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# The Encourager



St. Luke's Lutheran Church  
"a church that encourages"

## December 2024

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

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

**Our Rule of Love**

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### CONGREGATION COUNCIL

Lisa Rhyne, President

Tom Ainsworth, Vice-President

Rebekah Woodward, secretary

Sara Mueller, Treasurer

Phil Brooks, Treasurer

Erin Pushman-Aldred, Pete Schmidt, David Sweet

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

**Click on the buttons below to view reports.**

**November Council Minutes 2024**

**Interim Pastor's Report November 2024**

## Admin Support Meeting & Recommendations November 2024

SLLC Moving Update from Ami-Lusie

Income Statement

Budget: Year to Date

Income Statement by Month

2025 Budget SLLC & Encouragement Center

Encouragement Center & Congregation

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## CONGREGATION & WORSHIP LIFE

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Watch us on YouTube

Recorded Services on YouTube

**We have been having issues with the internet, causing lagging and buffering during the Live Stream.**

**Please check the recorded service button above.**

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## **FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT**

December 1st at 10:00am  
(Sanctuary)

### **“Worries of This Life” (Weary)**

Main Text: Luke 21:25-36  
(Jeremiah 33:14-16; 1 Thessalonians 3:9-13)

#### CHILDREN'S CHURCH:

Will not be meeting this Sunday

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## **SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT**

December 8th at 10:00am  
(Sanctuary)

### **“Gathered From West and East” (Connection)**

Main Text: Baruch 5:1-9  
(Philippians 1:3-11; Luke 3:1-6)

#### CHILDREN'S CHURCH:

We are following a chronological, narrative book series called “The Story” by Max Lucado, Randy Frazee and Karen Hill.

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## **THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT**

December 15th at 10:00AM  
(Sanctuary)

### **“Surpasses All Understanding” (Amazement)**

with Installation of Council &  
Noisy Offering - YWCA's Families Together Program.

Main Text: Philippians 4:4-7  
(Zephaniah 3:14-20; Luke 3:7-18)

#### CHILDREN'S CHURCH:

We are following a chronological, narrative book series called “The Story” by Max Lucado, Randy Frazee and Karen Hill.

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## **FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT**

December 22nd at 10:00am  
(Sanctuary)

### **“Believed There Would Be” (Hope) (Magnificat)**

Main Text: Luke 1:39-45  
(Micah 5:2-5a; Hebrews 10:5-10)



CHILDREN'S CHURCH:

We are following a chronological, narrative book series called "The Story" by Max Lucado, Randy Frazee and Karen Hill.

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**CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE**

December 24th at 5:30pm  
(Sanctuary)

**"Treasured All These Words" (Make Room)**

Text: Luke 2:1-20  
(Isaiah 9:2-7; Titus 2:11-14)

CHILDREN'S CHURCH:

We are following a chronological, narrative book series called "The Story" by Max Lucado, Randy Frazee and Karen Hill.

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**FIRST SUNDAY OF CHRISTMAS**

December 29th at 10:00am  
(Sanctuary)

**"Obedient to Them" (Listening)**

**Lessons and Carols**

Text: Luke 2:41-52  
(1<sup>st</sup> Samuel 2:18-20, 26; Colossians 3:12-17)

CHILDREN'S CHURCH:

We are following a chronological, narrative book series called "The Story" by Max Lucado, Randy Frazee and Karen Hill.

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**WORSHIP NOTES ADVENT & CHRISTMAS 2024**

