

St. Luke's Episcopal Church

Where all are welcome at the Lord's table

December 3, 2023

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Dear Brothers and Sisters,

When you next come into our atrium you will notice the "Gratitude Tree" is gone, replaced by the "Giving Tree." It seems a fitting transition.

First, let me say, I am grateful to Amy Weigand, our Director of Youth and Family Ministries, for sharing her artistic talents with us. She crafted a Gratitude Tree so beautiful that even my new puppy, Findley, when roaming the halls, thought it the real deal (much to my embarrassment!). And I am equally grateful to all of you who made the tree "bloom" with leaves of gratitude. To think that those leaves represented a special relationship for each of you just warms my

Researchers suggest that gratitude fosters generosity, which is why I think it makes perfect sense that the Gratitude Tree now gives way to our Giving Tree. In an experience which mirrors the Gratitude Tree bloom, with the Giving Tree, we are invited to "prune" it of its leaves (or in this case, bells, stars, etc.), plucking from the tree ornaments which bear the Christmas wishes of our neighbors, many who have limited resources to make for a "merry Christmas."

Upon careful examination, you will find an ornament which reads, "a Walmart gift card" or "a Stop & Shop gift certificate." These wishes might seem modest to many of us, but for some in the wider East Greenwich community, they represent much-needed gifts.

Please take an ornament home with you, as you next leave St. Luke's. And then, return your purchases along with the ornament to our office no later than December 13. Volunteers will package the certificates and see that they get to our neighbors in ample time for Christmas. (If you're interested in assisting Santa's elves with final preparations, let Christina or Judy Horton, the Giving Tree coordinator, know!)

One of the wonderful truths about the relationship between gratitude and generosity is that they are a self-reinforcing circle of sorts. Just as gratitude fosters generosity, so too does generosity beget gratitude. Which then often leads to further generosity, which produces still more gratitude... and so it goes.

Whether or not you helped the Gratitude Tree "bloom," it's not too late to enter into this sacred circle. Your participation in the Giving Tree enables you to get on that magical merry-go-round of gratitude and generosity.

May all of us enjoy the merry-go-round ride so that, come December 25, others may enjoy a merry Christmas.

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St. Luke's TikTok, Instagram and Facebook



This Sunday at St. Luke's

The First Sunday of Advent

Click above for the lessons.

8:00 am Holy Eucharist with Sermon 10:00 am Holy Eucharist with Sermon

We are glad to offer YouTube livestream for our 10:00 am Sunday Service. Please <u>Click Here</u> to worship with us via YouTube.

Click Here to download a copy of the parish prayer list.

The Rev. Timothy T. Rich, Rector, Preaching

Covid Update

St. Luke's Has Shifted to a Mask At Your Own Discretion Practice

Town Hall Meeting

We Will Have A Town Hall Meeting In The Dining Room On Sunday, December 3, at 9 am

Please join us!

Join Us For Advent!

ST. LUKE'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

Faith Community for the season of Advent, beginning on Sunday, December 3rd





Sunday, December 17th Christmas Concert at 4:00pm

Sunday, December 24th - Christmas Eve Advent Service with Eucharist at 9:00am Family Service with Holy Eucharist at 4:00pm Service with Holy Eucharist at 7:00pm Choral Prelude at 10:30pm with Holy Eucharist following at 11:00pm

Monday, December 25th - Christmas Day Holy Eucharist at 10:00am

Sunday, December 31st A Service of Lessons and Carols with Holy Eucharist - One service at 10:00am

Sunday, January 7th Holy Eucharist at 8:00am Epiphany Children's Pageant at 10:00am

Join us for worship on Sunday mornings at 8:00am and 10:00am

99 Peirce Street, East Greenwich, RI 02818 | (401) 884-4116



The Giving Tree



Thank you again for your generosity last year to the Giving Tree. We have just put the tags on the Christmas tree and we already have ten inquiries. It provides an opportunity for each of us to make a big difference in some family's lives. We are asking again if you could please purchase a gift card from Walmart or Stop & Shop. With these cards families can purchase gifts and food for their family. Simply pull a tag(s) from the Giving Tree and purchase the gift card. Then return the card and tag to Christina (in the office) or mail it to St. Luke's. We will need the cards to be returned by December 13th.

