

Where do we go from here?

Last year around this time, we just came out of the last lockdown in spring and started to redefine ourselves as a post COVID congregation. I remember myself saying – this post COVID year will be challenging, exciting and indicative. We have seen people coming back to church, our Sunday School thriving, and felt joy at all the extra activities we did together. We started to redevelop our spiritual life with prayer group, bible study and different worship forms, like the contemplative midweek services in Lent. But truth be told, things are different now from how they were before the Pandemic. What we have already felt a few years ago, declining membership, decreasing financial and volunteer resources, has accelerated through the Pandemic. Here at St. Luke's, staff and volunteers try hard to keep it going and continue the good work we did in the past, but with each day we feel more and more that we have reached our limits. It is good to know that the future perspective of the Synod for St. Luke's predicts that St. Luke's will remain a Single Point – Full Time congregation in 2025 and 2028 (see Donna Finch's article for the Dream Team). But are we really healthy? Are we healthy with a \$25,000 deficit and a small group of devoted volunteers who keep the church running? At our last Annual Meeting we saw how difficult it was to find new council members, willing to commit to serve three years in this leadership position. These signs are all hinting that we can't continue as is – things need to change and be done differently, but how?

In May, I attended the Deans' Conference of the Synod in Mississauga and we visited the Rhenish Church in Markham – a church which has embraced the Welcoming Angel Programme and welcomes

new immigrant families from China, Hong Kong and Ukraine. For your information: The congregation was featured in the last edition of Canada Lutheran. Their Senior Pastor David Tin told us: "We emphasize engagement, not membership, and we focus on the outcome, not the output. Everybody cares for everybody else on a daily basis, not just at church on Sundays." I was most impressed when Pastor David told us that the Rhenish Church doesn't have any contractors coming in for janitorial or groundskeeping work (a huge item in our budget) as they are doing it all by themselves. And then Bishop Mike said something very interesting which stuck with me: "The Rhenish Church has disciples, not volunteers." Although, every congregation is different and there is not one concept that fits all, this is something to consider – a healthy congregation is made up of disciples. This is along the lines of an article about Congregational Health from Bishop Jason Zinko (Manitoba Synod) which can be found in a previous edition of Canada Lutheran. He says: "These are the only marks of congregational health that matter: Are we following Jesus? Are we being the church as well as we can in this time and place? [...] Who are we and why do we gather as the church?" And in times of decreasing financial resources, we need to ask these questions more often and clearly define what is important for us as a congregation. Bishop Jason continues: "I'm convinced that focusing on things like budgets, ages and attendance numbers will not make us healthy. Following Jesus will. Doing the best we can with what (and who) we have will. Focusing on why we are the church and what we should do to better live out our purpose will."

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We still have to pay our bills, and especially during summer we will try to keep our spending to a minimum – you will see a few small changes which will help us to keep our costs under control, like having flowers only on the altar when they are donated or printing this newsletter only in grayscale. I'm determined to make it work. St. Luke's is a great congregation with much potential. I'm convinced if we all start to understand ourselves more as disciples, then things will fall into place. What could this look like? Sorry, I don't have any roadmaps or recipes in my pocket, and as the pastor of this congregation, I certainly can't just pull out the magic wand and everything will be fine. Being a disciple, for me, is to pray for each other, to listen to each other, try to follow in Jesus' footsteps as best as I'm able, talk about my faith to others, give what I can, be mindful of resources. The body of Christ has many different parts. Where do I find myself in this body with what I have to give and help this body to function? Let us continue to talk about who we are and why we are the church together. This will keep us on track to true congregational health.

Have a blessed summer, Pastor Heike



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***

Did you know...

The following explains how the offerings are being designated:

Lent through Good Friday towards Benevolence
Easter towards St. Peter's TV ministry
Thanksgiving towards Food Bank
Christmas towards St. Luke's

Update from Finance Committee

Spring has sprung and summer is just around the corner. We'd like to remind members that St. Luke's needs your current donations whether you attend church or not during the summer months as our operating expenses continue over the summer months. At the end of April, our operating deficit was \$ 25,507.15 up from \$23,938.30 at the end of 2022. Our hope is that we eliminate this deficit by the end of 2023. Donation options include PAR, e-transfer or drop off in our secure mailbox beside the front entrance to the church if you are not able to attend. We thank you for your continued support of St. Luke's.

