

# St. Luke's

St. Luke's Episcopal Church ~ East Greenwich, Rhode Island



MONTHLY

## From Father Tim

When I was in college, I took a course entitled, “The Theological Implications of the Holocaust.” In some ways, the mere fact that Jews were still open to thinking theologically rather than giving up on theology all together seemed like a miracle to me.

We read a variety of Jewish authors, but the one I remember best was Eli Wiesel. Perhaps you too have heard of him—he was the author of numerous books, *Night* being the one most widely read. Wiesel once wrote, “*In any society, fanatics who hate don't only hate me—they hate you too. They hate everybody.*”

Recently, in our society, hate for just about everybody has been running rampant.

In October alone, the examples of hate were numerous and breath-taking. Once again, hate visited the Jewish community, this time in the form of a gunman who killed worshippers at a synagogue in Pittsburgh. Almost overshadowed by the enormity of this act, a gunman in Louisville, KY, after being prevented from entering a black church in that town, walked into a local supermarket and killed two black shoppers.

These two stories capture hate in its most immediate and visible form. But sadly they do not represent the only hate active in this country. Let us make no mistake, words, too, can be hate-filled and violent, and we have heard plenty hate-filled words in recent times.

I dare say, the possibility of new legislation defining gender by the singular element of one's genitalia at birth, feels both hateful and violent to transgender individuals and all who might care for them. Likewise, the characterization of a series of trucks moving through Central America and heading towards the United States' border as an “invasion” foments fear and loathing as well.

And then, there is the abundance of political rhetoric coming from candidates and elected officials on both “sides of the aisle”, and our President, too,<sup>1</sup> which is laced with condemnation, demonization, and hate. While I cannot say that

this kind of speech caused the recent series of pipe bombs sent to numerous public figures, is there any denying that this rancorous tenor is part of our current malignant landscape?

*“In any society, fanatics who hate don’t only hate me—they hate you too. They hate everybody.”* When, where, how will this hate end?

While there are numerous ways to answer this question, I think one answer begins with taking seriously the banners hanging in our church. “Many Hungers,” “Many Voices,” “Many Blessings,” “Many Venues,” “Many Journeys,” “Many Tables,” “Many Faces,” they read, and then each of them concludes with the same reminder, “Same Jesus.”

Do we believe these banners to speak our truth?

Do we believe that the Jews shot and killed in Pittsburgh, praying blessings different than we might pray, are beloved by the same Jesus? Do we believe that the two African Americans shot and killed in Louisville, faces perhaps a different color from yours or mine, are beloved by the same Jesus? Do we believe that transgender individuals, hungering for the recognition, respect, and safety, that so many of us take for granted, are beloved by the same Jesus? Do we believe that the Hispanic men, women, and children, crammed onto trucks, journeying from afar in search of shelter and peace and opportunity, are beloved by the same Jesus? Do we believe that Democrats, Republicans, Independents, “conservatives,” and “progressives,” many of whom are thoughtfully trying to give voice to their various concerns and values, are beloved by the same Jesus?

If our answer to these questions is, “Yes,” and we want to stand with this Jesus, then we also have to be willing to stand with Jews, and people of color, and transgender persons, and asylum seekers, and Republicans, Democrats, and Independents, no matter how much they might differ from us, and offer them the love of Christ.

Likewise, if our answer to these questions is, “Yes,” then whenever and wherever we hear or see hate stirring, we must combat it. We must combat hate with courage, with kindness, with compassion, with respect. We must combat hate with words and actions. We must combat hate with the love of Christ.

Will that eliminate all hate? Certainly not; there’s more work to be done. But as Christians, I do believe each of us is called to this work. As Christians, I believe that’s where our efforts must begin and end.

Wiesel also wrote, *“Our obligation is to give meaning to life, and in doing so to overcome the passive indifferent life. The opposite of love is not hate; it’s indifference.”* Now, perhaps more than ever in our lifetimes, we need to honor this obligation.

