

ST. LUKE LUTHERAN CHURCH

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NEWSLETTER 2023

From the Pastor's Desk:

"For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven ..."

-Ecclesiastes 3:1

'Tis the season! Or is it?

As I write this article, it is mid-November, one week before Thanksgiving. So, to focus on Advent and Christmas (my intent for a December article), feels a little ... premature, at least for the world I'm living in **right now**.

But this is not unusual for Christmas. People often **want i**t to come prematurely. Certainly this is often true of the places we shop. As I write, grocery stores are already a few weeks into their displays of Christmas candy. Other businesses have already started theming their advertising in red and green in order to compete for our gift shopping dollars.

And there's nothing wrong with that. Christmas is viewed by many as a time of good will and good cheer, a magical season. But as early as the culture around us wants to get into the "Christmas Spirit", it isn't Christmas ... yet. And it won't be until the end of this month.

The season we are in as you read this is Advent, which is a time for us to reflect on the meaning of Christmas and to prepare for Christ's coming. Why is that important? Well, if you have (or have ever had) guests to your home this time of year, imagine how you'd feel if those guests announced that they were going to

come for Christmas on December 1. You'd want a time to prepare, wouldn't you? The time spent in preparation makes the celebration of the visit all the more meaningful.

Advent gives us the opportunity to prepare our hearts for the coming of Jesus. The season gives us the opportunity to reflect on both the question of why Jesus' birth was necessary in the first place and also the future promise alluded to by his birth. And it gives us the opportunity to reflect on how **our** lives bear Jesus into this world. That's a lot more than we get from eating peppermint and stringing lights. The more we reflect on those things, the more time we spend in preparation, the more Christmas means when it actually gets here.

So, as the month of December progresses, go ahead and eat those cookies and candy canes, and maybe even sing a carol or two. But remember ... it isn't Christmas yet.

Peace,

Jeff





Watch, Wait, Wonder, and Worship: A Midweek Series for Advent

Join us for a contemplative Advent liturgy on Wednesday nights this Advent season! **Beginning Wednesday, December 6**th, at 7 pm. We will meet on Wednesdays (6th, 13th, 20th) for a brief prayer service.



Serving in December at the 10:30 am worship service

Altar care – Charles Mahler

Greeters – 3rd Sue Beidler; 10th Rachelle & Jeff Jones; 17th Linda Updegraff;

24th Hanne Schuman; Christmas Eve Nancy McCarty; 31st Deb Smith

Ushers – 3rd Brad Nason; 10th Chip Edmonds & Keith Wood; 17th Chip Edmonds

& Brad Nason; 24th Keith Wood; 31st Terry Belles

Dec. 3rd The 1st Sunday of Advent

10:30 am

Lector – Dan Lamade

Communion Assistant – Patty Durand & Becky Lewis

Dec. 10th The Second Sunday of Advent

10:30 am

Lector – Sue Beidler

<u>Communion Assistant</u> – Mark Bergren & Marilyn Eshleman

Dec. 17th The Third Sunday of Advent

10:30 am

Lector – Melanie Taormina

Communion Assistant – Dan Lamade & Charles Mahler

Dec. 24th The Fourth Sunday of Advent

10:30 am

Lector - Cheryl Newburg

<u>Communion Assistant</u> – Sandy and Rod Strother

Dec. 24th 7:30 pm Christmas Eve Candlelight service

Lector – Jay Nau

Communion Assistant – Patty Durand & Nancy Wood and Hanne Schuman &

Karen Baldys

Dec. 31st Christmas I, Service of Lessons and Carols

Lector – Debra Smith

Readers – Debra Smith 1-3 readings; Wilma Reeder 4-6 readings

Communion Assistant Susan Horn & Janice Ogurcak

WORSHIP SERVING

If you would like to help serve in our 8:00 am or 10:30 am worship service(s), please contact Diane Kohler at 570-419-7085 or email <u>kohlerdede@gmail.com</u> or Pastor Jeff at 570-323-7309.



Anyone interested in serving as an usher, please contact the office or email or call Nancy McCarty at: nmac7149@gmail.com; (570) 419-7827).

PRAYER CHAIN UPDATE

If you or someone you know needs prayer, please call Cindy Belles at 570-419-1363 or Karen Bergren at 570-220-3201 to start the prayer chain. If you want the name to be on the bulletin prayer list call the church office.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY

The Outreach committee is looking for volunteers to be Greeters at the late service. If you are interested in this ministry, please contact Deb Smith at 570-762-3308.

