

# TIDINGS

*a newsletter of St. Luke's Episcopal Church & School*

*In this issue:*

**Holiday Calendar**

**Realm Connect App**

**Security Upgrades**

**Advent Formation**

## ADVENT & CHRISTMAS

*Security on the Hilltop*  
Letter from the Rector  
Page 3

Diocesan Council  
Page 4

From the Associate Rector  
Page 5

Children & Family  
Ministry  
Page 7

*Lookback*  
Community Pet Blessing  
Page 10

*Lookback*  
St. Luke's LIVE!  
Page 11

Campus Landscape  
Improvements  
Page 12

Advent & Christmas  
Calendar  
Page 15

Music  
Page 16

Youth Ministry  
Page 18

Mustard Seed  
Page 24

Qualified Charitable Donations  
& Finance Report  
Page 26



Page 22

# SECURITY ON THE HILLTOP

*Letter from the Rector*

Dear Friends,

Church and School leadership have paid a lot of attention to security at St. Luke's in recent months. Recent efforts follow up on the important work that has been accomplished over the past few years. I'm writing to catch you up on some of the specific changes we've made to ensure that our campus is a safe setting for the ministries of St. Luke's Episcopal Church and School.

The past couple of years have seen several security-related enhancements: the School began hiring off-duty San Antonio police officers to patrol the campus during school days; the School hired a Director of Security to guide us in our security upgrades; and we have rekeyed and installed key fob access to several exterior and interior doors, to control access into the buildings and traffic flow within the buildings, in effect creating zones for the School and the Church's Mustard Seed program that can be better separated from zones where church-related activity takes place.

An additional project that has been going on the past few weeks is the modification of many of our exterior windows. Thanks to the generous contributions of several donors, including Mustard Seed families, we are currently replacing many of the windows around campus. New frames will hold new glass with bullet-resistant film, and the windows of our nursery and Mustard Seed classrooms will have bullet-resistant glass. If you haven't been to church in the past few weeks, make sure to visit

the Parlor the next time you're here; many parishioners have commented on what an attractive upgrade these new windows have provided.

We also have new procedures for people who visit St. Luke's during the school day. We are now encouraging church visitors to park on the south side of the campus and enter through the DiRad-do entrance, where they will be taken to the church offices. School visitors will park on the north side and go to the Jones Lobby of the Middle School building, where they will use their driver's license to do an instant background check before entering the building. Those steps on the south side can be a challenge, so of course we have provisions for church visitors to enter on the north side. If you haven't been on campus during school hours recently, give our office a call before you visit so we can ensure you get in and out of the church in an efficient manner.

We're also preparing for future work. At last month's St. Luke's Live, we raised enough money to be able to set aside more than \$30,000 for the next set of security enhancements. We know there's a desire to upgrade security cameras at St. Luke's, and we look forward to working with the School to implement those upgrades.

Many people have worked hard to make all these changes happen. I'm grateful to the church staff who have worked with counterparts at the School, and to the Security Task Force that the School's Board of Trustees formed in the spring. I'm grateful especially to our Junior Warden Dan Pfeil,

# DIOCESAN COUNCIL

who has thrown himself into many of these projects, using his expertise and his contacts to help with the costs of these projects and to ensure that they have gone well.

So, if you come to St. Luke's during the school day, perhaps for a committee meeting or a study group or a visit with a church staff member, there may be a few extra steps than you're not used to. I appreciate people's understanding as we have made these changes. I know that parents in the School community appreciate the Church's support of these efforts. All the church members I've talked to have been very supportive of this important work. I look forward to continuing to tend to the security of the campus, so that all who come here feel safe and secure.

If you ever have questions about security at St. Luke's, I hope you'll reach out to me.

Yours faithfully,



**The Rev. Irving Cutter, Rector**

Every year, clergy and lay delegates from every congregation in the Diocese of West Texas gather for the Diocesan Council, to elect people to various offices, approve a diocesan budget, consider resolutions, and celebrate the work of the Holy Spirit in the Diocese.

The location of Council changes from year to year, and each year one congregation (or a group of congregations) serves as the Host Congregation for Diocesan Council.

St. Luke's will be the Host Congregation for the Diocesan Council in San Marcos, February 22-24, 2024. Our church last hosted in 2000. This upcoming Council will be an important event in the life of the Diocese of West Texas: we'll celebrate the 150th anniversary of the establishment of the Diocese; we'll mark the twentieth anniversary of the Diocese's Department of World Mission; and this Council will be the first Council under the oversight of our new bishop, the Rt. Rev. Dr. David Read, who was Rector of St. Luke's from 2009-17.

The Rev. Irv Cutter was excited when parishioners David and Ana Cotton accepted his invitation to serve as Co-Chairs for Diocesan Council. As co-chairs, they have been working diligently with members of the diocesan staff and getting fellow parishioners lined up to chair various subcommittees.

You'll be hearing more about Diocesan Council as February approaches. Subcommittee chairs may approach you to help with their work. There will be many opportunities to get involved, both ahead of time and during Council itself. Please keep this important event in your prayers for the next few months!

