

December 2023

St. Luke Presbyterian Church

Epistle

December 2023 | Volume 59, Issue 12
Nan Kemp & Dynette Hofmann, Co-Editors



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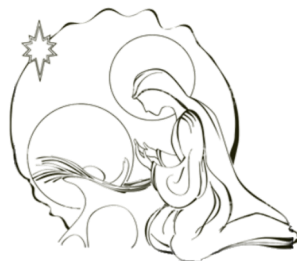
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*For unto you is born
this day in the city of
David a Savior,
which is Christ the
Lord. And this shall
be a sign unto you;
Ye shall find the
babe wrapped in
swaddling clothes,
lying in a manger.*

~ Luke 2:11-12



R U L I N G E L D E R S

Class of '23 **ROTATING OFF**

Ann Hefner
Camille Hoy
Bob McCracken
Doug Tanner

Class of '24
Jennifer Denham
Kendra Jones
Tim Lacey
Cruse Messer

Class of '25
Ross Clopton
Bob Hansen
Barbara Taylor
Kary Wingo

Class of '26
ELDERS ELECT
Paige Hadley
Priscilla Sheets
Tim Sougstad
Helen Thorsheim

Session Highlights

Below is a short summary of the session meeting on November 19.

Clerk's Report

- * October 2023 average attendance for worship - 62.
- * Active membership as of October 30, 2023 - 143.
- * Communion celebrated on November 5, 2023 with **David Kemp** presiding.
- * **Medora Williams** entered the Church Triumphant on October 31, 2023.

Commendation and Suggestions

- * All of the volunteers who came to pass out candy at the Trunk or Treat. Another successful year and many in the LGBTQIA+ community were amazed at how many church people were a part of the event.
- * **Nicole Payne** for her service to St. Luke in the nursery.
- * **David and Nan Kemp** for sponsoring a table in honor of St. Luke at the Women of GSA Women of Distinction Event.
- * **Dynette Hofmann**, St. Luke's Admin, has attended many events such as the Trunk or Treat and the Coming Home Event. Thank you.
- * **Mary Holmlund** for the music at Medora's service and **Mila** and **Mary** for their duet.
- * **Rev. Robin Gantz** for presiding over Medora's service and providing pastoral care to Medora's family.
- * **Susan Barnes** for crocheting blankets for the families of the two people who past away over the last year in the LGBTQIA+ community.
- * **Barbara Taylor** for participating in the Transgender Remembrance representing St. Luke.
- * Fellowship Committee for the great Thanksgiving Dinner.
- * **Helen Thorsheim** for taking leftover food from WNL to PARC.
- * Gypsies Ice Castles for their donations at AATAG Trunk or Treat.

December Birthday's

12/02 • Mary

12/02 • Susan

12/02 • Aubrey

12/04 • Sutton

12/05 • Phillip

12/09 • Barbara

12/12 • Nona

12/16 • Katrina

12/17 • Steven

12/19 • Brad

12/21 • Milam

12/27 • Kyle

12/27 • Judy

If your birthday is not listed or if there is an error, please call the church office.



St Luke Women

Presbyterian Women will meet Wednesday, December 13 at 9:30 a.m. in the fellowship hall. **Mary Holmlund** and **Donna Clopton** will provide the brunch. **Kendra Jones** will lead a short business meeting, then **Donna Clopton** will present the devotional. Lesson 4 is "Mary and Martha Encounter Jesus" from the Horizons Bible Study. All women of the church are invited to attend.

Stewardship Update

As always, the members and friends of St. Luke have shown their gratitude for God's gifts and their support of the church. Thank you for your abiding generosity of your time, treasure, and talents. If, somehow, time has gotten away with you, it's not too late to make an estimate of giving and/or a time and talents commitment for the coming year.

Please contact the church office.

~ YOUR FINANCE/STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE

THANK YOU

LIBRARY ADDITIONS

- *Benedict, Saint; Philip Freeman, translator. *The Rule of St. Benedict* (2020).
- *Cameron, Julia. *Seeking Wisdom: A Spiritual Path to Creative Connection; A 6-week Artist's Way Program* (2021).
- *Ehrman, Bart D. *Heaven and Hell: A History of the Afterlife* (2020).
- *Gascoigne, Bamber. *A Brief History of Christianity, Revised Edition* (2003).
- *Guengerich, Galen. *The Way of Gratitude: A New Spirituality for Today* (2020).
- *Hoff, Benjamin, translator. *The Eternal Tao Te Ching: The Philosophical Masterwork of Taoism and Its Relevance Today* (2021).
- *Steele, Andrew. *Ageless: The New Science of Getting Older Without Getting Old* (2020).
- *Williams, Ann R., General Editor. *Lost Cities, Ancient Tombs: 100 Discoveries That Changed the World* (2021).

