

## The one who lets the light shine

In many Christmas depictions he has a lantern in his hand. He makes sure that light falls on the scene in the stable. Without him, you wouldn't be able to see anything. It all depends on him. And yet he is usually in the background. He doesn't say a single word in the entire Bible. He is silent. He quietly accompanies the story. But he dreams. He dreams of Mary's son, who is also to be his. He dreams of the salvation of the world. And then he wakes up and does what the angel told him to do in his dream. He takes Mary and the child. Without making a big deal out of it. Without asking who the father is. He trusts that the child is a child of God. He protects Mary, stands by her. He follows love. This is Joseph.

I think we all have those 'Shining Lights' in our lives. The ones who work tirelessly in the background. They keep themselves in the shade, and take care that their light is shining on others. It is easy to oversee them as they keep quietly to themselves. They are the cheerleaders on the sideline, the ones who are happy for our successes, the ones who walk with us through all the turmoil of life. To all the protectors, comforters, supporters, unconditional lovers, light shiners – I would like to shout out this Christmas: I see you! I appreciate you! Thank you for being there and making my life and the life of others a little bit better.

In God's kingdom everyone has a place and role. Everyone is important, loved and cherished. It is my prayer this Christmas that you all feel the unconditional love which God gave you through his son Jesus. The light that Joseph shines onto the

scene in the stable is reflected through the little baby in the manger and spread out into the world to us. May it fill us this Christmas with much joy and happiness.

Wishing you all a blessed Christmas and a good start into the new year!

*Pastor Heike*



Joseph figurine from St. Luke's Nativity Scene.  
Picture: Pastor Heike



Our Love and Prayers go out to all who are in need of God's grace.

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*

### **VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION SUNDAY**

What a wonderful opportunity to recognize all who contribute to making our congregation a welcoming and joyful place to come together on a regular basis, to support each other, and carry out Christ's mission to do our best to make the world a better place!

What a surprise to see over twenty-five committees and groups, and over a hundred individuals who work diligently, many on an occasional basis or behind the scenes, using their talents and skills.

Although we zeroed in on 2023-4, we appreciate all who have been involved in the past as well as all of you who work anonymously with no recognition. Know that we are aware of all of you, of what you do, and we are truly thankful.

**THANK YOU, THANK YOU, THANK YOU!!!**

### **Men's Cooking Club**

The Men's Cooking Club will resume on **Sunday, January 19 at 1:00-5:00 pm**  
If you're a guy and want to learn new cooking tricks, call...Gail Atkinson at 519-893-7097.

### **Seniors' Cards**

**Christmas Lunch on  
Thursday, December 19 at  
1:00 pm**

### **Council Corner (Update May to October)**

- the review of the Constitution and Bylaws and Policy and Procedures are underway
- no meeting in July or August
- the Cantata Fund Policy has had an update made to align the policy to current accounting practices
- gave approval for the cost of the security system that was over and above the amount of the grant money to come from the building account
- supported Pastor Heike in holding Neighbours' Day (a City of Kitchener initiative)
- gave Pastor Heike the authorization to apply for a grant for a summer student to work on our website.
- gave approval for FMT to:
  - install a backup sewer valve as per city requirements
  - finalize a contract up to \$17,000 for new front doors (new cost of \$19,000 approved by referendum)
  - oversee any and all safety concerns relating to the building that may affect our liability insurance including keeping current with building codes.
  - update choir loft railing as per building codes
- received updates from the Dream Team and the Redevelopment Team

## Choir

---

### ADULT CHOIR

Wednesday, January 8 at 2:00 pm

### HAND BELL CHOIR

Wednesday, January 8 at 4:00 pm

## Community Connections Committee

---

### Blessing Box:

We are always in dire need of children's books. Please be on the lookout for good buys.

### Upcoming events:

**Pop-up Bakery: Sunday, December 8** during coffee hour – baking and more!

**Quilt Raffle: Sunday, January 5 and 12**

### Gift Bags:

During December, the committee will be delivering gift bags that they have prepared to the shut-ins in our congregation.

## Christmas Bazaar 2024

---

A big thank you to all who donated and volunteered towards this event. We raised \$5,260.00!

