



# St. Luke's Episcopal Church

Where all are welcome at the Lord's table

weekly

December 27, 2020

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Greetings!

Merry Christmas!

Truth be told, it is only December 23 as I type these words to you, and yet I have just completed filming my part of our Morning Prayer service for January 3. All of this evidence of how our Advent/Christmas season, much like most of 2020, has been a strange, mind-bending, time-blurring sort of year. (Pop-quiz: What day is it for you, right now, as you read this note? If you needed a second to be sure, you are not alone.)

Admittedly, little about these past several weeks has been business as usual. Instead of voices echoing throughout our parish halls and choirs rehearsing for our many celebrations, the building has been mostly empty and quiet. With the exception of hungry residents visiting the Interfaith Food Pantry, grateful recipients collecting gifts cards, courtesy of our Giving Tree, and an occasional request for financial assistance, there have been few people coming into St. Luke's.

And perhaps strangest of all is the fact that Rodney, Tanya, and I have already "celebrated" Christmas. Rodney and Tanya wrapped up their recordings a few days ago and I just "preached" my Christmas sermon last night. Do you see what I mean when I call these days mind-bending and time-blurring? Yesterday, during our staff meeting, Rodney and I commented on how much we missed the usual ruckus and joy of a St. Luke's Christmas. Perhaps the same is true for many of you?

I am mindful of how the Rev. Noel Bailey, our assistant several years ago, used to celebrate a "Blue Christmas" for those not experiencing the merry and cheer commonly associated with these days. Given 2020, I imagine more individuals than usual might feel like such a service captures their true Christmas spirit. (If interested, you can go to our diocesan website and view the Bishop's Blue Christmas service recorded December

Nonetheless, strange as this Christmas might be, even now I feel a profound sense of blessing-- because I get to share it all with you. I am buoyed by the memory of our usual Christmases and heartened by the prospect that we will worship in person again come 2021. And, more than that, I also am moved to a new sense of wonder by the different ways we have journeyed through these recent weeks.

The Advent/Christmas blog, written by many of you, has been such a gift. The Sunday music has provided comfort for my aching heart. Our weekly gatherings-for adult faith formation, social hours, and worship-have reminded me that we remain connected, even if "socially distanced." And even the special virtual services we have produced, from the Christmas Concert to the two Christmas celebrations, have brought me great joy.

We did "keep awake" this Advent; we have "celebrated" Christmas this year. COVID be-damned!!

As I look forward now to a week of rest, I want to say a special thanks to the many individuals who have made our celebrations possible. My thanks to the Altar Guild, who decorated the church so that we could at least enjoy familiar sites as a backdrop to our worship. My thanks to Bruce Dearnaley, who has climbed the bell tower weekly to entertain those near and far. My thanks to our many lay readers who took the time to record their readings. My thanks to Brad Kleyla, our "film producer," who assembled countless recordings and produced polished celebrations. My thanks to Deborah Collins and Rob Walsh who labored on Saturdays (sometimes late at night!!) to make sure we could all worship on Sundays.

And most especially, my thanks to our fabulous staff. Christina has worked harder than ever, producing bulletins for multiple services, communicating with lay readers, all the while tending to the regular administrative demands. I would be lost without her organizational gifts. Tanya has jumped on to our moving train, unable to learn the ropes the usual way, but already we have benefitted greatly from her faith, wisdom, and work. Rodney has found ways to ensure that the music we love has not been silenced by COVID. We are so blessed by his talents, as well as the talents of choristers young and, um... not as young, who have provided us anthems for our services. And Tim has taken advantage of the reduced foot traffic to do projects, readying the campus for your return.

As our Advent/Christmas journey and 2020 comes to an end- mercifully-I am keenly aware that we

have not lost our way in the darkness. In fact, throughout it all God has provided us many points of light to brighten our path.

Just as this Christmas season reminds me that we have the Light of Christ to follow, so too does COVID remind me that we can follow His light in the company of one another. For those reminders, and so much more, I am grateful.

Dear friend, may the humility of the shepherds, the perseverance of the wise men, the joy of the angels, and the peace of the Christ-child be God's gift to you this Christmas-time and always.

Christmas Blessings,

*Jim*

## This Sunday at St. Luke's

### The First Sunday of Christmas

Click above for the lessons

Streaming Service of Morning Prayer.

Watch our worship service this weekend on [Facebook](#) or on [YouTube](#).

[Click Here](#) to download a copy of the parish prayer list.

The Rev. Tanya Watt, assistant rector, preaching

## Pledge Envelopes

If you have requested pledge envelopes, they are located in the atrium.

