The Encourager August 2025



(Deadline for the upcoming Newsletter submissions is on August 25th)

The Mission of St. Luke's Lutheran Church is to Share God's Love Through Welcoming, Encouraging and Serving

Our Rule of Love

CONGREGATION COUNCIL

President: Lisa Rhyne

Secretary: Tom Ainsworth

Treasurer: Phil Brooks

Members are encouraged to bring any questions, suggestions, or concerns to Council.

Click on the buttons below to view reports.

Admin Support Team July

JUNE GENERAL - Income Statement

MID-YEAR GENERAL - Income Statement

JUNE COMBINED - Income Statement

Q2 Combined - Income Statement

MID-YEAR COMBINED - Income Statement

JUNE ENCOURAGEMENT CTR - Income Statement

MID-YEAR ENCOURAGEMENT CTR - Income Statement

Q2 SLLC - Income Statement

Q2 ENCOURAGEMENT CTR - Income Statement

TRANSITION AGREEMENT EXTENDED MONTH TO MONTH

The council has extended the agreement with Pastor Keith month to month. This means that we will not set a specific date, but both the church and Pastor Keith will need to give 60 days-notice. This gives time for any transition or bridge to be developed.



In gratitude to God and in thankfulness for our shared ministry and mission across North Carolina, and throughout the world, our congregation intends to provide an investment of:

\$14,580 in 2025

which represents 4.5% of our regular giving.

 \blacksquare This amount is an increase of \$\frac{1.5\%}{0}\$ over our share in 2024.

Congregation Name:

St. Lutres Lutheran Church

City:

Charlotte, NO

Primary Contact:

Ami Vycartch

Contact Email:

Office Ostlutes ejca. 019

Please return this statement of intent no later than Sunday, December 15, 2024 to Jenny Ramos by emailing to jramos@nclutheran.org or by mail at 1988 Lutheran Synod Drive, Salisbury, NC 28144. You can also fill out online.



CONGREGATION & WORSHIP LIFE



Watch us on YouTube

Worship Notes August to September Race That Is Set Before Us

Overall Theme: Following the guidance of the Spirit does not mean sitting still. God is calling for a movement. There is a race that is set before us (Hebrews 12:1). What is the race that God has set before us in this time? Over the next couple of months, we are going to mine the lectionary texts for how we engage the race that is set before us. We begin with setting our minds not on the finish line, but on the eternal kingdom before us. An important part of entering the race, is getting ready for it. What do we need to line up at the starting line and how do we prepare to push off the blocks? Endurance is key to running the race. We need to recognize the difference between a sprint and a marathon. We need to be training in body, mind and spirit. It is the Lord who has set the course and will guide us continually. Learning from those who have already run their course and finished the race is important not only in the how, but also in the why. We need to imitate the faith of those who have led the way on the course and now handed it off to us. Breathing is important as we run the race and it's important to have our hearts refreshed in Christ. What gives us strength on the course is also key to running the race with endurance. Timing is everything. If we jump the gun, we take off on our own course and become disqualified. Waiting for God is waiting for the proper time. Training for a race or any physical activity involves resistance training. It is pushing up against limits and overcoming barriers. We will be exploring how we fight the good fight of faith as we run the race set before us.

EIGHTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

August 3rd at 10:00am (Sanctuary)

"Set Your Minds"

Main Text: Colossians 3:1-11 (Ecclesiastes 1:2, 12-14: 2:18-23; Luke 12:13-21)

with Children's Church program

NINTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

August 10th at 10:00am (Sanctuary)

"You Also Must Be Ready"

Main Text: Luke 12:32-40 (Genesis 15:1-6; Hebrews 11:1-3, 8-16)

with Children's Church program

TENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

August 17th at 10:00am (Sanctuary)

"Run With Endurance"

Main Text: Hebrews 11:29-12:2 (Jeremiah 23:23-29; Luke 12:49-56)

with Noisy Offering Classroom Central

with Children's Church program

ELEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

August 24th at 10:00am (Sanctuary)

"The Lord Will Guide You Continually"

Main Text: Isaiah 58:9b-14 (Hebrews 12:18-29, Luke 13:10-17)

with Children's Church program

ADULT SUNDAY BIBLE STUDY

Is currently on summer break, check back with us in the fall.