With Christ’s love, 2

*Jim*

## Anecdotes From The Assistant: A Word From Father Dante

It has been a difficult few weeks. It seems that every time my phone buzzes or I turn on the news I am being made aware of acts of hate occurring in our nation. On Wednesday October 24, Gregory Bush shot and killed two African-Americans in a grocery store in Jeffersontown, Kentucky after he tried and failed to enter First Baptist Church, a predominantly black church. On Saturday October 27, Robert Bowers entered the Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania where he shot and killed 11 people and wounded many others. But before these two things happened, and I am sure there are other events that I am unaware of, something happened on Sunday October 21 that placed a weight and anxiety and fear upon my shoulders.

On Sunday October 21, the New York Times broke a story about the Trump Administration's intention of redefining sex (and thus sex discrimination) under Title IX. This proposal limits the definition to "a person's status as male or female based on immutable biological traits identifiable by or before birth." The consequences of this change in definition will roll back protections established by previous presidential administrations and will ultimately remove protections, safety, and civil rights from the Transgender and Gender Non-Conforming community. Since this story broke I have been experiencing a myriad of emotions that are hard for me to describe: anger, anxiety, worry, and fear chief amongst them. I have wondered what it will mean for the students I work with at RIC. I have wondered what this will mean for my friends. I have wondered what this will mean for my family. I have wondered what this will mean for me, and my own personal safety. As many of you know, I am transgender (for me that means I was born biologically female, and I live and identify as male) and since October 21 I have been living with the weight that it seems some in our country would like to erase my existence.

To be honest with you I have been struggling and wrestling with what this all means. Over the last two weeks I have had to muster all the energy and strength I have to not give into this fear. The thing that has been most helpful in all of this has been my faith. As Christians we are people of hope not of fear. Through the work of God, in the person of Jesus, we know that fear, hatred, and even death are not the final answer. We can trust, even in the moments it is hardest to believe, that for us fear is overcome by hope, hatred is overcome by love, and death is overcome by life. That is the grace and gift of the resurrection. That truth is what has strengthened me to keep going in these last weeks.

I do not know what will happen with this proposal, with the three court cases regarding transgender bias that are making their way to the Supreme Court, or with Question 3 in our neighboring state of Massachusetts. But what I do know is this: all people are created in the image of God, all people contain within the deepest core of their being the spark of the Divine, and all people no matter what identity they claim have and are entitled to sacred worth, dignity, love, and respect. I think it is from this place that we as a church, that we as followers of Jesus, can be an example to the world around us.

While this at times might cause disagreement or discomfort, we at St. Luke's Church are a diverse and mixed community. We are made up of people from every line and barrier that society uses to define and separate us. With all of our differences we come together to worship the same Jesus. We come from our diversity of identities to kneel beside one another and share in the Eucharist, that most sacred meal of Christ's Body and Blood. We as follows of Jesus can hold together what at times feels like, at least for me, the tension of our national political world and the Kingdom of God. We can model that while we might disagree politically we can treat one another with respect, dignity, and love. While as a community we might occupy every place on that wide political spectrum of opinion on the administration's proposal to narrowly define sex, it is my hope and prayer that we are of a singular mind when it comes to our call to love one another. That each and everyone of us believe our state place of interaction and engagement with one another is the love that God bestows upon us all.

As we journey through these days ahead, as we continue to walk as a nation through what might be described as uncertain political times, I hope you will join me in committing to first and foremost be followers of Jesus. To commit, and recommit, to loving all people not just the ones we find easy to love. To commit, and recommit, to seeking the Divine spark – the image of God – in all the different faces we encounter. To commit, and recommit, to being witnesses to the possibility that we can still be in relationship with one another amidst our differences.

I am sure that I am not the only one carrying that heavy weight of sadness, fear, and anxiety as we witness the events of recent weeks in our nation and in our world. It seems to me that the only way I, and we, are going to be able to shoulder this weight is if we share it with one another; if we are willing to be honest and vulnerable with each other. In this we can model one of the primary characteristics of the Church at its best. We can be that place where burdens are brought and we carry them together. Where we walk alongside one another in faith, hope, and love trusting that God will be with us, holding us in those almighty arms of love, until that day when we know fear no more. Beloved of God let us walk together, that we might bear witness to God's broad and inclusive love to the world.

