

The Messenger

Volume XLVI ~ Issue 2 ~ February 2024

St. Luke's Evangelical Lutheran Church

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Staff

Interim Pastor: Rev. Richard Mathisen

Music Director: Ms. Andrea Berntsen

Sexton: Mrs. Beth Hickman

Growing St. Luke's Congregation by Outreach Efforts

How can we grow St. Luke's congregation? This subject has been on my mind and in my prayers. For Christian churches, there are two obvious models for encouraging growth. One model is ancient, the other model is modern.

The ancient model is the early Christian church and its astonishingly fast growth, as described in the Bible in the book entitled the Acts of the Apostles. The early church was a very energetic and highly spiritual. We can learn much from the early church, by studying the book of Acts.

In the modern world, a good model is learning from modern churches which have grown successfully. I have been talking to pastor friends who are knowledgeable. I'll try to summarize what I have learned so far. **First**, people need to know that St. Luke's exists. **Second**, they need to visit St. Luke's at least once, if they might be interested. **Third**, people need to have a reason to visit us. What is it that makes St. Luke's worth visiting? What is our identity? How are we different? In modern marketing language, what is our "Brand"? This usually takes the form a short tagline or slogan. I have some ideas about this.

So, what makes St. Luke's great? First, we have good preaching (I hope!). We have excellent music, in our Sunday liturgy, our choir, and our bells. We have plenty of off-street parking. We have a great coffee hour. We have the capability to have a really first-rate Bible study program (I am assuming that we will have an Education Hour of some sort and frequency between 9:00 am and 10:00 am on Sunday mornings). We have one entirely unique feature, which is that St. Luke's is the Jesus Christ Superstar church. We present that JCS musical every Palm Sunday, which is approaching this year on March 24th. There is simply no reason why St. Luke's cannot grow, if people know we exist and are willing to at least visit us once. What I have been learning recently is about the possibilities of various forms of communication, such as a pastor's blog, podcasts, Facebook, Twitter, and even newer methods, as well as our website and our own educational facilities. Again, there is much for me (and others) to learn.

Please feel free to share your own ideas with me and others. My email address is: richard.a.mathisen@gmail.com. My landline phone is: 215-643-9109. I am happy to talk with anyone about anything that might help St. Luke's to grow! And, of course, please continue to pray for St. Luke's and our members!

Yours in Christ, Pastor Richard Mathisen

The Season of Lent - February and March 2024 - Pastor Richard Mathisen

The season of Lent is upon us. Lent traditionally is a time of spiritual renewal. During these forty days, from Ash Wednesday (February 14) to Easter Sunday (March 31), Christians are urged to pray and to meditate anew on the Gospel accounts of Christ's redemptive passion and death. If Lent is a time for reflection, Easter will be the moment for celebration! May the reflection time of Lent and the celebration time of Easter be a truly blessed time for you!

Lent and Holy Week in Allentown 2024

Lutheran Lent and Holy Week Observances

St. Luke's is a member of the Allentown Collaborative Ministries (ACM), a coalition of mostly Lutheran churches which has also added several other churches as well. At our January 9th meeting, we made the following plans. This schedule is very much the same as our 2023 schedule. Please note that Easter is very early this year, so Ash Wednesday is coming up soon!

Ash Wednesday, February 14 — Ash Wednesday will feature two services at Egner Memorial Chapel at Muhlenberg College in Allentown, at noon and 7:30 pm. Muhlenberg College is our Lutheran college right here in Allentown. There will be a joint choir of all churches for the 7:30 pm service.

Lenten Midweek Gatherings, February 21, 28, and March 6, 13, and 20 — Lenten Midweek Gatherings will again be held at noon at St. Timothy's Lutheran. There will be noontime food prepared by the various Lutheran congregations. St. Luke's will be assisting with the food on Wednesday, March 20th.

Holy Week — During Holy Week, there will be joint services for Maundy Thursday on March 28 and Good Friday on March 29, as well as observance of the Easter Vigil on Saturday evening March 30. The Maundy Thursday service will be at Redeemer Lutheran Church at noon, with the evening service at Nativity Lutheran Church at 7:30 pm. The Good Friday noontime service will again be hosted by us at St. Luke's, from noon to 3:00 pm. It will again be led by Pastor Maritza Dolich reviewing the Stations of the Cross, which was very well-appreciated last year. The Good Friday evening service will be at St. John's Lutheran Church. The observance of the Easter Vigil will be held at Christ Lutheran Church at 7:30 pm. Please note that all daytime services are at noon and all evening services are at 7:30 pm. The evening services will have a joint choir. Of course, all participating churches will plan and conduct their own services on Palm Sunday and Easter Sunday.

We encourage all members of St. Luke's to attend these community worship services and educational opportunities in Allentown as you are able!

Yours in Christ,
Pastor Richard A. Mathisen

SAVE THE DATE

ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

- Sunday, February 4, 2024
- Immediately following the 10:30 a.m. worship service

Please join us to remain current in our planning for the life of

**St. Luke's Evangelical Lutheran Church
In the City to Stay**



Council Highlights – From the Approved December 2023 Council Minutes

- Call a special congregational meeting to vote for the apartment roof replacement.
- Janey Zimmerman is organizing a catechetical class with support from Pastor Mathisen.
- Interviews are taking place for a part-time Administrative Assistant.