**"Prepare the Way"**

**Overall Theme:** Advent is much more than the preparation for Christmas. Advent is the season of preparation for Christ and the advent of the Kingdom of God come into the world once and for all. As we approach 2025 how are we called to prepare the way of the Lord in this time and in this place. This Advent and Christmas, we will be mining the scriptures of the season for keys to preparing the way of the Lord in the coming year. This, we pray, will then lead us into Epiphany and the manifestation (appearance) of Christ to lead us into



the way. Our first Sunday of Advent, we will recognize the weariness we have had on the journey. We recognize the worries of this life that can weigh us down and keep us from moving forward, not to lean into them but rather to ensure they do not get in the way. The second Sunday of Advent we will focus on the importance of connections and how we are not to be solo travelers. The way includes God's desire to gather all people on and in the way. The third Sunday of Advent we will remember to approach the way with curiosity and amazement. The way of the Lord surpasses all understanding and takes us to places we can't even imagine. The fourth Sunday of Advent will lift up the importance of hope grounded in faith. Mary believed there would be a fulfillment and it was this hope that opened her heart to God's fulfillment in Jesus. Christmas Eve will remind us of the importance of place in preparing the way of the Lord. How do we make room in all of our plans and dreams of the coming year for Christ to be in it, or is there no room in the inn. How do we treasure God's Word and make room for it in us as Mary did. The first Sunday of Christmas will remind us of the importance of obedience (intently listening). Jesus listened to the leaders of the synagogue and asked questions. Jesus was rooted in his relationship with the Father and sought his presence in the house of the Lord. We are called to prepare the way of the Lord in 2025. Then, we are called to follow it into Epiphany (appearance) of Christ to lead us on and in the way.

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## CHILDREN'S CHURCH

During service, we are going to be following a chronological, narrative book series called "The Story" by Max Lucado, Randy Frazee and Karen Hill. This book tells the story of the Old and New Testaments.

We are excited to share new songs and puppet skits, along with the stories of the Bible, that lay a foundation of the love of our Heavenly Father and the gospel message of Jesus Christ.

There is an adult novel in this series that you can read if you wish to follow along with the children as well.



# YOUTH CONVERSATIONS STARTING DECEMBER 8th

All middle-high schoolers encouraged to come to a 9:45am for Bible study with Erin Aldred-Pushman. Please be on the lookout for an upcoming email with more details.

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## 2 ADULT SUNDAY BIBLE STUDIES

The Contemporary Bible Class will be led by Phil and Diana Brooks and Tracey Perez and will cover a variety of topics that include Bible studies as well as books and topics dealing with Christian living.

What do the Medieval saint and anchorite, Julian of Norwich, and contemporary queen of rap, Nicki Minaj, have in common? Join us for the new Contemporary Bible Class starting this Sunday at 9 a.m. to find out.

Facilitated by Tracey Perez, this series will dive into Amy Laura Hall's *Laughing at the Devil: Seeing the World with Julian of Norwich* (no need to purchase or read the book). Hall (Professor of Christian Ethics at Duke Divinity School) engages in personal reflection on the writings of Julian and the similarities between her times and our own. Hall says of Julian: "She wanted people to think, see, sorrow, and laugh at the Devil with her."

This is my invitation . . . to join in this vision."  
Please join us as well!

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The Adult Bible Study, led by Joy Cooper, will be a combination of the Ladies and Men's Bible Classes. Their Bible studies will be based on the "Augsburg Adult Bible Studies" series.

Their first topic will be God, Holy Spirit. The aim of these sessions is to examine what the New Testament says about the crucial role of the Spirit in creating the church of God and in nurturing the life of discipleship. The material is by Brian Peterson, who was a member of faculty in Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary in Columbia, SC at the time of this writing.

This class will meet in Room 106 near the sanctuary from 9:00-9:45am Sundays.

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## COPELAND'S CORNER

**What then is Apollos? What is Paul? Servant through whom you came to believe, as the Lord assigned to each. I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. So neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God who give the growth.**

**(1 Corinthians 3:5-7)**



**The Purpose of the Grain is To Produce More Grain** The grains purpose is not food, that is how we have repurposed the grain. The function of a grain of wheat is to produce more wheat. The grain of wheat is not meant to stand on its own. It is designed to bear much fruit. In using this analogy, Jesus is reminding us that we also are not designed to preserve ourselves. We also are not designed to stand on our own. We also are designed to bear much fruit by growing the numbers of those identified as children of God.

