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The Steeple



December 4,
2024



The Weekly Newsletter of St. Luke's Episcopal Church



Ember Days in Advent and the New Year

As I write to you today, I realize that it is an Ember Day and I'm guessing you all haven't had much engagement with those over the years but I could be wrong! Nevertheless, Ember Days are days set aside by the Church for prayer, fasting, and giving thanks, often tied to the changing of the seasons. They occur quarterly and are observed on the Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday following certain liturgical feasts.

The term "Ember" derives from the Latin "Quatuor Tempora" meaning "four times." and are days that trace back to ancient agrarian customs when prayers for agricultural blessings were common. The Church Christianized these observances, using them as a time to focus on spiritual growth and gratitude for creation. Advent is a perfect time for that.

Ember Days thus are linked to the natural calendar and the Church calendar at the following times:

- After the Feast of St. Lucy (December 13) - Winter.
- After the First Sunday of Lent - Spring.
- After Pentecost - Summer.
- After the Feast of the Holy Cross (September 14) - Autumn.

Ember Days themselves serve three main purposes:

- Thanksgiving - Gratitude for seasonal blessings.
- Renewal - Spiritual and physical preparation, including fasting and
- Intercession - Praying for the clergy, the faithful, and the needs of the world.

Practices on Ember Days usually include:

- Fasting and abstinence: traditional practices involve fasting (one main meal and two smaller meals) and abstinence from meat.

- Prayer: Special prayers are included in the liturgy, focusing on themes of creation, the Church, and ministry.
- Ordinations: Historically, Ember Days were associated with ordinations, emphasizing the preparation and sanctity of Church leadership.

Although not universally observed today, Ember Days remain a meaningful tradition in some Christian communities, particularly Roman Catholic, Anglican, certain Orthodox traditions and the Episcopal Church. There is even a collect for them!

Let us pray,

Almighty God, the giver of all good gifts, in your divine providence you have appointed various orders in your Church: Give your grace, we humbly pray, to all who are [now] called to any office and ministry for your people; and so fill them with the truth of your doctrine and clothe them with holiness of life, that they may faithfully serve before you, to the glory of your great Name and for the benefit of your holy Church; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

Peace be with you.

Nick+



A BIG THANK YOU to everyone who donated baby dolls for the Foster Children's Christmas Party. When the representatives from DHS picked them up, they were elated! One stated they had enough from us to give every girl in that age range a doll.

Let's make a joyful noise!

Christmas in the Woods

*Food & Drinks
&
Holiday Cocktails*

*Face Painting
&
Fun for Kids!*

**December 7th • 4-8p.m.
1000 Hazel Ct.**

rsvp is welcome - 918-914-3263 - Nancy Woods

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 Rockey, and Lauren Barlowe

Please add the following to your prayers this First Week of Advent

St Stephen's, Guymon Province of the Episcopal Church of South Sudan

At Luke's Place : Dec 5th– Dec 11th , 2024

- Dec 5th Men's Group & Breakfast, 7am, Metcalf
Bible Study, 9:15am, Metcalf
Green Country Eucharist, 1pm, GCV
Vestry at Fantasy Land, 6-120pm, Johnstone Park
- Dec 7th Christmas Open House, 10am, Bookstore
Christmas in the Woods, 4pm, 1000 Hazel Ct
- Dec 8th Eucharist, Rite I, 8:00am, Chapel
Faith Forum, 9:15am, Metcalf
Eucharist, Rite II, 10:30am, Nave
- Dec 9th Ladies' Prayer Partners
Finance Com, noon, Vestry Room
Vestry, 5:30pm, Vestry Room
- Dec 10th Spiritual Discovery Book group, 9:30am, Library
- Dec 11th Choir, 5pm, Choir Room
YD, 6pm, Rodgers Hall
Advent Soup Supper and Program, 6pm, Metcalf
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Birthdays and Anniversaries Dec 8th – Dec 14th, 2024

Birthdays



Judy DuVall (12/9)
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!



December 15th 4 pm at St. Luke's Christmas Concert & Reception 🎵

Featuring: piano and organ duets by Susan Mueller and Marjoleine Gravely, Bartlesville Bells handbell choir with Janet Young, Margaret Parrett and friends, Keeli & Daisy Droege (vocal, piano)

Reception will be in Metcalf Hall immediately 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 ***](#)**

Come and check out your St Luke's Bookstore for Advent calendars, Wreaths, Candles, and Devotionals. Get ready for this Advent Season with the help of St Luke's bookstore! All profit goes to Outreach in the community. (See further for the Bookstore's Open House info!)



