



January 2017 Newsletter



St. Luke's Lutheran Church
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In Christ, all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form. — Colossians 2:9

In many ways Christmas is over the top excess. Put so many lights in your yard that the neighbors cannot sleep. Buy so many presents that they don't fit under the tree or in the budget. Eat so much that you hurt. Stay up too late, exhaust yourself, overdose on sappy holiday music. It is sensory overload.

God didn't do Christmas the way we tend to celebrate it. A humble couple traveled from Nazareth to Bethlehem because of government decrees. They could not find a space to stay except in a stable. Giving birth there, Mary used the manger for the baby's bed. Nothing seemed extraordinary, for such things happened fairly regularly in those days.

But there in that stable happened the most amazing miracle of all time. The almighty God was born in human flesh. He who is infinite and immeasurable limited himself to the confines of the body of a tiny baby. He submitted himself to the demands of the Law, to perfectly obey them. The Second Person of the Triune God was wrapped in swaddling clothes, looked up at the face of Mary and Joseph, depended on them to feed him, to clean him, to clothe him. Can you even wrap your head around the truth: all the fullness of the Deity dwells there, in this child.

Angels sang glorious praises to some shepherds at Christmas, but only a few noticed. Bethlehem was not decked out for the event. The people were busy with their lives, with the commotion around the census, with the needs of their families. They were much like us, who have important things to take care of. Those things often distract us from the miracle of God with us, Immanuel.

How could we lose sight of this awesome truth: God entered human flesh to save sinners? You know how it happens. He looks so humble. It doesn't seem so important. I will get to that later. And later I am tired and weary and something else becomes urgent. We lose Jesus in the clutter.

Jesus cuts through the clutter of Christmas with his word. He calls us to repentance, exposing our sin. And then he stands in our place to be holy for us. In flesh and blood, he obeyed for me and for you. God hung on the cross to pay the debt for our disobedience. He died under the curse of our sin. He really died – dead and buried. How could such sacrifice not be important to me, more important than anything else?

God substituted for us, not to guilt us into some reaction, but to forgive us completely. God showed his power over death by raising Jesus from the dead. In him, God gives us the victory over sin and death and Satan. At Christmas we see just a little baby, but he is still Mighty God, our Savior. Our lives don't have to be filled with the excesses of our society. May our reaction be a life of continual worship, of genuine thanks to a Savior who forgives our sin and brings us peace. God has come to save us! Merry Christmas!

Pastor James Plocher

<p>Board of Elders</p> <p>At the end of the year, the board thanked four men whose terms as elders ended. Tom Kabat, Dave Atkins, Tom McTaggart and Steve Bertoia ably served our congregation and our members. We look forward to working with those who have taken their places: John Solgat, Tom Borcharding, Dave Somerville and Jim Zoellner. We will continue to pray for the members of St. Luke's and seek to meet their spiritual needs.</p>	<p>Adult Bible Class</p> <p>Pastor Plocher is teaching a Bible Class on Symbols in the Bible. We have talked about the Old Testament Sacrificial system, and about the "Glory of the LORD" which was revealed to God's people at various times. Our next topic will be the yearly festivals of Israel, which taught about the coming Messiah and trained the people in service to the Lord. Come and see what the symbols teach us, Sunday mornings at 9:30am.</p>	<p>Bible Information Class</p> <p>A new Information Class will begin in January. We present the basic teachings of the Bible to all who are interested. We invite those who are thinking about joining St. Luke's congregation to attend the classes to see what we teach and confess. We also invite any confirmed member of the congregation to attend and review those truths that sometimes get forgotten. The usual meeting time is Thursdays at 7:00pm. Look for a start date of January 12. Bring a friend and you will find it to be most interesting!</p>
<p>Junior Ushers</p> <p>The Board of Elders is working out a set of guidelines for inviting our confirmation age boys to serve as junior ushers. We hope to encourage them by setting an example of service in the congregation and equipping them to be productive with their individual talents. Look for details to come soon!</p>	<p>Board of Christian Education (BOCE)</p> <p>The members of the board spent time in December seeking to support and encourage the faculty. We held informal interviews with each teacher, talking about personal and professional topics. It is enlightening to see the dedication of each person and the determination each has to serving the Lord faithfully. God has blessed us tremendously with these called servants! Let us not fail to give thanks to God for them.</p>	<p>School Pavilion</p> <p>As the winter progresses, so does work on the 25th Anniversary Project at St. Luke's School. The plans are being finalized to make a pavilion that will give shelter at the property and allow for tables to be set up for meals. We will make the size appropriate to the funding that is available. Paul Schultz and Terry Mocny are heading up the project. Congregation members who can lend their time and talents can speak with them to volunteer.</p>
<p>Annual Report</p> <p>Articles are due in the church office for the annual report by Monday, January 9. Look for the annual report for 2016 to be delivered in your mailboxes as we get to the end of January. Last year, few requested an in-home visit from the elders. If you do desire that home visit, please call the church office and we will make an appointment with you. It is a joy to sit down and talk things over, especially when the conversation is eagerly anticipated!</p>	<p>Confirmation Class</p> <p>Pastor Plocher and Vicar Leistekow will switch teaching responsibilities in the new year. Pastor Plocher will teach the Public School Catechism classes two times a week, and also teach Bible History at St. Luke's School twice a week. Vicar will teach Catechism classes three times a week at the school. There are currently twelve students in the LES classes, and four in the Public School classes.</p>	<p>Quarterly Voters Meeting</p> <p>The quarterly meeting of the voters of St. Luke's will be at noon on Sunday January 29. An informational pre-meeting will be held two weeks earlier, during Bible Class hour on January 15. Agendas will be available in the church office after the Church Council meeting on January 10th. We will be able to see the year end reports and begin to look forward to our ministry together in the new year.</p>

