

A year with 'awe'

Ever thought about awe inspiring moments or places? I used to call them magical moments or magical places, until I learned that the emotion connected with such special moments or places actual is called 'awe' and that there are scientific studies around which try to grasp the concept of the feeling of 'awe'. So, what is awe? Here is a definition I found online: "Awe is the feeling we get in the presence of something vast that challenges our understanding of the world, like looking up at millions of stars in the night sky or marveling at the birth of a child. When people feel awe, they may use other words to describe the experience, such as wonder, amazement, surprise, or transcendence. The most common sources of awe are other people and nature, but awe can be elicited by many other experiences as well, such as music, art or architecture, religious experiences, the supernatural, or even one's own accomplishments."

(<https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/topic/awe/definition>)

I think of Christmas Eve in our church – the moment when the church is completely dark, and then the light of the Christ Candle slowly spreads out into the sanctuary, and illuminates the church with a golden glow. Then the chimes play the first notes of 'Silent Night' until everyone joins in and voices combine their harmonious colours. I think of a lush summer night in Jerusalem when the bells of the Church of the Redeemer ring full force and, at the same time, the voice of the Muezzin calls Islamic believers to their evening prayer. I think of a crisp winter night in Saskatchewan when I saw the Northern Lights for the first-time dancing in the night sky. I'm sure you can name a few 'awe'-inspired moments in your life as well.

Did you know that awe is an often-used concept in the bible? The word translated is not always awe itself, but it is apparent that awe is a thread which runs through the entire Biblical narrative. For example, there are references not only to awe but to amazing, astonish, reverence, and wonder. Related words such as fear, afraid and tremble are also frequently mentioned in the bible, and sometimes – but not always – refer to awe experiences. Moreover, many references to the emotion of awe play a central role in religious and spiritual experience, often appearing in some of the most significant stories in the bible. For instance, after Jesus rebuked the wind, the disciples were described as being in 'fear and amazement'. The women who found the tomb empty were described as 'trembling and bewildered'. Those first filled with the Holy Spirit were described as being 'amazed and perplexed'. Saul's companions were 'speechless' when Jesus appeared, and it would be fair to say that Paul's conversion of Christianity involved being awestruck.

(<https://thequestforagoodlife.wordpress.com/2011/06/26/awe-and-reverence-in-the-bible/>)

For me the feeling of 'awe' simply occurs when heaven and earth touch; when we get a glimpse of the Holy. Often, it doesn't need grandeur, just some openness and spiritual sensitivity. It is often something that we don't create, it is just there all of a sudden and usually fills oneself with warmth and joy, and when others are with us – a sense of community. I like that although I'm just a tiny, perishing piece in the universe, I'm part of something greater, unfathomable. Researchers are now even uncovering the benefits of awe for clear thinking, good health, and close relationships. I think that awe is an awesome feeling.

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My wish for you in this new year 2024, is that you will have less awful times, and more times full of awe. May you always feel God's warm embrace, that you are loved and that you are part of something greater which, we can't grasp with our human understanding.

Many blessings, 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**

Annual Meeting

Mark your calendars! The Annual Meeting takes place on **Sunday, February 11** after the Worship Service, approx. at 11:30 am. For those who aren't able to attend in person we will create the opportunity to join via ZOOM. The link will be published closer to the meeting in our weekly 'News from St. Luke's' mailing.

Council Corner

Updates from the November/December Council Meetings:

- Kindred Letter of Intent has been signed
- Received a security grant
- One congregation member is needed to fill a 2-year term on Council (Feb 2024-Jan 2026)
- Exploring working with a professional fundraiser
- Working on Constitution/Bylaw changes
- Snow removal contract was signed
- Tim Wilke is looking for a volunteer to help him monitor and fix our computer/Wi-Fi issues when they occur. If you would like to be this person, please contact Tim.

Community Connections Committee

We would like to offer our thanks to Rev. Monika Wiesner for her very generous donation of funds from the sale of her cards at our church bazaar, to be used to purchase children's books for our Blessings Box.

