

Mission Statement

To share the Gospel of Jesus Christ with all people through the proclamation of the Word, the celebration of the Sacraments and through service in Christ's name.

December 2021 – January 2022 Newsletter

It's Beginning to Look a Lot Like Christmas

Although COVID-19 is still a reality that interferes with our daily lives, hopefully this year's Christmas will be a time where families can gather again and celebrate with each other. May the love of our Saviour Jesus Christ bless you this Christmas season and bring you happiness, joy and hope. I love the Advent/Christmas season – the excitement of our Sunday School children in church, the Candlelight Services on Christmas Eve and the Lessons and Carols on the First Sunday of Christmas. I love the family time and the traditions we pass on to our children during this time. What does your Christmas celebration look like? Are you following the same 'routine' every year, or do you switch things up occasionally? With progressing secularization, loss of tradition and multiculturalism, the perception of Christmas has changed. Once I read in a German newspaper that 39 percent of 6–12-year-olds do not know why we are celebrating Christmas. Some of the responses had been: 'It's winter', 'Santa Claus comes' or 'It has been always like that.' Some children also mixed up cause and effect, saying they celebrate Christmas, 'because it's the day when you get lots of good food', 'because it's school break and grandma is coming', or 'businesses can sell more'. I dare to say that a similar survey here in Canada would generate similar answers. We are in a time where traditions and life circumstances change at a speedy pace. We feel it here in our church community as well – and this is not only because of COVID – lots of things aren't as they used to be anymore. Usually, there are two ways for us to respond: We can either lament about the loss of tradition, or we can start to embrace the change and discover something new in the old. The benefits are twofold: not only do we get to pass on a good and happy message of the Christmas story to the

next generation, but we also get to see it in a fresh, new light through their eyes.

The same routine as last year? Yes, please! Let's tell the message of the birth of Jesus again and again as exclusive and hot news: What God has begun in creation, the creation of humankind in his image, he has radically continued with Christmas: He has become human himself. And since then, we find in every human being something from God himself. On Christmas God became human. He took a closer look into places where we usually used to turn away from. He has gone to those we usually exclude. He has turned away from the powerful and has become a victim. How can we tell our children about this God, who turns everything upside down? Quite simply: With the ancient story of the Holy Night. No more is needed. Those cute yet embellished Christmas stories like the angel with the broken wings who comes too late to give the good news to the shepherds; the ox who gets angry with the extra traffic in his stable; or the shepherd boy who gets lost on his way to the manger. These stories can be helpful tools, but they are superfluous. Everything is said in Luke 2. I would like to encourage you and your family to pick up the Bible this Christmas – open Luke 2 and (re)read it together. Dive into the Christmas story after Luke and allow your life to get turned upside down.

May you all have a blessed Christmas with old, new and new-found traditions while creating family memories.

Blessings, Pastor Heike

Pastor Heike will be on vacation from December 27 until January 1. She will still receive emergency calls.



Christmas Worship Services

Friday, December 24, 2021

4:00 pm – Children & Family Service

This service will be live-streamed

7:00 pm – Worship Service

Sunday, December 26, 2021

10:00 Worship Service

“Lessons and Carols”

**A warm welcome to our newest member
to the St. Luke’s family,
Emily Woellner**

(Granddaughter of Mary Ann Lang)

Sunday School

The next Sunday School Classes and Family
Worship Services take place on:

Sunday, December 12 (Christmas Crafts)

Sunday, January 16, 2022

Sunday, January 30, 2022

Confirmation Class

Next Confirmation Classes:

Friday, December 17 at 6:00 pm

Sunday, January 16, 2022 at 11:30 am

Sunday, January 30, 2022 at 11:30 am

Living Advent Calendar

Join in for some Advent Joy with our Living Advent Calendar. Each day from December 1 until December 24 a new door to our congregation will open on YouTube. You can sign up for a daily email with the link to the Video with Pastor Heike (please email pastor.heike@gmail.com if you would like to receive a daily email). Nevertheless, we still have some spots to fill. Let us know if you are willing to show your talent or share a Christmas tradition with us. If needed, I can help with videotaping.