Board of Trustees

As we end the year, we thank Tom Borcharding for ten years of service on the Board. He was appointed several times to fill vacancies. Jim Walker also completed his service as a Trustee. Both men have had their hands in many projects that keep our buildings in tip-top shape. Dave Einhardt and Terry Mocny fill their shoes, beginning their service in January.

The end of the year saw us have to repair the septic pump at school, as the float system malfunctioned. A new copier for the church office was delivered. It is being leased for five years, but the cost is lower than maintaining the ten-year old one. Thanks to a generous gift, we have a new TV and disc player for the front of church. The old ones stopped working, so the update was necessary. New LED lights are being installed over the parking lot. They give much brighter light and make the trek to the car safer. Work will begin in January on the basement shower at the parsonage. It has not worked for several years, so replacement and remodeling are underway. Trustee volunteers are doing the work.

Poinsettias for the Altar

If you donated poinsettias for the altar this Christmas season, you may take them home at any time after Christmas Day. If you have any questions, please speak with the church secretary.

Church Budget Adopted

At a special voters meeting on November 30, the voters of the congregation approved a budget for 2017. It is slightly smaller than the uncertain number we used to begin the 2016 budget, but also larger than the actual expenses of this year. We have work to do, and God has given us the desire and the ability to do it!

Two major things are included in the new ministry plan. We will ask for a second vicar, to arrive in August. The program has given us the ability to continue to meet the needs of our people. The congregation has been a good training ground for a student to learn the varied aspects of the pastoral ministry. The second major item in the budget is the beginnings of a plan to increase the financial support we give to our called workers. Our current system has fallen behind the standard used by our Wisconsin Synod. Over the next five years we plan to implement the changes that will bring us close.

God has blessed the work of our congregation in 2016. After undertaking an effort to release those who have not been active in hearing God’s Word for years, our total congregational membership is around 600. That includes 30 new members received in 2016 by confirmation, transfer, and profession of faith. We have the potential to reach many in our communities for whom the Savior died and rose again. Faithful proclamation of the law and the gospel touches hearts and changes lives. Every member of St. Luke’s has a part in the work we do together, and we eagerly set our hearts and minds to the opportunities God has given us.

Informational Pre-meeting

A new practice of the congregation is to hold an informational meeting before the quarterly voters meeting. We will run through the reports of the boards and committees and preview the items on the agenda. The time will be during Bible Class hour, Sunday January 15 at 9:30. We will have one hour to discuss these things. All are invited to participate. Look for the agenda to be published after the Church Council meeting on January 10. Because of the MLS Choir being at St. Luke’s on January 22, we will have the informational meeting on Jan 15, and the voters meeting two weeks later, on the 29th.

MLS Concert Choir

The Michigan Lutheran Seminary Concert Choir will be at St. Luke’s on Sunday January 22. That week we will not have a Monday service, so plan to attend Sunday worship. The Choir has two St. Luke’s members, Julie Marker and Leah Plocher. They will sing in both the early and the late services that day. We will be hosting the choir for a potluck meal at noon. Plan to bring a dish to pass, and some yummy desserts. We have a stellar reputation for good food among the students, so let’s keep it up! Look for sign up sheets in the early weeks of January.

