

THE EPISTLE

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

God's
LOVE



In Luke 15 Jesus weaves three simple but poignant scenes into one parable of "lost things." In each instance He depicts the incalculable value of that which is lost.

The last of the trilogy of parables deals with a lost son. The story of the prodigal son has been called "the paragon of the parables." It is the story of a common, heartbreaking experience - a beloved child chooses to leave home and go his own way, refusing to incorporate into his decisions the faithful and consistent teachings he received in childhood.

The beautiful part of the story, of course, is that the young man did "come to his senses," and in a very touching soliloquy, he "talked to himself" with both shame and realism. He took full responsibility for his sins, resolved to make a full confession of them, and returned to his father's house as a hired servant.

More compelling than the story of the repenting son is that of the waiting father, who never forgot his wandering son while

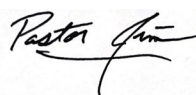
he was away. It was undignified for the old man to break his stride and run, but this father forgot himself and ran all the way to meet his returning son!

Immediately the father set plans in motion to celebrate his son's return.

His actions parallel those of the rejoicing shepherd and woman in the two previous stories. But there is an added dimension of God's love in this third parable: we see how sensitive God's love is, especially when we need it most.

St. Luke's, Saint Augustine expressed the love of God by saying, "God loves each one of us as if there were only one of us to love." May we carry this statement in our hearts throughout the coming year and beyond.

Happy New Year!



Pastor Jim

Children's Ministry

The Children's Department at St. Luke's has been up to some truly special things during the Season of Advent. We rolled out a combined Sunday School class for all ages created and led by our amazing Sunday School teachers, called "Tis the Season for ADVENTure." Each week the children focused on a different theme in Advent. They got to do very special crafts and every week reflected on what the themes of hope, love, joy, and peace mean to them, which was added to our beautiful banners for all to see. The kids even had their own Advent wreath they got to light each week in the Chapel.

We continued the fun of December with a beautiful intergenerational event of "Cocoa & Carols." We had young and old gathered on the front steps of our church singing Christmas Carols out onto the streets of Highland. We even had a few bypassers stop, listen, and join in the fun! One family stayed to play on the bounce house with the other kids. The children enjoyed the Gingerbread Bounce House & Slide tremendously and the sandwich lunch and cocoa was appreciated by all!

The next festivity was our "Holiday Hope Night" which was an evening for parents to have a night off during a busy season to shop or relax, and the kids got to enjoy some fun games, pizza, watching of "The Star," and making gifts for their families to remember the reason for the season. We had around 17 kids attend, some of which were new friends brought by our regulars! So the event was a great success.

The Children's Choir was back up and running this Holiday Season as well thanks to Mrs. Sheridan. All of our children got to perform either music or a special reading they worked so hard on for the whole congregation in our first ever Children's Christmas Program! We even had a really special cookie reception afterwards so the families and congregation could fellowship together! December was such a special time from start to end, and we look forward to so much more fun in 2024!





CHALLENGERS

Challengers finished 1st semester with a party to celebrate their hard work. We ran in the inflatable obstacle course, pizza party and movie with hot chocolate.

Challengers board members and families purchased gift cards and snacks for Challengers staff members to end 2023! We're so grateful for their support and kindness.

St. Luke's Challengers and Christian Life Center is acting as a host site for youth instructional basketball training, ages 3rd-5th grade. In partnership with Campus Elementary School, we're transporting 31 students to St. Luke's weekly, which provides our church with the opportunity to meet new children and parents, plus use our programming and facilities to provide a safe and convenient place for youth sports.