# FROM THE ASSOCIATE RECTOR

*“What an amazing, what an impossible message the angel brought to a young girl! But Mary looked at the angel and said, ‘Be it unto me according to your word.’ And so the life of Jesus began as it would end, with the impossible. Possible things are easy to believe. The Glorious Impossibles are what bring joy to our hearts, hope to our lives, songs to our lips.”*

—*The Glorious Impossible* by Madeleine L’engle

We are now entering the season of waiting with expectant hope that God will once again choose to come down and live among us, not set apart as an applauded deity, but as one of us. The incarnate God who chose to know what it means to have desires, longings, grief, frustration, and joy. The God who comes again and again, every year, not as a strong valiant conqueror, but as a helpless infant. Our lives are lived in the impossibility of this message: God loves us as we are (human) and calls us to live like him (with divine love for all of creation). That’s the difference the incarnation makes. God believes that you, your mind, your soul, and your body, are good, and worthy of a relationship with the creator of the universe.

I wonder what impossible things your heart desires this season? I wonder what impossibilities you hold in your heart and dare not whisper out loud? I wonder what cynicism, apathy, or flippancy

is preventing you from entering the Christmas story anew this year?

I invite you into this season of purple. This season of waiting. This season of womb-like darkness, where we wait for God to be born into our lives again. I invite you to open yourselves to the impossible. I invite you to watch for the glory of God to surprise you, to wrap itself around you, and to walk with you into a future that is beyond your imagining.

## ADVENT SUNDAY SCHOOL

Join us in the Large Conference room the first three Sundays of Advent, Decemeber 3, 10, and 17 at 10:00 am, for an in depth look at the Christmas story as told in scripture.





## **THE CHOSEN**

*Wednesday nights beginning December 6 from 6-7:00 pm in the Large Conference Room and Zoom.*

Join us as we learn from and discuss the hit TV show *The Chosen*, a multi season series about the life of Jesus. We invite you to watch the episodes at home, then come ready for good conversation and discussion. *The Chosen* can be streamed for free on Amazon Prime and Peacock, and can be found on a variety of other streaming services, such as Netflix and Hulu.

Please RSVP to Reagan, to ensure we have enough printed materials ready. Plan to watch Episode 1 prior to December 6, and we look forward to seeing you there!

## **JANUARY ADULT SUNDAY 10:00 AM FORMATION**

January 7-28 we'll be taking a dive into the Gospel of Mark. Mark was the first gospel written, is the shortest, and is the gospel we'll be hearing on Sunday morning most in the year 2024. I hope this overview will help you as you hear portions of it on Sundays, hear Fr. Irv and me preach on its passages, and as you read scripture in your daily lives.

**The Rev. Reagan Gonzalez  
Associate Rector**

# CHILDREN & FAMILY MINISTRY

We have had such a wonderful Fall! Highlights include the opening of nursery rooms to accommodate all of our beloved little ones! We continue to enjoy the renovated rooms and are thrilled to have a loving and engaging nursery staff.



We also have a fantastic team of Sunday school teachers some of whom went through the three-day Godly Play core training which empowers teachers/story tellers to share the bible stories with great care and wonder. To learn about all of our Sunday school classes for ages Preschool, K-1st grade, 2nd-3rd grade, and 4th-5th grade, be sure to read the descriptions on our webpage.



We enjoyed a collaborative festival led by our school - Fall Family Fling. Grade levels along with parent leaders led carnival games, we had wonderful food by Sage Catering and enjoyed a massive inflatable obstacle course. A big shout out of thanks to Whitney Ormond and Lauren Hawa for all they did to make that event such an over-the-top rollicking success.

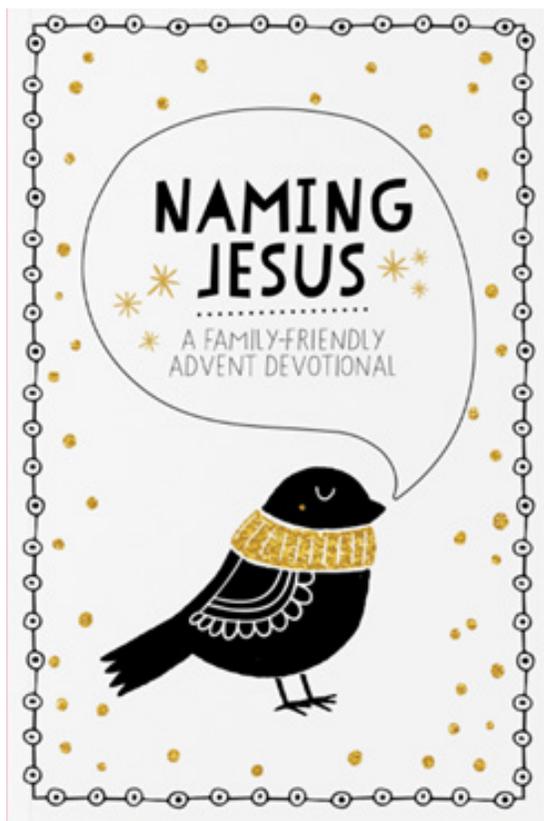
As we head into the season of Advent, we have two upcoming events that are meant to engage you and your family in meaningful ways “get ready” for the mystery that is Christmas!