<p>Stewardship Journal of Thanksgiving</p> <p>In November our Bible Classes and worship services focused our attention on the amazing blessings God has given us. Several members indicated a desire to journal together through the year to write down a unique blessing for each day. A book called “364 Days of Thanksgiving” is available from Northwestern Publishing House to assist you if you want to participate. Even without the book, perhaps you want to consider what you are thankful for every day. The challenge is to not repeat any of your thankful items for the whole year. We have been beginning Bible Class each Sunday with an opportunity to share your individual thankful things. If you want to write something down and give it to Pastor, he will read it. Your journal entries will encourage all of us to be thankful every day for the gracious gifts our Savior gives.</p>	<p>End of year outlook</p> <p>As of this writing, with half of December still to come, we still have a good opportunity to end the year without a deficit. Generous offerings often are given at the end of the year, and if this month is like most Decembers, we will see an abundance. Thank you for your gifts. A larger expenses have been paid recently, and the cold snap will increase our utility costs. The Christmas schedule works against us, too. Yet God has been faithful and he will provide our needs. (Why do we ever doubt him?) We should begin the new year with our feet under us, ready for the challenges that lie ahead. So we give thanks to God, and we rededicate ourselves to our service to him. To him be the glory!</p>	<p>Scholarship Fund Envelope</p> <p>A reminder to use the Scholarship Fund envelope in your yearly envelope box. This special offering is given to St. Luke’s members who are attending Synod schools. These students are willing to be encouraged to consider the public ministry as a pastor or a teacher. We want to support their goals and prepare them for service in congregations across our Synod. We anticipate 13 students in three schools next fall (2 at WLS, 4 at MLC, 7 at MLS). Gifts to the Scholarship fund will be combined with proceeds from the Endowment fund and distributed in July. Gifts given before June 30 will be included in the distribution.</p>
<p>We want to hear from you!</p> <p>Over the Advent season, the readings during our Sunday worship services might have sounded strange. Perhaps a familiar verse had a slightly different wording, or you caught a phrase that sounded odd. You didn’t mishear the reading! We have been using the new Evangelical Heritage Version of the Bible, testing this new translation for readability and listenability. If you have any thoughts about what you heard from the lectern during Advent, please share them with Pastor Plocher or Vicar Leistekow</p>	<p>Vacation Bible School</p> <p>While we are still deep in the midst of winter, it’s never too early to start thinking about our summer VBS! While it is still in the planning stages, if you would like to offer your time and help to this ministry, please speak with Vicar Leistekow.</p>	<div data-bbox="1128 993 1453 1140" data-label="Image"> </div> <p>Paul Wendland tells how much pastors and missionaries appreciate your Christmas cards. When he was nine years old, his dad was sent to Africa as a missionary. They in Africa three months before their first Christmas there. He was lonely and it wasn't home. They started to receive Christmas cards from his dad’s former congregation wishing them well and asking God to bless them. His mother decided to put the cards on the Christmas tree since their belongings from the US hadn't arrived yet. It turned out to be a Christmas he has not forgotten. It taught him that God’s best gifts don't come when and how we expect. So don't forget your pastors and our missionaries this Christmas season. Let them know how much you appreciate them.</p>
	<p>Altar Flowers</p> <p>If you wish to place flowers on the altar, please sign up on the poster in the entry way. A 2017 sign up sheet is posted. You are responsible for ordering the flowers for the date and making payment arrangements with the florist of choice.</p>	

Take Down Decorations

The following people who were on the list for putting up the Christmas tree for the Advent and Christmas season now also have the job of taking down the tree on Sunday, January 8th after the late service:

Jeff Sackman, Jennifer Santoviz, Gary & Brooke Sargent, Jennifer Sargent, Adam & Jennifer Sayles, Heather Schaefer, Justin Schlicker, Charles & Diana Schultz, Darald & Dottie Schultz, Paul & Carla Schultz, Margaret Seal, Christine Shoens, Shane Shoens, Susan Shoens, John & Beth Solgat, Autumn Somerville, Cody Somerville, David Somerville, Margaret Somerville, Aaron & Lisa Stallings, Kay Stoddard, David Streeter, Duane & Shirley Streeter, Lisa Stuart, Al & Marge Sugden, Kimberly Sulicki, Ryan Sulicki, and Nancy Sullivan.

Your help is greatly appreciated!
Thank you for your joyful service!

Teen Bible Class

Now that Teen Bible Class has been going on for a couple of months, we're looking forward to digging deeper into God's Word and growing together in our faith. For those who haven't had a chance to join us yet, please come! We'd love for you to join our discussion and we'd love to encourage you with God's Word. We meet in the Mother's Room at 9:30 every Sunday. (Note: there will be no Teen Bible Class on Christmas Day or New Year's Day)

Board of Christian Education News

The St. Luke's Board of Christian Education (BOCE) remains very committed to the education provided at our Lutheran Elementary School (LES)! We'd like to take a moment during the New Year to extend appreciation to all of the faculty, staff and Sunday school teachers for their dedication towards the God fearing education of our children.