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With my gratitude,  
Dante

# The Choirs Of St. Luke's

## St. Cecilia Choir Members Achieve Gold and Bronze Awards

Congratulations to St. Cecilia Choir members **Palmer Berry**, **Caitlyn Holmstedt**, and **Laurel Ann Pilkington** who recently received awards from the Royal School of Church Music (RSCM). The Gold Medal was presented during church to Palmer on October 7, and the Bronze Award was presented during church to Caitlyn and Laurel Ann on October 21. We are so proud of the work these choristers have done and are happy to share some details of that process.



These awards are the result of several months of work on the part of the choristers and Minister of Music Rodney Ayers. For the Gold award, Palmer prepared a major solo piece, and two choral anthems for performance, including thorough program notes on the anthems. Additionally, she prepared five more anthems, learning all the choral parts. For these anthems, she had to answer questions about the anthems musically, textually, and liturgically, including historical information about the composer. A hymn and prepared Anglican chant completed the extensive requirements for this award. One final component was to design an evening service, choosing bible readings and writing prayers. Palmer chose the season of Advent for this service, and had to be prepared to discuss all aspects with the RSCM examiner.

For the Bronze award, Caitlyn and Laurel Ann prepared a hymn, Anglican chant, and an anthem for performance. Extensive sight-reading and aural testing (intervals and rhythms) were major components of the exam. Additionally, they had to be ready to discuss their prepared anthem, both textually and musically. Each chose a liturgical day (Caitlyn chose Christmas; Laurel Ann Good Friday) for which they must discuss the meaning of the day, the Gospel passage of the day, and suggest appropriate hymns and anthems for that day. Finally, the choristers brought in a Sunday bulletin from St. Luke's and discussed the service with the RSCM examiner, including the role music plays in the service.



At its founding in 1927, RSCM was an organization based in Great Britain that consisted of a training college for church musicians (called the College of St. Nicolas) and an association of affiliated churches committed to attaining high standards of musical performance. The RSCM has grown to become an international and ecumenical organization, with more than 11,000 affiliates in the United Kingdom, United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, Nigeria and throughout Europe. RSCM offers numerous summer courses, and many St. Cecilia choir members participate, particularly the Newport course.

The St. Cecilia Choir of St. Luke's is an affiliate of the Royal School of Church Music, and the choristers all participate in RSCM classes as part of their Friday rehearsal process. We are grateful to Canterbury Choir members Deborah Collins, Sally House, and Ben Lovejoy for mentoring our choristers through these classes.

*Bless, O Lord, us Thy servants who minister in Thy temple.  
Grant that what we sing with our lips we may believe in our hearts,  
and what we believe in our hearts we may show forth in our lives.  
Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*  
— RSCM Choristers' Prayer

# Many Differences, Same Jesus

*This article is the first in a six part series titled “Many Differences, Same Jesus.” In this series we have asked members of our community to reflect upon the theme of our 2019 Commitment Campaign. The first piece of this series is a printing of Gary Schweizer’s witness given in church on Sunday October 21.*

My Journey to St. Luke’s  
By: Gary Schweizer

Good morning friends. My name is Gary Schweizer. My husband Joseph and I have been coming to St. Luke’s for five years now and we are so happy to have found such a loving church home. The Commitment Campaign has asked that I share a bit about the journey that led me here.

It began in a Congregational church here in New England. But most of my childhood was spent in northern Italy, where I was introduced to soaring cathedrals and mysterious churches filled with ornament and ritual. So different than the Puritan simplicity of New England. At an early age my eyes were opened to just how big and fascinating our world is. And to how its diversity is to be sought and embraced, not feared and walled off.

My high school and college years were spent in Texas. A different cultural adjustment than Europe, but I grew to love my brash and big-hearted adopted state.

Texas is imbued with a particularly conservative and evangelical brand of American Christianity. Before we assume we know everything that means, you should know that these faith traditions are filled with sisters and brothers motivated by a deep love and compassion for people. With a sincere desire to bring God’s love to a broken world that so desperately needs it. I was drawn to that sincerity -- to that desire to do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly before God.

