

In This Week's  
Steeple:



# The Steeple

December 8,  
2021

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- \* Stewardship Wrap Up This Month!
- \* Fr. Nick's Report Card on Us
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## The Weekly Newsletter of St. Luke's Episcopal Church

### **"Rejoice in the Lord always; again, I say, Rejoice."**

Gaudete Sunday is upon us if you can believe it – and with it Joy. This week we light the pink candle and are reminded that during our spiritual preparation for Christmas – we are to rejoice in the knowledge that the Lord approaches. Isaiah says this, "Cry aloud inhabitants of Zion, ring out your joy for the great one in the midst of you is the Holy One of Israel. There is, my friends, so much to be thankful for in our life together.

One of the many blessings I give thanks for is the life and ministry of Dolores McCreary. As she did last year, Dolores will offer us the opportunity to gather in the church for an advent musical meditation on Thursday Dec. 16<sup>th</sup> from 10:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and on Thursday Dec. 23<sup>rd</sup> from 2:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. Please come and enjoy your space. Bring a friend and allow the sounds of the season to wash over you and fill you with peace.

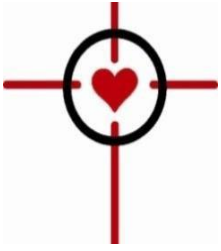
You know... I wish you that peace, the peace that passes all understanding. And yet, I know that the holidays can hold a great loneliness for some of us. Especially those of us who cannot help but remember those who are now with our Lord. Their memory is precious to us, and while "rejoice" may be the word of the day - tears may present themselves as tokens of the love we still bear those we love in memory. And so, I invite you to Evening Prayer on Thursday, Dec 16<sup>th</sup> in the chancel at 4:00 p.m. - to light a candle in memory of those we love and see no longer. Be sure to bring a picture for the altar too and let us remember them together.

Finally, a word about our Christmas Eve service. We will have one service this year and it will be at 5:00 p.m. with a champagne reception to follow. We will also have a Eucharist with music on Christmas Day at 10:00 a.m. in the chancel. My hope is that these services bring you great joy and that your hearts are filled with wonder and hope this Christmas season. These are but a few of the services this December. So, please see the schedule of events at the end of the Steeple for a detailed view of the next few weeks and know that you go with my love.

Every Blessing,

Fr. Nick+

# *Please Consider Volunteering at CONCERN!*



**Concern office and food pantry:** Volunteers are always needed to check clients in at the front desk and answer the phone, or to provide intake assistance by determining the needs of our clients, or to pack pantry orders or to re-package bulk food or make “food runs” to the Tulsa Food bank or local stores. The time commitment is up to the volunteer: 2-4 hours once a week or once a month. Concern appreciates the help and will work with volunteers to make volunteering a good experience for all. Call 918.336.4693. Please visit: <http://www.concerncares.com/give-help.html>

## **Stewardship Wrap-up This Month!**

Our stewardship initiative to fund church operations in 2022 is wrapping up. If you’ve pledged in the past but were unable to attend Consecration Sunday in November, you’ll be receiving a pledge card in the mail soon. Please watch for it. Then please mail it back to the church, drop it by the office or place in the Sunday offering. We would like to have all pledges accounted for by the end of the year.

The results so far indicate that many members strongly responded to Fr. Nick’s call for stewardship as “a spiritual-growth-oriented process.” Almost all members who returned pledge cards increased their pledges and a few began pledging for the first time. Thank you!

We still have not heard from about 20 members or member families who have pledged in the past. If those members chose to raise their pledges, the projected \$16,000 deficit in next year’s budget could be reduced, hopefully significantly.

By the way, the parish has provisions for receiving gifts of stocks and bonds for both pledging and as special gifts beyond the annual budget. Special gifts may be made for a particular purpose or undesignated to meet future needs. Estate gifts, including donations of physical property, are also possible. For assistance with these options, please contact Dennis Mueggenborg of the vestry finance committee at 918-440-5649 or [drmuegg@gmail.com](mailto:drmuegg@gmail.com).

– Droege, on behalf of the Finance Committee

## **Fr. Nick’s Report Card on Us**

As you’ll recall, in last week’s Steeple, the Review Committee summarized its “report card” on Fr. Nick’s performance of his responsibilities during his first 10 months with St. Luke’s. It was a strongly favorable report. The Review Committee also felt it was important to know how Fr. Nick felt about well we were doing our job to support him.

