

Nothing Without Love

The Monthly Newsletter of St. Luke United Methodist Church - February 2016

Love Through Discipleship

Understanding and Following the Great Commission

Most likely, if you have been around churches very much at all, you have heard of the Great Commission. It's Jesus' charge to His followers after He had risen from the grave, just before He ascended into heaven, and it's found in Matthew 28, verses 18-20.

Here Jesus tells His followers to go throughout the world and make disciples, to baptize in the name of the Father, Son,

and Holy Spirit, and to teach them to do everything He has commanded. And Jesus closes His charge with a promise: "I will be with you always."

(Continued on Pg.6)

**"If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing."
1 Corinthians 13:2**

This Month

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- Missions 2016: How You Can Serve, Give, and Pray
- Stewardship Update
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Announcements

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- Resources for Facilitators

The Lenten Season

BEGINNING FEBRUARY 10

Ash Wednesday

Ash Wednesday is the beginning of the Lenten Season, which is the six weeks of prayer and reflection leading up to Easter Sunday. The Christian practice is to “give up” something for Lent as an act of penance and a reminder of the sacrifice that Jesus made for each of us on the cross. As we continue On The Road to Discipleship With Jesus, each one of us needs to ask ourselves what are the potential road blocks that could side track us on our journey. Those are what we need to be working on this year as we move through the Lenten Season that starts on February 10. That may involve “giving up” something or it may involve “taking on” something like scripture study or more daily prayer or performing a random act of kindness for each of the 40 days of Lent. We will have a daily devotional booklet available for every family. As is our custom, we will begin with an Ash Wednesday service of ashes and healing prayers at 6:00 p.m. Come join us for dinner starting at 5:15 and worship at 6:00 p.m.



WEDNESDAY.COMMUNITY

Wednesday.comm Spring Semester

Wednesday evenings are a great way to get connected at St. Luke. The evenings start with a time of fellowship over dinner. Following the meal there are classes and activities for children, youth, and adults. Once again this year the meals will be hosted by different groups and classes to raise awareness and support for various ministries in our community. Meals are \$5 per plate (\$15 max per family, sharing allowed if you wish) and will be served from 5:15 -6:30 p.m. We have a very exciting line-up of classes this spring! Check out the descriptions below to find one that best suits your discipleship growth needs.

Wednesday.comm Schedule Each Week:

5:15-6:30 p.m.	Come-and-go community meal in the gym
6:00-7:00 p.m.	Childcare for infants and toddlers
6:00-7:00 p.m.	Activities for preschoolers
6:00-7:00 p.m.	K-5th Graders
6:00-7:30 p.m.	Youth Bible Study in the Youth Room
6:00-7:30 p.m.	Adult Classes (see below)
7:00-8:30 p.m.	Adult Choir
7:00-8:30 p.m.	<i>Child care available for children of parents in choir or class.</i>

FIND YOUR GROUP

WEDNESDAY.COMMUNITY

Adult Classes and Groups – Topics and Schedule:

St. Luke 101 – Membership Class

6:00 - 7:00 p.m.

Facilitated by Pastor Mark Girard

New to St. Luke? Just want to learn more about St. Luke? Join our pastor in this discussion-oriented group as they explore St. Luke's ministries as well as the history and beliefs of the United Methodist Church.

24/6: A Prescription for a Healthier, Happier Life by Matthew Sleeth

6:00 - 7:00 p.m.

Facilitated by Wendell Barnett

Sabbath is about restraint, about intentionally not doing everything all the time just because we can. Setting aside a day of rest helps us reconnect with our Creator and find the peace of God that passes all understanding. The Sabbath is about letting go of the controls one day a week and letting God be God. So how do we do it? In 24/6, Dr. Matthew Sleeth lays out a simple plan for living a healthier, more God-centered life in a digitally-dazed, always-on world.

God Talks

6:00 – 7:00 p.m.

Facilitated by Jennifer Baker

This group is all about hearing the God stories in each other's lives. Participants will seek to encourage one another and grow in wisdom and understanding of who God is and how God is working in our lives. Each week will start with a relevant topic centered around a biblical theme followed by discussion, sharing, and prayer. Topics include: "Hearing God's Voice," "What is Worship?" "Our Identity in Christ," and many others. Join us on this journey of community and discipleship.

Journey through the Psalms

6:30 – 7:30 p.m.

Facilitated by Nora Conner

What do the Psalms tell us about God? What do they tell us about our relationship with God? Have you ever really explored their depth and variety? Come join us on this journey as we explore how the Psalms speak of the fullest joy and praise, the depths of sorrow and fear, and of thanksgiving and longing.

Before Amen: The Power of a Simple Prayer Video Series by Max Lucado

6:00 – 7:00 p.m.

Facilitated by Sue Lord

The New Year is a great time to strengthen spiritual habits. While growing in one's prayer life is a lifelong journey, a little inspiration and encouragement can help your prayer time become more meaningful. Using Max Lucado's "Before Amen" video series and wisdom from additional authors, this hour of sharing may be just what you need. Each video lesson stands on its own and there is no "homework" except your personal resolve to apply whatever you have learned to prayer. This is a five-week series.

