

Gratitude Continues *through* Generosity

St. Luke Lutheran Church and Lutheran Campus Ministry

A Devotional written by the church for the church



Dear St. Luke,

Thank you for your participation in creating this devotional booklet. This will stand as a testament to those things we are thankful for here at St. Luke. As you will see there is both overlap and great uniqueness in what it is we are thankful for.

The way in which this booklet is designed to function is to allow the reader to take in those things their fellow churchgoers are thankful for – to ponder those things alongside a passage from scripture and then a moment of prayer to close out each section. You can read this in one sitting, you can read this as a daily or weekly devotion, but what is most important is that you use this to help awaken your sense of gratitude and thankfulness.

It is not a shrouded secret that this booklet arrives in time for the autumn season of harvest and thanksgiving. This is part of our ongoing effort to look at the stewardship of our lives and the many places it is manifested in our spiritual journey. We know that it hits financially this time every year as we look towards Commitment Sunday (November 26, 2023), but we would like to also be cognizant of the other places stewardship plays out. Stewardship of time. Stewardship of place. Stewardship of self. Stewardship of others.

At the end of this booklet is a pledge card for the 2024 annual giving campaign at St. Luke. It will be used to help the new finance team and Council plan the budget and prepare for any shortfalls or inconsistencies with our mission vs our income. Please prayerfully consider how you might be part of the annual campaign here at St. Luke, it is a commitment, but it is not a contract. Sometimes we can give more than we expected and other times we cannot meet the goal we set for ourselves. That is OK. This is just a guide for the leadership of our church to plan out as robust of a year as possible – from new staffing possibilities to programming for Campus Ministry and faith formation, to our new Sunday School and children/youth programs.

In the letter dated September 7, 2023, the Stewardship team wrote

“We are grateful for you and the way in which you have been part of the returning life at St. Luke Lutheran Church. It is not to say that we went anywhere, but COVID drove us into a quieter way of living at 109 Oak Avenue. However, as we emerge into this new tomorrow, life is living itself joyfully out loud in Collegetown – and St. Luke is part of that joyful noise.

Make a joyful noise to the Lord (Psalm 100:1).

We are grateful for the joyful noise of St. Luke. We are grateful for you!”

Indeed, Gratitude Continues *through* Generosity.

So let me begin, I am thankful for my church because we are awakening to a new season, together. I am thankful because each of you have made this transition for Craig and me one of meaningful holiness. I am truly thankful for you.

Pr. Jason

A special thank you to the Stewardship team, Laura Gathagan and Lauren Mossotti-Kline.
and our Administrative Manager, Erik Kibelsbeck

The Nature of St. Luke

Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore, love is the fulfilling of the law.

Romans 13:10

Scripture: Ephesians 4:32

Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ has forgiven you.

I am thankful for my church because:

The people in it are thoughtful, kind, and welcoming.

Sophie Sparrow

Prayer:

Almighty God, by the love of Jesus Christ you draw people to yourself and welcome them into the household of faith. May we show your joy by embracing new faces as we bear your creative and redeeming word to all the world. Keep us close together in your Spirit, in the breaking of bread and the prayers, and in service to others, following the example of Jesus Christ, our servant and Lord. Amen.

(Lutheran Book of Worship)

Scripture: Matthew 25:35-40

³⁵for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, ³⁶I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.’ ³⁷Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food or thirsty and gave you something to drink?’ ³⁸And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you or naked and gave you clothing?’ ³⁹And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?’ ⁴⁰And the king will answer them, ‘Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did it to me.’

I am thankful for my church because:

Of the opportunity to serve; to pray and worship God individually and as a community of faith, and the opportunity to love our neighbor, here, on campus, in Ithaca, and globally embrace all.

Suzanne Snedeker

Prayer:

God, our creator, by your holy prophet Jeremiah you taught your ancient people to seek the welfare of the cities in which they lived. We commend our neighborhood to your care, that it might be kept free from social strife and decay. Give us strength of purpose and concern for others, that we may create here a community of justice and peace where your will may be done; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

(Evangelical Lutheran Worship)

Scripture: 1 John 1:6-7

⁶ If we claim, "We have fellowship with him," and live in the darkness, we are lying and do not act truthfully. ⁷ But if we live in the light in the same way as he is in the light, we have fellowship with each other, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, cleanses us from every sin.

I am thankful for my church because:

Of the fellowship and welcoming nature of the congregation

Anonymous

Prayer:

What a fellowship, what a joy divine,
 leaning on the everlasting arms;
 what a blessedness, what a peace is mine,
 leaning on the everlasting arms.