The review committee asked Fr. Nick specifically how the congregation and the vestry were supporting him in his key responsibilities within the church. Here is a summary of his responses in his own words:

### **Pastoral Care**

From the very beginning of my time at St. Luke’s – members of the vestry and the congregation have cared for me and my family in so many remarkable ways. From offering temporary housing and meals in January to the pounding in February, offering reassurance during times I needed to be away with my family, countless prayers, a willingness to do just about anything I asked, and several gifts along the way – well... these remain just a small part of the care my family and I have received on behalf of everyone. What truly remains the hallmark of your care, however, is the absolute grace that has been given to this young priest and his family.

To the extent that you can - I believe there is an honest and concerted effort to serve members in need through meals, prayer, and presence. I have never had to ask anyone to do anything. Rather, I remain one who passes along

information and the community responds. Now, that is support. And, this remains true for those who have been here often and for those who have not been here long. St. Luke's truly lives into its identity to love with arms wide open.

### **Sunday Services**

It is such an absolute joy to worship at St. Luke's and it remains my humble and most honored privilege to preside at the services we offer at Luke's Place. The commitment of the congregation, witnessed in faithful attendance and participation, is both vocationally affirming and humbling to witness. And, while this feels like support, the energy I receive because of it is because of something far more blessed – and that is – seeing the Eucharistic community gathered to worship Jesus. Nothing is more powerful nor beautiful than that. I am humbled just to be a part of that.

### **Adult Christian Formation**

Facilitating the formation of adults is one of the most humbling aspects of my vocation. Your support in allowing me to teach, preach, and walk beside you is such a blessing to me. We all come from a variety backgrounds and experience. We all know that there is truly only one teacher – Christ. And we value a diversity of opinion. In the midst of such a revelation, I remain honored and extremely humbled that what I bring to table has been so freely given the chance to be heard and indeed, engaged with. I want the vestry and the congregation to know that the feeling is mutual. For it remains my honor to learn from you all every day.

### **Youth Christian Formation**

I, indeed everyone at St. Luke's, remain blessed by our families and our YD leaders. The vitality of the YD program is due in large part to their commitment to each other. I have been blessed to be invited into that enclave and will continue to work hard to earn the youth's trust and respect. Though the office of rector opened the door, I have felt supported not only by the youth, but the vestry and the congregation when advocating or seeking permission to participate in youth events. Such support and encouragement mean the world to me. Thank-you.

### **Support of St. Luke's Ministries (Family Promise, Agape, CONCERN, etc.)**

There is not one ministry listed here that has not been fully supported by members of the vestry or the congregation. Our engagement with certain ministries has certainly been modified due to COVID, however, every ministry remains sustained. Such efforts are a direct result of the compassionate care given by members of our congregation. I remain in awe and seek ways to support you.

### **Church Administration and Communication**

How and where to begin? I just cannot begin to offer my thanks and sincere appreciation for the substantial support I have received in managing the office and parish communications. Dan Droege, Nancy Woods and especially Jeff Birk have been invaluable sources of support. The ministry of Dennis Mueggenborg has sustained me in ways that I could have never expected. And, all of these ministries go hand in hand with a supportive and understanding congregation.

### **Fr. Nick's Expectations**

The Review Committee also wanted to know if Fr. Nick had expectations when he joined us that we had not fully met. Here's what he told the committee:

To say that I didn't have any expectations would be disingenuous. The expectations I did have, however, were that of a naïve minister – that of a first-time rector and based on an "ideal" rather than on a contextual, lived experience. After 10 months, I am finding that I am beginning to form some expectations but they are shaped by a forward momentum as opposed to a cold start. I know now that I wouldn't have been able to form reasonable expectations from a posture of authenticity and mutual trust had I not took the time to learn and become part of the community first. Thank-you for giving me that opportunity.

