



The New Humanity

November 2025

The New Humanity, affectionally referred to as the "NuHu," is inspired by Ephesians 2:15: *"that Christ might create in himself one new humanity in place of the two, thus making peace."* See what's included in this monthly newsletter for November:

- Featured Article: Advent
- From the Loft
- From the Pastor's Fireside
- Committee Spotlight
- Point & Click
- A Pastoral Letter
- Announcements

Advent 2025: *Light in the Midst of Turbulence* by Pastor Jason Churchill

As the days grow shorter and the chill deepens, we gather for Advent—a season not of hurry, but of holy slowing. In a world marked by turbulence, Advent invites us to prepare the way of the Lord with watchful hearts, patient hope, and quiet wonder.

This year at St. Luke, our worship will be shaped by candlelight and the contemplative beauty of Johann Sebastian Bach's sacred music. In the Lutheran tradition, Bach's compositions are not simply art—they are prayer in sound. Each week, as we light the Advent wreath, a piece from one of Bach's cantatas will frame our time of reflection, inviting us to pause amid the rush of the season, breathe deeply, and listen for the still, small voice of God. We will begin each service in softened light, surrounded by candles guiding our way through the growing darkness. The flickering glow reminds us that, even as the year grows older and colder, the light of Christ continues to warm and illumine our hearts.

The scriptures of Advent in Year A—Isaiah’s visions of peace, Paul’s call to wake from sleep, John the Baptist’s cry in the wilderness, and Mary’s Magnificat—speak into our own age of uncertainty. Like the reformers who lived in an era of great upheaval, we, too, await God’s transforming presence with courage and faith.

- In **Advent 1**, we hear Isaiah’s dream of swords beaten into plowshares and the call to “walk in the light of the Lord.”
- In **Advent 2**, a shoot shall spring from the stump of Jesse, and the wolf shall dwell with the lamb—symbols of justice and reconciliation.
- In **Advent 3**, deserts bloom and the blind see; Mary sings her Magnificat, proclaiming God’s mercy that overturns the powers of the world.
- In **Advent 4**, we hear the promise of Immanuel—God with us—fulfilled in a child born to Mary and Joseph, a sign that God draws near to us in every human life and moment of need.

Through word, candle, and song, we will contemplate the great mystery of the Incarnation: the eternal Word made flesh, God’s light breaking into our shadowed world. Come and rest in this season’s sacred hush. Come and listen as Bach’s music and the ancient scriptures weave together the promise that *“the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.”*



From the Loft

Erik Kibelsbeck
Music Director

You know you have a good job as a church musician when the pastor turns to you in September and says, “What would you think about doing an Advent focused on Bach?” Do I even need to answer that question? Obviously I would love to organize it! And given our great blessings of resources: a splendid choir, soloists, and the ability to field a little orchestra, it’s completely doable.

The way I’ve chosen to do it is to bring three selections from Bach works appropriate for the season into each of the first three Sundays in Advent. One will be near the beginning of the service as we light the Advent wreath, the anthem slot will get the main choral piece, and another piece will go during communion.

On November 30, the music will be from the cantata (or actually one of the two cantatas) based on “Nun komm, der heiden Heiland” – “Savior of the Nations, Come.” This hymn is one we sing nearly every Advent, so the melody of the choral movement will be familiar. We will sing the hymn at the end to send us forth into our first week of Advent.

December 7 we'll hear selections from "Wachet Auf!" – Wake, Awake! – another hymn often sung during Advent, though its text connects more with the Parable of the Ten Virgins (Matthew 15:1-13). That passage is not actually read this year (It'll be on Advent 3 next year though) but the associations with Advent are so strong that I decided to go ahead with it anyways.

For the last Sunday of Advent, so close to Christmas, I'm keeping things simpler, but on the Third Sunday, December 14, there will be selections from Bach's Magnificat. Mary's song upon learning of what was to come for her is very much part of Advent, and of course Bach's setting—done complete some years ago here in a concert—is magnificent.

From the Pastor's Fireside

Pastor Jason Churchill



What Are You Thankful For?

As November begins and Thanksgiving approaches, that question — *what are you thankful for?* — seems to rest gently on our hearts. Each Sunday, as we sing “thankful hearts and voices raise” after communion, we are reminded that gratitude is not just a feeling; it’s a way of living. It’s in our songs, our prayers, and (hopefully) in our daily words of thanks to one another.