**Falling into the Ground:** The culmination of the life of the grain of wheat is its death. A grain of wheat must fall into the ground and die, or it can't fulfill its purpose. Our goal of survival is contrary to this message. Simple survival keeps us from dying, but it also keeps us from our purpose. The purpose is not to die. The purpose is to increase life through and beyond death. Jesus fulfilled his purpose through death to resurrection life, and we are called to do the same.

**Losing Our Life To Keep It:** Sounds strange, doesn't it? Jesus is saying that to keep our life we need to be willing to lose it. It goes against all our natural instincts of preservation and survival. Yet, that is exactly what Jesus is calling us to do. Faith in the death and resurrection of Christ calls us also to take up our cross. Faith calls us to go against our instincts, and instead of holding on, we are called to let go. By letting go, we die to ourselves and are opened up to the infinite possibilities of life in Christ.

**Becoming More Than a Single Grain:** We also are not meant to do this by ourselves. All our plans regarding the Encouragement Center, moving the Church Footprint and the development of the Welcome Center require us to let go of St. Luke's as a single grain of wheat and let our own single plans of saving the church fall to the ground, that God can expand the reach and produce more fruit for the glory of the kingdom. We must lose our life in order to keep it for eternal life.

*Lord of life, our natural inclination is to hold onto the life we have had. You showed us that this is not the way you intend. You modeled for us the way through death to new life and you call us to follow. Now we ask that you give us the faith to follow in that path. Lead us beyond a narrow vision of survival and preservation and into our true purpose and calling. As we do, take our life and expand it to reach and grow your presence in this time and in this place. Through Jesus Christ, the pioneer and perfecter of our faith we pray. Amen!!!*

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## ADVENT & CHRISTMAS WORSHIP

As we enter a new Advent Season and prepare for the birth of Christ, not just a long time ago in a manger but in our time. We prepare for the way of the Lord to not only unfold before us, but also for Christ to lead the way. Here are some things to look forward to:

**Hanging of the Greens December 1<sup>st</sup>:** We will be decorating the house of the Lord for this season following the Worship Service on December 1<sup>st</sup>. It is a



great time to join and get the space ready for the celebration of the Birth of Christ. Make plans to stay after church and help with this important service.

**December 15<sup>th</sup> Installation of Council:** This past year we changed from a January annual meeting to a November meeting. We held that meeting in November and elected council for the coming year. We will be installing them into office on December 15<sup>th</sup>. Following the service, the council will elect their leadership and be prepared to hit the ground running in December.

**Christmas Eve Service 5:30PM:** This service will have much of the traditional elements of our Christmas Eve but also some special focus on children in sharing the story. Please make plans to join with your St. Luke's family as we receive the King born in a manger who changes our lives and the world.

**Lessons and Carols Sunday, December 29<sup>th</sup>:** The Sunday after Christmas, we will have a Lessons and Carols Service. Plans are still being made but bring the family and hear the story as we sing carols.

**January 3<sup>rd</sup> – Special Memorial Celebration for Jan McCoy:** In Columbia where Mario is from, they celebrate the anniversary of the day someone joined the church triumphant. Jan McCoy did that on January 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2024. Plans are being made for a special celebration of his life with stories and music. Watch for more information coming.

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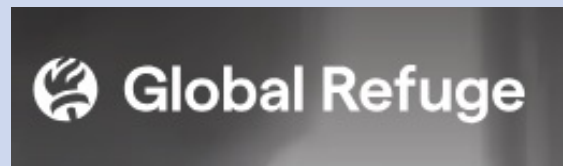
## EPIPHANY 2025

The Second Sunday of Christmas falls on January 5<sup>th</sup> this year. We normally do not get a chance to celebrate Epiphany Day (January 6<sup>th</sup>) on a Sunday, but we are going to do so this year on the 5<sup>th</sup>. Come as we hear the story of the Appearance of Christ in the world.

