

# The Steeple

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- Office closed July 3<sup>rd</sup>
- Happy 4<sup>th</sup> of July



July 2, 2026



Ordinary Time

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



### Let us give thanks for freedom and grace

As the 4th of July approaches, we find ourselves surrounded by familiar signs of the holiday — American flags flying, cookouts, laughter, and fireworks lighting up the sky. For many of us, Independence Day stirs gratitude, memory, and hope.

As Christians, we give thanks for the freedoms we enjoy in this nation. We remember those who sacrificed so that liberty might be preserved and passed on. But our faith also invites us to think more deeply about what freedom means. Freedom is not only something written into history or protected by law. It is also something we receive with

gratitude before God.

In the *Book of Common Prayer*, the collect for Independence Day asks God to grant “that we and all the people of this land may have grace to maintain our liberties in righteousness and peace”. That word — *grace* — reminds us that the best things in life, including the wise and faithful use of freedom, are not accomplished by our strength alone. We need God’s help to live well with the gifts we have been given.

That is true not only for nations, but for each of us personally. God’s grace teaches us how to use freedom not selfishly, but lovingly. It calls us beyond “what do I want?” toward “how can I love my neighbor?” The *BCP* puts it beautifully in the prayer “For the Nation,” asking that we may have “a zeal for justice and the strength of forbearance, that we may use our liberty in accordance with your gracious will”. Christian freedom is at its best when it makes us kinder, humbler, and more generous.

And that freedom is never ours alone. In the Baptismal Covenant, we promise to “respect the dignity of every human being”. Those words speak powerfully on Independence Day. To honor the dignity of every person is to remember that all people are created in God’s image. Every person matters to God. Every person is worthy of respect, compassion, and the freedom to live with dignity as one of God’s beloved children.

So, as we gather this Independence Day, may we give thanks for the blessings of this land. May we pray for our country with love and humility. And may God, in abundant grace, teach us to use our freedom well — cherishing it, sharing it, and honoring the dignity of all.

Blessings and peace, Jeff†

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### At Luke's Place: July 3<sup>rd</sup> – July 9<sup>th</sup>, 2026

July 3<sup>rd</sup>      Office closed for Holiday  
July 5<sup>th</sup>      Holy Eucharist, Rite I, 8:00am, Chapel  
                    Faith Forum, 9:15am, Rodgers  
                    Holy Eucharist, Rite II, 10:30am, Nave  
July 6<sup>th</sup>      Ladies Prayer Partners, 11:30am, Metcalf  
July 9<sup>th</sup>      Men's Group, 7am, Metcalf  
                    Bible Study, 9:15am, Metcalf  
                    Green Country Eucharist, 1pm, GCV

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### Prayer List

**Please pray for:** Ben Baker, Steve McCraw, Josh Harris, David Swindell, Connie Finch, Terry Grogan, Tyler Roberson, Jerry Nezam, Lynette Beebe, Danny Clem, David McAtee, Steve Linn, Jean Mason, Mary Wallace, Lynda Stephens, Marcie Zervas, Audrey Harris, Nan Buhlinger, Dionna Cameron, Betty Rogers, Dan & JoAnn Gallery, Kathleen Turner, Steve Clark, Dean Zervas, Frank Molina, Diane Mitchell, Frank Traylor, Steve Hand, Donna Steward, Penny Johnson, Kim Shipman, Shaina Smith, Ann Morrow, Carrie Washington, Miriam Petrovich, Jason Elmore, Teresa Phares, June Mosley, Marsha Tibbits, Larry Mueggenborg, and Sherry Breitman.

