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The Steeple

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December 11,
2024



The Weekly Newsletter of St. Luke's Episcopal Church



Preparing for the Longest Night

As you know, the season of Advent invites us into stillness and reflection—a sacred slowing down as we prepare our hearts for the coming of Christ. Yet, when we pause and quiet our busy minds, it's not uncommon for feelings, memories, and emotions we've long suppressed to rise to the surface. These moments can feel overwhelming, but they are also invitations to healing and deeper connection with God.

What do we do with these feelings? Rather than fear them, Advent encourages us to engage them courageously through reflection, prayer, and liturgical practice. Reflection helps us name and acknowledge what we are experiencing. In prayer, we lift these burdens to God, inviting the Holy Spirit to work within our hearts. And in liturgy, especially during services like the Longest Night, we find communal support and a tangible reminder of Christ's light breaking into our darkness.

The Longest Night, or Blue Christmas services, are held around the winter solstice, the darkest time of the year. It recognizes that for many, this season is not all joy and celebration. Loss, grief, or unmet expectations can weigh heavily. These types of services create space for lament and even hope—a quiet, contemplative time to lay one's burdens before God and seek comfort in the promise of Emmanuel, "God with us."

This year, I invite you to bring an ornament to decorate the tree in the narthex, our tree of remembrance. Bring an ornament as a symbol of a person, emotion, memory, or situation that has been on your heart. By doing so, you bring those parts of your story into God's house, letting them be bathed in the light of our shared worship and prayer.

As we approach the Third Sunday of Advent, we pray the collect reads, "Stir up your power, O Lord, and with great might come among us; and because we are sorely hindered by our sins, let your bountiful grace and mercy speedily help and deliver us!"

The stirring we feel within is not just for us—it is how God stirs up the world around us. Through our reflection, prayer, and acts of faith, we help bring about the light and love of Christ in our homes, community, and beyond. My prayer for you is that this Advent be a season of courageous engagement with what stirs in your heart, knowing that Christ's love will meet you there.

Peace be with you,

Nick+



Theologians Corner: Lucy Virgin and Martyr: 304

The early Roman lists of martyrs commemorate Lucy, virgin and martyr, on 13 December, and her name, with that of Agatha, appears in the Roman Liturgy as an example of those who have gone before us, in whose company we join in giving thanks and praise to God. Aside from this, little is known of her, except that she lived in Syracuse in Sicily, and probably died around 304.

Her name, which means "light," probably accounts for the story that her eyes were put out and her eyesight miraculously restored, and may be connected with the fact that her feast occurs near the time when (in the Northern Hemisphere) the nights are longest.

In Sweden and elsewhere, the day is observed by having one of the daughters of the house dress in a white robe with a crown of lighted candles and go singing from room to room (presumably followed by an adult with a fire extinguisher) early in the morning when it is still dark to awaken the other family members and to offer them St. Lucy's Cakes and hot coffee.

Ember Wednesday (of the winter season) is defined as the Wednesday after Lucy's Day. (An equivalent definition would be: the Wednesday preceding the last Sunday before Christmas.)

Together let us pray: Loving God, who for the salvation of all didst give Jesus Christ as light to a world in darkness: Illumine us, with thy daughter Lucy, with the light of Christ, that by the merits of his passion we may be led to eternal life; through the same Jesus Christ, who with thee and the Holy Spirit livest and reignest, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

CONCERN NEEDS For December

Concern is very low on homeless food items - individual serving-size of pudding cups, fruit cups, and individual type crackers and cereal. Concern also needs spaghetti, macaroni and boxes of cereal.

Prayer List

Please pray for: Liz Green, Michelle Sheffield, Catherine Sheffield, Ben Baker, Steve McCraw, Josh Harris, David Swindell, Norma Perrier, 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, Jim Carroll, Kate Carroll, Steve Linn, Chuck McCarty, Bob Baughman, Jean Mason, Estelle Sams, Adam Thomas, Bob Lambert, Carla Curry, Jack Bridendolph, Tom Oakes, Bill Pendley, Mary Wallace, Connie Freebern, Lynda Stephens, Jim Perrier, Marcie Zervas, Margaret Holden, Don McCoy, Jean McCoy, Audrey Harris, Peggy Rocky, Lauren Barlowe, Ken Harvey, and Luke Karel.

Please add the following to your prayers this Second Week of Advent
St John's, Woodward Grace, Yukon Province of the Episcopal Church of
Sudan

At Luke's Place : Dec 12th – Dec 18th , 2024

- Dec 12th Men's Group & Breakfast, 7am, Metcalf
Bible Study, 9:15am, Metcalf
Green Country Eucharist, 1pm, GCV
- Dec 13th Barbara Westfall Service, 1:30pm
- Dec 15th Eucharist, Rite I, 8:00am, Chapel
Faith Forum, 9:15am, Metcalf
Eucharist, Rite II, 10:30am, Nave
- Dec 16th Ladies' Prayer Partners
- Dec 17th Spiritual Discovery Book group, 9:30am, Library
- Dec 18th Choir, 5pm, Choir Room
YD, 6pm, Rodgers Hall
Advent Soup Supper and Program, 6pm, Metcalf

Birthdays and Anniversaries Dec 15th – Dec 21st, 2024

Birthdays



Jim Carroll (12/21)
Logan Warring (12/21)

Anniversaries



Fr Lee & Lynda Stephens (12/17)

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!