December 2023

Honorariums:

In Honor of Denise and David Hensley from Barbara Caldwell

In Honor of Miller Delgadillo from Marjorie Buckley

Memorials:

In Memory of Sue Whitt from Mary Lou Cushing, Marilyn Sandler, Martha Eubank, Janie Hendrix, Harry and Bette Colter

In Memory of Coni Stevens from Mary Lou Cushing, Harry and Bette Colter, Harry and Laura Jones, James Cox

In Memory of Ed Barlow from Harry and Bette Colter, Rex Hinkle, Janie Hendrix

In Memory of Max Ostner from Elizabeth Ostner and Carolyn Purser, Sally and Ed Beasley, Joseph and Cheryl McCormack

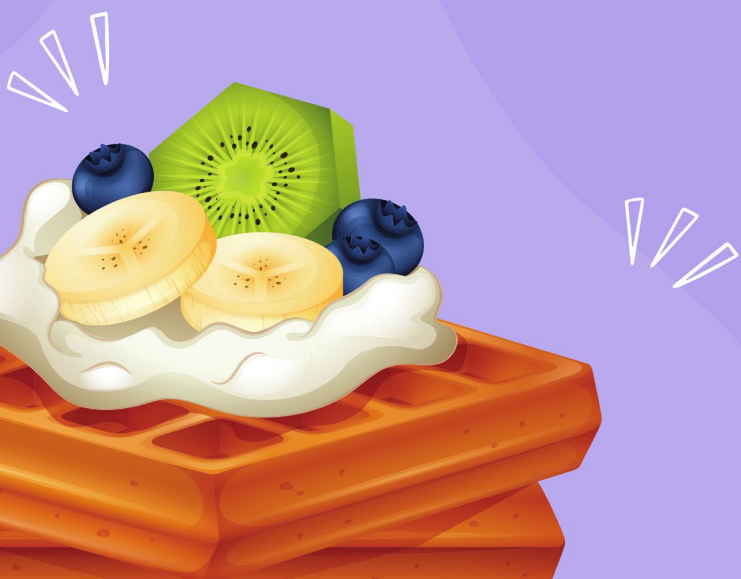
In Memory of Candy Williams from Carolyn Galloway

In Memory of Gloria Thompson from Rorie Read

In Memory of Judy Rossetti from John Rosetti

In Memory of Louise Fairfax from J. Edward Beasley Jr., Harry and Bette Colter

In Memory of Olivia Roberson from Barbara Atkeison



The Waffle Shop at Calvary Episcopal Church is right around the corner. It will be open Thursday, Feb. 15 through Friday March 22nd, and is open Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays from 11am-1:30pm. If you would like to volunteer, please let Doey know what days you would like to work or you can sign up on their website. Thanks! Doey- 901-351-7942



Fun Bunch Activities

On Wednesday December 6th we will meet The Fun Bunch will be meeting in the CLC Craft room on Thursday January 25th at 11:00 am. We will be Painting by the Dots! We will provide a pot of Chili and drinks. Please sign up in Hospitality Hall for what you will be bringing and so we will know how many beans to put in the pot. Thanks!

Questions? Call Jim Debo 413-3341 or Jeanne Debo 826-4581

2023 contribution statements will be available any time before Sunday school or after Worship in Hospitality Hall on January 14. They will also be available during the week if you want to stop by the business office. Thank you! -St. Luke's Business Office

The United Women of Faith will take a winter break in January and February with no meetings. We will resume our meetings on Tuesday March 12 at 6 pm. in the Lounge.

Come join us then.

Trusted by Hospitals Nationwide.

Life Line Screening has partnered with over **100 hospitals** across the country and has conducted over **10 million screenings** since 1993.



Carotid Artery Disease

an ultrasound is performed to screen the carotid arteries (a pair of blood vessels in the neck that deliver blood to your brain) for buildup of fatty plaque. This buildup, called atherosclerosis, is one of the leading causes of stroke.



Atrial Fibrillation (AFib)

a 6-lead electrocardiogram (EKG) is performed by placing sensors on the arms and legs to screen for Atrial Fibrillation. AFib can lead to blood clots, stroke, and heart failure, and other heart-related complications.²



Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm (AAA)

an ultrasound is performed to screen the abdominal aorta for the presence of an enlargement or aneurysm. AAA can lead to a ruptured aortic artery, which is a life-threatening medical emergency.



Peripheral Arterial Disease (PAD)

an Ankle-Brachial Index (ABI) test is performed using blood pressure cuffs on the arms and legs. It is important to screen for PAD because it increases the risk of coronary artery disease, heart attack, or stroke.³

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When: Friday, February 23, 2024

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