NOISY OFFERING

In July we collected for:

UrbanPromise Charlotte

This month we will be collecting for:





More than 162,000 children in our region lack the basic school supplies needed for school success. That's more than 54% of local students.

Classroom Central can turn each \$1 donated into \$9 worth of distributed school supplies. Therefore, your gift significantly impacts the educational outcomes for both students and teachers.

By supporting teachers and students in need, you make a difference in the lives of local students, helping guide them from crayons to careers.

TURNING PENCILS INTO POSSIBILITIES

At Classroom Central, we believe every child deserves a level educational playing field. Through supporting teachers and students in need, we ensure that every class has the resources needed to become world-class.

Our innovative programs empower educators and students in 300+ schools across six Charlotte-region districts, from Iredell County Schools to Lancaster County Schools.

We provide free essential supplies and resources to local educators specifically through our Free Store, Mobile Free Store, and other community-supported programs.

Join us in our mission to help educators guide students from crayon drawings to successful careers by supporting Classroom Central and making a tangible difference in the lives of students and teachers.

ANNUAL IMPACT 2024- 2025 SCHOOL YEAR





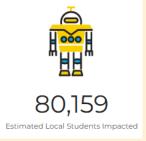


248

istributed Schools Served in Six School Districts







Click to learn more about Classroom Central

FLOWER CHART IN THE NARTHEX

If you would like to beautify our church sanctuary, honor someone, or commemorate a special day, please add your name to the chart!

We are now using Starclaire House of Flowers. They can be contacted at 704-553-2435. Payment is by credit card or check in advance to the florist.

Remember to tell the florist the date you are giving.

Call Ami-Luise at the church office at 704-523-7981 or email office@stlukeselca.org with the information you would like put in the bulletins by Wednesday morning of the week you are giving.

If you have any questions, call Pam Moser at 704-552-0996. Thanks!



AUGUST BIRTHDAYS



- 2 Cherish Copeland
- 10 Andrew Gilliland
- 11 Adriane Brooks
- 11 Emily Phillips
- 15 Mark Fenton
- 15 Lorelei Schlick
- 17 Phyllis Burnett
- 19 Erin Aldred-Pushman
- 20 Heather Micci
- 20 Dale McKee
- 22 Jim Gilliland
- 23 Amelia Mueller
- 27 Tony Lee
- 29 Charles Cushing
- 30 David Stolen
- 31 Nicholas Aldred
- 31 Melba Isley
- 31 Greta Davis

If we have missed your birthday, please reach out to the office.

Katharina Circle

Katharina Circle will be meeting on August 5th at the home of Janet Henderson at 7:00pm.

We will be assembling school supply kits for Classroom Central

Anna Vee Circle

The Anna Vee Circle is on Summer Break.

<u>Lutheran Men In Mission (LMIM)</u>

Please reach out to LMIM for updates.

ST. LUKE'S HAPPENINGS!

AS CHRIST SUPPORTS YOU IN YOUR TRAVELS YOUR CONTINUED SUPPORT IS NEEDED BY THE CHURCH

Just like there are ongoing costs at home when you go on vacation, the same is true for this community of faith. We need your continued generosity throughout the summer as we continue to serve at home in the name of Christ.

Online Giving: Setting up a recurring contribution is easy and a true blessing to the church. You can do so through your bank or set one up through APLOS. **You can give by ACH Transfers from your Bank or Credit Card on this platform.**

SLLC ONLINE GIVING

Please Consider Option to Cover the Fee: There is an option to cover the fee of the transaction so that 100% of the gift goes to mission. Simply mark the box indicating the fees and it will be added in. Either way, we are grateful for your gift!

If You Need Help We Are Here: We commit to support you every step of the way and will be glad to walk you through it either on the phone or you can come to the office as well.

You can reach us at the office by email at office@stlukeselca.org or phone 704-523-7981.

You can also contact Kathy West at west@stlukeselca.org.

