

St. Luke's Shining Light

December 2008

"Therefore the Lord himself will give you this sign: the virgin shall be with child, and bear a son, and shall name him Immanuel" (Isaiah 7:14).



**ST. LUKE'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH
500 HILLCREST BLVD
Phillipsburg, NJ 08865
(908) 859-1479**

ST. LUKE'S WORSHIP SERVICES



Sundays:

- 8:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist, Rite II
9:45 a.m. Christian Education (Sept.-June)
10:15 a.m. Holy Eucharist, Rite II, with music

ST. LUKE'S MISSION STATEMENT

RECOGNIZING THAT GOD IS THE SOURCE OF ALL THAT WE ARE AND ALL THAT WE HAVE, OUR CALL IS TO PROVIDE A LOVING AND ACCEPTING ENVIRONMENT SO THAT WE MAY SHARE, THROUGH JESUS CHRIST AND THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, GOD'S UNCONDITIONAL LOVE WITH OUR PARISH FAMILY AND THE WIDER COMMUNITY, AND TO CONTINUALLY NURTURE AND DEVELOP OUR SPIRITUAL LIFE THROUGH CELEBRATION OF PRAYER, WORSHIP, EDUCATION AND PLAY.

RECTOR

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SUNDAY SCHOOL COORDINATOR (NURSERY-6TH GRADE)

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NEWSLETTER

Pat Strehl, Coordinator
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RECTOR'S MESSAGE

DECEMBER 2008



Advent: A mystical season of waiting

To say that the month or so between Thanksgiving and Christmas is harried is an understatement! There are projects due at your job, accounts that need to be settled in work places that end their fiscal year on Dec. 31st, kids in schools are doing their Christmas concerts, colleges are breaking for winter recess, and, of course, retail stores are in full swing.

But, all of these things have the risk of making us forget what this season is all about; the season of Advent. Many people don't like the "waiting" part of it. In fact, society by and large does not understand the significance of Advent as a time for preparation. But, as Christians, this season of waiting and inward reflection is vital so that we can truly prepare a place for the infant Jesus to be "born" in us anew this Christmas.

In church, we maintain Advent as a unique and special season by "bringing out the blues" in the altar hangings and vestments, as well as the large Advent wreath to help collect us at the beginning of worship. But, the work that we do to keep Advent real and vital in church can only be successful to the extent that you allow the season of waiting to be alive in your lives and your homes. I'm not saying that you shouldn't have Christmas decorations up, although that's one way to keep a Holy Advent. I personally

get decorations out a couple of weeks before the 25th. But, we can also keep a Holy Advent by lighting our wreath at home, one candle each day the first week, two each day the second and so on until we finally light that middle candle, which represents Jesus, on Christmas Eve.

We can also keep a Holy Advent at home by not letting the "business" of Christmas take over from the goal of preparing for Christ's arrival. We can do this by taking a moment out of the day to give thanks to God, and to pray for God's help to create a place in our hearts where Jesus can enter. Such a prayer might be said at home in the morning or evening, or while on the way to work or the grocery store or another errand, or with your children any day and every day. Such a prayer can even be said while standing on those dreadful lines! By doing this, we let some of the intended mysticism of the season of Advent enter into our lives in a new and vibrant way.

And so, in this mystical season of Advent, I invite you to find a way to hear John the Baptizer shouting to you to prepare the way for Christ's arrival; make your path straight. Because then, when you wake up on the morning of the 25th, I believe you'll still have that childlike sense that something enormous happened in order for Christmas to be as special as it can be.

Peace,

Fr. Tom †

CHRISTMAS MEMORIALS

Envelopes for Christmas Memorial prayer intentions will be in the bulletin on the first Sunday in December. On the following Sundays they will be available on the shelf at the back of the Sanctuary. Envelopes can be put in the collection plates through December 14 or returned to the church

office by December 17. A list of memorials will be published in the Christmas Eve bulletins.

CHRISTMAS SERVICES

Christmas Eve:

4:30pm: Pageant and Holy Eucharist

9:00pm: Candlelight service

Christmas Day:

9:00am: Holy Eucharist

(*Children are invited to come in their pajamas right after opening their gifts!)

