



St. Luke
Lutheran Church

Announcements

**December 18,
2025**

**Welcome to our weekly
Announcements email!**

Enjoy reading the important
news and events at St. Luke
Lutheran Church & Campus
Ministry. And remember, God
loves you!

**In this week's Announcements
you can read about:**

- A Note from Pr. Jason
- Christmas Eve Services
- Order Poinsettias
- Godly Play
- Lessons and Carols
- Feeding the Hungry
- Give Warmth: Mittens N' More
- Got Containers?
- Changing from Givelify to Tithely
- Advent Book Club
- Amahl & The Visitors

A Note from Pr. Jason

Dear Church,

Over the past few days, we have been inundated with tragic events. From Brown University to Bondi Beach, and from Hollywood to MIT, so many of us have been shocked by violence during this season of preparation for the coming of the Prince of Peace, Jesus. In these short four years we have spent together, I cannot tell you how often we have had to pause to pray for victims of gun violence, hatred, and cruelty.

Even beyond our borders, we see images of ethnic cleansing in Gaza, Sudan, and other parts of the world. We witness the ugliness of antisemitism, Islamophobia, and attacks against queer folks. And yet, in these days of preparation for the coming of Jesus, we are reminded of the truth that centers all believers: *the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not—and will never—overcome it.*

That light, no matter how small it may feel, is the light of Emmanuel—God with us. Mary sang of this promise: that the lowly will be lifted, the proud scattered, the mighty brought down

from their thrones, and that love and peace will have the final word. It is within each of us to reveal that love and peace in the way we live.

On Christmas Eve, we will sing one of my favorite carols, **“Love Has Come”**:

Love has come, a light in the darkness!

Love has come, He never will leave us!

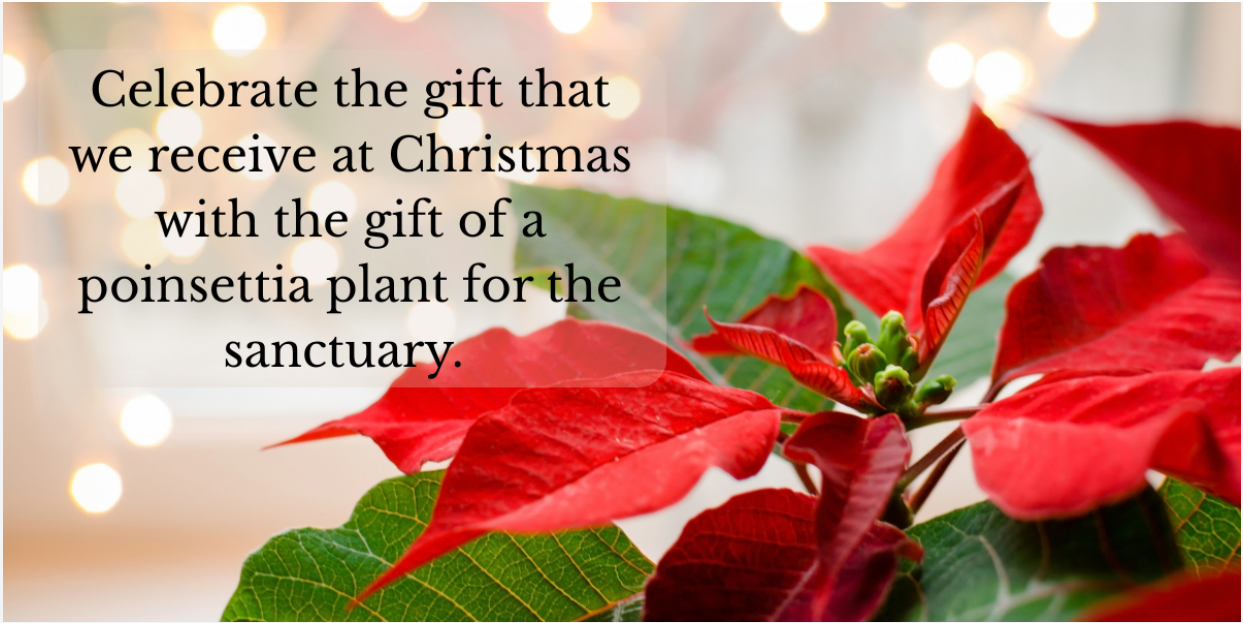
Love is life everlasting and free.

Love is Jesus within and among us.



All are welcome, without exception, to come and celebrate Christmas Eve together with us. We offer two services, one at 5:00pm which is shorter and involves children helping to bring the characters to the manger scene as the story is told through words and carols. No communion or sermon will be offered, but we still definitely sing Silent Night by candlelight.

The later service at 9:00 pm is the traditional Holy Communion service with many carols, a choral anthem, and Silent Night sung by candlelight. Merry Christmas!



Celebrate the gift that
we receive at Christmas
with the gift of a
poinsettia plant for the
sanctuary.