COPELAND'S CORNER

Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus the founder and perfector of

faith... (Hebrews 12:1-2a)

Surrounded By So Great a Cloud of Witnesses: St. Luke's has truly been blessed with incredible saints who have shown up when the congregation and community needed them the most. These saints have stepped up many times to not only ensure the future of the congregation, but also the viability of the mission. In Hebrews, the author speaks of all of those who have walked through pain, heartache struggle, and persecution, but remained true to their faith in God. Though it would have been easier to adjust and avoid, they instead persevered. Some of them never saw the fullness come and died still believing in hope. We are also surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses. They would have never imagined what we are facing now, but they would point us to the same God who led them. Who are some of the great cloud of witnesses that have surrounded you and surrounded us at St. Luke's?

Lay Aside Every Weight, and Sin Which Clings So Closely: There have been huge decisions made in the past. Many of those decisions were huge risks and may not have made sense, yet they layed them aside and moved forward in faith. Is this our time now? What St. Luke's is planning to do has no guarantee and is incredibly risky. Based on who we are and our current circumstances, it does not make much sense. None the less, God has called this community to move forward in faith. Decisions have been made and the course is set before us. What weight and burden of sin do we need to lay down as we step forward in faith as those who came before us did? We may not see its fulfilment, but we are called to believe, and we are called to run the course that is set before us.

Run With Endurance: The course is not easy, and the path will not be smooth, but surrounded by that great cloud of witnesses, we have been charged with running this course in this time and in this place. It will take endurance to keep things moving forward. That endurance involves patience, persistence and faithfulness. There may be times we want to quit, but let's remember the great cloud of witnesses that surround us, and let's keep our eyes on the promise that lies ahead.

Looking to Jesus – The Pioneer and Perfector of Faith: We are surrounded by a great company of saints, but we are led by Jesus who is the pioneer and perfector of that faith. Jesus is the one who has not only set the course but shows us the way. Let us now run the course that is set before us, surrounded by a great company of saints and following Jesus, the pioneer and perfector of faith.

Let us pray together...Dear Lord, you have set the course and gone before us. Now we are called to follow in faith where you have led the way. We have been charged and entrusted with this leg of the race in our time and in this place. We can be overwhelmed by our own fear and paralyzed by our own limitations. Remind us that this is a course of faith not certainty. Remind us that we are surrounded by a great company of saints. As we lay down the weight and sin that clings so closely, lead us into a new day. In your precious name we pray. Amen!!!

COMING TO THE STARTING LINE GETTING READY TO RUN THE COURSE

One of the hardest times in a race is at the starting line. All the hopes and anxiety seem to pool together in that time before the starting gun is fired. Our anxiety makes it easy to jump the gun. It takes a lot of self-control and focus to hold at the starting line and not be disqualified before the race even begins.

St. Luke's is standing at the starting line. All that we have been doing has come to this moment and time. As a community of faith, we have been getting ready to run this new course that is set before us. Now we need to pray for patience as we prepare to release all that energy into forward motion.

We Are Not the Only Thing Being Prepared: We have been doing everything we know to get ready for the course that stands before us. What we need to remember is that we are not the only ones being prepared to run this course. God is also preparing the next leader who will run the course with this community of faith. We can't know what is going on in that person's life or how God is leading them to this starting line with us.

Centered in Prayer and Worship: Before a race begins, athletes will keep moving and stretching. They will focus on their breathing and envision what is coming. As St. Luke's waits to be called to the starting line, we need to center ourselves in prayer and worship. We need to breath in the Holy Spirit, envision what is coming and get ready to receive the one God is calling to run with us. We do this by centering ourselves in prayer and worship. Instead of getting lost in anxiety, we need to breathe, worship and pray without ceasing. We need to pray for...

- The Call Committee as they Search
- The New Leader God is Preparing
- The Leadership as they Seek to Maintain Readiness

Continued Financial Support: In addition to prayer and worship, it is important for financial support to continue. Without this financial support, we will not have the endurance to even start the race let alone run the race.

