



St. Luke's Episcopal Church

Where all are welcome at the Lord's table

weekly

December 31, 2023

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A Note From Bishop Knisely

A friend of mine once gave me a small stone from the Sea of Galilee as a gift. He told me about how he had waded out into the water of the lake to reach down and find a stone that he thought Jesus himself might have once walked upon. I am deeply touched by his thoughtful gift, and that little stone has a place of honor among the other wonderful little gifts that people shared with me over the years. But let me tell you something ... if we spend a moment and do a little math, we can work out that with every breath we take, we inhale and exhale hundreds and thousands of atoms of air that our Lord inhaled and exhaled during the time of his earthly incarnation among us. **With every breath we take we breathe the breath of Christ Jesus – the Lamb of God, our Savior and our Redeemer.**

So, our breath is sacred because in it we are united with Christ. But our unity to God doesn't just start or stop with our breath — it is found in the water we drink, the food we consume, the tears we shed, the water with which we baptize, the bread and the wine we eat and drink. All things upon this wondrous earth have been touched by God, not only through creation, but through the Incarnation of Jesus upon this planet we all share.

God who made all things, the heavens and the Earth, the galaxies, the stars, planets, moons, comets, the fires of space and the music of the spheres, literally shares the very breath we breathe — as we all share together in the existence that God undergirds with Agape love.

The meaning of the Incarnation is that there can be no artificial divorce between the heavenly and the earthly. It reminds us that the Greeks were wrong when they thought that the only way to find the divine was to reject the earthly. Instead, because of the doctrine of the incarnation, God with Us, Immanuel, we know that there is no place in our lives upon this planet Earth that we cannot encounter God and God's redemptive love.

Let me repeat that — there is no divorce between Heaven and Earth. This is the message of the Incarnation. God in Jesus has redeemed it all. There is no need to escape the earthly and move toward the heavenly.

I'll tell you a great secret — if you look around you cannot avoid stumbling over the presence of God. Certainly, there are times when it is easier to see God in the world — like in the joy of Christmas morning as friends and family gather to exchange gifts and luxuriate in the warmth of their shared love. We see God in the faces of the volunteers at soup kitchens that on Christmas Day will feed hundreds of people, giving earthly food and joy to people who may not have either. But we can also see God in the face of a person laying ill in the hospital tonight, knowing that so many people are working to return them to health. We can even see God in long lines at the stores these past days, knowing that family members are so grateful for our presence in their life that they are willing to endure long waits to find us that simple gift that will show us how much we mean to them.

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Stay Connected



St. Luke's TikTok, Instagram and Facebook



Stay up to date with all things St. Luke's, and follow us on **TikTok, Instagram, & Facebook** @StLukesEG

This Sunday at St. Luke's

[The First Sunday of Christmas](#)

Click above for the lessons.

10:00 am First Sunday of Christmas with Holy Eucharist and Lessons and Carols Service

We are glad to offer YouTube livestream for our 10 am Holy Eucharist Service. Please [Click Here](#) to worship with us via YouTube.

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

No matter where you are, you can find God. God is present in the quiet wind whispering through the dark and fragrant pine branches tonight. God is present in the candles glowing on the altar. God is present far out to sea on the crests of the foamy waves moving silently through the starry night upon the great deep. God is present in the little smile of a child anticipating the joys of tomorrow morning. God is present in the heart of the great-grandmother who sits by the fire and treasures the memories of Christmases long ago. God is present in the bread and the wine that we share with each other tonight, remembering the reason that Jesus came into this world.

If you would know the true meaning of Christmas — look for signs of the Incarnation. God will show you that there is nothing that cannot be redeemed, nothing that God cannot love, including you and me. Even the part of us that we can't love, God already does. That's ultimately why the Incarnation is so important.

+Nicholas

[Click Here](#) to hear more from Bishop Knisely about the meaning of Christmas in the video of his Christmas sermon.

Covid Update

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

One Service Only

ONE SERVICE ONLY

Sunday, January 28th
@ 9 a.m.

Followed by St. Luke's
189th Annual Meeting

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year From Your St. Luke's Family!



Join Us For Advent!

Join the ST. LUKE'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH



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



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

   @stlukeseg

The Giving Tree



Wow! How amazing is the St. Luke's family community! The Giving Tree Committee is very appreciative of the generous donations that came from all of the parishioners of St. Luke's. Because of you, we were able to help 22 families! You gave so many Stop & Shop, Walmart and Target cards! We had grandmothers and aunts who are taking care of children and many of these 22 families are working parents that just do not have the extra cash for the holidays. We can't thank you enough for all of your donations!

Merry Christmas to all!

May the Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you; the Lord lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace. (Numbers 6:24-26)

Judy, Nora, Lois, Helen, Ruth, Sue, Mimi, and Deb

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.

Pledge Envelopes

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

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 January 3, please read Chapter 4.