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## NOISY OFFERING

In November we collected for:



**This month we will be collecting for:**

**YWCA's Families Together Program**

Latasha's Story - Putting one foot in front of the other

In May 2022, Latasha, a strong mother of five, had run out of options. After her relationship with the father of her five children ended, she was in need of a path forward. She had been living in a housing program with her family, but due to the breakup, she and her children, aged 4 through 21, had to move out. With nowhere else to go, she moved her family into her mother's living room. She knew she needed to find a path forward, but didn't know where to start. After doing some research, Latasha learned about YWCA's Families Together program. Through this program, YWCA provides safe, affordable housing and intensive support services for families with minor children facing homelessness. Immediately, Latasha knew it was a fit. She had her social worker write her a referral, and soon, she and her children were approved. Finally, there was a glimmer of light on their path forward. When Latasha and her four youngest children moved into one of YWCA's Families Together townhomes, she was overcome with gratitude. "I was grateful that we didn't just have a place to stay, but we had our own kitchen. I had my own bedroom. And YWCA provided everything we needed: bedding, washcloths, towels and more," shared Latasha. Although it had been a difficult period of transition, "It felt like a step in the right direction — a stepping stone," shared Latasha. Now with a safe roof over their heads, Latasha and her family had the time and energy to set and work towards goals with the help of YWCA's Families Together staff. Latasha wanted to achieve financial stability. She needed to save money, provide support and a stable home for her children. And most importantly, she needed to secure permanent housing — a safe place for her and her young children to grow together as a family. The journey to financial stability and permanent housing is not an easy one, but with the support of the Families Together program, Latasha kept putting one foot in front of the other by budgeting, taking classes, and navigating affordable housing waitlists. While seeing the finish line was difficult at first, she gained hope and knowledge by celebrating other families in the Families Together program who had graduated into permanent housing. It opened her mind to what was possible for her and her family, even though she had a long road ahead of her to achieving her goals. After nearly 18 months of hard work and perseverance, Latasha and her children got to experience that same excitement they witnessed in their Families Together neighbors. They were approved for Section 8 housing, thanks to YWCA's partnership with Inlivan, and moved out of Families Together this past January — graduating from the program into permanent housing. "This part felt really far away when I first started the program," shared Latasha, but thanks to the one-on-one support she received in the program, "I knew it was reachable." Now, a few months later, Latasha and her children have settled into their new home. Her children were able to stay in the same school district, able to avoid the uprooting that happens when young students transfer schools. And as Latasha reflects on her journey, she's looking forward to the future, too. Today, Latasha is working towards bigger goals — like improving her financial stability and her career. She wants to eventually become a social worker or work in the human services field, and to be able to give back and support others who have walked her same path. She was even able to take classes in human services and case management while in YWCA's program. "I've come so far from my first day when I moved into YWCA. I feel like a different person!" The future is bright for Latasha and her children, and YWCA is so proud to have played a role in their story.

[Learn more about Families Together](#)



In FY 2023/2024, 80% of families successfully moved into permanent, affordable housing upon exiting our program. 80% of families maintained or increased their income while enrolled in YWCA's program.

"The YWCA has been very wonderful for me and my family. It has lifted a big weight off my shoulders and has allowed me to focus more on myself, my future and my finances."



Patricia

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## 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](mailto: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!



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## DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS





Did we miss your birthday?

Email us  
or  
call us at  
704-523-7981  
so we can update our Birthday List.

Email the office

1 Stephanie Safrin  
2 Sarah Behm  
2 Janet Eve  
3 Tony Murray  
4 Hannah Berry  
6 Brain Chundrik  
11 Marilyn Schuster  
14 Sandie Fenton  
15 Jon Hofland  
17 Rachel Phillips  
18 Halsten Heintz  
20 Yvonne Poole Ritchie  
21 Gabriel Aldred- Pushman  
21 Sylvia Johnston  
22 Beth Murray  
27 Trista Schlick  
31 Bill Robertson  
31 Ann Rowe

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### **Katharina Circle**

The Katharina Circle's upcoming events:

Dec. 3rd

Meeting at the church to cook meals for Hospitality House & set up Minis-tree.

