

“Even in Your Wildest Dreams!”

“ . . . But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart.”

Luke 2:19

“This just isn’t what I was planning on. I had planned on a nursery. I had planned on having the baby at home. I had planned on being married . . .”

For Mary, one of the most important milestones of her life was spinning out of control. A pregnancy she did not anticipate. A road trip she did not want. A dingy old barn she was reluctant to enter, much less birth a baby in!

All the notions, all these preconceptions, and all the resulting disappointments. And yet, how God banished all that regret with one spectacular star and one miraculous Child!

We often speak about what Jesus in the manger came to bring us at Christmas time, but we dwell much less on what he came to dispel. Peace and joy and love are what we sing about. But we much more rarely mention what He came to take away in his birth: our notions of what should be and what we expect. We don’t often dwell on the infant Jesus as the Savior, come to save us not only from our sins on the Cross but too, from our preconceptions, expectations, and assumptions.

“This isn’t at all what I planned. I wanted things to work out so differently. I thought I could make it happen just this way . . .” The sentiments that I imagine a pregnant Mary to feel before her son’s birth seem so similar to those that we are all experiencing prior to this holiday and Holy Season.

As I write this, Thanksgiving is but two days away, Christmas less than a month. Like Mary, many of us confront days ahead that are not developing in a way anywhere close to what we imagined, wanted or hoped for. Not in our wildest dreams! Now, we wish only that “pandemic” had remained locked in those old black and white photos from a century ago.

But we do not select our times. Our times select us. We do not direct our God. Our God directs us, even thru times we never anticipated. And like a young, scared teenage mother, we can only declare this isn’t what we had planned, not even in our wildest dreams, and then wait in hope. And hope we have! In vaccines soon to begin distribution, and even more in a Lord who counsels our patience in this time, just as He had patience in his, to live day by day, knowing that setbacks would give way to breakthroughs, and sorrow, to joy.

Grace places us in the most unlikely of spots, and then apprehends us there with joy and hope. We may be locked down, socially distant and mentally exhausted. Our plans for this joyful season may have dissolved into complete disarray. But like everyone who has ever encountered our Jesus, even Mary at his birth, God may dispel all we had hoped. But God does this only so He might give us a hope that nothing in the world can dispel.

Enter in, even in the chaos of our times, and here find and here greet -- the Savior who, thankfully, is so much greater than anything you ever imagined, even in your wildest dreams . . .

May the Prince of Peace be your guest this Christmas!
Pastor Lisa

DECEMBER 2020 – JANUARY 2021

CHURCH ACTIVITIES

December Communion will be in person and drive-thru.

Virtual Christmas Bingo Party, Sunday, December 6 at 4 pm. (invitation sent by email on 11/9/20)

Bob Ford's Virtual Christmas Keyboard Recital, December 12, 2:30 pm (invitation will be sent by email)

Children's Percussion Choir Presentation in Worship on Sunday, December 13, 2020 (in person and live streaming)

Christmas Eve - Lessons and Carols, December 24, 7:00 pm (in person and live streaming)

December Christmas Mission is Christmas Mother. Please send your donation to the Church office.

Covenant Service - Sunday, January 3, 2021 at 11 am (in person and live streaming)

You're invited to
St. Luke's Virtual

CHRISTMAS BINGO PARTY

Sunday, December 6 at 4 PM

Put on your favorite Christmas
sweater, grab a hot cocoa &
play Bingo with us from the
comfort of your home!

click below to Sign-Up for Bingo Party

<https://forms.gle/3jUzGPPn1YkjRPwK7>

Christmas is for Sharing

We will be working with the Chesterfield-Colonial Heights Christmas Mother in December. Because of the virus, it is recommended that we send a cash donation in order to provide less personal contact with other people. The deadline is December 21st, but the sooner we can send the donations in, the better.

Any monetary gift, in cash or by check, will be added to your giving statement. **VERY IMPORTANT:** Do not combine your donation with your tithe/offering check. Instead, make a separate check out to St. Luke's UMC with a notation of Christmas Mother in the memo line. If you have any questions, please contact me at the church office.

