



Saint Luke Lutheran Church

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

December 2022 Newsletter



The Pastor's Perspective

Divinity in Humanity

Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, our glory is to stand before the world as your own sons and daughters. May the simple beauty of Jesus' birth summon us always to love what is most deeply human and to see your Word made flesh reflected in those whose lives we touch.

-Second Sunday after Christmas, Roman rite

As we move through this holy season, from Advent to Christmas, I hope you are encountering the mystery of Christ's light shining around us even in these the darkest days in our hemisphere. This beautiful prayer from the traditional Roman rite reminds us that the incarnation is not only about Christ born in Bethlehem two thousand years ago. It is also about Christ dwelling all around us in the holiness of humanity – even the very ordinary people we encounter each day!

On Christmas Eve, we read from Isaiah: "For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace." What striking and strong names for a helpless little newborn, a reminder that God's glorious divinity is also reflected in humble humanness. Jesus is indeed wonderful, mighty, everlasting, the King of Kings and Prince of Peace. And yet, here he is: crying and tired and hungry, just like all infants.

Building on that theme, I want to share one of my favorite Advent reflections, from Evelyn Underhill. To her prayer group in the 1940s, she wrote:

"Advent is, of course, first of all a preparation for Christmas; which commemorates God's saving entrance into history in the Incarnation of Jesus Christ. A tremendous spiritual event then took place, something which disclosed the very nature of God and His relation to the universe. But there was little to show for it on the surface of life. All men saw was a poor girl unconditionally submitted to God's Will, and a baby born in difficult circumstances. And this contrast between the outward appearance and the

***December
Worship Volunteers***
*Thank you for your
time and talents!*

USHERS

In Person:

First and Second Sundays:

Judy Salaba

Third and Fourth Sundays:

Mary Jo Brandt

Carol Vigdal

Online:

1st Sunday: David Tews

2nd Sunday: Sue McNeill

3rd Sunday: Raulie Ruiz

4th Sunday: David NedreLOW

OFFERING COUNTERS

4 Katy Eggert

11 Wendy Bjorklund

18 Kay Reich

25 Sue McNeill

SCRIPTURE READERS

4 Christine Olson

11 Barb Jensen

18 Wendy Bjorklund

24 Sue McNeill

25 Charlotte Sivanich

COMMUNION ASSISTANTS

4 Katy Eggert

18 Wendy Bjorklund

25 Casey Ulrich

inner reality is true of all the comings of God to us. We must be very loving and very alert if we want to recognize them in their earthly disguise. Again and again he comes and the revelation is not a bit what we expect.

So the next lesson Advent should teach us is that our attitude towards him should always be one of humble eager expectancy. Our spiritual life depends on his perpetual coming to us, far more than on our going to him. Every time a channel is made for him, he comes; every time our hearts are open to him he enters, bringing a fresh gift of his very life, and on that life we depend. We should think of the whole power and splendor of God as always pressing in upon our small souls. 'In Him we live and move and have our being.' But that power and splendor mostly reach us in homely and inconspicuous ways..."

Very loving and very alert. That's Evelyn's description of the Advent spirit we should strive to have. We are expectant, trusting that God will arrive, and yet open, ready to acknowledge that God will certainly arrive in ways that surprise us. "Homely and inconspicuous ways," Evelyn suggests.

Look around you: God is already here. In the ordinary. In the people you see every day. And in the manger. Thanks be to God who dwells among us!

Pr. Bristol



Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

If you were at the annual meeting in November, then you may already know that we elected new council members, approved the 2023 proposed budget, set up an additional way for the congregation to contribute online to the building fund, and voted to lease space to Metronet, the multitype library system in the metropolitan area.

Congratulations to your 2023 council as follows: President - David Tews, Vice President - Volker Landenberger, Secretary - Kay Reich, Treasurer - Joyce Bluel, Council Members at Large (serving two-year terms) - Doug Nelson, and Carol Hornung, and (serving one year) Mike Hegdahl. The new council members will be invited to the December meeting as we have done in the past. Please continue to pray and support this new leadership as you have done this past year of transition.

Again, I want to thank everyone for their support this year, I know with Pastor Bristol's leadership, St. Luke will remain a bright star in our community.

Happy Holiday Blessings,
Nancy Hegdahl



Loaves and Fishes

Our heartfelt thanks to our November Loaves and Fishes volunteers: Landenberger Family, David Tews and Larry Litzkow.



December Bun Run

Many thanks to our Bun Run volunteers for December: Mike and Nancy Hegdahl, Volker Landenberger, Ken McGrew, Doug Klein and Larry and Junella Litzkow.

December Birthdays

- 4 Olivia Peterson
- Stacy Alcenot
- 5 Douglas Nelson
- 7 Alina Alcenot
- Raul Ruiz
- 18 Holly Schultz
- 23 Deborah Vigdal
- 30 Roger Diestler

December Anniversaries

- 17 Doug and Karen Wasko, 1960



All are invited to Game Day at St. Luke, the first and third Fridays of the month, December 2 and 16, at 12:30pm. Bring a snack to share and your favorite game and settle down to an afternoon of fun...join us!

A Quick Guide to Liturgical Festivals

This is a holy time in the liturgical year when we celebrate a lot of special days! They come fast, so here's a quick guide to the upcoming festivals:

Advent: The four weeks leading up to Christmas are a time of preparation as we await the coming of Emmanuel, "God-with-us." This year, Advent begins on November 27, when we dec the halls at St. Luke. We'll read from the Gospel of Matthew during these weeks.

