



St. Luke's Episcopal Church

House Call Newsletter

January – February 2025

A New Heart in the New Year



A new heart I will give you, and a new spirit I will put within you...

Ezekiel 36:26

Each new year brings with it the opportunity for a fresh start. Many people take that opportunity by making resolutions to better themselves. According to Forbes, the most common New Year's resolution is to improve physical fitness, with improved finances and better mental health coming in a close second and third. However well-intended these resolutions are, though, they rarely last. Psychology Today reports that 80% of people who make New Year's resolutions abandon them by the end of January. It's such a common phenomenon that the second Friday in January has come to be known as "Quitters Day," a tongue-in-cheek nod to those whose resolutions fail before February rolls around.

There are many theories as to why New Year's resolutions fail. A resolution might be too vague, too specific, or unrealistically ambitious. It might require the commitment of more time or money than the person making it actually has to spend. Or a resolution might require the person to abandon too many habits,

gratifications, or obligations. A new parent who loves to read might resolve to complete a new book every month but, when faced with the demands of caring for a baby, might not actually pick up that novel until the little one starts kindergarten.

Some resolutions may fail because they're grounded in self-dissatisfaction. People rarely resolve to do more or better at things they're already doing well. Rather, as journalist Ellen Goodman points out, "We spend January 1st walking through our lives, room by room, drawing up a list of work to be done, cracks to be patched. Maybe this year, to balance the list, we ought to walk through the rooms of our lives...not looking for flaws, but for potential." Goodman's approach might encourage those who make New Year's resolutions to focus less on their inevitable human shortcomings and more on making better and more frequent use of their God-given gifts. Such resolutions might be easier to keep.

But I wonder whether New Year's resolutions fail so often because we rely too much on our own strength. No matter how self-disciplined, people are fallible. God is not. Jesus instructed us to be perfect as our Father in heaven is perfect, but he also observed that only God is entirely good. That suggests to me that, if we want to improve ourselves, we should first go to the source of all goodness and ask for divine support.

Fair warning, though. Much as God loves us and wants us to be happy, he may not be terribly interested in helping his children improve their golf swing or lose that last ten pounds. My sense is that God cares about our becoming the most loving and faithful people we can be, and he knows our needs far better than we do ourselves. Asking God to help us grow into the people he intended us to be, to give us new hearts and new

spirits, will bring greater blessings than any secular resolution could.

There’s nothing wrong with wanting to be healthy and financially stable. And there’s nothing wrong with making New Year’s resolutions – God made us, after all, to be creatures of hope. But, as G.K. Chesterton observed, “the object of a new year is not that we should have a new year, but rather that we should have a new soul.” Instead of struggling to fix ourselves, may we invite God to transform us so that we can better love and serve. May God bless you with a new heart and a new spirit to welcome the coming year.

Blessings,
Pastor Lauren+

A Note from the Treasurer

Thank you so much for keeping your pledges up to date in 2024. It was much appreciated.

We will be sending out your annual donation statements in January. Please review them when they arrive and let the treasurer know as soon as possible if you see any problems or have any questions.

Remember that there are several ways that you can make your pledge payment:

- Sending a personal check in the mail to the church or placing it, or cash, in the offering plate on Sunday.
- Setting up a recurring payment using your bank’s automated bill payment feature. There is generally no fee attached and the bank sends a check to the church automatically with the frequency and amount you specify.
- Using Givelify online (<https://www.givelify.com/donate/st-lukes-church-annapolis-md-2j7wy5ODQ0MQ==/donation/amount>). You may set up a recurring gift to match your pledge amount and frequency. Please remember that Givelify charges us for each donation, so please consider adding an additional couple of dollars to your donation to help us defray this cost.
- Zelle through your bank account. The church email address for Zelle is finance@stlukeseastport.org.

Please contact Pete Stark, Treasurer, at 410-269-9760 or starkhe2@yahoo.com for any questions or assistance. Thank you.

