

The Encourager



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

December 2022

(Deadline for January's Newsletter submissions is on December 23rd)

Members of St. Luke's Lutheran Church

Dear Family of God at St. Luke's,

I pray you had a blessed Thanksgiving celebration with family and friends. As we move into the Advent Season, let us reflect on the promise of the coming of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

I want to take this opportunity to share thoughts and address the next steps that we will take as Pastor Ingold accepts the call from the Lutheran Church of Reconciliation in Wilmington, NC.

First, we want to thank Pastor Jeffrey for his service to this congregation. We wish only the best and most positive experience for both Pastor and Sarah as they begin a new chapter in Wilmington.

Next, as a community of faith, St. Luke's has two key initiatives before us:

- Calling a pastor to St. Luke's who will walk with us into the future.
- Moving forward with the Sustainability Study to determine the future of our ministry and how we want to carry on God's work in our community and beyond.

In the coming weeks, the Congregational Council will meet with a potential interim pastor, and will keep you informed as our next steps become clear. Please pray for the Council to hear the guidance of the Holy Spirit. God has his perfect plan for our church, and I know this congregation will be faithful and strong as we work through these transitions.

As shared in October, the Council and assigned committees continue to work on the final details associated with redeveloping the church property. Our goal is to complete the design details, cost estimates and options available to the congregation in December. We anticipate a congregational vote about St. Luke's future during the first quarter 2023.

Let us all enjoy the beauty of the Advent Season as Pastor Jeffrey leads us through the month of December and our Christmas services.

Please feel free to contact me or any Council member with your questions and comments. We welcome your input as we move forward.

Blessings,

Terri Wells
Council President
803-370-2796

PONDERING PASTOR

Seminarian Sylvia Johnston recently preached at St. Luke's, Charlotte, right here at her home congregation. In her sermon she said Jesus disrupted the world. That can sound harsh, perhaps even negative, but with ears of faith we know Jesus' disruption to be lifesaving, life-giving, and life-affirming.

Disruptions happen all the time and while we often experience them as something undesirable, an interference (our baby crying in the middle of the night; the dog whimpering to go for a walk in the middle of your professional meeting on ZOOM; a diagnosis challenging your health when you least expect it; etc.) the sort of disruption Jesus introduced is holy. It is, again, in the way Jesus introduced it and experience that can be lifesaving, life-giving, and life-affirming.

Yeast disrupts dough in the baking process so that bread will rise and become more flavorful. A teacher disrupts her student when walking through the classroom to see how her students are doing working the math problem she just assigned when she notices where one student has made a mistake. She stops by his desk to quietly call attention to the mistake, redirecting that student towards correct method and success. Adding a spoonful of sugar to a bitter medicine can help disrupt the bitterness and make it easier for it to go down, so the song from The Sound of Music muses.

Pastoral transitions can often feel disruptive. They are disruptive. Whether a pastor is coming or going there is natural disruption afoot. What Sylvia was masterfully attempting to drive home in her sermon is that by the disruption Jesus is, your faith that God is at work through Jesus, makes all the difference in the way what is disrupted reacts, responds, and either flourishes or withers from the experience.

The most consequential disruption for people of faith is the knowledge that Jesus acquiesced to being crucified. He could have rejected it. He could have refused to follow through with it. He could have submitted to another less-than-divine will, but he did not. Jesus was willing to be sacrificed for us. Born out of his willingness to die for us, then, this faith tradition we belong to has been enacting lifesaving, life-giving, and life-affirming disruption through the life of being Church that ripples through each of us even now.

2023 holds countless disruptions. That is true for you as an individual. It is true for the congregation, especially as you get to know a new Interim Pastor. My prayer for you is that you experience this disruption as something holy, so much so, that you engage in it. Indeed, consider yourself the yeast in the bread, the teacher keenly

nurturing her students toward success one math problem at a time, and be the spoonful of sugar that helps make the transition that is soon upon you something that is much easier to go down simply from your willingness to be faithful to your calling to be Church.

May God be with you as I know God is, and May God Bless you, as I know God Does!

Peace, Pastor Jeffrey Ingold

ST. LUKE'S HAPPENINGS!