1st Sunday after Christmas, Dec. 28th

8:00: Lessons and Carols

10:15: Lessons and Carols

ANNUAL HOLIDAY BAZAAR INFORMATION

- St. Luke's Annual Holiday Bazaar will be held on **Saturday, Dec. 6, 2008 from 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM** in the Social Hall.
- The kitchen will be open all day, beginning at 9:00 with fresh bagels, donuts, hot coffee and tea for shoppers and workers.
- The lunch counter will feature Bar-B-Q, sausage and peppers, hot dogs, chicken soup, vegetable-beef soup,

potato salad, coleslaw, coffee, tea, soda and milk.

PLAN TO HAVE YOUR LUNCH AT ST. LUKE'S THAT DAY!!!

Our table set-up this year will be slightly different than years past:

JEWELRY: After many years of chairing the most popular table, Claire and Ray, Nina and Ruth have passed their torches to Pat Roth and Lorrie Marine and Janet Allen. If you are cleaning out your jewelry boxes and have some nice quality jewelry "to spare", share it with us! We will clean it for you and find it a new home!

SOUP TABLE: (Back after popular demand!) We will be selling chicken soup, French onion, vegetable and....**THE MOST ASKED FOR.....**Pepper Pot soup. Please see sign-up sheet in the chapel if your talent is in soup making!

CRAFT: If you are "crafty", we will gladly accept a donation of a Christmas item or any craft item! If you aren't, why not purchase an item at another show or bazaar and donate it to our craft table!

ECW CUTLERY: We offer Rada Cutlery as an ongoing fundraiser. Keep our table in mind for those wedding shower gifts or housewarming gifts or just to build up your own collection of kitchenware.

ATTIC TREASURES: New this year! We will gladly accept new or "lightly-used" Christmas items, toys/games that could be recycled as Christmas gifts, or any item that could be purchased for a nominal price and "regifted"!

CANDY: This table needs no introduction! Under the direction of Shirley Koch, our St. Luke's Candy Ladies have been making the finest candy in the Lehigh Valley

specifically for our bazaar. We know there are women in the parish that make candies and fudge, too. Consider St. Luke's Candy for all your gift-giving!

POINSETTIAS: New this year! We will be selling medium sized red, white and pink plants for \$5.00. Shop at St. Luke's before purchasing your gift plants elsewhere!

GIFT: New this year! A friend of St. Luke's, Bob Irvin, has donated many beautiful items from his store in Hellertown (A Blissful Home) for us to sell at our bazaar. We are also asking for donations of small baskets or packages of gifts already made-up to be purchased and given as gifts to friends, teachers, school-bus drivers, neighbors, etc. The value will be \$25.00 or less. For more information, contact Jean Wadnik. We think this is a great idea and a real time-saver for the shopper with limited time!

BAKE TABLE: Here is an opportunity to show your expertise in cookie baking (chocolate chips, snickerdoodles and cut-outs are the most popular!) Brownies of all kinds are big sellers. Cakes sell well, too; however if baking a 13x9x2, cut the cake in 4 sections and wrap each section individually. We love new recipes too!

The annual Holiday Bazaar is an all-parish event, coordinated by the ECW. There are many ways for all to participate.....donating items for the tables or kitchen, setting up, cleaning up, working at tables, chairing a table, working in the kitchen....or just coming to say hello and have some lunch or a cup of coffee and something from the bake table.

For this event to be a success, not only as a fundraiser, but as a time for fellowship among the parish family as well as fellowship with our community, we can use your help. Please look at the sign-up sheets

in the chapel and see where you can share your time and talents!

Thank you from the officers of ECW

Ceil Zeno
Pat Roth;
Lorrie Marine
Joan Smith
Michelle Boyer

ST. LUKE'S INCREASES OUTREACH AND GIVING IN RESPONSE TO INCREASED NEED

St. Luke's outreach has increased as of late through a variety of ministries aimed at helping those in need, both in our community and abroad. Why have we done this when money is tight? Because it is times when we think that we don't have enough that we must remember to be thankful for all we do have- by giving. In this season of Advent, which begins this year right after Thanksgiving Day, we are writing to let you know how the leadership of St. Luke's is role-modeling our thankfulness through giving this year.

First, the ECW is working on a giving tree that you will give parishioners a chance to either buy gifts for individual children in needy families (given to us by the Community Outreach Board) or to contribute money to various outreach activities, including the United Way of Warren County, which directly supports families in need (see our mention in the article later in the newsletter!)

St. Luke's is also increasing the request for volunteers to help at our Pantry. We are looking into the possibility of picking up food for the pantry on Saturdays instead of Mondays so we can get additional volunteers who work during the weekdays.

