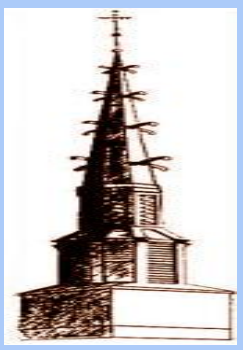
In this week's Steeple >>>

- Bishop's Pastoral Letter
- Message from Fr Nick
- Theologian's Corner
- Anglican Heritage Pilgrimage
- February item for Pack the Backpacks
- Parish Annual Meeting
- YD at MMO
- Canned Food drive
- Agape Volunteers
- Concern needs

The Steeple



January 30, 2025

The Weekly Newsletter of St. Luke's Episcopal Church

The Episcopal Diocese of Oklahoma

Dear Friends in Christ,

This is not an official Pastoral Letter (required by canon to be read or provided to all Episcopalians), but I do ask that our clergy in charge of congregations share it with your people.

"Happy Are They": Navigating Together the Uncertain Years Ahead

(Feast of Saint John Chrysostom, 2025)

Put not your trust in rulers, nor in any child of earth,
For there is no help in them.
When they breathe their last, they return to earth,
And in that day their thoughts perish.
Happy are they who have the God of Jacob for their help!
Whose hope is in the Lord, their God. (Psalm 146:2-4)

My Friends in Christ in the Episcopal Diocese of Oklahoma,

Before each of the last two Presidential elections, I wrote to you offering some basic principles for how Episcopalians in Oklahoma might approach our political engagement faithfully.

With all of the uproar this past week over the beginning of the Trump administration, and the strong responses both for and against the sermon by Bishop Budde of Washington at the national prayer service, I want to share some additional thoughts, not as any kind of national statement, or partisan rallying cry, but as your chief pastor, and someone who loves you as a friend and fellow disciple of Jesus Christ (John 13:35).

It is important that the Episcopal Church share our voices in matters of public policy, especially as it relates to the vulnerable. We must not bury our heads in the sand, disinterested in or afraid of speaking to the critical issues of this or any time. Though we are just one small denomination among many religious groups, ours is a valuable perspective based on a long heritage of theological reflection.

At the same time, one of my favorite things about our Anglican tradition is its humility. We have never said that the Anglican Communion or the Episcopal Church are the only way. It is Christ himself who is the Way (John 14:6). We attempt to follow him in our imperfect humanity, knowing that on many things, including politics, Episcopalians do not agree even with each other.

This is my primary concern as your Bishop: how will we navigate this uncertain journey together in the Diocese of Oklahoma?

Will we spend the next four years getting stuck endlessly in partisan social media and cable news outrage that feels righteous in the moment, but is actually the quicksand of hatred and despair? How will we love, protect, and care for all those in our congregations and communities? Can we have grace to show mercy to those who are in need of it, even if we would rather pass by (Luke 10:32)?

As your Bishop, here are my commitments to you in this tense political climate.

As I have said before, I will speak out mainly on matters of direct impact to our diocese and state of Oklahoma, especially affecting the vulnerable, where I see a clear Christian teaching, informed by the Bible and the teachings of the Episcopal Church. A recent example of this was directing our attention to the Department of Justice report on the Tulsa race massacre. Read the statement **HERE.**

I will not speak out on every issue or controversy, but will attempt prayerfully to discern when my voice and perspective can be useful. I do not expect everyone to agree with what I say or when or how often I say it, and I welcome respectful and direct conversation. Please look to our Presiding

Bishop and President of the House of Deputies for more regular statements on national and international matters.

A word to our clergy, my fellow pastors: I trust you to know your own congregations and communities, and how best to shepherd them in these anxious times. I know that some in our congregations are terrified, including some immigrants, LGBTQ+ folks, and others. The clergy canons and I are here for you, and care about you, as you care for your people, each one made in God's image. You are daily in my prayers.

I encourage all of us to eschew the easy talking points of political ideology and division, and instead speak and act from the heart of our faith. And let us be kind with one another. Are the fruits of the spirit from Galatians 5:22-23 (love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self control) present, even in difficult conversations?

Can we find, in our diverse congregations and diocese, not uniformity but unity, in Christ? As Bishop Budde said in her sermon: "unity is a way of being with one another that encompasses and respects differences, that teaches us to hold multiple perspectives and life experiences as valid and worthy of respect; that enables us, in our communities and in the halls of power, to genuinely care for one another even when we disagree."

