

The Encourager



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

June 2021

Pondering Pastor



Tom, Suzanne Fund, and Jesus!

The pandemic has conjured a whole lot of messy stress. I heard that the collective health of the entire global population has been impacted. One person referred to their weight gain as, "My COVID 20!", as the stay-at-home orders have triggered a lot of sedentary living. Another person reflected on their heightened sense of anxiety and the weight they felt not so much on their physical body, but on their mental and emotional health. This past year has been an incredibly difficult one for everyone, some more than others, certainly.

As a community of faith St. Luke's has something important to offer to one another. For people like Tom Ainsworth, whose article is embedded in this newsletter, we offer our prayers for safe hip replacement surgery and recovery.

We offer support through the **SUZANNE FUND**. This fund was set up as a memorial fund to honor the life of Suzanne Lemons, providing financial support for psychological therapy/counseling. This fund helps offset the costs for members seeking mental health care but may be unable to afford the total cost of counseling. Ask me for more details if this is something you may find helpful to you or a loved one.

As a worshipping community, we offer that, too – worship! Over the year we have built an online, streaming platform for our weekly worship. Now that face-covering is optional for those who have been vaccinated the return to in-person worship is advancing at an increasingly steady pace, praise be to God! Of course, we will continue to live-stream worship, as well.

Let us never forget that the community that prays together, stays together. That is true of the community who serve together, too.

As the Council considers the future of our outreach ministries (Drop-In Center and Room In The Inn), one ministry birthed out of the pandemic is our sack lunch preparation for Roof Above, Inc. Each month members prepare over 200 lunches to be distributed to our homeless neighbors in this community. This opportunity to serve in this way has the potential to grow with more effort on the part of individuals and families at St. Luke's. Look for ways throughout the summer by which the Community Care Committee may help us grow this important outreach ministry.

Jesus says, "Do to others as you would have them do to you." (Luke 6:31)

So much of what it means to be a faith community needs to be centered around this Golden Rule, caring for others just as lovingly as we want others to care for us. Let us do that by supporting one another, worshipping with one another, and serving together with our brothers and sisters in

Christ at St. Luke's.
Peace, Pastor Jeffrey

St. Luke's Announcements!



Beer and Bible

Tuesday, June 1st, 7:00 pm
Brewers at 4001 Yancey

Join us for good food, good imbibes, and good Biblical/Topical conversation among good people.

Please RSVP with Pastor Jeffrey at pastoringold@stlukeselca.org

"Going to my first Beer and Bible was very rewarding. It gave me an opportunity to meet members of the St. Luke's family that I did not know personally. The fellowship was great and the conversation was quite meaningful. The beer was good too." -Joel Moser

Brewers at 4001 Yancey

Katarina Circle

The Katarina Circle is meeting June 1st at Karen Weston-Chien's house from 6:00pm-7:00pm

Connie Counts Circle

Connie Counts Circle will meet at 12:00 on June 2 in the Conference Room for a covered dish. Thanks be to God we are now able to meet again and everyone is looking forward to seeing our friends again, finally. This is as usual our luncheon for good food and fellowship. All you Connie Counts members mark your calendar and lets have a joyful time. Love all of you.

Men In Mission

Men In Mission will meet Wednesday June 9th at 1:00pm in the Conference Room.

St. Luke's Women's Fall Retreat

As we begin to emerge from our pandemic lifestyle, we look forward to getting back to some of our previous activities. It is with great joy that we announce that we will have our annual fall women's retreat the weekend of October 22-24, 2021, at Lutherock, in the N.C. mountains. Lutherock is open and receiving guests; Sue Setzer has agreed to lead us; and Chef Barbara is ready to go!

If there's anything the pandemic has taught us, it is that we need each other. We are made whole by personal interaction. There's no better place to connect with other Christian women than in this small group setting to renew us spiritually and to have just plain fun. All women of St. Luke's are welcome. Contact Diana Brooks for questions. (704-542-6825)

God's Work, Our Hands

Council has proposed a change for our community engagement project for God's Work, Our Hands this year. With a grant from Thrivent Financial, we will be assembling "Welcome Home Kits" for Roof Above. These kits include basic necessities for families entering first time housing. You will be given the opportunity to select and purchase items from a wish-list provided by Roof Above. Emails containing instructions will be sent out in the coming weeks. September 12th we will gather for worship, followed by an afternoon of food, fellowship, fun, and boxes full of hope for the future of these families.

Roof Above Lunches

Our next day for making lunches for our homeless neighbors is **Sunday, June 13th**. There have been some changes made to the Sign-Up Genius. Please click the button to access the Sign-Up. Thank you for your continued support of this important ministry!



[Sign Up Genius](#)

[Learn More About Roof Above](#)

Directory Pictures

St. Luke's staff members are currently working on putting together a new directory for members. Members will have the opportunity to schedule individual or family photo sessions. Details and schedule to come!