[www.slecsa.org/children-and-families/](http://www.slecsa.org/children-and-families/)

## ADVENT WREATH MAKING EVENT!

On November 26, in preparation for the season of Advent, all ages are invited to come to the Parish Hall (cafeteria) for our Advent Wreath Making event at 10:00 am. Each family will gather a wreath base and supplies along with a devotional to use at home weekly. Note that your littlest ones are very welcome to join us, but the nursery remains open if you wish. There are no Sunday school classes for children up through 5th grade that hour.



*The devotional called “Naming Jesus: A Family-Friendly Advent Devotional” is all about the many names we give to Jesus, and the life-changing names he gives to us. Organized around the*

*season’s four traditional themes (Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love), “Naming Jesus” features a simple, home-based weekly Advent service for each week, including a scripture passage, reflection, and prayer. Several accessible, family-friendly practices round out each week, all designed to bring a little more meaning and mystery to your Christmas preparations and celebrations - plus a few fun “anytime” activities to do along the way.*

<https://www.saltproject.org/>

### **What can I bring?**

We will have fresh greens, wreath bases, candles, and ornaments. We are supplementing the mixed greens we ordered by bringing our own cuttings. If you are able to bring cuttings to share, please choose plants that will keep well on a wreath such as magnolia leaves, holly, boxwood, or rosemary.

To help with the festivities, let’s bring Christmas cookies to share! If you care to share a recipe, please bring a printout that we can photograph as we wish. We look forward to this event together!

## **CHRISTMAS PAGEANT 2023 THE FRIENDLY BEASTS**

We are excited that it is time to assign roles for this year’s pageant and super fun volunteer roles for adults! We seriously have a blast. Signup is first come, first serve by November 21. Please be sure to sign your child up for a role that fits their grade. Our tradition is that certain roles are played at certain grade levels, which gives children a sense of antici-

**Kristine Spilker, Director of Children & Family Ministry**

pation and deeper connection to Jesus as they play various roles over the years.

### Other important details:

- All costumes are provided!
- We have ONE rehearsal Saturday, December 16 from 9-11:00 am in the sanctuary/nave. Preparing livestream camera angles will be part of this rehearsal. Parents, please be sure to stay on or near campus since we hope to finish (especially the animal parts) sooner rather than later. We will provide breakfast tacos, water, and coffee for those of you who want to hang out in the parlor. If your child has a short speaking part (not readers), please encourage them to memorize the part before rehearsal. Angels, shepherds, and sheep do *not* need to come to rehearsal. They will be led the day of by the nursery staff and parents who volunteer.

- Our pageant is Sunday, December 17 during the 11:00 am worship service and will be livestreamed. Children need to arrive by 10:00 am for dressing and prep. Sign your child in and out upstairs in Room 202, which is our main dressing room.

If you have questions or thoughts to share, please reach out. We are excited about this year's pageant as it is always such a meaningful highlight of the Advent season!

Thanks for your participation! We definitely need volunteers for the rehearsal and the actual day of the pageant. It will be a blast! Please contact me if you have any questions or want to talk about the pageant: [kristines@slecsa.org](mailto:kristines@slecsa.org)

December 16 - Rehearsal from 9-11 am

December 17 - Dress at 10 am  
Pageant 11 am service

# St. Luke's Christmas Pageant

Role & Volunteer Signup!



*Lookback*

# COMMUNITY PET BLESSING

On October 14 we gathered on the South Lawn for our first annual Community Pet Blessing. We had a great turn out, with many folks from around the neighborhood and beyond, stopping by to have their pets blessed, enjoy tasty treats, create fun crafts, and watch the solar eclipse.

We offered pet blessing certificates, dog bandanas with the St. Luke's logo on them, pup cups, dog painting, stuffed animal adoptions for children, and welcomed several animal loving non-profit groups to educate us on their organization.

The solar eclipse provided wonderful mid-morning entertainment, and the animals varied from bunnies, to puppies, to guinea pigs, and one affectionate chicken on a leash.

Thank you to the planning team and all the volunteers who helped make this event a wonderful gift to our community.



Lookback

# ST. LUKE'S LIVE!

On a beautiful Friday evening, September 29, more than 170 came to the hilltop for St. Luke's LIVE!, our annual church fundraiser.

Co-chairs Sallie Walton and Abby Cole worked with their team of volunteers and with church staff to create a great event enjoyed by all.

In addition to supporting the church's operating budget, we highlighted the various projects related to security at St. Luke's Episcopal Church and School (see *Letter from the Rector*). We gave special focus to the School's plans to upgrade its network of security cameras, and the need for some security upgrades at the Green Door Thrift Shop.

Sources of income included admission fees, raffle ticket sales, live auction proceeds, and contributions from generous underwriters. Net proceeds were \$68,153 – the Vestry designated \$30,000 for the Operating Fund, with the remaining \$38,153 to



support security projects here on the Hilltop and the Green Door.

Many thanks to Sallie and Abby and everyone who supported this fun and successful event. Soon we'll be making plans for 2024's St. Luke's LIVE! When we have details to share, we hope you'll make plans to attend!



**The Rev. Irving Cutter, Rector**



## Campus Landscape Improvements

Since early February 2023 several self-help landscape projects have taken place:

- 8 tree stumps removed
- Winter rye grass sown
- Entire South Lawn raked for tree debris removal
- Organic surface and tree root fertilizer applied
- Plant replacements and mulch:
  - Tiered fountain at the top of the steps
  - Children's butterfly garden
  - Columbarium
  - Buzzini Garden
- St. Augustine sod layed (18 pallets):
  - 2 provided by the church
  - 6 provided by the school
  - 5 provided by parish donors
  - 5 more to come also from by parish donors
- Irrigation system from air conditioning condensate for entire South Lawn in the works; planned for spring and summer 2024.