The theologian of Benedictine spirituality Esther de Waal has written that the Church faces three basic demands of the spiritual life: the need not to run away, the need to be open to change, and the need to listen. In the coming months and years, we in Oklahoma will be tempted to run away from each other, from Christ, and from his Gospel. We will be tempted to harden our viewpoints, our biases, and our hearts. And we will be tempted not to listen to God in daily prayer and Scripture study, nor to our neighbors (including those with whom we disagree).

My friends, God has called us to much good work in our diocese. Enhancing vitality in our congregations. Forming disciples of all ages. Baptizing and confirming the faithful. Inviting our neighbors through evangelism into loving relationship with Jesus Christ. Serving those in need. Living out every promise of the Baptismal Covenant.

The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few (Matthew 9:37). Still, we do not lose heart, for we follow the one whose kingdom is not of this world (John 18:36), the only leader who is our help and our truest happiness.

The Rt. Reverend Poulson Reed, Bishop
The Episcopal Diocese of Oklahoma

Candlemas: The Blessing of Light in Our Homes

This Sunday is February 2nd and we will be celebrating the Feast of the Presentation of Our Lord in the Temple, commonly known as Candlemas here at St. Luke's. This ancient feast marks the moment when Mary and Joseph, in accordance with Jewish law, brought the infant Jesus to the temple in Jerusalem, where he was recognized by Simeon as "a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel" Over the centuries, the Church has embraced this imagery of Christ as the Light of the World, making Candlemas a day to bless the very symbol of His presence: light! And so, candles.

The roots of Candlemas stretch back to at least the 4th century, when the Church in Jerusalem observed a festival celebrating Christ's presentation. By the 7th century, the feast included a solemn procession with lighted candles—a tradition that spread throughout the Western Church. By the medieval period, the blessing of candles had become an integral part of the liturgy, and faithful Christians would bring their own candles to be blessed, carrying them home as a reminder of Christ's enduring light in their lives.

I invite you to bring your own candles this Sunday to have them blessed. In doing so, we reaffirm our faith in Christ as the Light who dispels all darkness. These blessed candles then will serve as a tangible reminder of His presence in our homes throughout the year. They may be lit during prayer, in times of distress, or to mark the feasts and fasts of the Church year. Just as Simeon saw in Christ the fulfillment of God's promises, so too do these small flames remind us of the hope and guidance we receive through Him.

During our Candlemas service, we will pray together:

O gracious Father, bless these candles, that they may be for us a sign of Christ's presence, a light in our darkness, and a symbol of your eternal love. As we carry them forth, may we be strengthened to walk always as children of the light, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

When lighting those candles you might consider this prayer:

Blessed are you, O Lord our God, King of the universe. You have called us out of darkness into your marvelous light. May this candle remind us of your abiding presence, and may its flame inspire us to shine forth with your love. Amen.

When extinguishing those candles you might consider this prayer:

Lord Jesus Christ, Light of the world, as we extinguish this flame, may your light remain in our hearts. Guide us in your truth, that we may bear witness to your love in all we do. Amen.

It is my hope that this Candlemas might bring you renewed hope and the warmth of Christ's presence in your home and heart.

God's peace,

Nick+

Theologians Corner:

Bridget of Kildare
Abbess 523

Bridget (Brigid) of Kildare was born around 450 into a Druid family, being the daughter of Dubhthach, court poet to King Loeghaire. At an early age, she decided to become a Christian, and she eventually took vows as a nun.

Together with a group of other women, she established a nunnery at Kildare (meaning, Church of the Oak). She was later joined by a community of monks led by Conlaed.

Kildare had formerly been a pagan shrine where a sacred fire was kept perpetually burning, and Bridget and her nuns, instead of stamping out the fire, kept it going but gave it a Christian interpretation. Bridget as an abbess participated in several Irish councils, and her influence on the policies of the Church in Ireland was considerable.

It is reported of Francis of Assisi that as a young man he had a dream in which God said to him, "Francis, repair my church." He took this to refer to a church building near Assisi which was in need of repair, and he sold a bale of silk from his father's warehouse to obtain building materials. His father was furious. Francis had not asked for permission: he simply took it for granted that his father would wish to contribute to such a worthy cause. It is said of Bridget that she made similar assumptions about her family.