Operating Income and Expense Summary

As of November 30, 2024

<u>Operating</u>	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Planned</u>
<u>Income</u>		
Pledges	149,413	146,667
Other	<u>65,735</u>	<u>79,619</u>
Total Income	215,148	226,286
<u>Operating</u>		
<u>Expenses:</u>	<u>225,450</u>	<u>232,117</u>
<u>Net Gain</u>	<u>(10,302)</u>	<u>(5,831)</u>
<u>Assets</u>		
Checking	42,865	
Investments	89,455	

Vestry Summary

Greetings from the St. Luke’s Vestry!

We have arrived to 2025 with wind nipping at our heels and snow on the ground, but the bite in the air does not diminish the warmth of St. Luke’s. For New Year’s, we often reflect upon our past but look to the future ahead. Corinthians 5:17 states, “So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away, see, everything has become new!” We are embracing the New Year without giving up the values that make us

who we are. In Christ, we have a steadfast companion to remind and support us of those values.

As the previous newsletter touched on, the Vestry is contemplating how to prioritize resources for the coming year. In how we allocate resources we hope to faithfully reflect the values of our community. To that end, the Vestry is finalizing the 2025 budget to be presented at the Annual meeting on February 9th. Within this budget, we are allocating more outreach funds for the Earth Day Arts Festival which will run April 25th-26th, and for our presence at the Annapolis Pride Festival, both of which were previously funded by other means, including discretionary funds from Pastor Lauren+. We also will have some salary adjustments for church staff to reflect cost of living increases and we will continue to sustain and support our other various ministries and programs. Many thanks to Finance committee and Pete Stark and Gil Gardner on the vestry for their continued guidance.

Clientele for our Food Pantry has been increasing, along with a reciprocal increase from the Maryland Food Bank in the amount of food we distribute weekly, as we have many children who are recipients. The Vestry agreed to convert the small room in the undercroft to pantry space to safely store the food. Vestry member Lesley Margerrison will apply for grant funding for new shelves to maximize storage space. She would also love to start a Food Pantry committee as it is one of the most vital and important ministries we have, as we walk in Jesus's footprints and feed anyone who needs it. Please reach out to Pastor Lauren+ or Lesley if you would like to participate on this committee.

Vestry members may serve up to two (2) three-year terms, and vestry members Claire Miller, Lesley Margerrison, and Chuck Gallegos are up for election for second terms on the vestry. We thank all of them for their term of service! Both Claire and Lesley have agreed to serving a second term. In addition, Vrej Zarikian will take over Helen Leitch's Junior Warden position. The Junior Warden is responsible for the upkeep of the buildings and grounds of the church. As Junior Warden, Helen identified much needed church improvements, which were ultimately accomplished through St. Luke's Building Campaign. We thank Helen for her service, and we know that Vrej will be an excellent Junior Warden.

It is always an acceptable time to walk with Christ and we are very grateful you walk it with us. Stay warm, friends.

With Blessings,
St. Luke's Vestry

Evening Prayer at St. Luke's



St. Luke's will be hosting an Evening Prayer service on **Monday, January 20 at 5 pm**. We will commemorate the life and work of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and pray for reconciliation and peace in our nation.

Annual Meeting – Save the Date!

The Annual Meeting of St. Luke's' congregation will take place **on Sunday February 9, 2025** immediately after services. We will review the past church year, elect new members to the vestry while thanking those who have completed their terms. We will also review our Finances from 2024 and highlight plans for 2025. Please join us as we celebrate our accomplishments in 2024 and look forward to the church year ahead.

Scout Sunday 2025



Each year, St. Luke's invites the members of Cub Scout Pack 153 as well as former scouts to join in celebrating scouting during our worship service.

This year, Scout Sunday is on **Sunday, February 2**.

St. Luke's is the chartered organization for Pack 153, meaning that we hold the charter agreement with BSA and provide administrative and financial oversight for the Pack. Joseph Bicchirei is the current Chartered Organization Representative for St. Luke's.

Lenten Season

The Season of Lent begins on Ash Wednesday, March 5. During this season of reflection and repentance there will be a book discussion around the works of Thomas Merton.

