



St. Luke Lutheran Church
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St. Luke Lutheran Church

Connect, Grow and Serve.

Parish Times *December 2021*



The Pastor's Perspective.....

Dear beloved children of God, greetings in the name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ!

¹⁰ But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: ¹¹ to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. ¹² This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger." Luke 2:10-12

I would like to take a moment to wish you a very Merry Christmas. During this season, we will be celebrating Hope, Peace, Love, and Joy; I pray that all four of these will fill your life in every way this Christmas and beyond. I am grateful to God. This Christmas, as in all previous years, we celebrate "Immanuel" (God with us). Without Christ's presence among us, we would be lost. Through God's presence working within us, we are being healed, transformed, reconciled, and made whole. While we might recall difficult times and frustrations in 2020-2021, we continue with faith, love, joy, and hope for 2022.

For many people, Christmas is a time of sorrow. They do not have the extra money to buy presents for their children, family, and friends. Many are saddened at Christmas time when they think of their loved ones who will not be able to come home for various reasons or the loved ones who have passed during this last year. Yet, Christmas can be a season of great joy - it is a time of God showing His great love for us. It can be a time of healing and renewed strength. Christmas is when we celebrate the birth of the Christ child. God sent His Son, Jesus, into the world to be born and his birth brought great joy to the world.

At this most wonderful time of the year may you and your loved ones find joy and fulfillment as surely Joseph and Mary did. Glory to God in the highest, and on earth, and peace to all people of goodwill.

We can truly be happy at Christmas! No matter what may be happening, we can know that we are His children and heaven will be our home one day. Look at Christmas in a new way this year. This is the year to invite Jesus into your heart - the joy and peace you will receive will last all year as you look to God for all your needs to be met. Jesus is the reason for the season of Joy.

Loving God, help us remember the birth of Jesus, that we may share in the song of the angels, the gladness of the shepherds, and worship of the wise men. Close the door to hate and open the door of love all over the world. Let kindness come with every gift and good desires with every greeting. Deliver us from evil by the blessings which Christ brings and teach us to be merry with clear hearts. May Christmas morning make us happy to be your children, and Christmas evening bring us to our beds with grateful thoughts, forgiving and forgiven, For Jesus' sake. Amen.

Your sister in Christ,
 Pastor Jacqueline Belzer

Notes From the Music Director



A big thank you to the choirs of St. Luke! You don't know how much I appreciate each of you and your dedication to the choirs. We still have many challenges to keep each other safe but your patience and attitudes are greatly appreciated. We are so lucky to have such amazing ringers and singers at St. Luke! Rehearsals are the highlight of my week and I love working with all of you very much! Especially during Advent and Christmas when we have more music, more performances, and less time together: thank you so much!

--Rebecca Ruiz



Join us for
Advent and Christmas worship at St. Luke

Advent Candlelight Service

Sunday, December 5, 7pm

Christmas Eve Service

Friday, December 24, 6pm

There will be no service December 25. We will gather for Holy Communion worship on December 26 at 9:30am.



Our next SL/SM Book Club will be Sunday, Dec. 12, 6:30pm via Zoom to discuss *The Book of Longings*, by Sue Monk Kidd. "An extraordinary story set in the first century about a woman who finds her voice and her destiny, from the celebrated number one New York Times bestselling author of *The Secret Life of Bees*." All are welcome...join us!



December Birthdays

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



December Anniversaries

- 17 - Doug and Karen Wasko: 1960

Announcing a brief special congregational meeting for the adoption of 2022 budget on Sunday, December 19 directly after worship. If you use Zoom, simply use the Zoom invite for the December 19 service and stay online; the meeting will follow the service asap. Please plan on attending; we need and value your input.



December Scripture Readers

- 5 Christine Olson
- 12 Joyce Bluel
- 19 Kay Reich
- 24 Barb Jensen
- 26 Wendy Bjorklund



LOAVES AND FISHES

Our heartfelt thanks to our November volunteers: Christine Olson, Bev Gause, Claudia Melbye, David Tews and Larry Litzkow.

BUN RUN



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

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 28 to December 26. 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!



thrivent® Thrivent Financial

Thrivent Financial members of St. Luke, have you directed your Thrivent Choice \$ yet this year? If not, a wonderful way to support your church would be to direct those dollars to St. Luke. It is simple to do by logging into your account online or by calling your Thrivent agent. See instructions below.

Online

- 1) Visit **Thrivent.com/thriventchoice**
- 2) In the Get Started section on the right, click **Direct Thrivent Choice Dollars**
- 3) Log in by entering your user ID and password. (If you haven't yet registered on Thrivent.com, click **Register for account access**.)
- 4) Choose the organization to which you want to direct Choice Dollars:
 - a. To direct to a previous organization:
 - i. Click **Direct Now** next to the organization's name, or
 - ii. Click on the **View activity history** link, scroll down and click on the **name of the desired organization**.
 - b. To direct to a new organization, **enter keyword(s)** like organization name, Zip code, cause, etc. Click **Search**
- 5) Choose **Direct All** or **enter a specific number** and click **Direct Now**. Follow the prompts on the confirmation page to direct Choice Dollars

By phone

1. Call **800-847-4830** and when prompted, say **Thrivent Choice**.
2. **Press 1** to direct Choice Dollars or **2** to hear Thrivent Choice Dollars Program Terms and Conditions. (If prompted, say or enter your phone number and date of birth.)
3. A representative will work with you to direct Choice Dollars.

President's Corner



We are going to begin a new chapter for St. Luke in January 2022. Pr. Reading will be experiencing her first year as an ordained pastor with us, just as Pr. Hock was a first-year pastor when he was welcomed to St. Luke. We are hoping that Pr. Reading will help us to grow our membership as she leads us in our faith. We must maintain our Vanguard Fund to keep our building open to our church family and others. I am hoping that those who are regularly making an offering will continue to do so, and perhaps increase when special projects are funded by our dwindling Vanguard Fund. We have been using the Vanguard Fund for monthly expenses not covered by offerings since March 2020. We used \$64,000 to repave the parking lot. This was a safety decision, and long overdue. If you are able to designate an extra amount to assist in replacing that large withdrawal, we will all benefit. It is so very important for our congregation to have the Vanguard Fund for replacements and repairs, but not for monthly expenses. Whether you have returned a stewardship pledge card or not, please be as faithful as possible in supporting St. Luke in this time of transition.

This will be my last President's Corner. I want to thank my congregation for your support these past two years. I am so proud that we have survived COVID, the separation from each other for over a year, the acceptance of Zoom services and Zoom meetings, the patience and guidance of Pr. Jacqueline Belzer since December 2020 as we regrouped, and having Bristol Reading accept our call as our three-quarter time settled pastor. I am thankful for being a member of this church family for 60 years. I have volunteered to organize the Zoom chats so Pr. Reading can meet everyone on a casual basis. Knowing us will certainly help her in discovering why St. Luke is important to each of us. Please be prepared to be available in January and February for a Zoom chat.

I know that our 2022 council will be fine leaders in working with our new pastor. Please support them so they can use their experience as council members and leaders to help us grow stronger.

I wish each of you a blessed holiday season, and an exciting new year at St. Luke Lutheran Church!

Sue McNeill
Council President (2020-2021)

The Lord bless thee and keep thee. -Numbers 6:24