Christmas: On Christmas Eve, we hear the familiar nativity story from Luke's Gospel. This year, Christmas day falls on a Sunday, and we'll read from John 1, "In the beginning was the Word..." Christmas is actually its own mini season in the church year, 12 days long. So be sure to keep the celebration going with lots of singing and treats!

Name of Jesus: On the eighth day of Christmas, we celebrate another special festival. In Jesus' world of first-century Judaism, baby boys were circumcised and named on the eighth day, a holy dedication somewhat like a christening. So on Sunday, January 1, we honor Jesus' holy and powerful name.

Epiphany: The 12 days of Christmas conclude on Friday, January 6, with Epiphany ("manifestation"), when we celebrate God's glory revealed in the person of Jesus Christ. We'll read scripture about the divine light come into the world and bless our church building for a new year. This is the day some traditions celebrate the arrival of the three kings from the East.

Baptism of Our Lord: The first Sunday after Epiphany is yet another festival day! Just as many of us begin our faith journeys with baptism, we start our new journey through the liturgical year with the story of Jesus' baptism in the Jordan River. This year, we'll hear Matthew's version.

All of these festivals are a wonderful opportunity to celebrate and worship, either at church or at home. I'd love to hear about the traditions that are special to you during these holy days. In our home, we love making an Advent wreath and paper Advent calendar each year. If you're looking for some new rituals for this time of year, one of my favorite resources is *To Dance With God: Family Ritual and Community Celebration* by Gertrud Mueller Nelson.

St. Luke is growing in generosity

Our goal was to receive 25 intent cards this fall, and so far we have received 32. This means we achieved our \$2,000 challenge gift together. Most exciting of all, 70% of households grew in generosity! One individual household increased their giving by 76%. Wow!

If you haven't returned your intent card yet, please do! You can mail it to the church or fill it out online at www.saintlukechurch.org/ways-to-donate. We want everyone to be part of this growing momentum. Your

o Come
+ ALL YE +
faithful

Join us for
**Advent and Christmas
worship at St. Luke**

Advent Candlelight Service
Sunday, December 4, 7pm

Christmas Eve Service
Saturday, December 24, 6pm

Christmas Day Service
Sunday, December 25,
9:30am



Ladies' Luncheon



**St. Luke/St. Mark
Ladies Luncheon**

will be held on Saturday, December 10th at noon at the Downtowner Woodfire Grill, 253 W. Seventh St. Please call Joyce Bluel at 651-690-4614 by December 5th if interested in attending so a reservation can be made.



Join us for Book Club
on Sunday, Jan. 8, 6:30pm via Zoom to discuss "Gilead" by Marilyn Robinson. Winner of the Pulitzer Prize and National Book Critics Circle Award, GILEAD is a hymn of praise and lamentation to the God-haunted

generosity makes our ministry possible in big ways and small ways. Here are two recent examples of how our congregation extends God's love.

First, we held two funerals in two days last month. Both were big crowds and both included luncheons hosted at St. Luke. It was a lot of work for our staff and volunteers, but our hospitality and care made it possible for these families to have a meaningful experience of remembering their loved one, a precious gift to them. Thank you for all the ways you supported those families in their grief.

Second, we were able to give two families in our congregation Thanksgiving baskets (in the form of Aldi gift cards) to make the holiday a little less stressful and a little more celebratory. We can't solve all the hardships people face, but we can share the burden in love.

When people face loss or hard times, their family of faith is there to support them. That's possible because of the ways you generously share your time and money. Thank you!



Loaves and Fishes

is one of our long-standing ministries here at St Luke. Since the pandemic, we have gone from dining in to take out at St. Matthews. Costs for the ingredients to make the chili and coleslaw served each month have gone up as well as having to purchase take out containers. Our designated funds for Loave and Fishes is in need of replenishing, if you would like to make a donation to this ministry, note that on the memo line of your check.

December is a month with so many opportunities to sing together! Plus the choirs will be sharing special music during our services too. I know there are some talented folks at St. Luke and this is a great time of year to share your talents. Check out the bulletin board in the Fellowship Hall to see openings for special music during the offering and communion distribution. There's a handy sign-up sheet or you can always contact me by email or after service.



Notes from the Music Director

We also changed up the liturgy for Advent and the Christmas season! We are reminded of the angels as we sing "Glory to God" after the Kyrie each Sunday. Each Sunday we'll sing a different verse of "O Come O Come Emmanuel" before the Gospel reading. Our post-Communion hymn for Advent anticipates Jesus' birth, and our post-Communion hymn in the Christmas season reminds us of Jesus' younger years with the "Nunc Dimittis" based on the Song of Simeon. I hope these small musical ties, among others, help bring us more into the Advent and Christmas seasons as we worship and celebrate together.

Join us for a festive HymnSing, Friday, Dec. 23, 5-7pm, online or in person. O come let us adore him with some favorite hymns of the season!

-Becca Ruiz

Connect, Grow and Serve.

existence that Reverend Ames loves passionately, and from which he will soon part. "So serenely beautiful and written in a prose so gravely measured and thoughtful, that one feels touched with grace just to read it." -*The Washington Post*. The Zoom invite will be emailed to you shortly before the meeting. All are welcome!



St. Luke Mitten and Hat Tree

During the Advent season there will be a Christmas tree placed in the sanctuary where we will be collecting hats, mittens, and scarves. We will collect items from November 27 to December 25. At the end of this drive, we will 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!

Building Fund

We have recently found out that some electrical work needed to be done on the east wing of the building to correct some problems and bring it up to code. The cost of this work is around \$4,800. This is not in our budget for 2022, so if you are interested in contributing to cover these costs, please note "Building Fund" on your check. You may also utilize the online giving and select Building Fund instead of General Fund.