukechurch.org.

Offering Photos: If you like to plan ahead, here is this month's offering photo themes. Nov. 1st: Candles and Blessings; Nov. 8th: Lamps & Light; Nov. 15th: Bread & Wine; Nov. 22nd: Shepherd & Sheep, King and Royalty; Nov. 29th: Advent Wreaths.