Canning	418.50
Knitting	210.00
Nearly New	566.00
Vendors	500.00
Lunch Room	349.00
Baking	2,210.50
Raffle	1,006.00

***Thank you to All!***

## Updates from FMT

---

At our Town Hall meeting on November 10, Facility Management presented new figures for the replacement of the front doors of the church. The congregation approved by referendum the new cost of \$19,000 including details of installation of mobility buttons, privacy film and new keying. The completion will be coming in the next few weeks.

## St Luke's Women

---

A great big thank you from 'Canadian Food for Children' for your donations of items to support those at the Leprosy Mission in Africa.

Wow... our Mitten Tree is looking wonderful. Thank you so much for your continued support of this mission. This year we are able to branch out and support a few community initiatives with the items donated! We are especially delighted to add to our contacts the Stanley Park Community Centre to support their Mitten Tree for those in need in our community through the 'Stanley Park Eats' program. Thanks to all our knitters also!

### **2025 Program:** **Second Thursday in March, April and October**

Watch for our new program on the bulletin board in January!

**MERRY CHRISTMAS  
TO ALL!**



## Christmas Tree Ornaments/Advent Calendar

---

We are adapting a new Christmas tradition from the Eastern Synod for St. Luke's. Beginning December 1, we are asking the congregation to bring a special ornament to hang on our tree in the entrance area of the church. This could be an ornament that has a special meaning for you or something you created especially for this occasion. Ornaments will be tagged with your name and given back to you after the Christmas season.

## Sunday School News

---

Thanks to our wonderful teachers Darlene Brooks, Dianne Metcalf and Rachel Sutton we had an amazing start into the new Sunday School year. Sunday School can always use help and support. We are happy to announce that the Sunday School Children in cooperation with the Confirmation Students will present a Christmas Play during the 4:00 pm Worship Service on Christmas Eve, December 24. Please join abundantly – the more the merrier! Please reach out to our Sunday School Teachers or to Pastor Heike for more information. Practices take place on December 8, 15 and 22 after the worship service.

# Take Note!

## Townhall Meeting Sunday, December 8

*Following the Worship Service*

## Christmas Potluck Dinner Sunday, December 15

*Following the Worship Service*

*Please sign up on the Socialites bulletin board*

## Reminder !

**Reports for the Annual Meeting  
are due on December 31.**

## German Christmas

---

On **Tuesday, December 17, at 2:00 pm** all who love German Advent and Christmas Traditions are welcome to join for a German Christmas Celebration. We will sing German Christmas Carols, enjoy tea, coffee and cookies as well as revamp our German. I'm looking forward to a cozy afternoon in the Parlour.

## Blue Christmas

---

For some of us the Christmas Season is a difficult time, especially when it's the first Christmas without a loved one. A Blue Christmas Service is offered especially for those hurting during the holidays. On **Saturday, December 21, at 4:00 pm** all who feel that a short, contemplative time of prayer and worship could bring healing and comfort are invited to join for a blue Christmas service in the Sanctuary of St. Luke's.

## Christmas at St. Luke's

---

### Christmas Eve, December 24:

Candle Light Family Worship Service with Christmas Play at 4:00 pm

Candle Light Worship Service at 7:00 pm

Carol Singing before Worship Services starts at 3:45 pm and 6:45 pm

### First Sunday of Christmas, December 29:

Carols and Lessons at 10:00 am

## Bible Verse for 2025

---

If you wish to receive a (personal) bible quote for 2025, let Pastor Heike know. They will be distributed during the Worship Service on Sunday, January 12 (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, a light house.

## Annual Meeting

---

Mark your calendars! The Annual Meeting takes place on **Sunday, February 9** 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.

## Update from your Finance Committee

At the end of September, our Operating account deficit was \$1,158. This is significantly less than September 2023 when it was \$28,000. Thanks to our members for their donations toward the deficit and increased current account donations. We are hopeful that we will end 2024 in a positive position. We are close to attaining this goal and we can do it with your continued support!