Dec. 7th

Christmas Party- home of Kristy Elgart

Dec. 19th

Assisting with Christmas Pageant for Circle of Friends- Forest Hill Church

### **Anna Vee Circle**

The Anna Vee Circle will be meeting on  
Tuesday, Dec. 2nd at 12pm off site for their holiday meeting.

### **Lutheran Men In Mission (LMIM)**

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## ST. LUKE'S HAPPENINGS!

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### ONLINE GIVING A GREAT WAY TO GIVE!

**Easy Online Giving Form on Website:** You can now give securely online either as a one time gift or recurring gift using the form on our website. This form is very easy to use and self explanatory. Donors can give to the general fund or designate a gift for a specific purpose such as flowers or other specific mission priorities. Simply click on the link below. ***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](mailto:office@stlukeselca.org) or phone 704-523-7981.  
You can also contact Kathy West at [west@stlukeselca.org](mailto:west@stlukeselca.org).*

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### PREPARING THE WAY 2025 ALIGNING TO THE WAY OF THE LORD

As was shared in the Congregational Meeting on November 17<sup>th</sup>, God is revealing a path forward for St. Luke's.

In the meeting, you heard:

**Shared Leadership Encouragement Center and Congregation:** Instead of searching for a full-time pastor for the congregation and a full time Director to develop the Encouragement Center, it was proposed we explore a shared pastoral position with clearly defined duties and focus. The Pastor called would be charged with developing the Encouragement Center part time and part time care for the congregation in terms of worship and pastoral care. The mission would be the Encouragement Center and the shared pastor position would create a connection to the existing congregation.

**Synodical Guidance:** Danielle DeNise, who is the Director of Evangelical



Mission for the NC Synod spoke with the council in November. She is the one who proposed the Shared Leadership vision based on experience she has had in the synod and connections throughout the ELCA. Danielle was very excited about this possibility and has offered to connect us with funding resources and guidance in developing the position clearly. When asked if she thought anyone would be interested, she indicated that something like this (well defined) would be appealing to her and anyone like her who love to build community and mission as well as serve a congregation.

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## **SO WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR THE TRANSITION? MOVING FROM TRANSITION TO SEARCH IN 2025**

**February Congregational Meeting:** Work will be going on over the next couple of months with Danielle's guidance. We will be working to bring to the congregation:

- **Funding Sources for Encouragement Center:** Without this funding, the Encouragement Center will not have a runway long enough to get off the ground before the funding runs out of the congregation. These sources, especially loans, need congregational approval.
- **Clearly Defined Position Description for Shared Leadership:** Also with Danielle's guidance, we will be developing documents that clearly lay out the responsibilities of this shared position so that it is attractive but not overwhelming. This needs to be approved by the congregation before any search can take place. They also give clarity to the MSP (Ministry Site Profile) that will need to be developed. We need to be clear on what is needed and expected before the search.

**Prayerful Process to Identify Call Committee:** In January, we will send something out to the congregation requesting nominations for consideration to serve on the Call Committee. The council will meet in late January or early February in prayerful process to identify and contact those being considered. This Call Committee needs to be representative of the diverse voices of the congregation, spiritually centered and play well together. Watch for more information coming out.

**Writing Process MSP (Ministry Site Profile):** A Writing Team will be formed to take all that has been gathered in our original work and the defined description to draft the Resume of the Church. Once it is written by the team, it will be shared with the congregation and Synod for review and suggestions. The final draft will then be submitted to the council. Once approved, it is posted for search.

**Training of Call Committee:** The Synod is responsible for the training. Danielle has suggested that she might be able to have one of her Director of Evangelical Mission Colleagues to train the Call Committee to help them focus on the unique search they will be engaging.

**Search Begins:** Once the MSP is online and the Call Committee is trained, the search begins. ***This will probably be by or after Easter. This of course is when more candidates will start to become available and it is a good time***



to search (*Easter – Summer*).

**Getting the Congregation Ready:** The time between when the search begins and the issuing of a call is a time of aligning the congregation and preparing the way for the Encouragement Center.