Pastor Heike

German Christmas with Pastor Heike

On **December 15, at 1:00 pm**, Pastor Heike invites our German speaking members (and those who are interested) to a cozy German Christmas in the Parlour. We will gather for a short devotion in German, sing German Christmas carols and hopefully share some stories with each other. All participants will receive some of Pastor Heike's favorite Christmas treats to take home.

Image from clipart-library.com

Christmas bags and greetings for housebound members

The Community Outreach Team, together with the Sunday School children and confirmation students, are busy putting together treat bags for our housebound members.

The bags with many goodies will be distributed mid-December. If you would like to help with distribution or know someone who would like to receive a greeting from St. Luke’s, please let Pastor Heike know.





Our Love and 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.

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

St. Luke's Future Direction

We hope you had a chance to read the article 'Where do we go from here?' in the November edition of our Newsletter. Like many other churches, our congregation is at a crossroad. Do we continue as we did in the past, and run into a huge deficit which could force us in the end to cut back on staff and ministries or do we discern where the Holy Spirit is leading us despite declining membership and resources? We have dreams and we have hopes, and we love St. Luke's congregation, thus, the Dream Team has started to work on the development of a 'Vision, Mission and Value' statement, with the help of 'EDGE', the Network for Ministry Development, a resource of the United Church in Canada and partner with the Eastern Synod's Office of Congregational Redevelopment Services. As members of St. Luke's, as people who love this congregation, we ask you to join in the process to discern where we should go from here. We have created a survey which will help us to work on our future direction, and we want to listen to your dreams, hopes, and concerns. The survey will be distributed beginning December 5. Please join us in this exciting process – let us know why you are a member of St. Luke's, what is the value that St. Luke's brings to you, what fills your soul and if there is something that isn't filling your soul? We would love to hear your answers.

Pastor Heike for the Dream Team

Visit at St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Bridgeport

A delegation of our Dream Team visited the new building of St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Bridgeport and had a chat with Rev. Monika Wiesner. The congregation had made the bold decision to make new use of their property and partnered with Menno Homes and Parents for Community Living. Beginning of 2019 the church was demolished, and Menno Homes built a complex for affordable housing on the property of the congregation. St. Paul's now owns a multifunctional sanctuary, with a sacristy and office as well as some storage space in the building. They have access to a shared kitchen and some more gathering space on the weekends. In fall the first renters, St. Paul's congregation and Parents for Community Living moved in. 'Giving back to the community' is their motto and we have been very impressed with the implementation. If you are interested in a virtual tour, you can watch the Grand Opening Video on:

<https://mennohomes.com/phase2/>

Pastor Heike



Picture: Gay Anderson, Rev. Monika Wiesner and Donna Finch at St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Bridgeport.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Time flies! Committee Chairs, please submit your Year-End Reports no later than December 30, 2021.

St. Luke's Women

Exciting news: We are very hopeful that we can start our meeting programs up again in the spring! Thank you ever so much to everyone who donated items to the Salvation Army Tree of Hope - Mitten Tree. It was a tremendous success.

We appreciate your continued support of all our programs during this time of lock downs. We have been full steam ahead.

Merry Christmas!

Bazaar Committee

Thank you for supporting our small event on Nov 14. We raised in excess of \$130.00.

Please be informed that we will no longer be collecting Christmas items. We appreciate your support. We have decided to eliminate that table from any further bazaar activities, to open space for other efforts.

Community Outreach

We are so thrilled with the response from the community to our Blessings Box. Thank you for your donations of books for the project. This will be an ongoing project.

This month we are preparing gift bags for the sick & shut in, as was done last year.

We are looking forward to our next meeting and new ideas for outreach within the church and outside the church.

Poinsettia Fund



Contributions are being accepted for poinsettias for the Sanctuary in celebration or memory of a loved one until December 19. Poinsettia envelopes will be provided on the entrance tables.

Salvation Army Mitten Tree:

St. Luke's collected...

Toques:	150
Headbands:	8
Scarves:	33
Mitts:	108 pairs
Socks:	40 pairs
Slippers:	1 pair
Afghans:	2
Winter Jacket:	1

Thank you for your generosity!

Volunteers Needed

Flowers for the Altar

A volunteer is needed to assist with providing flowers on the altar for Sunday morning worship services in the New Year. Expenses will be reimbursed. For details, contact Darlene Hilborn at 519-893-8630 (evenings).

