

St. Luke the Physician Episcopal Church

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VISION STATEMENT

WE SEE ALL PEOPLE IN RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD, AND THROUGH GOD, WITH EACH OTHER.

December 2008

Advent and Christmas at St. Luke * Love is Born

Dear Friends...

Sunday November 30 First Sunday of Advent. Make an Advent wreath after the service. Coffee Hour Forum on Diocesan Convention.

Sunday December 7 Advent Lessons and Carols. Greening the church and children's Advent crafts after the service.

Sunday December 14 Third Sunday of Advent. Greening the church and making English Christingles after the service.

Sunday December 21 Family Worship (not the 4th Sunday). Greening the church and children's crafts after the service.

Wednesday December 24 5:00 p.m. Christmas Eve service with carols and Come-as-You-Are pageant.

Thursday December 25 9:00 a.m. Christmas Day Holy Eucharist

We are approaching the holiest-and busiest-time of the year: Advent. I love contrast and paradox, and this week I can feel both the hope and beauty of this sacred time and the anxiety of mounting tasks and tensions. I'm holding these conflicting realities within me and I'm wondering what Mary must have felt like, carrying the child who was both fully God and fully human at the same time.

And while I love the contrast of sacred and busy, that doesn't mean I don't try to spend more time on the sacred side of things and less on the busy side! This year we are trying something new in our family: we're giving a cow for Christmas. And we're hoping that, through this gift, we'll help someone we don't know (and many people we do) experience Christmas differently this year. And if it makes our Advent a little slower, a little more sacred, it will be holly on top of the Christmas pudding.

Gift giving can be a touchy subject. Some people like to do it, some don't. Some people are, frankly, better at it than others. Some folks just have a knack for picking out gifts that are relevant and precious to the recipient. Some of us (and this is definitely the group I'm in) feel completely lost when it comes to choosing a gift for someone else. And the past few years, it's struck me as-well-a little off when my family hasn't been able to give very much to people in need at Christmas because we were spending all our money on gifts that we weren't even sure the people receiving them would like.

So this year we're taking the guesswork out of gift giving. The gift we are giving will let our family and friends know we love them, and it will actually help sustain life in another part of the world. That's a far better gift than a new pair of socks.

Not that there's anything wrong with socks. Or giving gifts. Some year we may decide that we don't need any gifts at all. This is not that year. The cow is not replacing all the gifts we would give at Christmas, but many of them. We'll still exchange a gift or two in our immediate family, with a few other people. But when we give these gifts, we'll try to make them relational. Like the afternoon baking Christmas cookies that I'll spend with my 11 year old cousin, or the train ride we'll take with my dad.

In Advent, Christians look forward with hope to the coming reign of Christ. And we look to a world that has more of the kingdom of heaven in it than the world we live in now. This Advent, I want to do something to bring that world a little closer. And, hopefully, doing that will bring some stillness into a sacred season.

A Happy Advent to all of you,

Rev. Jennifer

Come-as-You-Are Christmas Pageant

Please let your families and friends know: any young person who wants to be in the Christmas Eve pageant can have a part and a costume. We'll walk through the story of Jesus' birth in the Christmas Eve service at St. Luke's, complete with Christmas carols and lessons. Children who would like to be in the pageant are asked to arrive at 4:45 on Christmas Eve to pick up costumes.

FROM THE LABYRINTH LOGBOOK.....



Since our Labyrinth Open House, with the introduction of our new kiosk, we have seen evidence of a steady flow of “walkers” coming from the community and beyond! These guests have filled out **four** pages of our guest book already! A steady stream of prayer requests shows up each week in our comment box. We are so encouraged. This is what we prayed and planned for all these years....and it's happening! Thank you Scott Wood. This kiosk is a sentinel of hospitality for all who come to silently “*walk out*” their joys, aches, worries and prayers at all hours of the day or night.

A lively group of Pre-Election walkers braved the rain to pray, sing and walk for peace and unity in our nation. Rev. Elise and Joe Astleford even made the trip to be here.

