
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.

Fling Wide the Door (ELW 259)

Fling wide the door is one of my favourite Advent Hymns – I can't wait to finally sing this again during Advent. It was one of the first Hymns I was able to play on the recorder, and I love the upbeat, cheerful melody. I love how it connects us with our ancestors through the centuries as the original German text was written by Georg Weissel in early 1600. The melody as we know it was composed by J. A. Freylinghausen a hundred years later.

Fling wide the doors, unbar the gate! That's an invitation. Advent invites us to open doors! We open numerous doors every day: house and room doors, basement and garage doors. We walk through familiar doors to visit friends, acquaintances and neighbours, and sometimes through unfamiliar doors. We walk through doors at churches or public buildings. Sometimes there are doors we don't want to open or go through. And then there are doors we don't have access to or are well guarded so that we can't go in.

Doors are useful. They protect us from cold and dust, from rain and wind, from noise and uninvited guests. Sometimes things look very different outside the door than they do inside. I can close a door to hide something, to protect myself or to be undisturbed in a room. Doors are very real – and at the same time they are also allegories and symbols. Because a door is always a transition from one space to another. The door stands between inside and outside, between

life and death, between this world and the next, between light and darkness, yesterday and tomorrow.

How wonderful it is when a door opens and I am allowed to enter. Warmth and light welcome me. And there is a host who has been waiting for me. And who knows – perhaps this is how it will feel when the very last door opens for us one day. We Christians

believe that God opened the door to heaven at Christmas. God opened the door with the birth of the child in the manger. A stable door. There is no longer any need for a doorkeeper. No one is turned away. Everyone is welcome to step inside and to meet God. God is a good host.



Fling wide the door we sing in Advent to let the King of Glory in. But why do we so often close our doors? Keep them firmly shut? Hide behind them? Remain untouched by the misery and suffering of the people who are outside our closed doors? An open door feels good, is inviting, and lets us know: We are welcome here. Fling

wide the door this Advent and Christmas time, open the door to your heart for the Christmas miracle of God becoming human and let God take room in there.

Wishing you a blessed Advent, Christmas and start into the new year. May you always find open doors where others welcome you with joy and open arms.

Blessings, 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*

Christmas Potluck Dinner



**Sunday,
December 21**
*Following the
worship service.*

Christmas Bazaar Results

Canning	623.50
Vendors	615.00
Knitting	220.00
Nearly New	517.00
Tea Room	302.25
Baking	2,020.50
Raffle	<u>1,024.00</u>
TOTAL	\$5,322.25

A big thank you to all for supporting our event!

~ The Bazaar Committee ~

Music Director Search Committee Team

The search is over! Our new Music Director is Lois Horst. Lois started on November 2 and brings lots of experience and new ideas with her. The Search Team hopes everyone will introduce themselves to Lois and give her a warm St. Luke's welcome!

Seniors' Card Social

Thursdays from 1:00-4:00 pm

Join us for an afternoon of cards and good conversation and coffee time.

Council Corner: Update June-October

- Council met in June, September and October
- We approved scholarships
- There is ongoing work with the Property Team regarding the design of the new walkways
- We are waiting on Synod council to pass our updated Constitution and Bylaws
- We approved the variance application for the electronic sign

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

**The AGM will be either February 15 or 22
depending on which constitution we are under
at the time.**

*Charitable Donation Receipts will be available
at the end of February.*

Fall Update from the Finance Committee

A big thank you to members for continuing to donate to St. Luke's during the summer months. At the end of September our current year operating deficit was approximately \$4,500. We ask members to prayerfully consider their donations through the end of the year as we hope to have this current year operating deficit eliminated and finish 2025 with a surplus.

Special offerings for Christmas will go to our current operating account; Thanksgiving donations went to Waterloo Region Food Bank and Easter donations went to Anishnabeg Outreach. Special donations for 2026 will be allocated in the same manner.

Charitable donation tax receipts for 2025 will include all donations received by the church by December 31, 2025. Please note the donation receipt will show only the amount that is tax deductible. If you purchased tickets for a socialite event or other non-tax-deductible items through the church, these payments will not appear on your receipt.

We wish everyone a very merry Christmas and all the best in 2026!

Finance Committee:

Christine Petersen, Cathy Wilke and Nancy MacLean

St. Luke's Women

Potluck Dinner

Thursday, April 9 at 6:30 pm

Guest Speaker – TBA

Fellowship of the Least Coin

Request: If anyone is able, we are in need of knitters for pneumonia vests. If you are in need of a pattern, we have some available in our collection area under the stairs in the narthex. There is also yarn for this project in the women's storage room.

