

STL ACTS OF FAITH

The Newsletter of St. Luke's Episcopal Church



"Look on your family, our God,
and teach us to care for one
another, for you are child and
parent, you alone are love's
source and secret."

"O God, you made us in your own
image and redeemed us through
Jesus your Son: Look with
compassion on the whole
human family; take away the
arrogance and hatred which
infect our hearts; break down the
walls that separate us; unite us in
bonds of love".

--New Zealand Prayer Book

Dear friends,

In recent weeks, many in our
immigrant community have been
living with renewed fear. The
presence of ICE in Raleigh and the
likelihood of further activity in
Durham has reopened old wounds
—memories of families torn apart,
children left without parents, and
an entire community treated as if
their lives and stories were
somehow less worthy of dignity. It
is dehumanizing. And it is not the
way of Jesus.

(Cont on page 2]



[cont. from page 1]

At moments like this, Scripture becomes painfully clear: “You shall love the foreigner, for you were foreigners in the land of Egypt.” Throughout the Bible, God calls God’s people to stand with the vulnerable, the displaced, the stranger whose very life depends on the hospitality of others. These are not theoretical commandments. They are invitations to incarnate God’s own heart.

This is why St. Luke’s has chosen to stand—boldly, publicly, and without apology—alongside our immigrant brothers and sisters. We do this not as a political statement but as a Gospel one. Love of neighbor is not optional. Solidarity is not optional. When one part of the Body suffers, the whole Body suffers.

I am reminded of something Father Medina said in his sermon November 23rd: “The St. Luke’s community is an embodiment of the Gospel.” He said this while speaking to the courage and tenderness he sees in you—your willingness to show up, to protect, to accompany, to hold space for those who are afraid. He said it because he meant it. And he meant it because he has seen it.

St. Luke’s, thank you for being a community that lives what it proclaims. Your presence, your resolve, and your love are signs of God’s kingdom breaking into our world.

In Christ’s peace,
Greg



FOR GOD’S PEACE IN THE WAKE OF VIOLENCE AND FEAR

God of peace, who breaks down the dividing walls of hostility, we bring before you the pain and grief brought by escalating tensions on immigration. Lord, we pray for peace and understanding to prevail. Heal the wounds of those who are hurting, and hold close the souls of those lost in the wake of violence and fear. Be near to families separated by tragedy and uncertainty, offering your comfort and protection. Soothe angry hearts and silence words that inflame hatred or division. May your Holy Spirit guide us toward justice, reconciliation, and the dignity of every person—so that our communities might reflect your love for the captive and the vulnerable.

Through Jesus Christ, your Son, who is our peace and has reconciled us to you in one body through the cross. Amen

--Public Policy and Witness Division, Episcopal Public Policy Network

<https://www.episcopalchurch.org/ogr/public-policy-and-witness-weekly-prayers-september-26/>

Upcoming Events and Opportunities *

Chrismons Workshop

Wednesday, December 3, 1-4 p.m.
Kramer Room

Blue Christmas Service

Wednesday, December 10, 5:30 p.m.
Nave

Praying with a Brush: Icon Workshop

Saturday, December 13, 10 a.m.-2:30 p.m.

St. Luke's Hikers

Saturday, December 13, 10 a.m.
Pump Station Trail, Eno River State Park

St. Luke's Men's Group Lunch

Tuesday, December 16, 12-1:30 p.m.
Kramer Room

St. Luke's Stitchers

Wednesday, December 17, 1:30-3:30 p.m.
Kramer Room

Winter Labyrinth Group Walk

Saturday, December 21
1-2 p.m.

Croasdaile Eucharist

Tuesday, December 23, 11 a.m.

Christmas Eve Service

Wednesday, December 24
4:30 p.m. Musical Offering
5 p.m. Holy Eucharist

Christmas Day Morning Prayer

Thursday, December 25, 9 a.m.
Nave

Almighty God, give us grace to cast away the works of darkness, and put on the armor of light, now in the time of this mortal life in which your Son Jesus Christ came to visit us in great humility; that in the last day, when he shall come again in his glorious majesty to judge both the living and the dead, we may rise to the life immortal; through him who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

BCP p. 211

Welcome to Advent!



Advent always begins in the dark. Not as a punishment or a detour, but as the place where honest hope is born. Scripture has never asked us to pretend that everything is fine; instead, it invites us to wait, to watch, and to trust that God is already moving in the shadows we would rather avoid.

