

THE EPISTLE

The Monthly Newsletter of St. Luke's United Methodist Church

The Greatest Wonder of Them All

As we enter the season of Advent, we celebrate God authenticating his presence by entering human history in the person of God's son made incarnate. This ultimate act of humbling God's self was and is the pathway to reconcile humanity with God as Jesus's suffering and death paid the penalty for our sins.

There are four accounts in the Scriptures concerning the birth of Christ.

- The first and probably the least known because of its apocalyptic flavor is found in Revelations 12:1-6. It is referred to as the Cosmic Christmas Story. (I invite you to google it for explanation.)
- The second is Paul's theological birth story recorded in Philippians 2:5-8 regarding an emptying of himself taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness."
- The third is John's account recorded in John 1:14-18. "And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory as of the father's only son, full of grace and truth."
- The fourth is the birth of Christ as told in Matthew 1:18-25 and Luke 1:26-2:20. The simplicity of the story and its tenderness of the incarnate Christ is by far the most beloved account early tucked in our heart to stay a lifetime.

To me, God authenticating His presence by entering human history in the person of God's

Son made incarnate is the greatest of God's Wonders. For sure every one of the innumerable Wonders and mighty displays of God's love, power, and protection are significant but Immanuel, God with us is number One.

Within this Wonder of Christ's birth, as all in others deeds of The Almighty, there are treasures to meditate on adding more meaning to gifts given. I share one that stands out for me. God cries! Is that not something?! The One with limitless power and inescapable presence and who set the stars in place and calls them by name (Psalm 147:5) came to be with us crying as a baby. What can be more humbling and loving than that!

A blessed Christmas season to you and yours.

PS. I would be delighted to listen to your wonders of this Wonder we celebrate together. You know where I am.

Thank you note:

The Neenan family appreciates so very much the prayers, kindness, and memorials you have sent our way in our season of grief regarding our brother, Mike. It has been a tough road to travel, and the St. Luke's family made it a little easier to journey on through this past year. Please continue to especially remember, Dorothy, his wife and their children, Debbie and Brian, along with their own families.



ADVENT Services

SERVICE OF LESSONS AND CAROLS
SUNDAY, DECEMBER 8TH, 10:30AM

BLUE CHRISTMAS SERVICE
WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 18TH, 6PM

CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE
TUESDAY, DECEMBER 24TH, 5PM





Join us for our

CHRISTMAS SERVICE OF *Lessons & Carols*

Sunday
December 8th
During Worship



Come Sing With Us At:

Cocoa & Carols

December 8th

11:30 a.m - 1 p.m

Join us in front of the sanctuary
for caroling with our neighbors.
(no musical talent required)

Cocoa, Cookies, Sandwiches
Gingerbread Bounce House and
Giant Snow Globe Photo Op

CHRISTMAS FUN FOR ALL AGES!



The background is a dark green color, decorated with various Christmas-themed illustrations. At the top, there are strings of colorful lights (red, orange, green, white) and small green snowflakes. A candy cane is on the left and a red and yellow striped bomb is on the right. In the center, a green banner contains the event date and time. Below the banner, the location is listed. The bottom of the poster features two cartoon characters: Santa Claus on the left, wearing a red suit and hat, and a snowman on the right, wearing a red hat and scarf. There are also two green Christmas trees with red and yellow ornaments, a gingerbread man, a red and white striped stocking, and a yellow gift box with a red bow. The text is in white and yellow, making it stand out against the green background.

SLUMC CHILDREN

HOLIDAY HOPE NIGHT

JOIN US FOR A JOLLY
GOOD TIME!

DEC 13TH - 5:30-7:30 PM

480 S. HIGHLAND

EVENT DETAILS:

Parents bring your kids for a night off during one of the busiest seasons of the year. We will feed your children, do crafts, watch a movie, and enjoy time together remembering the Reason for the Season! Just drop them off and leave the fun to us!

**HO-HO-HOPE TO SEE
YOU THERE!**

901-826-3493

MARYPAGE.CONTRERAS@STLUKESUMC.ORG



CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

So many fun things are happening for our children as we enter into such a magical season of the year. Beginning on December 1st, we will be bringing back a special Advent class for our children. The combined Sunday School class for JK-5th Grade will meet in the Day School Lobby. This special class is called, "Tis the Season for ADVENTure!" and each week the children will get to discuss the different components of Advent: Hope, Love, Joy, and Peace. They will get to create something special for each theme that will be displayed for the whole church to enjoy. The class will meet together in the Lobby weekly from 9:15-10:15 am until Sunday, December 22nd, which will be the final week. Our Children's Choir is also back up and running this year being led by our very own, Mrs. Amy Pearson! The kids practice weekly in the lobby after Sunday School classes and the church will get to hear their hard work on Sunday the 8th.

Finally, on Friday, December 13th we will be having another "Holiday Hope Night" this from 5:30-7:30pm. This night is a time for parents to get some peace and quiet during one of the busiest seasons of the year. The children will be dropped off in the Fellowship Hall for pizza, a movie, crafts, and games and parents can go run errands, have a nice dinner out, or maybe even take a nap! This event was so fun last year and we hope to have even more kids come this year. It is free to attend and open to all ages JK-Fifth Grade, but we can add a nursery for infant and preschool age siblings if requested. Be on the lookout for a registration link and as always, if you have any questions do not hesitate to reach out to Mary Page Contreras. We could use volunteers too! We have so many fun things planned for our children to enjoy the true meaning of the season and share their special gifts with us all, as well as have some fun! I hope you and your family can be present for all the good to come and we can enjoy the magic of the season together.