Our recent Stewardship reflections have also turned our attention toward gratitude — for what God has done and what God is doing among us. Personally, I’m thankful for the life and witness of Diane and Eckhart, two beloved members of our community whom we commended to God’s mercy and love in October. Their faith and kindness continue to shape who we are. I’m also deeply grateful for our Church Council and Committee Chairs. On the morning before Diane’s funeral, we gathered to talk about the future of St. Luke...to dream, to hope, and to imagine together what comes next. One idea that resonated strongly was the vision of St. Luke as a “*third place.*” We have our homes, we have our workplaces, and then we have a third place...a space where we can truly belong. A place of welcome and respite, where we can stretch our hearts and minds, share our gifts, and find community.

That word *belonging* surfaced again and again in our conversation. How do we create a space where everyone feels they belong? How do we nurture a community that invites people not only to come but to stay, grow, and live more deeply into the life of Christ? I have a feeling that Council will be cooking up a few ideas on discipleship programs, welcoming initiates, and focus on our community building.

As we move into this season of gratitude, I'm filled with excitement and hope for what's ahead for the ways St. Luke will continue to be a place of belonging, blessing, and joy for all who enter.



Committee Spotlight

The Stewardship Committee

by Bob Wagner & Lauren Mossotti-Kline

We recently shared: “When we hear the word, stewardship, too often we immediately think about money. That is **NOT** stewardship. Stewardship **IS** baptismal, relational, and biblical, tied to the very gift God gave us when he said, have dominion (Genesis 1:28-31). Stewardship is how we manage all that has been entrusted to us by God – how we exercise our dominion.”

As a ministry focus, the Stewardship Committee (or, Ministry Team) is working to help strengthen our sense of what it means to be servants. This means using all of whom we are, and whose we are, to proclaim Christ. In the traditional terms, we are called to use our Time, Talents, and Treasures to be the presence of Christ in our community and world.

One opportunity the Team offered for growth was an invitation to reflect on different aspects of our stewardship practices. 9 questions were asked:

1. What do I really need?
2. What do we crave?
3. How do we use what we have?
4. How do we understand and use money?
5. How many resources do we commit to “fun-time”?
6. How do you practice the Sabbath?
7. How do we spend our days?
8. What has God called us to do?
9. What do we value most?

Questions like these are part of a Holy Conversation that we are encouraged to have as we put our faith into action.

In the months to come, the Team will be continuing to offer opportunities to enrich that conversation. Some of it will be financial, like the soon arriving Pledge Card; some will be invitations for time, as we work to grow our care and outreach for congregation and community; and, some will encourage us to consider how what we love helps us to our ministry.

The Team hopes you will always remember that stewardship caring for what God has given us. It is baptismal, relational, and biblical. God continue to guide us in our use of “dominion” and our care of all that is a part of our journey in Christ.

point & click

Kimberly Fick
Communications Manager



The month of October with all the glorious changes of autumn was a bit of a bumpy ride for this Communications Manager! From emails not reaching their intended recipients to newsletters getting lost in the cyber-verse ... I think I have done more trouble-shooting this month than all the other months I've been at this job combined. Additional bumps along the proverbial road with my oldest son (Wally, who is autistic) and his schooling has landed him in the office with me most days as it looks like we'll be homeschooling him for the rest of this academic year.

(see Wally doing some phonics work below)

The hope, or the *point*, with all the changes to emails and newsletters and the website is that our communication as a church family will eventually become smoother and easier. Bumps on the journey let us know that we are moving and progressing, even if it's a bit uncomfortable along the way.

That's the way it is with so many areas of our lives, isn't it? We long for things to be easier and better, but to reach the end goal we must work out and over and through all the bumps.

My prayer this month of November for

you, dear reader, is that you will know God is walking with you and walking with us in the midst of all these bumps. And for every bump in the road you feel, send up this prayer of gratitude: *Thank you, God, for reminding me with every bump that we are still moving forward.*



A Pastoral Letter

from Pastor Jason Churchill

Dear Beloved of St. Luke,

Grace and peace to you in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

This is the first pastoral letter I write to you, and I do so with both a heavy heart and a steadfast hope. The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program—known as SNAP—has been severely disrupted by the ongoing federal government shutdown, and the effects are being felt right here in our own community. Just today I spoke to someone using the blue cabinet for the first time as a recipient of assistance instead of a provider of assistance.

