

New Beginnings

You might have heard of the Irish New Year's Eve tradition of opening the back door of the house just before midnight to let the Old Year out and opening the front door at midnight to let the New Year in. I assume we are happy to leave 2020 behind us, although we aren't exactly sure what 2021 will bring. Will the lockdown be really over on January 23? Will the vaccine help us to regain some kind of 'normalcy' at least by summer? Will we be able to defeat the virus in 2021? So many uncertainties.

New Year's Eve always has a certain magic for me. It's a time to reflect on the last year and to let go of it as well as excitement and anticipation for the New Year that has all these unwritten pages in front of us on which we are going to write our stories. A beloved tradition for me is to reflect on the bible quote for the year. For 2021 it's Luke 6:36: *Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.*

I'm an only child, but my husband has three siblings and it always amazed me to see how differently the parents had been perceived by their children. Conversations about the role God the parent plays in our lives can be just as interesting. We, the siblings in Christ, might have different perspectives on God our heavenly parent as well. This often comes to the surface in times of crisis: Is God with us in this Pandemic? Or did he even send the Pandemic? Why is God not using his mighty powers and put an end to the Coronavirus disaster? Is God not touched by our suffering and mourning? *God is merciful* claims Jesus regardless of all questions and concerns we might have.

We just celebrated Christmas – God's incarnation in Jesus. The suffering of the people goes to Jesus' heart and drives him to places that all others usually avoid. He is with the sick, shepherds, whores, widows, orphans, tax collectors, sinners, outcasts. He is where the strong would never seek the Messiah.

God is merciful! And when God is merciful and we have experienced God's mercy first hand in our lives, then we are asked to pass it on to our fellow human beings. I can clearly see this as the headline for 2021: Be merciful! Because, despite all the hardships we experienced in 2020, we as a congregation received a lot and we prevailed. This alone is something to be thankful for and now let's take the mercy we received and put it to work for our community.

When the hibernation is over there will be lots to do for us. We have to turn from ourselves, from focussing on our building and paying the bills, to the places where no one else wants to go. May 2021 be the year when we start to dream big and to be merciful to those in our community that need to be seen and heard. That would be my wish for 2021!

May the New Year bring you happiness, health and joy and ... don't forget to be merciful!

Blessings, Pastor Heike

***For a visit from the Pastor,
please contact Rev. Heike directly at
519-212-9952***

Nutrition for Learning

Many Gifts

During this giving season we give thanks to our many volunteers members who have given the gift of time to Nutrition for Learning. Thank You!

Nutrition for Learning is an umbrella group that provides food to our local schools for the children. We have had the joy of serving up to 80 children from Franklin School breakfast each and every school day. A portion of our budget came from Nutrition for Learning. Sadly due to COVID virus last spring, our program was forced to close for safety reasons and a full-time coordinator.

We continued to look for opportunities to support our neighbouring school this fall. Happily, fifteen of our members stepped up to support Nutrition for Learning in a new capacity. We met every Monday and Thursday morning at the Schwaben Club to pack snack bags for all of the children in the region. The bags usually had five or six non-perishable items like granola bars, apple sauce etc. Again the COVID virus has suspended the operation for the time being. We hope it will begin again soon.

If you know of any other volunteer opportunities for St. Luke's members let us know. We like to work together in God's service. Thank You All!

- Cathy Dowsling

Worship Services

In accordance with Ontario's Gray level lockdown, in-person worship services are currently suspended.

We invite you to visit us on YouTube for our live-streamed services Sundays at 10:00 am.

Giving Envelopes

The 2021 envelopes are ready at the church office.

As worship services are currently suspended, we ask that you would please call or email the office to make arrangements to receive your box of envelopes.

Office: 519-893-3826

Pastor Heike: 519-212-9952

Email: stlukeslutheran.ca



Photo by Helga Morrison

Christmas Lights & Memories

My aunt Ruth Golbeck told me about the lights in the evergreen tree out front.

I'm not sure if you're aware but my late Mother Arlene Ober planted the tree in memory of my brother Ron when he passed away. They both loved Christmas so it is very fitting.

I know there are two angels looking down and smiling on St. Luke's.

Warmed my heart this Christmas.

- Pat Cote



Photo by Heike Toeller



Our Love & Prayers go out to all our Christian brothers and sisters who are ill, grieving or in long-term care.

Grace be to you and peace from God our

Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

Jan Cina would like to thank everyone for their prayers for his sister Anna Cina who passed away shortly before Christmas.

Our prayers and condolences for the Cina family.

Volunteers

During lock-down level and uncertainty as to when we can resume in-person worship, we will be scheduling volunteers a month at a time.

Training for live-streaming is postponed until such time that we can safely meet. In the meantime, Helga and Glenn will continue to take care of Sunday live-streaming.

All volunteers will be contacted this coming week for availability.

We give thanks to all volunteers for their continued assistance and support.

CHURCH EXECUTIVES:

Chairperson: Jane Hennig
Vice-Chair: O.J. Wilura
Secretary: Donna Finch
Treasurer: Dave DeCoppel

Council Members:

Jane Hennig (Chair)
O.J. Wilura (Vice-Chair)
Donna Finch (Secretary)
Aaron Wilke
Cathy Dowsling
Darlene Hilborn
Anita Gerstenkorn
Mary Ann Lang
Tim Wilke
Bonita Ziegler
Lynn Brooks

Office Contact:

Church Office: (519) 893-3826
Church E-mail: info@stlukeslutheran.ca
Website: stlukeslutheran.ca
Pastor Heike: (519) 212-9952
Pastor's Email: pastor.heike@gmail.com
Office Administrator: Helga Morrison
Music Director: Gloria Berg

Weekly Offerings

We appreciate your support to meet our financial obligations during the pandemic. Please send your offerings in through the mail or drop it off in the church's mailbox on the left side of the main entrance as you approach the church. We are also accepting E-transfers for offerings as well.

They can be sent to our email address, info@stlukeslutheran.ca or stlukes@rogers.com. When the transfer is sent, you can put the designation into the comment box (current, benevolence, building, etc).

**Please contact Dave DeCoppel at
stluketreasurer317@gmail.com
for the 'secret' question and answer.**

Our mail box is checked regularly; however for your peace of mind, arrangements can be made with Helga to ensure your offering is retrieved the day you drop it off.

We are thankful for all who have recently joined PAR for their contributions during this time. For PAR information, please contact the church office.

We graciously thank all who have continued their generous offerings during this time.

Keep in touch...

Visit our Website at
stlukeslutheran.ca
for our online worship services,
Newsletters and updates.

Like us on Facebook and
subscribe to our
YouTube Channel under
St. Luke's Evangelical Lutheran
Church, Kitchener

**DEADLINE
FOR
FEBRUARY NEWSLETTER
is
January 20th**