Operating account analysis										
2024	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Year to Date
Income	14,682	15,860	17,819	18,201	15,092	23,729	15,457	17,076	20,056	157,972
Expense										
administration	1,163	2,029	791	590	1,547	382	661	299	1,264	8,725
property	2,809	3,948	3,594	2,493	3,089	2,271	2,645	1,847	1,692	24,388
salaries & benefits	12,100	15,922	14,669	13,602	12,506	14,210	14,826	13,990	13,808	125,633
Worship&Music	151	-	90	-	143					384
subtotal	16,222	21,899	19,144	16,685	17,285	16,863	18,132	16,136	16,764	159,130
Net	- 1,540	- 6,039	- 1,325	1,516	- 2,193	6,865	- 2,674	940	3,292	- 1,158
<b>2023 Deficit analysis</b>										
2023 Deficit		- 6,193								
Deficit reduction payts rec'd		6,193								
Balance		0				<b>Total Deficit</b>				- 1,158

## From our Seminary Student

Hello St. Luke's family,

Though I have had the opportunity to meet and get to know many of you, I wanted to take a moment to formally introduce myself to the community and reflect on my time here so far. I am a student in the Master of Divinity program at Martin Luther University College, currently in my first year. I join you in worship and fellowship as part of the contextual learning offered at Luther. In my class, Spiritual Formation and Nurturing Faith, we explore topics of growing in faith individually and in relationship with one another. My time with you at St. Luke's will allow me to not just discuss these ideas in class but to live them out within the life of the Church.

Outside of school, you can often find me (like many young people) playing video games. I am also

passionate about the outdoors and try to go on camping trips at least twice a year. Having done my undergrad in anthropology and history, I am also fascinated by different communities, cultures, and times.

Given that all of this is a totally new context and experience for me, I don't think I could have been given a better congregation to start my academic, spiritual, and community formation. I cannot thank you enough for the warm welcome you all have given me. Walking through the front doors several months ago, I was a student doing what needed to be done for a class. You all have made this experience so much more, and have taught me a great deal of what it is to be a faithful community. I hope to learn more from you, and grow with you over the coming months.

*Andres Rodriguez*

## About the Spiritual Life of the congregation

### Question: What does it mean to be an “Evangelical Lutheran Church?”

To be “evangelical” means to bring “Good News” as it is expressed in the Greek word *euangelio*: *eu* = good, *angelion* = I bring news, also meaning *angel* or *messenger*, and to be “Lutheran” means to be guided by the Lutheran Confessions as they come to us in the “*Book of Concord, The Confessions of the Lutheran Church*”. Thus, The Evangelical Lutheran Church is a Christian community that practices or lives out the Good News of Jesus Christ in worship, preaching, teaching, and social functions; guided by the Lutheran Confessions. ***The member of this Evangelical Lutheran Church is an evangelist, a messenger of this good news.***

### Question: Why and What for the WEPP TEAM???

The WEPP TEAM or *Witness Education and Personal Preparation Team*, are brothers and sisters of St. Luke's who are committed to nurture and grow the “Spiritual Life” of St. Luke's members.

Our “Spiritual Life” is our inner life, the domain of the Spirit by which we make choices and decisions, which are acted out in our physical life, how we relate and who we relate to and with, what our values are, and how we are concerned about our neighbours' spiritual and physical well-being.

***The health and wellness of our Christian Faith Life is dependent on our personal relationship with our Lord and Saviour Jesus, the Christ.***

### A Biblical Foundation

There are many biblical examples about how this personal relationship with Christ is established and acted out. Our reference here comes from the *first chapter of the Gospel of John*:

John the Baptist testified to his disciples that he was given to know “*by the One who sent me to baptize with water that the one on whom I see the Spirit descend and remain is the Son of God.*”

The next day when John, with his disciples, saw Jesus walking, he pointed to him and proclaimed him “***the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world***”. Andrew and another of John's disciples who followed Jesus were invited to come and stay with him that day. We are not told what happened that day to Andrew, but we are told that he was so deeply touched by Jesus to be *convinced that he was the Messiah, the Christ*.

And now, at verse 40 of the 1<sup>st</sup> Chapter of John begins the process of personal witnessing:

***The first thing Andrew does is to go and find his brother Simon*** to tell him that they have found the Messiah, the Christ and he brought him to Jesus, and Jesus named him 'Peter'.

The next day ***Jesus finds Philip and calls him to follow him, and Philip finds the doubtful Nathaniel*** who never the less accepts Philip's invitation to “come and see”. *Nathaniel, together with Andrew, Peter and Philip became faithful disciples of their Lord Jesus Christ.*

**The whole process of entering into relationship with Jesus began and begins with our Lord's invitation to “Come and See!”** Lives are changed and faith grows and matures as our Lord becomes personal and important to those who answer his call.