We have benefited greatly from our own St. Luke's Church and School volunteers during Saturday mornings in April, May, September, and October.

One final workday of 2023 will be on Saturday, December 2, from 9:00 am until noon, to lay the final five pallets of St. Augustine grass to beautify our South Lawn. This will be the last of the 18 pallets (8,000 sq. ft.). All volunteers from our church and school are welcome to help and the only thing needed is a favorite pair of work gloves and desire to fellowship with our St. Luke's Church and School community.

Thank you in advance for your willingness to help.

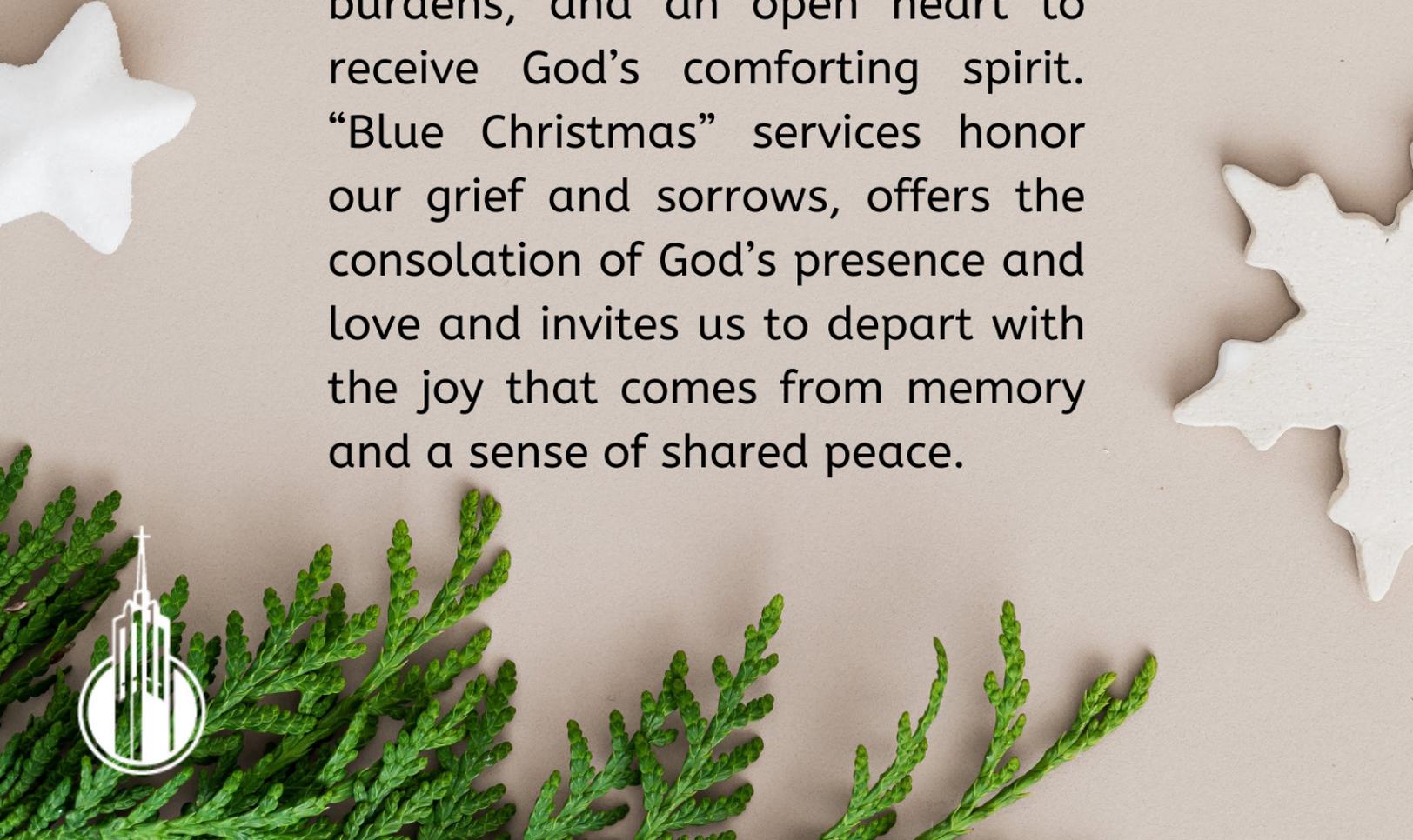


# BLUE CHRISTMAS

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 21, 5:00 PM



Join us for a "Blue Christmas" service at 5:00 pm on December 21 with The Rev. Canon Luchy Littlejohn. Bring your cares, burdens, and an open heart to receive God's comforting spirit. "Blue Christmas" services honor our grief and sorrows, offers the consolation of God's presence and love and invites us to depart with the joy that comes from memory and a sense of shared peace.





# ADVENT & CHRISTMAS AT ST. LUKE'S

Poinsettia donations begin on Sunday, November 26, through Monday, December 18, for the annual Christmas dedications. Contact Sara Spreen for more details at [saras@slecsa.org](mailto:saras@slecsa.org).