This season, I'm mindful that many in our community are carrying quiet griefs, unanswered prayers, and the heaviness of a world that feels increasingly fragile: the division, the vitriol, the inhumane treatment of our immigrant brothers and sisters. Advent gives us permission to name those things. It even invites us to see them as the very places where Christ's light first begins to shine.

That is why we will gather on December 10 at 5:30 p.m. for our Blue Christmas service—a gentle, contemplative space for those who find the holidays complicated or painful. If you need a place where the tears are welcomed and the pressure to be “merry” is lifted, this service is for you. And if you know someone who needs that kind of room to breathe, bring them. No one should have to walk through this season alone.

And then, the story turns. The darkness is not denied, but it is not the last word. On Christmas Eve, we will gather at 5:00 p.m., with special music beginning at 4:30, to welcome the Christ who shows up not with spectacle but with vulnerability. God arrives not in a palace but in a borrowed space, not with security but with risk. Every year that truth feels more urgent.

Because Christ still comes to us in precisely that way—in the tender and small, in the places we overlook, and in moments that break us open just enough for grace to get in. Advent reminds us that God's presence is rarely loud or obvious. It is born quietly, humbly, sometimes almost imperceptibly, right in the middle of our ordinary and imperfect lives.

So as we enter Advent together, I invite you to let the quiet honesty of the season do its work in you. Bring your grief. Bring your hope. Bring your longing for a world made new. And bring your courage to keep watch for the light, trusting that it is already on its way.

With you on the way,
Greg



This service offers a sacred space for ALL who find the holidays difficult. Here, tears are welcome, silence is holy and hope is not demanded but offered. Come as you are, without pressure or pretense, and rest in the compassionate presence of God.



All Are Welcome

St. Luke's Episcopal Church
1737 Hillandale Road, Durham, North Carolina 27705
www.stlukesdurham.org

Senior Warden Reflections

He defends the cause of the fatherless and the widow, and loves the foreigner residing among you, giving them food and clothing. And you are to love those who are foreigners, for you yourselves were foreigners in Egypt.

Deuteronomy 10:18-19 (NIV)

For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known. And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity.

1 Corinthians 13: 12-13 (KJV)



Hello all! I bring up the above as we enter into a new season of the church calendar, of St. Luke's journey, of our own lives. The Vestry has been doing what we can to serve you and our neighbors in a way that is in keeping with our Baptismal Covenant, all while "seeing through a glass darkly" regarding what is going on in the world. We don't have to have all the answers, however, to still do good and do something.

We continue to find clarity and grace in our relationship with Iglesia El Buen Pastor, to be partners with them and with LEAP in these incredibly troubled times. I sit safely and happily in my warm kitchen typing this, while others are huddled, hungry, and scared. Really. What do we do?

We continue our support, we continue being extremely welcoming, we find ways to make all at St. Luke's feel included and safe. Thanks for traveling this road with the Vestry. Please continue to let us know how we can best support you in this season of our lives.

As I wind up my season on the Vestry and as Senior Warden, I want to thank everyone, especially the Vestry, for their hard work over the past year. The best part about this hard work is that we did it with JOY in our hearts. Towards the end of this month, we will sing together "Joy to the World." Let's keep the joy going through the next seasons—in our church and outside.

Love y'all,
Joan Hodges,
Senior Warden



Recent financial action by your Vestry:

Jim Brunnquell, Treasurer, reported that pledge contributions for the ten months ending in October were \$309,520 versus a budget for ten months of \$297,063. Regular, unpledged contributions are at \$30,682, which is well above the \$15,000 budgeted for that line item in the 2025 budget.

The vestry agreed to move 10% of the \$5,195.76 net profit from the Pumpkin Patch to the Outreach Fund. Additionally, the vestry voted to split all plate donations (cash only) from joint services with IBP 50/50.



Junior Warden's Corner

Deuteronomy 28:6 "Blessed shall you be when you come in, and blessed shall you be when you go out."

The Junior Warden Ministry Team and other members of the congregation were busy in November, providing a safe place for us to worship. They continue to take care of our beautiful, sacred space. During the month, the following improvements were completed or planned.