As a young girl, Brigid was notorious for giving away all of the family's food and goods in order to feed and assist the poor. Enraged, her father tried to sell her to the king of Leinster, but even while the two men were negotiating her price, she took her father's jeweled sword and gave it to a beggar so that he could sell it to feed his family. The king was impressed with her compassion and resourcefulness and offered Dubhthach his own jeweled sword as a replacement, telling him to give his daughter her freedom.

Brigid died around 523 at Kildare. Her remains are said to have been re-interred with those of Patrick at Downpatrick in the ninth century.

Together we pray: O God, whose servant Brigid, kindled with the flame of thy love, became a shining light in thy church: Grant that we also may be aflame with the spirit of love and discipline, and walk before thee as children of light; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with thee, in the unity of the Holy Ghost, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

Prayer List

Please pray for: **Liz** Green, **Michelle** Sheffield, **Catherine** Sheffield, **Ben** Baker, **Steve** McCraw, **Josh** Harris, **David** Swindell, **Connie** Finch, **Tony** Clapper, **Terry** Grogan, **Tyler** Roberson, **Jerry** Nezam**, Miriam** Petrovich**, Lynette** Beebe, **Jack** Smith, **Danny** Clem, **David** McAtee, **Shawn**, **Stephanie** Gallegos, **Pat** Sare, **Steve** Linn, **Bob** Baughman, **Jean** Mason, **Adam** Thomas, **Tom** Oakes, **Bill** Pendley, **Mary** Wallace, **Connie** Freebern, **Lynda** Stephens, **Marcie** Zervas, **Margaret** Holden, **Audrey** Harris, **Peggy** Rockey, **Lauren** Barlowe, **Ken** Harvey, **Nan** Buhlinger, **Bill** Birk, **Kathy** Stewart, **Carol** McSpadden, and **Rebecca** Landreth.

Please add the following to your prayers for the Third Sunday after the Epiphany

Trinity, Guthrie **The Episcopal/Anglican Province of Alexandria**

Agape Volunteers

We are in need of volunteers from St Luke's to serve at Agape. You serve hot meals and clean up once a month on the second or fourth Thursday and the shift is a little over two hours during the day. Please contact Becky Liehr if you are interested.

Birthdays and Anniversaries Feb 2nd – Feb 8th , 2025

Birthdays

Anniversaries

Linda Huffman (2/3)
Marcie Zervas (2/5)
Patty Vail (2/8)

If your or a loved one's name doesn't appear on the list, please email or call the office, and we will add your birthday or anniversary!

At Luke's Place : Jan 31st – Feb 6th

Feb 2nd	Eucharist, Rite I, 8:00am, Chapel
	Faith Forum, 9:15am, Metcalf
	Eucharist, Rite II, 10:30am, Nave
Feb 3rd	Ladies' Prayer Partners, 11:30am, classroom
Feb 4th	Spiritual Discovery Book Study, 9:30am, Library
Feb 5th	Choir, 5pm, Choir Room
	YD, 6pm, Rodgers Hall
Feb 6th	Men's Fellowship, 7am, Metcalf Hall
	Bible Study, 9:15am, Metcalf Hall
	Green Country Eucharist, 1pm, GCV

ANGLICAN HERITAGE PILGRIMAGE
Pilgrimage to England & Scotland - June 22-July 3, 2025

***** PLEASE NOTE *** *** PLEASE NOTE *** *** PLEASE NOTE *****
This pilgrimage replaces the "Pilgrimage to England" previously announced.
The destinations, travel dates, cost,
and registration deadline have all changed.

*** Please click here for the updated information. ***

The following is an invitation from The Rev. Dion Crider, Dean of the Iona School for Ministry, Diocese of Oklahoma.

I am thrilled to share that Fr. Nathan Carr and I are joining forces to combine our individual pilgrimages into one incredible journey to England which I will be leading June 22nd through July 3rd. This unified pilgrimage

will not only celebrate our rich Anglican heritage but also include an expanded list of destinations that promise to inspire and deepen our faith.

A pilgrimage is so much more than just a trip - it's a sacred journey. As we visit these historic sites, their stories, beauty, and holiness will invite us to experience God's presence in new and profound ways. Together, we will walk in the footsteps of those who have gone before us, worship in spaces steeped in centuries of prayer, and reflect on what it means to follow Christ in our time.

