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# *The Steeple*



Dec 6, 2023



## **The Weekly Newsletter of St. Luke's Episcopal Church**



### **The Candle of Hope**

In Fredrich Buechner's book "Wishful Thinking" the word *Hope* is not defined per se. Next to Buechner's entry of Hope are three other words, "wishful thinking and cross." From the entry on wishful thinking, we read:

Christianity is mainly wishful thinking. Even the part about Judgement and Hell reflects the wish that somewhere the score is being kept.

Dreams are wishful thinking. Children playing being at grown-up is wishful thinking. Interplanetary travel is wishful thinking.

Sometimes wishing is the wings the truth comes true on.

Sometimes the truth is what sets us wishing for it.

This past weekend, I sat across from Teresa at McAlister's and asked, "How would you explain hope to a child?" She replied, "Well, how would you explain it to an adult? Define it and we will work backwards." I was surprised by how much I struggled with her request. Had she asked me to explain what a wish was, however, I would have had no trouble. But hope! Just imagine.

Later that day I returned to Buechner's entry and it offered me a clue. Wishful thinking was paired with another word, cross. It seems that whatever hope ultimately is, somehow it involves the cross and speaks more to Peter's declaration that we should always be ready to give an account of the hope that is in us than it does with a dictionary definition, no matter how well structured it may be. What is hope to you and to me is a profound question. But just like when you ask an adult these days, "How do you play?" hope sometimes seems the stuff whimsy rather than what the wise have come to count on.

But there is the rub.

God has chosen what is foolish to shame the wise. For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. And I guess that is a major part of it, our hope, I mean. For if we believe that we have died with him (through our

Baptism) we shall also live with him; if we endure, we shall also reign with him. That my friends, is quite a big, big hope. Perhaps the biggest.

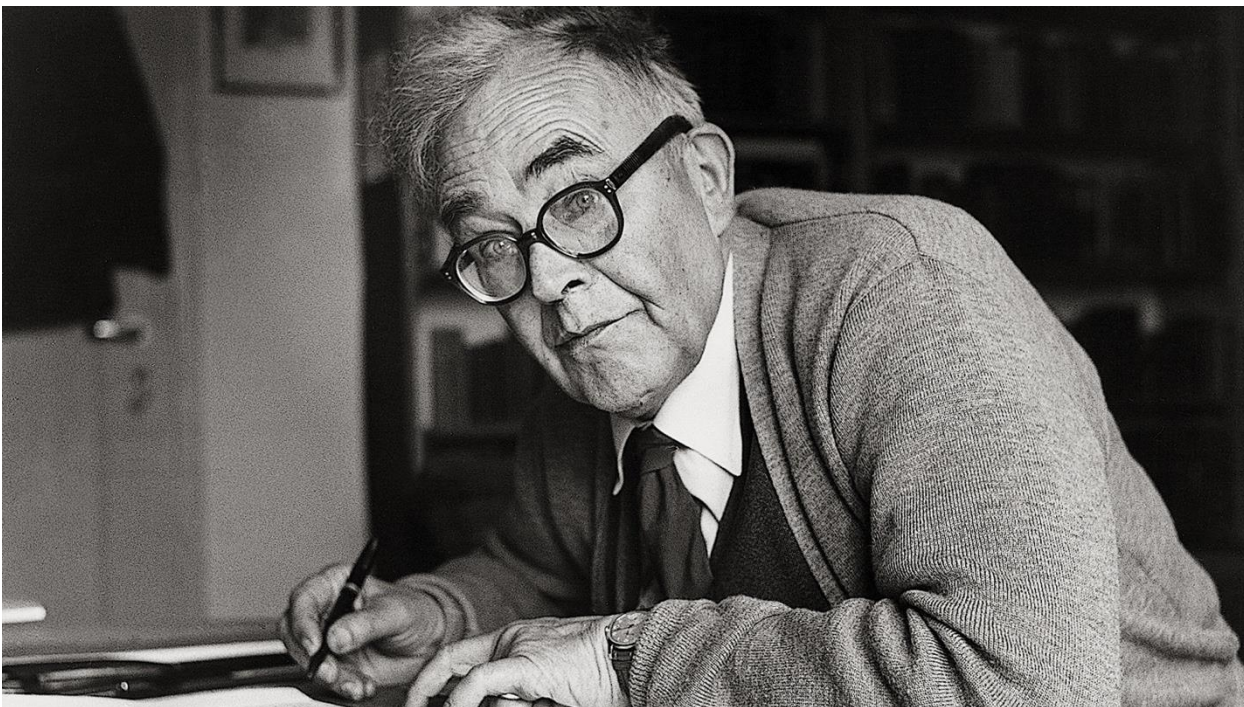
That death could somehow be part of my hope, when Advent seems to put life on full display is one of those things about this season that will always stop me short. Nevertheless, it serves as another reminder that there is never one without the other. The difference for me this year though, is in recognizing the place that Christ has in that cycle of death and rebirth.