The Fun Bunch Activities.

- On December 11th, we be hosting our annual Ornament Decorating Party. We will meet in the Craft Room. Bring your sack lunch. We will be sending this “St. Luke’s Christmas Decorations” to our homebound members. Also, there will be a special game in memory of Ms. Alice Roberts.

We are busy planning adventures for the New Year. If you have suggestions please let us know.

Call Jim or Jeanne Debo 413-3341

The Sherwood Elementary School Mitton Tree Ministry will be collecting winter gear through January for preschool- 5th grade students. What a lovely way to keep reminding the teachers and students that we are thinking of them throughout the winter months. We will make deliveries to Jaclyn, the school counselor, every few weeks.

Thank you so much for your generous gifts. Store bought or hand made, your gifts are so haertfelt and appreciated.

In Christ's Love,
The Church Ladies' Small Group
Melinda Kaler Bette Colter
Jacki Romey Barbara Simpson

contact: mtkaler1111@gmail.com



NOVEMBER 2024 HONORIUMS AND MEMORIALS:

Honors:

In Honor of Carolyn Graves from Deborah Ann Sanders

Memorials:

In Memory of Bettye Jo Masters from Helen Wofford, Barbara Simpson, Ruth and Warren Morrison

In Memory of Alice Roberts from Helen Wofford

In Memory of Mary Francis Hall from Janet Dunphy, Jane Griffin, Debra Frasure

In Memory of Michael Neenan from Mary Lou Cushing

Sunday, January 26 is Leadership Sunday at St. Luke's!

On this special Sunday, during worship, we will recognize all of our church's leaders and the numerous volunteers who are dedicated to serving in our church's ministries. All Staff and Church Council members should make plans now to attend a Leadership Information Event following worship, where we will provide you with tools to help you as you lead your ministry area. We will have a boxed lunch. More details will follow as the event approaches. For now, please save this date, January 26, 2025.

BLUE CHRISTMAS SERVICE

DEC 18, 2024 6PM

A SERVICE OF HEALING AND HOPE

Blue Christmas, Service of Light, or Longest Night are the labels we attach to a winter service that provides quiet, contemplative moments conducted in the Christmas season. This year our service is a Blue Christmas service since it does not fall on the Longest Night. But as in years past this service provides quiet moments of reflection, litany, scripture, guided meditation, song and prayer for those who may find themselves facing difficulty in finding a balance between periods of struggle and the hope, joy, love, and peace held out before in the lives of many around us caught up in the seasonal celebrations. In our service on December 18, as we meet in the chapel, we pray that you will find rest for your soul and the hope that God provides. May this service reveal to you the presence of the God of Love who meets us in the middle of the mess and pain of every day in the lives of those around us.



Join Us for Sweet Sunday on December 22nd, 2024

The fourth Sunday of each month, we have a time of sweet treats and sweet fellowship between Sunday School and Church. Join us for our next Sweet Sunday in Hospitality Hall on December 22nd, from 10 a.m. to 10:25 a.m. Treats and Coffee will be there. We just need you to come share a little sweetness.

A blood mobile will be coming to St. Luke's UMC on January 12 at 9:30am. They will be located in the CLC parking lot.



A HUGE thank you to the University of Memphis Middle School. The food pantry received a huge donation of food from the school!

Burgers & Books

**Bring a
book
donation!**



**A portion of all
sales go to
Project
Transformation!
Mention us when
you order!**

Sunday, December 8, 1-3:30 pm
Belly Acres
6130 Poplar Avenue,
Memphis, TN 38117



Christmas Poinsettias

\$15 Each

Deadline to order is December 15



Help Beautify our Sanctuary for the Christmas Season!

Donors and honorees will be listed in a special bulletin insert on Sunday, December 22. Poinsettias are \$15 each. Please complete this form and return to Business Office by Sunday, December 15 with your check made payable to St. Luke's UMC and noted for "poinsettias" or use the special poinsettia envelope.

Name _____

Phone _____

Email _____

In Honor of

In Memory of

_____ Poinsettias @ \$15 each = \$_____

OUR MISSION STATEMENT

**We are becoming a faithful community of disciples striving to share the heart,
mind and hands of Jesus Christ with all people.**

Staff Directory

Jim McKinney
Senior Pastor

jim.mckinney@stlukesumc.org
901-361-5726 (Cell)

Dennis Neenan, Utility Pastor
901-378-7505 (Cell)
dpneenan@comcast.net

Harry Colter, Pastoral Assistant
harry.colter@stlukesumc.org

Jacob Allen
Director of Music
jacob.allen@stlukesumc.org
920-475-7972 (Cell)

Wes Kirkpatrick, Organist

Mary Page Contreras
Children's Ministry Director
marypage.contreras@stlukesumc.org
(901)826-3493

Amy Pearson
Day School Director
amy.pearson@stlukesumc.org
901-407-7300

Alexa Velasco

Director of Communications
alexa.velasco@stlukesumc.org
901-452-6262, ext 114

Eddie Anderson

Facilities Manager
eddie.anderson@stlukesumc.org
901-452-6262, ext 102

Tracy Farnsworth

Church Administrator
tracy.farnsworth@stlukesumc.org
901-452-6262, ext 105

Sheridan Harris

Youth Ministry Director
sheridan.harris@stlukesumc.org
901-452-6262, ext. 119

Jabarey Luster

Challengers After School Director
jabarey.luster@stlukesumc.org
901-407-7301

Sunday School: 9:00 a.m.

Worship: 10:30 a.m.

www.stlukesumc.org

901-452-6262

info@stlukesumc.org