Financial Highlights – December 31, 2023

Income	\$8,454.00
Expenses	(\$15,332.00)

Roof Fund Loans as of December 31, 2023

Memorial Fund Loans	
North Roof	16,000.00
Elevator Addition Roof	10,000.00
Apartment Turret Roof	5,000.00
Loan Repay	<u>(4,773.00)</u>
Balance	\$26,227.00

Property Highlights – Projects for January 2024

- Delivered down payment check for the replacement of the third-floor apartment roof to Paul Wright Roofing.
- Hung a clock in the Fellowship Hall that was donated by the Chess Club. Also hung a clock in the Youth Lounge that was donated by Bonnie Wachter.
- Cleaned garbage out of the courtyard and off the parking lot.
- Cleared construction trash (which was dumped in front of our 435 building) to have it removed by the city in order to avoid a fine from the city.

ST. LUKE'S MISSION STATEMENT: St. Luke's is a community of God's people centered around the Gospel and empowered by God's Spirit to be Jesus' disciples now. The Lord calls us to be channels through which His love and acceptance can flow to others. Using our varied gifts, we commit ourselves as a congregation and individuals to be God's presence to our community in both word and deed.

Lay Ministers February 2024

Date	Offering Collector	Scripture Reader	Worship Assistant	Communion Assistant	Greeter
4-Feb-24	D. Skinner	T. Zimmerman	K. Baker	T. Zimmerman	R. Patterson
11-Feb-24	J. Zimmerman	J. Zimmerman	M. Tucker-Morgan	M. Westman	J. Zimmerman
18-Feb-24	B. Engler	L. Weaver	B. Mathisen	L. Weaver	B. Engler
25-Feb-24	E. Hickman	C. Bachman	M. Westman	J. Zimmerman	E. Hickman

Thank you to our St. Luke's Church Congregation Council for sponsoring the 135th Anniversary Commemoration Social

Jesus Christ Superstar

12th Annual Performance

Rehearsals for *Jesus Christ Superstar* continue:

Sunday, February 4th
 Sunday, February 18th
 Sunday, March 3rd

1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.

St. Luke's Fellowship Hall

- All are welcome to join in the performance.

NOTE: Rehearsals are conveniently held every other week.

- For questions or additional information, please contact Lynn Weaver: laposte@juno.com

Performance date:

Palm Sunday, March 24, 2024
 2:00 p.m.



Happy Birthday Blessings

February 5	Judith Helm
February 7	Elizabeth Swoyer
February 10	Marge Yarnall
February 21	Karen Melber
February 24	Barbara Mathisen
February 26	Carol Mayers
February 28	Patti Engler

Notable Dates in February

February 2	Groundhog Day
February 4	Our Congregational Meeting
February 10	Lunar New Year
February 14	Ash Wednesday Valentine's Day
February 19	Presidents' Day

Allentown Collaborative Ministries

Partners in sharing Christ's witness in the Allentown community

Partners in sharing Christ's witness in the Allentown community,

The *Allentown Collaborative Ministries* invites you to join us as we prepare to take a journey through the Lenten season:

Ash Wednesday, February 14 – Worship opportunities (with the imposition of ashes) include:

- Noon and 7:30 p.m. Muhlenberg Chapel
2400 Chew Street, Allentown
Led by Chaplain Janelle Neubauer and Drew Lutz-Long
- 7:30 p.m. St. Timothy Lutheran Church
140 South Ott Street, Allentown

Mid-Week Lenten Study – Wednesdays at noon at St. Timothy's Church

- The dates are February 21, 28 and March 6, 13, 20
- The focus of these gatherings is to continue to promote study and fellowship around engaging with the unhoused in our area.
- Offering will be collected at the Mid-Week Study to support the work of unhoused projects.
 - A simple lunch of soup, bread, salad, and beverages will be provided.



In 1990, this simple prayer by Rev. Brad Smith was delivered to a small youth group at Spring Valley Presbyterian Church in Columbia, SC and gave birth to an idea:

“Lord, even as we enjoy the Super Bowl football game, help us be mindful of those who are without a bowl of soup to eat.”

On Super Bowl Sunday, February 11, we will join other churches and organizations to support “Tackle Hunger” by having a freewill offering at the end of our worship service.



Lilies for Easter Sunday, March 31, 2024

**Easter lilies will once again adorn our sanctuary
on Easter Sunday!**

Please note, we are again offering the choice to sponsor lilies
or to donate to our Raise the Roof campaign
in memory or honor of your loved ones.

ORDER FORM

Name: _____

Envelope No. _____ Telephone No. _____

In Memory of: _____

In Honor of: _____

Given by: _____

• I will pick up my plant(s) _____ • Please donate my plant(s) _____

• No. of plants _____ x \$11.00 = \$ _____

• I prefer donating to the Raise the Roof campaign \$11.00 or \$ _____

Paid by check no. _____ OR Paid by cash _____

- The deadline for all orders is Sunday, March 10, 2024
- Please return this form with payment to Kathy Patterson,
in the offering plate, or via email to robert.patterson@rcn.com
or telephone Kathy at 484-633-0333
- Please make checks payable to:
St. Luke's Evangelical Lutheran Church

Thank you!

**To sponsor flowers, The Messenger or Sunday bulletins, please contact
Kathy Patterson for available dates:**

Altar Flowers - \$16.00 per vase

The Messenger - \$35.00

Sunday Bulletins - \$12.00

Email: robertpatterson@rcn.com **Telephone:** 484-633-0333