- An assessment of the fire safety of our property is underway. We have regular inspections and professional advice. We will install detectors in the coming weeks.
- The exterior of Johnson Hall will be painted within the next few weeks.
- Other exterior activities include roof inspections. We have a small leak that will be repaired soon, along with good maintenance to prevent future leaks. The flat roof over the offices, Sprague Room, and Kramer Room has a little pond that will be cleared and prevented from reappearing.
- The choir is about to receive additional kneelers (hassocks) thanks to funds from the Memorials Ministry! The choir is grateful and excited to be able to kneel on padding instead of tile.
- We could use some assistance from a certified electrician. If that is you, please contact me!
- The landscaping of our grounds is in pretty good shape. During the winter months, we may add plantings at the sign and at south-facing office windows.
- Please note what is and is not allowed in the trash (green), recycling (blue), and yard waste (brown) bins. There are signs in the kitchen indicating what is allowed in the recycling bin. While we need to recycle as much as possible, one wrong item can make the whole bin "trash." That may seem harsh, but it's because of the manner materials are sorted for recycling. If you aren't sure, put it in the trash! Yard waste bins are only for weeds, sticks, and other plant material.
- Thanks to June Santa for maintaining the timer for exterior lighting, especially in the longer nights of winter.
- Thanks go to Randy Griffin for cleaning the major outdoor play equipment!

We are always working on small needs, like tightening screws and door hinges, replacing lightbulbs, and tweaking plumbing. Thanks to Bill Gutknecht, Peter Taflan, and Steve Dedrick for handling many of these recent jobs.

If you would like to help with ongoing needs, please contact me!

Wendy Cook
Junior Warden



Peace Like a River

This Fall the Choir of St. Luke's and I have worked together to explore how music as a ministry reaches the congregation on Sundays. There are many, many possibilities for choral anthems and responses, and it is always sad to realize that the selections not chosen for the choir to sing would themselves be great contributions to worship. However, the current times present us with a challenge of how we can worship together as a diverse parish in a world fraught with hate and division. The answer to this challenge has been to select anthems on "peace," and enable that theme to affirm our faith and awaken hope like the waters of a calming but mighty river.



On November 16 we sang an anthem composed by Felix Mendelssohn (who grew up in a Jewish household but converted to Christianity in response to societal and cultural pressures throughout Europe), with words by Martin Luther, "Verleih uns Frieden." The text can be found among the responses in the Suffrages from the earliest forms of Evening Prayer: "Give us peace in our time, O Lord; for there is none other that fights for us, but only you, O God."

For the second Sunday of Advent, the choir will offer Carl P. Daw Jr.'s meditation on Isaiah's prophecy, "O Day of peace, that dimly shines" from the Hymnal 1982. We have also sung anthems entitled "Peace to you, my peace be with you" (Robert Pearsall) and "Prayer for Peace" (David Cherwien), all of which offer various ways to fathom the peace that we receive from God and pass along to each other. All these texts speak of true peace as an unmerited gift (grace) from God and not the world's view of something we can fashion ourselves or negotiate with others.

As we look ahead to the Christmas season, we will surely wish peace to one another in the spirit of the angels' cry, "Peace on earth, goodwill to all." This will be a time for many of us to reflect on what exactly is this peace that the newborn Jesus will speak about as an adult. How can we be bearers of that incomprehensible peace to one another, and not merely well-wishers of it? For our aim should be, in Carl Daw's words: that "enemies shall learn to love, all creatures find their true accord; the hope of peace shall be fulfilled, for all the earth shall know the Lord." Amen.

David



Birthdays!



7. Patricia LeMoine
8. Tim Lassiter
11. Margaret Cline
11. Barbara Longmire
12. E. June Santa
12. Wayne Wagoner
13. Dan Koppenhaver
15. Joanne Hooker

18. Daniel Emory
23. Venicia Emory
23. Frances Hite
26. Peter Jacobi
27. Paul Welty, Jr.
28. Elizabeth Maginnes
31. Richard Renard





St. Luke's Share Your Christmas

Share Your Christmas Is Up and Running!

Help brighten Christmas for St. Luke's Families (families identified by St. Luke's parishioners or clergy), LEAP students, Ronald McDonald House and the Durham Animal Protection Society.

To donate a present or gift card, stop by the Sprague Room and take a tag off the Share Your Christmas tree. All tags are numbered. Please enter your name and phone number on the sign-up sheet, next to the number that corresponds to the number on your tag. Put presents/gift cards back under the tree on or before December 14 (December 10 for Ronald McDonald House).