The young people from the Diocesan Jr. High groups also used our labyrinth as part of their overnight retreat. Our facilitators reported that they shared mature and insightful reflections about their experience of walking.

As we “*prepare the way of the Lord,*” watch for a coming **Advent Walk**. Some of you may want to make the labyrinth a weekly part of this Season's preparation. It's a great antidote to the Christmas machine! *Welcome!*

Judy Bevilacqua, Chair

Human Solutions Holiday Store

Our annual Giving Tree was a huge success this year. We had 9 weeks to take over 50 tags off the tree, purchase the item and return it to the church for delivery by December 5. Your

generosity will help hundreds of families in need of holiday gifts without the resources to go shopping for such gifts. On December 9th and 10th, families will be able to shop from 9 to 4 at the Gethesemane Lutheran Church. The Holiday Store is a unique opportunity for a family member to browse through a large selection of donated, new gifts for their children. Last year, over 250 families received gifts from the Holiday Store.

If you have the resources to donate further to the store this year, please email lrimestad@humansolutions.org. If are in need of gifts from the holiday store, please call the Human Solutions Front Desk to sign up, at 503.548.0200.

Julie Wood

Altar Guild News for Advent Greening of the Church

Greening of St. Luke will be done differently this year and we are asking the congregation for their help. This will be the schedule for our greening of our church this year. All of our greening is located in the storage room down stairs in the Parish Hall.

November 30th: The green garland for our stain glass windows will go up along with the two bows on each end soon after church service is over. The Altar Guild members are asking for everyone who wants to help (which will include the children) to help us get these items out of storage.

December 7th: The Christmas tree will be put together and place it on the side of the Altar where the piano is located. Again, we are asking the congregation including the children to pitch in to put it together.

December 14th: All Christmas Wreaths along with their bows will go up. These items are located in the storage room.

December 21st: We will decorate our Christmas tree. We are asking everyone in our congregation to bring a religious ornament to be placed on our tree. We will also be putting out our poinsettias that were ordered.

As always, we thank each and every one of you for supporting our Guild here at St. Luke.

Carolyn Johnson

St. Luke Sunday School

Our new group of dedicated teachers have continued to bring new life to our Sunday School.

Having two different age groups has given us the opportunity to be more lesson appropriate for the Little Lambs and Adventure groups.

We are looking forward to being able to provide so much more for the advent season than in the past. This shows as a beacon to the health of our program. We will be doing Advent Candles, shell angels, and blessing chains with the congregation. The Sunday School will once again be sponsoring the Prayer Tree in the fellowship hall. We got a wonderful response to this last year. We also noticed that other groups that use St. Luke shared in the use of the tree.

Our family services have been such a great hit with the kids and the congregation. Our family service will be on the 3rd Sunday, the 21st of December, which Rev. Jennifer has chosen to share Advent with the children. The best news is that we will be once again be celebrating Christmas Eve with a Christmas Pageant.

Come one and all. All the children will have a part. There will be no practices. Just show up and you will be part of the show.

May the Lord Bless and Keep all the children of the World this Advent Season.

Remember to be like Barnabas.

Sandy Stumpf

Dear friends of St. Luke,

I wanted to take this opportunity to thank you all for your love and support in these last few months. It is only when you find yourself in crisis that you realize how important your spiritual family is. You have all surrounded Chuck and me with such love. I cannot tell you how much it has meant to both of us. Even though his mind is not good, Chuck loves your visits and he almost always recognizes his visitors. Thank you so much.

I have been able to keep up with the Treasurer's duties thanks to help from many of you, and most especially to Linda Simmons who has come along side me to help carry the load by doing the deposits and helping write checks. Thank you again so much.

On the financial front, St. Luke's family has remained faithful to their commitments and we have been able to pay all of our bills - even those hefty repair bills we have been hit with this year. You are all the best and I count myself blessed to be sharing this journey with all of you.

Karla Rackleff

Check out www.saintlukesgresham.org. Our website is all new, thanks to Ian Doescher. Check back often for news, sermons, and schedules.

