

So be strong and courageous! Do not be afraid and do not panic . . . For the Lord your God will personally go ahead of you. He will neither fail you nor abandon you.”

Deuteronomy 31:6 (New Living Translation)

“Haven’t We Been Here Before?”

In mid-summer of 2021, we thought COVID was waning. Now, with the positivity rate just below 30%, we find ourselves back on line for worship and bemused as we ponder, “Haven’t we’ve been here before?” There is a sense of *deja vu*, and a concern that all of this is frighteningly cyclical. I want to know when this pandemic will end, and when I can get back to life as I remember it.

The past two years have underscored for all of us that we never know what is just around the corner. Our assumptions and plans are dependent upon something much greater than ourselves and the world in which we live. And if we feel as though we’ve been going in circles, it’s good to remember we are not the only ones to make a difficult journey.

There was Moses and the Israelites trying to find their way out of Egypt and through the wilderness to reach the promised land. Like us, their faith was tried, they made mistakes along the way, but God never left them alone in the wilderness day or night. In fact, because they were in the wilderness and had only God to rely upon, they experienced miracles like the manna and quail.

I think about Jesus and his journey into the wilderness for 40 days and 40 nights. Unlike the Israelites, he was alone except for the devil who tempted him. But our Lord was determined not to succumb, and despite hunger and thirst and loneliness, Jesus Christ persevered in the wilderness, so that we might know when we wander in our own wilderness, that God understands our hardships.

So far, 2022 seems like another wilderness for we who sought neither test nor trial. We were naively content, not fleeing a far-off land or cast out from our homes. We protest that we did not seek out COVID, but it has sought out us, sending us into a wilderness we never expected. As God Almighty accompanied the Israelites through the wilderness, and to a promised land flowing with milk and honey, so God will accompany us until we find unexpected blessings. And Jesus Christ endured the wilderness, so that when we find ourselves in our own wilderness, we will know we are not alone and that our struggle is understood by our Savior.

“Haven’t we been here before?” The answer is ‘yes,’ and so have all the children of God. We find ourselves in inhospitable places and inhospitable times, but never without a hospitable, gracious God who tends us and loves us and knows when and where this wilderness will end. Our hope is in God who is greater than any wilderness.

As hard as it is, be patient and trust. We have been here before, and we know, but we have no doubt that God is here too, showing us the way out, never leaving us alone, and bringing blessing out of tribulation.

Thanks be to God!
Blessings,
Pastor Lisa



Music Notes

Sanctuary Choir

Greetings and salutations as I begin my sixth year at St. Luke's UMC. Wow, has it been a ride. Thank you for all of your participation and support of Pastor Lisa's and my ongoing ministries. Being on the same page is crucial for the outpouring and nurturing of one's talents. St. Luke's is so bountifully blessed and supported.

We will continue to utilize solos, duets, and trios until Ash Wednesday, March 2nd, when we will resume live rehearsals for the sanctuary choir. Hopefully, we will feel comfortable practicing together in preparation for Holy Week and Easter.

Mallet-percussion choir

I am looking forward to practicing with these talented young people on Sundays in March: the 13th, 20th and 27th. April 3rd will complete our preparations for the Lenten season and beyond.

Healthy Church Task Committee Findings

The Healthy Church Task Committee met in January. Due to the spike in COVID-19 cases, the committee decided to close the church to in-person worship until the number of cases and positivity rate moderate. The safety of our congregation is top priority. We have returned to virtual worship and will continue it from January 30th through February 20th. The plan is to return to in-person worship on February 27th. On February 6th we will have drive-thru Communion between 12:30 pm and 1:30 pm after the virtual service. Please remember the church's expenses continue even while we are closed. Your offering is greatly appreciated and can be dropped in the box at the carport door or mailed to the church. If the number of cases declines sharply, the committee will re-evaluate our opening date. Stay tuned!

Finance Committee Update

The Finance Committee is pleased to report that due to your faithful stewardship, St. Luke's paid 50% of its Priority 1 apportionments to the Conference and District to support our global church. While this percentage is down from last year, 2021 --the first full year of the pandemic -- brought its own challenges and no benefit, as in 2020 of a PPP Grant. St. Luke's is truly blessed by your generosity. Thank you.

