

St. Luke's Episcopal Church

Where all are welcome at the Lord's table

September 5, 2021

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Greetings!

If you worshipped with us (either in-person or virtually) last Sunday, then you witnessed one of the things I love most about St. Luke's. We collaborated for a Q&A sermon and once again the faithfulness, thoughtfulness, and even playfulness of our parish were on display in all the index cards you filled out.

Also, once again, there were so many questions that I could only get through a portion of the cards. So let me tackle a few extra here. I'll keep my responses brief (never an easy thing for me).

One final note by way of introduction. I have organized your questions into three categories: "What is God all about," "Living a faith-filled life," and "Life at St. Luke's."

What is God all about?

Is Jesus more about judgment or mercy?

Well, practically, I suppose you can't have one without the other. But more importantly, my reading of the crucifixion and resurrection suggests that for Jesus (and God) mercy and grace reign supreme. Recall that even as Jesus hung on the cross alongside two thieves being crucified, he told one of them, "Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in Paradise." (Luke 24:43) Further and more fundamentally to me, His resurrection serves as an invitation for all of us (including those first disciples who abandoned him on the cross) to know the mercy and grace of our God. Judgement is not the final act in our Gospel—mercy and grace get the last word.

Is heaven a place just for Christians?

I do not believe that to be true. I do believe it is true that there was and is something uniquely divine about Jesus and particularly salvific about the resurrection. But I can not believe that those who have never been exposed to Jesus or his story—or even those who have adopted a different faith story—would be summarily excluded from that experience we call "heaven." Rather, I believe God's love to be more expansive and God's ways to be more creative than confined to a simple or singular Christian formula.

Do you think God sent Jesus to other planets and places besides Earth? If "God so loved the world..." (John 3:16), why just this world?

What an interesting question to consider! If God is in some way

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the Creator of all things, then why would this creator not extend love and concern to those other worlds—whatever they might entail? Again, I refer back to my closing sentence in the previous paragraph: "I believe God's love to be more expansive and God's ways to be more creative than confined to a simple or singular Christian formula." And to that statement I would add, "... to be confined to a simple or singular Christian formula or even a solitary human world."

Living a faith-filled life.

What do you think about what Christians would think about what's going on in Afghanistan?

Well I am sure that there is no one answer to this question, as Christians think a variety of things about any one topic. That said, I am mindful of the last verse from the Epistle of James, which we heard just this past Sunday. *Religion that is pure and undefiled before God, the Father, is this: to care for orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself unstained by the world.* "(James 1:27) The shortest single verse on our gospels also comes to mind: "Jesus wept." (John 11:35) It seems like those two verses might be a helpful place to begin our Christian response.

The Prodigal Son parable—so much was made over the son who returned... how do those who never left feel about this? How do we accept those who were/are lost? And not feel unrecognized for our steadfastness?

These questions get at our very human wrestling with this parable. While I won't pretend to speak for all those who might identify with the faithful older son, here's my own thinking. Honestly, I imagine many who "never left" feel resentfulresentful that the younger brother returns to such fanfare and celebration. There is no hint of joy on the part of the elder brother in this story. So how does one accept those who were/are lost without feeling unrecognized? To this part of the question I wonder, first, what would feeling recognized entail? Let's not overlook the fact that the father tells the elder son, "Son, you are always with me and all that is mine is yours." (Luke 16:31) That sounds like a pretty clear expression of recognition and affection to my ears. If that statement is not recognition enough, then I wonder is the desire more about recognition for the elder son or punishment for the returning son? Of course, both desires are totally understandable and human. But the parable, among many things, reveals God's capacity for mercy in addition to our desire for judgment (see the first question above).

Does prayer have the power to heal all ailments? Does prayer truly work?

Yes, I believe so. But let's be clear that our definitions and expectations of "Heal(ing) all ailments..." and "work(ing)" might be very different from how God "answers" our prayers. About prayer I would say these things: 1. The way prayer works can not be distilled into a formula or a quid pro quo transaction—it is, like with all things divine, a bit of a mystery. 2. I believe God attends to and responds to our prayers. 3. As Soren Kierkegaard once wrote, "At the very least, prayer changes the pray-er."

Our teenaged children resist coming to church and worship on Sunday. They say it doesn't mean anything to them. What can we say and do to show them that this is good for them?