If you prefer, you can make a donation to St. Luke's online through Pay Pal. You'll find directions at the Share Your Christmas page on the St. Luke's website at <https://stlukesdurham.org/share-your-christmas-2025/>. You do not need a Pay Pal account to use this option. You may also donate via cash or check. Indicate the cash or check donation is for "Share Your Christmas." These donations will be used to purchase presents or gift cards, as appropriate.

To help with purchasing gifts or gift cards with funds donated by St. Lukers who prefer not to shop, or to help with wrapping or delivery, contact Bill or Carol Charping (cell: 919-214-0560; email: bizzocharping@earthlink.net).



November 2025 Vestry Reflections

As usual, this month's vestry meeting was opened with a calming exercise of centering prayer led by Rector Greg, in which we cleared our minds, in preparation for Greg's prayer for the Holy Spirit to guide us in our deliberations during our time together. And, as usual, as part of our check-in, each vestry member shared blessings and concerns from their own lives.

Next, Greg preempted the regular agenda to have Hope report on the progress of the fall pledge campaign. As many of you already know, we reached a significant milestone this year and exceeded our \$400,000 goal! Total Pledges from 94 pledging units were \$422,508. New pledges were \$49,400 from 18 pledging units. And, increased pledges were \$60,664 from 52 pledging units. Vestry celebration and congratulations were shared with Hope, John Hodges-Copple (not in attendance and co-chair of the campaign with Hope) and Rector Greg. The joyful news warmed our hearts. The joy, faith and love Rector Greg has brought to St. Luke's reflect the renewed energy we're experiencing at St. Luke's to be the feet and hands of Christ in the world.

"For I know the plans I have for you," declared the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." – Jeremiah 29:11

Infused with the spirit of this wonderful news, our November meeting felt more like a celebratory gathering. Some of us were celebrating the milestone stewardship campaign. Some of us were celebrating their penultimate vestry meeting. And, others were celebrating the good news of St. Luke's renewed energy, which Rector Greg has brought to St. Luke's, and the mutual love our vestry members have for each other and for our parish. The meeting opened with excitement and joy and gratitude. The spirit enveloped everyone and everything throughout the evening. It closed the same way when Rector Greg recounted an encounter he had had this past Sunday.

Greg shared a story with us of how substantial using his Rector's Discretionary Fund (RDF) had been in paying rent for two households. Greg said he was told Sunday by one recipient that without St. Luke's his family would have been homeless. Both Greg and the recipient were moved to tears. Greg suggested that maybe Jan Freeman (our Almoner) could write a newsletter article. And, Greg said to give thanks for the heart of this parish.

At the end of our meeting, we gathered together, held hands and recited the Lord's Prayer in unison and then we carried God's love out into the world.

Respectfully submitted in faith,
Peter Taflan
Vestry Class of 2027

BTW Greg mentioned that the diocese has two, full-length portraits to give to St. Luke's. One is of Bishop Bob Johnson and one is of Bishop Anne Hodges-Copple. Greg will arrange for them to be delivered to St. Luke's. The next step will be to determine where to hang them.



A Strong Foundation And A Renewed Spirit

2026 Pledge Campaign

Thanks to all who have pledged for 2026, St.Luke's reached a significant milestone this year and exceeded our \$400,000 goal! As of November 19:

Total Pledges: 94 pledging units have pledged \$422,508

New Pledges: 18 pledging units \$49,400

Increased Pledges: 52 pledging units \$60,664

	2023	2024	2025	2026
Pledges	\$343,292	\$333,504	\$356,675	\$422,508
Pledging Units	107	96	94	94

We are thankful for the leadership and energy that Greg brings to St. Luke's and to all of you who pledged your support for our shared ministries and mission. The vestry is able to build a budget that supports our outstanding staff, continues building our relationship with Iglesia El Buen Pastor and further invests in the care and upkeep of our facilities and campus.

If you haven't yet sent in your pledge for 2026, please do so before December 1 to allow the finance committee and vestry to finalize the 2026 budget.

With gratitude,

Hope Galunas and John Hodges-Copple, co-chairs



Wish list+

YOUR Picture in the Online directory.

Our directory is woefully short of pictures. Please contact Bill Gutknecht or Alan Schueler listed below for help uploading a picture. The directory is a vital tool for building community.