But, there is another side to this type of Christianity. When faith is built on concepts like the infallibility of the bible, distrust of personal reason, and the drawing of clear lines between who is in out of God’s favor, it becomes a very rigid and brittle construct. It takes concerted effort and a regular suspension of human empathy and reason to keep it all together. Because like a Jenga tower, removing just one of these narrowly defined pieces of faith can bring the whole thing tumbling down.

And when the faith tradition around you uses such phrases as love the sinner, not the sin -- it does not see how that demeans the soul. How it parses out a person’s humanity. Those words may make someone feel like they are reaching out in love but they do nothing to heal the object of their judgement. In fact, they have the power to wound deeply.

I know this because, you see, just as I was drawing nearer to God and desiring His holiness, I was realizing with a slow, dawning horror that I was gay -- and there was nothing I could do about it. The very place I was fleeing to for refuge was also being denied me because I was an abomination in God's sight.

I spent a college summer as a short term missionary in China, hoping that somehow a religious calling might change me. But even at the ends of the earth, I was still me. Sexual orientation is no more a lifestyle choice than the color of your skin or the shape of your nose. No amount of prayer will change it. And to be told that you are just not praying hard enough is devastating.

I returned to New England after college and continued to struggle with how I could stand in God's presence. But after many years I came to the point where I could not continue the spiritual battles within me. I simply stopped.

Remembering the beauty of the Anglican services I had attended during a summer semester in England, I began to attend Trinity Church in Boston. It was the balm I needed. I didn't think; I didn't pursue; I didn't struggle to figure out. I just was. I decided to take God at his word -- that He loved me just as I am.

Then one day the biggest blessing swept into my life without warning. I met the man who was to one day become my husband. I found in Joseph such kindness, integrity and love. It was like a switch flipped within me. I went from wishing I could change to wishing the world would change. I came out to my family and friends. Not one of them responded in judgement. Most only wished I had shared sooner and not put myself through such pain.

We found St. Luke's one Christmas Eve and received the warmest, most sincere welcome from Father Tim. And then *over and over* by all of you. Joseph and I have been welcomed -- not just a gay couple, but as complete persons. We have celebrated with you and grieved with you. We have shared daily joys and struggles. You have become our family.

I have found in St. Luke's a place to develop a living, breathing faith. I've shared God's love alongside you through Loaves and Fishes. Not just feeding and clothing, but sharing our common humanity without any dissection or judgement.

I've attended adult faith formation classes where we've wrestled with challenging topics with forthrightness and honesty. With the resiliency to examine and explore without the fear of dismantling a brittle construction of beliefs.

St Luke's is a place where I can breathe. Where I can be me, fully me, and know that I am loved. Father Tim absolutely means it when he says each Sunday that ALL are welcome at God's table. We are not gatekeepers to God's kingdom here at St. Luke's. We are greeters, welcoming all to God's loving presence.



This is a pretty special place. And I want it to continue. To thrive and grow. Do you feel the same way? This house of God is our house. It is built and maintained by all of us. So please consider making a pledge to help make sure we remain a place where all can come and be touched, as I have been, by God's deep and abiding love.

## Youth Faith Formation

### Youth Faith Formation is Coming to Your Inbox

Dear Parents,

In mid-October we launched a new initiative as part of our Youth Faith Formation program. Every Sunday that there is Youth Faith Formation an email update goes out after church. This email includes highlights from our Youth Faith Formation classes, announcements about special events in the life of the parish, and resources to support faith formation at home. It is our hope that this will help build a stronger bridge and connection between what happens here on Sunday mornings and what happens in our lives the rest of the week. If you would like to receive this email update please contact Fr. Dante.

### Middle School Youth Group Update

We had a great kickoff event on October 19 with pizza and a viewing of the 1993 Disney classic Hocus Pocus. In November we have two events lined up.

We will gather on **Friday November 9** from 6-8pm for dinner and an instructed Eucharist. We gather in the Church after dinner to talk about all the stuff we use during a Sunday morning service. We will try on chasubles, stoles, and even a cope! We will write our own Eucharistic Prayer and conclude the night by celebrating the Eucharist together.