POINSETTIA ORDER EMAIL

Look out for our email about the beautiful poinsettias will adorn our chancel for the season, reflecting the beauty, eternal life and presence of our Lord. Paper order forms will be in the Sanctuary on Sundays.

Orders are due no later than
December 20th.



HANGING OF THE GREENS



On **December 4th** we will be having Friendship Room in the Sanctuary as we decorate the church.

Come and spread some Holiday cheer as we hang the greens and dress the trees.

In the Bleak Mid-winter....

Hanging evergreens in the Church is to me, one of the most beautiful of ancient Pagan customs we as Christians happily appropriated! To the people in northern climates, decorating their sacred space with branches whose colors did not die at with the first cold breath of winter

symbolized their prayers for health, life and the coming of warmth and light to their fragile world.

Christ is our promise of warmth and life in our still fragile world and our coming season of Advent is where we as Christians wait, watch and pray for the coming of light.

Dreema Clarke Brunnemer

CHOIR CHRISTMAS CONCERT

On **December 11th** during service the Choir will be singing songs of the holiday season.



CHRISTMAS EVE FAMILY SERVICE



Please join us for carols, candle lighting and the Nativity. This is our Family focused service.

On **December 24th at 5:00pm** where our Children and Youth will be performing the Nativity Scene.

CHRISTMAS EVE CANDLELIGHT SERVICE

Please join us for the traditional
candlelight Christmas Eve Service
December 24th at 10:30pm

We will be celebrating with reading scriptures, singing carols, candle lighting and communion.



STEWARDSHIP

Your Offering Lifecycle

[Stewardship Document](#)

STAFF GIFT

Greetings St. Luke's Family,

We would like to show our appreciation to our St. Luke's Staff for their hard work and dedication to our church community. I ask that you prayerfully consider sending a love gift to them this Christmas season. You can place your gifts in the offering drop box in the Narthex or mail them to the church office:

St. Luke's Lutheran Church
P.O. Box 11063
Charlotte, NC 28220-1063

Attention: Tom Applegate.

Please write "Staff Gift" in the memo line of your check or indicate clearly on the envelope should you be giving cash. I want to personally thank all of our staff for their love and support of St. Luke's this past year and pray they know how much we love them all.

Blessings,

Terri Wells
Council President

BOY SCOUT TROOP 355



Boy Scout Troop 355 sponsored by

Men in Mission
at St. Luke's have been very busy this year. .

We currently have 4 Eagle Scout candidates waiting on their eagle board of reviews. 2 projects were at "MyFarm Camps" off Downs road, they provide a camp for children homes around the area. The other 2 projects were at The Red Fez Shriners club. One project was to build another handicapped camp site and trail. The other was to clean up a beach area, cut down 7 trees, clean up the wood and stack it. Also built a swing to watch the sun sets. With the 4 scouts going for their Eagle, we needed to recruit heavy this year. We were down to 6 scouts and we had a great recruiting class. We have 6 new boys joining us with a possibility of one more We are at 12 scouts again and look forward to pushing them all to their Eagle badge. .

Now we are getting ready for our annual BBQ, our only fund raiser, It is a week long process and we are going to cook 6,000 pounds again this year. It starts on Martin Luther King Holiday and goes into the following weekend. More details will be coming soon.

The super trip this year was a trip to the Florida Keys to go sailing and scuba diving. This is a trip for the older scouts. We had 10 scouts participate. In 2023, the super trip is the Boy Scout National Jamboree up at the Summit in West Virginia!

We go camping once a month. We have gone skiing, backpacking, biking down the Virginia Creeper trail, fishing down at Myrtle Beach, rock climbing and zip lining at the gorge.

DOLLSPEL

From cover to cover, DOLLSPEL contains inspirational and encouraging insights on eight familiar topics for any-aged adult, young or older, on your gift list.

It is available from any online bookseller, especially Amazon, who now has it discounted at 50% off retail (in large part because my last name is not Lucado, Grisham, Roberts, etc.!)

Wishing you a blessed Christmas season...