Reminder: We have prayer shawls available if you would like one to share with someone in your concerns. Please contact Elaine Schwartz.

Mitten Tree:

A special thanks to everyone for their donations of items to our tree this year – always appreciated!

Thanks to our knitters, we were able to supply mitts and hats to this project, to the Stanley Park Community Centre for their tree in support of our neighbours and to our Blessings Box.



Community Connections Committee

Christmas Gifts for Shut-Ins:

We prepared gift bags for those who are no longer able to join us in our church activities. Thanks to the ladies who delivered the gifts and visited with the recipients.

The Giving Tree:

We made a donation of 48 mitts and 10 hats to the Stanley Park Community Centre to assist with their tree decorating! This project runs until December 6. The items are distributed to the clients of the Stanley Park Eats Program which we support at St Luke's. *"Donations will be given back to the community."*

Pop-up Bakery:

Sunday, December 7 during fellowship.

Proceeds go towards the church deficit.

Food4kids – Advent Drive:

Lutheran "food4kids" Ambassadors

The Lutheran 'food4kids' Ambassadors are kicking off a food drive for Advent. St. Luke's, St. Peter's, St. Matthews, Third Space, St. Stephen and St. Peter's Cambridge have joined forces to help support food4kids Waterloo Region.

Food4kids Waterloo Region is working to address the childhood hunger crisis by providing healthy food packages to local children. The mission of food4kids is to provide nutritious, culturally sensitive, allergy-aware food packages to children ages 1–14 from households facing severe food insecurity. These packages are provided on weekends and during school breaks. Deliveries are made to schools during the school year and directly to homes during breaks, ensuring families can receive support without stigma.

Lectors Needed!

Please consider the call to Lector.
Being a Lector is spiritually rewarding.

Winter Clearing of the Stairs

It has been brought to Council's attention that, for the safety of all, the stairs should be closed for the winter due to the condition they are presently in. Therefore, both sets of stairs will not be maintained during the winter. There will be yellow tape across the stairs that face Franklin Street. The sidewalk will be cleared and salted from the Franklin side and along the Narthex side so everyone can use the ramp. If you have questions, please talk to a member of council.

Charitable Donation Tax Receipts

Charitable Donation Tax Receipts will be available at the end of February. Please do not call the office to ask for receipts early as the preparation of the annual report and AGM meeting is the priority.

Sunday School Christmas Play

Thanks to our wonderful teachers Darlene Brooks, Dianne and Jeni Metcalf, Brenda Robinson and Rachel Sutton we had an amazing start into the new Sunday School. This year we would like to present a Christmas Play again at our 4:00 pm Christmas Eve Worship Service on December 24. It will be a bit different from what we did in the previous years and we will collaborate with our new Music Director to make it a joyful experience for all. Parents – if your child(ren) are available on December 24 at 4:00 pm and would like to join, please reach out to their Sunday School Teachers or to Pastor Heike. How the play will look like depends on the number of children participating and we need some time to practice.

Coffee with Friends

Every first Tuesday of the month at 1:30 pm the doors to Coffee with Friends open. Everyone is welcome. We get together in the board room for coffee, tea and yummy treats. Besides joyful conversation there is always something special happening – in the past we did Bingo, Trivia and had a tea presentation as well as fun with ‘conversation’ cards. In December, we are looking at different Advent and Christmas traditions. Please feel free to bring an item from home that describes your special tradition, and if you wish you can present this to us. Upcoming meeting dates are: **December 2** (Advent and Christmas Traditions), **January 6** (Creating Epiphany Stars) and **February 3** (topic TBD).

Talk Faith with Friends

Every last Tuesday of the month at 1:30 pm you are invited to talk about your faith and explore new ways to deepen your faith in everyday life or learn from each other about daily faith exercises. Right now, we are trying out the so-called ‘Wreath of Faith’, a Lutheran Rosary, invented by the former Swedish Lutheran Bishop Martin Lönnebo. There are still sets available to create your own wreath – if you are interested in receiving one, please reach out to Pastor Heike or join for Talk Faith with Friends. Talk Faith with Friends will be on a break in December, but back in January and February. Upcoming meeting dates are: **January 27 and February 24**.

German Christmas

On **Tuesday, December 16, at 1:30 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. Pastor Heike is looking forward to a cozy afternoon in the Parlour.