While we are temporarily worshipping online only, you may make your offering:

- At drive-through Communion
- By mail to the church at 4101 Fordham Road, North Chesterfield, VA 23236
- By leaving your checks and cash (in your church envelope) in the yellow box on the left side of the carport entrance. The box is checked each church office workday (Monday-Thursday 9-1).
- By paying online through your bank's "Bill Pay" program.

If you have questions regarding your estimates of giving, please contact Margaret in the church office.

"Uploaded and Uplifted"

In a new year, it's time for a new study in the Scriptures. Please plan on watching online video segments presented by our teaching teams: Roger and Ray J., and Ruth and A. Ray, from Adam Hamilton's book *Half Truths*. Here is a description of this study:

Join Adam Hamilton in exploring popular sayings that miss the point. They are simple phrases: "God helps those who help themselves," "Love the sinner, hate the sin," and others. They sound Christian - like something you might find in the Bible. We've all heard these words. Maybe we've said them. They capture some element of truth, yet they miss the point in important ways. Discover the whole truth by comparing common Christian clichés with the wisdom found in Scripture.

The first chapter will be distributed, and the first segment will air, beginning the first week in February! Stay tuned and stay focused on the Word of our God!

Pastor Lisa's Confirmation Class

Confirmation, now being viewed virtually, will continue through Easter. Please keep the confirmands in your prayers: Mabel Rose Cassada, Jean-Kathryn Cassada, Cameron Jones and Sadie Jones. Please keep their mentors, Haley & Chris deKrafft, in your prayers as well.



BE INFORMED

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

<http://www.vaumc.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/>

From Our Trustees

The Trustees have been voting on building issues as well as Boy Scout items as of late. The most recent issue with the building is that some tiles over Scottie's desk fell to the floor (not while she was sitting there). Wilmer took a look and said he thinks it's possible it has something to do with the gutters needing cleaning. The gutters were cleaned the week of 1/17/2022 and we're waiting to see how the tiles do after the next snow/rain.

The compressor for the fellowship hall quit working and a repairman was called. The part has been ordered and should be in the first or second week of February. In the meantime, the preschool is working around it.

The Boy Scout issue is being resolved, and the Trustees will be voting on whether to allow the Boy Scout troop to continue to use St. Luke's for its meetings, using a Facilities Agreement and having a copy of their insurance.

Boy Scouts

The Boy Scouts and this organization's relationship with the United Methodist Church have been in the news a lot lately. Approximately 84,000 claims of sexual abuse were filed against the Boy Scouts (no claims were filed against St. Luke's). The national Scout organization filed for bankruptcy in February 2020. The bankruptcy agreement establishes a fund to compensate victims in exchange for limiting claims to those filed by November 2020. Thousands of United Methodist churches, including St. Luke's, are Chartered Organizations which sponsor Scout troops.

The Charter agreements include insurance provided by the Scouts to protect sponsoring organizations. The Scouts however, chose to not include churches in the coverage provided by the settlement fund. That decision has led to many twists and turns to protect the church. Most recently, our Scout Troop has not been allowed to meet in the Church since September 2021, while the fate of the charters is being discussed and other legal mechanisms are being considered to allow meetings to resume in churches. As of this writing, efforts are underway to execute a legal document to permit our Scouts to reenter the Church at least until the end of this year. The United Methodist Church as a whole has also agreed to contribute 30 million dollars to the settlement fund. This contribution entitles the United Methodist Church to protection under the settlement agreement.