We are again thankful for another beautiful Children's Christmas service provided by the children of our school and Sunday school. What a perfect way to start the church year off for 2017!

We continue to raise funds for the erection of the school pavilion. Don't forget that you can designate a gift toward the construction of the pavilion through use of the special envelope provided with this monthly newsletter. If you receive the newsletter electronically, special donation envelopes can be picked up at the front of the church. We hope to have the pavilion up and ready for use sometime this spring. We are also very thankful for the new school roof that we have over our heads and appreciate all of the financial support provided by our congregation.

The BOCE continues to spend time looking at our upcoming cradle roll which includes the young and potential children that may enroll in our school. Additionally, we are strategizing for the advertising of the LES and the benefits of a Christ based education! We ask for your prayers as we consider the ongoing future of the school.

Marc Augsburger

Holiday Service Schedule

This year's holiday schedule will be strange. Both Christmas Day and New Year's Day fall on Sunday. Our Christmas Eve service will be held at **6:30 PM Saturday, December 24**. Because we would normally celebrate the birth of our Savior with one special service, we will have **one service on Christmas day at 9:30 AM**. There will be no Bible Class (either adult or teen) or Sunday school on that day, due to this schedule. We will have our normal Monday night service at 7:15 PM, which will be the same as our Sunday Morning Christmas service.

Our New Year's services are also affected by the calendar. We will have three services to give thanks for God's blessings on 2016 and ask his continued blessings on 2017. All three services will be identical, giving all of us an opportunity to express our thanksgiving and praise no matter our plans or schedules for the holiday. The New Year's services will be on Saturday, **December 31 at 6:30 PM**, Sunday **January 1 at 9:30 AM**, and Monday **January 2 at 7:15 PM**. We will celebrate the Lord's Supper at each of these service. Please join us to welcome the new year with prayer and praise!

Sunday School Page

New Superintendent

We welcome our new Sunday School Superintendent, Paul Schultz! We thank him for taking on this responsibility. Please pray for him and the rest of the Sunday School staff that they faithfully teach God's Word to the children of our congregation, and that their work blesses them as well as their students.

Children's Christmas Service

The Children's Christmas Service on December 18th was a beautiful sharing of the Christmas message. We thank the Sunday School teachers, as well as the faculty at St. Luke's school for the time and work they put into preparing their students for the service. We thank them and the students for clearly proclaiming the joy of our Savior's birth.

Sunday School Lessons

January 1	No Sunday School
January 8	Joseph Tests His Brothers
January 15	Joseph Makes Himself Known
January 22	The Births of John and Jesus Announced
January 29	The Birth of John the Baptist



Schedule for Holidays

We will have no Sunday School on New Year's Day. Because the holidays fall on Sunday, our normal Sunday schedule will be exchanged with a holiday schedule: one 9:30 service with no Sunday School or Bible Class.

To our Sunday School Teachers:

Please accept the deepest thanks from your congregation for all of the work you do. God has certainly blessed us with teachers who are willing to train and instruct the young people of St. Luke's in God's Word.

Babysitting during Bible Class & Sunday School

We have child care available for parents who have children too young to attend Sunday School. This allows parents to still attend adult Bible Class if they so desire. If you have any questions, or would like to volunteer to help supervise these children, please speak to Vicar Leis-tekow.

Thank you for your support of and involvement in
Christian Education at St. Luke's.

St. Luke's Lutheran School News

School to End Its First Semester Our twenty-sixth year is almost half over. Our forty students have made great progress so far this year not only in their growth in secular subjects but especially in their knowledge and understanding of God's Word. We, the faculty, are blessed to be working with such great Christian families, too. We appreciate the tie of God's love that binds us together in our Lutheran elementary school.

Children's Christmas Service We wish to thank all those who were involved in producing a very edifying Children Christmas Service on Sunday, December 18. From our parents who listened to their children's memory work to the Sunday school teachers who rehearsed the memory work and helped organize the children at the Saturday practices, we thank you. We especially wish to thank those who prepared the service for us: Mrs. Lange for directing, Vicar Liestekow for presenting the sermonette, Jess VanLue for accompanying the children's choir on the piano, and former student, Olivia Marker for playing the organ. God the Holy Spirit blessed the message we heard that night; may it strengthen our faith and hope in our salvation found in Jesus.