Blue Christmas – Longest Night of the Year

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 **Sunday, December 21**, at the beginning of the longest night of the year **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

3:45 pm – Carol Singing prior to the Service

**4:00 pm – Candlelight Family Worship Service
with Christmas Play**

6:45 pm – Carol Singing prior to the Service

7:00 pm – Candlelight Worship Service at 7:00 pm

First Sunday of Christmas, December 28

Carols and Lessons at 10:00 am

Bible Verse for 2026

If you wish to receive a (personal) bible quote for 2026, let Pastor Heike know. They will be distributed during the Worship Service on Sunday, January 11 (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.

Gifts from the Heart – Friends of Creation

If you wish to make a special and meaningful Christmas gift this year, please have a look at the 2025 Gifts from the Heart Christmas catalogue from Canadian Lutheran World Relief (CLWR). This year you will find many gifts which connect with our Friends of Creation Project. As of November 2025, we donated \$2,600 towards the project which equals 52 rejuvenated acres around Lake Chad. Can we still reach our goal of transforming 100 acres (= \$5,000)? If you consider making a gift through Gifts from the Heart, make sure your acre gets counted towards our goal! Let CLWR know on their donation form that you support the Friends of Creation Project at St. Luke's Evangelical Lutheran Church in Kitchener and they make sure that our congregation's total gets updated.

St. Luke's accredited as a Greening Faith Community!

Remember the action items which run with the Friends of Creation Project in fall? We asked you to pick a few that we would be able to accomplish here at St. Luke's. One of the action items was to get accredited as a Greening Faith Community with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (ELCIC). In October we received the certificate from the ELCIC. The certificate serves 'as a celebration, reminder and encouragement to live out the goals you have chosen for your faith community' (from the letter of Rev. Paul Gehrs, Assistant to the National Bishop, to St. Luke's). We have some work to do! Please have a look at our bulletin board in the hallway which connects the North and the South wing of our building. Right now, you will still find the information about the Friends of Creation project on there, but it will be updated during the year with Stewardship of Creation challenges and projects. Way to go St. Luke's!

Join Our Prayer Group — Strengthened Together in Faith

Prayer is one of the simplest and yet most profound expressions of our Christian faith. In prayer we bring our joys and burdens before God, listen for Christ's guiding voice, and hold one another in the gentle shelter of the Spirit's love. Our weekly prayer group

is a place where this sacred conversation comes to life—where we gather in trust, hope, and mutual support. If you have been longing for a quiet space to reconnect with God, or if you simply feel called to lift up the needs of our congregation and community, we warmly invite you to join the prayer group meeting after the Worship Service in the chancel area of the Sanctuary. Whether you are new to prayer or have been praying for a lifetime, your presence enriches the whole body of Christ. Come, be part of this circle of grace. Together, let us pray boldly, faithfully, and with open hearts. We encourage everyone to join and to make use of the new prayer note books in the pews. During the Worship Service you can write down your prayer request on a sheet of paper from the book, tear it off and place it folded into the offering plate. The ushers will put it for you into the prayer box. Join the prayer group after the service for your beloved one and for yourself to be upheld in prayer.

Future Visions: Dreaming together for tomorrow

The conversation started in October 2025 with Two Rivers, Grand River and Rev. Adam Snook, Assistant to the Bishop from the Eastern Synod about the future of our churches will continue. The next meeting takes place on Saturday, January 17, from 9:00 am – 12:00 noon at Christ Lutheran Church, 445 Anndale Rd. in Waterloo. Save the date! We will be once again joined by Rev. Adam Snook from the Synod Office, and together we will move the conversation forward regarding present and future collaborations—in real and practical ways. Everyone interested is welcome to join!

Season of Lent

The season of Lent will be upon us in no time with Ash Wednesday happening already on February 18. This year, things will be slightly different as we are collaborating with St. Matthews, St. Peter's, Kitchener, and St. Paul's Bridgeport. All Midweek Services are taking place on Wednesdays and start at 7:00 pm. The planning is well underway but not yet finalized, so here is the schedule for our Lenten Midweek Services in February: Ash Wednesday with imposition of the ashes – February 18 at St. Luke's and February 25 – at St. Luke's with Guest preacher

from one of the other collaborating churches. Stay tuned for more information and the finalized schedule for March (including topics).