**Please add the following to your prayers for this week:**

**St Luke's, Ada    Grace, Muskogee    The Anglican Church of Southern Africa**



## Birthdays & Anniversaries for July 5<sup>th</sup> – July 11<sup>th</sup>, 2026

### Birthdays

Dolores McCreary (7/8)  
Emily Almy (7/11)

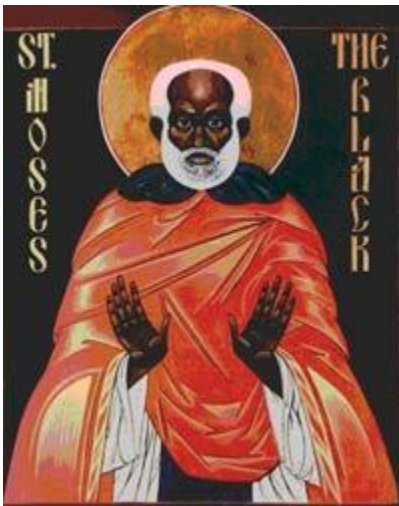
### Anniversaries

Tom & Keeli Droege (7/7)

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

## Concern

Concern's current needs are: adult toothbrush and toothpaste, unisex deodorant, travel size shampoo and conditioner.



### Theologian's Corner:

#### Moses the Black

330-405 AD

Saint Moses the Black lived during the fourth century in Egypt. He was a Nubian and was black-skinned; therefore, he was called "Murin" (meaning "like an Ethiopian"). In his youth, he was the slave of an important man, but after committing a murder, his master banished him, and he joined a band of robbers. He then roamed the Nile Valley with an infamous and violent gang of 75 robbers. Moses was a man of huge physical stature, strength and courage, and became leader of this gang of robbers that became a social menace and living terror to the communities where they roamed.

Attempting to hide from local authorities, he took shelter with some [monks](#) in a colony in the desert of [Wadi El Natrun](#), then called Scetis, near [Alexandria](#). The dedication of their lives, as well as their peace and contentment, influenced Moses deeply. He soon gave up his old way of life, [became a Christian](#), was baptized and joined the [monastic community](#) at Scetis.

Moses had a rather difficult time adjusting to regular monastic discipline, and traces of his criminal tendencies lingered. Attacked by a group of robbers in his desert cell, Moses fought back, overpowered the intruders, and dragged them to the chapel where the other monks were at prayer. He told the brothers that he did not think it was [Christian](#) to hurt the robbers and asked what he should do with them. The robbers themselves repented and joined the community as brothers afterwards. Moses was zealous in all he did, but became discouraged when he concluded he was not perfect enough. Feeling overcome by despair and once again tempted by his former passions, early one morning, Isidore, abbot of the [monastery](#), took Moses to the roof. Together they watched the first rays of dawn come over the horizon, and Isidore said to Moses, "Only slowly do the rays of the sun drive away the night and usher in a new day, and thus, only slowly does one become a perfect contemplative."

Moses became the spiritual leader of a colony of [hermits](#) in the [Western Desert](#). Later, he was ordained a priest.

At about age 75, about the year 405 AD, word came that the [Mazices](#), a group of [Berbers](#), planned to attack the monastery. The brothers wanted to defend themselves, but Moses forbade it. He told them to retreat, rather than take up weapons. Citing that a violent death was the appropriate death for a former robber—"All who take the sword will perish by the sword"—he opted to remain behind. He was joined by seven others, and they were together martyred by the bandits on 24 [Paoni](#) (July 1).

Almighty God, whose blessed Son guides our footsteps in the way of peace: Deliver us from paths of hatred and violence, that we, following the example of your servant Moses, may serve you with singleness of heart and attain to the tranquility of the world to come; 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.



Fr Nick & Teresa Phares' new address:

311 Fire Tower Rd  
Sewanee, TN 37375

## July School Supply Item Needed



For July and August 2026, the featured item for Pack the Backpack will be 24-count Crayola Crayons. Please purchase the Crayola brand; for your reference, the current pricing at Walmart is \$1.44. Staples has them on sale for \$0.50 right now, limit 10.

Last year, we distributed over 2,600 boxes to students.