Redhawk Sports at St. Luke's Boys' basketball and girls' cheerleading seasons are right around the corner. Many of our children participate in these winter sports each year. This year we are having boys' A and B basketball teams made up of students from grades 4-8. The boys will be coached by John Korthals and Brad Main. We are thankful for all the teaching Coaches Korthals and Main do. We especially thank them for teaching Christ-like attitudes to our boys in a game where such attitudes are often lacking. Practices will begin during Christmas break at the Wolverine gym in Vassar. Our first home A-team game will be played against Emanuel, Tawas on Friday, January 6 at **our home gym** Immanuel, Frankentrost.

OUR HOME GAMES scheduled to be played at Immanuel, Frankentrost (M-46 west of M-83) are:

- **Friday, January 6 @ 6:30 PM against Emanuel, Tawas (A-team only)**
- **Friday, January 27 against Trinity w/ 6:30 PM start time for the B-team game**

We will have a cheerleading squad this year comprised of girls from grades 4-7. Their cheer practices have already begun. They are coached by Mrs. Janice Finkbeiner and Hailleigh Morse again this year. We are thankful for our coaches' tireless work in making our cheer team shine!

Please watch the church calendar and bulletin for reminders of times and locations of our home games and upcoming tournament dates.

Mission Offering Report In their first trimester of offerings, our LES children gave a gift of **\$300** to *Friends of China* program which provides English teachers to the vast mission field of China. We pray that our gift will be blessed and multiplied by God so that many will hear the saving message of Jesus our Savior.

In the second trimester, we have already collected **over \$150** for the WELS Mission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing fund. This WELS agency provides sign language training and materials to those interested in translating for the deaf. It also provides closed captioning on many WELS video publications. We will collect for this fund through **February of 2017**.

Operation Joy at the School This year the children of the middle and upper grades took up special offerings in lieu of exchanging names for a classmate's gift at the annual Christmas party. The middle grade was able to collect enough money to purchase a "Pack and Play" and a \$10 donation while the upper grade gathered a large box full of essentials for newborns. The recipient of the gifts was the Pregnancy Care Center of Saginaw. This WELS-run organization teaches early parenting skills and encourages mothers-to-be to complete their pregnancy. They are also available for spiritual counsel for the families involved.

A New Year of Exciting Activities at the School

Pre-K Play Date – This year the students of the First Grade will host our annual Play Date on **Friday, January 13 from 10:30-11:30 AM**. Invitations are being sent to the 4 year olds on our cradle roll and to friends of the congregation and school who have 4 year old children who will be **FIVE on or before September 1, 2017**. This Play Date gives those who are considering sending their children to our school the opportunity to get an introduction to the classroom, its students, and Mrs. Lange. Those coming should RSVP to the school office by January 9.

Can Collection for Wolverine Camps - We are asking our families to consider collecting their cans and bottles with deposits from the holidays and donating them to the 7-8th graders for their week-long outdoor education trip to Wolverine, MI on February 13-17.

Your donations reduce the travel and meal expenses on the trip. Currently, there are two collection points: one at church and one at school. The children of the seventh and eighth grade are willing to stop by and pick up your bags of cans and bottles if you call the school office and arrange for pick up. 823-8400.

The drive will run through the second week of February. Save those holiday cans and bottles and contribute to a great education cause!

Annual MLS Fine Arts Fair – The date for this year's MLS Fine Arts Fair will be Saturday, March 4, 2017. This competition will allow many of our students to participate in forensics, art, science, math, spelling, and music competitions. Grades 3-8 are invited and encouraged to participate. This date also signals our own **annual St. Luke's School Science and Art Fair**. This week-long event, held at the church fellowship hall, gives all our students the opportunity to display their talents in art and/or science.

Our LES children have already received their science project guidelines in order to begin their project search over the Christmas holidays. The upper grade uses this public showing to introduce their major science projects for the year.

A Final Thought ... Far too often, we let Christmas and New Years overwhelm us with all the preparations and parties of the season. We may also take for granted that our Lord and Savior will always be there in the manger waiting for us. When we do so, we diminish God's great love and grace for us and miss an opportunity to teach our children the reason for celebrating the holiday. Let us always be mindful of all of God's gifts to us, but especially the gift of His Son, our Savior from sin.