We would like to give special thanks to Deb and John Lukens for purchasing a new, beautiful Christmas tree. We are praying this Giving Tree will help families enjoy the Christmas season.

Sincerely, The Giving Tree Committee

Hanging Of The Greens



Christmas Concert



cookie reception to follow



99 Peirce Street, East Greenwich www.StLukesEG.org | 401-884-4116





Christmas Flower and Music Memorials

Christmas Flower & Music Memorials

As in years past, we invite you to remember loved ones this Christmas season by making a memorial gift to St. Luke's. Simply make out your check to St. Luke's Church and let us know both how you would like it directed and for whom your contribution has been given. Please submit names to the office by Wednesday, December 13.

Suggested donation for the Poinsettias and Music Memorials is \$10 per name. You can email names to Christina in the office at <u>cimondi@stlukeseg.org</u> or fill out the form in our Sunday bulletin and mail or drop off with your check to St. Luke's.

Thank you for your generosity. May your loved ones continue to rest eternal with the communion of saints and may God bless you in the weeks to come.







Advent Blog Series

Advent Blog Series – 2023

Beginning December 3 and running through December 25

In what has become a tradition at St. Luke's, parishioners are invited to read, reflect, and write on daily readings. Interested in writing an Advent blog?

Contact Christina Imondi at cimondi@stlukeseg.org



Click on the QR code above, visit our Advent Blog Series 2023 page (https://stlukeseg.org/advent-blog-2023), and subscribe for automatic email notifications when new blogs have been posted! Previous blog subscribers are automatically signed up.

Stained Glass Book Sale

Stained Glass Window Books

Have you ever asked, how can I give to St. Luke's Church and get something in return?

By purchasing "The Stained Glass Windows of St. Luke's Church" book at \$20, you will help care for and maintain the windows of St. Luke's every year!

It has been said that St. Luke's has the finest collection of stained-glass windows in the state of Rhode Island!

Members of the Pastoral Care Committee and volunteers will be at the tables in the Atrium selling these books following both services starting November 26 through December 17th.

Why not gift a book for you and one for a favorite friend at Christmas?



Epiphany Pageant

Epiphany Pageant

Sunday, January 7th, 10:00am

Calling All Children, Teens, And Those Who Are Young At Heart!

All people of St. Luke's from pre-school through high school and beyond are welcomed and encouraged to be part of this year's Epiphany Pageant, the telling of the Christmas Story.

Costumes are provided and there are no lines to memorize!

There will be only one rehearsal for the pageant. It will be on Saturday, January 6, from 10 am - Noon.

A sign-up sheet is available in the Atrium. For more information, please speak with Rodney Ayers at rodney@stlukeseg.org or Amy Weigand at amy@stlukeseg.org.

Adult Faith Formation

Adult Faith Formation Book Study

Join us for a soul journey as we read *Surrender to Love* by David Benner, PhD. Wednesdays during Advent and Christmas at 7pm by Zoom. We will meet November 29, December 6 and 13, and January 3 and 10.

This book explores the themes of love and surrender as the heart of Christian spirituality. Reflecting on Scripture and Christian tradition, Dr. Benner shows how God invites us to trust fully in God's perfect love. God is love, and God wants us to live in this love. *Surrender to Love* will lead us to an unexpected place, where yielding to God frees us to become who God created us to be.

God doesn't want us to respond out of fear or obligation. Rather, God invites us to enter into an authentic relationship of intimacy and devotion as God calls us to move beyond obedience—by surrendering to love.

David Benner, PhD, is an internationally known psychologist whose work has been directed toward facilitating a journey of awakening and transformation. This book focuses on living the spiritual journey in a deeply human way and the human journey in a deeply spiritual way.

For December 6, please read Chapter 2.

Class discussions will be by way of Zoom on Wednesdays, running from 7:00-8:30. Please join us!

