

ACTS of ST. LUKE'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

FEBRUARY 2025



Jessica Hitchcock

Beloved, Remember that You are Dust and to Dust You Shall Return.

On March 5, Ash Wednesday, I will trace the sign of the cross on your forehead with ashes from last year's Palm Sunday fronds. These words above are both beautiful and brutal as they remind us of our mortality. I am humbled and honored to be a part of this moment—to remind you that God made you from the dust and that you will return to dust and return to God when this life has ended. Just because these words are holy and solemn doesn't mean they are not also good news. I believe that since God made me with a body that is fragile and is wearing out, and God loves me, whatever happens after my body can't go on, whatever happens when this life ends, God will be there and it will be loving and safe.

We've had a few funerals at St. Luke's lately, and I've attended others, so I've got death and dying on my mind more than usual. On the way home from a funeral lately, I told my spouse that if they know I am dying and people are sitting with me, to give me regular bits of alone time; I'm a private person and there's a chance that I will want to die alone—that I'll be too uptight to die with an audience. After a funeral I attended with my in-laws, I asked them if they had any requests for their funerals, and they both requested Elvis songs—WHICH I WOULD NOT HAVE GUESSED. In a conversation with another person, they told me they very much wanted there to be a viewing before her funeral—so I made a note of that. At Lunch Bunch, we had a good conversation about THE APPLICATION PROCESS involved in donating your body to science—that this is something that has to be arranged in advance.

All this is to say, I am wondering if you have SOME of your affairs in order. Having all your affairs in order in preparation for your death is a very overwhelming proposition ... and sometimes the enormity of it keeps us from doing anything at all. This is my request for you to consider doing SOMETHING. Send me an email or fill out the funeral form on the resources page of the St. Luke's website—tell me a few favorite hymns, a story about Jesus that you like, a poem about living or dying that is meaningful to you, your favorite flower.

Another option is completing the "5 Wishes" program, which is a way to document types of medical treatment that you do or don't want, how comfortable you want to be, how you want people to treat you, etc... Pick up a copy of 5 Wishes lying around church and go through the booklet (or do it online; just do a web search for 5 Wishes). Feel free to answer the questions that are easy to answer—skip the ones that stress you out. A 5 Wishes booklet that has been half completed is way more helpful to your loved ones than a completely blank one.

I'll go ahead and state the obvious: this is easier done when it is not so ... relevant. I would not wait till SOMETHING happens to take care of any low-hanging fruit around the topic of death and dying. And

(Beloved, continued on page 4)

Editors: Tine Stone with Catherine Nellist, Deb Marks, Pat Rogers, Susie Casson, and Treva Miller

To view the ACTS online go to www.stlukesbethesda.org

PARISH

February

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	



February Special Dates

February Birthdays

Edward Len	1
Samantha Lowe	1
Sandra Swab	7
Brian Katulis	8
Justine Miller	9
Sarah Hutchins	17
Phil Taylor	20
Amy Elsbree	21
Sebastian Leal	26
Stuart Wilkinson	27

6 February	Donations drop-off
9 February	St. Luke's Ministry Celebration
11 February	Lunch Bunch
14 February	New Leaf Shelter dinner
12 February	Retired Men's Group (online)
17 February	Presidents' Day
	Office closed
	MCPS no school
20 February	Donations drop-off
25 February	On Death & Dying (online)
25-28 February	Office closed
27 February	Prayer Shawl Ministry

March

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					



March Birthdays

Ann Blandamer	4
Margie Orrick	4
Lucy D'Agostino	6
Mandisa Griffin	6
Alex Votaw	10
Clay Miller	11
Kevin Curtin	12
Logan Zimmerman	23
Julia Schneider	24
Renata Gonzalez	24
Alby Williams	27
Bridget Legates	27
Stephane Le Boudier	27

March Special Dates

4 March	Pancake Supper
5 March	Ash Wednesday
	7:30 am: Service is in person
	12 noon: Service is in person and online
6 March	Donations drop-off
11 March	Lunch Bunch
12 March	Retired Men's Group (online)
14 March	New Leaf Shelter Dinner
17-18 March	Office closed
18 March	Booklovers
31 March	MCPS no school

The ACTS is now distributed electronically using the email address that we have for you on file in the office. If you did not receive it, please update your email address at admin@stlukesbethesda.org.