## From The Treasurer

### A Note From the Treasurer

I was in the checkout line the other day, waiting for my turn to approach the register, masked and socially distanced by the stick on feet placed on the floor. It brought me back to the annual meeting last year, where our floors (and walls and many other places, so it seemed) also had stick on feet for that year's commitment drive theme of taking our next step. Who knew we would be trend setters.

October and November were solid months financially. Pledges and gifts have continued in your support of our Parish. With all the good news of vaccines coming, and a potential return to less sickness and a less restrictive lifestyle, there is a reason to hope.

And hope sounds like a pretty good Christmas gift for all of us.

If you can, please help us close out 2020 on a positive note.

	2020 YTD	Budget	%	2019 YTD	Var
Pledge Income	\$382,778	\$400,000	95.69%	\$419,131	(\$36,353)
Loose Plate	\$17,960	\$17,700	101.47%	\$31,321	(\$13,361)
Other Personal Inc.	\$65,165	\$68,819	94.69%	\$130,517	(\$65,352)
Total Personal Inc.	\$465,903	\$486,519	95.76%	\$580,969	(\$115,066)
Total Other Inc	\$110,133	\$94,533	116.50%	\$47,201	\$62,932
Total Income	\$576,036	\$581,052	99.14%	\$628,170	(\$52,134)
Staff Expenses	\$384,676	\$391,199	98.33%	\$408,644	(\$23,968)
Facilities Expenses	\$102,289	\$111,926	91.39%	\$144,990	(\$42,701)
Program Expenses	\$21,825	\$29,296	74.50%	\$22,739	(\$914)
Outreach Expenses	\$12,067	\$7,506	160.76%	\$7,036	\$5,031
Total Expenses	\$607,610	\$626,658	96.96%	\$668,302	(\$60,692)
Net Income	(\$31,575)	(\$45,607)	69.23%	(\$40,132)	\$8,557

Peace,  
Michael Sullivan

## Youth Faith Formation

### Youth Faith Formation

Fr. Tim has put together an excellent group of people to thoughtfully consider how to offer formation in the safest way possible. As we move through this season of uncertainty, we continue to walk in faith and hope. So that we can continue to be in touch with you as our plans progress, please fill out a registration form for each of your children. The form is online only this year and can be found in our weekly and on our website. Questions? Feel free to reach out to Mother Tanya: [tanya@stlukese.org](mailto:tanya@stlukese.org) or 684-2844.

## Christmas Blog

### 12 Days of Christmas Blog!

Our cup is truly running over, and the enthusiasm for our Advent Blog has spilled over into the coming season of Christmas. During the 12 Days of Christmas, we will have the opportunity to continue to hear from members of our faith community as they reflect on the scripture for the day.

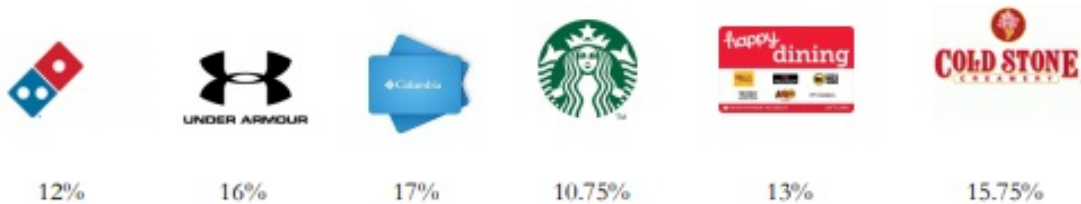
**[Click Here](#)** to view our Christmas Blog!

## St. Luke's RaiseRight Program

### Deck Your Halls with Dazzling Bonuses for St. Luke's!



Looking for an easy way to shop for and send gifts? RaiseRight ecards and gift cards will help on both accounts! Purchase now to lock in 'Dazzling Bonuses' that will earn up to 17% for St. Luke's. Not only can you lock in these bonuses for Christmas, but they will also apply for early shopping purchases you might consider for upcoming birthdays, special occasions, or general shopping needs. You can even purchase your Giving Tree Walmart gift cards through RaiseRight! With new bonuses every week, there are ample possibilities ...



So, please, add the RaiseRight app to your phone today and help raise additional funds for St. Luke's! Scan the QR code below to get more details on the app. Most importantly, when downloading the app, please enter the following enrollment code to specify St. Luke's as your charitable organization of choice: FEB88LAC73L81



Create opportunities for what matters most to you—right from your phone. Buy gift cards from 750+ brands to earn on your daily purchases. It's simply the right way to fundraise.



[Click Here](#) to view the Holiday Gift Guide and take advantage of increased bonus rewards during the upcoming holiday season. Stay tuned for more information on this exciting opportunity to support St. Luke's.