Sincerely, Margaret Anderson

St. Luke's United Methodist Church

Financial Secretary

Phone: (804) 276-7000

Email: stlukesfinsec@stlukesrva.org

St. Luke's Face Book Page

Make sure you like the St. Luke's Facebook page to keep up with everything going on at church. Also, please like and share the posts and events. The more we share and like, the more others will see what a wonderful place St. Luke's is -- and all the things that we are doing!

Here's a link to our page:

<https://m.facebook.com/St-Lukes-United-Methodist-Church-486188658201339/>

December Birthdays

December 2	Larry Batten Laura Jarrett William Warriner
December 3	Kevin Jenkins Richard James Moyer
December 4	Danielle Hawkins Ronnie Bowman Tom Rohlk Joshua Sykes
December 6	Suzanne Steinhorst Jennifer Frankey
December 8	Ray Kyle Peggy Uglow
December 9	Chelsea Bowman Nicholas Bowman
December 10	Bettie Jones Sarah Estes
December 17	Susan Wertz
December 18	Annie Davis Robert White, III
December 19	Dean Smith
December 20	Conner Skeen
December 22	Pat Knust Austin Morris
December 23	Gordon Reed John Crawford
December 27	Karla Lacy
December 28	Michael Pearse Luke Daniel
Boykin	
December 30	Kevin Parrish Marie Dunlap Betty Wellman
December 31	Reagan Gary

Anniversaries

December 12	Keith & Donna Miller
December 16	Jennifer & Roger Frankey
December 20	James & Charlotte deKrafft
December 28	Dean & Ibbie Smith

BE INFORMED

Keep up with all that's going on within the Virginia United Methodist Conference by visiting —

<http://www.vaumc.org>

Christmas Music is Coming!

I will be presenting the third and final piano recital co-sponsored by Salisbury Presbyterian Church and St. Luke's United Methodist Church on Saturday, December 12, 2020 at 2:30 p.m. Traditional Christmas carols and seasonal favorites will be presented. A Zoom link will be sent to the St. Luke's congregation prior to December 12th.

It has been my joy to practice with the mallet-percussion choir again as they prepare a special treat for St. Luke's during the 11:00 worship service on December 13, 2020. This choir continues to amaze me as they excel in learning Christmas carols to play for you this holiday season. They will be "live" in the sanctuary and will lift your hearts as we prepare for the coming of the Lord.

The new year of 2021 will bring new challenges for scheduling adult and mallet-percussion rehearsals as we await the good news concerning the vaccines. May we all hope and pray for the second "new normal" to take place. — Bob Ford

"Sorrow and Love flow mingled down"

Our love, prayers and sympathy to Deb Hogan and family. Her mother, Billie Faye Reynolds, claimed the promise of the resurrection on November 2, 2020. Billie was Jimmy's grandmother and Autumn and Ceara's great-grandmother.

Our love, prayers and sympathy to Karen and Reg Whitton and family. Karen's sister, Debi Clements, claimed the promise of the resurrection on November 19, 2020.

Upheld in our Prayers

Prayers for peace, unity and justice across the nation

Wayne Johnson	Florence Smith
Barbara Armstrong	Joan Varner
Carlton Hudson	Leslie Howser
Wilmer & Phyllis Downs	Rev. Tom Brown
Doris Teeter & family	Joyce Arrington
Bettie Jones	Paul Steinhauser
Taylorann Bradon	Chuck Fayle
Bob Gardner	Deannie Reynolds
Bob & Jan Hall	Opal Holshouser
Dean Smith	Gayle McGonigle
Bob Gary	Wendy Patterson
Kathy Tuten (preschool teacher)	

Eric & Andi Sorenson, awaiting birth of first child
Continuing prayers for Carolyn Beeckler's father,
Bob Gardner, now home from the hospital

Our Military

Robbie Bowen Aaron Frankey Holden Russell

January Birthdays

January 1	Barbara Armstrong
January 2	Anna Hart
January 3	Elizabeth Thomas Debbie Tatum Richard James Moyer
January 4	Steve Taylor Karen Whitton Sarah Allen Adam Warriner Matt Strum
January 6	Audrey Vogen
January 7	Kent Calfee
January 11	Justin Stoneberg
January 12	Seth Sykes Brenda Staehle
January 14	Paul Brown Faye Sisson
January 15	Nancy Allen Krystal Worner
January 19	Ibbie Smith
January 20	Yvonne Morris Bradley Smart
January 22	Wendy Brown White
January 23	Cheryl Sanker Adam Jones
January 27	Wesley Sykes
January 29	Jerry Anderson
January 30	Sheri Stoneberg
January 31	Erin Cowardin Jacoby