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## WHAT ABOUT THE WELCOME CENTER PLANS?

The Welcome Center is made up of three different projects:

- The Driveway (Circular Drive and accessible entry)
- The Sanctuary (Handicap Access bathroom, JM Welcome Center, seating, etc)
- The Community Center (Room in the Inn showers and community space)

These projects will become more of a focus as the Encouragement Center takes the weight off the congregation and these other areas can be a focus for legacy and memorial giving along with fundraising and grants. The Welcome Center Fund is ready to receive any gifts toward this vision. ***You can give to a particular project or simply to the Welcome Center Fund and it will be used wherever needed as the projects move forward.***

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## OCTOBER 6th CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

Congregational Meeting Notes

Project 1 Slides

Project 2 Slides

Project 3 Slides

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## CONVERSION PEWS TO CHAIRS INVITATION TO CONVERSATION

All of the movements we are exploring, including renovations to the sanctuary entry and seating are not for our past needs or even our present. The changes being explored are in anticipation and hope of future church. We are getting it ready for the next generation of St. Luke's to live, worship and grow in faith and community. To that end, there have been two key factors that have been central to the plans being developed. **Those key factors are Accessibility and Flexibility.**

Pews have been an important part of worship for generations before. Pews, however, are bolted to the floor and are immovable fixtures. As accessibility and flexibility are key factors, a conversation has begun regarding the wisdom of converting our sanctuary from pews to chairs. Here is the rationale:

- **Pews already Removed in Front Space:** The purpose was to create flexibility. In our current setting, however, it has put distance between the people and the worship leadership. Moving the congregation closer will bring a closer sense of community that is very important in this time.
- **Pew Cushions Need Replacing:** No matter what, the pew cushions need being replaced. Before we put money into that, it is good to consider the alternatives of chairs.
- **Flooring Will Need Replacement:** The Current flooring will need to be replaced when the space is moved forward. Chairs do not need to be bolted to the new flooring, where pews would.
- **Flexibility of Space:** The area that would become the Welcome Center could be easily opened up to expand space for large events. The area can be easily expanded or tightened up with chairs rather than pews.

This is only initial conversation but the team working with the Architect would love your feedback, questions and suggestions.

Please contact the Church Office and Ami will share this with the team.

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## TIME AND TALENT REQUESTS

A church is like a commercial boat—not a commercial ship. If you are on a cruise, you are a passenger. You are free to do whatever you want with little effort. But your church—or any church—should not be a place for just passengers. A church is a boat because boats have a crew, and everyone is working.

Please fill out the time and talent sheet to tell us how you will use your talents to be part of our crew. Mail it to us, bring it by the church or email us.

Click the button below to view mailer.

[Letter & Time and Talent Form](#)

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## ROOM IN THE INN COMING DEC. 15 th

Our first RITI will be Sunday night, Dec. 15th, and we're almost ready.

Heather Micci will be the van driver to bring and return our neighbors all season. Park Road Baptist Church has loaned us their van. Julie Bartlett has agreed to be one of the Greeters this year. (We still need another one.)

The Anna Vee Circle will be the host team to provide dinner and breakfast. Fancita Lorimer will pack lunches for our guests the whole season. Paul Sullivan and Rob Llewellyn will serve as our overnights.

We're off to a great start, but we still have a few needs of food items, another Greeter, and help setting up and making beds. We will send out a Sign up Genius this week or contact Phil and Diana Brooks (704-578-2721).

Please help us continue this important ministry.

**Our dates will be Sunday night, January 19th, February 16th, and March 23rd.**

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## **ST. LUKE'S MINIS-TREE**

After Thanksgiving, the Katharina Circle will be putting up our Christmas St. Luke's Minis-tree. (Ministry).

We will have envelopes on the tree for donations to three of our ministries:

1. Room in the Inn- for supplies and laundering of sheets and towels
2. Pastor's Discretionary Fund- for money to provide needs of members or visitor's in need of emergency funds.
3. Mission Possible- prison ministry providing correspondence to inmates with words of hope and encouragement.
- 4.