### **Sunday morning, December 24: the 4th Sunday of Advent**

- 10:00 am - One service this Sunday morning, as the Advent season comes to a close. Holy Communion with organ and hymns. (Childcare, livestreamed)

### **Sunday evening, December 24: Christmas Eve**

- 4:00 pm - Holy Communion with organ and Christmas hymns and an Offertory song by Rick Cavender. A favorite service for families with young children. (Childcare available.)
- 7:00 pm - A traditional service of Holy Communion with organ, Christmas hymns, choir, and string quartet. (Childcare, livestreamed.)
- 10:00 pm - A traditional service of Holy Communion with organ, Christmas hymns, choir, and string quartet. (No childcare.)

### **Monday, December 25: Christmas Day**

- 10:00 am - A traditional service with organ and hymns. If kids (or the young at heart) have just opened presents and want to come in PJ's, they'll be welcome to! (No childcare.)

### **Sunday, December 31: New Year's Eve**

- 10:00 am - One service this morning, as we bid farewell to 2023. Holy Communion with music led by our contemporary musicians. (Childcare, livestreamed)

# MUSIC AT ST. LUKE'S

Towards the end of summer I plan the repertoire we're singing for the entire year, then make a Music List (available in the narthex and on the website) for the Choir. It always surprises me how quickly the year moves, especially as we start rehearsing new music normally about six weeks ahead. In addition to the regular rounds we have Evensongs, feast-days, and extra services such as Diocesan Council this year. The Choir is also featured in our Concert Series and I want to draw special attention to two events:

## **Handel's *Messiah* on December 10 and the Christmas Eve Services.**

This music actually falls somewhere between concert and church music, but *Messiah* is such an iconic part of Christmas even though the music represents Jesus' whole life from birth to resurrection. This year we are doing something different. Instead of accompanying the choir with the organ in the rear gallery, we will perform it from the chancel steps at the front of the church with strings, trumpet, tympani, and continuo organ and harpsichord. We will also have our soloists:



Sherry Millican, Valerie Jeannin, Christiana Davis, Andrew Tucker and Chia-Wei Lee. This special presentation is free to all, and we sincerely hope you'll come along and bring your family/friends to celebrate with us at 3:00 pm on December 10.



On Christmas Eve the Choir will be singing sections of Vivaldi's *Gloria* during the two later services at 7:00 and 10:00 pm. We will be accompanied by the Avanti String Quartet and sing the *Gloria in Excelsis Deo* at the Offertory, and the *Et in Terra Pax* as the communion motet which reflects the sublime peace at the moment of Christ's birth--music of celebration and solemnity. The carol *In the bleak mid-winter* asks the question in regard to gifts of gold, incense and myrrh: "What can I give Him, poor as I am?" Christina Rossetti answers her own question: "I will give Him my heart."

**Russell Jackson, Director of Music**

# HELLO, PIANO!

In just the last few weeks the music program was incredibly fortunate to receive a magnificent Bechstein Grand Piano from the Atwell Family whose children attended our school a few years ago. This gorgeous piano (a 7' foot grand) is concert standard, with wonderful tone and a gorgeous satin finish case. Many church music programs have to put up with second or third rate instruments which really is a detriment to the quality of the whole, but we are privileged to have this instrument support and enhance our musical endeavors. Many thanks to Wendy and Bill Atwell.



# YOUTH MINISTRY

Winter is quickly approaching, and it is finally beginning to feel like fall weather here on the hilltop. The season of Advent is on the horizon, and with its arrival we begin our time of waiting for the arrival of the Christ child.

While we await his arrival, multiple new programs will begin that will focus on this season of waiting and further strengthen the youth connections to the community. And as we on the St. Luke's Youth team prepare to say goodbye to 2023, we can look back on the past few months and recognize the truly astounding work of the youth and recognize what has been a busy fall season for us.

From the bottom of my heart I cannot express how incredibly proud I am of the work and ministry of our youths, and how thankful I am to them and all our parishioners who help support this ministry. Fall was an incredibly busy season for us, but if anything it has strengthened the flame of ministry that the youth carry with them and I look forward to all the works and fellowship of the coming year.

## **Sunday Classes:**

The beginning of the Fall semester saw a return of Sunday evening youth group, with an updated format that saw the middle and high schoolers having their own hour while maintaining our shared meal time. Throughout the semester the middle schoolers have explored side characters and individuals from the Bible who, while being mentioned

only once or twice, have a tremendous impact on the ministry of Jesus. Later in the evenings the high school youth have come together and explored the way in which Heaven has been portrayed in popular culture with the watching and discussing the theology behind the TV show "Miracle Workers" which envisions Heaven as a company and God as the CEO.

High school youth have also welcomed a new tradition of going off campus for dinner on the first Sunday of the month as a chance to explore our neighborhood and strengthen our fellowship. Throughout both sessions we have welcomed the return of old friends and seen many new youths join this wonderful ministry.

Both middle and high school youth are wrapping up our fall offerings and for Advent both our morning and evening sessions will see new programming that will focus on the season. During our 10:00 am formation hour, the youth will be reading the wonderful book *All Creation Waits*, which invites readers to meditate on the mystery and new beginnings that Advent brings to the world.