COFFEE HOUR

There will be a Coffee Hour after the late service on the 1st Sunday of each month, immediately after the church service (11:30AM) in Bell Hall. Also, on the 3rd Sunday of the month, Coffee Hour will begin at 9AM following the early service in the chapel. Join us for refreshments and fellowship! Please consider volunteering for a coffee hour. A sign-up sheet is located on the bulletin board directly across from the chapel. If you have any questions, contact a member of the Fellowship Ministry.

PLEASE NOTE UPDATED MEETINGS

- The Exec. Comm. will meet on Tuesday, Nov. 29th at 6:00 pm
- Council will meet Monday, Dec. 4th at 7:00 pm in Bell Hall
- BSA will meet Thursday, Dec. 7th at 6:30 pm 8:00 pm in Bell Hall
- PVC will meet on Tuesday, Dec. 12th at 1:00 pm Christmas Bag packing in the library.
- Worship & Music will meet on Wednesday, Dec. 12th at 7:00 pm
- Pre-School No Dec. meeting
- Knitters No Dec. meeting

SEW FINE QUILTERS will meet on Monday, Dec. 4th from 9:00am - 3:00pm in Bell Hall for an End of Year luncheon.

ST. LUKE ANNUAL MEETING of the Congregation Part One will be held **Sunday, December 10, following the 10:30am worship service.** A copy of the agenda and 2024 budget will be available in the back of the nave for pick up starting November, 26th. If you would a mailed copy, please contact Sarah Young at the church office. Thank you.



DECORATING THE NAVE

On **Sunday, Dec. 10th following the Annual Meeting**, the Worship and Music Ministry invites all who are able to help decorate the Nave for Christmas. **Pizza and snacks will be provided.** Many hands make quick work!

CHRISTMAS DONATIONS ARE NEEDED for filling Christmas bags for our St. Luke shut-ins and friends. A box will be located in the West Hall for your donations. Suggested items:

Juice boxes, tissues, small notepads, puzzle books, hand lotion, chapstick, hard candies, individual packs of crackers or snack items, homemade cookies and treats.

Anyone interested in helping to pack and helping to deliver the bags is invited to meet in **Bell Hall at 1:00pm on Tuesday, Dec. 12th.** Any questions, please contact Cindy Belles.

GOOD GIFTS GIVING TREE



It is that time of year when we all look out for deals on Christmas presents or ponder over what to get for that one person who has everything. Every Advent, St Luke supports the ELCA Good Gifts program. Over the last few years, (prior to COVID) We have provided

for wells, farms, and schools in developing third-world countries. This year Outreach has decided to support Computers for Community Centers and 1 year of internet service. The total is \$2,000.00. The children in these communities will be able to use the internet to do schoolwork and the community will have access to information to help them grow. For that hard-to-get- for person on your gift list, please consider donating to our Good Gifts Program. Order sheets will be available under the Christmas tree table, located in the West Hall. Please make checks out to St. Luke, please put Good Gifts in the memo.

God Bless us Everyone one- Tiny Tim

COME TO THE MANGER on Saturday, December 16th at 2:00 pm.

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Bring your family to St. Luke Church (1400 Market St., Williamsport) for a fun, low-pressure, Christmas celebration! We'll be telling the Christmas story in an interactive way that places you and your children in the center of the story. Upon arrival, kids will choose a costume headpiece that will help them to portray a lamb, magi, or angel. Parents will receive a corresponding headpiece (shepherd hat, camel, or star). We'll all move to different locations in the sanctuary, telling the story of the birth of Jesus, singing, and interacting along the way. **Christmas refreshments to follow in the Chapel Lounge.**



WORSHIP SERVICES FOR THE CHRISTMAS SEASSON

Dec. 24th - 8:00 am and 10:30 am: The Fourth Sunday of Advent Dec. 24th - 7:30 pm Christmas Eve Candle Light Service Dec. 25th – Christmas Day – No service Dec. 31st - Christmas I, Service of Lessons and Carols

INCLEMENT WEATHER

CLOSING ANNOUNCEMENT may be found by checking the church website, and our FACEBOOK page.