On **Sunday November 25** we are going on a field trip! Last year on Good Friday several of our youth group members talked about how much they love the Taizé service. Since Good Friday is still a few months out, we are going on a road trip to get a Taizé fix. Join Fr. Dante on a trip to Providence to attend the monthly Taizé service at The Church of the Redeemer. We will meet at The Redeemer at 4:15pm to talk more about Taizé. Following the 5pm service we will have dinner together at one of the local restaurants down the street from the Church.

Parents should stay tuned for an email from Fr. Dante with more information about both of these events.

As a reminder all young people in grades 6-8 are welcome to join our Middle School Youth Group!

# The Stewardship Committee

## **St. Luke's 2019 Commitment Campaign: What a Difference Your Pledge Makes**

As a relative newcomer to the financial side of church life, I tended to use the terms commitment and stewardship interchangeably. I've realized they are different and those differences are important.

Stewardship is the act of sharing one's gifts with the church and our faith community. Stewardship is defined as the careful and responsible management of something entrusted to one's care. As St. Luke's parishioners, we are all its stewards. We accept direct responsibility for the financial support and progress of our Church and its mission.

Commitment applies structure and direction to our personal stewardship journey. It is the act of assessing our personal situation, our stewardship goals, and making a declaration of our stewardship for the coming year. This declaration allows the parish to plan its ministries and community activities to accomplish the church's mission.

By now, it should be clear that we're focusing on how St. Luke's is different from other groups and organizations in our lives. Each year, the Stewardship Committee asks parishioners to share personal accounts of how St. Luke's has touched their lives. For those who missed it a couple of weeks ago, Gary Schweizer shared his personal journey to St. Luke's. I'd like to share something Gary said that touched me and highlighted our campaign theme. In reference to St. Luke's accepting nature, Gary said, "We are not the gatekeepers for the Kingdom of God; we are the greeters." That is different!

David Sampson  
Stewardship Committee Chair

## Property Committee

Now there are SIX! Six new handicap parking spaces in the parking lot, thanks to Doug MacPherson and Sandy Rubel. We've had a taste of cold weather and we're busy getting ready!

Our upcoming Property Breakfasts will be on November 18 and December 13. We welcome more parishioners to add to the group which includes Ellen Abell, Bob Brockway, Ken Fecteau, Cindi Lovejoy, Doug MacPherson, Bill McClintick, Sr. and Jr., Jack Newton, Dave Savage, Bruce Stevens and Ralph Sykes.

Please continue to let us know of things that need Property attention. Thanks!

Sandy and Peggy Rubel (884-6594)

### Be a Blessing at Twilight!

The Twilighters, our Monday evening property crew, have been very busy for the past eight weeks. We have pruned, deadheaded, raked and swept up outside to supplement the Thursday morning Property Breakfast crew. We have enjoyed beef barley soup, and clam, chicken and corn chowder as we got to know one another! Inside, we have cleaned radiators, plasticked windows, and dusted ledges, books, and tables to make our facility both clean and inviting. On our last night, Oct 29, we will clean our way through the building in preparation for Diocesan Convention, when we welcome people from all over Rhode Island to our faith home. So if you see Eric, Melanie, Jane, Margaret, Melissa, or Ben, please give them a hug and say "thank you" to this small but mighty crew of people!

If you didn't get an opportunity to be a blessing at twilight with us this fall, fear not! We will resurrect the group in the spring to help bring our grounds back to life after winter has passed. Any questions may be addressed to Cindi Lovejoy at [benem@cox.net](mailto:benem@cox.net).



## The Vestry Corner

Notes from the Treasurer.

As I close out my second full year as your Treasurer, I'd like to express that it has been both an honor and a pleasure to help out in this way. I have some wonderful help - we have a dedicated group on the Finance Committee and a talented bookkeeper in Lisa Paolino.

This Parish has many blessings, and much to be grateful for. But most of all, it is you, the individual parishioners, that make it all work. Your commitment to fulfilling your pledges and contributing in various other ways keeps the Parish running.