Grand River Ministry Area 4th Annual Picnic

Sunday, June 11

**10:00 am Gathering Time
10:30 am Worship Service**
with Holy Communion

**Hosted at St. Luke's Evangelical
Lutheran Church**

The worship will feature leadership by local Pastors, Deacons and lay people and live music with the Worship Band "The Rocks".

Games, Music, Activities for adults and kids.

Lunch will be served after the Worship Service.

Bring a lawn chair or blanket and sun umbrella.

*For more information, please contact
Pastor Heike.*

Boiler FUNdraising

Our Boiler FUNdraising is well underway and we are happy to announce that we have been able to fundraise \$12,230.70 so far. Thank you so much to all who support the boiler project and to the groups facilitating fundraising events. Have a look at our FUNdraising bulletin board in the hallway and share your FUNdraising ideas with Pastor Heike. We still have a way to go until we reach our goal of \$69,000. Here are our summer fundraisers:

June

- **Greeting Card Sale** after the Worship Service on June 4 with Gay Anderson.
- **Bake Sale and Garage Sale at the Trunk Sale** on **June 10, from 8:00 am – 12:00 pm (noon)** with the Community Connections Group and Pastor Heike. Drop off your gently used and priced Garage Sale items until June 9 in the Nursery. Information about the Bake Sale Drop Off – see Ladies' Group article.
- **Vegetarian Dinner** with the Men's Cooking Club on **June 20, at 3:00 pm**. Tickets for sale through the office. Tickets are \$120 (*Charitable tax receipt of 100.00 for the boiler fund, \$20 paid in cash to Men's Cooking Club day of dinner*)
- **Painting Raffle** ticket sale on each Sunday in June after the Worship Service. The draw will take place on **June 25**.
- **LCBO Bottle Fundraiser** Drop off your wine bottles and beer cans in the cart located in the hallway to the Parish Hall.
- **'Every Cent Counts' Donation Jar** in the Narthex of the church.

In *July* and *August*, we will focus on our ongoing fundraisers, like the Bottle Drive and the Donation Jar. Stay tuned for exciting FUNdraising events in Fall and Winter. You can certainly donate towards the boiler through your offering envelope as well.

Painting Raffle

Our own artist, Dennis Willfang, painted a beautiful winter landscape and donated the framed painting for our Boiler FUNdraising raffle. Tickets are for sale at \$5 for 3 tickets each Sunday during fellowship. **No ticket sales on Sunday, June 10 during the GRMA Picnic.*

Draw is Sunday, June 25.



Stanley Park Market

Thursday nights 4:30 – 7:30 pm

June 15 – August 17

We have been offered the opportunity to have a table at this event. It will give us the chance to have a presence in the community. Our focus will be to support the children in attendance with crafting and small gifts as well as to promote our Blessings Box. We hope that this table will make a difference!

Summer Worship Services

This summer we will again alternate with indoor and outdoor Worship Service. Please see schedule:

July 2	Indoor Communion
July 9	Outdoor
July 16	Indoor Communion
July 23	Outdoor
July 30	Indoor Communion Rev. Barry Boeckner
August 6	Outdoor Communion Rev. Barry Boeckner
August 13	Indoor
August 20	Outdoor Communion
August 27	Indoor

Pastor Heike will be on vacation from July 24 until August 12. The Worship Services on July 30 and August 6 will be covered by Rev. Barry Boeckner.

Emergency Contacts are:

Pastor Jim Koellner (home 519-895-2527 or cell/text 519-505-1876) from **July 24 – July 31**

Pastor Shirley Ruller (home 519-748-4304) from **August 1 – August 12**

Please note that depending upon the availability of our volunteers, we may not be able to Live-stream all indoor Sunday Worship Services during the summer. On 'Outdoor' Sundays, we will upload a sermon from the 'Summer Sermon Series' of the ELCIC to our YouTube Channel.

Visitation Team

Our Visitation Team has formed and started to visit parishioners in the congregation in-person and by phone. Many thanks to Rev. Shirley Ruller, Donna Berscht, Barb Pitz, Sharon Eggleston, Jeanette Wyatt and Gay Anderson. If you would like to be visited from either the Visitation Team or Pastor Heike, please give the office a call. If you are hospitalized, and wish for a visit, please let Pastor Heike know. On a side note: You don't need a reason to call Pastor Heike, a chat is always welcome!