Live-Streaming

Ushers

What is Lutheran?

Sometimes we wonder why the Evangelical or Community Churches are so successful at drawing in members, especially younger people. Then we start to ponder: Should we maybe copy a few things that they are doing, or should we do things differently in our church? I think this is a good question; after all we are a reformation church. However, as much as we need constant reflection of who we are through time, we need to know what our core values and beliefs are. Thus, the Dream Team has decided to start a series of articles shedding some light on our Lutheran faith and who we are. A huge Thank You to Pastor Val, Pastor J.R. and Pastor Neil who have agreed to write the articles. Pastor Val starts the series with a text about 'Law and Gospel'.

Pastor Heike

Gloria

By Rev. Val H. Hennig

I got to know Gloria when she was 12 years old. She was the kind of girl that I knew as the one who could always get a squabble started in any group of children who were invited to come to a group meeting, whether it was intended for a lesson time or a play time at the group of children who had been invited to the church for the start of a new venture for youth. On one of those days, she started a fuss and I had already had too much of her when I took her, and we walked straight to the door where I told her that in no way would I tolerate her anymore. Finally, in my exasperation, I spoke very loudly and said, "Gloria, I want you to go home and never come back to this group because I can't handle you here any longer, and I have to call this the end of your presence here; so – do not come back anymore". I then walked back into the hall, and all was quiet and soon the life of the group continued.

On the next Tuesday, when I arrived at the Children's Club, there she was again in all her free

spirit. I took her by the arm and asked her, "Gloria, did you not understand what I told you last week?"

Before I could say another word, "Yes" she said. "But it's about forgiveness!" So off she went with her friend and that ended that event and we have lived with God's Grace ever since then.

Sixty years later we picked up the incident in a conversation and reviewed it, and she said, "I remember it, but you taught me that God loves me all the time and I have lived with the message of that day since then."

Gloria has phoned us many times wherever we have been since then and has come to visit with our family. Her love for us has never ceased nor has her relationship with God's Grace and Love ever left her.



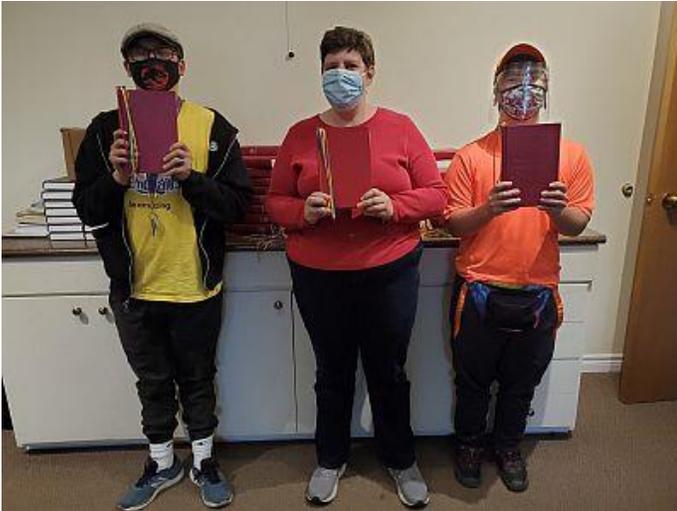
I value this experience because it has always reminded me of the necessity of being clear about both the "LAW" and "GOSPEL" in every sermon I preach. It is so easy to preach Law to all people who come to worship and to pound away at that message in order to get the fear of God into them, but this is not the God of Gloria and her "it's about forgiveness!". I have so often listened to sermons about hell and damnation and have feared for the

people in the pews! When I handed in my class sermon for my final exam and got it back with a statement about how I could preach this easier and that it was not acceptable, I sat down with my professor and talked about finding the Gospel in each sermon topic or text. I felt much better and handed in a "re-write" which passed so I could accept a call in my life as a preacher thereafter. Though it is a gift to be in the pulpit, I have found that the gift that needs to be heard is the Gospel (the Love of God in Christ) and not the establishment of fear in the minds of my listeners.

Every sermon must be a message about the love of God as a gift given in love!

Artwork by Rev. Val Hennig

New Ribbons for the Hymn Books



Thank you to Bonita Ziegler for creating the bookmarks for our Hymnbooks and to our friends from Adults in Motion: Jeremy, Emma and Alex for putting them into the spine.