Christmas Pageant December 13th

Mark your calendars for the AUMC and St. Luke Children's Christmas Pageant! It will be held on the evening of Wednesday, December 13 at 7:00 p.m., immediately following WNL dinner. Bring your favorite Christmas desserts/snacks and join us in the Fellowship Hall after the pageant for refreshments.

The pageant rehearsal will be held on December 6 after WNL dinner.

We hope to see everyone at this year's Christmas Pageant!

KARY WINGO

Outreach News

On behalf of the Outreach Committee, I would like to thank Dave and Nan Kemp for sponsoring a table at the Girl Scouts Women of Distinction banquet this year in St. Luke's name. Thank you Dave and Nan for all that you do for the Girl Scouts and reaching out into the community on behalf of our church.

JENNIFER DENHAM

AATAG (Amarillo Area Transgender Advocacy Group) will hold a holiday dinner on December 16 here at St Luke in the fellowship hall. Contact Teresa Burnett for more information (tbtwife5@gmail.com).

Postscripts

▷ Jennifer Denham was recognized at a celebration for West Texas A&M University's inaugural cohort of the Doctoral Educational Leadership program. She received a medallion that she wore at her graduation.

Do you have December Birthday?

The Endowment Committee encourages you to celebrate your birthday and the church together by donating the amount of your age. Your gift is added to St. Luke's Perpetual Endowment Fund to continue the mission of the church in years to come.



Important Deadline

As the end of 2023 approaches, please remember that St. Luke closes its fiscal year on December 31. *All contributions to be applied to the current year must be received by 3:30 p.m. on Friday, December 29.* If you made in-kind donations, send your receipts to the church office so that those may be acknowledged as well.

Please know that donations made through the church's online platform take *several* days to be deposited in St. Luke's bank account. Any online contributions to be applied to 2023 must be deposited in St. Luke's account by the close of the banking day on December 31; therefore, if you need to be certain that your gift is recorded for 2023, it is best to bring a check by the church office.

In the first full week of December, you will receive a Giving Statement (by email) that covers the period of January 1 to November 30. The purpose of this statement is to allow you to review that we have properly recorded all of your 2023-to-date gifts as you directed. It also gives you an opportunity to correct any errors or to catch up before the final 12-month statement is released in January 2024.

Your offerings, tithes, and special gifts make the ministries, missions, and programs of St. Luke Presbyterian Church possible.

THANK YOU for giving joyfully!
Hakarat Hatov!

Wednesday Night Live

- * Dec 6 - Chicken and Dumplings
After dinner, the youth and children will be practicing for the Christmas pageant. We will still have adult bible study.
- * Dec 13 - Fried Chicken
The Christmas pageant will begin at 7:00 p.m. We will have snacks immediately following the pageant. Please bring your favorite Christmas desserts.

All youth and children are welcome to attend, whether they are a regular attendee of WNL or not!!

Remember to contact **Kary Wingo**
If you plan on attending dinner.



Epistles

Dear Elves,

A big thank you from the members of the Congregational Care Committee for the care baskets provided by some very loving and anonymous elves. We were surprised and grateful for all the goodies we received.

MARY HOLMLUND

Dear St. Luke, AUMC and Friends,

A big THANK YOU for your donations to the Presbyterian Women Thank Offering. A total of \$328.81 was collected at our Thanksgiving Luncheon. All proceeds go towards various humanitarian projects throughout the country.

KENDRA JONES

NOROC Mission

Rev. Kristen Harris will lead our Sunday School (9:45 a.m.) and Worship Service (11:00 a.m.) on December 17.

NOROC (New Opportunities for Romanian Orphaned Children) is primarily dedicated to the care for orphans, but now their efforts also focus on Ukraine refugees. Please join Rev. Harris for Sunday School and Worship on December 17.

OFFICE SCHEDULE:

The church
office will be
closed
December
25th. Volunteers
will be filling in on
the 26th & 27th.



The Perfect Gift

CHRISTMAS JOY SPECIAL OFFERINGS

"Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver."