Altar Flowers

Altar Flower Reminder Cards will be placed in the Narthex! Please call Starclaire House of Flowers 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 Holly at the church office at 704-523-7981 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!

What's going on at St. Luke's?



Thank you

The last time my children stepped inside of St. Luke's was March 8th, 2020. By the next week, their schools were closed, gymnastics and swim were closed, and we couldn't attend our church in person. Their lives were turned upside down in a matter of days and we started the process of gently teaching them about what it means to live during a global pandemic. Thanks to St. Luke's, we didn't have to teach this alone. Jake shared beautiful messages with our children through Mr. Jake's Churchhood and through children's sermons. By March 15th, our church started sharing the love of God through Facebook Live, YouTube and Zoom. Throughout the pandemic my children received cards and materials from the church to help continue their faith formation, and they're currently receiving wonderful monthly Sunday School Kits to help continue their faith journey.

Those who don't have small children might not know all of the work that Terry, Patsy and Marilyn put into creating these kits and making them available, or even delivering them directly to our home during a gas shortage (Thank you, Marilyn!), but it is a constant reminder to me of the love of God, the support we have in our church community and the fact that Church is not about the building where we worship. It's not about whether we choose to worship in person wearing our Sunday best or by piling into bed on Sunday mornings in our pajamas. Church is about these acts of love and supporting each other to the best of our abilities. That love has been thriving at St. Luke's and we are so thankful for it.

A Little Thank You

Well, here I am about a week away (writing this on May 25th— only seven shopping months left 'til Christmas folks!) from a total hip replacement, and if this gets into the

newsletter I'm thinking that the operation will have already happened. Hmmmm, I hope it went well. I'm tired of being on crutches for over a year, feeling bone on bone, and having had to wait for the pandemic to subside and being able to receive my second Covid vaccine shot before it could be scheduled. My daughter Rachel, who lives in England and flies all over Europe, is afraid of flying. She insisted that I have folks pray for a successful outcome to my surgery because she has folks pray for her all the time before each flight she takes. I hope that her insistence on that score worked for me too. She also told me to ask people to bring me casseroles for afterwards only because she thinks I can't cook, but that is not necessary because I can, and I also need to be up and walking around post-surgery as much as possible per the doctor's instructions. But the asking for prayers part was hard for me to accept because I am not used to doing that. I was brought up to be self-reliant and do for myself, and we Presbyterians (as I was growing up) were Highland Scottish tough according to my Grandma McCracken. Asking for help, especially prayer-wise, was not comfortable for me. But now the older I get, I guess I don't mind it as much. I figure it's like what Groucho Marx used to say when he was challenged on his instructions to give chicken soup to a dying man- "It couldn't hurt!" We all need as much help as we can get these days, God knows, and getting prayers for surgery seems not such a bad idea right now. So thanks to all those who did offer their prayers for my surgery, and recovery outcome, because they are most welcome. I hope I can continue to accept that kind of help more often in my life, and get over the reluctance to ask for it.

-Tom Ainsworth

"Copernicus and Luther " by Thomas Johnston

Thomas Johnston is a seminarian entering his Middler Year at Trinity Lutheran Seminary at Capital University. Thomas is fascinated by the relationship between science and faith and is also interested in looking at this relationship through the lens of Lutheran Theology. He enjoys reading books and articles on cosmology and considers himself an amateur astronomer. View his recent publication, "Copernicus and Luther" [here!](#)

F&S Collective

Green Team Update

YOU MISSED AN EXCITING AND REWARDING GREEN TEAM WORK DAY ON SATURDAY, MAY 22! Green Team members **Al Dowsom, Mark & Sandie Fenton, John & Sam Hofland, Fancita Lorimer, Marilyn Schuster and David Sweet** were joined by **six young scouts and two parents from Boy Scout Troop 55 plus their Scout Master, Gary Swanson**. These focused and dedicated young men got right to work on their first BIG assignment and even brought their own wheel barrels, rakes and shovels. They eliminated a big eyesore by the first light pole along the driveway off of Park Road. The nandinas were dug up and the rotting landscape timbers were removed. Then they smoothed off the ground and covered it with mulch. Tremendous improvement!!! Next they helped the Green Team members spread 13 cubic feet of mulch. That's right, 13 cubic feet. That's a lot of mulch. But, **WOWSIE**, what a difference it made around the entrance to the chapel and on both sides of the entry into the Ministry Center as well as around the doors leading out of the narthex facing Park Road and around the church sign at the corner of Marsh & Park Road. In addition, Al and David

spread 10 bags of mulch in the Prayer Garden/Columbarium. All told it amounted to 50 plus hours of free labor by scouts/men/women to beautify your church grounds. One of the perks for the scouts to keep working was the bag of homemade oatmeal chocolate chip cookies that was a treat from **Pat Sweet**. Please take the time to say thank you to all involved.