The book we will study is entitled *Lent and Easter Wisdom from Thomas Merton: Daily Scripture and Prayers, Together with Thomas Merton's Own Words* by Thomas Merton and Jonathan Montaldo.

Watch for details in early March for dates and times.

Environmental Committee Meeting

The Environmental Committee at St. Luke's seeks to spread environmental stewardship through education, advocacy, and volunteerism on a teaching campus that heals the human spirit while caring for Creation.

The next meetings will be held on **Thursday, February 13 and on Thursday, March 13**. Meetings are held remotely via Zoom beginning at 7 pm.

All are welcome to attend. For questions, contact Chuck Gallegos (gallegoscl@verizon.net) or Anne Arms (armspna@aol.com).

Lunches for the Light House Shelter



Making sandwiches for our unhoused neighbors at the Light House offers a perfect way to plug into outreach at St Luke's. On two Sundays a month, during the after-church coffee hour, we make up and then deliver 24 bagged lunches. There is a sign-up sheet on the bulletin board but everyone is welcome to join in the preparations on the day.

The mission of the Light House is 'To rebuild lives with compassion by providing shelter and services to prevent homelessness and empower people as they transition

toward employment, housing and self-sufficiency' and we are privileged to be a part of that. Please contact Lesley Margerrison if you have any questions or would like to volunteer by email at lmargerrison@gmail.com.

Contemplative Prayer at St. Luke's

Be Still and Know that I am God.
(Psalm 46:10)



Photo by Chuck Gallegos

St. Luke's centering prayer ministry meets once a week to take a break from the chaotic world around us. We take time to be still.

Gradually, with practice and patience, the mind calms and our hearts open to transformation and to deeper

knowing of God's presence in our lives. The weekly sessions begin with a reading from a variety of contemplative authors. The reading is followed by 20 minutes of silent centering, followed by reflection. You need no experience to join us; simply begin where you are.

Using [St. Luke's Zoom link](#), we meet **every Friday**, from **10 to 11 a.m.** We plan more in-person sessions in St. Luke's sanctuary, as well as other offerings, so please stay tuned. If you would like to receive the weekly reminder and update on events that goes out every Thursday, contact Eve Waldman and she will put you on the mailing list. eleanorevewaldman@gmail.com. Eve's co-facilitators Chuck Gallegos can be reached at gallegoscl@verizon.net, and Jenna Lane, Jenna.S.Lane1944@gmail.com. They will be happy to answer questions.

The Daughters of the King



The Daughters of the King is a lay Order for women in the Episcopal Church. Our local Anne Arundel chapter is preparing to offer a discernment class for those who are interested in joining the Order. Members undertake a Rule of Life,

incorporating the Rule of Prayer and the Rule of Service. By reaffirmation of the promises made at Confirmation, a Daughter pledges herself to a life-long program of prayer, service, and evangelism. We find the Order to be a quiet place in a busy world, where we can support each other in our walk with Christ. If you are interested in learning more, please contact Pam Roth at 410-353-6774, or at rothsbythebay@verizon.net

Episcopal Relief and Development



Episcopal Relief & Development (ERD) partners with faith and community leaders to advance lasting change in communities affected by injustice, poverty, disaster and climate change.

Inspired by their faith and in collaboration with local experts, ERD provides resources and programming that: nurture [early childhood development](#); reduce violence against [women and girls](#); strengthen communities' [climate resilience](#); provide support in the wake of [disasters](#).

They emphasize shared learning to ensure support is purpose-driven, compassionate, effective and respectful of the dignity of all human beings.

For each program, ERD defines measurable objectives and establishes key data points to track. With that information, they monitor and assess program effectiveness. Results are shared with partners to evaluate success and identify areas for improvement. These standards have provided effective care, even in highly challenging contexts, to more than 49 million people in the last 10 years.



Currently, the ERD is offering support to those affected by the wildfires in California. If you are able to assist at this time, please visit www.episcopalrelief.org or click [HERE](#)

Burdens Men Carry Panel Discussion



Join Eastport United Methodist Church for a Male Mental Health Panel Discussion on **February 23, 2025 from 4p.m. – 6p.m.** Eastport United Methodist Church is located at 926 Bay Ridge Avenue, Annapolis, Maryland 21403.