Here's the great news: **Spaces are still available, and the deadline to register has been extended to February 1!**

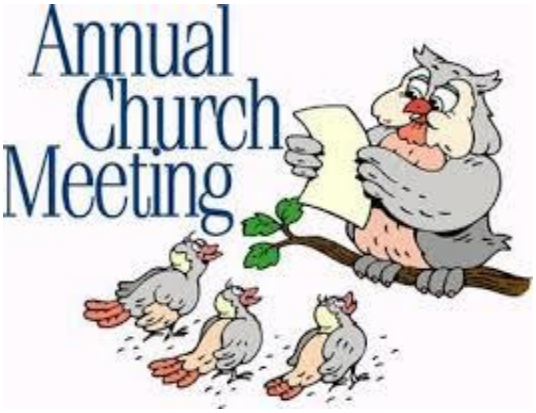
I would love for you to join us on this transformative journey. If you're interested, please feel free to reach out to me for more details. For a full itinerary, pricing, and information on the amazing places we'll visit, click the link below.

If you have any questions at all, please contact The Rev. Dion Crider at dcrider@epiok.org.

*** Please click here for the updated information. ***

YD

Thanks to everyone who came out to help us serve at Mary Martha Outreach on Wednesday! We had a great turnout and helped their clients select groceries, fill their carts and load their cars. Our kiddos also sorted and hung donated clothing items. The team at MMO was grateful for our support and invited us back again. And thanks to the Durrell family for dinner! (a few pics attached...more can be found on our Facebook page).



Annual Parish Meeting
February 9th, after the 10:30am service.

February Pack the Backpacks Item

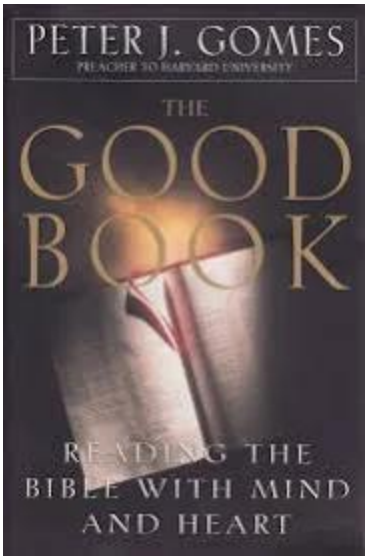
8 or 16 Watercolors, Crayola preferred but any brand for February 2025.

Walmart prices and pictures are below
8 count Crayola brand at Walmart is $2.34
8 count Cra-Z-Art brand at Walmart $1.34
16 count Crayola brand at Walmart $3.97

YD Annual Canned Food Drive for Concern begins. Let's make this the biggest year yet! Beginning February 1st, please make a point to bring as many canned goods as you can every time you come to worship until February 18th. Fill the boxes of your team choice to win the Super Bowl!

Concern's current needs are: ramen noodles, Vienna sausages, and homeless: women (or unisex) deodorant, and mini personal tissue packs.

The Daily Office of Morning and Evening Prayer is held every weekday (except for Friday) in the Chapel. MP begins at 9:00am and EP starts at 4:00pm and EP can also be found on the St Luke's Facebook page if you would like to follow along at home.



The Spiritual Discovery Book Group will be starting a new study using 'The Good Book' by Peter Gomes. This study begins February 11th at 9:30am in the Library upstairs. Everyone is welcome to join us!

St. Luke's Vestry Members

- Nancy Woods, Sr. Warden – Nancywoods120@gmail.com
- Jo Baughman – jybokla@aol.com
- Karole Cozby, Jr Warden – kscozby916@gmail.com
- Chad Ellis – w.chadwick.ellis@gmail.com
- Karen Lewey – kgrammy07@yahoo.com
- Laura Birk – lpbirk73@gmail.com
- Mark Peterson- markandmarypeterson@gmail.com
- Steve Heidorn- sgheidorn@yahoo.com
- Dolores McCreary –dolomc37@gmail.com
- Steve Roper- sdroper2006@yahoo.com
- Erin Roper-
- Robert Lonski- rjtazski@yahoo.com

Bereavement Team 2

Laura Birk, Nancy Megee, Wendy Hall, Karen Lewey, Debbie Mueggenborg

St. Luke's Episcopal Church Contacts:

The Reverend Nick Phares, Rector
269-788-7063; RevPhares@outlook.com

Keeli Droege, Choir Director/Organist
918-697-8509 keelidroege@gmail.com

St. Luke's Episcopal Church
210 East 9th St., Bartlesville, OK 74003
Office Hours: 9am-4pm, M-F
Email: StLukesBartlesville@outlook.com
918-336-1212
Or contact
Penny Williams, secretary 918-766-2157