Flat-Screen TV (Approx. 55")

We are seeking a flat-screen TV for the Sprague Room to showcase photos of the many activities at St. Luke's. If you are upgrading or have an older flat-screen TV (around 55 inches) to donate, please contact Alan Schueler (aschuel@gmail.com) or Bill Gutknecht (bill.grams@outlook.com). Thank you

Ushers at the 10:30 service

This is an easy job that helps the service progress smoothly. Please contact Bill Charming if you would like to learn more.



Robin Arcus to Sing at Canterbury this December

(Robin writes)...This December I will take my place as a tiny link in the long chain of choristers offering daily services at England's Canterbury Cathedral. Canterbury Cathedral dates to 597, first as a Roman Catholic outpost directed by Pope Gregory the Great. The Cathedral has endured multiple rebuilds, wars, and ecclesiastical ruptures and stands as the seat of the Archbishop of Canterbury who, as first-among-equals, is head of the Church of England and the global Anglican Communion. In an historic event this year, Sarah Mullally was appointed as the Archbishop, the first woman to hold that office.

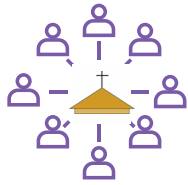
Given the rigors of daily services, the resident choirs at Canterbury, as at other cathedrals, enjoy time off during the summer and after Christmas. As a substitute choir, the Adult Choir of the Royal School of Church Music (RSCM) in America stands in for the resident singers. Made up of fifty auditioned, volunteer singers from North America, our choir will fill in for Evensong as well as the Sunday Mass, December 30, 2025 through January 4, 2026. The RSCM Adult Choir is a companion to the week-long RSCM summer residencies St. Luke's singers, including youth members Caroline Babb and Marleigh Nelson, have enjoyed at Duke University and other locations. The same RSCM organization also provides the Voice For Life music-curriculum currently active at St. Luke's. Each achieved level of learning corresponds to a colored ribbon you see worn by our St. Luke's choir members. The mission of the RSCM is to continue to enhance the beauty of excellence through sacred music worldwide.

To worship with us at Canterbury Cathedral via livestream, December 30, 2025 - January 4, 2026, Evensong is daily at 5:30pm (12:30pm ET) and Sunday 11:00am (6am ET) via the Cathedral's YouTube channel www.youtube.com/@CanterburyCathedralOfficial. The recorded livestreams will also be available later on YouTube.



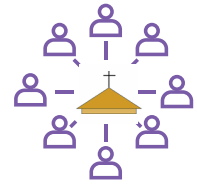
Congratulations, Carol!

The Durham Early Childhood Educator Apprenticeship program held their Achievement Ceremony recognizing apprentice progress. Mrs. Carol Joyner was recognized for already having her NC Early Childhood Credential and was awarded her Infant/Toddler Certificate and Preschool Certificate. This achievement has put her closer to earning her Associate's Degree in Early Childhood Education. Congratulations Mrs. Carol Joyner!!! You got this!!



Connecting at St. Luke's

Learn about groups you may want to join



Episcopal Center Ministry

The Episcopal Center at Duke University is a community of students, faculty, and staff, where everyone is encouraged to reflect, study, and grow in their faith journey. The ministry is sponsored by the Diocese of North Carolina and led by Campus Minister Sam Laurent. Services include Holy Eucharist, celebrated each Sunday during the academic year, weekly Compline, plus others. Episcopal churches in the area sponsor the group by naming a representative to the Campus Minister's Advisory Board. Additionally, church volunteers provide a home-cooked meal on Sundays after services two or three times a semester. These volunteers perform different roles - planning the meal, providing food, taking food to the Center, setting up, and cleaning up. It gives us great satisfaction and joy to worship and participate in this ministry. Anyone interested in this joyous Ministry can speak with Lera Williams, Mary Etta or Bob King. They are in the online directory!



St. Luke's Hikers



Our next walk is:
Saturday, December 13, 2025, 10 a.m.
Pump Station Trail, Eno River State Park.