Come and Support Your Vestry at Fantasy Land of Lights in Johnstone Park, Dec 5th (this Thursday) from 6-10pm! Vestry members from St Luke's will be working at the Gingerbread House and hoping to spy some St Luke's folks enjoying the lights! So make sure you drive through the park and stop to say hello to your Vestry members!



*Join us for some
holiday cheer!*

Christmas Open House
at
St. Luke's Bookstore

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 7

10AM TO 3PM



- ~See Santa and Mrs. Claus from 1-2PM.
- ~Explore a curated selection of inspirational books, gifts, and seasonal items perfect for Christmas giving.
- ~Enjoy complimentary holiday treats.
- ~Enter our hourly raffle drawings.



Advent



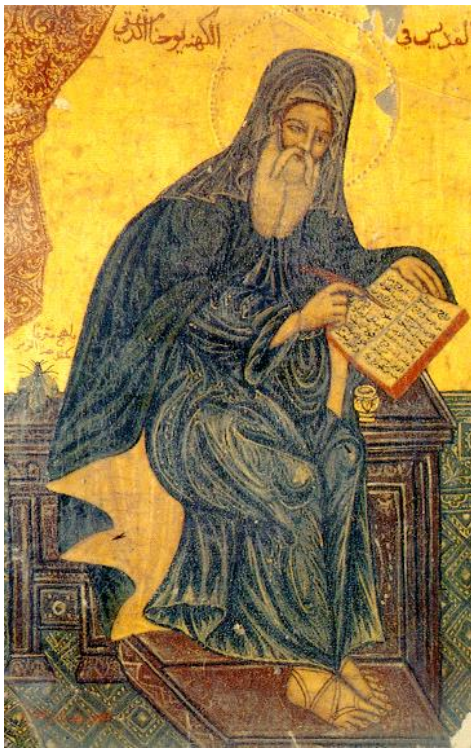
A Season of Reflection and Reverence

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.



Theologians Corner: John of Damascus

John is generally accounted "the last of the Fathers". He was the son of a Christian official at the court of khalif Abdul Malek, and succeeded to his father's office.

In his time there was a dispute among Christians between the Iconoclasts (image-breakers) and the Iconodules (image-validators or image-respectors). The Emperor, Leo III, was a vigorous upholder of the Iconoclast position. John wrote in favor of the Iconodules with great effectiveness. Ironically, he was able to do this chiefly because he had the protection of the khalif (ironic because the Muslims have a strong prohibition against the religious use of pictures or images).

John is also known as a hymn-writer. Two of his hymns are sung in English at Easter ("Come ye faithful, raise the strain" and "The Day of Resurrection! Earth, tell it out abroad!"). Many more are sung in the Eastern Church.

His major writing is *The Fount of Knowledge*, of which the third part, *The Orthodox Faith*, is a summary of Christian doctrine as expounded by the Greek Fathers.

The dispute about icons was not a dispute between East and West as such. Both the Greek and the Latin churches accepted the final decision.

The Iconoclasts maintained that the use of religious images was a violation of the Second Commandment ("Thou shalt not make a graven image... thou shalt not bow down to them").

The Iconodules replied that the coming of Christ had radically changed the situation, and that the commandment must now be understood in a new way, just as the commandment to "Remember the Sabbath Day" must be understood in a new way since the Resurrection of Jesus on the first day of the week.

Obviously, the use of images and pictures in a religious context is open to abuse, and in the sixteenth century abuses had become so prevalent that some (not all) of the early Protestants reacted by denouncing the use of images altogether.

In the East Orthodox tradition, three-dimensional representations are seldom used. The standard icon is a painting, highly stylized, and thought of as a window through which the worshipper is looking into Heaven. (Hence, the background of the picture is almost always gold leaf.) In an Eastern church, an iconostasis (icon screen) flanks the altar on each side, with images of angels and saints (including Old Testament persons) as a sign that the whole church in Heaven and earth is one body in Christ, and unites in one voice of praise and thanksgiving in the Holy Liturgy.

At one point in the service, the minister takes a censer and goes to each icon in turn, bows and swings the censer at the icon. He then does the same thing to the congregation -- ideally, if time permits, to each worshipper separately, as a sign that every Christian is an icon, made in the image and likeness of God, an organ in the body of Christ, a window through whom the splendor of Heaven shines forth.

Together let us pray: Confirm our minds, O Lord, in the mysteries of the true faith, set forth with power by thy servant John of Damascus; that we, with him, confessing Jesus to be true God and true Man, and singing the praises of the risen Lord, may, by the power of the resurrection, attain to eternal joy; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Spirit, one God, for evermore. Amen.

The Collect for the Second Sunday of Advent

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

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Bereavement Team 2

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

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