Canadian Lutheran World Relief *Gifts from the Heart*

Give a meaningful gift with CLWR's Gifts from the Heart catalogue. Your gift to a loved one will provide meaningful, tangible items for people around the world facing hunger, poverty and the threat of Covid-19.

Gifts from the Heart catalogues will be on the sign-in tables in the Narthex and north entrance on Sundays; and between the doors by the education wing through the week.

Visit www.clwr.org/GFTH to learn more.

Stanley Park Eats

Please drop off items in the boxes between the glass doors by the education wing.

Ingredients needed:

Jasmine rice, basmati rice, brown rice, rigatoni pasta, rice stick noodles, chickpeas, mixed kidney beans, black beans, dry green lentils, dry red lentils, vegetable stock, beef stock, crushed tomatoes, tomato paste, tomato sauce, coconut milk, Worcestershire, tamari, hoisin sauce, ketchup, wow butter, olive oil, dill pickles, low fat mayo, Dijon mustard, brown sugar, molasses, white wine vinegar, cider vinegar, garlic powder, onion powder, curry powder, chilli powder, cumin, paprika, thyme, basil, oregano, white pepper, turmeric.

Council Members

We need to fill three council positions at the 2022 Congregational Meeting. Please prayerfully consider filling this role and reach out to either Pastor Heike or Council Co-Chairs Cathy Dowling and Tim Wilke.



Clip art from pixabay.com

Dominican News Update

Hello to all the generous supporters of Servant's Heart Ministries. With your help we have raised over \$10,000 this year. We would like to tell you about some of the many wonderful things that have happened in the lives of the people in the past couple of months.

The second floor of the community centre has been finished and is being used regularly for group activities, meetings, classes, church services, etc.



The children have returned to school in person. Many new desks had to be bought after termites damaged a lot of the wooden ones during the lengthy lockdown. Folding tables were also purchased for group activities like baking and crafts. The children are sponsored but many do not have sponsors yet. If you wish to help, go to the Servant's Heart Ministries website www.servantsheartdr.org and click on WHAT WE DO and on Hugs for Kids.

The Pregnancy Education Centre provides care and supplies for moms and babies. Before COVID most teams took supplies for the centre - clothing, medicines, diapers, etc. which now must be purchased, cutting into their financial resources.



Council Members:

Council Co-Chairs:

Cathy Dowling and Tim Wilke
Past Council Chair: Jane Hennig
Secretary: O.J. Wilura
Darlene Hilborn
Anita Gerstenkorn
Mary Ann Lang
Bonita Ziegler
Lynn Brooks

Standing Committee Chairs:

Finance: Christine Petersen
Mutual Ministry:
Kathy Thomsen and Jane Hennig
Worship and Music: Kathy Thomsen
Property Mgmt: Vic Lytle
Christian Ministry and Parish Life: TBA
Community Outreach: Gay Anderson
and Heather Meyer-Kraft
Dream Team: Rev. Heike Toeller
WEPP: Rev. Heike Toeller
Sunday School: Darlene Brooks

Office Contact:

Church Office

(519) 893-3826
Email: info@stlukeslutheran.ca
OR stlukeslutheran317@gmail.com

Office Hours:

M/W/Th 9:00am – 1:00pm

Website:

stlukeslutheran.ca

Pastor Heike

(519) 212-9952
Email: pastor.heike@gmail.com

Office Administrator

Helga Morrison

Music Director

Gloria Berg

Treasurer

Dave DeCoppel

Weekly Offerings

We appreciate your support to meet our financial obligations. 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 narthex entrance.

We are also accept E-transfers, which are set up as automatic deposits; so, there is no need for secret question/answer. **Please send e-Transfers to our email address at stlukeslutheran317@gmail.com**

When the transfer is sent, you can put the designation into the comment box (current, benevolence, building, etc).

Please contact Dave DeCoppel at stlukestreasurer317@gmail.com if you have any questions.

Our mailbox 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 joined PAR for their contributions. For PAR information, please contact the church office.

We graciously thank all who have continued their generous offerings.

Keep in touch...

Visit our Website at www.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 2022 NEWSLETTER
is January 15th**