If you do not see your birthday listed during the year, please contact the office.

SENIOR WARDEN

Thinking About St. Luke's



In February
I use the ACTS article
To write a haiku.

The goal is to be
Disciplined and coherent:
To get to the heart.

Hearts abound this month-
The February logo.
A symbol of love?

Michael Curry said:
If it's not about love, then,
It's not about God.

The heart of your week
Is Bishop Mariann's prompt.
I pause in reply.

Thought is required.
I don't react; I reflect,
And I seek stillness.

But seeking stillness
can make it feel elusive,
Difficult to grasp.

So, I stop reaching.
I quiet myself. Be still.
Breathe. Let go. Listen.

And I realize
That God has always been there,
Patiently waiting...

I'm looking at God
Looking at me, and smiling.
And there is the heart.

Deb

She/hers

PARISH

(*Beloved*, continued from page 1)

there is the possibility that your doing this work will inspire your loved ones to join you, or at least to talk with you about these things. Telling people what you want when you are dying or dead frees people to share similar bits of information with you!

On Tuesday, Feb 25, at 6:30 pm, I'll offer a presentation on Zoom about some things I want you to know and some lessons learned, and then we'll have some Q&A time, and some sharing of helpful information. You're welcome to eat your dinner while we talk—but I do hope that you'll take this opportunity to think about this inevitability. This is a hard topic to consider, but doing so together may make the burden a bit easier to carry. Until then, I offer you this prayer to give you hope and bring you comfort.

Jesus, our Redeemer and Brother, by your death you took away the sting of death: Grant to us your servants so to follow in faith where you have led the way, that we may at length fall asleep peacefully in you and wake up in your likeness; for your tender mercies' sake. *Amen.*

Jessica



Looking for a Key!

Parish Administrator James is unable to make copies of the Fellowship Closet key, since the blank for it simply doesn't currently exist.



This closet, in the Break Room on the lower level, was formerly known as the Bell Closet. Do you have a Bell Closet or Fellowship Closet key that you have no use for? If so, please get in touch with James (admin@stlukesbethesda.org). Finding several keys will save replacing the entire doorknob.

Tine Stone

LUNCH BUNCH

Join us on **Tuesday, February 11** at 12 noon for the next Lunch Bunch. You may wonder what Lunch Bunch is. Recently, someone described it as a “seated coffee hour.” This to me is a perfect description. There is no scheduled agenda, just conversation while seated. We bring our lunches, sit at tables, and the conversation starts. And like coffee hour there is usually an abundance of treats.



So, join us in the Reaves Room and sit and enjoy talking to fellow church members you may not ordinarily interact with. It is a very good way to find out about the various activities of the church from members who are involved and enthusiastic. We also ask participants to bring a donation for the Bethesda Help food pantry as a way we can all contribute to this important ministry.

Questions? Please contact Marie Holbrook.

Marie Holbrook

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT ~ Basic Needs Cluster ~ January through April



Background

During the mid-1960s, St. Stephen and the Incarnation Episcopal Church began providing meals after Sunday services. When non-churchgoers from the Columbia Heights-DC neighborhood who were hungry began to appear in considerable numbers, the congregation launched Loaves & Fishes, a meals ministry named for the Biblical miracle.

As Loaves & Fishes grew, other churches stepped in to help—including St. Luke's. Loaves & Fishes is now the oldest church feeding program in the DC area, and it still serves lunch every weekend and Federal holiday when other sites are closed. All who need a meal are welcome. As a feeding program, Loaves & Fishes falls squarely under the "Basic Needs" Cluster in the Community Engagement Committee's framework.

Honoring our Saints

Beginning in 1986, Fred Heiken kindly and consistently coordinated St. Luke's volunteers for Loaves & Fishes, serving thousands of fried chicken lunches on the 3rd Sunday of each month for the next 26 years. In 2012, Fred transitioned the leadership to his close friend and fellow parishioner George Huckabay. More recently, Diane Fox and Jane Battles enjoyed serving there. It was—and continues to be—a fulfilling ministry for many parishioners.



Loaves & Fishes turned 50 in 2018, and St. Luke's marked the occasion with an informational coffee hour forum while enjoying shared ministry successes—and cake!