***A congregation which claims to be spiritually healthy will demonstrate its need for growing ever closer to Jesus and for following his ways as much or more than it demonstrates its need for a well maintained building, orderly and uplifting worship, outreach and social functions.***

This is where the WEPP Team enters the picture. The team has chosen for itself the following Mission Statement:

“To equip the saints of St Luke's for the Ministry of Witness through providing growth opportunities such as Prayer and Study groups, Bible Studies and Workshops, as well as having Guest Speakers.”

Right up front it should be noted that teaching one method of witnessing is not the team's focus, because each of us has our own personal way in how we relate with others. Teaching one method to meet all needs severely compresses the natural way of relating to another, which is the foundation for honest and genuine witnessing, telling our Christ story.

This is where the commitment to “Witness Education” comes in which has at its foundation our Lord's invitation to “Come and See”, spent time with him, and the commitment by the disciples to do the “come and see we have found the Messiah, the Christ.” The growth activities listed will lead any participant into a closer relationship and possibly

deeper commitment to being Christ's disciples who proclaim His love, grace and mercy in very personal ways; and with every participant in any of those ventures the 'spiritual life of the congregation deepens and matures because when we come and seek to be closer to Jesus, the Holy Spirit does wonderful work within that relationship.

And so it is that the WEPP Team invites every member of St. Luke's to come and see, to come and spend time with Jesus in the study of his Word and to discover how our Lord nurtures and deepens our faith life and actions. COME AND SEE!!!

*Rev. J.R. Bestvater*

## Summary of Events at St. Luke's

---

Sunday, December 1	10:00 am Service	Cantata Sunday
Sunday, December 8	11:15 am <i>(following the service)</i>	Pop-Up Christmas Bakery & Townhall
Sunday, December 15	11:15 am <i>(following the service)</i>	Christmas Potluck Dinner
Tuesday, December 17	2:00 pm	German Christmas
Thursday, December 19	1:00 pm	Seniors' Cards Christmas Lunch
Saturday, December 21	4:00 pm	Blue Christmas
Sunday, December 24	3:45 pm 4:00 pm	Carol Singing prior the service Family Christmas & Play
Sunday, December 24	6:45 pm 7:00 pm	Carol Singing prior the service Candle Light Service
Sunday, December 29	10:00 am	Carol and Lessons Service
Sunday, January 5	11:15 am <i>(following the service)</i>	Quilt Raffle
Wednesday, January 8	2:00 pm 4:00 pm	Adult Choir Hand Bell Choir
Sunday, January 12	11:15 am <i>(following the service)</i>	Quilt Raffle
Sunday, January 19	1:00-5:00 pm	Men's Cooking Club
Sunday, February 9	11:30 am <i>(following the service)</i>	Annual General Meeting

## 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. Please send e-Transfers to our email address at [stlukeslutheran317@gmail.com](mailto:stlukeslutheran317@gmail.com)

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

**If you have any questions, please contact Dave DeCoppel at [stlukestreasurer317@gmail.com](mailto:stlukestreasurer317@gmail.com)**

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](http://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  
Cathy Dowling  
Barb Pitz  
Don Snow  
Dennis Willfang

### **Standing Committee Chairs:**

Finance: Christine Petersen  
Mutual Ministry: Kathy Thomsen  
Worship and Music: Kathy Thomsen  
FMT: Cathy Dowling  
Property Mgmt: Roger Wyatt and Ken Wolfe  
Christian Ministry & Parish Life:  
- Community Connections:  
Gay Anderson & Heather Meyer-Kraft  
- Sunday School: Darlene Brooks,  
Dianne Metcalf, Rachel Sutton  
- WEPP: Pastor Heike Toeller  
Dream Team: Pastor Heike Toeller

### **Church Office:**

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

### **Office Hours:**

Mon/Wed 9:00 am – 1:00 pm  
Thu 9:00 – 3:00 pm

### **Website:**

[stlukeslutheran.ca](http://stlukeslutheran.ca)

### **Pastor Heike**

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

**DEADLINE for March-May Newsletter  
is February 15.**