Saint Luke Lutheran Church

1807 Field Avenue, Saint Paul, MN 55116 | 651-698-9443 | saintlukechurch.org

November 2026 Newsletter



The Pastor's Perspective — *Pr. Bristol Reading*

It might not be time to turn your wall or desk calendar to 2027 just yet, but it is time to turn the church calendar to a new year. Liturgically speaking, the church year begins at Advent, the season of preparation for Christmas.

What does it mean to start a new church year, you might wonder? You'll sense a number of changes in our worship life in the coming weeks. For one, the color will change. We've been in a green season since Pentecost, all the way back in June! The weeks of Advent are blue, and Christmas, like other major festivals, comes in sparkling white and gold. It's fun to see the worship space change with the season, especially once the holiday decorations come out.
Another thing that shifts is the scripture for Sunday mornings. We've been reading primarily from Matthew's Gospel for a number of months, but in the next year, we will read mostly from the Gospel of Mark. Mark is the shortest of the four Gospels. It's play-length and can be read aloud in under two hours. We won't read it all in one sitting during worship, but we will read almost all of it at some point over the course of the next year.

Interestingly, though, Mark's Gospel doesn't tell us about Jesus' birth. There is no visitation from an angel to Mary. There is no donkey-laden journey to Bethlehem. No stars or wise men or mangers or sheep. Mark's Gospel picks up the story when Jesus is already an adult. So one unique thing about this year in the lectionary (the calendar of assigned scripture readings for Sunday mornings) is that we will hear from all four Gospels during Advent

November Volunteers

Thanks for your participation!

ONLINE USHERS
1st Sunday: David Tews
2nd Sunday: Sue McNeill
3rd Sunday: Raulie Ruiz
4th Sunday: David Nedrelow

IN PERSON USHERS
First and Second Sundays:
Doug Klein, Carol Hornung
Third and Fourth Sundays:
Kay Reich, Carol Hornung

READERS
1 Emily Elfritz
8 Julie Gaarder
15 Kyle Ulrich
22 Nancy Redlin
29 Theodore Eisner

COMMUNION ASSISTANTS
1 Emily Elfritz
8 Julie Gaarder
15 Kyle Ulrich
22 Nancy Redlin
29 Joyce Bluel

ALTAR GUILD
Nancy Hegdahl, Christine Olson

COUNTERS
1 Katy Eggert
8 Kay Reich
15 Julie Gaarder
22 Wendy Bjorklund
29 Carol Hornung

and Christmas. Once we settle further into the church year, Mark will become the norm.

Now that you have a sense of what the start of a new liturgical year will bring, I want to offer a word of encouragement for the coming weeks. There's a kind of competition between this time of year in the church and this time of year in the wider culture because both can feel a little too full. There's a lot going on at church throughout the fall and up until Christmas. Lots of holy days and worship events, choir rehearsals and decorations, cookies and candles and fundraisers and feasts. On the other hand, life outside the church also gets busy with festive events and obligations. Sometimes it feels hard to make enough space for faith and worship in November and December, even though this is a holy time of year!

If you've ever felt that way, remember that the incarnation is a moment when God comes to us. You might not feel like you have enough time or energy to come to God the way you want, but take comfort in knowing that God still comes to you. That truly is point at Christmas. When Jesus was born, the eternal presence of God stepped into human time and became human himself. Feeling stressed about juggling too many obligations seems a very human experience indeed. But human experience is precisely God's destination. The messy, ordinary chaos of your very human life is the perfect place to encounter God, who chooses again and again to come to us. After all, Jesus is Immanuel, which means God-is-with-us.

In a work never finished but posthumously published, Dietrich Bonhoeffer wrote, "While we exert ourselves to grow beyond our humanity, to leave the human behind us, God becomes human and we must recognize that God wills that we be human, real human beings." Don't try to be more than human this holiday season. Human is enough.

So happy new [church] year, all you ordinary, real, beloved human beings! Christ is here among us.



Notes from the Music Director - Becca Ruiz

As we approach November each year, the question of whether I present a report at the annual congregational meeting comes up. I figure there are enough reports shared that day but thought I'd share a few highlights as music director in the past year here:

KITCHEN LAUNDRY
1 Jo Klein
15 Pastor Bristol
29 Emily Elfritz



Bun Run

Many thanks to our Bun Run volunteers for November: Ken McGrew, Doug Klein, Kay Reich, Julie Ellingson.

November Birthdays

8 Dennis Olafson
10 Hugo Ruiz
Kaylee Larson
17 Dwight Paulson
Joan Wilson
30 Robert Herrmann

November Anniversaries

9 Kevin and Tracy Arndt: 1991



All are invited to Game Day at St. Luke, Friday, November 6 and 20. Bring a snack to share and your favorite game and settle down to an afternoon of fun…join us!

Kiva Lending Opportunity

It's time for another Kiva lending session, Sunday, Nov. 8! Thanks to the funds that have been repaid, we have $2,370 available to lend to individuals and entrepreneurs outside the United States. Since we began this program, our congregation has provided a total of $39,985 in loans to people around the world.Please join us

- With the help of our new member, we were able to schedule a concert with pianist Thomas Hecht.
- We started a Family Choir with a 5 week session last fall. The Family choir did a piece with the adult choir on Sunday, Dec. 21st. We are having two 5 week Family Choir sessions this year, one in fall and one in spring, with the plan to sing on Dec. 13th and Pentecost.
- Hymns: Three years ago I did a survey for people's favorite hymns and made a list. I've kept an informal accounting of how many songs we've sung since but decided to print off the list and write it down this year. We sang about 75% of the songs this past year at least once, and my goal is to hit every song by the next congregational meeting.
- I arranged 6 bell choir pieces
- I wrote a total of 8 Psalm refrains (3 in Advent, 5 in Easter)
- I wrote two new pieces this year - a prelude and a reflection
- I created the Sanctus we sang from August through October, and added to my Advent tune setting and made official accompaniments for the pieces.
– Over the year, I also continued having "Music Previews." These brief meetings after church are to gather people's thoughts on how we use music in our worship and get feedback on upcoming liturgical changes. Kind of like little ad hoc music committees as we approach a new season.
- I also led a couple of One-Hour Choirs to add special music in the choir "off-season." I hope next year I can organize maybe one or two more.

