

St. Luke's Shining Light

November 2008

**For What We Are About To Receive,
Let Us Be Truly Grateful**

Thanksgiving in America



The Pilgrims, shown here celebrating their first Thanksgiving, were a group of Puritans who landed at Plymouth Rock, in what is now Massachusetts in 1620. In 1621 Governor William Bradford of New England proclaimed a day of "thanksgiving" and prayer to celebrate the Pilgrims' first harvest in America. United States president Abraham Lincoln, following the precedent of a number of states, designated a national Thanksgiving Day in 1863.

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

9:30- Adult Forum (1st and 4th Sundays)

9:45 a.m. Christian Education (preK-6th grade)

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

The Rev. Thomas E. Mathews, Jr.

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Rector's Message November 2008



The Greatest Commandment-and challenge-is to love God and neighbor. Is it a “gotcha question?”

The following is an abbreviated version of my sermon on Oct 26.

In this political season, that seems to inundate us every time we turn the TV on or open the newspaper, we see a lot of times when the candidates for president are asked tricky questions, which sometimes make them stumble, and then everyone pounces on them. In modern political wording, we call this a “**gotcha**” question. We call it this because usually no matter how you answer it, you’re gonna get in trouble!

So, here’s Jesus’ response to one particular “gotcha” question in which a Pharisee was out to “test” him about what the greatest commandment is (Mt: 22:34-46) “*You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.*”

That’s some answer! I mean, if that was a “gotcha” question, then Jesus didn’t exactly give them something to run on the front page, did he? Nothing about marriage or divorce, or anything “salacious” enough to

get a front page news story! This is just a short message about love.

And, in a way, what’s more important than the fact that it’s not “front page worthy” is that for all of us who hear it today, Jesus’ words are kind of a “yeah, no kidding” statement. What I mean is that EVERYONE knows we should love God and one another, right? It’s not really an earth-shattering statement by God’s son.

So, my question is, “Is Jesus taking the easy road by directing the Pharisees to these rather trite laws rather than something more controversial?” In my opinion, nothing could be further from the truth. Because, as well known as this passage is, we too often miss the larger point, which is that Jesus’ statement here is actually **incredibly challenging!** For most people, living into the commandments to truly and fully love God and all of our human family would require a **dramatic** change in our lifestyles.

When considering the first part of Jesus’ answer-that of loving God- we need to remember how in Jesus’ time, these words from Deuteronomy were recited several times a day by Jewish believers in their daily prayers. How many of us pray several times a day? Are we, then, falling short of this commandment, simple as it sounds?

And, when considering the second part of Jesus’ answer- that of loving our neighbor- we can probably all agree that God wants us to love **most** of the people around us: but surely God doesn’t mean that mean person at work, or that nincompoop who cut you off on the road, or the person in the paper who’s being indicted for a crime, or that person on the street who doesn’t look like you. What I’m saying is that when we hear this commandment, we tend to gloss over it and hear it sounding something more like, “Love everyone who’s **lovable.**”

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So, when you take these two “innocuous” commandments a little deeper, you realize that what Jesus was saying here wasn’t all “love and sunshine,” but in fact it was something that is so hard, we can only pray that we get better at it a little more each day.

So, in the end, the “testing” of Jesus on that day quickly becomes a test for each one of us. So, if you agree with Jesus, as I do, that these are the two most important commandments, then how are *you* going to really start living into it? And I hope, I really do, that it’s *not* a “gotcha” question.

Peace,

Fr. Tom†

Sunday School News

Now that we have our older children in church during the whole service, I would like to offer some suggestions for parents and parishioners.



ABC’s for Parents and Friends of Children

Arrive in time to find a good place to sit, where the children can observe what happens at the altar. And to give the family time to settle in and answer any pre worship questions.

Be sure to pick up a copy of the “Sunday Paper”, an age appropriate children’s version of the readings, and other coloring pages & crayons provided in the back of the church at the “**children’s table**”. Bring quiet toys or books for the little ones.

Clue in the children as to what will happen next in worship. Children who can read will want to follow the service in the Prayer book, or bulletin, and find hymns in the Hymnal.

Discuss worship at home to prepare the children for special services that happen from time to time, Baptisms. Also give time to answer questions about worship experiences after the service is done. Feel free to discuss any questions your children ask with Fr. Tom if you want any help.

Express your gladness at having children in worship. During the Peace be sure to welcome the children near you.

Free yourself from worry about children’s behavior and be open to receiving their ministry to you.

Get involved with children’s education; it takes a village to raise a child.

Help out with kids, when parents are outnumbered, or at a stressful moment or situation.

Include children in your conversations before and after church.

JESUS!!!!

Keep other families in your prayers.

Let kids know they are welcome.

Make concessions for a little noise.

Note good behavior and reinforce it.

Overlook the small stuff.

Patience may be a virtue, but it needs to be learned.

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Questions are a part of learning.

Respect is a two way street.

Sitting is only part of the service.

Try to be more accepting.

Unleash your inner child.

Visit your experience of times when you were welcomed, or not, as a child.

Worship the Lord

Xenophobia we do not want our children to be thought of as strangers or foreigners. They are part of a healthy parish life.

You are an example to the next generation.

Zest for life is found in the smallest people.

Peace - Kathy Matlock
Sunday School Director

Meet the New St. Luke's Choir!

On Sunday, October 19th, we celebrated our "Saints Day" for Luke with a day to remember!

At the start of the service, Fr. Tom commissioned the new choir and formally commissioned Ann Hoyt as the Minister of Music. The decision to restart the choir after approximately a 6 year hiatus was made back in June, and it was first announced at the Parish Picnic. Since that time, Ann has been gathering names for potential members. And, we're delighted to say that her list of Adult Choir members now is at fifteen!

Please welcome the members of our new St. Luke's choir, listed alphabetically:

Mary Ellen Andrews	Bob Muzerall
Susan Brooks	Kathleen Scala
Liz Doughty	Steve Scala
Sophia Fleming	Phil Sevetson
Scott Hoyt	Barbara Stromoski
Cheryl Karcher	Amy Zebrowski
Lexia Matlock	Ceil Zeno
Eric Mitcheltree	

There is also one member of the budding Children's Choir, which recently expanded the list of grades to include grades 1-6 in the hopes that this too will grow. Special thanks to Children's Choir member Nicole Boyer! On the 19th, we celebrated with flowers for Ann and a cake for all to share that read, "God bless St. Luke's choir." **I can't describe my feelings about this wonderful new life at St. Luke's any better than that statement!**

AND HERE THEY ARE....



Halloween Party: Lots of Treats, Plus a Little Trick

On the Sunday just before Halloween, the

children of St. Luke's were treated to some spooky stories, build your own masks, plenty of homemade treats, and a tricky Halloween piñata that took two "full rotations" to get to burst! Thank you to all of the people who brought treats, crafts, stories *and most especially their kids* to make it such a fun day for all! Enjoy these two photos!



Building and Grounds

Do you like to garden? Or are you the handy person around the house?

Then... Why not volunteer to help out the Building and Grounds Committee. There are always lots of projects in and around our church, Christian Ed building and Rectory to keep them beautiful and in good repair. Remember many hands lighten the load.

Please join me on November 4 and the 1st Tuesday of each month at 7 pm for our committee meeting.

Keith Matlock
Building and Grounds

Wedding Bells At St. Luke's



October 18 was a gorgeous Day!

And wedding bells tolled for Sophia Matlock and Sean Fleming.

Meet the Flemings



May God bless this new family and the St. Luke's parish family as a whole.

Please congratulate the couple when you see them.

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.

Fundraisers

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

Clergy and Officers' Contact information

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