***Also, a discipleship group led by Keith Reinke will begin in March!**

CHANGE THE WORLD



The Going Forth Team announces opportunities to serve, give, and pray for our short term mission trips:
Honduras February 26-March 5, 2016
Nicaragua March 18-26, 2016

Serve, Pray, Give: What you can do?

How can you *serve*? You can help the teams fundraise before they go on their trips! Contact Reid Buchanan or Mark Walz for opportunities.

How can you *Pray*? Pray for our ministry partners in both countries and pray for the villages the teams will serve. Pray for the team members from St. Luke UMC who will travel to Honduras and Nicaragua. Pray for Safety during the trip. Pray that God would use the teams to fulfill His Will and that relationships will be built and everyone will grow in their walk with Christ.

How can you *Give*? You can be part of the trip by donating to the mission teams. You can do this by donating online (just use the "missions trip fund" line) or purchasing "shares" in the trips for \$20 each at the Connection Center in February. You can also support the team at Wednesday.com meals on February 17th and March 2nd.

Want to know more? Contact Reid Buchanan at rbuchanan@stlukeumc.org or Mark Walz at mwalz@stlukeumc.org for the Nicaragua trip or Earl Brady at 859-619-0160 or earlbrady13@gmail.com for the Honduras trip.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

United Methodist Women

Happy New Year St. Luke Women! You are all invited to come and bring a friend to our UMW unit meeting on February 11th, Thursday morning at 10:30 in the fellowship hall. A former St. Luke member, Anne Wood, will share with us about Native Americans and the Methodist church. Refreshments will be served. Questions? Contact Janet Garrison 272-3226.

Walk for Warmth

Do something important on February 20. Help prevent homelessness by raising funds to assist with rent and utilities. Join Team St. Luke 9:30 am at Phoenix Park for a one or two-mile walk downtown, followed by a luncheon and prize presentation. Come to the Connection Center to see a display on our team history. You can register on line at www.walkforwarmth.org. Bundle up and do a good thing.

Attention Facilitators!

Facilitators, are you looking for study materials for your group? Check out the Curriculum Room, where we have shelves of great resources as well as a new "Featured Resources" table. This month we're featuring materials for Lent as well as books and studies that support our discipleship emphasis. Have questions? Need help locating just the right thing? Contact Nora Conner, nconner@stlukeumc.org or 269-4687.

Stewardship Update

Budget Needs for December, 2015	\$102,500.40
*Total Income for December, 2015	\$145,320.17
Surplus for the month	\$42,819.77
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Budget Needs Year-To-Date (as of 12/30/2015)	\$1,332,505.20
Total Income Year-To-Date (as of 12/30/2015)	\$1,240,207.89
Deficit for the year	(\$92,297.31)
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Christmas Offering	\$4,330.40
Alms Donations – December	\$3,557.48
Balloon Fund Contributions – December	\$3,871.70
Balloon Fund Contributions – Year-To-Date	\$106,744.73
Life Center Mortgage Balance	\$2,717,165.85

"A gift is acceptable according to what the giver has, not according to what he has not." — John R.W. Stott (1921-), English pastor and evangelist

DISCIPLESHIP

TAKING THE GREAT COMMISSION SERIOUSLY

(Continued from front cover)

I was studying this passage recently, and I was struck by how it's stated in The Message. I want to share it with you, backing up a couple of verses and starting with verse 16:

Meanwhile, the eleven disciples were on their way to Galilee, headed for the mountain Jesus had set for their reunion. The moment they saw Him, they worshiped Him. Some, though, held back, not sure about worship, about risking themselves totally. Jesus, undeterred, went right ahead and gave His charge: "God authorized and commanded me to commission you: Go out and train everyone you meet, far and near, in this way of life, marking them by baptism in the threefold name: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Then instruct them in the practice of all I have commanded you. I'll be with you as you do this, day after day after day, right up to the end of the age."

The disciples understood the risk, and they considered it carefully. Jesus was not deterred by this but went ahead and told them what He expected. And he promised that He would remain with them. Not in an abstract way, but as they did His work, every single day.

Being a follower of Christ means to be His disciple, and this year at St. Luke, we are going to take this command very seriously. Our primary goal for 2016 is to fully equip every member to be a disciple. No one begins the journey as a completely mature disciple, and it's a journey that lasts a lifetime, but we should all be on the path and moving forward. To assist our congregation in this journey, we will be talking a lot about discipleship: It will be the theme of our sermon series, we will be offering resources for classes and individuals to use, and we will be offering additional classes and groups so that every person in the congregation has the opportunity to grow in this way.

We're also looking for stories. What has your journey been like? What does it mean to you to be a Christ-follower? What challenges and joys have you experienced? We know how much hearing each others' stories means to us, so let 'em flow!