The United States Department of Agriculture has confirmed that, because of the funding lapse, benefits for November 2025 will be significantly reduced—about half of the normal amount for most recipients. For a household of four, that means roughly \$497 instead of roughly \$975 for the month.

These are not distant numbers. These are our neighbors.
These are the people Jesus loved—and calls us to love.

Our blue box outside the church has already seen a high volume of activity. It is a living reminder that hunger is present among us—but so too is generosity. We are a people called to act, and I trust that together we will rise to meet this challenge in Christ's name.

If you personally rely on SNAP benefits and are concerned about your ability to afford food this month, please reach out confidentially to me at pastor@stlukeithaca.org. Through the wonderful collaboration of local faith leaders, we are working together to ensure that no one goes hungry during this difficult time.

For those who are able, I invite you—indeed, I urge you—to act in the following ways immediately:

1. Make a donation to St. Luke Lutheran Church via [Tithe.ly](https://tithely.com). Scroll down to "Give" and then when in the app from the drop-down menu, select "Food Ministries at St. Luke." Every dollar designated for this cause will go directly toward local hunger relief and our outreach efforts.
2. [Support Ithaca Kitchen Cupboard](#) a vital community partner working daily to feed our neighbors. You may volunteer your time to help with food distribution. Please reach out to our Social Ministry team or the office for more information.
3. Bring food to fill our red and blue wagons at the church. Each time you shop, pick up extra non-perishables—beans, rice, canned vegetables, pasta, soup—and bring them to St. Luke. Let's fill those wagons to overflowing.
4. Consider turning a Little Free Library into a mini-pantry. Along with books, you can stock it with non-perishable foods, toiletries, and essentials. Small acts multiply hope.

So by the grace of God I pray we respond boldly. Let's see the red and blue wagons overflow. Let the blue box outside our church stand as a beacon of hope. Let our generosity be as fierce as our faith.

And always remember this truth—our truth—God loves you. And because God loves you, we love one another, and we love our neighbors.

With faith, hope, and unwavering compassion,
Pr. Jason Churchill

Announcements



Campus Ministry News

First Friday Spaghetti Dinner



Students, Campus Ministry invites you to our monthly FREE Spaghetti Supper this Friday, November 7th at 6 pm in the Fellowship Hall (basement). Come hungry and bring a friend.

Faith in Action!

Our "Global and Local Neighbors" fundraiser has enabled us to deliver 40 Personal Care Kits and 15 Quilts to the Lutheran World Relief Warehouse in New Windsor, MD. In addition, we were able to purchase and deliver a box full of personal care items to the Tompkin's County Dept. of Social Services for distribution to their homeless clients. Thank you to all who helped in our outreach to our global and local neighbors!



November items for the Ithaca Kitchen Cupboard (place in the RED WAGON in the church narthex): Crackers and Fruit Juice (no sugar added, please).

Compline (nightsong)

Join us for a quiet and reflective service of prayer and song.
8:00 - 8:30 PM November 6 at Immaculate Conception Church
8:00 - 8:30 PM November at Forest Home Church



Become a Godly Play Feast Provider - it's easy!

Each Sunday of Church School, we follow a Godly Play instructional format. We gather the children, then enter the classroom for a lesson and response time, followed by "work" time, and then we finish with a "feast" for all to enjoy together! The "feast" is an important time for fellowship amongst the children and it indirectly prepares them for Holy Communion. [You can find more info here](#) & reach out to amandakemp18@gmail.com for details!

****AIM FOR ~10 PORTIONS, CAN BE DROPPED OFF BEFORE SERVICE!****

BUTTERFLY SNACK BAGS

Supplies: snack/ziploc bags, pipe cleaners or clothespins

Ingredient ideas: grapes, blueberries, grape tomatoes, baby carrots, olives, cheese cubes, goldfish, graham snacks, mini filled crackers, mini pretzels, cereal, etc.