Advent begins with one word hope. And my hope is in Him. The one who came and who will come again. As we light the first candle, may we remember that all our hopes, and in fact our most wishful hope, finds home in Christ's light – the same light that has been given to us. Light the match. Count to three. What is your hope? And may that hope find home in thee.

In hope,  
Nick+

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## **Theologians Corner: Karl Barth** **Pastor and Theologian, 1968**



Born at Basel, Switzerland, on May 10, 1886, Barth studied at several prestigious universities including Tübingen, Germany. After completing his studies, he served as pastor in two Swiss centers, Geneva and Safenwil. The events of the First World War led Barth to critically question the dominant theology of the day, which, in Barth's view, held a too easy peace between theology and culture. In his Commentary on Romans, published in 1918, Barth reasserted doctrines such

as God's sovereignty and human sin, central ideas which he believed were excluded and overshadowed in theological discourse at that time.

With Hitler's rise to power, Barth joined the Confessing Church and was chiefly responsible for the writing of the Barmen Declaration (1934), one of its foundational documents. In it, Barth claimed that the Church's allegiance to God in Christ gave it the moral imperative to challenge the rule and violence of Hitler. Barth was himself ultimately forced to resign his professorship at Bonn due to his refusal to swear an oath to Hitler.

In 1932, Barth published the first volume of his thirteen-volume opus, the Church Dogmatics. Barth would work on the Dogmatics until his death in 1968. An exhaustive account of his theological themes and a daring reassessment of the entire Christian theological tradition, the Dogmatics gave new thought to some of the central themes first articulated in the Commentary on Romans. In the first volume, "The Doctrine of the Word of God," Barth laid out many of the theological notions which would comprise the heart of the entire work, including his understanding of God's Word as the definitive source of revelation, the Incarnation as the bridge between God's revelation and human sin, and the election of the creation as God's great end.

Karl Barth was one of the great thinkers of the twentieth century. Pope Pius XII regarded him as the most important theologian since Thomas Aquinas. This assessment speaks to the respect Barth received from both Protestant and Catholic theologians and to his influence within both theological communities.

Together we pray: Almighty God, source of justice beyond human knowledge: We offer thanks that thou didst inspire Karl Barth to resist tyranny and exalt thy saving grace, without which we cannot apprehend thy will. Teach us, like him, to live by faith, and even in chaotic and perilous times to perceive the light of thine eternal glory, Jesus Christ our Redeemer; who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Spirit, ever one God, throughout all ages. Amen.

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**Please pray for:** Liz Green, Michelle Sheffield, Catherine Sheffield, David King, Pris Snow, Ben Baker, Sanawbar, Diana Farris, Joel Hahn, Steve McCraw, Josh Harris, David Swindell, Norma Perrier, Connie Finch, Dorothy Buchanan, Peggy Kauffman, Ryan Kiesel, Tony Clapper, Bruce Neiswander, Jack & Karla Stoecker, Joseph, Tim, Shania Smith, Terry Grogan, Tyler Roberson, Jerry Nezam, Jim Brooks, Tom Martin, Don Doty, Luke Karel, Miriam Petrovich, Lynette Beebe, Nancy & Joe Norton, Jack Smith, and Haley Grogan

**Please add the following to your prayers this first week of Advent:**  
**St Stephen's, Guymon**  
**St Stephen's, Montevideo, Uruguay**

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## December Needs

Concern's current needs are: peanut butter and for homeless - hats, gloves and hand warmers.

Thank you, Gretchen and Kathy Hoyt, for the gift of the Christmas Tree!



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### Luke's Place Dec 7<sup>th</sup> -Dec 13<sup>th</sup>, 2023

- Dec 7<sup>th</sup> Men's Breakfast, 7am, Metcalf  
Rector's Bible Study, 9:15am, Metcalf  
Green Country Eucharist, Rite I, 1pm, GCV
  - Dec 9<sup>th</sup> Remembrance Service for Radomir Petrovich, 3pm
  - Dec 10<sup>th</sup> Holy Eucharist Rite I, 8am, Chapel  
Faith Forum, 9:15am, Metcalf  
Holy Eucharist Rite II, 10:30am, Nave  
Godly Play, after Children's Sermon, upstairs
  - Dec 11<sup>th</sup> Finance Committee, noon, Vestry Room  
Vestry, 5:30pm, Vestry Room
  - Dec 12<sup>th</sup> Spiritual Discovery, 10am, Library
  - Dec 13<sup>th</sup> Choir, 5pm, Choir Room  
YD, 6pm, Rogers
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## Birthdays and Anniversaries, Dec 10<sup>th</sup> –Dec 16<sup>th</sup>, 2023

### Birthdays



Chase Almy (12/13)  
Robert Clark (12/14)

### 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!

## STEWARDSHIP WRAP UP THIS MONTH



Our stewardship initiative to fund church operations in 2024 is wrapping up. If you've pledged in the past but were unable to attend Stewardship 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. There are pledge cards available in the office as well.