Volunteers in the Pantry on the 2nd and 4th Mondays of the month are also needed. Please speak to Jeanne Merryman for more information or to volunteer. Your gift of time is very much needed and appreciated.

Also, at the November vestry meeting, we voted to send \$500 to help an orphanage in the Cameroon. This orphanage, which is the only place for children without a home to live and thrive, was begun by someone who lived with the Episcopal sisters of the Convent of St. John the Baptist in Mendham, NJ, and it is supported by the ongoing help of the sisters and now by the member churches of District 1. St. Luke's, which is part of District 1 of the Diocese of Newark, is one of 5 churches pledging part of its operating budget to support the Millenium Development Goals (MDG's), which supports the end of poverty. We will be hosting Sr. Barbara Jean of the Convent at one our Adult Forum on Sunday, Jan. 25th, and all are invited to hear her speak about this vitally important ministry at the Forum and the 10:15am service.

St. Luke's also pledges to the Diocese 10.5% of our income. Some churches are higher and some are lower, but all churches in the diocese pledge from our gifts to the diocese. The diocese uses part of our pledge to help people and churches in need. The diocese, in turn, pledges 21% of all of its income to the National Episcopal Church, and much of that money is used as outreach to help people in need. So, you might say that St. Luke's is part of a web of outreach through prayerful stewardship of our gifts. Even when our budget is tight, we commit to supporting other ministries not because we have to, but because we *need* to. If we don't give thanks for all that we have, then we are missing our opportunity to be co-creators and helpers with God in the local community and in the world. That's the only stewardship message I've ever needed.

So, thank you for your support of our St. Luke's family through your pledge of

time, talent and treasure this year and in the coming years. If you have not already had a chance to return your pledge and time and talent cards, please do so soon. Feel free to ask Bee Muzerall, our Stewardship chair, for a new packet.

Below is a reprinting of an article run in the Tues. Nov. 25th edition of the Express Times. When you read it, you will notice our church's name prominently! [The United Way of Warren County](#) headquarters in Washington were dark and cold during a news conference this afternoon. The chill drove home the harsh reality facing hundreds of families in the county who are unable to afford heating or electricity.

The charitable organization announced a \$20,000 grant for Catholic Charities and [NORWESCAP](#), but asked residents, organizations and businesses to consider donating in order to double that number.

That \$20,000 is capable of helping only 48 households endure the cold winter months.

"The United Way would love to give more money, but we don't have any more to give," Sarah Brelvi, president and chief executive officer, said during the conference.

Brelvi said St. Luke's Episcopal Church in Phillipsburg and [North Jersey Oil Co.](#) out of Kenil, N.J., were the first organizations to offer their help so far.

"I didn't have a lot of explaining to do," **Brelvi said.**

John Korp, NORWESCAP's associate director of housing and energy services, stressed the impact of even the smallest donation.

"We challenge all of Warren County to look within themselves and come up with any

dollar amount to contribute to the United Way," Korp said.

Korp estimated that the amount of money needed to warm the homes of needy families of Warren County is about \$87,500.

STEWARDSHIP UPDATE:

Pledges of financial contributions and time and talent commitments continue to trickle in. We are grateful to all who have responded so very generously with their time, talent and treasure. If you haven't yet made the commitment to St. Luke's you can still do so! Pledge materials are still in church, or if you prefer, call Shirley Koch or Bee Muzerall (908-213-1482) and we will send the packets to you.

A final tally of pledges will be coming soon. We are very pleased with the response we have received thus far, and hopefully we will receive commitments from all parishioners within the next week or two.

Thank you again.

Bee Muzerall

EBAY NEWS

St. Luke's eBay fundraiser is 1 year old!!!

The St. Luke's Vestry sponsored eBay fundraiser; "ourstlukesfamily" was started in October 2007. **100%** of its profits go directly to help close any gap in the yearly budget. We are very proud to report that after 6 months it continues to be successful. However, in order to keep it viable we need a steady influx of items to keep it running and profitable.

In January 2009 we will have a month of "eBay Item Collections". So gather all those Christmas gifts and/or attic treasures you don't "think is you" or that you can't use, for example, duplicates, and donate them to a cause that benefits St. Luke's. There will be a designated drop off box for your donations.

Some of the items that we have sold on eBay to date include: comic books, computer devices, electric iced tea maker, a cookie jar, a sports beer stein, a beautiful civil war reenactment dress, bridesmaid dresses, a prom dress, and various items from our basement.