PIZZA STICKS/ROLLS

Supplies: snack/ziploc bags

Ingredient ideas: canned dough, string cheese, pepperonis, black olives, sweet peppers, marinara



SANDWICHES

Supplies: snack/ziploc bags, skewers

Ingredient ideas: bread or wraps, turkey, ham, cheese, can supplement with fruit/veggies (apple slices, strawberries, baby carrots, sweet peppers, mini cucumbers, etc.) or classic PB&J and add cheese stick/cubes or veggies





St. Luke
Lutheran Church

ADVENT BOOK CLUB

with Pr. Jason Churchill

The First Christmas

BY MARCUS BORG AND
JOHN DOMINIC CROSSAN

Thursdays at 6:30pm
December 4, 11, and 18th
On Zoom





Stewardship Bible Study

November 9, 2025 – “Sabbath”

Reading: Mark 2:27

Question: How do you practice the Sabbath?

Think about the question in terms of your own experience. What does the Sabbath mean to you? Where is God in that sabbath practice? How is God honored? How do you find rest from your labors? Is there a healthy balance of rest, praise, necessity and (*your practices*) or are there things that need to change?

Prayer: Lord, grant me balance in my days and rest when needed. Let my life be one of faithful praise. In Christ, Amen

October Treasurer's Report

- October income was \$24,494, or 82% of the budget plan of \$29,911. Regular offering for the month was ~\$20K, or about \$7k lower than our monthly budget plan.
- YTD income is \$261,887, or 88% of the budget plan.
- October expenses were \$34,089, or 114% of the budget plan of \$29,911.
- YTD expenses are \$290,489, or 97% of the budget plan.
- YTD we are running a deficit of \$28,602.
- Our October month end balance in Tompkins Bank checking was \$26,792, down from \$42,086 at the end of September.

- At the end of October our Morgan Stanley investment values:
Endowment (designated) @ \$1,806,060, up from \$1,791,942 at the end of September.
Reserve (unallocated) @ \$261,198, down from \$264,273 at the end of September.

We pray together for:

... Kathy, Brenda, Linda, Becky, Ernie, Carl, and Jenna. We pray for Christine Lindemann and her family as they mourn the passing of her father, Eckhart. We pray for the people of Jamaica and all the Caribbean who have lost loved ones and homes due to the recent hurricane. Pray for Jennifer and family.

Upcoming commemorations of saints, renewers of society, and other festivals can be [found here](#). Prayers are added weekly to our list and will remain for three weeks. If you wish to extend the name of the person for whom we are praying please inform the office. To add someone to the prayer list please [email the Communications Manager](#).

Calendar

Friday, November 7

10:00 am Tea and Tarot
6:00 pm First Friday Spaghetti Dinner

Sunday, November 9

10:00 am Holy Communion
11:45 am Godly Play Children's Church

Tuesday, November 11

Main office closed for Veterans Day but Bible Study will still meet.

12:15 pm Bring Your Own Lunch Bible Study

Wednesday, November 12

10:00 am Staff Meeting
1:00 pm Collegetown Community Collective

Thursday, November 13

1:00 pm CCC Events Committee
8:00 pm Compline at Forest Home Church

Friday, November 14

10:30 am. Tea and Tarot

St. Luke Office is generally open: Mon. 1 pm-5 pm, Tues. 9:30 am-1 pm,
Wed. 8am-4pm,
Thur. 9:30 am-5pm, Fri. 9:30 am-1pm

Download Our Church App!

Download our St. Luke Lutheran church app for free.

Download now



Sunday 10:00 am Service of Holy Communion

St. Luke is a [Reconciling in Christ Congregation](#) of the [ELCA](#). As a Reconciling in Christ Congregation, the people of St. Luke Lutheran Church are called by God to be a community of Christians, a part of the body of Christ. Because we believe we are one in God's eyes, we welcome the mix of ages, races, gender identities, physical and mental capabilities, and sexual orientations with which God's children are blessed. Everyone is invited to share in God's grace. We rejoice in the knowledge that nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus--not our wealth, nor our poverty, nor our nationality, nor our political convictions, nor whom we love, nor anything else in all creation. We are called to follow God's mission of reconciliation and justice with all humanity, and we celebrate our journey of discipleship with a special appreciation for the privileged responsibility of our campus related ministry.

Worship

Website

Give