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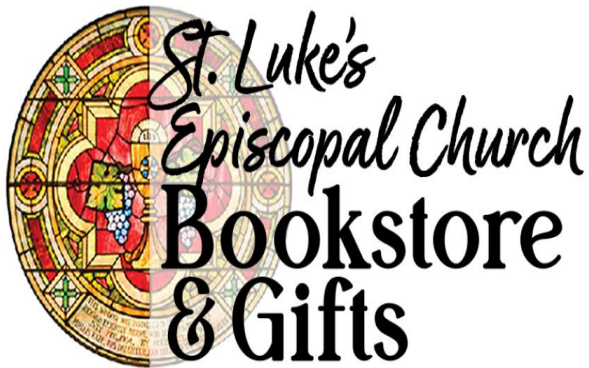
### A Prayer for our nation:

Almighty God, who hast given us this good land for our heritage: We humbly beseech thee that we may always prove ourselves a people mindful of thy favor and glad to do thy will. Bless our land with honorable industry, sound learning, and pure manners. Save us from violence, discord, and confusion; from pride and arrogance, and from every evil way. Defend our liberties, and fashion into one united people the multitudes brought hither out of many kindreds and tongues. Endue with the spirit of wisdom those to whom in thy Name we entrust the authority of government, that there may be justice and peace at home, and that, through obedience to thy law, we may show forth thy praise among the nations of the earth.

In the time of prosperity, fill our hearts with thankfulness, and in the day of trouble, suffer not our trust in thee to fail; all which we ask through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

*BCP p.820*





### Summer Hours:

Sundays only after the 10:30am Service

Or By Appointment. Check with the office if you need to shop anytime during the week.

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## Church Office will be closed Friday for the 4<sup>th</sup> of July

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To Penny Williams on the loss of her father, Glenn Pitts. May he rest in peace and rise in glory.

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### Pack the Backpacks information and timeline:

Join us for the packing of the backpacks or backpack pickup. If you have not seen the process it is pretty amazing. I am including a link to Signup Genius where you can sign up for a time, or just come to St. Luke's Church 8th, and Dewey at the times below.

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/20F054BA8A92CAAFF2-64437884-pack#/>

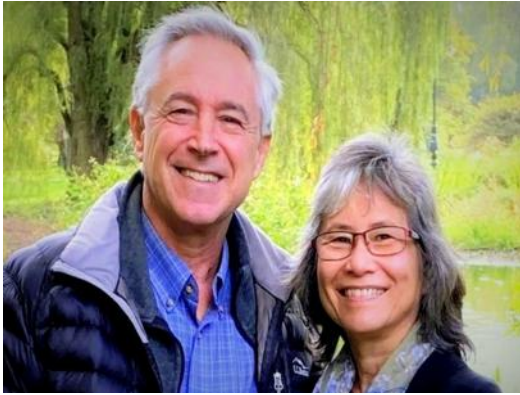
### Packing backpacks

Thursday July 30th through Saturday August 1st

- Thursday July 30 – 6-8 pm
- Friday July 31 – 9:30-11:30am AND 1:30-3:30pm
- Saturday August 1 - 9:30-11:30am

## Backpack pickup

- Sunday August 2nd 2pm – 7pm
- Monday August 3rd 8:30am – 7pm



### News from the Greens:

Hi friends,

Sickness, demon possession and addiction issues were the topics that Lina chose as most relevant for the \*Ngap culture, a minority group in a country near Thailand. So, at the September 1 to 4 Good News workshop, \*Lina will give assignments to the Ngap team to practice leading Discovery Bible Study with Bible narratives on those topics.

We are also planning a discussion on God's blessing to those who are persecuted because of Jesus. (Mt. 5:10-12; Ph. 1:12-14) The Ngap team already has experience with persecution, so we hope to be an encouragement to them, especially how Paul's chains caused brothers and sisters to "dare all the more" (Ph. 1:14). In addition to discussing God's blessing, we'll also discuss our own response to being persecuted. This will include loving, praying for and blessing those who are doing the persecuting, as well as continuing to preach the word with boldness (Mt. 5:44; Ro 12:14; Ac 4:29-31). I was blessed as I studied those passages.

One interesting topic that Roger and I learned about in the Chicago conference last year was "false persecution." An example is posting something to social media that will certainly be inflammatory communication. . .and then being persecuted because of it. In all the steps of reaching out to people--prayer, care, share--we want to walk by the Spirit, be led by the Spirit and not put obstacles in the way of people coming to know Jesus.

We're excited about this upcoming September 1 to 4 Good News workshop. Please join us in asking God to give good health and open schedules to the facilitators and participants.