LAST CHANCE TO ORDER POINSETTIA FLOWERS: Poinsettia flowers can be presented in memory or in honor of special individuals. The cost of each plant this year is \$30. You will be able to take your plant home after the 9:00 p.m. service on Christmas Eve, if you wish. Remaining plants will continue to brighten our worship on the Sundays after Christmas and can be distributed to the shut-ins in our parish after the first of the year. Order through the paper forms in the bulletin or [online by clicking here](#).

Godly Play

Children are welcome to join us upstairs after worship for a story, activity, and snack as we learn together the story of the Nativity.

Lessons & Carols - December 28th

Our Lessons and Carols this year on December 28th will focus on the Gospel according to Matthew and include a video sermon from Rev. Imani Olear, the ELCA Director for Evangelical Mission and Assistant to the Bishop. Music from Jeff Snedeker will be based on the Christmas carol, "From Heaven Above"

Study Hours Report from Neil Mattson

Many thanks to Study Hour hosts and bakers! St. Luke Hosted study hours from each day from Dec. 4-6 and 8-13. Attendance was lighter than last spring (about 80 study hours). Most

students attending had never been in St. Luke before and greatly appreciated the warm space, goodies, and cheerful volunteers.

PARTICIPATE IN THE GOOD WORK

Feed the Hungry

Winter is upon us and freezing weather means cans and glass containers could explode in our blue cabinet! For the next few months please bring packaged soups, tuna, and boxed dinners, instead of canned. Pasta sauce, peanut butter and jam should be in plastic jars. Cereal, oatmeal, macaroni and cheese, pasta, protein bars and toiletpaper are always welcome. Thank you for supporting this ministry!

DECEMBER items for the Red Wagon:

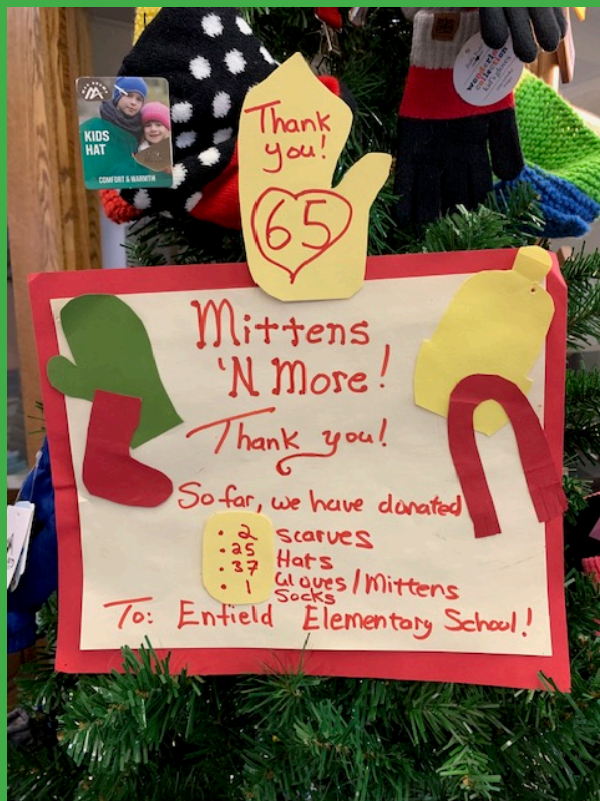
Pasta and Pasta sauce-- with or without meat. **NO CANS OR GLASS.**

Blue Wagon for the Blue Cabinet: This cabinet is re-filled 3-4 times a week as food insecurity has been growing even here in our Collegetown Neighborhood. All non perishable food items are welcome but the most popular items are soup, peanut butter, mac n' cheese, protein bars, and personal care items. **DURING WINTER NO CANS OR GLASS.**



GIVE WARMTH: Mittens 'N More

Mittens 'N More: Great news, we are halfway to our goal of collecting 144 items (a dozen dozen) — with 8 items on the tree and 65 bagged up and ready to go to Enfield Elementary, we've collected 73 items so far. Our Mittens 'N More tree will be up in St. Luke's narthex starting on Sunday November 16th, and will be up through Advent, Christmas, and the first part of Epiphany. All donations will go to children in need in the Ithaca City School District. Place your store bought or handmade mittens, gloves, hats, scarves, and scarves sized for school-aged children on the tree or in the donation box next to the tree. And yes, you can mail order items and have them sent directly to St. Luke: Mittens'N More, 109 Oak Avenue, Ithaca, NY 14850. Thank you for helping to keep heads, hands, and feet of children warm this winter.



Got Containers?

Campus Ministry needs take-out containers for future Spaghetti Suppers: Tompkins County no longer accepts the black-bottomed takeout containers for recycling. But Campus Ministry will take them for students to take home leftovers from our Spaghetti Suppers and other events. Please place clean containers with their lids in the pass-through in the Fellowship Hall kitchen. Thank you!