YEAR-END REMINDER

Please note that for offering donations to be counted towards 2023, they must be received by the Church office by the end of business on **Wednesday, December 27, 2023.** Any questions regarding your 2023 giving, please contact the Business Manager, Melissa Eshleman at businessmanager.stlukeluth@gmail.com. The 2024 Offering Envelopes will be available for pick up in the West Hall. Thank you

ONGOING COLLECTIONS AT ST. LUKE

Daniel's Closet

Daniel's Closet needs your help! Now more than ever, warm winter clothing and accessories are needed for all ages, from infant through adult. **Seasonal clothing** (no summer clothing at this time and please NO hangers) for infants, children, and adults, as well as accessories (belts, ties, shoes, boots, scarves, hats, gloves, purses, backpacks/bags, suitcases, etc.). All clothing must be bagged, no loose clothing, please. A collection box is located in our West Hall or items can be taken directly to Redeemer Lutheran Church at 1101 Washington Blvd., Williamsport

THE FOOD PANTRY

Your help is desperately needed! The shelves are empty! Below is a list of items that the UCLC Food Pantry is in need of. If you would like to join the volunteer team at the Pantry, please contact Tammey at 570-322-1110 for an orientation.

Peanut Butter
Boxed Macaroni and Cheese
Canned Beef Stew
Canned Chicken Noodle Soup
Canned Chicken Breast
Canned Mandarin Oranges
Large (shelf-stable) Fruit Juices

Donation drop-offs are Monday from 9:00-11:00 a.m.

SHEPHERD OF THE STREETS Needed for men, women & children: Shampoo and Conditioner, Shaving Cream, Razors, Toothbrushes, Toothpaste, Body Wash, Deodorant, Feminine Hygiene Items, and Soap, especially Dove. Paper Towels and Toilet Tissue are also needed. *URGENT NEED: Shampoo for men, women & children*.

COMMUNITY EVENTS

FESTIVAL OF LESSONS & CAROLS

Trinity Episcopal Pro-Cathedral, 844 West Fourth Street, Williamsport, will present a *Festival of Lessons & Carols* on **Sunday, December 10th at 4:00 p.m.**. Modeled on the annual celebration at King's College, this service features traditional congregational carols and anthems presented by Trinity's Choir, Choral Scholars, and guest musicians. This event is free; doors open at 3:30 p.m. For more information, contact 570-322-0126 or trinitychurchpa@comcast.net.

CML ADVENT HOLY HIKE

<u>December 17, 2023 at 3:00 pm - 6:00 pm Camp Mount Luther,</u> 355 Mt Luther Ln, Mifflinburg, PA. Join us for a meditative hike reflecting on the promises of the coming Messiah and the Christmas story. Christmas refreshments to follow.

SAVE THE DATE

MEN OF ST. LUKE

Please join us for a Men's Breakfast at 8:00 am on Saturday, January 27th. All men are invited to join us along with your neighborhood friends, sons, and grandsons. We will have a guest speaker; open discussion on what kind of program we want; and dates for a regular event (bi-monthly or at least quarterly). We are looking for guest speakers, if interested contact Jay Nau.

Please, RSVP on the sign-up sheet located in the West Hall or by contacting Jay Nau at (503-686-4550) or the church office.

WOMEN'S BIBLE STUDY

Deb Smith is starting a Women's Bible Study in February. Before determining a date and time, she would like to see who is interested. She has also picked two studies and would like those interested to decide which one will be studied. Please contact Deb Smith at 570-762-3308 or mdtmom4@ gmail.com. "I'm looking forward to deepening our faith together." - Deb

SAVE THE DATE

The Pre- School at St. Luke All You Care to Eat Pancake Breakfast

Saturday, February 3, 2024



Snow date: Saturday, February 10, 2024



To our members celebrating a birthday in December

Madalyn Fortin 12/06

Melissa Mahler 12/09

Jere Eshleman 12/12

Krista Hiller 12/12

Marjorie Holland 12/12

Roger Wyland 12/12

Deloris Snyder 12/13

Wendy Kelsey 12/15

Alex Reed 12/15

Christian Scampone 12/18

Brenna Beck 12/20

Rebecca Jean 12/21

Gerald Brown 12/23

Leah Nason 12/23

Karl Yoas 12/23

Carole Harris 12/26

Scott Seyler 12/27

Ethan Fisher 12/28

James Donnell 12/29

Ali Wyland 12/29

Happy Anniversary.....

Mr. & Mrs. Debra Smith 12/09 David and Susan Horn 12/18 Jim and Sally Labenberg 12/23 Rev. Theodore and Bonita Cockley 12/27

(We're sorry if we missed anyone. If we did, please contact the office so we can add you to our records.)





Pastor Jeffrey LeCrone, Pastor Email: info@stlukeweb.com



Sarah M. Young, Church Office Manager Email: info@stlukeweb.com



Rebecca Ciabattari, Organist/Choir Director Email: beckyciab@gmail.com



Chris Knaur, Sexton Email: <u>info@stlukeweb.com</u>



Melissa Eshleman, Business Manager Email: <u>businessmanager.stlukeluth@gmail.com</u>

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