1 CORINTHIANS 9:7

When Jesus was born among us, he came as a helpless baby destined to bring joy, peace, and salvation to his people. This child, God's Word made flesh—fully human and fully God—became one of us. One with us. One among us. In all of our vulnerabilities, struggles, and triumphs, Jesus became one of us—leading us, knowing us, connecting us to himself and to each other, and offering us his gift of eternal life. *The perfect gift!*

Through the Christmas Joy Special Offering, we reflect God's perfect gift to us, with generous support of church leaders among us—past, present, and future—who have pointed us to God. This and other special offerings play an important role in defining what it means to be a connectional church in the 21st century, bringing together the diversity of the PC(USA) to focus and take faith-based action on shared concerns.

The Christmas Joy Special Offering will be received at St. Luke on or before Sunday, December 17. There are three ways that you can give:

- 1) Donate by credit card online at pcusa.org/christmasjoy.
(This is the preferred method.) If giving online, please provide the name of our congregation.
- 2) Text CHRISTMASJOY to 91999.
- 3) If you are unable to give by either of the electronic methods above, you may write a check payable to St. Luke with "Christmas Joy" noted on the memo line.

"Glory to you, God most high, you have given us a Savior, the messiah, the Lord; good news of great joy for all. Make us messengers of the gospel and shepherds of your people; guide us always in paths of peace; through Jesus Christ we pray."

~ LUKE 2:1-14

THANK YOU
for your faithful giving!



Detailed financial reports are always available for review by church members. Stop by the church office during regular hours and request to examine the previous month's financial documents.

OCTOBER 2023

Actual Income for October	
Budgeted Monthly Income	_____
Amount over expected income	
Actual Expenses for October	
Budgeted Monthly Expenses	_____
Amount under expected expenses	

YEAR-TO-DATE

Actual Income for 10 months	
Budgeted Income for 10 months	_____
Amount under expected income	
LESS	
Actual Expenses for 10 months	
Budgeted Expenses for 10 months	_____
Amount under expected expenses	

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
December 2023				 <i>Merry Christmas</i>	1 World AIDS Day	2 4:00 p.m. Christmas Setup Worship Committee
3 First Sunday of Advent Mesa Verde Sunday Elder Phillip Periman will fill the pulpit. Lighting of Advent Candles Begins	4 No Piano Class 5:30 pm Mission Com. Mtg.	5 10:00 am Exercise Group 4:00 pm Congregational Care Com. Mtg.	6 6:00 pm WNL - Dinner 6:30 pm Adult Bible Study Christmas Pageant Rehearsal	7 Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day 10:00 am Exercise Group 2:00 pm Threads of Love Ministry 6:00 p.m. Adult Bible Study Barbara Taylor's	8 	9 10:00 a.m. Cantata Setup Worship Committee
10 Second Sunday of Advent 10:00 a.m. SLPC Brunch 11:00 a.m. SLPC Christmas Cantata (Combined Choirs) 5:00 p.m. Sunday Meditation <i>Human Rights Day</i>	11 10:00 & 11:00 am Adult Piano Class 6:30 p.m. Outreach Comm Mtg	12 6:30 am Men's Breakfast 10:00 am Exercise Group 5:45 pm Worship Com. Mtg.	13 9:30 am St. Luke Women 12:00 p.m. Finance Comm Mtg 6:00 pm WNL - Dinner 7:00 p.m. Christmas Pageant	14 10:00 am Exercise Group 2:00 pm Threads of Love Ministry 6:00 p.m. Adult Bible Study Barbara Taylor's	15 	16 8:00 - 10:00 am Laundry Love Event @ 10th Street Laundry <i>Fellowship Hall reserved for AATAG Holiday Dinner.</i>
17 Third Sunday of Advent Rev. Kristen Harris will fill the pulpit Christmas Joy Special Offering 4:00 p.m. Stated Session Mtg	18 No Piano Class <i>E-piste deadline</i>	19 No Exercise Group	20 No Young at Heart	21 <i>Winter begins</i> No Exercise Group 2:00 pm Threads of Love Ministry 6:00 pm Blue Christmas Service	22 	23 
24 Christmas Eve 10:00 a.m. AUMC & SLPC Communion will be celebrated 6:00 p.m. SLPC & AUMC Lessons, Carols, & Candlelight Service	25 NATIVITY OF THE LORD Church office will be closed.	26 No Exercise Group	27 	28 No Exercise Group 2:00 pm Threads of Love Ministry	29 All contributions to be applied to 2023 giving must be in the office by 3:30 p.m.	30 
31 New Year's Eve Any online contributions to be applied to 2023 giving must be posted by the bank by the close of the bank day.	<p>“Holy God, all-glorious giver of grace, you are light, shining in darkness; you are life, the life of all people. Fill us with the light and life of Christ, through whom all things were made, so that we may be faithful disciples, bearing witness to your grace and truth; through Christ, your Word made flesh.”</p> <p style="text-align: right;">~ John 1:14</p>					

Piano Lessons

Piano lessons will take a winter break and will not meet December 4, December 18 & 25, or January 1. Lessons will resume on January 8.