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

Meeting ID: 867 3899 9469

Passcode: 427552

Treasurer's Notes

From the Treasurer

October Month End

Oct, 2023	2023 YTD	Budget	Var	2022 YTD	Var
Pledge Income	\$385,567	\$390,000	(\$4,433)	\$386,266	(\$699)
Loose Plate	\$31,225	\$38,000	(\$6,775)	\$43,468	(\$12,243)
Other Personal Inc.	\$52,910	\$40,450	\$12,460	\$69,558	(\$16,648)
Total Personal Inc.	\$469,702	\$468,450	\$1,252	\$499,292	(\$29,590)
Total Other Inc	\$76,460	\$80,067	(\$3,607)	\$74,817	\$1,643
Total Income	\$546,162	\$548,517	(\$2,355)	\$574,109	(\$27,947)
Staff Expenses	\$364,638	\$383,185	(\$18,547)	\$376,709	(\$12,071)
Facilities Expenses	\$100,630	\$118,953	(\$18,323)	\$153,538	(\$52,908)
Program Expenses	\$22,946	\$28,579	(\$5,633)	\$19,040	\$3,906
Outreach Expense	\$91,218	\$92,490	(\$1,272)	\$75,180	\$16,038
Total Expenses	\$579,432	\$623,207	(\$43,775)	\$624,315	(\$44,883)
Net Income	(\$33,270)	(\$74,691)	\$41,421	(\$50,206)	\$16,936

Notes:

Income:

- We are within 0.4% of budget for total income
- · Let's end strong!

Expenses:

- · Choir room window replacement has been completed (Parishioner gift paid for most of this cost)
- The new 1st floor carpeting for the hallways and staircase has been selected and should be installed by the end of November for a rough cost of \$18,000.
- · Sound system upgrades to add some new microphones and equipment has been installed. (Parishioner gift will cover all of this cost)

Many thanks for your continued support!

Mike



Vanco





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

No cost to you or the Church

each payment.

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

IRA Donations to St. Luke's

Did You Know?

The IRA Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD) allows for direct gifts to St. Luke's Church through your IRA:

- An easy way to make a gift or fulfill your pledge from your IRA
- · A tax-free rollover is excluded from your gross income
- A great way to meet your Required Minimun Distribution (RMD) at 72 years of age

The Rules of IRA Qualified Charitable Distributions:

- It must be from an IRA (other retirement accounts are not eligible)
- Transfers must go directly to St. Luke's from your IRA
- You must be 70 1/2 at the time of your gift
- Your total IRA gifts cannot exceed \$100,000

To Learn More

- Consult with your financial advisor or attorney
- Contact Michael Sullivan, St. Luke's Treasurer, by email at treasurer@stlukeseg.org

Flower Chairperson

Flower Chairperson

We are looking for someone to take over the role of Flower Chairperson. We would like thank Pat Savage for her many years of coordinating flower memorials! We have been blessed to have her help with this role!

It's not a difficult task, it involves ordering flowers each Sunday, provided by a florist who delivers them to the church. Christmas and Easter flowers are delivered also, and we have several volunteers to help out with this as well.

Please reach out to us if you are interested in participating as our Flower Chairperson. Thank you!

Liz Fox and Lisa Johnson Altar Guild Chairs

Women of Grace

Join WofG for a **YogaMass** - a worship experience that engages all of our physical, spiritual and psychological beings through yoga and the holy eucharist.

Women of Grace will be meeting Monday, December 4 th, at 7:00pm with a YogaMass at 7:30pm. All women of St. Luke's are Women of Grace and invited to join us in this unique opportunity to quiet the mind and center the self as we celebrate the birth of Jesus and remember the true meaning of Christmas.

YogaMass is geared to all women regardless of physical ability. Please feel comfortable to practice floor yoga or chair - your choice. If you have a mat, please bring it. We will have some available.

As usual, we will gather for some fellowship at 7:00pm. with YogaMass to follow. For planning purposes, kindly RSVP to Deb Lukens at <u>deblukens73@gmail.com</u> or text (908)500-4573.