A special thanks also goes out to the Sunday School children for assisting with the gift bags for the shut-ins, by making the cards and decorating the bags – so pretty!

Thanks also to everyone for supporting our raffles and the pop-up bakery this fall to raise funds to put towards our church deficit.

Our **next meeting is Wednesday, January 10** and we are excited to continue with all the projects that have been initiated since we formed this committee and look forward to new projects.

- Gay Anderson

2023 Salvation Army Mitten Tree

Thank you so much to all who donated to our tree. A special gratitude to our talented knitters for their mitts, hats and scarves. Many in our community will benefit from the warmth that these items will provide for the winter.

The following donations to the tree include:

Mittens:	78pr.
Toques/hats:	62
Scarves:	27
Socks:	47pr.
Headbands:	7
Sweaters:	3
Slippers:	1pr.
Men's jacket:	1
Total items:	226

- Jeanette Wyatt

St Luke's Women

Fellowship of the Least Coin

Starting in January until March 10, we will be collecting nickels in support of this project. The jar will be in the narthex every Sunday.



From prayers and least coins around the world, the International Committee for the Fellowship of the Least Coin (ICFLC) is able to provide grants for:

- **Grassroots projects** that promote women's literacy, health, and leadership development; promote justice, peace, and reconciliation in families, communities, and for the environment; provide opportunities for women to participate in regional and international ecumenical gatherings and movements; and raise awareness on issues such as gender-based violence.
- **Post-Secondary Education and Training** for younger and older women; and
- **Emergency Relief** due to natural and human-made disasters.

2024 Meetings:

Thurs. Mar. 14 – Fellowship of the Least Coin

Thurs. Apr. 11 – Pot Luck Dinner

Thurs. Oct. 10 – Ladies Night Out

Thank you so much for supporting all our ongoing projects!

Bible Verse for 2024

If you wish to receive a (personal) bible quote for 2024, let Pastor Heike know. They will be distributed during the Worship Service on Sunday, January 7 (Baptism of Our Lord). But you can certainly receive one per email or text as well. May this word from the bible be a companion for you during the new year, a waypoint and a light house.

What has the bible to do with me?

Fair question – and the answer is: a lot! Whenever we dive into a bible text, we will always explore the relevance for our lives today, look at things from a biblical perspective, shed the light of the gospel on questions, worries and concerns we have. Reflecting on bible texts together with a group is even more exciting as you always learn something new from your fellow bible explorers. Interested to get some food for thought? Join our next Bible Study beginning **Sunday, January 21 at 8:00 am** (Breakfast served) or **Thursday, January 25 at 6:30 pm** (Snack provided) called 'Gospel: Jesus of Nazareth, Studies from the Gospel of Mark'. You don't need to be a scholar to explore the bible, your own life experience is the treasure we thrive from. Each session is enclosed in itself. You can step in at each session.

Lent at St. Luke's

Soup Suppers

The season of Lent starts early this year on Ash Wednesday, February 14, with a Worship Service at 7:15 pm (and distribution of ashes). From February 14 until March 20, we will again offer Lenten Soup Suppers each Wednesday evening from 6:15 pm until 7:00 pm. Soup, buns and dessert will be served in the Parish Hall. But this can only happen with your help. We need volunteers to provide soups, buns/rolls and dessert, helping with set up and clean up as well as serving. There is a sign-up sheet in the hallway on our volunteer board. Please fill the empty spots abundantly!

Short Contemplative Worship Services

After the Soup Suppers on Wednesdays, we will meet in the Sanctuary for Worship Service at 7:15 pm with music from Taizé. This year's theme is:

'Come over: Seven weeks without solo actions!'

These services are short, interactive, contemplative and take place in a circle at the bottom of the stairs in the sanctuary.



Image from pinterest.ca

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

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
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Office Hours:

Mon 9:00am – 1:00pm
Wed/Thu 9:00 – 2:00 pm

Website:

stlukeslutheran.ca

Pastor Heike

(519) 212-9952
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**DEADLINE for Mar-Apr 2024
Newsletter is February 15.**