Confirmation 2024

Calling all youth in Grade 7 and 8 or older for Confirmation Class 2024. A new class starts mid-September (day and time will be determined with the group). With hands-on and fun activities, we discover our faith and will make some new friends. At the end of Confirmation classes, we celebrate our accomplishments in a festive Worship Service and affirm our baptism. Parents of youth on our membership list will receive an invitation to confirmation class by August. Please reach out to Pastor Heike if you have any questions.



Crow Shield Lodge Outdoor Experience
Saturday June 24, 2023
10am to 1pm

We are very excited to present this outdoor, educational opportunity; an engaging experience to walk alongside Crow Shield Lodge on a path towards learning, healing and friendship.

Light lunch/refreshments will be provided.

The suggested age for this 2-3 hour learning session is Youth to Adult. We recommend this wonderful opportunity to begin your Indigenous learning journey, to listen and take in knowledge and to ask questions freely. For many who have been to one, or several events, this would be valuable to extend your knowledge and familiarize yourselves with another local Indigenous organization and the incredible knowledge they provide.

Tickets available via Eventbrite \$50.00



Event is subsidized with thanks to the Eastern Synod Mission Committee

You Can't Always Get What You Want

We have a long prayer list every Sunday. It seems like new names are added every week. Worship and Music has heard some rumblings about the length of the prayer list and the length of service. Recently, we have changed the way we “do” the prayers. Instead of the lector reading out the names, members of the congregation have been given a slip of paper with names to be read aloud, simultaneously, at this time. Anyone can add their voice to these prayers saying a name or names out loud. I must confess, we did not come up with this idea. St Peter's Evangelical Lutheran Church in Cambridge prays this way and we thought it a good idea to borrow. Some Sundays, the lector will read the names and other Sundays the congregation will read the names.

Why do we pray for each other? It seems that some names have been on the list a very long time and we may start to wonder if our prayers are even being heard let alone answered. As people of faith, we do need to pray. During the prayers of intercession, “we do need to talk together about what we will do about needs in the world, but at this point what we are doing is speaking the prayer of faith, genuinely naming urgent needs before God, believing that there is a God and that God answers prayer...we are invited genuinely to pray for others. Prayers for the sick or those who have died best simply name the person, omitting details about illness, hospitalization, or funeral arrangements. Remember that we are speaking to God. It is worth considering whether any names beyond baptismal (first) names need be used in prayer: For Kristine, Morrie, and Olaf...” (page 169 *The Sunday Assembly Evangelical Lutheran Worship*). God hears our prayers. God will answer them as He sees best to do. Prayer is comforting to those doing the praying and to those whom the prayer is for. Prayer is powerful. Prayer can help change the world. Even Walt Disney knew this when he said, “To me, today, at age sixty-one, all prayer, by the humble or highly placed, has one thing in common: supplication for strength and inspiration to carry on the best human impulses which should bind us together for a better world. Without such inspiration, we would rapidly deteriorate and finally perish.”

So yes, our prayer list is long. Yes, there are people on it for a long time. Yes, there are people on it who we don't personally know. What I **do** know is that someone felt a need to submit a name to the prayer list because that person needed prayer and that is good enough for me. I think we are in the “prayer business”. It is what we, as Christians, do. There is even a prayer box in the Narthex for members to submit concerns, needs etc. that require prayers. Every Sunday, a group of people pray the submissions to this box. Perhaps the Rolling Stones will allow me to change up their lyrics. “*You can't always get what you want but if you **pray** sometimes, well, you might find, you get what you need.*”

- Kathy Thomsen, Council Chair

Council Corner

Updates from March-May 2023 Meetings:

As always, we are working with Finance to keep a close eye on the financial health of the congregation.

- four of the pews that were removed from the sanctuary and the hymnal holders will be offered for sale. Proceeds will go towards the Boiler Fund

- Question from the annual meeting: Chairlift inspection-the chairlift inspection cost is \$250 per year. In 2022 the 2022 charge of \$250 was paid in January 2022 and the 2023 cost of \$250 was paid in December 2022. The maintenance contract is \$695.00 +HST.