Please note: For anyone who sells/buys on eBay already – Father Tom has set a non-profit account for St. Luke's with eBay which allows ANYONE with an eBay account to sell an item and designate 10-100% of sale profits to go to St. Luke's. This can be done from your own home. This allows items to be listed by you with lower than usual fees (because of non-profit status), which in turn benefits St. Luke. You can also become a Direct Seller, and we'd connect your eBay name to St. Luke's and you could help sell items and 100% would go to benefit St. Luke's. Help with shipping/drop-off at shipping company is also appreciated.

Donors of items that have sold will receive a letter/receipt for their donation that they can use when they prepare their tax returns.

I invite all to visit eBay and check out "ourstlukesfamily" to see what it up for sale in the coming months.

Should you have any questions, concerns or recommendations, please contact us at lorriemarine@aol.com or 610-438-0258 or Pat Roth @ gwrpbr@comcast.net or 908-735-4667.

Thanks to all for helping to make this a continuing success,

Jim and Lorrie Marine

PICTURE OF THE MONTH

Nicole Boyer of our Children's Choir performing with the Adult choir on November 2



MAY YOU HAVE A HOLY ADVENT AND A MERRY CHRISTMAS!

FELLOWSHIP AND VOLUNTEER ACTIVITIES:

FELLOWSHIP GROUPS

An active Episcopal Church Women's (ECW) group, meets monthly on the 2nd Sunday at 9am. All women are automatically considered members and welcome at meetings. For more info, speak to Ceil Zeno.

A Men's Group meets monthly at different homes. For more information, speak to Vic Zeno or Fr. Tom.

"St. Luke's Tots" is a playgroup for toddlers and infants (and their mommies!). The group meets every other Tuesday, at 10:30am (occasional changes). For more information, please speak with Tanya Mathews.

Fellowship Committee: Help plan fun dinners and lunches, such as "Italian Night" and "Comfort Food Night"

Welcoming/Newcomers Committee: Help welcome the newest members of St. Luke's and make the newcomers feel part of the St. Luke's family

OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

Luke's Pantry, which provides groceries to local families in need every 2nd and 4th Monday, from 11 a.m.-1 p.m. Volunteers needed on Mondays to give out food or another day as "baggers" to get these healthy groceries ready for pickup. For more information or to volunteer, speak to Jeanne Merryman.

Meals-on-Wheels, a regularly supported ministry at St. Luke's. It involves visits one week per month. Speak to Pat Ivankevitch for details.

WORSHIP MINISTRIES

Acolytes: Serving on the altar, carrying cross or torches in procession. Youth (4th grade and up) and adults are welcome in this ministry. See Fr. Tom for more details.

Altar Guild: Help setup for worship services. A "behind the scenes" ministry that is so important at St.

Luke's. Saturday is the usual set-up day, and Sundays between services are rotated by month. You work in teams. See Edith Exley, Joy Shue or Janet Allen for more information

Children's Choir: St. Luke's will be starting a children's choir this fall. Rehearsals will be on Sunday mornings, likely before the service. Children in grades 3-6 are welcome (younger children invited for special days). To sign up, please speak to Ann Hoyt

Adult Choir: Ann will also be restarting an adult choir after years of St. Luke's being without one. No experience is necessary, as Ann says the Bible tells us all to "make a joyful noise," and all are welcome. Warmup will be before service, with full rehearsals at an additional time. Age range is 7th grade through adult. To sign up, please speak to Ann Hoyt

Layreaders: Reading on Sunday mornings or at other services. Training will be offered in May. See Fr. Tom for details.

Ushers: Our ushers arrive early to help setup, welcome visitors, hand out bulletins, guide people up for communion, and help people with physical disabilities into the church and during the service as needed. Both youth, 8th grade and older, and adults are welcomed to be ushers. See Fr. Tom for more information or to sign up.

use more people willing to sell and ship items. Also, items may be donated that have a high estimated selling value and low to medium shipping weight (no computers, monitors, etc.). People with a "good eye" for items would also be a plus. For more details, speak to Lorrie Marine or Pat Roth.

Tricky Tray: A major fundraiser that takes place in the fall. People buy tickets to take a chance on winning a beautiful gift basket. It is sponsored by and coordinated by the ECW.

FUNDRAISERS

eBay Fundraiser: A successful fundraiser at St. Luke's, which can

CLERGY AND OFFICERS' CONTACT INFORMATION

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