SUE DUCKETT

Early Newsletter Deadline for Jan 2024

Due to the holidays, the deadline for the January edition of the *Epistle* will be Sunday, December 17. The newsletter will be emailed the last week of December. Send your news to editor **Nan Kemp**. If you are not on St. Luke's emailing list and would like to receive the newsletter, please contact the church office to be added.

Joys and Concerns

- ✧ **Joyce Baughn** fell and has broken her left arm. Please pray for her speedy recovery.

We extend our condolences and prayers to all who have lost loved ones. May God bless and comfort these families during this time of grief.

- ✝ We extend our love and sympathy to the family of **Dale Conner**, husband of **Judy Conner**, who entered the Church Triumphant in October. Please remember **Judy** in your prayers.

Continue to remember **Grace Acha**; **Dorothy Baggerly**; **Joyce Baughn**; **Rev. Bob Carson**; **Andy Chambers** (Steve Parker's husband); **Lucille Dunn**; **Leslie Hadley** (Kyle's mom); **Mindy Hayden**; **Margaret Heyde**; **Tom Heyde**; **Sarah Kangerga**; **Roger Osburn**; **Aaron Parker**; **Dennis Phelps** (Melissa Shields' father); **Donna Phipps**; **Sharon Remling**; **Marilyn Shillings**; **Rev. Karl Travis**; the St. Luke Session; the Pastor Nominating Committee; the staff and residents at Amarillo Children's Home; the people of our sister church Johnson Chapel A.M.E.; **Glenda Moore** and **Kind House Ukraine Bakery**; our participants and helpers at **Laundry Love**; and the students, teachers, and staff at **Mesa Verde Elementary School**.

'Tis the Season

★ Saturday, ★
December 2
Christmas setup | 4:00 p.m.

✱ Sunday, ✱
December 03
First Sunday of Advent
Lighting of Advent candles begins.
Adult Advent Study | 9:45 a.m.
Choir Practice | 10:15 a.m.
Worship Service | 11:00 a.m.
Childrens Church after Anthem

★ Wednesday, ★
December 06
WNL Dinner | 6:00 p.m.
Christmas Pageant Rehearsal | 6:30 p.m.

✱ Saturday, ✱
December 09
Cantata setup | 10:00 a.m.

★ Sunday, ★
December 10
Adult Advent Study | 9:45 a.m.
Cantata Brunch | 10:00 a.m.
SLPC Cantata | 11:00 a.m.
(Combined Choirs)

✱ Wednesday, ✱
December 13
WNL Dinner | 6:00 p.m.
Christmas Pageant | 7:00 p.m.
(followed by snacks)

★ Sunday, ★
December 17
AUMC Cantata | 9:00 a.m.
(Combined Choirs)

✱ Thursday, ✱
December 21
Blue Christmas Service
6:00 p.m. | Sanctuary

★ Sunday, ★
December 24
Combined Worship | 10:00 a.m.
Communion will be celebrated
Lessons, Carols & Candlelight Service | 6:00 p.m.
Combined Worship



Social Media Stats

In October 2023:

Facebook: We reached over 865 people, which is a 22% increase. 325 people have engaged with our page by liking, sharing, and commenting on the various posts throughout October. We had six new followers and about 400 people viewed our live stream worship services.

Instagram: At this time, we do not have any statistics. We are trying to link our Facebook and Instagram together. Hopefully we will have more information coming soon.

JENNIFER DENHAM

Men's Breakfast

All men of the church are welcome to meet at 6:30 a.m. on Dec. 12th (Tuesday) at HUD'S, 4411 Bell St., (east side of the street) for breakfast and fellowship. Kaci Jones will deliver the devotional.

See you there!

Mesa Verde Sunday!

The first Sunday of each month is designated "Mesa Verde Sunday." You are encouraged to bring facial tissue, disinfecting wipes, or lip balm to donate to our Partners in Education school. The Mission Committee sponsors this ongoing drive.

Thank you for your continued generosity!

Bring a Friend to Church!

The second Sunday of each month is "Bring a Friend" Sunday. This year the 2nd Sunday in December is the 10th, which is the date of our Cantata and Brunch. It will be a special treat for you and your guests!



"Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son and shall call him Immanuel"

~ Isaiah 7:14