Christ's Community Kitchen Dinner

Christ's Community Kitchen

St. Luke's Church Dining Room December 18, 2023 From 5-6:30 pm

St. Luke's is hosting a wonderful chicken parmesan dinner in our Dining Room!

Please join us!

Free Will Offering – All Are Welcome

Lunch on the Hill

Welcome Back - "Lunch On The Hill"

Matthew 25:35
I was hungry and you gave me food,
I was thirsty and you gave me drink,
I was a stranger and you welcomed me.....

Prior to shut down due to Covid, Saint Luke's "Lunch on the Hill" offered lunches every Wednesday to our surrounding community with a focus on the clients of the Food Pantry. "Lunch On The Hill" has resumed lunches on the 2nd and 4th Wednesday every month.

You may recall that in the past lunches had been provided by local restaurants with sides being provided by the host Church. Due to the current economy and shortage of labor, we will be moving ahead with a combination of lunches provided by a restaurant and lunches prepared in Saint Luke's Community Kitchen.

Saint Luke's/ EG Food Pantry will provide lunch on the 2nd Wednesday. Saint Luke's will prepare Sandwiches, sides, salads, desert etc. The EG food Pantry will assist in providing food to prepare.

Our Lady of Mercy (OLM)/ Wild Harvest will provide lunch on the 4 th Wednesday. Wild Harvest will provide sandwiches and soup or a side. OLM will provide additional sides, salad, desert etc.

We are excited about resuming our outreach to our community and support to our neighbors.

Saint Luke's Here's how you can help:

Volunteers (3 or 4) from 9:30 to 12:30 needed to assist in preparation and serving of lunch on the 2nd Wednesday of the month.

Donations of deserts, baked goods, fruit by 10:00 am on the second Wednesday of the month.

For more information on how you can be part of this outreach ministry you can contact:

Steve McLoughlin smcloughlin2@aol.com, 401 225 5540

Loaves and Fishes

Loaves And Fishes

November was the largest turnout this year, we gave away 100 bags and the tent city continues to grow. For December we are increasing the bag count to 130 with 20 bags going to the Hotel in East Greenwich.

The offerings will be cheeseburgers, hot dogs, peanut butter and jelly sandwiches, and the regular other items included in the bag are shown in the SignUp Genius. It is appreciated if all donations can be in the St Luke's kitchen by 10:00 AM on December 16, 2023. If you are dropping off items before December 16, please mark them for Loaves and Fishes.

In signing up, there is no expectation that one person needs to fulfill the total amount of a particular item. When using the SignUp Genius, please indicate how many of an item you will be donating.

With the cold weather coming, there is a great need for warm sweatshirts or fleece, either new or gently used and hats and gloves. Hoods are always a helpful addition. If clothing donations could be delivered before December 16, it would be appreciated and please leave them by the Parish office.

<u>Click Here</u> to sign up!

If you are not receiving the SignUp Genius in your e-mail and would like to do so, please send an e-mail to: saintlukesfeedingministry@gmail.com

Your generosity is most appreciated. It allows St. Luke's to continue helping those in need.

Thank you!

Food for Backpacks!

Our Food for Backpacks ministry is delivering to East Greenwich food insecure families. The appreciation and gratitude was deeply felt by both the receiving and the giving. For many of the families weekends are especially difficult as school breakfasts and lunches are not provided. Our first team of volunteers all expressed it was a moving experience, were grateful to participate, and are excited to continue the service. If you are already on the volunteer list, we will be contacting you as we developed a rotating schedule. If you're not on the list and would like to know more about it or would like to join with us, please contact:

Caroline Sparhawk : cdsparhawk@gmail.com

Joyce Harvey: joyce836@gmail.com



Undie Sundays!

As things start to improve around the state, the community we serve is in need of certain items, so we will be reinstating "UNDIE SUNDAYS". On the first Sunday of every month we are calling on your generosity to provide us with **new underwear** and **summer socks** for men and women. You can leave these items in the church atrium where a basket will be provided in front of the office. Thank you!