Summer Lutheran Youth Camp 2026

Summer seems to be far away right now, but the planning for the next Summer Lutheran Youth Camp (SLYC) at Camp Kintail in Goderich, at the shores of Lake Huron, is well underway. Those who participated last summer had a fantastic time and we hope we will have a group of campers from St. Luke's to join again. The camp takes place from Sunday, August 30, 2026 until Friday, September 4, 2026. The cost per camper is \$750, which will be partially subsidized by St. Luke's congregation. Campers are expected to attend church activities and to fundraise for their participation to keep the individual costs down as much as possible. For now – let Pastor Heike know if you are interested to join. An invitational email with more information will go out in the new year to the families of all eligible youth (Grade 6 to 12) of our congregation.

Listen to the Music Playing

Christmas is coming! What a great time for me to join you as Director of Music! I am so pleased to be able to share music with you and I really appreciate the warm welcome you have given me.

I did not expect to find so many connections at St. Luke's. My father was a Lutheran minister, and some of you remember him from his time at St. Peter's in Heidelberg. I've also found kindred spirits from Hanover and Neustadt, where my parents were raised. And since I grew up almost literally IN the Lutheran Church, with a father who was the minister and a mother who was the organist (which meant I sang in the choir since I was small and started playing the organ and directing choirs at age 16), Lutheran church music is in my blood.

After being the organist and choir director of St. Peter's, Brodhagen, for 14 years, I returned to Wilfrid Laurier to complete my Bachelor of Music Degree in Church Music. Following several years at St. Matthew's, Kitchener, as Director of the Children's Choir, I spent 9 years as Director of Music at Christ Lutheran, Waterloo. A car accident left me with chronic neck and shoulder symptoms which made the capacity to play the organ unpredictable for a long time. Zion, Stratford, hired me as Director of Music but I was only able to continue for a year. For the last 18 years, I have been Director of the Generations Choir at Church of the Holy Saviour (Anglican), Waterloo, and have played the organ as a fill-in.

A couple of years ago, there was a bad snowstorm on Christmas Eve, and I was called to come and play for the services as the organist was stranded in Elmira!

I hope you will join me in some of the opportunities for making music at St. Luke's. The Senior Choir is rehearsing at 5:30 pm on Tuesdays. We have some special music planned for the service on December 14, and lovely anthems for Christmas Eve. If you're not sure about making a commitment to sing regularly, come and sit in on one of our practices.

If singing is not your thing, maybe Handbell Choir would suit you better. We are going to practice on Sundays after church from now until Christmas, and will play on Christmas Eve.

The Children's Choir will start again after Christmas. Practice times are to be determined but I hope we can get an enthusiastic group together.

If you play an instrument and would like to contribute to our services on occasion, please introduce yourself to me. Music is meant to be shared and bring us together.

Poinsettias

Contributions are being accepted for poinsettias for the Sanctuary in celebration or memory of a loved one **until December 15**. Poinsettia envelopes are provided on the entrance tables.





God calls us to be stewards of creation
and to show leadership by living out this call.

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada
recognizes the congregation of

**St. Luke's Evangelical Lutheran
Church,
Kitchener, ON**

as an accredited Greening Faith Community.

The Church acknowledges your leadership, vision, and efforts in the care of God's creation, and
thanks God for your ministry.

Dated this 29th day of October 2025.

+Bishop Larry Kochendorfer

The Rev. Dr. Larry Kochendorfer,
ELCIC National Bishop



**Evangelical Lutheran
Church in Canada**
Living Out God's Grace & Unconditional Love

Council Members:

Council Chair: Kathy Thomsen
Vice Chair: Brent Clarke
Secretary: Donna Finch
John Carapanta
Nahlah Jeorje-Carapanta
Cathy Dowsling
Barb Pitz
Don Snow

Standing Committee Chairs:

Finance: Christine Petersen
Mutual Ministry: Kathy Thomsen
Worship and Music: Kathy Thomsen
Rentals: Cathy Dowsling
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,
Brenda Robinson
- WEPP: Pastor Heike Toeller
Dream Team: Pastor Heike Toeller

Church Office:

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

Office Hours:

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

Website:

stlukeslutheran.ca

Facebook and YouTube

St. Luke's Evangelical Lutheran Church,
Kitchener

Instagram: [stlukeskw](https://www.instagram.com/stlukeskw)

Pastor Heike

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

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

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

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

Images:

Winter/Door scene from Pastor Heike

Mitten Tree from Helga

Potluck image from clipart-library.com

Star from clipart-library.com

Poinsettia image from publicdomainpictures.net

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