In the evenings both sessions will be looking into the history of many of our holiday traditions such as the Christmas tree, lights, decorations, etc, and how the Christmas season has changed throughout time. These lessons will see the youth room decorated and culminate in a Christmas party on December 17 that will also see all new members adding their hand prints to the hand wall.

# MISSION:

# LAREDO



## **Wednesday Evening Classes:**

In addition to our regular Sunday morning and evening sessions, October saw the start of our new Wednesday night youth offerings with the intergenerational book study of the C.S. Lewis classic *The Screwtape Letters*. During this offering both youth and adult parishioners had the opportunity to delve into the theology of the text and engage in meaningful conversations on how Lewis' work can be used to evaluate and strengthen our own faith lives.

The Wednesday night series will take a brief break for the remainder of November, and will return on December 6 with the start of our youth caroling class for Advent. Carols can bring joy and holiday cheer to many throughout this season, but what exactly is the history of these joyous songs? Our very own Russell Jackson will lead the youth on a journey through the history and evolution of Christmas carols every Wednesday evening beginning December 6 and ending on the 20th. In addition to this class, we are looking at the evening of Friday, December 22, as an opportunity for all parishioners to go forth and spread some holiday cheer with a caroling session.

## **Mission Trip & Service:**

Truly one of the greatest themes for the youth group for 2023 has been the commitment to answer our callings from Christ to serve all those around us.

This year of service has seen the youth designate one Saturday each month as a day of service, with our inaugural Saturday seeing the youth lead the charge in placing sod on the south lawn of St. Luke's. These service Saturdays will continue into the new year, with our next service day scheduled for December 9 at the Headwaters Sanctuary at the University of Incarnate Word, which will see the youth engage in work that will help maintain this natural space for the community.

Alongside our service Saturdays, October saw multiple members of our youth group embark on the first St. Luke's mission trip in many years as we made our way to Laredo for a journey of service and discovery regarding our nations migrant situation.

Over the long weekend the youth volunteered with The Holding Institute, a local nonprofit active in Laredo since 1860 that provides food, clothing, medical care, and a place of rest for those who have recently gone through processing with immigration before they head off on the next stage of their journey. During our time with the institute the youth engaged in helping prep and distribute both meals and clothing, while also engaging with individuals and learning about their personal stories. This trip also focused on allowing the youth to learn about the various aspects of migration ministry both on the local and national levels, with presentations from both the US Border Patrol and members of Christ Church Episcopal, the local parish who hosted us during our stay.

# COFFEE HOUR HOSPITALITY

Since our return, many youths have felt inspired to continue to serve and support migrant ministries both in Laredo and here in San Antonio. To ensure that the lessons from Laredo continue, beginning in January the youth group will lead the charge in volunteering with the local nonprofit Plaza de Paz, a ministry that our Diocese co-leads that provides food and services to thousands of individuals each year. Also in January, the youth will organize several clothes drives for the Holding Institute so that we may return at a future date and continue to support this ministry.

**Bryan Gonzalez**  
**Director of Youth Ministry**

From week to week, people enjoy visiting in the Parlor after the 11:00am service over coffee and refreshments. Different people provide the refreshments each week: some bring treats from their favorite bakery, and others bring homemade treats.

Marquel McCabe and her daughter Addison have been coordinating the scheduling of Sunday morning hospitality for the past year. They are now turning the reins over to Katherine Hampsten and her son James Rodriguez. If you'd like to sign up to bring refreshments on a Sunday, please contact Katherine at [katherine.hampsten@gmail.com](mailto:katherine.hampsten@gmail.com).

It's not just individuals who provide refreshments! Sometimes a family will make it a team effort. Or if you're a member of a church group, your group might consider hosting on a Sunday. Katherine and James would love to hear from you.

Many thanks to the McCabes for your leadership over the past year! And thanks to Katherine and James for taking on this role going forward!

## SLEC YOUTH GROUP

# VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Interested in helping support this amazing ministry?

Lend whatever talents you have, all are welcome at St. Luke's Youth Group!

- FORMATION HOUR & EVENING SESSION TEACHERS/SECOND ADULTS
- PROVIDE/ORGANIZE MEALS FOR SUNDAY EVENINGS
- CHAPERONES FOR FELLOWSHIP EVENTS & SERVICE DAYS

For More Information Contact:

Bryan Gonzalez  
[bryang@slecaa.org](mailto:bryang@slecaa.org)  
(210)687-3314



**GREEN DOOR  
BLACK FRIDAY  
Giveaway**

**Any Customer Who Spends \$75 or More\* will be Entered to Win a \$75 Green Door Gift Card!**

Qualifying Customers Must Provide Name, Email, Phone Number & Instagram Handle (if applicable)

WINNER CHOSEN & CONTACTED ON TUESDAY, 11/21/23 AFTER STORE CLOSING AT 1PM

\*Minimum \$75 Subtotal Before Tax  
\*Purchase Dates from 10/31-11/21/23



St. Luke's Church is migrating its membership database to Realm, a new product by ACS, the company we've long used for our administrative record-keeping. Realm primarily serves the administrative needs of our staff, but it also offers some exciting opportunities to support how members are involved at St. Luke's.