Ahhh, the only questions harder than explaining the mystery of

the divine is explaining the mystery of adolescents! A question that combines both—well it is humbling indeed. But here's my thinking. First of all, at some point, teenagers often resist and dismiss anything parents value—that's developmentally appropriate; do not be dismayed. Second, do not be deterred from asking (or even requiring) that they continue to come. While each parent needs to sort out her/his parenting voice throughout the adolescent years, you still do have voice and license to require your children to do what you value as important for them. (Just because they complain about brushing their teeth you don't allow them to stop, do you?) Third, keep in mind the latent learning theory which suggests that evidence of learning might not surface until years after the lesson. Even though your daughter or son might say (and perhaps truly feel) that it "doesn't mean anything to them," that doesn't mean the experience won't have meaning in later years. And finally, in response to, "What can we say and do to show them that this is good for them?" I would say, show them first that it is good for you.

Life at St. Luke's

Will Tuesday's healing service be resumed in the fall?

I am eager to resume offering this service but have heard from many participants that the time is not quite right yet. If you are interested in the resumption of this service, PLEASE let me know and we will offer it.

Do you plan to keep our Adult Faith Formation meetings on Zoom or transition back to in-person meetings?

One of the unexpected "gifts" of this terrible pandemic is that it has led to a significant increase in those attending Adult Faith Formation classes. Both the change in timing (from Sunday at 9:00AM to Wednesday at 7:00PM) and the adoption of the Zoom platform have allowed more people to participate. So, at this time, we expect to continue holding the main AFF offering on Wednesday nights and by way of Zoom. But also, we will be developing additional offerings that might focus on a one-off kind of subject and involve in-person gatherings.

How can one get more involved at St. Luke's?

I LOVE THIS QUESTION! The opportunities are numerous and in the first several Sundays of September we will be featuring a variety of our ministries at the coffee hours. Please visit the tables in the atrium. Also, keep your ears tuned to our many announcements and invitations. When you hear me say, "We are looking for folks to help out with..." hear that as an invitation to YOU! And then, please, don't be bashful about approaching Tanya, Rodney, Gary and Bill, our wardens, or any of our leaders to express your interest. Besides the fact that St. Luke's is what it is because of you, if you get more involved in St. Luke's you will find your own life infinitely enriched. Being more involved at St. Luke's doesn't just change St. Luke's—it changes you as well.

When will we bless the new kitchen/dining room?

Like the answer to so many of our questions about all manner of things, God only knows! © More seriously, the work continues at a steady pace. The biggest current uncertainty is the arrival of various items on back-order. Stay tuned for updates from Gary. And know that when the time arrives, we will enjoy one grand celebration!!

In conclusion...

So now do you see why I began this letter by saying, "If you worshipped with us (either in-person or virtually) last Sunday, then you witnessed one of the things I love most about St. Luke's." I am so grateful for your questions. And I am equally thankful that we get to search for answers together.

I can't wait to see and hear what the upcoming "program year" has in store for us all!

Peace, *Tim*

This Sunday at St. Luke's

The Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost

Click above for the lessons

7:45am Holy Eucharist with Sermon

10:15am Holy Eucharist with Sermon

We are glad to offer a Facebook livestream for our 10:15 am Sunday services. To access the livestream, please follow the instructions below:

- 1. Our Facebook page can be accessed by **Clicking Here**.
- 2. You do not need a Facebook account to access this page. If you do have an account, 'liking' our page ahead of the service will allow Facebook to send you a notification when the livestream begins. If you do not have an account, Facebook will ask if you would like to set one up. Simply click the 'x' at the top right corner to close that box or click 'not now'.
- 3. The livestream will be accessible from St. Luke's Facebook page near the time the prelude begins. If you have liked our page, simply click on the notification you will receive from Facebook when it starts to view the video.
- 4. If you have not liked our page, you may have to scroll down the page to find the livestream while it is happening due to the way Facebook works. Once the livestream concludes, the video of the service will be available at the top of our page, (so you will not have to scroll to find it).

Please contact our Assistant Rector, Mother Tanya, with any questions. She can be reached at <u>tanya@stlukeseg.org</u>.

<u>Click Here</u> to download a copy of the parish prayer list.