The discussion is to encourage an honest and lively dialogue concerning the difficult topic of male mental health, to offer support for men as they navigate the unique pressures of being a man in today's world, and to fight the continued stigma against men opening up about emotional/psychological problems.

Three panel speakers, an experienced therapist and two award-winning mental health advocates, will explore the burdens of being a man in the 21st century, the stigma against male openness and vulnerability, the social/cultural problems affecting male mental health, and the positive possibilities of a path forward. Attendees will have the opportunity to ask the panel speakers their own questions during the Q & A segment. Free pizza and refreshments will be offered afterwards.

Email & Text Scams

If you receive an email or text that appears to be from Pastor Lauren+, asking you to take some kind of unusual action – click a link or download an attachment you didn't request, wire money to a specified account, purchase gift cards and reply with the serial numbers, or simply to reply quickly, watch out – it could be a form of “phishing”. The message will give some explanation of why Pastor Lauren+ needs your help immediately. They may include some story about another person in dire circumstances she is trying to help. But instead of helping a needy person, if you respond you will be turning over money and possibly your identity information to a scammer.

Verify the “from” email. The malicious actors behind “phishing” attacks are counting on people springing into action as soon as they see an important name on an email. You can outsmart them by looking beyond the name and checking the “from” email address to see if it matches what you know the alleged sender's email to be. If you only see a name, you can cause the “from” email address to be displayed by hovering the cursor over the name.

Confirm requests with a conversation. Even if the email or text seems legitimate, if a request seems even remotely “off,” don't act on it until you confirm it with a phone call or face-to-face conversation. Contact the church office at 410-268-5419. If there is a need, Pastor Lauren+ includes any announcements on Sundays during service, our weekly publications, and bi-monthly newsletters.

DO NOT reply or forward the suspicious email or text. REPORT emails as SPAM to your email carrier and BLOCK texts.

Pastor Sabbath

Sunday is the Sabbath for most of us but, for clergy, Sunday is often the busiest workday of the week. Scripture tells us to honor the Sabbath and keep it holy. Pastor Lauren+ takes her Sabbath on * **Mondays** as a time of rest, reflection, and prayer.

***Pastor Lauren+ will be at church all day on January 20th in preparation for our 5 p.m. Evening Prayer Service.**

Please let her know if you have questions or are need of spiritual support on a Monday or any other time by contacting her directly at 703-585-0651.

Holiday Office Closures

The Church Office will be closed for the following Holidays:

M. L. King Jr. Day – Monday, January 20, 2025

Presidents Day – Monday, February 17, 2025

Hospitality Hour

St. Luke's offers a hospitality hour immediately following our Sunday services. Volunteer hosts are asked to set up the beverage station and bring light fare for persons attending the Sunday Service to enjoy. The sign-up sheet for hosting Hospitality Hour on Sunday mornings is located downstairs in the Undercroft. The Winter sign up is posted. Anyone is welcome to sign up to host. If you haven't hosted before, contact our Hospitality Hour coordinator, Kathy Dinin, to learn more: 914-241-3966 or dinin.kathryn@gmail.com. Kathy can also help pair you with someone else if you don't want to host on your own.

Lunch Bunch



The Lunch Bunch is a weekly gathering for fellowship through sharing a meal. This Dutch treat meal takes place **Wednesdays at Noon** at [Adam's Ribs](#) in the Eastport

Shopping Center, right next to the church. Who is invited? Everyone! Lunch Bunch is an open event organized by members of St. Luke's. Contact Dianne Crews 410-268-9741 for more information. Friends and visitors are always welcome. No RSVP necessary.

Flower Ministry

The beautiful altar floral arrangements are sponsored by members of the community who honor or remember loved ones with a dedication. The arrangements can also be dedicated to celebrate a marriage, baby or other happy occasion. **The 2025 sign-up sheet is located in the Undercroft.** The requested donation amount is \$50

and may be made either by check or online with the memo "Flowers." Please email our Parish Administrator Dalyn Huntley with your dedication details at 410-268-5419 or office@stlukeseastport.org.