Cozette Nowak



SUMMITED BY TOM AINSWORTH

OK, here we are again. Another Christmas Season, which according to Wikipedia (and Target's marketing department) starts right after Labor Day. No sooner have the kids returned to school from Summer vacation do the Christmas decorations show up in pretty much any major retail chain, even before Halloween and, God forbid, never as late as Thanksgiving! Hard to believe that another year has gone by so quickly, more quickly as we grow older, at least for us Boomers -- not so much for grade school kids who think that time just crawls along like a snail. Seems like only yesterday it was August. Oh well, time stretches out to infinite slowness just for kids I think and not for adults. To me it seems that no sooner have Thanksgiving and, a few weeks later, Christmas come then they're gone in an instant. Tempus fugit, no time for Christmas to linger on past the 25th of December itself since another retail holiday's paraphernalia have to be put out and on the shelves. Yup, no sooner have Christmas and New Year's come and gone, then the Valentine's Day displays, the next big celebration in commercial promotions, hit the stores. Yeah, I know, the railings against the commercialization of Christmas have been around since even before the release of "Miracle on 34th Street" (which incidentally was released not at Christmastime but in the Summer of 1947, and titled "The Big Heart" in the U.K.), and have continued through Linus's 1965 soliloquy in "A Charlie Brown Christmas" up to the most recent "Grinch" offering. Unfortunately, Christmas commercialization is here to stay, so to get any real meaning out of this holiday you need to sidestep Santa, his reindeer, Mrs. Claus, the North Pole workshop, elves, Frosty the Snowman, any Ronco product or Flex-Seal promotion and, God help us all, the Star Wars Christmas Special or William Shatner's Christmas Album (what the hell were they thinkin'?). Don't get me wrong, the whole secular versus sacred dichotomy of Christmas is just fine with me. I would never deprive any child of the wonderful adventures of writing to Santa, telling him their hope for some special present while on his lap at the mall (if that's still done in this post-Covid world), putting out cookies and milk for Santa's visit (carrots for the reindeer), hanging stockings on Christmas Eve and waiting for presents to miraculously appear under the tree. Those are memories that make childhood special, and were certainly memories that made my childhood special. Let the kids have their full Santa Christmas experience while they can, while we adults get to focus on the true religious significance of the event. The "Reason for the Season" movement certainly has its place but let kids be kids first; there's always time for them to outgrow the magic of childhood and, perhaps sadly, move into the maturity of the adult world. No misunderstanding though-- at the same time, it's important that children know exactly what we're celebrating, why their elementary school puts on the Birth Story Christmas production, and what Nativity Scenes in front of churches at this time of year signify. But focusing on the birth of Christ, and its significance, is primarily grown-up business. Contemplating how Christ came into the World through a spiritual miracle is the stuff of adulthood. The implication of God's gift to us in the corporeal form of his only begotten Son just to be sacrificed for our sins is not for the faint of heart, or for the immature mind. The New Covenant between God and man through Christ's birth, life and death is a profound idea on which whole civilizations have been built. But that's for personal reflection and major theological discourse. While we can, let's just be a little selfish and enjoy the all too fleeting moment of Christmas with each other, our families and our friends before it's gone again too quickly, and the next big holiday display takes over. But if you can, please try to see the 1951 film version of "A Christmas Carol" with Alastair Sim as Scrooge -- best Scrooge ever (sorry Patrick Stewart or George C. Scott fans)! It's redemption message, at least to me, embodies basically

the way we all should act and feel at Christmastime. Now THAT'S the face of a terrified Victorian, Christmas-hating miser, and that's why it's been MY adult religious tradition on Christmas Eve for over fifty years!

THE BAPTISM OF SOPHIE ROBERTS

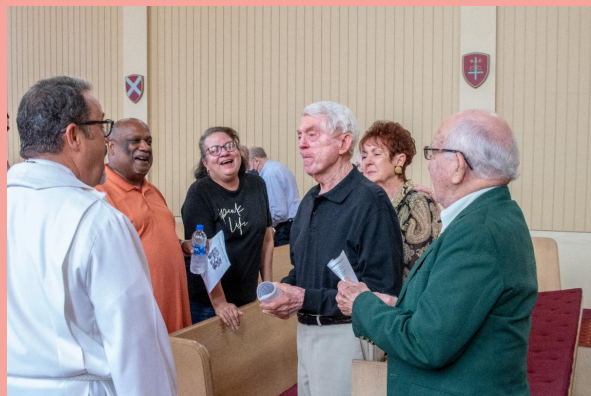








**FROM BEHIND THE LENS
OF "MR.TERRY" CHEVILLE**







CONTEMPORARY BIBLE CLASS



Sundays at 9
in the Conference Room at 9:00 am.