Ongoing Mission of Sharing God's Love through welcoming, encouraging and serving: The Mission of the Church continues both individually and as a community. Make plans to participate in the ongoing activities of the church. These include:

- God's Work Our Hands
- Friendship Room (Returning in the Fall)
- Children's Church and Ministries
- Administrative Support Team
- Choir (When it Returns in the Fall)
- Livestream and Organ Button Pushers
- Adult Sunday School (When it returns in the Fall)
- Leadership Responsibilities that Arise
- Call Committee
- Financial Counters

- Others as Needed to Remain Ready and Respond to the Mission
- Support the Staff

NEW SONG INTRODUCED IN AUGUST "FOR EVERYONE BORN"

This is a very appropriate hymn in this current time in our global conversation. Both locally, nationally and globally, we are called to look upon all of humanity as children of God.

Eric Hillestad will introduce the tune in the Offertory on Sunday, August 3^d as a saxophone solo. The words will be printed in the bulletin and can be found below.

We will then use the hymn during the month in order to grow familiar with the tune and the words. May we truly be reminded that God's love is for Everyone Born.

For everyone born, a place at the table, for everyone born, clean water and bread,

A shelter, a space, a safe place for growing, for everyone born, a star overhead.

And God will delight when we are creators of justice and joy, compassion and peace:

Yes, God will delight when we are creators of justice, justice and joy!

For everyone born, a place at the table, to live without fear, and simply to be, To work, to speak out, to witness and worship, for everyone born, the right to be free.

CALL COMMITTEE UPDATE

Unfortunately, vacations and the synod transitions have slowed down our progress in the month of July.

However, we look forward to continuing our discernment conversations as the new synod staff begins to be formed in August.

Please continue to pray that God guides our search for our future pastor.

DRESSING UP ST. LUKE'S FOR THE FUTURE

Getting ready for a new call and a new direction means putting on our best. Over the years our campus has lost a step in some outside care. It may seem unnecessary, but our outside look can reflect our inside condition.

When a person goes to an interview for a job, they put on their best to make a

good impression. In the same way, St. Luke's needs to put on it is best not only for potential leaders but also for the community. It's a statement that the church is ready. There are several ways we are doing that and are asking for help:

- Power washing Upper Left Side Complete: The Parish Hall side all the
 way down to Park Road around the front has already been cleaned. The
 change is striking and truly makes for a welcoming entrance that shows
 the life going on inside.
- Benches Cleaned and Wood Ones Painted: In addition to the power washing of the stone benches in front, we were truly blessed to have Kristy Elgard paint the wood ones after they were cleaned. A big thank you to Kristy for this incredible gift of love!

Contributions Need to Finish the Job in the Back: We are asking for donations to clean the rest of the areas not done along the back area where the Speech Garden, Bridge and the Child Development Center is located.

This can be a strong statement to the parents and children of how much we appreciate them being here and of wanting to provide the best. You can make a contribution to St. Luke's and indicate in the memo to be used for Power Washing. You can also do this on Aplos, our online giving platform.

CHILDREN'S CHURCH DURING THE SUMMER

There will be ongoing activities for the children during the summer worship. Thank you to Erin, Lucille and Mr. Terry for their leadership and service.



God's Work Our Hands Sunday promises to be a busy day around St. Luke's! You have a choice of 4 different projects and may participate in as many of them as you wish!

- Assemble and deliver 100 bagged lunches to Roof Above's Day Services
 Center by 11:30 am on Sunday, September 7th
 - Anyone may donate items for the lunches; a list will be on Sign Up Genius
 - A team will meet Sunday morning to assemble the lunch bags

- Dreema Brunnemer is the Project Manager
- Fill 30 HopeKids Hospital bags with toys to be given to children undergoing treatment for cancer at the Levine Children's Center
 - Anyone can donate toys; there will be a list on Sign Up Genius.
 - Filling the bags on GWOH day is a project for children ONLY;
 parents of very small children may assist them.
 - Diana Brooks is the Project Manager
- Deep clean and decorate the nursery in the old Bible Class space beside the sanctuary
 - We want to make this a welcoming space for our children and the children of our visitors.
 - Diamond Wasil is the Project Manager
- Collect and deliver non-perishable food to Nourish Up
 - A list of needed items is published each week in the bulletin and email message.
 - Items may be placed at the baptismal font
 - Rebekah Woodward is the Project Manager

We are inviting Unity's congregation to participate in the Roof Above, HopeKids, and Nourish Up projects.

Judy Hall is checking into getting T-shirts for us to wear that day.