During this Christmas break, let's take time to thank God for the ability to be able to teach our congregation's children about the little Babe of Bethlehem in our own Lutheran school. Let us also give Him thanks and honor for giving us the financial means in this congregation to be able to train the next generation of our congregation in the eternal truths of His Word. **JFL**



MLS Open House

Michigan Lutheran Seminary invites all students - especially 5th-8th graders - families, schools, churches to spend part of a day on campus learning about MLS at the Winter Open House on Tuesday, January 24, 2017. Please visit the MLS website at www.mlsem.org to learn more and to reserve a spot. The open house runs from 1:30 p.m. - 5:30 p.m. (Registration starts at 1:30 p.m.)

General Mills Box Tops

The next Box Top submission will be sent in at the end of February. We are off to a good start for this next submission. So far we about \$40.00, so keep them coming in.

Shop with Scrip

Thank you everyone for your orders. November's order raised \$29.23 and the first order for December raised \$86.30 for the CEO. The monies raised go to help offset the cost of the outdoor education trips. If you would like to learn how Shop with Scrip works just ask Melissa Augsburg-er. You can contact her at 989-286-3025 or visit www.shopwithscrip.com. There is a 2 minute video that also explains how this program works and you can also find a complete list of retailers there. There is a binder labeled Scrip program in the school office and the church fellowship hall which has order forms and a complete list of retailers. Orders are placed on the 1st and 3rd Mondays of the month.

Shoparoo

Shoparoo is the newest program being utilized to help support projects of the CEO. So far for this school year we have over 17,000 Roo points which is over \$30.00 for the school so far. Shoparoo is an app you can find on your smart phone. Snap pictures of your receipts and earn "Roo Points" which turns into money for the school. Don't have a smart phone, but still want to help. Leave your receipts in the box labeled "Shoparoo Receipts". There is a box located at the school and in the Church fellowship hall. If you need your receipts back just put in an envelope with your name on it and we will return it to your church mailbox. Receipts are only valid for 14 days. (Ex. A receipt dated 12/1/2016 must be processed in the app by 12/14/2016.) If you have any questions about the app and how it works just ask Joanne Fall, Kelli Wilson, Todd and Karen Leach, Marc or Melissa Augsburg-er

**Newly Elected
Congregational Officers**

The following people have been elected to serve at St. Luke's beginning January 1, 2017:

President

Ronald Nichol

Board of Elders

John Solgat
David Somerville
James Zoellner
Tom Borcharding

Board of Trustees

David Einhardt
Terry Moony

BOCE

Marc Augsburg-er
Steve Walker
Jon Woolworth

Asst. SS Superintendent

Paul Schultz

Congregational Delegate

Donald Clinesmith

Asst. Fin. Secretary

Tom Barnett
Eric Kern
James List
Brian Millerov
Ed Newsome
Phil Pellar
Chris Rupprecht
Dennis Thurston
Patrick Weber

CEO Executive Committee

Todd Leach

Scholarship Committee

Adam Partridge

Library Committee

Jennifer Santoviz

The installation of newly elected officers will take place in the 8:15 AM service on Sunday, January 8.

We thank all outgoing officers for their faithful service this past year.

Men and Women Serving Christ Sheets

Our congregation offers many activities throughout the year. These opportunities offer us the ability to get to know our church family and to help with the Lord's work at St. Luke's. Many of you have signed up to participate in one or more ways on the Men and Women Serving Christ forms handed out in November. The lists have been compiled and placed in your church mailboxes. Please review the list and note the dates of your chosen activities. If you missed out on volunteering, you may still do so. Just give the church office a call and the secretary will gladly add your name to any activity. God bless your joyful service.

Lutheran Mobile Clinic (CAMM) Lilongwe Malawi—December, 2016

*I lift up my eyes to the hills- where does my help come from?
My help comes from the Lord, the Maker of heaven and earth.
Psalm 121: 1-2*

Greetings from the warm heart of Africa!

I read somewhere that some have called Malawi the “Switzerland of Africa” due to its hilly terrain. That description makes me smile, because I appreciate hills and mountains. To me, they display a part of the majesty of God’s creation.

Malawi is indeed hilly and there are mountains on the horizon. Though it is lovely to see, it is not so lovely when you’re learning to drive a manual transmission vehicle. Never before have I spotted an incline in the road and felt butterflies about whether I’ll be able to maneuver the vehicle without rolling backwards.

Each time I start the truck for another driving session, my mind comes back to this passage. Though the hills in Lilongwe are testing my mastery (or lack thereof) of the clutch, in ancient times, the hills provided hiding places for thieves, dangerous animals and others intending harm to travelers passing by.

These days our “hills” in life take many forms. Perhaps this December you are facing a mountain of debt or a crippling financial loss. Maybe you have been ill and you feel as though getting out of bed is as difficult as scaling Kilimanjaro. Are the many miles that separate you from your loved ones crushing your cheer this Christmas?