In the letter from Fr. Nick at the beginning of November we are reminded to *“not only reflect on the many facets of stewardship and how stewardship is connected to spiritual growth, but also put that reflection into practice by offering our pledges as a community. Please also consider the ways we might offer our time and talent to the Lord as well. We are all one body and we all have gifts to share. May we remember the words of the doxology as we prayerfully consider what God is calling us to give.”*

“Praise God from whom all blessings flow, praise Him all creatures here below,  
praise him above the heavenly hosts, praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.”

Stewardship Committee  
2023

Sara Clements ■ Karole Cozby ■ Sam Duvall ■ Bill Jones ■ Kate Roper ■ Nancy Woods

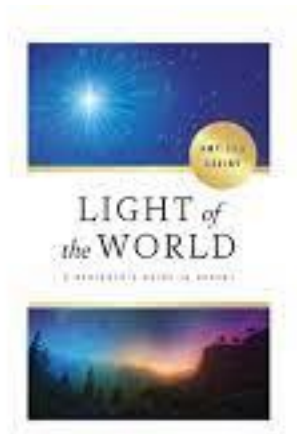
## Advent Faith Forum Series

### **Light of the World. A Beginner's Guide to Advent**

December 10<sup>th</sup>                      The Promise of Potential

December 17<sup>th</sup>                      The Journey to Joy

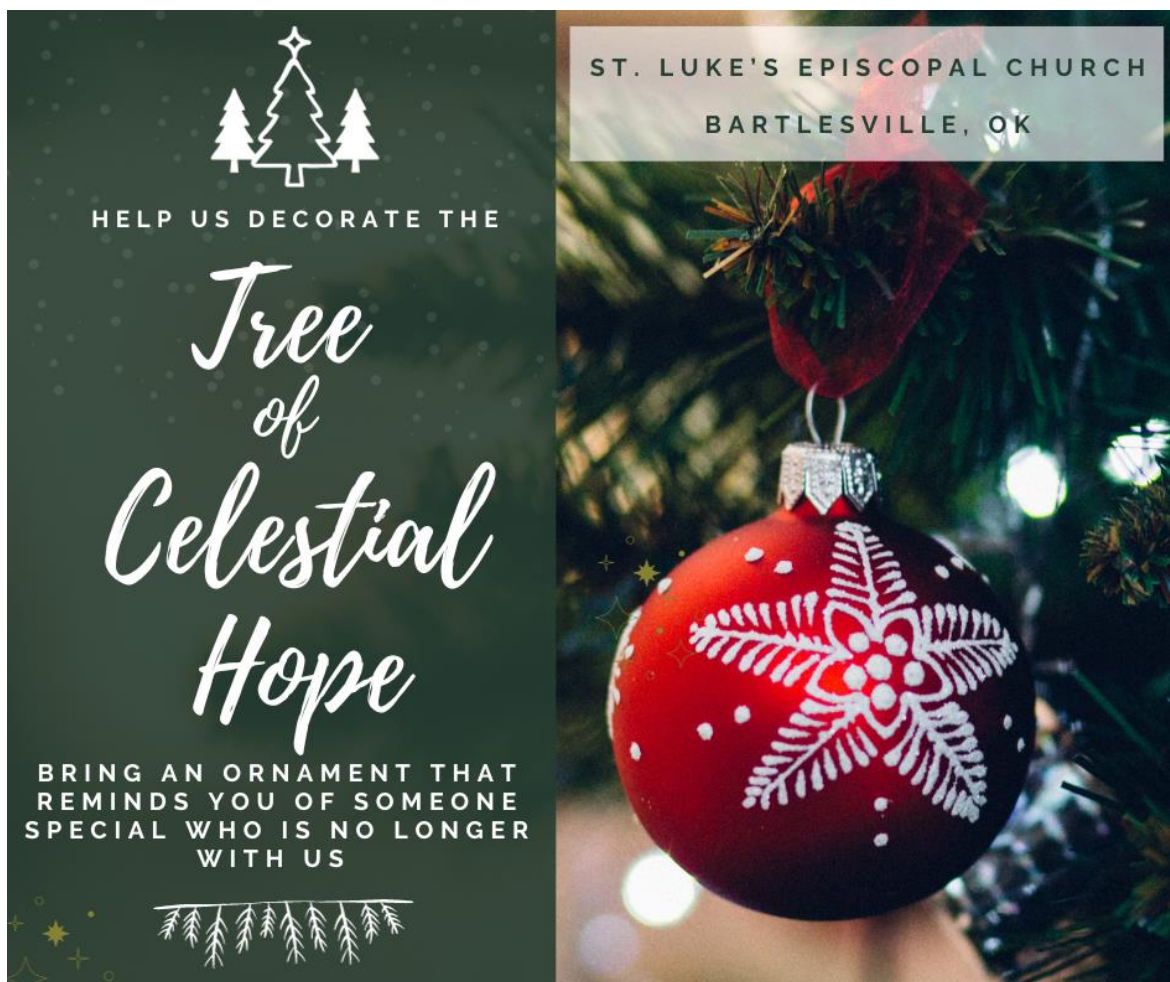
December 24<sup>th</sup>                      The Gifts of the Gentiles