Our Vestry worked Fantasy Land of Lights at Johnstone Park last Thursday. Hope you got out to enjoy the lights and see them!



PLEASE JOIN US FOR A

CHRISTMAS CONCERT

DECEMBER

15

AT 4:00 PM

Featuring
Susan Mueller & Marjoleine Gravelly

ST. LUKE'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH
210 E. 9TH STREET

Let's celebrate together!

REFRESHMENTS
AFTER THE CONCERT

Donations and canned goods will be accepted to benefit Concern

CELEBRATING OUR ANGLICAN HERITAGE

Pilgrimage to England - July 7-18, 2025

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

I am excited to announce plans for a pilgrimage to England next year to connect with our Anglican roots.

This pilgrimage is an offering of faith and fellowship, especially for members of our Iona Community and, more broadly, anyone in the diocese who feels drawn to join us (including members from your churches). Together, we will embark on a journey to the spiritual and historical heart of Anglicanism, walking the same paths and entering the same sacred spaces as those who shaped our tradition.

As a pilgrimage, this journey isn't simply about seeing these places but experiencing them - letting their stories, beauty, and sacredness deepen our understanding of who we are as followers of Christ. By immersing ourselves in their legacy, we'll encounter not just history but also inspiration for our present and future as a church striving to embody Jesus's call to unity.

Whether you're passionate about history, eager to deepen your faith, or longing for a journey of spiritual renewal, this pilgrimage promises to be a life-changing and faith-defining experience. I hope you will join us as we step across centuries, connecting the prayers of the past with the promises of today.

Our hosts, Lightline Pilgrimages, are staffed by members of the Church of England, who are uniquely suited to connect us to our Anglican roots. We begin the pilgrimage at Canterbury Cathedral, staying at the cathedral lodge and enjoying a private after-hours tour of the cathedral. The culmination of our tour concludes at the grand York Minster Cathedral where its Dean, the Very Reverend Dominic Barrington, will take us on a personal behind the scenes tour.

The deadline for registering interest is December 16 (although the entire tour amount is not due at that time) so that we can determine if we have the number of pilgrims needed to make our trip.

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

[* CLICK HERE FOR THE FULL ITINERARY ***](#)**



Now that the baby dolls have gone to their new owners, it's time to turn our Christmas tree into a Remembrance Tree. Please join in remembering those who have left us, not just this Christmas, but Christmases past. Bring an ornament or ornaments in memory of your loved one(s) and hang on the tree in the Narthex. The tree will be up through January 5th and you may pick up your ornament that

Sunday or in the office after the 6th.

YD Shopping for Angel Tree

Last week, after a tasty dinner from the Ryals, we had a great time shopping for some children in our community who could use some Christmas cheer. We bought clothes and toys for three children on the Salvation Army Angel Tree and Laura and Jeff Birk delivered them last week.



Many thanks for your support and patience this past year with the flood repairs, new sidewalk installation, tree removal, and a/c replacement. We've had a lot to navigate!

Just wanted to let you know the office will be closed Dec 24th, 25th, and Jan 1st. I will

be on vacation Dec 26th- 31st for that long winter nap! May JOY meet you at the door of St Luke's this holiday season. Penny



Advent



A Season of Reflection and Reverence

Wednesday Evenings 6:00 p.m. to 7:30p.m.

Dec. 4th, 11th, 18th.

Light Supper · Reflection · Vespers

Sign ups for meal prep outside the Church Office.



Christmas at St. Luke's

Christmas Eve - 4 PM

Christmas Day - 10 AM

After the Christmas Eve service, join us in Metcalf Hall for egg nog and wassail. AND if you have any extra or leftover Christmas goodies from parties or baking, please bring them to share!

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
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- Robert Lonski- rjtazski@yahoo.com

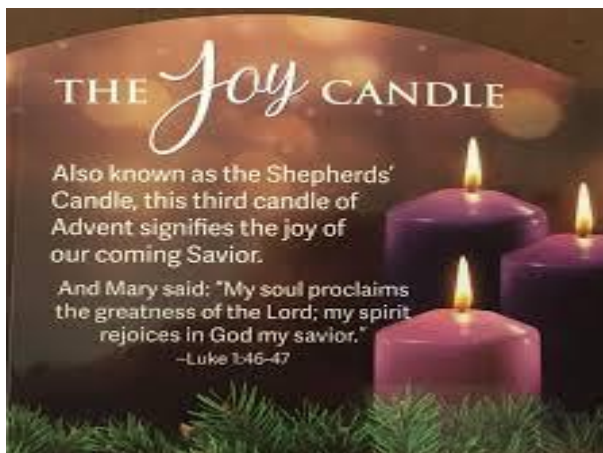
Bereavement Team 2

Laura Birk, Nancy Megee, Wendy Halll, 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
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Penny Williams, secretary 918-766-2157

CANTICLE OF MARY

(Luke 1:46-55)

The soul rejoices in the Lord

My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord,
my spirit rejoices in God my Savior
for he has looked with favor on his lowly servant.

From this day all generations will call me blessed:
the Almighty has done great things for me,
and holy is his Name.

He has mercy on those who fear him
in every generation.

He has shown the strength of his arm,
he has scattered the proud in their conceit.

He has cast down the mighty from their thrones,
and has lifted up the lowly.

He has filled the hungry with good things,
and the rich he has sent away empty.

He has come to the help of his servant Israel
for he has remembered his promise of mercy,
the promise he made to our fathers,
to Abraham and his children for ever.