Family Worship at St. Luke's

We feel God calling St. Luke's to provide welcoming, authentic, spiritual community for children and families in Gresham, and we've answered this call with monthly Family Worship services. In Family Worship we worship God with ancient and new prayers. We engage the senses. We share the holy meal-the Eucharist-with each other.

What's different about family worship? To keep the service short for younger attention spans, we leave out some of the readings and traditional prayers. We use a shortened form of Holy Communion. The Prayers of the People are re-written in language that children will easily understand. The sermon is especially for children. The children are invited around the altar during communion.

How is family worship similar to our regular worship? Family worship is rooted in the liturgy of the Book of Common Prayer. We still listen to readings from scripture, hear a sermon, and celebrate communion. We are still the people of God coming together to worship.

Family worship is already advertised in our Outlook ad and on signs in front of the church and on Powell. The best way to spread the word about this new service is to share it with people you know. Healthy churches are built on relationships. If we are going to grow, we will grow through relationships. Who can you share the gift of welcoming, authentic, spiritual community with this Advent?

Please mark your calendars! Annual Meeting of St. Luke the Physician: January 18, 2009 at 10:00 a.m.

St. Luke's 12th Annual Crab Feed was held Sunday, November 2, serving 60 crab and spaghetti dinners. The crabbers pulled in 120 crabs thanks to Head Crabber Scott Wood, Jim Stumpf, Keith Long, and Jake & Jeff Givens. The land crew consisted of Julie Wood, Ted & Raynette Takamura, Jack Bevilacqua, Ann Muir and Carolyn Johnson. A big thank you to "mama" Miki Yoshida for making the spaghetti sauce. We raised approximately \$994.

Julie Wood

120th Convention Diocese of Oregon

The 120th Convention of the Diocese of Oregon was held November 6-8 at the Salem Convention Center in Salem. Those attending from St. Luke's were Rev. Jennifer as Priest in Charge, Julie Wood and Linda Simmons as Delegates, Carolyn Johnson as Alternate and Peggy Long as Parliamentarian.

The Annual Convention Address was given by Assisting Bishop Sandy Hampton, followed by the election of Diocesan Convention Officers and the passing of several resolutions. Other business included the 2009 proposed budget. Round table groups were formed in order to have an appreciative inquiry brainstorming session. This session consisted of interviewing the person sitting next to you and finding out about them personally and spiritually. Then as a group, we shared with others at the table about our interviews. As a group we all compared our similarities and ideas as to what we were looking for in a new Bishop. We were then directed to draw a picture of what all of our ideas looked like. My table drew a church with a water wheel next to it representing the flow of water and there was a garden in the front yard of the church property with a picnic table where people could go to be fed. The sun was shining in the sky and there were mountain ranges in the back ground

and trees of all kinds. This was our representation of how we felt God's presence and our hope that our next Bishop would support us.

The Oregon Diocese Nets for Life campaign had raised \$38,000 (the goal was \$60,000) so we are still working on this very worthwhile event and are encouraged to continue the support. \$38,000 buys approximately 3,166 nets and are hung over beds or mats. Most nets cover three people. The nets are treated with a insecticide that protects people from being bitten by mosquitoes at night. The insecticide will kill those mosquitoes that come in contact with it, as well as repel and reduce the number of mosquitoes that enter the house. Research has shown when nets are used by three-quarters of the people in a community, not only does the incidence of malaria infection decrease, but the actual mosquito population drops by as much as 90%.

Julie Wood, Delegate

Lectionary Groups

Read. Laugh. Pray. Think. Remember. Hope. It all happens in community.

Monday morning group 9:15 in the Birch Room
Wednesday evening group 5:30 in the Birch Room

Rev. Jennifer

Bible in a Year

If you've ever wanted to read the Bible all the way through, here's your opportunity. I'm making the commitment to read the whole Bible in 2009 and I invite you to join me. It takes about 15 minutes of reading a day. We start with Genesis and finish with Revelation. You can use any copy or translation of the Bible you like. If you're ready to read, let me know.

Rev. Jennifer

LAY EUCHARISTIC MINISTRY

Are you called to be a Lay Eucharistic Minister or Lay Eucharistic Visitor? It's not too late to join the class. All current LEMs are also invited. If you haven't already, please let me know you'll be coming.