Thank you,  
Mark & Susan Cordle, Deborah Collins & Jeremy Stowe  
Your Faithful RaiseRight Project Team

**Stained Glass Window Books and Note Cards**

If you are missing church, here is an idea that will lift your spirits!

The Pastoral Care team will be selling The Stained Glass Window Books and Note Cards. They make wonderful Christmas gifts! The cost for our book is \$25 each or two for \$40. Shipping cost is \$2 if books are mailed to the recipient. The cost for our cards is \$10 for a package of 5 cards. They can also be picked up at the church office. Please call the office or email Christina, [cimondi@stlukeseg.org](mailto:cimondi@stlukeseg.org), if you would like to purchase these. We accept cash and checks made out to St. Luke's Church. All proceeds go for the restoration and maintenance of our beautiful windows!

Thank you!

**Pastoral Care Ministry**

Prayer is a powerful way for us to support each other and build community. If you would like to add someone to our parish prayer list, please use the online Prayer List Request Form. It is available on our website under our Parish Life tab and here in our Weekly Newsletter. The prayer list is updated weekly. The Pastoral Care Ministry continues to pray for all on the prayer list and send cards to the homebound and those in the hospital. By filling out the information on this form, you will help us to keep in touch. [Click Here](#) for our Prayer List Request Form.

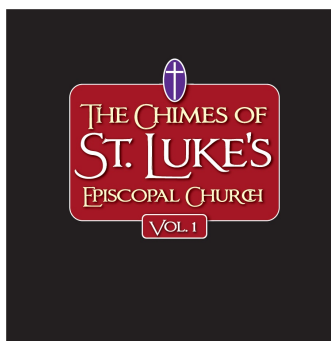
Thank you and stay well.

The Pastoral Care Ministry

**St. Luke's Chimes**

**Another Great Holiday Gift Idea!**

Many of you may have heard the chimes playing from our church tower on Sundays after services or on many a Tuesday evening over the last year. Now, a recording of 31 hymns is available on CD. Selections range from 'old chestnuts' such as Rock of Ages, patriotic tunes--My Country 'Tis of Thee, gospel songs--It's Me O Lord, to traditional favorites like O Praise Ye the Lord. Contact Christina Imondi, Parish Administrator, at [cimondi@stlukeseg.org](mailto:cimondi@stlukeseg.org) to obtain a copy. There is no set price--rather, a donation to St. Luke's would be gratefully accepted.



**St. Luke's Choirs**

**St. Luke's Choirs Sing for You!**

As a special gift from the Canterbury, St. Cecilia, and Angel Choirs to our St. Luke's family and friends, choir members compiled a special 'arrangement' of "How Can I Keep From Singing". The music is from an American folk song originally composed by Baptist minister Robert Wadworth Lowry in 1868 with the four-part arrangement published by Jeffrey Honoré in 1991. The choirs performed this piece at their 2019 Spring Concert and happily recreated that performance in this video (also available on St. Luke's website and Facebook page).



St. Luke's Choirs Sing For You!

## Big Brothers and Big Sisters Donations

### Big Brothers and Big Sisters Donations

In our continuing efforts to be a good neighbor and serve our local community, we have added a new addition to the St Luke's parking lot! The clothing bin is a result of joining in a new partnership between the Episcopal Diocese and Big Brother Big Sister of Rhode Island. It will serve as a collection point for community donations of clothing, shoes and other cloth items. Please drop off your bagged items at your convenience.



## Especially for Children

To watch Godly Play online please [Click Here!](#)

## Looking for Helpers / Looking for Help

Several of you have already reached out, volunteering to help those in need. If you are healthy

and in a low risk category, and would like to be added to a volunteer list please email our **Church Administrator**. We are working on creating a team of individuals who can help out as the need arises.

With all of the precautions and guidance coming from the Governor, CDC, and the Department of Health, we are aware that some members of our community may have difficulty getting access to basics like food, medication, and other necessities. If you find yourself in need, please contact our **Church Administrator** for assistance.

## Food Cupboard

Greetings from our Food Cupboard!

We are reaching out to update you on some of our needs during this challenging time. Our thoughts and prayers are with all of our families that they are able to stay healthy and safe.

Please consider donating these items:

Spam, Small Canned Hams, Chicken/Beef Broth, Mashed Potatoes, Hash, Chili, Beef Stew, Yellow or Chocolate Cake or Brownie Mixes, Canned Fruit, Pudding/Jello Mixes, Pasta Sauce, Beef/Chicken/Turkey Gravy

Thank you!

EG Interfaith Food Cupboard

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