The Rev. Tanya Watt, assistant rector, preaching

Reopening Announcement

St. Luke's is Reopening!

We are so excited to welcome everyone back to St. Luke's!

<u>Click Here</u> to view Fr. Tim's message regarding renewed COVID Cautions. As of Sunday, August 1, we have resumed our mask-wearing and contact tracing practices.

SignUpGenius is no longer necessary!

When not totally shut down for in-person worship this past year, the SignUpGenius helped us remain compliant and safe upon our return to in-person worship.

Beginning June 20, parishioners will no longer be required to "sign-up" to attend either the 7:45am or 10:15am services.

Hallelujah!

We are using a QR Code for our Sunday Bulletin which can be scanned by using a SmartPhone! This

will give worshipers the option to view our bulletin on their phone during Sunday Service or to print the bulletin and bring it to the church. We will provide hard copies as well.

Here Is The Sunday Bulletin QR Code:



OR

<u>Click Here</u> to view our Sunday Bulletin!

Kick Off Sunday!

St. Luke's Kickoff Sunday!

We would love to have you share this with your friends!



From the Treasurer

July Month End

	2021 YTD	Budget	%	2020 YTD	Var
Pledge Income	\$294,610	\$270,000	109.11%	\$252,380	\$42,230
Loose Plate	\$18,032	\$10,800	166.96%	\$11,289	\$6,743
Other Personal Inc.	\$47,068	\$37,383	125.91%	\$33,718	\$13,350
Total Personal Inc.	\$359,710	\$318,183	113.05%	\$297,387	\$62,323
Total Other Inc	\$100,696	\$108,341	92.94%	\$77,956	\$22,740
Total Income	\$460,406	\$426,524	107.94%	\$375,343	\$85,063
Staff Expenses	\$256,610	\$261,568	98.10%	\$238,959	\$17,651
Facilities Expenses	\$53,307	\$68,998	77.26%	\$66,400	(\$13,093)
Program Expenses	\$12,584	\$21,375	58.87%	\$12,911	(\$327)
Outreach Expenses	\$9,160	\$8,078	113.39%	\$5,089	\$4,071
Total Expenses	\$379,375	\$406,626	93.30%	\$379,573	(\$198)
Net Income	\$81,031	\$19,899	407.21%	(\$4,230)	\$85,261

Your continued support of St. Luke's has kept us on track. All this AND the capital campaign for the kitchen is a tremendous testament to all of you - the Parishioners that make it all happen. I Join Fr. Tim and Mtr. Tanya and the leadership team in thanking each and every one of you!

Grace and Peace, Mike

Here are some other options available if you would like to donate to St. Luke's!









Online Banking

Bill Pay – with online bill pay, you add St. Luke's Church as a payee, enter our address of 99 Peirce St. East Greenwich, RI 02818 and schedule your payment.

Benefits: Ease of use – if you already use online bill pay, then you are familiar with making payments this way. You can schedule single payments, or set up regular payments in advance.

No cost to you or the Church.

Zelle Transfer

Zelle Payment – with Zelle payment transfer, you can add St. Luke's Church by using the giving@stlukeseg.org address.

Benefits: Ease of use – if you already use Zelle, then you are familiar with making payments this way. This only makes one payment at a time, so you have to initiate each payment.

No cost to you or the Church

VANCO Payment Solutions

VANCO Payments – With VANCO payments, you create your individual account on the VANCO site, set up how you want to pay, and the funds are deposited in the Church's account

Benefits: If you like points or miles, then this is your site! VANCO is the only option that accepts credit cards. Like Online Banking, you can set up recurring payments or make single payments

Transaction Fees for the Church

Direct Payment From IRA

Direct Transfer – If you are 70 ½ or older, you can instruct your IRA provider to make a Qualified Charitable Distribution directly from your IRA. Benefits: Any funds paid this way are not reported as taxable income to you. You can make your entire yearly pledge with one payment, help satisfy your required distribution, and incur no tax on the income.

No cost to you or the Church

Adult Faith Formation

Adult Faith Formation

Adult Faith Formation will resume on Wednesday, September 15th, at 7pm via Zoom.