The Pandemic and Beyond

Despite the tremendous challenges of the COVID pandemic, Loaves & Fishes persevered, distributing to-go meals and providing vaccine clinics. Come check out the timeline posted in Ludlum Hall!

While in-person meals have not resumed, partly because of ongoing renovations at St. Stephen's, the need for meals in the surrounding community continues to increase. Presently 250 to-go meals are distributed at a time—up from 100-150 meals pre-COVID—with more children and families attending the distributions.



Following an extended pandemic hiatus, in January 2024 St. Luke's resumed preparing meals to-go on 3rd Sundays. We leave from the St. Luke's parking lot around 7:30 am and generally return in time for the 10 am service; SSL hours are available for volunteers 12+.

Please reach out to Marta Montoro with any questions. Please consider being part of this hunger ministry that has served our neighbors in the District faithfully for more than 55 years. Many St. Luke's friendships have been blessed by carpooling and serving together!

Marta Montoro

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Volunteers Sought to Assist with Community Engagement Survey

The Community Engagement (CE) Ministry is seeking volunteers to help develop, tabulate, and assess a survey to help the entire parish discern the priorities for our CE efforts in the future. The last time such a parish-wide survey was conducted was in 2016. From that survey and the follow-on discussions, the CE committee was not only able to identify and respond to parishioners' top five priority issues, but was also able to address an expressed concern that parishioners found the array of CE activities to be somewhat confusing and lacking in focus. This resulted in the adoption of our three-cluster cycle — Basic Needs, Human Rights and Dignity, and Looking to Our Future. Shortly afterwards, Jessica initiated the practice of focusing on one parish-wide community engagement activity after services during each month that has a 5th Sunday.

Since 2016, the number of parishioners at St. Luke's has declined and our CE budget has flatlined, causing financial stress, since we have added some new programs to our CE budget as well. We believe that the time has come to ask all parishioners again what St. Luke's outreach priorities should be, from the perspective of both time/talent and funding.

We also recognize that many parishioners support programs that benefit members of our community but are not part of our parish CE program. We hope to learn more about personal or work ministries that you would like to see partnered with and/or supported by our CE efforts. Our assessment may also identify legacy programs that we continue to support financially, but in which parishioner involvement has waned.

We are seeking the participation of parishioners beyond the core members of the CE team. We welcome the participation of any and all parishioners, whether or not you are now or ever have been, engaged in any CE activities. We would especially welcome participation by youth members and families with children.

Join our Parish CE discernment team to make a difference. You are invited to help in any or all of the following efforts:

- **January 26 - February 8:** Survey development and distribution to parish in conjunction with the Parish Ministry Fair.
- **March-June - 8, Pentecost:** Results collected and analyzed, in conjunction with scheduling several focus groups and other parish-wide discussions and culminating in recommendations to the Vestry and parish by Pentecost (June 8, 2025).

If you are interested in participating or if you have any comments or questions, please contact Patrick Crump or Jack Orrick.

Jack Orrick and Patrick Crump



FINANCE

FINANCE REPORT DECEMBER 2024

	2024 Budget	'24 Actual Thru Dec	% of '24 Budget *
REVENUE			
Offering Plate	\$ 15,000	\$ 23,297	155%
Pledge Payments	425,000	430,491	101%
Donations for Facilities	60,000	67,468	112%
Altar Flower Donations	5,000	12,437	249%
Gifts/Grants for Operations	4,977	15,145	304%
Miscellaneous		0	
Operating Revenue	\$ 509,977	\$ 548,838	108%
EXPENSES			
Compensations	\$ 402,154	\$ 393,997	98%
Church Activities	20,000	12,016	60%
Parish Operations	102,852	111,149	108%
Community Engagement	20,000	20,000	100%
Diocesan Giving	50,000	50,000	100%
Operating Expenses	595,006	587,163	99%
Surplus/(Deficit)	(85,029)	(38,325)	
Other Funding –Investment income, reserves	85,029	38,325	
	\$ 0	\$ 0	

ENDOWMENT FUND BALANCE

\$160,052

* YTD December = 100% of the year

Financial Ministry News: We ended 2024 with a lower deficit, and we were able to honor all our commitments. As we enter a new year, St. Luke’s financial position is steady, thanks to the active oversight of St. Luke’s financial committee and ministry leaders. Thank you for supporting St. Luke’s parish in its spiritual and community mission. And Happy New Year!