*(ELW 774 What a Fellowship, What a Joy Divine
Leaning on the Everlasting Arms Text: Elisha A. Hoffman,
1839-1929)*

Scripture: Romans 8:38-39

³⁸ For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, ³⁹ nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

I am thankful for my church because:

Of the amazing church family I have where age, gender, color, ability, nor sexual orientation matter.
God loves us all!

Beverly Dodici

Prayer:

Loving God, the time is now, the kingdom of God is here, and you call us together as your people. Open our ears that we may hear your call. Open our hands that we may give them to your service. Open our hearts that we may love all whom you create. Strengthen us by your Spirit that we may serve your world in the grace of Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

(Resources for Reconciling In Christ (RIC) Sunday by ReconcilingWorks)

Children and Youth

² Then he called a little child over to sit among the disciples, ³ and said, “I assure you that if you don’t turn your lives around and become like this little child, you will definitely not enter the kingdom of heaven. ⁴ Those who humble themselves like this little child will be the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

Matthew 18:2-4

Scripture: Matthew 19:14

but Jesus said, "Let the children come to me, and do not stop them, for it is to such as these that the kingdom of heaven belongs."

I am thankful for my church because:

Of the Playground.

Anonymous

Prayer:

Almighty God, you have blessed us with the joy and care of children. As we bring them up, give us calm strength and patient wisdom that we may teach them to love whatever is just and true and good, following the example of our Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

(Lutheran Book of Worship)

Scripture: Mark 10:15-16

I tell you the truth, 'Anyone who doesn't receive the Kingdom of God like a child will never enter it.' Then he took the children in his arms and placed his hands on their heads and blessed them.

I am thankful for my church because:

It has been such an important part of my children's lives as they've grown-up in our St. Luke family.

Laura Gathagan

Prayer:

We pray for schools and communities navigating new ways of learning.

We pray for nurses and all health care workers.

We pray for the changing seasons and God's beautiful creation.

We give thanks for books, libraries and the gift of learning.

We give thanks for songs and hymns that teach faith.

We give thanks for connecting with friends through phone calls, visits and letters.

Lord in your mercy, hear our prayers. Amen.

(The Rev. Kimberly Knowle-Zeller; Living Lutheran)

Service

³⁴ I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. ³⁵ By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”

John 13:34-35

Scripture: 1 Thessalonians 5:11

Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.

I am thankful for my church because:

Of all the things I get to do like lighting candles, doing
offering, welcoming people, and helping with coffee hour and the kids.

Emma Dodici

Prayer:

Almighty God, grant that we, who have been redeemed from the old life of sin by our baptism into the death and resurrection of your Son Jesus Christ, may be renewed in your Holy Spirit to live in righteousness and true holiness; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

(Lutheran Book of Worship)

Scripture: Amos 9:14

And I will bring my people Israel back from exile. "They will rebuild the ruined cities and live in them. They will plant vineyards and drink their wine; they will make gardens and eat their fruit.

I am thankful for my church because:

Of the numerous blessings God has bestowed on us and the St. Luke community.

We are particularly grateful for the return of in-person worship following the pandemic. We are grateful for pastor Jason's leadership and enthusiasm, which will result in our living the Gospel's message more fully, both individually and collectively.

We are grateful for the music provided throughout the pandemic and now during every service. Erik and the choir provide inspiration for us all, for which we are most grateful.

Anonymous

Prayer:

Thankful hearts and voices raise;

tell ev'ryone what God has done.

Let all who seek the Lord rejoice
and bear Christ's holy name.

Send us with your promises, O God,
and lead us forth in joy
with shouts of thanksgiving. Alleluia.

(ELW 206 Thankful Hearts and Voices Raise Text: John W. Arthur, 1922-1980 Text © 1978, 1995 Augsburg Fortress.)

Scripture: Amos 9:14

And I will bring my people Israel back from exile. “They will rebuild the ruined cities and live in them. They will plant vineyards and drink their wine; they will make gardens and eat their fruit.

I am thankful for my church because:

Of our pastor. He is creative, open to people, and there to help people. He inspires us to be active in our church and to help others as needed.

Diane Conneman

Prayer:

Holy God, we praise you for calling diverse people into the church’s ministry of word and sacrament. Uphold all pastors with your strong and loving arms. Empower our ministers to serve your people with the word of scripture, the water of life, and the meal of grace. Equip them with both beloved traditions and fresh ideas; grant them joy in their tasks; and renew them daily by the Spirit of Jesus Christ, the Word among us, now and forever. Amen.

(All Creation Sings)

Music

¹ Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth.

² Serve the Lord with gladness;
come into his presence with singing.

³ Know that the Lord is God.

It is he who made us, and we are his;
we are his people and the sheep of his pasture.

⁴ Enter his gates with thanksgiving
and his courts with praise.

Give thanks to him; bless his name.