The centerpiece of Realm is the mobile app Realm Connect, a mobile app available for iPhone and Android devices. Once you've set up your profile in Realm and downloaded the app to your mobile device, you'll have access to all sorts of features, including:

- Registering for events
- Access to an online church directory
- Church news feeds
- Access to the church calendar
- Viewing your giving history
- Receiving notifications from the church

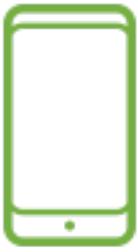
### **HOW TO PARTICIPATE: GET THE MOBILE APP**

Download the app for iPhone and Android devices. Use it to communicate with your groups, RSVP to events, manage your giving, update profile information, and more. It makes it easier for us to connect throughout the week and know what's happening.

Use this QR code to download the app:



**The Rev. Irving Cutter, Rector**



## UPDATE YOUR PROFILE

Everyone in our church gets a unique profile. Your profile contains everything you want people in our church to know about you. Your profile also enables you to join a small group, RSVP to events, track your giving, update your contact information, change family details, set notification preferences, or replace that outdated family photo.

We will soon send an email to all church members for whom we have an email address. That email will include your invitation to set up your

Realm profile. Even if you don't plan to use the mobile app, we hope you'll set up your profile! If you don't see an email from the church by early December (check your spam and junk folders!), please contact the church and we'll figure out how to get you an invitation.

We'll share more information soon as we roll out Realm to St. Luke's Church! The staff is excited about the possibilities, and we hope you will be too.

## YOUR INFORMATION IS YOUR INFORMATION.

1. You have complete control over who can see your contact and personal information.
2. Contact information is never public or searchable on the Internet. Any information you elect to make visible to your church family is always protected behind a login.
3. Authorized staff will always have access to your profile information.
4. You and certain authorized staff may update your profile information. In some cases, your group leader may update your contact information if you have made it visible to group leaders.
5. For safety reasons, sharing contact and personal information for children under 18 is limited. Parents determine whether or not to display their child's name in the church directory.
6. Children under 13 may not participate and will not be able to sign in.



## MUSTARD SEED

The Mustard Seed has been off to a great start this school year. All the children have settled into their new classrooms and schedules. Our Angel's classroom is full with twelve children, and our Shepherd's classroom currently has ten children enrolled. We have two openings in the Shepherd's classroom. All our students enjoy weekly chapel upstairs in the Children's Chapel led by Kris Spilker.

Last month, we joined St. Luke's Episcopal School students during the Alamo Heights Fire Department visit. The children were able to explore one of the fire trucks, learn about some of the equipment used by firefighters, and we watched a fun and educational puppet show about fire safety.

Both classrooms also read the book Pumpkin Jack, and they have their own Pumpkin Jack experiments in their rooms. Pumpkin Jack is a children's book that discusses the life cycle of a pumpkin, specifically a jack-o'-lantern named Jack. It has been fun to watch the different rates of decomposition between the two classrooms. Since the Angel's room receives more direct sunlight through the windows, their pumpkin is decomposing much faster than the Shepherd's room pumpkin. We are hoping that both of our pumpkins will eventually sprout and grow new pumpkins.

We are enjoying the new security upgrades to our classrooms and campus. The Mustard Seed classrooms have new, fire-rated doors with security shades for the door windows. We are anticipating the arrival of our bullet-proof windows which will hopefully be installed by the time of this publication. The new windows that have already been installed on campus are so beautiful and give a fresh new look to the spaces. We are so grateful to our families who donated money towards the purchase of these upgrades.

In late January, we will begin enrollment for the 2024-25 school year. If you are interested in enrolling your child in The Mustard Seed this school year or next, please contact me at [mustardseed@slecsa.org](mailto:mustardseed@slecsa.org) for more information.



**Jennie McLendon, Director of the Mustard Seed**

# It's not too late to pledge for 2024!



*Many thanks to everyone who has made a financial pledge for 2024 on Consecration Sunday! There's still time to make a pledge: you can pick up a pledge card at church on Sundays, make a pledge online using the QR code, or call the church at (210) 828-6425.*

*We appreciate your commitment to support the church's ministries in 2024.*



**ST. LUKE'S**  
EPISCOPAL CHURCH & SCHOOL

# QUALIFIED CHARITABLE DISTRIBUTIONS

*from Retirement Accounts*

If you are over the age of 70 ½, the government requires you to take annual distributions (withdrawals) from your retirement account—a provision known as the required minimum distribution (RMD). Up to a certain amount, these distributions may be made tax-free as long as they are directed to a qualified 501(c)(3) organization, an option known as the qualified charitable distribution (QCD).

A QCD is a direct transfer of funds from your IRA custodian, payable to a qualified charity – St. Luke’s Episcopal Church is a qualified charity! So a QCD to St. Luke’s Church can be counted toward satisfying your RMD for the year.

In addition to the benefits of giving to a charity, a QCD excludes the amount donated from taxable income, which is unlike regular withdrawals from an IRA. Keeping your taxable income lower may reduce the impact to certain tax credits and deductions, including Social Security and Medicare.