If you are new here, you may wonder how this all works – how does St. Luke's "keep the lights on" and fund its programs and ministries? Well, it all starts this time of year when we have our commitment drive. We ask each family to fill out a pledge card. What is a pledge? A pledge is what you intend to give over the course of the year – it helps immensely in creating an operating budget. It should reflect thanks for all in your life you are grateful for, both here at St. Luke's and elsewhere. What it is not is a legal contract – you can change it anytime. Should your circumstances change; just call the office and we can adjust it. While we do receive funds from rental income and some investment income from our Endowment, most of our budget is funded by your pledges.

Financially, 2018 has gone smoothly – income has come in on time (thank you!) and expenses have been running slightly under. We tackled some early repair work for leaks and mold, and finished off the year putting on a new roof. We rolled out on-line giving, and those that have signed up have appreciated the convenience of setting up contributions for the year and not having to worry about writing a weekly or monthly check. Vanco deposits the funds directly into the Church's checking account and the return feed updates the stewardship database automatically, eliminating those manual updates.

As we look forward to 2019, consider filling out a pledge card. And let us continue to be grateful that we have such a wonderful home here at St. Luke's!

Mike Sullivan

# **Coming this Spring: Adult Pilgrimage - England!**

All adults of the parish are invited to join Fr. Dante on a pilgrimage to one of the most important place in the history of our Anglican/Episcopal heritage: England

This spring, Fr. Dante and our adult pilgrims will spend three days in Canterbury to explore the roots of our heritage in the Church of England. We will walk the same steps, travel the same road, that faithful pilgrims have travelled for hundreds of years. Then we will spend two days in Salisbury another important location. While in Salisbury, the pilgrims will spend time with a monastic community and take time to pause and focus on the daily rhythm of prayer. Finally, the pilgrims will bring their journey to an end in London. Dates for the pilgrimage are tentatively set for April 24-May 1.

Please be in touch with Fr. Dante if you are interested in learning more about the parish pilgrimage!



***Bishop Knisely and  
The Board of Episcopal Charities  
invite you to a  
Choral Evensong  
in thanksgiving for everyone who supports  
Episcopal Charities***

**Sunday, November 18 at 5 pm  
at  
St. Luke's Church  
99 Peirce Street, East Greenwich**

**The Rt. Rev. W. Nicholas Knisely, officiant  
Collegium Ancora, choir**

**Clergy are invited to vest and process**

**Reception follows the Service**



*Third Annual*  
**RI RINGING IN THE HOLIDAYS**  
**HANDBELL SPECTACULAR**



*Believe*

Granite State Ringers, Concord, NH	Joan Fossum, Director
Jubilate Bells, First Cong. Church of Reading, MA	Martha Goodman, Director
Community Church Ringers, Westerly, RI	Andrew Wallace, Director
Lincoln Ringers, First Parish, Lincoln, MA	Diane Burke, Director
The Jubilate Ringers of East Greenwich, RI	Daniel K. Moore, Director

Massed and Solo Ensemble Ringing

**Come join us at:** **Save the Date**  
Swift Community Center  
121 Peirce Street, East Greenwich, RI  
Saturday, November 17, 2017 7:00 PM  
Free Admission Handicapped Accessible Parking Available

# **NOVEMBER SAVE THE DATES**

## **November 2**

12 pm Diocesan Convention @ St. Luke's Church

## **November 3**

8 am Diocesan Convention @ St. Luke's Church

## **November 7**

7 pm Women of Grace Meeting

## **November 8**

9:30 am Leisure Learning @ Dining Rm

## **November 9**

6-8 pm Youth Group Meeting @ Dining Rm

## **November 15**

9:30 am Leisure Learning @ Dining Rm

## **November 17**

7 pm RI Ringing In The Holidays Handbell Concert @  
Swift Community Center

## **November 18**

5 pm Episcopal Choral Evensong @ Auditorium

## **November 24**

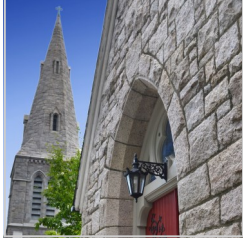
10 am Loaves & Fishes Run @ Dining Rm

## **November 25**

4 pm Youth Group Field Trip @ Church of the Redeemer

## **November 26**

5 pm CCK Dinner @ Dining Rm



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East Greenwich, RI 02818

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