Do you have a love for flowers and artistic eye? Consider becoming a Flower Ministry volunteer. If you have questions or wish to learn more, contact Anne Arms at 707-479-4303 or armspna@aol.com.

Claggett Retreat Center

Visit www.claggettcenter.org/adult-programs



House Call Deadline

The deadline for submission of materials for the next edition of House Call is no later than **Thursday, February 27, 2025**. Submissions may be emailed to the office at office@stlukeseastport.org.



St. Luke's has a long-standing tradition of remembering the birthdays and anniversaries of our members with a card and in the newsletter, as well as praying for those who are present on the preceding Sunday. If you are new to the St. Luke's community or unsure if we have your birthday/anniversary, please let us know when it is! Send the information to the office by phone or email (410-268-5419 or office@stlukeseastport.org).

January Birthdays

- 1 Arthur Cotsalas
- 8 Alastair McGregor
- 16 Ildar Khannanov
- 21 Sharon Williams
- 23 Pete Stark
- 29 Heather Ackroyd
- 31 David McGuiness

February Birthdays

- 2 Joshua Reynolds
- 7 Penelope Reynolds
- 10 Jennifer Brown
- 17 David Dent
- 28 Bayinnah Shabazz

Prayer List

Ongoing Needs: Sunniah Ngonzi Magogo; Patty Peterson (friend of Helen Wheeler); Hilda Uribe (friend of Avedis & Olgui Zarikian); Jimmy Riccardi; Deacon Bob McCoy; Karen Sears-Wright (mother of Lexi Wright); Olgui Zarikian; Patricia; Sarah Lamming; Lee Riley; Jennifer Miles (friend of Kathleen Rewa); Lucy Sprigg; Nelida Godfrey (family friend of Avedis & Olgui Zarikian); Rev. John Keydel; Vincent Veich (friend of Dianne Crews); Christine Kingerski (friend of Dan Ramirez); Deacon Frank Bailey (friend of Rev. Lauren Bloom); Helen Wheeler; Sammy Bernardi (grandson of Jon Diefenthaler); Larry Bloom (father of Rev. Lauren Bloom)

Immediate Needs: **Mary** Mineo (sister of Ann McGuinness); **Deacon Mary** Walton; **Tod** Wildason (friend of Dianne Crews); **Elizabeth & Kate** (friends of Lesley Margerrison); **Nancy** Otis; **Susan & Phil** Murphree (friends of David & Ann McGuinness); **Marcus** Dent (son-in-law of Alastair McGregor); **Julian** Easterday (friend of Helen Leitch); **Spencer** Johnson (husband of Rev. Andrea Johnson); **Karyl** Johnston (friend of Max McGregor); **Nicole** DeVino (friend of Dianne Crews); **Zigi** Zacs; **Patrick** Smiley (friend of Dianne Crews); **Joyce** Sutherland (mother of Michelle Sutherland); **Richard and Rabbi Susan** Warshaw (friends of Eve and Mike Waldman); **John** Smith; **Fred** Miller; **Lesley** Fallon (mother-in-law of Melissa Deckman Fallon); **Mark** Holt (father of Valerie Holt); **Max** McGregor; **Mike** Johnson (friend of Lance Landseadel); **Ted** Fulton (cousin of Ethel Bilderback); **Molly** Harrison (mother of Lesley Margerrison); **Jennefer** Trowers-Smith (friend of Tanya Bloom); **Bishop Chilton** Knudsen (Retired); **Judie** Sapio (cousin of Rev. Lauren Bloom); **Luke** Leitch (grandson of Helen Leitch); **those who have died and are affected** by the fires in California.

St. Luke's Episcopal Church

410-268-5419 ~ office@stlukeseastport.org
www.stlukeseastport.org
www.facebook.com/stlukeseastport

Episcopal Diocese of Maryland

The Rt. Rev. Carrie Schofield-Broadbent,
XV Bishop

Parish Staff

The Rev. Lauren M. Bloom, Rector
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Tom Adams, Sexton

Parish Officers

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