Class on Eucharistic Theology
11:00a.m.–1:00 p.m.

Sunday January 11
Sunday January 25

Environmental Stewardship

Hello again from the “Environmental Stewardship” section. Remember, we are always interested in hearing from you about suggested topics! And, we would especially like to have others place their own Environmental Stewardship articles here. The more the merrier!

PLASTIC BAG RECYCLING

O. K., we are about done talking about plastics for a while (even though there is so much more to say!). But before we move on, there are a couple more things to mention.

We all know that we can now recycle plastic bags at St. Luke's. This makes the recycling of plastic bags easy for us. Just bring your plastic bags with you anytime you are headed to church. By doing this we are also doing something good for God's earth. Since St. Luke's is considered a “commercial” entity (not residential), our garbage disposal service will pick up the plastic bags and have them recycled with our other recyclable items.

Currently our garbage disposal service picks up our recycling materials on an “as-needed” basis. But if we really get going with the recycling of our “garbage”, we can ask that it gets picked up each week. Won't that please the Lord!

One last thing: The plastic bag recycle bin is the large green receptacle in the small room by the side door across from the Nursery. Please make sure that we put only plastic bags in it. Thanks.

“THE GREEN GUIDE”: ALL PURPOSE CLEANERS

Does the troubled economy have us counting pennies? Here from “The Green Guide” is a little information about investing in all-purpose household cleaners that can handle multiple tasks. “Unless you have a compromised immune system or an illness that may make you especially vulnerable to infection from microbes and bacteria, you probably do not need a disinfectant for most household needs. Household surfaces can be adequately cleaned using hot, soapy water and a little elbow grease”.

The Green Guide tells us that although manufacturers are not required to disclose cleaning product ingredients, The Green Guide suggests that we try to avoid products containing the worst offenders, and choose those made with plant-based, instead of petroleum-based, ingredients.

While “Third Party Certification” is rare for cleaning products, products bearing either the Leaping Bunny or the Green Seal, come with additional guarantees. The Leaping Bunny label indicates products that are made by companies that follow the Corporate Standard of Compassion for Animals. This standard was developed by a coalition of animal protection groups, including The Humane Society of the U. S. Companies with this logo pledge not to conduct or commission animal testing on either their products or the ingredients used in those products.

The Green Guide tells us that to qualify for Green Seal certification, cleaning products cannot irritate skin, be corrosive to the eyes or skin or cause human illness or injury when inhaled, swallowed or absorbed through the skin. Green Seal products also cannot contain a whole slew of ingredients that other products can. They are not listed here. We will make that list available to you if you want. It should

be noted however, that the Green Seal certification guarantees that, under standard testing methods, the product performs at least as well as a conventional product.

We can be kinder to God's creatures and God's earth.

Eco-friendly or not, all cleaners should be used with basic common-sense measures. And, we should always keep cleaning products out of reach of children and pets, and store them in childproof cabinets.

The "Fact Corner"

How about more from The Green Guide?

8 WAYS TO SAVE WATER WITHOUT SPENDING A DIME

1. Turn off the water while brushing your teeth
2. Fill a milk jug with stones and place it in your toilet tank to displace water
3. Dig up an egg timer from your kitchen and use it to cut showers down to 5 minutes
4. Turn off the water while shaving
5. Fix toilet and faucet leaks immediately
6. Don't use your toilet as a trash can
7. Collect "warm up" water to irrigate your lawn and flower beds
8. Conserve energy. Water is consumed for every kilowatt-hour of power consumed

Ode to Home Cooking

The rising cost of prepared foods need not get us down. We may even decide to grow some normally "summer crops" in a particularly sunny corner of our house. We can bring more leftovers to work. We can reduce transportation

costs by purchasing food products from farmers in the region. We can reduce how much meat we eat. The return is significant. We spend less, and we're eating healthier and more responsibly. This change also pleases God by reducing malnutrition and environmental degradation in other places.

We can spend more time with family or friends, or just with God.

The Environmental Team
Mark Ebberts and Linda Simmons