All adults are welcome to join us.

Our first series will be a study and discussion of the popular book
When Bad Things Happen To Good People

by Harold Kushner.

Please plan to attend.

Contact Phil and Diana Brooks
with questions.

Katarina Circle

The Katarina Circle will be having their Christmas party
Saturday, December 3rd at Mary Lachacz house.

McCauley Diehl Circle

The McCauley Diehl Circle will be meeting Tuesday, December 6th
at 12pm in the Conference Room

Lutheran Men In Mission (LMIM)

The Lutheran Men in Mission will meet in the Conference Room on
Wednesday, December 14th at 6:00 pm.

The LMIM gents want you to know they are available for odd jobs with their
"Congregation/Community Help Program". If you need minor repairs,
changing out smoke detectors, batteries, and transportation needs, please
contact the church office and we will get you in touch with Tom Frick.

OUTREACH OPPORTUNITIES

ROOM IN THE INN

We are pleased to announce that St. Luke's will once again be
participating in RITI this year.

We have been part of this vital program for the homeless since it began in 1987,
and it is at the very heart of St. Luke's outreach ministry. We've had a few
obstacles to overcome since we were unable to partner with another church this
year, but we're now ready to proceed. Phil and Diana Brooks will coordinate the
program, but all of St. Luke's members are encouraged to get involved.

St. Luke's will host 8 neighbors once a month from Dec.-March.

Our dates are: Dec.18th, Jan. 22nd, Feb 19th, and March 19th.

Park Road Baptist Church has graciously loaned us their van to use on those
dates, and Heather Micci will transport our guests to and from our church and
Alyene Keen will continue as our faithful greeter. Men in Mission has agreed to set

up the beds and tables after church, and we would love to have volunteers (including children) to come down to make the beds on those 4 Sundays.

On December 18th, the McCauley Diehl Circle has agreed to host and provide dinner and breakfast. Other groups will be asked to host the other dates.

How can you help?

We have immediate needs for towels and wash clothes (used, but good condition), travel/hotel size shampoo and bars of soap, and monetary contributions to replenish our supplies (make checks payable to St. Luke's with RITI on the memo line). We will need volunteers to provide lunches to go. And most of all, we will need 2 volunteers each evening to stay overnight. This is always our greatest need. Please prayerfully consider giving of your time for this vital role. There's plenty more opportunities that will be shared on a Sign Up Genius next week.

Be a part of this wonderful way to live and share God's love!



CHRISTAMS PARTY FOR EASTER SEAL'S GROUP HOME UPDATE



The response to our Christmas party at the Easter Seals Group Home has been wonderful! Thank you to everyone! The party is December 17 from about 3-5. We will have the party first and then eat.

As I noted before, our own Ben McCall is a resident there and Vanessa, his mom, wants to do something special periodically, so I hope we can continue throughout the year.

Dinner:

Fettuccini Alfredo - Diana Brooks

Pasta and sauce (no dairy) - Vanessa Infanzon

Drinks - Vanessa Infanzon

Salad - Pam Moser

Bread - Marilyn Schuster

Grapes for dessert - Marilyn Schuster - several of the residents are diabetic

Those who will be there to serve:

Patsy Schober

Vanessa Infanzon

Pam Moser

Marilyn Schuster

Terry Cheville

Think we are okay for numbers to serve. Vanessa thought 3 would be enough and as noted she will be there and maybe Ryan. If anyone else wants to help, let me know.

Gifts:

Pajamas - Patsy Schober and the Murray family

T-shirts - Marilyn Schuster

I know folks have gotten some of the other items on the list and that is great. Just let us know so we can be sure to get the items. And I am sure items on that list are needed year round.

Vanessa has enough money for gift cards for the 17 staff. She and her family have contributed the majority of it and any additional money will go to gift cards for the group home - for takeout for the residents occasionally and for the continuously needed items that the group home needs.

If you have questions, let me know.