Thank you very much for praying for the June Scripture engagement intro workshop that \*VVNJ led for three translation teams in a country near Thailand. VVNJ wrote that the workshop went very well. We are grateful to God for providing safe travel and good sessions about how to let Scripture sink deep into our lives.

Roger will be leading a July 27 to 28 Facebook workshop next month for the \*Yene translation team. For the Christians in the country near Thailand, Facebook is the preferred way to communicate with large audiences. In our team, each of the language groups has Facebook accounts as well as websites where people can access resources in their own language.

Roger and two other teammates do most of the organizing for how the language groups will maintain online formats of their translated Scripture. Please ask God to make the Facebook workshop to be very effective for the Yene team coming from a nearby country.

Roger and I will leave Chicago tomorrow night to travel to our home in Thailand (via Taiwan, Bangkok and Chiang Rai airports.) Would you please ask God to make our adjustment back to our Thai home/work situation to be full of grace and peace? We thank God for being able to work remotely in the U.S. these past four months and being able to have time with family and friends. We are very, very grateful to God for the strength and health He has given us.

Our son-in-law Luke's father, Matt Bugbee, recently went to be with the Lord after a courageous journey with ALS. Matt will be sorely missed, so this is a time of grief for Luke and Juliette's family. Please ask God to comfort and help the Bugbee extended clan in this time of having lost husband/father/grandfather/brother/uncle.

Thank you for tracking with us as we work in Asia. We thank God for you,  
Joanne

*And because of my chains, most of the brothers and sisters have become confident in the Lord and dare all the more to proclaim the gospel without fear.  
Philippians 1:14 NIV*

\*names have been changed





# Pack the Backpacks

Need help with school supplies?



**Applications Open**  
**June 15 to July 15**



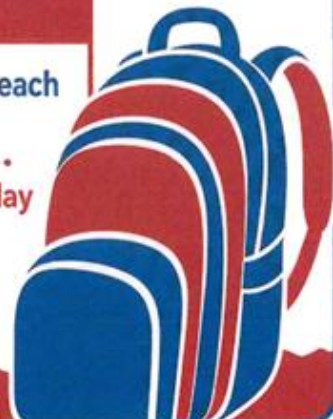
Scan the QR code  
to start your application  
or learn more!

SCAN ME

## IN PERSON APPLICATIONS

 **Agape Mission**  
555 S Cass Ave  
.....  
Fridays  
11am-1:30pm

 **Mary Martha Outreach**  
1845 SW 4th St.  
.....  
Monday-Wednesday  
9am-11am  
Thursday  
12pm-2pm



## St. Luke's Vestry Members

- Karole Cozby, Sr. Warden- [kscozby916@gmail.com](mailto:kscozby916@gmail.com)
- Karen Lewey, Jr Warden - [kgrammy07@yahoo.com](mailto:kgrammy07@yahoo.com)
- Becky Liehr – [jbliehr@gmail.com](mailto:jbliehr@gmail.com)
- Chase Almy – [chasealmy88@gmail.com](mailto:chasealmy88@gmail.com)
- Lisa Beeman – [lisabeeman89@gmail.com](mailto:lisabeeman89@gmail.com)
- Steve Heidorn- [sgheidorn@yahoo.com](mailto:sgheidorn@yahoo.com)
- Dolores McCreary – [dolomc37@gmail.com](mailto:dolomc37@gmail.com)
- Steve VanAken- [scvanaken@sbcglobal.net](mailto:scvanaken@sbcglobal.net)
- Fred Whitson- [sandyswhit@gmail.com](mailto:sandyswhit@gmail.com)
- Robert Lonski- [rjtazski@yahoo.com](mailto:rjtazski@yahoo.com)
- Cathy Perrier – [bling4mimi@hotmail.com](mailto:bling4mimi@hotmail.com)

### **Bereavement Team 3**

Becky Liehr, Cathy Perrier, Kris Bonner,  
Mary Jo Peterson

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

Keeli Droege, Choir Director/Organist  
918-697-8509 [keelidroege@gmail.com](mailto:keelidroege@gmail.com)

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