Our book for this season is *The Universal Christ: How a Forgotten Reality can Change Everything we See, Hope for, and Believe* by Richard Rohr. Rohr reminds us that we believe that "one God created all things", and he invites us to "reopen [the] ancient door of faith with a key, and that key is the proper understanding of a word that many of us use often... That word is *Christ*." Please join us

as we explore our faith in Christ more deeply.

Please read the Foreword, "Before We Begin", and Part 1, Chapter 1: "Christ is not Jesus' Last Name" in anticipation of our first class.

<u>Click Here</u> to join the meeting! Zoom Meeting Information is below:

Meeting ID: 867 3899 9469

Passcode: 427552

Godly Play

Godly Play

Godly Play begins Sunday, September 19th!

We're excited to welcome your children! We have two sessions: 3rd - 5th grade will meet from 9:30 - 10:10 and PreK - 2nd grade will meet at 10:15 with the children joining their parents at the church service as we exchange the Peace. To join us, you need to complete two steps:

- 1. Please complete the youth registration form <u>Here</u> or pick up a hard copy form from the atrium at the church.
- 2. Please sign up for the dates your children will attend using our Sign-Up Genius <u>Click</u> <u>Here</u>. With the safety of our volunteers and kids in mind, at this time classes are limited to six children.

Questions? Contact Theresa Deiters, Director of Youth Formation, at (415) 233-0761.

Youth Faith Formation

Youth Faith Formation

"Blessed are those who find wisdom, those who gain understanding." Proverbs 3:13

We are looking forward to an exciting year of Faith Formation at St. Luke's! Our first Sunday in class together will be September 19th. Every year our hearts are warmed as we watch your children grow in height and spirituality.

PreK-2nd Grade will meet at 10:15 downstairs in the Godly Play Room. Please try to be there by 10:05. Children will join their parents in our 10:15 service before Eucharist, at the Peace.

3rd - 5th Grade will meet 9:30 - 10:10 downstairs in the Godly Play Room. Please try to get them there by 9:25 so we can start on time.

6th - 8th Grade will meet 9:30 - 10:10 upstairs in Room 9 with leaders Mike Grady and Stacey Nakasian.

9th - 11th Grade will meet 9:30 - 10:10 upstairs in Room 7 with leaders Tom Sprague and Ali Poirer.

There is no registration fee! We are looking for some new Godly Play storytellers and greeters this year. If you'd like to learn more about serving in that ministry, please contact Theresa Deiters Muscat, our Director of Youth Faith Formation, at (415) 233-0761.

To help us as we prepare for the upcoming year, please complete the form located <u>Here</u> look for a paper form coming in the mail to you soon. We will also have forms available in our atrium. Our faith teaches us to care for the most vulnerable among us, and in keeping with that we will be observing CDC, State, and Diocesan guidelines to keep our classes as safe as possible.

Please contact Theresa at the number above or Mtr Tanya at (401) 684-2844 with any questions or concerns. We look forward to growing in our faith together!

Calling All Singers!

Calling All Singers! Come sing in a choir!

Our choirs resume after Labor Day. Have you considered participation in one of our choirs for you and/or your children? St. Luke's supports an active choral ministry, and new members of all ages are invited to sing. We will be following current CDC and state guidance for Covid safety protocols.

Contact Rodney Ayers, Minister of Music, for more information (<u>rodney@stlukeseg.org</u>)

REHEARSAL SCHEDULE

Angel Choir

PreK - 2nd Graders - Wednesdays at 4:30pm - beginning September 15

St. Cecilia Choir

3rd-12th grade Choristers - Fridays at 4pm - beginning September 10

Canterbury Choir

Adult Choir - Thursdays at 7:30pm - beginning September 9



Coffee Hour

Coffee Hour Volunteers

People don't come to coffee hour just for a cup of joe; they want a human connection, something we all have missed during the pandemic! Here's a place where we build community one cup at a time.

We need your help! Father Tim would like to resume Coffee Hour. For now, we are only offering coffee and juice- no food.

As usual, our sexton, Tim, will set up the coffee urn in the morning. The Coffee Hour host simply needs to set up the coffee "station" with cups, sugars, creamer and napkins. These supplies (except the creamer) are all kept in the armoire in the Blackburn Room. There will be a table set up in the narthex near the stairs where you can set up a juice "station" with small juice cups and napkins. Tablecloths can be found in the armoire also.