This is going to be a really exciting year in the life of our church! Can you imagine? More and more people understanding their faith, becoming alive with personal commitment to St. Luke's vision of Jesus Christ in Every Life. More lives changed, *your* life changed, all of our lives reflecting Jesus, our community impacted in ways that show them that Jesus really does love them.

I pray that every one of us will join this journey. I pray that *you* will join this journey. Commit to becoming a fully equipped disciple of Jesus Christ, and let's be on this journey together, knowing that Jesus Himself will be with us every day as we do this.

Need help finding a group? Have a story to share? Want to facilitate a group? Have questions or ideas? Contact Nora Conner, Associate Pastor/Director of Ministries, at 269-4687 or nconner@stlukeumc.org.

GENEROUS PEOPLE IN ACTION

The Wesley Foundation

Dear St. Luke UMC family,

"We met our first week on campus, thanks to a get-to-know-you game for incoming freshmen at the Wesley Foundation. We won a shared door prize, which was dinner for two at Applebee's. We had no idea that four years later, we would be married at a Methodist church in Lexington, and 10 years after that, we would renew our wedding vows with our three children serving as our witnesses... The Wesley Foundation didn't just give us the gift of each other, it gave us the gift of experiencing the grace and love of God so powerfully that we committed ourselves to follow Jesus for the rest of our lives. We had both grown up in wonderful local churches, but it was during our college years at the Wesley Foundation that we found a group of passionate Christ-followers who welcomed us and helped us develop a grown-up faith in Christ. At the Wesley Foundation, we were given opportunities to serve in some of the poorest neighborhoods in Lexington and on mission trips around the country and beyond. We learned how to lead with our unique gifts and passions and along the way discovered God's calling on our lives." — Rev. Kevin Griffin and Ashley Griffin, 2003 Alumni

"I was baptized at a really young age, but I didn't really come to know Christ until my junior year of high school. That's when I started going to my church's youth group more regularly and got involved without my parents telling me to. When I graduated high school, I made it a goal of mine to get involved with a campus ministry, but I did not find one during my freshman year. I can truly say with all of my heart that God worked a miracle to bring me here, to this place and these people. I have been welcomed by everyone and have grown so, so much in my faith because of this Christian living community. I wake up every morning thankful for the opportunity to live here and share God's love with the people in this community." — Hannah Meredith, Sophomore

Testimonies like these are made possible because of you, our generous supporters, who help the Wesley Foundation advance its mission to "connect, develop, and send a new generation of Christian leaders who will make disciples of Jesus Christ and transform the world." We are so appreciative of our local churches. When you partner with the Wesley Foundation we join together to fulfill the vow made to our children during their baptism: "With God's help we will proclaim the good news and live according to the example of Christ. We will surround these persons with a community of love and forgiveness, that they may grow in their trust of God, and be found faithful in their service to others. We will pray for them, that they may be true disciples who walk in the way that leads to life." Thank you for your prayers, and thank you for your gifts. Together, we can continue to "make disciples of Jesus Christ who will transform the world!"

May you be increasingly aware of God's blessings in this New Year,
William Herndon

A FEW Final Notes...

Downtown Worship On Hold

This past August, under the leadership of Jeremy Buchanan and the Young Adult Leadership Team, a new worship service for young adults began meeting in Downtown Lexington. Though it began on a positive note, the service did not develop as anticipated. After doing a thorough analysis, the Young Adult Team has made the decision to suspend the ministry and concentrate on further developing the Young Adult Missional Community. In addition, Jeremy Buchanan has decided to step away from vocational ministry for the time being and spend time discerning God's call on his life. He will no longer be appointed to St. Luke as a Local Pastor. Needless to say, this has been a difficult time for this ministry. Please be in prayer for the team and Jeremy as they seek God's will and direction. Also be in prayer for the Ministry Staff and Servant Leadership Team as we seek to reimagine and reenergize St. Luke's ministry with Young Adults.

Thanks for the Cookies!

Thank you to all the many bakers who donated dozens of homemade cookies that were sorted into pizza boxes and delivered on Christmas to those on the job. We were able to thank police, fire men, medical personnel, pharmacy staff, staff at a homeless center, the night guard at the hospital, and a teen working at a gas station on Christmas Eve. It was a blessing to share a loving gift with those serving others.



Dear Friends,

I am deeply grateful for the generous gift you sent to Samaritan's Purse. Thank you for your partnership - and for your prayers. As we work around the world, we want to share the truth of the Gospel with as many people as possible. "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life." (John 3:16)

Hope you had a wonderful Christmas and may God bless you.

Sincerely,

Franklin Graham of Samaritan's Purse

On behalf of the entire staff, thank you for your wonderful generosity during the holidays. You are truly generous people and it is such a joy to serve at St. Luke.



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Our Service Times:

Sanctuary: 8:30 a.m., 9:45 a.m., 11:10 a.m.

Youth Worship: 9:45 a.m.

God's Backyard (K - 5th grade): 11:10 a.m.

Swahili Worship: 12:30 p.m.

Multicultural Worship: 3:00 p.m.

Child care available at all services.