If you need to be reimbursed for a purchase or need the Treasurer to pay an invoice, please send an email to the office at admin@stlukesbethesda.org and include the receipt, the amount, the purpose for the expense, and the budget account to be charged. All requests for extra money or donations by committees, individuals, or church members should have prior approval of the Vestry before solicitation.

Sandy Swab, Treasurer

CALENDAR

February 2025

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
26 8:30am Worship Service (in person only) 10:00am Worship Service (in person & online) 5:00pm <i>Outside group</i> 8:30pm <i>Youth AA</i>	27 8:00pm <i>Men's AA</i>	28 1:30pm Fitness class 5:00pm YAA	29 11:00am Staff meeting 12:00pm Noonday Prayer (online)	30 5:00pm YAA 7:30pm Choir rehearsal	31	1 8:30am YAA 6:30pm <i>Outside group</i>
2 8:30am Worship Service (in person only) 10:00am Worship Service (in person & online) 5:00pm <i>Outside group</i> 8:30pm <i>Youth AA</i>	3 8:00pm <i>Men's AA</i>	4 1:30pm Fitness class 5:00pm YAA 7:30pm <i>Outside group</i>	5 11:00am Staff meeting 12:00pm Noonday Prayer (online)	6 4:00-4:30pm Donations drop-off 5:00pm YAA 7:30pm Choir rehearsal	7	8 8:30am YAA 6:30pm <i>Outside group</i>
9 St. Luke's Ministry Celebration after both services 8:30am Worship Service (in person only) 10:00am Worship Service (in person & online) 5:00pm <i>Outside group</i> 8:30pm <i>Youth AA</i>	10 7:00pm Finance meeting 8:00pm <i>Men's AA</i>	11 12:00pm Lunch Bunch 1:30pm Fitness class 5:00pm YAA	12 10:30am Retired Men's Group (online) 11:00am Staff meeting 12:00pm Noonday Prayer (online)	13 5:00pm YAA 7:30pm Choir rehearsal	14 New Leaf Shelter Dinner	15 8:30am YAA 6:30pm <i>Outside group</i>
16 8:30am Worship Service (in person only) 10:00am Worship Service (in person & online) 5:00pm <i>Outside group</i> 8:30pm <i>Youth AA</i>	17 Presidents' Day Office closed 8:00pm <i>Men's AA</i>	18 1:30pm Fitness class 5:00pm YAA 7:00pm Vestry meeting	19 11:00am Staff meeting 12:00pm Noonday Prayer (online)	20 4:00-4:30pm Donations drop-off 5:00pm YAA 7:30pm Choir rehearsal	21	22 8:30am YAA 6:30pm <i>Outside group</i>
23 8:30am Worship Service (in person only) 10:00am Worship Service (in person & online) 5:00pm <i>Outside group</i> 8:30pm <i>Youth AA</i>	24 8:00pm <i>Men's AA</i>	25 Office closed 1:30pm Fitness class 6:30pm On Death & Dying (online)	26 Office closed 11:00am Staff meeting 12:00pm Noonday Prayer (online)	27 Office closed 1:30pm Prayer Shawl Ministry 5:00pm YAA 7:30pm Choir rehearsal	28 Office closed	1 8:30am YAA 6:30pm <i>Outside group</i>

For up-to-date Calendar information, go to stlukesbethesda.org, click on Calendar.