Hello to those who like to hike. It's been a while since this Ministry was active, but it's time once again to join your friends from St. Luke's and enjoy hiking our many Eno River and Duke Forest trails. This hike will start at 10:00 a.m. on Saturday, December 13th. The rain date is December 20th. We will be hiking the Eno River Pump Station Trail which starts at the Nancy Rhodes Creek Bridge at 4023 Rivermont Road. The 1.5-mile trail is not difficult, but good walking shoes and walking sticks are recommended. A point of interest on the trail is the site of Durham's first water pumping station. If you want to join in, please send a message to Karen Gray (hebegray2@gmail.com or 919-612-0331) or Bill Gutknecht (bill.grams@outlook.com or 919-672-2153).



The Icon Corner

Mimi Games



It's easy to picture the traditional scene of Jesus's birth. We see the baby in a humble manger, with farm animals nearby, because there was no room for them in the inn. Angels in heaven announce the birth of the new king, while wise men travel from distant places to bring him valuable gifts. The story is just starting.

Mary, Joseph, and Jesus must go back to Nazareth, but they find out King Herod's forces are watching for male babies who might threaten Herod's rule. Their son's and possibly their lives are in danger. Mary and Joseph decide to return to Nazareth via a safer, less-traveled route.

The first icon depicts the Holy Family quietly traveling along a hilly path. The gold sky signifies God's presence. Jesus is shown as a playful child, with a halo indicating he is the Christ. The village in the background might be Bethlehem, which they are leaving, or Nazareth, their destination.

In the more modern icon shown on the right, halos identify this family as holy, and the lettering around the boy's head shows that he is Jesus Christ. The dark sky and the family's expressions show fear, while the boy, Jesus, nervously clutches his hands. The Holy Family wears simple clothes and carries few possessions. Jesus is shoeless, indicating that his mother will likely have to hold him for most of the journey. Fearful migrations persist and always require faith.

Don't Forget our upcoming workshop!

On **Saturday, December 13th from 10 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.**, St. Luke's will offer a one-day Advent devotional workshop, *Praying with a Brush*. The workshop is fully sold out but we will consider offering it again at a later date.

Internationally renowned iconographer, Marek Czarnecki, will lead our workshop. We will start with a lecture exploring the holy traditions and history of iconography, illuminating the legendary and archaeological origins of the first icons.

The workshop will feature a hands-on study of St. Luke's icon of the Mother of God, *She Who Shows the Way*. Using a 16th-century Greek version known for its clarity and harmony, we will experience the original way iconographers begin their training by copying. Following in the footsteps of the iconographer, we replicate their technique using a brush and ink, line-by-line. Every icon holds a connection to the individual it represents. Each brushstroke is matched with a prayer as we retrace the careful drapery of the garments, the positions of the hands, the features of the faces, and delve into the meanings of ancient symbols.

This knowledge and experience will enhance our experience of a blessed Advent and a joyous Christmas.



The Green Team's December Report



Thoughts for the Month

"You will go out in joy and be led forth in peace; the mountains and hills will burst into song before you, and all the trees of the field will clap their hands." Isaiah 55:12

"I play fictitious characters, often solving fictitious problems. I believe mankind has looked at climate change in the same way, as if it were fiction." Leonardo DiCaprio

December Green Tips

The Sierra Club's Toiyabe Chapter published over 100 ways to save the planet. The December tips (50 through 53) are listed below. These tips are an effective way to reduce our carbon footprint and contribute to a healthier planet.

Tip No. 50: Divest your savings from fossil fuels. Ask your financial managers about sustainable investing, or socially responsible investing.

Tip No. 51: Buy an electric car.

Tip No. 52: Walk, it's healthier.

Tip No. 53: Insulate your home. Start your insulation in the attic or roof. Install double or triple-paned windows, argon-filled windows. To do it super-duper, insulate your walls.

Upcoming Green Event: The Wondrous World of Moss, December 6 at 10:00 a.m.

Discover the wondrous world of mosses with Blanka Aguero, the Bryophyte Collections Manager at the Duke University Herbarium!

Moss is a keystone species that holds moisture, retains soil, pioneers environments, and serves as an ecosystem health monitor. The first terrestrial plants made way for all other life forms on Earth. Soft and serene, moss humbly dominates our environment yet is often overlooked in favor of flashier vascular plants. Moss is delicate and yet thrives in some of the harshest environments in the world. Moss is simple information, yet it supports all organisms in complex ecosystems. Moss roots us to nature while remaining unrooted itself!

The event takes place at the Durham County Main Library, 300 North Roxboro Street, Durham, on December 6 at 10:00 a.m. Visit durhamcountylibrary.libcal.com for further details.