Please consider taking a few of these envelopes as part of your Christmas gift giving.

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## **A NOTE OF THANKS**

For the past month, I have felt this bliss since I was ordained into the Ministry of Word and Sacrament of the ELCA, or as Pastor Keith told me "joining the club." It has been a delight so far, and I am looking forward to many more. The ordination service had all hands on deck, and I want thank those who had a role in making the day memorable. It was truly a delight, and again, everyone played a role. Thanks again for walking along with me on this journey, and I continue to pray for y'all each day.

Pastor Thomas Johnston

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## **SUBMITTED BY TOM AINSWORTH**

I can hardly believe that another year has come and gone already and it's almost Christmastime again! I was kindly reminded that Christmas was here by the Fresh Market guys who had little Christmas trees outside their store the week before Halloween! It's been an eventful Fall so far since I went through my cardiac ablation in late September which got my heart back in rhythm, but then I got stranded in the mountains in early October when hurricane Hellene came through while I attempted to recuperate from that, and then in early



November my arthritic right hip started acting up and so now I'm having to use a cane to get around with the great likelihood of another hip replacement in my near future. Geez, if it ain't one thing it's another! So now I'm getting ready for Thanksgiving, but since I have no family around here I will be by myself, but don't feel bad for me and invite me over because you can't anyway since by the time you read this Thanksgiving will be over! Gonna get some Honey Baked Ham™ turkey breast, make a green bean casserole (with Durkee's French Fried Onions™ on top) and mashed potatoes from scratch while balancing on my HurryCane™ with my bad right hip, wash it down with a nice Guinness™ and watch some Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade™ and some NFL™ football like a good American Citizen™ should by strictly abiding by the trademark legalities! It will be the same for Christmas with no family down here but I'm used to that and don't mind it at all since I have spent Christmases by myself a lot, especially when my daughter Rachel was growing up and was with her mother for Christmas every other year per our Separation Agreement. Rachel now lives over in Belgium, and my sister and her family and assorted cousins live outside of Philadelphia, and my legal practice keeps me here anyway. Besides, who wants to throw themselves into the mass chaos of an airport or highway at Christmastime? For those of us on our own during the holidays there is a lot to be said for the serenity of "aloneness" which actually happens to be a real by-God dictionary word! Now I know that Thanksgiving is typically for togetherness with FRIENDS and Christmas for togetherness with FAMILY, so being on one's own for both seems an anomaly but it's one that has its advantages. No stress of having to have dinners come out perfectly and on time, no drama over infra- or inter-family political differences, or some long-simmering unresolved family slights that have been percolating for awhile and suddenly erupt, or disappointments over not getting exactly what we wanted to get as a gift under the tree from oblivious family members. I can do just fine with my own company while watching my traditional favorite holiday movie, the 1951 version of "A Christmas Carol" with Alistair Sim as Scrooge (don't argue with me because I'm right on this that it is the best movie version of the classic). Christmas seems to come and then be gone so quickly that it really IS just another day that slides by. I know that there will be some Thanksgivings and Christmases in the future that I will be with friends and family to celebrate those holidays, but just not this year and that's OK, I'll survive just fine. But whether you're by yourself like me or having to be with family for Christmas this year, have a great holiday and try and keep the drama to a minimum if you can -- I know I will since I've given up trying to argue with myself because I'm always right.

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## ORDINATION OF THOMAS JOHNSTON

[Watch on YouTube](#)



















# FROM BEHIND THE LENS OF "MR.TERRY" CHEVILLE





















# OUTREACH OPPORTUNITIES

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## 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



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## NOURISH UP

Last month we donated 203 pounds of items to help our neighbors!

THANK YOU to David & Pat Sweet for dropping off the donations.

# OUR PRIORITY NEEDS

Please no glass containers.



**nourish up**  
Lifting our community  
through food.

*formerly Loaves & Fishes/Friendship Trays*



**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](https://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

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## 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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