To make an IRA qualified charitable distribution to the Church that includes tithing or other funds, a donor should:

1. Instruct your IRA administrator to make the check payable to St. Luke’s Episcopal Church (TIN 74-1143124) and send the check addressed as follows:

St. Luke’s Episcopal Church  
11 St. Luke’s Lane  
San Antonio, TX 78209

2. Notify Parish Administrator Angie Hudgins by mail to the above address or by email to [angieh@slecsa.org](mailto:angieh@slecsa.org) that the distribution is being made. Include the donor’s name, mailing address, name of IRA administrator, exact amount contributed, and allocation of the donation (e.g., pledge payment or contribution to a particular fund). This will help ensure that the donation is credited properly.

A donor may contact Angie Hudgins at 210-828-6425 if there are questions or if additional information is needed. The Church will mail an acknowledgment letter or statement to the donor using the physical address on file in their church membership record.

A QCD can be an effective way to provide financial support for the church’s ministries. To learn more, please talk to your financial planner or tax advisor.

# FINANCIAL REPORT

The Finance Committee will provide a financial update with each issue of Tidings.

This report shows the revenues received and expenditures for the Year-to-Date.

If you have any questions, please contact the Treasurer, Jon Sandidge

or the Parish Administrator, Angie Hudgins at (210) 828-6425

## St. Luke's Episcopal Church Statement of Activities - Operating Funds January 1, 2023 - October 31, 2023

	Year-To-Date		Annual Budget
	Actual 10/31/23	Budget 10/31/23	
<b>Revenues</b>			
<i>Contributions</i>			
Current year pledges	\$ 756,282	\$ 811,990	\$ 990,232
Nonpledged gifts	138,405	95,833	175,000
Loose plate offerings	16,531	15,000	18,000
Prior year pledges	12,287	6,000	6,000
Special offerings	3,971	2,500	5,000
<i>Total Contributions</i>	<b>927,476</b>	931,323	1,194,232
<i>Other Revenue</i>			
Endowment Trust Distribution	177,427	177,427	177,427
Fundraising Event (S. L. Live)	73,138	50,000	50,000
Interest and Other Income	173,032	39,733	47,900
<i>Other Revenue</i>	<b>423,597</b>	267,160	275,327
<b>Total Revenues</b>	<b>1,351,073</b>	1,198,483	1,469,559
<b>Program and Operating Expense</b>			
Personnel Costs	737,146	739,456	886,621
Diocesan Apportionment	208,060	208,060	249,672
Church Ministries	90,393	81,592	94,550
Administration and Operations	81,635	69,676	83,950
Church Building and Grounds	228,355	249,574	300,049
<b>Total Program and Oprtg. Exp.</b>	<b>1,345,589</b>	1,348,358	1,614,842
<b>Income (loss) from ops.</b>	<b>\$ 5,484</b>	\$ (149,875)	\$ (145,283)

### Revenue

- Total Budget for the year is \$1.470 million - Ahead of plan
- October 2023 YTD is \$1,351,073k versus budget YTD of \$1,198,483k
- Current Year Pledges \$756,282k YTD versus budget YTD of \$811,990k
- Non-Pledged \$138,405k YTD versus budget YTD of \$95,833k

### Expenses

- Total Budget for the year is \$1.615 million
- October 2023 YTD is \$1,345,589k versus budget YTD of \$1,348,358k

### Overall Budget for 2023

- Planning for a deficit of \$145k - Ahead of plan
- Offset by Beginning Fund Balance & Employee Retention Credit
- October 2023 YTD \$5k Surplus versus budget YTD of \$150k Deficit

St. Luke's Episcopal Church  
11 St. Luke's Lane  
San Antonio, TX 78209

Nonprofit Org  
US Postage Paid  
San Antonio, TX  
Permit No. 1001



**ST. LUKE'S**  
EPISCOPAL CHURCH & SCHOOL

St. Luke's Episcopal Church  
11 St. Luke's Lane, San Antonio, TX 78209  
(210) 828-6425 | [www.slecsa.org](http://www.slecsa.org)

**The Rev. Irv Cutter**

Rector - [rector@slecsa.org](mailto:rector@slecsa.org)

**The Rev. Reagan Gonzalez**

Associate Rector - [reangang@slecsa.org](mailto:reangang@slecsa.org)

**Angie Hudgins**

Parish Administrator - [angieh@slecsa.org](mailto:angieh@slecsa.org)

**Sara Spreen**

Ministry Support Associate - [saras@slecsa.org](mailto:saras@slecsa.org)

**Russell Jackson**

Music Director & Organist - [russellj@slecsa.org](mailto:russellj@slecsa.org)

**Amy Foster**

Finance Secretary - [amyf@slecsa.org](mailto:amyf@slecsa.org)

**Jennie McLendon**

Mustard Seed Director - [mustardseed@slecsa.org](mailto:mustardseed@slecsa.org)

**Bryan Gonzalez**

Director of Youth Ministries - [bryang@slecsa.org](mailto:bryang@slecsa.org)

**Kris Spilker**

Director of Children & Family Ministries - [kristines@slecsa.org](mailto:kristines@slecsa.org)

**Paula Guajardo**

Nursery Director - [nursery@slecsa.org](mailto:nursery@slecsa.org)

**Victor Eichhorn**

Director of Communications - [victore@slecsa.org](mailto:victore@slecsa.org)

**Gracie Gonzalez**

Lead Sexton - [gracieg@slecsa.org](mailto:gracieg@slecsa.org)

**Gregory Wingerter**

Facilities Manager - [gregoryw@slecsa.org](mailto:gregoryw@slecsa.org)