St. Luke's Solar Savings

The solar monthly savings are based only on the first three days of November. From November 1 through November 3, 2025, the solar energy savings were \$55.22. From January through November 3, 2025, the church saved \$7,426.09. Since installing the solar panels, the total system savings are \$30,900.63.



Walking Toward Light:

A Winter Solstice Labyrinth Journey

This year offers us a remarkable gift: December 21 brings both the winter solstice and the fourth Sunday of Advent, when we light the candle of love. This convergence invites us into a sacred pause, a moment to honor both the lengthening darkness and the growing light of hope within our hearts.

The labyrinth has long been a path of pilgrimage, calling us inward even as we move forward. As we approach the shortest day of the year, we find ourselves walking alongside the wise men of old—setting out with uncertain steps, trusting that the journey itself is the revelation. They traveled with open hearts and minds, guided not by certainty but by faith, believing that all would be revealed in its time. We walk as they walked, carrying both our eager anticipation and our anxieties, our joy intermingled with worry.

There is something profoundly fitting about Advent coinciding with winter's arrival. As the natural world grows quiet and still, we too are called to slow down, to move against the frantic pace of the season. In the midst of holiday chaos, the labyrinth offers us peace—a sacred spiral where we can hold both the darkness of winter and the warmth of love's light. Here, in this ancient pattern, we practice what Advent teaches: patient waiting, trust amid uncertainty, courage in the face of our fears.

The fourth candle of Advent glows with love—God's love given through the gift of His son. As we walk the labyrinth on the threshold of winter, we walk toward that love, preparing our hearts to receive the light that no darkness can overcome. Each step is an act of faith, each turn a release of control, each breath a prayer of trust.

Join us on December 20 at 1:00 PM as we journey together through the labyrinth, drawing closer to the peace and love of this blessed season. Walk with us as pilgrims of hope, embracing both the coming dark and the coming light, knowing that in this sacred season, we are never alone. The path calls us forward, and Love itself awaits at the center.

For more information on this walk and continued exploration of our labyrinth at St. Luke's, contact Annette Medlin, annette@annettedmedlin.com



Celebrating All Saints Day



Pre-Owned Christmas Sale



Food for our Friends and Neighbors



With generous donations from the parish, we were able this month to generously fill 10 boxes with numerous food items plus provide a turkey for families in our community.

Combining funds from the Durham Episcopal Resettlement Coalition (DERC) and the Rector's Discretionary Fund, we bought twenty \$100 Food Lion gift cards to be distributed by World Relief Durham to refugee families DERC has welcomed to our community.

AND, with our help, LEAP was able to pack and deliver 325 boxes of food to families in need as well as fill three community fridges!

"All things come of thee, O Lord and of thine own have we given thee."

Prayer Concerns

Almighty God, we entrust all who are dear to us to your never-failing care and love, for this life and the life to come, knowing that you are doing for them better things than we can desire or pray for; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Please pray for:

"For Those We Love" BCP 831

- Mary Jane Stillwagon, who is recovering from knee replacement surgery. She asks for prayers for an uneventful and successful recovery.
- friend of St. Luke's Laquita Bowling asks for healing prayers for her mother, Vanessa Bowling, who has had a foot amputated due to diabetes. Once she is released from the hospital, Vanessa will come to live with Laquita.
- Valleri Callahan, who is continuing to recover from a bad fall.
- Peggy DePasquale, for recovery from surgery.
- Lubby, brother of St. Luke's friend Helen Ruffin, who is currently hospitalized with symptoms of congestive heart failure.
- St. Luke's parishioner Kate Nathaniel and her husband Eddie. Kate is suffering from advanced Alzheimer's and is receiving hospice care at home.
- Judy Smith, dear friend of Liz and Sam Martin, who has been diagnosed with Plasma Cell Leukemia.
- Doug Marlowe, for successful recovery from knee replacement surgery.
- Regina Dickens, recovering from serious surgery. Regina is a dear friend of Jan Freeman.
- choir member Jenny Davenport, in her struggle with depression.
- Laurie and Richard Renard, who are struggling with ongoing health issues.
- Tom Muzicka, cousin of Carol Charping, who is undergoing radiation therapy for metastatic lung cancer.
- Jim and Vicki Fuller's son, Jaime, in his struggle with heart-related issues.
- Wendy Cook's stepfather, Bill, has a tumor in his esophagus, as well as previously diagnosed heart issues and shortness of breath. His wife (Jean) is on post-treatment meds for cancer and also has pancreatitis and colitis. Prayers for sound medical advice on next steps.
- Safety and protection for our neighbors who are feeling threatened and afraid.
- Our St. Luke's friends from the community in their continuing struggles for food security, decent housing, reliable transportation, sufficient employment, medical care, and dignity for themselves and their families. As the weather grows colder, many will not be able to afford to pay their heating bills.