So, the host would bring half and half as well as some type of juice. Everything else is provided. After the 10:15am service's coffee hour, the urns would need to be cleaned out and stored in the Blackburn Room and you would need to ensure that coffee grounds go in the trash.

Please consider signing up for an upcoming Sunday so we can properly extend our hospitality and reconnect. Christina put the sign-up sheet on the wall across from the office. You can sign up at church or call Christina in the office at 401-884-4116 and she'll add you to the list.

We look forward to seeing you all soon,

Tracy 401-447-0472

Marcia

Loaves and Fishes

Loaves and Fishes

We'd like to thank everyone who donated supplies and food to this month's Loaves and Fishes run to the Family Shelter in Woonsocket. The meals, backpacks with school supplies, underwear, and other supplies were very much appreciated by the shelter. It felt great to help the people there who are in such desperate need. Keep your eye out for plans for our next run on September 25th. The shelter staff identified a need in the future for bath towels, facecloths, and used DVD players. We couldn't continue this mission without your support."



Pastoral Care

Pastoral Care Ministry

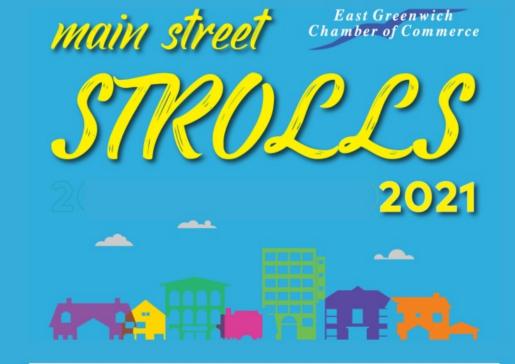
Our next Pastoral Care Meeting will be held on September 8 at 1 pm in the Blackburn Room.

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

Main Street Strolls



St. Luke's at Taste of East Greenwich Stroll Thursday, September 16 -- 5pm to 8pm

St. Luke's will be there to celebrate this community wide event -- meeting and greeting our neighbors. Local restaurants will be serving up samples from their kitchens -- so, be prepared to feast!

You will find us at 294 Main Street... home of Walsh & Associates.

Join us!

Music On The Hill



Baroque and Beyond

Friday, September 3, 2021 at 7:00 pm St. Luke's Episcopal Church

Born at St. Luke's in 1974, **Music on the Hil**l has grown into a statewide program with concerts in Providence, Jamestown, Wickford, Westerly, and more. Come and enjoy an evening of music performed by native Rhode Island professional musicians and their friends.

Please visit https://www.musiconthehillri.org/to purchase your tickets and view the full program for this extraordinary concert. Following the concert, all are invited to meet and greet the musicians.

MASKS REQUIRED FOR ALL

St. Luke's RaiseRight Program

More Summer Bonuses for You and St. Luke's!

Enjoy the rest of summer and raise funds for St. Luke's!

Make the most of the final month of summer. Whether you're squeezing in another trip, home project or party with friends, buy everything you need with e-cards from RaiseRight and raise money for a cause you care about.



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



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

St. Luke's Birthdays, Anniversaries, and Special Days of Thanksgiving

St. Luke's Birthdays, Anniversaries, & Special Days of Thanksgiving

Would you like to celebrate your birthday, anniversary, graduation or other special day with St. Luke's?

We are compiling a list of parishioners' birthdays, anniversaries, and other important dates. If you would like to have a thanksgiving offered during the weekly Prayers of the People, <u>please</u> <u>complete this form</u>. An appropriate thanksgiving will be included during the prayers.

Any questions? Please email Christina (<u>cimondi@stlukeseg.org</u>) or call the parish office (401-884-4116). Happy Celebrating!

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).



Big Brothers and Big Sisters

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!**

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:

Kidney beans, cannellini beans, baked beans, pasta sauce, rice/pasta sides, ramen noodles, cooking

stock, canned pineapple, hash, chili, yellow cake mix, Italian or ranch dressing, ketchup, juice (64 oz), crackers, cookies and mayonnaise.

Thank you! EG Interfaith Food Cupboard

> St. Luke's Episcopal Church | (401) 884-4116 cimondi@stlukeseg.org | http://stlukeseg.org 99 Peirce Street East Greenwich, RI 02818

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