Heather Micci will set up a Sign Up Genius to help track our progress.

More information will be announced each week!

GRANTS RECEIVED AND APPLIED FOR

Michael Peeler Fund Received \$40,000: We have received a \$40,000 grant for the new Encouragement Center. This grant is for salary for the new entity. It will be kept separate until a new pastor is called to properly account for the purpose.

Vitality Grant ELCA Pending: The NC Synod has made application for us to receive this grant available through the ELCA. Pray as this application goes forward.

What an incredible thing that this vision and call we have believed and invested in has been supported so greatly by the NC Synod and we pray for the ELCA.

RESOLUTION ON REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT

At the 2025 NC Synod Assembly, voting members approved a bold resolution reaffirming our commitment to refugee resettlement, rooted in Jesus' call to welcome the stranger (Matthew 25:35).

In response, Bishop Tim Smith is calling on all NC Synod congregations to take action—urging advocacy, generosity, and solidarity with our refugee

neighbors. His letter outlines specific ways individuals and communities can support Lutheran Services Carolinas and Global Refuge, and includes an invitation to contact elected officials and bear public witness to our shared values.

A sample letter and a list of representatives are available in the resources link below to help guide your faithful response.

Bishop Tim's Letter

Resolution 25.01

Resources for contacting your Representatives

LOCAL PRECINCT ELECTIONS AT ST. LUKE'S

Beginning in September, St. Luke's will become the location for local precinct elections.

This is a great opportunity for our congregation to be the neighborhood center we have been praying to become.

There will be no campaigning allowed on the site.

Watch for more information coming!

2025 Dates

Tuesday, September 8, 2025 - Primary Elections

Tuesday, October 7, 2025 - Second Primary (if necessary)

Tuesday, November 4, 2025 - General Election

<u>2026 Dates</u>

Tuesday, March 3, 2026 - Primary Elections

Tuesday, May 12, 2026 - Second Primary (if necessary)

Tuesday, November 3, 2026 - General Elections

FALL WOMEN'S RETREAT

102 degrees, 101 degrees. 105 heat index.

Are you tired of the heat yet? Just imagine cool mountain breezes, sitting in a rocking chair overlooking God's display of mountains and colorful leaves. Women of St. Luke's, this can be yours in October at the annual

Women's Retreat at beautiful Lutherock in the NC mountains.

Our "get away weekend" will be Oct. 24th-26th, so put it on your calendar now! Our topic will be based on the book "The Red Tent", but it will also be a celebration of the power of women. If you don't have time to read the book, it's okay because we'll watch the movie.

All women of St. Luke's are invited to join in the fun and fellowship. It's a great way to get to know other women in our congregation.

Please join us and bring a friend! Contact Diana Brooks with questions (704-578-2721)

WE NEED YOUR HELP

We are needing to grow our Live Stream Team and Organ Button Pushers!

THANK YOU Mike Hix for being such a blessing in filling this role!

We will be needing help in September with organ button pushing.

Please pray for these vital pieces of ministry!

Ami-Luise would like to be move involved in Children's Church in 2026 and would need to find someone to cover Live Stream.

If you feel called to keep these key pieces of service going, please reach out to the office.





This will be a short one! Finally, finally, I'm having my hip replacement on Friday August 8th! Although I DO look good on crutches, I will be glad to ditch them afterwards. Thanks to all who opened doors for me, offered to bring food for my recovery and generally helped me during those ten+ months on the sticks. After rehabbing for about a month (I can't drive for four weeks because the hip being replaced is the one on the right which moves the leg responsible for using the accelerator but more importantly the brakes, although I encourage others in a similar situation to mine to go ahead and try driving before you're ready since I need the legal work) I hopefully will have two properly working hips to get around on. I also hope to see you regularly in church instead of streaming at home. Swimming is also something I look forward to doing again especially in this heat but shagging (the dance anyway), which I do not do well, is not. I'll be home during August and can be reached by phone but not able to be visited since the apartment building I live in requires a fob to get into the building and to work the elevator. Love to you all and at least now I have a good excuse to miss the next Church Council meeting (phew)! Later.