Almighty and everliving God, ruler of all things in heaven and earth, hear our prayers for this parish family. Strengthen the faithful, arouse the careless, and restore the penitent. Grant us all things necessary for our common life, and bring us all to be of one heart and mind within your Holy Church; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

St. Luke's Email-What's in it for you?

Our email list lets you stay up to date on parish news and fellowship events (weekly announcements email), stay aware of difficult times facing your fellow parishioners (weekly e-prayers email), and know when the latest issue of our monthly newsletter, Acts of Faith, is published. But, to paraphrase a saying, you have to be on it to get it! Make sure the Parish Coordinator (parish-coord@stlukesdurham.org) has your email address, or subscribe automatically by going to <https://www.stlukesdurham.org/> and scrolling down to "Connect with us".

St. Luke's Calendar

Our calendar is up to date on our website: <https://stlukesdurham.org/parish-calendar/>. Weddings, baptisms, funerals, and other special services are scheduled by the rector. The Parish Coordinator, Kaye Saunders, can help you arrange meetings or other events.

Flowers Calendar

The 2025 flowers calendar is up on the wall in the south narthex just outside the parish office. Please sign up if you would like to provide flowers for a Sunday service this year. Put your name and the person or persons in whose memory or honor you would like the flowers given. The parish coordinator will contact you if more details are needed.

The florist charges us \$150 for the Sunday flowers each week. The cost, however, should never be prohibitive for those who want to donate flowers in honor of loved ones. We are working on alternative ways to make a donation of flowers affordable for all. If you have concerns, please speak with Kaye.

St. Luke's Parish Office Hours:

Monday- Thursday 9-3
(Closed Tuesdays 10-11:15)

Rector Office Hours:

Monday-Wednesday 9-5
Thursdays available by phone
Other times by appointment

For Children

Our Nursery is open in Johnson Hall Sunday mornings 9-11:30 for infants through three year olds. Older children through elementary school are invited to join in Godly Play, beginning at 10:15 also in Johnson Hall. Please ask an usher if you need directions or assistance.

Stewardship at St. Luke's

As a reminder, you can give to St. Luke's Church in several ways:

- Cash or Check (drop in the plate or mail to the office)
- Use PayPal with a debit/credit card via St. Luke's website
- Push payments from your bank or credit union to the Church, just like bill-pay payments for your regular bills
- Initiate a Qualified Charitable Distribution from your IRA if you are 70 1/2 or older

In the Episcopal Church, we ask our members to make a pledge, which is an estimate of giving in the coming year. It represents your commitment to God's work in this place. To make a pledge, please email our Parish Coordinator, Kaye Saunders at parish-coord@stlukesdurham.org.

Submission of materials for the newsletter:

The deadline for submitting materials for the newsletter is the 20th of each month. Please email your materials to Babs Wise: babswise@gmail.com.

Contact us: St. Luke's Episcopal Church
1737 Hillandale Road Durham, NC 27705 phone 919-286-2273
www.stlukesdurham.org

The Rev. Gregory Farrand, Rector
The Rev. Monnie Riggin, Deacon
Kaye Saunders, Parish Coordinator & Assoc. Director of Music
David Arcus, Director of Music & Organist

Treasurer Jim Brunnquell
Vestry Clerk: Jim Wise

Vestry

Class of 2025
Angel Gray
Bill Gutknecht
Donald Hamm
Joan Hodges, Senior Warden

Class of 2027
Carlton Brown
Kelley Lawton
Debbie Stonehouse
Peter Taflan

Class of 2026
Bob Buchanan
Wendy Cook, Junior Warden
Hope Galunas
Pike Hege

Class of 2028
Steve Dedrick
Daniel Emory
Brian Gullett
Martha Lassiter



St. Luke's Episcopal Church
1737 Hillandale Road
Durham, NC 27705
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The art of living your faith