## *December Services – Clip & Save!*

9 <sup>th</sup> Morning Prayer	Chapel	9:00 a.m.
Bible Study	Metcalf Hall	9:15 a.m.
Holy Eucharist Rite I	Green Country	1:00 p.m.
Evening Prayer	Chapel	4:00 p.m. and Facebook Live
<b>12<sup>th</sup> Advent III</b>		
Holy Eucharist Rite I	Chapel	8:00 a.m.
Faith Forum	Metcalf Hall	9:15 a.m.
Holy Eucharist Rite II	Church	10:30 a.m.
<b>13<sup>th</sup> Morning Prayer</b>	Chapel	9:00 a.m.
Evening Prayer	Chapel	4:00 p.m. and Facebook Live
<b>14<sup>th</sup> Morning Prayer</b>	Chapel	9:00 a.m.
Evening Prayer	Chapel	4:00 p.m. and Facebook Live
<b>15<sup>th</sup> Morning Prayer</b>	Chapel	9:00 a.m.
Evening Prayer	Chapel	4:00 p.m. and Facebook Live
Young Disciples	Rogers Hall	6:00 p.m.
<b>16<sup>th</sup> Morning Prayer</b>	Chapel	9:00 a.m.
Bible Study	Metcalf Hall	9:15 a.m.
<b>Advent Meditation</b>	<b>Church</b>	<b>10:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.</b>
Holy Eucharist Rite I	Green Country	1:00 p.m.
Evening Prayer - Requiem	Chancel	4:00 p.m.
<b>19<sup>th</sup> Advent IV</b>		
Holy Eucharist Rite I	Chapel	8:00 a.m.
Faith Forum	Metcalf Hall	9:15 a.m.
Holy Eucharist Rite II	Church	10:30 a.m.
<b>20<sup>th</sup> Morning Prayer</b>	Chapel	9:00 a.m.
Evening Prayer	Chapel	4:00 p.m. and Facebook Live
<b>21<sup>st</sup> Morning Prayer</b>	Chapel	9:00 a.m.
<b>Holy Eucharist</b>	<b>Chapel</b>	<b>12:15 p.m. Feast of St. Thomas</b>
Evening Prayer	Chapel	4:00 p.m. and Facebook Live
<b>22<sup>nd</sup> Morning Prayer</b>	Chapel	9:00 a.m.
Evening Prayer	Chapel	4:00 p.m. and Facebook Live
<b>23<sup>rd</sup> Morning Prayer</b>	Chapel	9:00 a.m.
Bible Study	Metcalf Hall	9:15 a.m.
Holy Eucharist Rite I	Green Country	1:00 p.m.
<b>Advent Meditation</b>	<b>Church</b>	<b>2:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.</b>
Evening Prayer	Chapel	4:00 p.m. and Facebook Live
<b>24<sup>th</sup> Holy Eucharist Rite II</b>	<b>Church</b>	<b>5:00 p.m. Christmas Eve</b>
<b>25<sup>th</sup> Holy Eucharist Rite I</b>	<b>Chancel</b>	<b>10:00 a.m. Christmas Day</b>
<b>26<sup>th</sup> First Sunday After Christmas</b>		
Holy Eucharist Rite I	Chapel	8:00 a.m.
Faith Forum	Metcalf Hall	9:15 a.m.
Holy Eucharist Rite II	Church	10:30 a.m.
<b>27<sup>th</sup> Morning Prayer</b>	Chapel	9:00 a.m.
<b>Holy Eucharist</b>	<b>Chapel</b>	<b>12:15 p.m. Feast of St. Stephen</b>
Evening Prayer	Chapel	4:00 p.m. and Facebook Live
<b>28<sup>th</sup> Morning Prayer</b>	Chapel	9:00 a.m.
<b>Holy Eucharist</b>	<b>Chapel</b>	<b>12:15 p.m. Feast of St. John</b>
Evening Prayer	Chapel	4:00 p.m. and Facebook Live
<b>29<sup>th</sup> Morning Prayer</b>	Chapel	9:00 a.m.
<b>Holy Eucharist</b>	<b>Chapel</b>	<b>12:15 p.m. Holy Innocents</b>
Evening Prayer	Chapel	4:00 p.m. and Facebook Live
<b>30<sup>th</sup> Morning Prayer</b>	Chapel	9:00 a.m.
Bible Study	Metcalf Hall	9:15 a.m.
Holy Eucharist Rite I	Green Country	1:00 p.m.
Evening Prayer	Chapel	4:00 p.m. and Facebook Live

# Children's Programming is Back!

On October 24, we began gathering with children again on Sundays. Drop your K-5<sup>th</sup> graders off upstairs at 10:15 am. Each week, we will alternate between music and Godly Play, giving children a chance to experience both! The children will rejoin their families in church before communion.

We are looking for people to serve as doorkeepers. Please reach out to Keeli Droege at [keelidroege@gmail.com](mailto:keelidroege@gmail.com) to sign up!

\*Children will be asked to wear a mask, and all adults working with children will be masked.



## *Weekly Words of Wellness*

### Sharpening Our Saws

By Scott Stoner & Holly Hughes Stoner

A story is told about two loggers who have been working all day cutting down large trees using an old-fashioned two-person hand saw, one of them on each end pulling back and forth. In the morning, they made significant progress in cutting down many trees. As the day went on, they became increasingly frustrated with how much their progress slowed down, finally quitting when they could not make it through their last tree. Once they stopped for the day, they suddenly realized why they had been so inefficient in the second half of the day. In their busyness and rush to cut down so many trees, they forgot to take their usual midday break to sharpen their saw. They learned from their oversight that it's nearly impossible to cut down a tree with a dull blade.

For many, this can be a hectic time of year. There are many things to do, many trees to cut down. If we are not careful, we can forget the importance of sharpening our saws. This is all the more critical this year because the ongoing grind of the pandemic means that we are likely to be already feeling a bit dulled by all that we have experienced.