Marilyn

LOAVES AND FISHES

With the holidays approaching we know that some of our Neighbors will be in need.
We will have a donation box in the Sanctuary on Sundays
or come by the office during the week.

Priority Needs

- ☐ **Canned Meat: Tuna, Chicken, etc...**
- ☐ **Canned Fruit: low sugar or in juice**
- ☐ **Pastas - Canned or Dry Boxed**
- ☐ **Diapers - especially larger sizes**
- ☐ **Low Sodium Canned Vegetables**
- ☐ **Peanut Butter**

No Glass Please

WE NEED YOUR HELP TO KEEP THE *LIVE STREAM* GOING

We are asking for your help in order to keep the *Live Stream* going for Sunday's services.

We are looking for anyone who would like to learn something new and give back to the church.

Would also be a great opportunity for high school student to get involved and earn volunteer hours.

Any questions or to sign up please reach out to the church office and ask for Ami-Luise.

Church Office Email



LUTHERAN WORLD RELIEF COFFEE

Many of you enjoyed the Lutheran World Relief Farmer's Market Coffee at our Rally Day Brunch on Sunday and

were asking how to purchase it.
The coffee comes in medium and dark
roast (Sunday's coffee was dark roast).

In addition to coffee, LWR Farmer's
Market also offers chocolate bars. Click
on the button to go to their website
where you may purchase the coffee and
chocolate and learn about the farmers
who grow it.



[LWR Website](#)

Lutheran World Relief (LWR) Farmers Market Coffee is sourced directly from coffee farmers participating in LWR projects. Every delicious cup helps transform poor communities that depend on their coffee crop to feed their families.

Farmers get a strong up-front price for their coffee beans and a portion of the profit. LWR Farmers Market Coffee brings you closer to the people you help through your support of LWR.

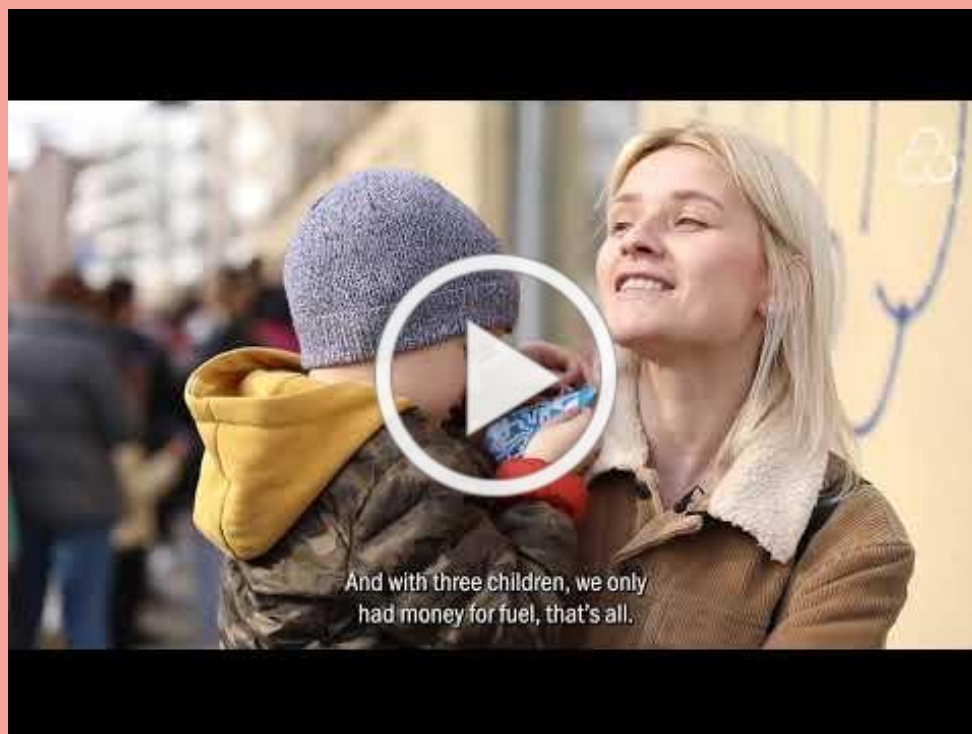
Because this coffee is sourced directly from LWR project participants, you will see the faces and learn the stories of the actual farmers who grow your coffee.