In *Light of the World: A Beginner's Guide to Advent*, author, professor, and biblical scholar Amy-Jill Levine explores the biblical texts surrounding the story of the birth of Jesus. Join her as she traces the Christmas narrative through the stories of Zechariah and Elizabeth, Mary, the journey to Bethlehem, and the visit from the Magi. These stories open conversations around connections of the Gospel stories to the Old Testament, the role of women in first-century Jewish culture, the importance of Mary's visitation and the revolutionary implications of Mary's Magnificat, the census and the stable, and the star of Bethlehem and the flight to Egypt.

Faith Forum begins at 9:15 a.m. on Sunday mornings in Metcalf Hall.

*Join Us!*



## StEWArDShiP

TOGETHER WE ARE CALLED TO BE STEWARDS OF GOD'S ABBUNDANCE AND CARETAKERS OF ALL HE HAS ENTRUSTED TO US.

### ... MEDITATION ...

St Luke's has a new worship experience that has been enjoyed by several of our communicants. This service is Meditation. There is a short Scriptural reading followed by some suggestions for meditation. We then quietly meditate for 15 to 20 minutes. If that sounds like a long time to be quiet, you will probably feel it might not be enough time after your first experience. Discussion follows our meditation with some participants speaking and others just listening.

We meet in the Library on the second floor at 3:00pm twice a month. We finish by 4:00pm. We meet on the second Thursday of the month and the fourth Monday. For December, the second meeting will be on Thursday the 28th because the regular date would be on Christmas day.

We would encourage anyone who might wish to experience this method of worship to meet with us at any session.

If you have any questions, please contact Fr. Nick or Tom Reyburn (970-209-4695).





This month's Pack the Backpacks items are 3x5 inch lined Index Cards, 100 ct packages and 5 tab notebook dividers.

Thank you to everyone who has contributed in the past. It helps more than you know.



**A Remembrance Service for Radomir Petrovich will be held Saturday, Dec 9<sup>th</sup>, 3:00pm at St Luke's.**





Have you seen some of the wonderful ornaments on the Tree of Celestial Hope?







Arnold Moore and Neekamp Funeral Home will be holding a Remembrance of Life Service for those who have passed in the last twelve months this Sunday, Dec 10<sup>th</sup>, 3pm in their chapel. Everyone who has lost a loved one is welcome.



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### Collect for the First Week of Advent:

**Traditional:** Almighty God, give us grace that we may cast away the works of darkness, and put upon us the armor of light, now in the time of this mortal life in which thy Son Jesus Christ came to visit us in great humility; that in the last day, when he shall come again in his glorious majesty to judge both the quick and the dead, we may rise to the life immortal; through him who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Ghost, one God, now and for ever. *Amen.*

### Collect for the Second Week of Advent:

**Contemporary:** Merciful God, who sent your messengers the prophets to preach repentance and prepare the way for our salvation: Give us grace to heed their warnings and forsake our sins, that we may greet with joy the coming of Jesus Christ our Redeemer; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. *Amen.*



## St. Luke's Vestry Members

- Doug McIver, Sr. Warden -- [dmciver@susandickcpa.com](mailto:dmciver@susandickcpa.com) 785-342-4328
- Nancy Woods, Jr. Warden – [Nancywoods120@gmail.com](mailto:Nancywoods120@gmail.com)
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- Josie McIver-

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### **Bereavement Team 1**

Susie Clark, Nancy Woods, Jeanne  
Julstrom, Sally Lindsey