Pastoral Care

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

Help Ukrainian Families

Help Ukrainian Families

As we pray for an end to violence and for those fleeing Ukraine, please also pray for Episcopal Relief & Development and other ecumenical agencies working to respond to the current crisis. Specific needs will change as the crisis evolves. As of right now, there is a need for cash, blankets and hygiene supplies. Let's support Episcopal Relief & Development as they help families fleeing the violence. Visit episcopalrelief.org for more information.

Dorcas Donations

Dorcas Donations

Dorcas Intentional Institute is looking for **children's clothes** for the refugee families they serve.

Many of them come from warm weather climates, like Africa and Central America and they find our winters pretty harsh. Even in summer they are often seen with heavy coats.

As you are cleaning out your closets and making room for winter clothes, please be on the lookout for children's clothing in good condition. You can drop them off in the donation box in the atrium.

Thanks in advance.

Questions - please ask Nancy Rudicil (aer39th@netzero.com) or Cathi Sloan (cathisloan@gmail.com)

Photos Wanted!

Photos Wanted!

Do you have photos of St Luke's church or at any events that we have hosted? As we work to increase our digital footprint, we would love the opportunity to share photos from our parishioners on our social media and communication channels. If you have photos that you'd like to share with us, please email them to Emma Peterson, our Social Media Specialist & Digital Evangelist, at Emma@StLukesEG.org.

Coffee Hour

Coffee Hour is Back!

We are pleased to announce that Coffee Hour is back! As Covid restrictions are being lifted somewhat, we feel it's the right time to bring back Coffee Hour.

We need your help! There is a quarterly sign-up sheet posted across from the office under our beautiful mosaic. Both services have spots to sign up to host a Sunday. We will continue to host in the atrium until our kitchen is ready. Our sexton makes the urn of coffee in the morning. The host provides juice, creamer for the coffee (although powdered coffee creamer is available in a pinch), and some baked goods of some sort. All supplies like cups, napkins, sugar, utensils are all located in the cupboard in the Blackburn Room. There are a few platters you can use to put goodies on. A table is set up in the atrium with a tablecloth on it. Afterwards, we ask that the coffee urn be washed out and set out to dry in the sink area of the Blackburn Room.

You can host with a friend, you can host with your kids, you can host solo - it's a wonderful way to be part of our St. Luke's hospitality – welcoming new faces and encouraging us all to reconnect in person after so many months of being apart. Jesus equated our love for each other and our neighbors with our love for Him. "Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me." (Matthew 25:40)

Thank you for your help making St. Luke's a loving and welcoming space!

In His Service, Tracy Sampson (10:15am service) 401-447-0472 Marcia Gladue (7:45am service) 401-241-1821

Grief Support Group



Grief is hard work!

It is even more difficult when we feel like we need to figure it out all on our own!

But ...

We Need Not Walk Alone!

St. Luke's has just started a Grief Support Group for Widows and Widowers. If your spouse has died within the last few years, this group is for you!

Please join us in the Blackburn Room on the 4th Saturday each month at 10 am and let's navigate through this challenging journey of grief together!

I work as a Bereavement Specialist for Southcoast VNA and a large portion of what I do is to facilitate Grief Support Groups.

I am so very grateful for the opportunity to facilitate a group with my St. Luke's family.

Feel free to reach out if you have any questions!

Nancy Arnold - nancearnold@yahoo.com

Our next meeting of the group will be December 23, 2023 – 10 am

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 (cimondi@stlukeseg.org) 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!

As we head into summer, the shelves are getting bare as the need goes up.

Needed this month: Cans of Hash, Chili, Spam, Beef Stew, Hearty Soups, Ravioli, Jelly/Jam, Mashed Potatoes, Cans and Jars of Pasta Sauce, Ground Coffee, Large Bottles of Juice, Vegetable Oil, Cans of Beef and Chicken Gravy, Cereal, Pancake Mix, Peanut Butter, and of course Monetary Donations are always welcome.

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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