Assist M.E. is a non-profit [501c(3)] organization in the Charlotte, North Carolina area. We take in gently used medical equipment and gift it to low-income, uninsured patients in our community. Assist M.E. gets wheelchairs, bedside commodes, walkers, shower chairs, and other medical equipment from individual donors and organizations.

If you have any unused, or gently used medical equipment to donate, simply call our church office 9-12:30pm M-F to make arrangements to drop your equipment off so that it may be reused by someone in need.

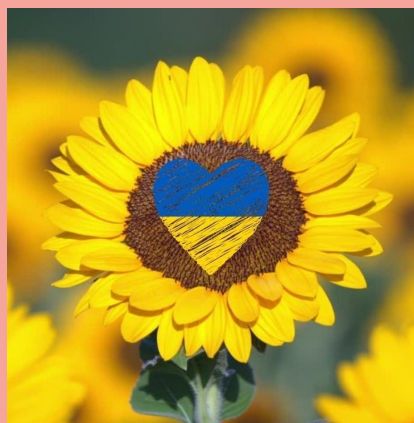
[Visit Assist M.E.
website](#)



See how our love and contributions provides hope for families fleeing the war in Ukraine.

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.

[ELCA Eastern Europe Crisis Response](#)



CONGREGATION & WORSHIP LIFE

LAST MONTH IN A GLANCE

In order to be more transparent, the Financial Team has decided to separate this information into its own email. This gives us the ability to close out the month and give a more accurate and up to date financial report.

Please be on the lookout for this new email that we will send out on the 2nd week of the month.

REALM ACCESS



It is our software platform that helps us manage the operations of the church and is an easy way to stay connected to the church and other members.

Giving options and Online Member Directory also available through Realm.

Try the QR code above for easy access.

GIVING THROUGH REALM

Click on the button below to donate.

[Make a Donation](#)

“I learned to GIVE not because I have much but because I know

NOISY OFFERING

In November we collected for:

Mission Possible Words of Hope Ministries

Thanks to your Noisy Offering we raised
\$ 158.00

This month we will be collecting for:



The YWCA operates the Women In Transition (WIT) program, which is now recognized as a YWCA hallmark program by the southeastern region of YWCAs.

With safe, affordable housing and comprehensive support services, single women have the opportunity to move their lives to firmer foundations. From computer training to budgeting skills to preparing for job interviews and health and fitness, the YWCA offers participants a variety of opportunities to grow and set goals for the future. Program participants may remain in the program for up to 18 months.

Meet Keziah Singleton who completed the program and now lives in her own apartment and is working on a certificate program in health services. Women in Transition (ywcacentralcarolinas.org)



Women In
Transition



SECOND SUNDAY IN ADVENT - December 4 at 10:00 am

THIRD SUNDAY IN ADVENT - December 11 at 10:00 am

FOURTH SUNDAY IN ADVENT - December 18 at 10:00 am

FAMILY SERVICE CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE - December 24 at 5:00 pm

CANDLELIGHT CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE - December 24 at 10:30 pm

CHRISTMAS DAY - December 25 at 10:00 am

Live streaming worship is available on our YouTube Channel.
Click on the button for the link.

YouTube Channel

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!



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 Safrit
2 Sarah Behm
2 Janet Eve
3 Kyle Flack
4 Hannah Berry
6 Brain Chundrlik
9 Anna Vee Rice
14 Sandie Fenton
15 Jon Hofland
17 Rachel Phillips
18 Halsten Heintz
20 Yvonne Poole Ritchie
21 Sylvia Johnston
27 Trista Schlick
28 Laura Wales
31 Bill Robertson
31 Ann Rowe
31 Tim Wales

CONGREGATION COUNCIL

Terri Wells, president

TBD, vice-president

Rebekah Woodward, secretary

Kristen Conner / Pete Schmidt, co-treasurer

Julie Fosbinder, Alex Jenkins, Emily Phillips, Lisa Rhyne,
David Sweet, Jon Wolff, Jeff Seavy

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

Please contact Terri Wells, Council President (tkwells@comporium.net),
or the church office if you have anything you wish to bring to Council.

November Council
Minutes