As part of our Wellness Compass Initiative, we lead and train others to conduct our Wellness Circle program. Based on our holistic Wellness Compass Model for Well-Being, a Wellness Circle is a six-week small group coaching program where each participant chooses an area of wellness that they want to strengthen. One of the most commonly chosen areas of wellness is "Rest and Play" because it seems that many people are aware of the need for them to take more time to consciously re-create and re-energize both their mental health and physical well-being.

As we navigate the holiday season, we are wise to reflect on the activities that are truly re-creative, and those which are not. Over-eating, over-spending, and over-drinking are not going to sharpen our saws, but in fact, they will probably do the opposite. Focusing on simplicity, time with friends and family, and the spiritual meaning of the season are all things that will likely be more re-creative for our overall well-being.

I'll close with something I read this week that made me cringe. "I think I'm winning Christmas this year" was a comment I read on social media. Accompanying this statement was a list of all the person's accomplishments as proof of their "winning." I cringed because I can remember times when I was younger, and I overdid things this time of year and somehow thought that was a good thing. I remember how exhausted I used to get and how I figured that was the way the holidays were supposed to be. Now I am taking more time to unplug from some of the things that previously wore me out around the holidays and am instead focusing on what renews and feeds me.

I invite you to reflect on what sharpens your saw and helps you rest, play, and re-create with these three "Making It Personal" questions. We provide these each week to help you put into action anything that speaks to you in these columns. We also close our weekly podcast with these same questions and so just a quick reminder that you can find our podcast [here](#).

### **Making It Personal:**

What signs do you see in yourself that indicate that you need to unplug or sharpen your saw?

Make a list of three to five things that help you sharpen your saw and re-energize you.

Are you satisfied with the quality and quantity of time you take for rest and play? If not, what is one thing you could do differently this week?

## **Pub Theology at ¡El Maguey!**

**There will be no Pub Theology in December.**

Please join us on **January 28th!**

**The next meeting will be at 7 p.m. Thursday, January 28th at El Maguey.**

What is 'Pub Theology'? It's a time to gather informally and talk about different subjects around our core values of faith. What feeds your faith? Where did you see Jesus this week?

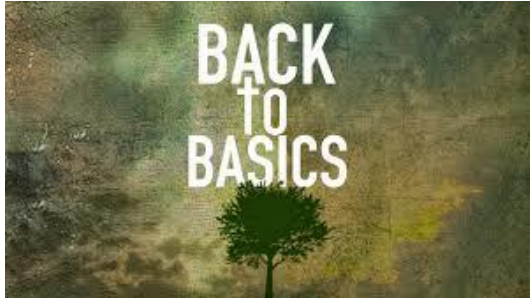
What literature are you reading that has had some inspiration for you?

If you have any questions, contact Fr. Nick, Penny Williams, or Nancy Megee.

We will be happy to share. Let's share some theology!



## Faith Forum Series



**Sundays 9:15– 10:15 a.m.  
in Metcalf Hall**

## Rector's Bible Study



**Thursdays 9:00 a.m.  
in Metcalf Hall**

### St. Luke's Vestry Members

Dan Droege, Sr. Warden – 918-331-7936  
[dbdcomm.2@gmail.com](mailto:dbdcomm.2@gmail.com)

Doug McIver, Jr. Warden – 785-342-4328  
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Katherine Powell – [kmpbmp48@gmail.com](mailto:kmpbmp48@gmail.com)

Nancy Megee – [sc4me81@yahoo.com](mailto:sc4me81@yahoo.com)

### St. Luke's Prayer List

Our Prayer List can be found in the Sunday bulletin and on our website.

Call or email our office  
with prayer requests.

918-336-1211 or  
[StLukesBartlesville@outlook.com](mailto:StLukesBartlesville@outlook.com)

### Bereavement Team 2

Laura Birk, Kris Bonner,  
Nancy Megee, Rita Childers,  
Carol Murphy

### St. Luke's Episcopal Church Contacts:

The Reverend Nick Phares, Rector  
[RevPhares@outlook.com](mailto:RevPhares@outlook.com) 269-788-7063

Dolores McCreary, Choir Director/Organist  
[dolomc37@gmail.com](mailto:dolomc37@gmail.com) 918-397-4828

Keeli Droege, Christian Education Coord.  
[keelidroege@gmail.com](mailto:keelidroege@gmail.com) 918-697-8509

### Connecting with St. Luke's

To learn various ways to connect at St. Luke's,  
visit our website at:

<http://episcopalbartlesville.org/>

### Birthdays and Anniversaries December 9 – 15

#### Birthdays

**Jill Pletcher – Dec 10**

**Robert Clark - Dec 14**

#### Anniversaries

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!