Anniversaries

January 2	Jim & Cindy Self
January 7	Seth & Lisa Sykes
January 31	Ray & Scottie Kyle

50 Wonderful Years!

On November 28th, at 4 o'clock in the afternoon, David and Bonnie Urbanski renewed their wedding vows in a small gathering of family

and closest friends. Among their guests were all three of their daughters, their husbands, and both their grandchildren.

The renewal of vows took place at their home, 50 years to the day from their original wedding ceremony. It was a beautiful day for a beautiful event, touched with much love and a little humor, too. We hope all Bonnie and David's years of marriage ahead are as happy

as all those past! No doubt about it, they'd do it all again! God bless, and Congratulations to the very happy couple!!



Returning to in-person worship, George and Brenda bring all 4 of their grandchildren! Thanks to all for observing our mask mandate. During the pandemic, this crowd has made it their goal to visit all the Virginia State Parks. Marcia Grubbs screens worshippers as they enter the church.

Give Thanks!

*Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good; His Love endures Forever.
Psalm 107, 1*

Give Thanks! We have opened the doors for in-person worship! What a joy to be in fellowship and worship even as we stay six feet apart and wear a mask. In-person attendance has averaged about 30 individuals. Combined live stream and in-person attendance has been as high as 90!

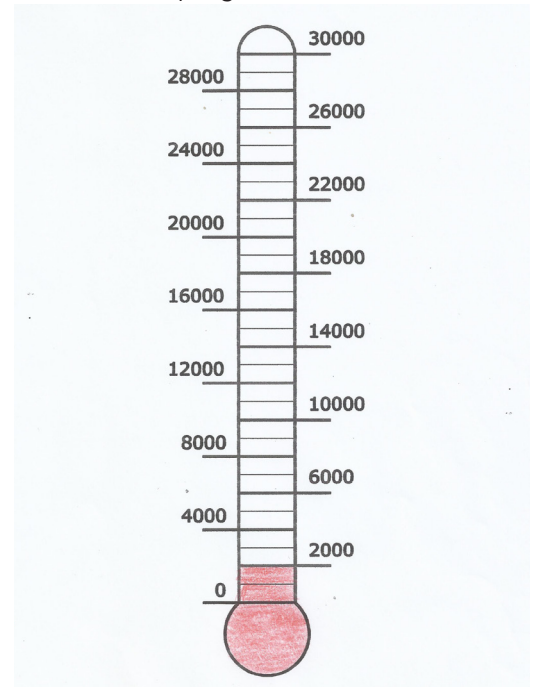
In-person worshippers, please remember to take your temperature at home and put on a mask before exiting your vehicle. Our greeters will record your attendance at the carport entrance. Communion will be “take out” for in-person worshippers. Drive through Communion will remain the same.

We are in need of two greeters for each Sunday. If you can help as a greeter, please call Marcia Grubbs, 804-873-9653 or the church office.

From the Finance Committee

Thank you for your generosity and faithfulness in supporting St. Luke’s during this unimaginable year. Through your pledges and gifts the day-to-day expenses of the church have been met and “live streaming” begun. We are beginning to catch up on our share of apportionments.

Our end-of-year fund-raising campaign has set a goal of \$30,000 which we encourage you to prayerfully consider. Look for the “thermometer” that will chart our progress.



Poinsettias for Christmas

Red Poinsettias will be placed in the Sanctuary on Sunday, December 20th and Christmas Eve, December 24th. The cost will be \$13.00 per plant. You may take your plant after the 11:00 am service on Dec. 20th or the 7:00 pm service on December 24th. Make your check payable to St. Luke’s UMC.

The deadline for ordering is December 6, 2020

stlukesoffice@stlukesrva.org

Name of individual purchasing Poinsettia: _____

Number of Poinsettias purchased: _____

In Memory of: _____

In Honor of: _____