I hope you enjoyed this little reflection on the past year!



Thank you, Thank you, Thank you.....I can't begin to name everyone that helped at the fall bazaar because I am sure I would forget someone, but I can't say thank you enough to EVERYONE who helped make the bazaar such a success. It is almost a year of planning starting with designing the flyer, recruiting the vendors, Thrivent members applying for funds to offset the cost of the food and publicity, cooking the chili, then setting up and taking down. We can be proud of the fact that we welcome ALL into our church home for such an event. The food was great, and the variety at the rummage sale was fantastic. The vendors enjoyed their time at our location, and many enthusiastically asked to be invited back next year! Someone emailed me a week after the bazaar to comment on how delicious the pumpkin bars were! We couldn't pull off such an event without the help of all of you. Again, thank you, everyone. -Nancy Hegdahl

Sunday, November 8, after worship in the double room down the hall as we decide together where to lend these funds. It doesn't take long, and anyone is welcome to join us. Come be part of this meaningful outreach and help extend our congregation's generosity around the world!—Julie Gaarder



Congregational Meeting On Nov. 1, we'll meet for our annual congregational meeting after the Sunday service. The key events of the meeting are reviewing annual reports, approving the minutes of last year's meeting, approving next year's budget, and electing a church council for next year. The council meets monthly to conduct the business of the church. We welcome new people and previous council members to serve on the 2027 council. If you are interested, talk to Emily Elfritz or one of the other council members.

Cherish
ALL CHILDREN

Youth Holiday Gifts Your Council has voted to "go local" again this year and support homeless youth in the Twin Cities over the holidays. Lutheran Social Services sponsors a program for homeless youth called "Youth Holiday Gifts." This is a gift program of LSS's Cherish All Children service . We will be



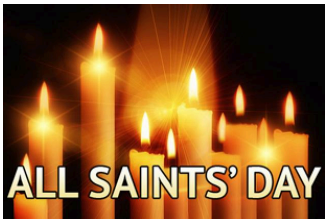
Supper with Saints will not take place in November, but will return as a luncheon in December. We will meet at Joseph's Grill, 140 S. Wabasha St., St. Paul, at noon on December 5th. Please let Joyce Bluel know by Sunday, November 29th if you would like to reserve a spot. We will need a firm number and will not be able to accept requests after this date.

St. Luke's Farmers' Market

Thank you for supporting the St. Luke's Farmers' Market this season. First, you helped financially! You, along with a past vendor, contributed $1154 (with $300 designated for music at the market), which helped keep the market financially strong and pay for music 7 markets of our 16 this season. Attendance was consistently stronger than we've ever had (except during Covid when we were the only story in town), with 151-283 customers weekly (average 220). We had a range of 5-9 vendors each week (average 7). Along with returning vendors, we welcomed four new ones: Wilson Creek Dairy, Smidge of Sweetness, Sparks Sweets, and Button and Bean (our new cupped coffee vendor). At least two of these will return. Second, you helped as volunteers! The market needs five volunteers per shift plus me—covering the EBT/credit booth, bread booth, and entrance greeters. Setup and takedown require everyone's help. I especially thank Doug Klein (our setup master), Kay Reich, and Sue McNeill—who worked the bread booth every single week! We had 23 volunteers, and a few were from the community beyond St. Luke. Many of you served multiple Saturdays, and the market couldn't happen without you! I want to give a shout out to Volker Landenberger, David Elliott, and Casey Ulrich who helped to set up and/or take down the market after Doug hurt his back mid-season. We really need people with upper body strength to help set up and take down the market!

Thanks also to Jo Klein and Becca Ruiz for publicity and volunteer coordination. Jo sends the volunteer reminder every week!

The market is not an individual effort—it takes a congregation! As you know, the market is my "happy place." Our volunteers, customers, and vendors have created a community. A customer collecting gifts on Sundays, 11/1, 11/8, 11/15, 11/22, 11/29 and 12/6. The gifts will be delivered in early December. Gifts should be NEW and UNWRAPPED. Please indicate the dollar amount on any gift card you donate. A list of desired holiday gifts is available in the Social Hall or click here for details. You are a warm, giving congregation; I'm confident we can offer gifts to these young people who are in need. Please contact me with any questions or concerns! -Wendy Bjorklund 651-357-5742, wlbjorklund@stcloudstate.ed



All Saints Day Sunday, Nov. 1 is our annual All Saints Day worship service at St. Luke. We will be honoring those who have passed away since our last ASD service. During this service we observe a Rite of Remembrance, in which we read the names of the deceased one by one, and as each name is read, a family member or friend of the deceased may come forward to light a candle to honor their loved one. (If no one comes forward, the Pastor lights the candle.) We invite you to participate in this special service. If you have a family member or friend that you wish to honor on All Saints Day, please contact Administrator Jo Klein at jojoklein@gmail.com so that she may add the name of your loved one to the list.

came to the kitchen window at the fall bazaar and said (I'm paraphrasing a bit), "Thank you so much for hosting your little farmers' market! It is such a great community!" Thank you again—I look forward to seeing you at the market next season! Best, Wendy Bjorklund, Market Manager

Connect, Grow and Serve.

..