Then remember the hill called Calvary that Jesus willingly climbed to suffer the consequences of all of our sins. When you feel that you are rolling backwards and can’t make any headway, look to our Savior who burst out from the grave and ascended into heaven. Jesus knows the peaks and valleys of our lives and He cares. He cares so much about each of us that “even the very hairs of your head are all numbered” (Matthew 10:30).

I pray you enjoy a peaceful and joyful Christmas, secure in the comfort and knowledge that the One who made the hills is also the One who will grant passage through all of our “hills”.

Your sister in Christ,
Amanda Artz, Clinic Administrator-in-Training
Lutheran Mobile Clinic

2017 Men Alive! Rally

All confirmed WELS men are invited to a gathering on Saturday, February 18, 2017 from 7:15 AM to 3:30 PM at the Double Tree Riverfront Hotel in Bay City, MI. There will be a keynote address and break out groups intended to encourage you in your faithful living “In Such a Time as This.” There will be musical entertainment and a break out group aimed at the young men in our congregations as well. See more information at menalivebalm.org. A manly breakfast with meat, snacks, and a hearty lunch are included in your registration cost of \$65 (only \$40 for young men ages 14-22). Sign up now to attend.

23rd Annual Today's Christian Women's Retreat

Please join us for our 2-day retreat! Our featured speaker, Pres. Paul Wendland, will lead an in-depth study of the first 8 chapters of the book of Romans. The Retreat will take place Friday March 31, 2017 beginning at 1:00 PM through Sunday April 2, 2017 at 1:00 PM at the Double Tree by Hilton Hotel Bay City - Riverfront, One Wenonah Park Place, Bay City, MI 48708 .

Contact Heather Bigelow by email at heatherbigelow3@gmail.com or by phone at 989-971-3505 for more information.

You can see the poster on the church bulletin board as well.

**Financial Update
November 2016**

Income \$ 26,608.87
Expenses \$ 29,543.69
 -\$ 2,934.82

*Monthly budgeted need is \$32,953.

Special Envelope

Contributions can be made to any of the funds below by using the special offering envelopes in the narthex or included with this newsletter. Be sure to name the fund on the envelope before you put it into the offering plate.

- Property Maintenance and Improvement Trust Fund—Funds will be used for unexpected upkeep on our properties
- Scholarship Fund – This fund is distributed each year to students attending synod schools.
- Scholarship Endowment Fund – Proceeds supplement the Scholarship Fund annually.
- Building Trust Fund – To pay for future building projects.
- St. Luke’s Rainy Day Fund – This fund helps the congregation when cash flow is slow. Repayment of the loan to ourselves is made through your generous gifts to the General Fund and/or special gifts to this line item.
- Roof Fund— This fund will help us to pay off the loan for the new school roof.

Memorials & Special Gifts

A memorial was given to the Shut-In Basket fund in loving memory of Steve Marovich, Jr. by Chris & Cindy Lane.

A memorial was given to the Rainy Day Fund in loving memory of John Wertz by Marilyn Graubner.

A memorial was given to the Rainy Day Fund in celebration of Ruth Bruder’s 96th birthday by Joe & Julie Coffey.

A special gift was given to St. Luke’s Lutheran School by Keith & Shelley Murringer.

A memorial was given to the Rainy Day Fund in loving memory of Jerry Solgat by Margaret Somerville.

2017 Offering Envelopes

Envelopes are in the fellowship hall. Please, pick yours up, but do not begin using them until 2017 since your number may have changed. Discard your unused 2016 envelopes after New Year’s Eve to save the counters some headaches in the new year.

**Contact Information—
Updates Needed**

Please check the list next to the 2017 envelopes to make sure we have the correct contact information for you and your family members. Make any changes using the red pens provided. Also if you would like to include your cell phone number or email address, just write that information next to your address listing on the sheets.

**Treasurer’s Update,
November 2016**

Budgetary Offerings: \$26,608.87
Budgetary Expenses: \$29,543.69
Net Income: -\$2,934.82

Our General Budget Checkbook Balance as of 12-11-2016: -\$10,484.11, which reflects our internal borrowing. We budget \$32,953 per month to fund the work we do at St. Luke’s.