CALENDAR

March 2025

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
23 8:30am Worship Service (in person only) 10:00am Worship Service (in person & online) 5:00pm <i>Outside group</i> 8:30pm <i>Youth AA</i>	24 8:00pm <i>Men's AA</i>	25 Office closed 1:30pm Fitness class	26 Office closed 11:00am Staff meeting 12:00pm Noonday Prayer (online)	27 Office closed 5:00pm YAA 7:30pm Choir rehearsal	28 Office closed	1 8:30am YAA 6:30pm <i>Outside group</i>
2 8:30am Worship Service (in person only) 10:00am Worship Service (in person & online) 5:00pm <i>Outside group</i> 8:30pm <i>Youth AA</i>	3 8:00pm <i>Men's AA</i>	4 1:30pm Fitness class 5:30pm Pancake Supper 7:30pm <i>Outside group</i>	5 Ash Wednesday 7:30am Ash Wednesday service (in person only) 11:00am Staff meeting 12:00pm Ash Wednesday service (in person & online)	6 4:00-4:30pm Donations drop-off 5:00pm YAA 7:30pm Choir rehearsal	7 6:30pm <i>Outside group</i>	8 8:30am YAA 5:00pm Prayer & Conversation (in person) 6:30pm <i>Outside group</i>
9 8:30am Worship Service (in person only) 10:00am Worship Service (in person & online) 5:00pm <i>Outside group</i> 8:30pm <i>Youth AA</i>	10 7:00pm Finance meeting 8:00pm <i>Men's AA</i>	11 12:00pm Lunch Bunch 1:30pm - 2:30pm Fitness class	12 10:30am Retired Men's Group (online) 11:00am Staff meeting 12:00pm Noonday Prayer (online) 7:00pm <i>Girl Scout leaders meeting</i>	13 5:00pm YAA 7:30pm Choir rehearsal	14 New Leaf Shelter Dinner	15 8:30am YAA 5:00pm Prayer & Conversation (in person) 6:30pm <i>Outside group</i>
16 8:30am Worship Service (in person only) 10:00am Worship Service (in person & online) 5:00pm <i>Outside group</i> 8:30pm <i>Youth AA</i>	17 Office closed 8:00pm <i>Men's AA</i>	18 Office closed 1:00pm Booklovers 2:30pm Fitness class 7:00pm Vestry meeting	19 11:00am Staff meeting 12:00pm Noonday Prayer (online)	20 5:00pm YAA 7:30pm Choir rehearsal	21	22 8:30am YAA 5:00pm Prayer & Conversation (in person) 6:30pm <i>Outside group</i>
23 8:30am Worship Service (in person only) 10:00am Worship Service (in person & online) 5:00pm <i>Outside group</i> 8:30pm <i>Youth AA</i>	24 8:00pm <i>Men's AA</i>	25 1:30pm Fitness class 3:00pm <i>IPC Board meeting</i>	26 11:00am Staff meeting 12:00pm Noonday Prayer (online)	27 5:00pm YAA 7:30pm Choir rehearsal	28	29 8:30am YAA 5:00pm Prayer & Conversation (in person) 6:30pm <i>Outside group</i>
30 8:30am Worship Service (in person only) 10:00am Worship Service (in person & online) 5:00pm <i>Outside group</i> 8:30pm <i>Youth AA</i>	31 8:00pm <i>Men's AA</i>	1 1:30pm Fitness class 5:00pm YAA 7:30pm <i>Outside group</i>	2 11:00am Staff meeting 12:00pm Noonday Prayer (online)	3 5:00pm YAA 7:00pm <i>Girl Scout Leaders meeting</i> 7:30pm Choir rehearsal	4	5 8:30am YAA 5:00pm Prayer & Conversation (in person) 6:30pm <i>Outside group</i>

For up-to-date Calendar information, go to stlukesbethesda.org, click on Calendar.



You are invited to attend the

Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper

St. Luke's Episcopal Church

5:30 - 7:30 pm Tuesday, March 4, 2025

Please join us for the traditional Pancake Supper!

We'll have eggs, pancakes, sausage, applesauce, oranges, and King Cake!

Breakfast for dinner! YUMMY!

We will need your help to make this great event a success.

Please consider giving a half hour, or more, of your time to help us
with setup, cooking, decorating, etc.

To sign up, go to:

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/9040D4FAFAC2C7-shrove1#/>

For questions or offers to help, contact:

Jen Luna or Veronica Walgamotte

St. Luke's Episcopal Church

Trinity Parish

6030 Grosvenor Lane

Bethesda, Maryland 20814-1852

Phone: 301-530-1800

email: admin@stlukesbethesda.org

website: stlukesbethesda.org

The Rev. Jessica K. Hitchcock

Rector

email: jessica@stlukesbethesda.org

ACTS of St. Luke's

Newsletter for members and friends of

St. Luke's;

published monthly, except January and July.

ACTS Deadline:

15th of the preceding month