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

[Click Here](#) to join! Zoom Meeting Information is below:

January Comparative Religion Class

This adult education offering will serve as opportunity to dip our toes in the water, exploring points of intersection and difference between the three Abrahamic faiths: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. We'll cover three broad themes, the role of scripture, creation narratives, and stories of salvation, while also exploring avenues for future exploration and discussion.

Classes will be in-person from 11:30 am to 1:00 pm on the following three Sundays: January 15th, 21st, and February 4th. Pizza or roll-ups will be provided. Please bring a side or dessert to share.

Treasurer's Notes

From the Treasurer

November Month End

| Nov, 2023 | 2023 YTD | Budget | Var. | 2022 YTD | Var. |
|---------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Pledge Income | \$423,404 | \$430,000 | (\$6,596) | \$424,735 | (\$1,331) |
| Loose Plate | \$36,623 | \$42,400 | (\$5,777) | \$48,419 | (\$11,796) |
| Other Personal Inc. | \$59,712 | \$40,950 | \$18,762 | \$69,828 | (\$10,116) |
| Total Personal Inc. | \$519,739 | \$513,350 | \$6,389 | \$542,982 | (\$23,243) |
| Total Other Inc. | \$80,524 | \$84,333 | (\$3,809) | \$130,893 | (\$50,369) |
| Total Income | \$600,263 | \$597,683 | \$2,580 | \$673,875 | (\$73,612) |
| | | | | | |
| Staff Expenses | \$402,123 | \$421,499 | (\$19,376) | \$411,673 | (\$9,550) |
| Facilities Expenses | \$135,531 | \$129,726 | \$5,805 | \$214,824 | (\$79,293) |
| Program Expenses | \$25,690 | \$32,152 | (\$6,462) | \$21,412 | \$4,278 |
| Outreach Expense | \$99,790 | \$101,078 | (\$1,288) | \$81,866 | \$17,924 |
| Total Expenses | \$663,893 | \$684,454 | (\$20,561) | \$729,816 | (\$65,923) |
| | | | | | |
| Net Income | (\$63,630) | (\$86,771) | \$23,141 | (\$55,941) | (\$7,689) |

Notes:

Income:

- Pretty much on budget for the year. We had some designated gifts for sound system enhancements and new windows in the choir room.

Expenses:

- Almost all the improvements have been made and paid for. (New carpets look so nice!) Over all expenses still slightly under budget for the year.

We would like to acknowledge and thank all who attended our Financial Town Hall on the 3rd. We felt the general consensus of the room was an overall willingness to overcome the financial challenges presented. (Treasurer's side note – I think you are all amazing!)

Peace and Grace,

Vanco and PayPal QR Codes If You Would Like To Donate



Vanco



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



| Online Banking | Zelle Transfer | VANCO Payment Solutions | Direct Payment From IRA |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 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. | 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. | 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 | 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. | No cost to you or the Church | Transaction Fees for the Church | No cost to you or the Church |

Women of Grace

Women of Grace

January 8, 7 pm, at St. Luke's Dining Room

Women of Grace will welcome in the new year with a discussion on *When God Winks*. Is there more to coincidence than meets the eye? Are those random events that happen in your life coincidence or are they winks, meaning a signal or message from a higher power?

Please join us January 8th, 7:00pm, in St. Luke's Dining Room where we will share coincidences in our lives and explore whether they are "God Winks".

All women are welcome. Feel free to bring a savory or sweet to share. Kindly RSVP to Deb Lukens, deblukens73@gmail.com, or 908-500-4573.

Christ's Community Kitchen Dinner

Christ's Community Kitchen

St. Luke's Church Dining Room

**January 29, 2024
From 5-6:30 pm**

St. Luke's is hosting a wonderful 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 4th 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

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 **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.

We are also seeking volunteers to deliver clothing to the Dorcas clothing collaborative in Providence. Please contact Nancy Rudicil for more information.

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
January 27, 2024 – 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, **please complete this form**. 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

St. Luke's Food Cupboard

For several years, the Food Cupboard has benefited by receiving donations from Stop and Shop on Frenchtown Rd. These donations include meat, milk and dairy products, bread and other items that are pulled from the shelves before their use by dates expire. Stop and Shop would like us to pick up three times a week rather than the one time we currently do. We would like to put together two more teams to pick up Wednesdays and Fridays. The pickups would be done around 8:15 AM allowing time to get to the Food Cupboard and weigh, count and restock the items before the Food Cupboard opens at 10:30. Chris will train each volunteer and each person will have about 15 minutes training by computer. We need volunteers who can lift 45 pounds and who can commit to the early pickup time each week for an hour or so.

This is a critical program for the Food Cupboard, and we would really appreciate anyone who is willing to help as a volunteer! Please help so we can continue to benefit from this program. Anyone interested should call Chris or Steve Bartlett 401 885-5889 or chrisbartlettri@gmail.com or dufferdogri@gmail.com

Thank you!

Chris and Steve Bartlett

St. Luke's Episcopal Church | (401) 884-4116
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