The balance in the Rainy Day Fund: \$16,673.91

The School Roof Loan Balance: \$24,550.00

We had other non-budget income in November totaling \$1,851.68

Respectfully submitted,
Bill Dudewicz, Treasurer

Pastoral Acts

Baptism:
Lisa Jeanette Gibisas
11-17-16

Transfer Out:
Danny Korthals to St. Paul, Saginaw, MI—WELS

Todd Wilson, Jr. to Risen Savior, Pooler, GA—WELS

Jaeland Sayles to St. John, Bay City, MI—WELS
12-13-16

Release by request:
Jacob Morse 12-13-16

Remove—No Address:
Ariel O’Brien
Brian Sage
Gary Nichol
Andrew Singer
12-13-16

St. Luke's Lutheran Church, Vassar, MI

January 2017

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 9:30 am NY Day Worship w/Communion <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; text-align: center;"> LES NO School through Jan. 3 – Christmas Break </div>	2 Scrip Orders due 7:15 pm Comm. Worship	3 MLS Classes resume 6:30 pm BOCE Mtg in RM 4	4 LES Classes resume LES McDonald's Hot Lunch 3:45 pm LES BBB practice @ Wolverine Elders Mtg 6:30 pm	5 3:30 pm LES Cheer practice in Rm 4 3:45 pm PS Catechism	6 6:30 pm LES BBB Home Game vs. Emanuel, Tawas @ Trost (A-Team Only)	7 9:00 am PS Catechism
8 8:15 am Install Officers 8:15 am Worship 9:30 am Bible Classes & SS 10:45 am Worship 1:00 pm Take Down Christmas Decorations	9 10:00 am Seginaw Study Club 3:30 pm LES Cheer practice in Rm 4 3:45 pm LES BBB practice @ Wolverine 7:15 pm Worship 8:15 pm Trustees	10 5:30 pm LES BBB Away Game @ Trinity, BC 6:30 pm Church Council	11 LES Shop Rite Lunch 3:45 pm LES BBB practice @ Wolverine	12 LES Gr. 5-8 Science Project registration 3:45 pm PS Catechism 7:00 pm BIC	13 LES Chapel: Pastor Balogh Principals' Conference @ St. John's, Bay City 10:30 am Pre-K Play Date at school 6:30 pm LES BBB Away Game @ St. John's, BC	14 9:00 am PS Catechism
15 8:15 am Comm. Worship 9:30 am Bible Classes & SS 10:45 am Comm. Worship 12:00 pm Pre-Voters Informational Meeting	16 10:00 am Scrip Orders due 10:00 am Thumb Circuit Meeting @ Elkton 3:30 pm LES Cheer practice in Rm 4 3:45 pm LES BBB practice @ Wolverine 7:15 pm Comm. Worship	17 5:30 pm LES BBB Away Game @ Bethel (B-Team only) 7:30 pm Worship Committee	18 LES Finish Line Hot Lunch	19 3:45 pm PS Catechism 7:00 pm BIC	20 LES CARPOOL DAY LES End Qtr 2 w/48 days 11:30 am LES Early Dismissal 6:30 pm LES BBB Away Game vs. St. Bart's/GS/St. John's, Sag @ St. John's, BC	21 LES BBB B-Team Tourney 9:00 am PS Catechism
22 MLS Concert Choir @ St. Luke's both services Church Newsletter deadline 8:15 & 10:45 am Worship 9:30 am Bible Classes & SS 12:00 pm Potluck lunch w/choir 3:00 pm Installation at St. John's, Pigeon	23 3:30 pm LES Report cards 3:30 pm LES Cheer practice in Rm 4 3:45 pm LES BBB practice @ Wolverine NO MONDAY WORSHIP	24 1:30 pm MLS Open House 5:30 pm LES BBB Home Game vs. St. John's, BC	25 LES McDonald's Hot Lunch	26 3:30 pm LES Cheer practice in Rm 4 3:45 pm PS Catechism 7:00 pm BIC	27 9:00 am NL Committee 6:30 pm LES BBB Home Game vs. Trinity, BC @ Immanuel, Frankentrost	28 9:00 am PS Catechism
29 8:15 am Worship 9:30 am Bible Classes & SS 10:45 am Worship 12:00 pm Voters' Meeting 12:00 pm Women Serving Christ Meeting	30 3:30 pm LES Cheer practice in Rm 4 3:45 pm LES BBB practice @ Wolverine 7:15 pm Comm. Worship	31 LES Upper Grade Book Cube/Diorama/Mobile due Circuit Pastor Meeting @ Maumee, OH 6:30 pm CEO Mtg in RM 4	Ushers 8:15 AM Tom McTaggart II* Mike Bragg Eric Kern Don Bender	Elder: Brandon Frank 10:45 AM Barry Mays* Nate Rupprecht Paul Schultz Jim Heidenberger	Finance: Brian Millerov* Chris Rupprecht Eric Kern Altar Guild Pat Greenwood	