February Birthdays

February 1	Becky Jenkins Jason Williams C.W. Rice
February 2	Randi Hayes
February 5	Kevin Russell Stephanie Burnett
February 6	Gayle McGonigle Ashley Driskill Nikki Driskill
February 8	Sean Wythe
February 10	Katie Haley Katherine Stefi Harris
February 12	Carolyn Beeckler
February 15	Ruth Russell Tom Proffitt
February 17	Robert Hall Rebecca Heath Tee Leigh
February 19	Andrea Brown Betty Hubble Justin Burnett
February 20	Maria Proffitt Wayne Johnson
February 22	Scottie Kyle
February 24	Mary Nell Kloss
February 25	Thelma Edwards Jason Williams Rachel Jenkins Cook Sofia Lorenzo Bruce Anderson Stewart Ball
February 26	George Moore
February 27	David Urbanski
February 28	Pam Coleman



St. Luke's seeks to be a spiritual community where all God's children experience Christ's love and redemption and where we share this through worship, fellowship, education and mission for the community and the world.

www.stlukesumconthehill.org

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Sunday Schools

“Sorrow and Love flow mingled down”

Our sympathy, love and prayers are extended to Woody Smart and family. His Uncle Percy claimed the promise of the resurrection on December 6, 2021. He was 102 years old.

Our sympathy, love and prayers are extended to Ann Brown and family at the passing of Tom Brown, former Minister at St. Luke's. Tom claimed the promise of the resurrection on January 3, 2022.

Our sympathy, love and prayers are extended to Ibbie Smith and family at the passing of Dean. He claimed the promise of the resurrection on January 6th, 2022.

Upheld in our Prayers

Prayers for peace, unity and justice across the nation

Wilmer & Phyllis Downs	Gayle McGonigle
Annie (Rose Marie's sister)	Joan & John Crawford
Bob & Jan Hall	Katherine Peterson
Dianne Rust	Ronnie & Shirley Weade
Sennie Case	Ibbie Smith
Jim Raines	Bettie Jones
Terry & Louise Kyle	Jim Brantley
Chuck Fayle	Deannie Reynolds
Curtis Perry	The R. Jones Family
Opal Holshouser	LuAnn Courtney
Florence & Marion (Margaret's sisters)	

Recovering from Covid

Paul, Thomas, Jerry, Sam, Woody, Beth, Becky, Riley

Our Military

Robbie Bowen, Aaron Frankey, Larry Russell

See our weekly Tuesday email for a complete listing of all prayer requests.

Preschool News

Preschool continues to be full of fun activities! We enjoyed a concert with Mr. Beatman, and it was such a joy to see the kids having such a great time! We look forward to class Valentine parties and card exchanges in February!

We are currently registering for the 2022-2023 school year. Did you know that church members get priority and can register with our current families? Visit our website for registration information, or feel free to give us a call! www.stlukespreschoolva.com (804) 276-8303



Dancing Little Stars Debuts at St. Luke's UMC

Tiny dancers, 12 of them, aged 3-kindergarten, kicked off their dance season in January in the social hall. The group will meet Tuesdays from 4:45-5:45 pm, and will present a recital at the end of the year.





NOW OPEN

**Pfizer (12 and Older), Moderna and J&J (18 and older)
Vaccines will be offered at the Rockwood Vaccination Center
located in the former Big Lots building in Rockwood Shopping Center**

**Mondays 3 - 7 p.m. Thursdays 3 - 7 p.m.
Tuesdays 3 - 7 p.m. Saturdays 9 - 12 p.m.**

**Rockwood
Vaccination Center**
10161 Hull Street Road,
Midlothian, VA 23112

If you have questions call 1-877-829-4682

Conducted by The Chesterfield Health Department

**Vaccination Card
is required for
Booster Dose**

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Booster Dose**

**BOOSTER DOSE — If you are eligible, you can receive a booster dose of the
Moderna, Pfizer or J andJ COVID-19 vaccines.**

A COVID-19 vaccine booster dose is recommended for certain individuals, **at least 6 months** after completion of the primary series:

People 65 years and older and residents in long-term care settings,

People aged 50–64 years with underlying medical conditions.

Additional individuals may receive a booster shot of the Pfizer-BioNTech’s COVID-19 vaccine at **least 6 months** after their Pfizer-BioNTech primary series, based on their individual benefits and risks:

People aged 18–49 years with underlying medical conditions, and

People aged 18-64 years who are at increased risk for COVID-19 exposure and transmission because of occupational or institutional setting.