GOOD TROUBLE LIVES ON EVENT & NOURISH UP FOOD DRIVE



THANK YOU to everyone who came to this event and to all those who donated food to the Nourish Up Food Drive.

We have collected 43 bags of donated items.

We are facing the most brazen rollbacks of civil rights in generations. Whether you're outraged by attacks on voting rights, the gutting of essential services, disappearances of our neighbors, or the assault on free speech - this movement is for you.

Coined by civil rights leader Congressman John Lewis, "Good Trouble" is the action of coming together to take peaceful, non-violent action to challenge injustice and create meaningful change.

Ami-Luise hosted a location here on the church front lawn. A reporter form the Charlotte Observer was here during the event interviewing attendees. We started the day off on the corner of Park and Woodlawn, news clip below. If you are looking to get involved or have any questions, please reach out to Ami-

Luise at amiluisevucovich@gmail.com.

Prayer from Ami-Luise:

God of justice and mercy, you see what is hidden and hear the cries we barely dare to speak.

When the world trembles with greed, violence, and false promises, anchor us in Your truth.

When fear rises, plant courage deep in our bones.

When power oppresses, make us bold enough to speak, to stand, to serve.

Make us instruments of Your peace and builders of Your Kingdom, where no one is forgotten, where justice flows like a river, and where love is not just spoken, but embodied.

Strengthen our hands. Steady our hope.

And remind us that You are always with the least of these - and therefor, with us still. Amen.

Good Trouble Lives On- Charlotte Observer Article



"Get in good trouble, necessary trouble, and help redeem the soul of America."

- Congressman John Lewis

FROM BEHIND THE LENS OF "MR.TERRY" CHEVILLE





















































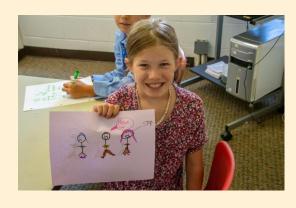


























OUTREACH OPPORTUNITIES

LUTHERAN DISASTER RESPONSE

Lutheran Disaster Response shares God's hope, healing and renewal with people whose lives have been disrupted by disasters in the United States and around the world.

When the dust settles and the headlines change, we stay to provide ongoing assistance to those in need

Lutheran Disaster Response



NOURISH UP

OUR PRIORITY NEEDS



formerly Loaves & Fishes/Friendship Trays

Please no glass containers.



canned meat

tuna, chicken, salmon



canned fruit

no sugar added or in juice



canned vegetables

no salt added or low sodium



pasta

canned or dry boxed



whole grain cereal



beans

canned or dry



peanut butter



rice



diapers and wipes

Visit nourishup.org for more information about how you can get involved.

LUTHERAN WORLD RELIEF COFFEE

Lutheran World Relief Farmers Market now offers chocolate in addition to coffee!

Mountain Harvest works with roughly 850 farmers in eight communities on Mount Elgon, Uganda with each farm growing between 600 and 1,000 coffee trees. We pay farmers up to 30% above local market prices allowing them to better provide for their families, invest in their crops and land, and ultimately, drive the local economy to benefit their community.

Latitude Craft Chocolate signs long term contracts with their suppliers to grow organic cocoa, promote biodiversity and ensure fair labor practices on all the

farms. Over half of their contracted farmers are women. Latitude pays on average 50% higher than prices in Ghana and Cote d'Ivoire, the world's leading cocoa producing countries.



LWR Farmer's Market Coffee

FAMILIES IN CRISIS NEED YOUR HELP

Your love will reach your neighbors who feel so alone as they continue to fight for their lives.

You'll provide frightened, cold and hungry children, mothers and seniors with:

- Shelter from the deadly cold with beds, pillows and heaters.
- Warm meals and clean water.
- Mobile medical clinics that provide health care, critically needed medical supplies and mental health support for PTSD and trauma.
- Essential supplies, like soap and toilet paper.
- Comforting quilts made by members of our caring Lutheran family.
- Love, support and most importantly hope for a brighter tomorrow.

Click on the button below and connect to the website enabling you to contribute directly and your offering will flow swiftly to where it needs to go.

Lutheran World Relief











St. Luke's Lutheran Church | 3200 Park Road | Charlotte, NC 28209 US

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