⁵ For the Lord is good;
his steadfast love endures forever
and his faithfulness to all generations.

Psalms 100

Scripture: Amos 95:1-3

O come, let us sing to the Lord;

let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation!

² *Let us come into his presence with thanksgiving;*

let us make a joyful noise to him with songs of praise!

³ *For the Lord is a great God*

and a great King above all gods.

I am thankful for my church because:

It is a place to sing God's praises and learn about His plans for the world.

Susan Wohlheater

Prayer:

With each new day, help us, Lord, to make our lives a hymn of constant praise to you. Teach us that the sweetest song is stirred when our hands are open in generosity and our feet are quick to bring the good news of your reconciling love to rich and poor alike. Amen.

(Common Prayer, A Liturgy for Ordinary Radicals)

Scripture: Psalm 67:7

May God continue to bless us; let all the ends of the earth revere him.

I am thankful for my church because:

Being able to sing in the choir is a blessing.

Anonymous

Prayer:

God of majesty, whom Saints and angels delight to worship in heaven:

be with your servants who make art and music for your people,

that with joy we on earth may glimpse your beauty,

and bring us to the fulfillment of that hope of perfection

which will be ours as we stand before your unveiled glory.

We pray this in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord period. Amen.

(Book of Common Worship – Daily Prayer Edition Presbyterian Church USA)

Scripture: Psalm 100:1

Make a joyful noise to the Lord.

I am thankful for my church because:

It brought music back into my life.

Sophie Sparrow

Prayer:

Lord, grant that in my earthly pilgrimage I may ever be supported by the love and prayer of your beloved community and may know myself to be surrounded by their witness to your power and mercy. Amen

(Common Prayer, A Liturgy for Ordinary Radicals)

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 15:57

But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

I am thankful for my church because:

We have excellent pastoral and musical leadership.

Dave Wohlheater

Prayer:

Almighty and everlasting God, from whom comes every good and perfect gift: send down upon our bishops, and other clergy, and upon the congregations committed to their care, the healthful Spirit of your grace; and that they may truly please you, pour upon them the continual dew of your blessing. Grant this, O Lord, for the honor of our Advocate and Mediator, Jesus Christ. Amen

(The Book of Common Prayer of The Episcopal Church)

Nourishing

Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I fear no evil for you are with me; your rod and your staff,
they comfort me.

Psalms 23:4

Scripture: Matthew 11:28

Come to me, all you who are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest.

I am thankful for my church because:

Saint Luke provides a welcoming place to slow down and reflect inward amid the crazy pace of life. Our spiritual journey is ever changing and the lessons we learned through the gospel and sermons have an impact on our thoughts and actions. I also hold gratitude for pastor Jason and his refreshing energy and for Erik's devotion to the musical life of Saint Luke.

Anonymous

Prayer:

O Lord, support us all the day long of this troubled life, until the shadows lengthen and the evening comes and the busy world is hushed, the fever of life is over, and our work is done. Then, in your mercy, grant us a safe lodging, and a holy rest, and peace at the last, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

(Evangelical Lutheran Worship (ELW) Compline Prayer)

Scripture: John 6:35

Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty."

I am thankful for my church because:

It nourishes my faith every week – the congregation is my second family.

Louise McGee

Prayer:

There is a balm in Gilead
to make the wounded whole.

There is a balm in Gilead
to heal the sinsick soul.

1. Sometimes I feel discouraged,
and think my work's in vain,
but then the Holy Spirit
revives my soul again.

(Refrain)

2. Don't ever feel discouraged,
for Jesus is your friend,
who, if you ask for knowledge,
will never fail to lend.

(Refrain)

3. If you cannot preach like Peter,
if you cannot pray like Paul,
you can tell the love of Jesus,
who died to save us all. (*ELW 614 There Is a Balm in Gilead Text: African American spiritual*)

Scripture: James 3:13

Who is wise and knowledgeable among you? Show by your good life that your works are done with gentleness born of wisdom.

I am thankful for my church because:

Of worship, learning, fellowship.

Anonymous

Prayer:

O Wisdom on High, by you the meek are guided in judgement, and light rises up in darkness for the godly. Grant us, in all doubts and uncertainties, the grace to ask what you would have us do, that we may be saved from all false choices, and that in your light we may see light, and in your straight path may not stumble; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

(The United Methodist Book of Worship)

[Insert commitment card here]

St. Luke Lutheran Church and Lutheran Campus Ministry
109 Oak Ave.
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The Rev. Jason R. Churchill
Senior Pastor and Campus Chaplain

Erik Kibelsbeck
Administrative Manager and Music Director

stlukeithaca.org

Worship on Sundays with Holy Communion at 10:00 am
Bible Study Tuesdays 12:15 pm – 1:15 pm