Bridges VBS at St. Luke's

This year's Bridges Vacation Bible School takes place from July 10 to 14. We are excited to be able to host this event and would like to support them as much as we can. They are looking for the following donations:

Paper napkins, paper towels, garbage bags and pre-paid garbage tags, reusable plastic juice pitchers, construction paper and Bristol board, empty shoeboxes, Crayola markers, white fiber fill, stuffing or plain white fabric, lunch foods and dessert peanut and nut free snack foods or juice. If you would like to help or volunteer, please email bridgesvbs@gmail.com for more info.

St. Luke's Women

Bake Sale

We will be holding a Bake Sale Table at the Church Trunk Sale on **Saturday, June 10** in support of the Boiler Fund.

If you are able to provide items for our sale, please drop off at the church kitchen between noon and 6:00 pm on Friday June 9th - cookies, cakes, pies, candies, squares, loaves, cupcakes, muffins etc. Thanks so much!

Questions - Gay Anderson at 519 893-6827.

"call2recycle" Battery Recycling

We are collecting used batteries for proper disposal as it is unsafe to put them in our everyday garbage; chemicals may seep into our water supplies. The collection box is in the Narthex. We appreciate your help towards environmental safety for our community.

For more information on various battery recycling, and "How are batteries recycled?", please visit call2recycle.ca

Supper 8

Supper 8 will continue in the fall of 2023.

What is Supper 8?

An opportunity to have fellowship with other members of the congregation over a meal, dessert & coffee, and conversation and/or games.

See bulletin board in the courtyard for details and sign-up sheet.

Community Support

TRUNK SALE!

Saturday, June 10

8:00 am -12:00 noon in the parking lot

Vendor spots are still available at a cost of \$20.00.

Please contact Donna Berscht at

bdberscht@rogers.com

Proceeds are in support of food4kids.

TRUNK SALE

Saturday, June 10, 2023

8:00 am – 12:00 noon (rain or shine)



St Luke's Lutheran Church Parking Lot

317 Franklin St N. Kitchener

Proceeds to food4kids

Vendor Information: \$20.00 per spot

Register with Donna Berscht

bdberscht@rogers.com

Pastor Heike is willing to sell additional items from her 'trunk'. Please bring items in to the nursery; price if possible. Proceeds from her table will go to the boiler fund.

RECYCLING BEYOND THE BLUE BOX!

Recycling Beyond the Blue Box

We are working with a community group to gather items that can be recycled but are not collected in the regular blue box system.

Containers for collection are in the Narthex for: Oral & Personal Care Products, Staples Writing Instruments, Beauty Products and All Brita Parts. Full details are on the individual containers and there is a list on the bulletin board.

These initiatives are supported by major manufacturing companies. In some cases, funds are raised and all proceeds collected are donated to Canadian Food for Children.

Oral & Personal care products

- Mouthwash bottles & caps
- Toothbrushes
- Deodorant containers & caps
- Soap packaging & floss containers
- Toothpaste tubes & cap
- Dental flossers

Staples writing instrument

- Pens
- Pencils
- Markers
- Highlighters
- Mechanical Pencils

Beauty Products

- Plastic & glass tubes
- Pots, pumps, sprays, & jars
- Lipstick, lip balm, & lip gloss tubes cases/caps
- Mascara tubes
- Eyeliner pencils and cases
- Eyeshadow & bronzer cases
- Foundation packaging
- Powder cases
- Eyeshadow & concealer tubes/sticks

BRITA Products

Pitchers, water bottles, filters & packaging

Council Members:

Council Chair: Kathy Thomsen
Vice Chair: Brent Clarke
Secretary: Donna Finch
John Carapanta
Nahlah Jeorje-Carapanta
Barb Pitz
Don Snow
Dennis Willfang
Bonita Ziegler

Standing Committee Chairs:

Finance: Christine Petersen
Mutual Ministry: Kathy Thomsen
Worship and Music: Kathy Thomsen
FMT: Cathy Dowsling
Property Mgmt: Vic Lytle
Christian Ministry & Parish Life: TBA
- Community Connections:
Gay Anderson & Heather Meyer-Kraft
- Sunday School: Darlene Brooks,
Dianne Metcalf, Rachel Sutton
- WEPP: Rev. Heike Toeller
Dream Team: Rev. Heike Toeller

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 doors to the narthex.

We 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
Sept-Oct 2023 NEWSLETTER
is August 15th**