November Treasurer's Report

- November income was \$24,843, or 83% of the budget plan of \$29,911. Regular offering for the month was ~\$22K, or about \$5k lower than our monthly budget plan.
- YTD income is \$286,730, or 87% of the budget plan.
- November expenses were \$24,027, or 80% of the budget plan of \$29,911.
- YTD expenses are \$314,017, or 96% of the budget plan.
- YTD we are running a deficit of \$27,786.
- Our November month end balance in Tompkins Bank checking was \$144,974, up from \$26,792 at the end of October.

- At the end of November our Morgan Stanley investment values:
Endowment (designated) @ \$1,810,106, up from \$1,806,060 at the end of October.
Reserve (unallocated) @ \$264,263, up from \$261,198 at the end of October.

IF you used to give to St. Luke through Givelify...

We are moving our giving platform to Tithely, which will help us save hundreds of dollars in fees each year.

As soon as possible, please [log in to your Givelify account](#) and stop your regular giving there. Then create or log into your Tithely account at the link below and set up your regular giving: [Create or log into your Tithely account here.](#)

If you have already done this, then Thank You! If you need help with this, please don't hesitate to reach out to [John Vakiner \(our Treasurer\)](#).

We are so grateful for your faithful partnership!

Church Staff during the holidays:

Pastor Jason and Erik will be away with family for the holidays from December 25 to January 4th. Kimberly will be checking her email remotely on a limited bases during the holidays.

Become a Godly Play Feast Provider - it's easy!

Each Sunday of Church School, we follow a Godly Play instructional format. We gather the children, then enter the classroom for a lesson and response time, followed by "work" time, and then we finish with a "feast" for all to enjoy together! The "feast" is an important time for fellowship amongst the children and it indirectly prepares them for Holy Communion. [You can find more info here](#) & reach out to amandakemp18@gmail.com for details!

****AIM FOR ~10 PORTIONS, CAN BE DROPPED OFF BEFORE SERVICE!****

BUTTERFLY SNACK BAGS

Supplies: snack/ziploc bags, pipe cleaners or clothespins

Ingredient ideas: grapes, blueberries, grape tomatoes, baby carrots, olives, cheese cubes, goldfish, graham snacks, mini filled crackers, mini pretzels, cereal, etc.



PIZZA STICKS/ROLLS

Supplies: snack/ziploc bags

Ingredient ideas: canned dough, string cheese, pepperonis, black olives, sweet peppers, marinara



SANDWICHES

Supplies: snack/ziploc bags, skewers

Ingredient ideas: bread or wraps, turkey, ham, cheese, can supplement with fruit/veggies (apple slices, strawberries, baby carrots, sweet peppers, mini cucumbers, etc.) or classic PB&J and add cheese stick/cubes or veggies



CONNECT AND ENJOY...

Advent Book Club


**St. Luke
Lutheran Church**

ADVENT BOOK CLUB

with Pr. Jason Churchill

The First Christmas

BY MARCUS BORG AND
JOHN DOMINIC CROSSAN

Thursdays at 6:30pm
December 4, 11, and 18th
On Zoom



Come ready to explore the story of the first Christmas in a whole new light. TONIGHT is our final Book Club meeting.


Reading Schedule:

- ☐ Week of Nov 23: Chapters 1–3
- ☐ Week of Nov 30: Chapters 4–5
- ☐ Week of Dec 7: Chapters 6–7
- ☐ Week of Dec 14: Chapters 8–9

[Zoom Link for Book Club](#)

Amahl and the Night Visitors


An Opera in One Act by Gian Carlo Menotti



The First Presbyterian Church of Ithaca
Thursday, December 18th, 7pm–8pm
Sunday, December 21st, 10am

Free and Open to All –
Refreshments to follow.

Please RSVP for the Thursday performance using
the QR code, or by contacting the church:
firstpresithaca.org or 607-272-2800



Amahl & the Night Visitors

For those who don't know the piece, "Amahl and the Night Visitors" was first commissioned by NBC as a live television extravaganza for Christmas. It's the story of a young boy and his poor mother, who are visited by the three kings on their way to see the newborn king. This performance will be in full theater with a 15-piece orchestra!

[RSVP Here](#)

We pray together...

... for Patrice, Heather, Ernie, Kathy, Marjorie, Sharon, Anne, and for all those traveling this holiday season.

Upcoming commemorations of saints, renewers of society, and other festivals can be [found here](#).

Prayers are added weekly to our list and will remain for three weeks. If you wish to extend the name of the person for whom we are praying please inform the office. To add someone to the prayer list please email [the Communications Manager](#).

Calendar

Thursday, December 18

6:00 pm [Advent Book Group \(Zoom\)](#)

Sunday, December 21

10:00 am Holy Communion

11:30 am Godly Play Sunday School

Tuesday, December 23

12:15 pm. Bring Your Own Lunch Bible Study

Wednesday, December 24 Christmas Eve

5:00 pm. The Nativity Story for Children & Adults

9:00 pm. Holy Communion and Candlelight Christmas Eve Service

The Office will be closed for the Holidays from December 25 to January 4.

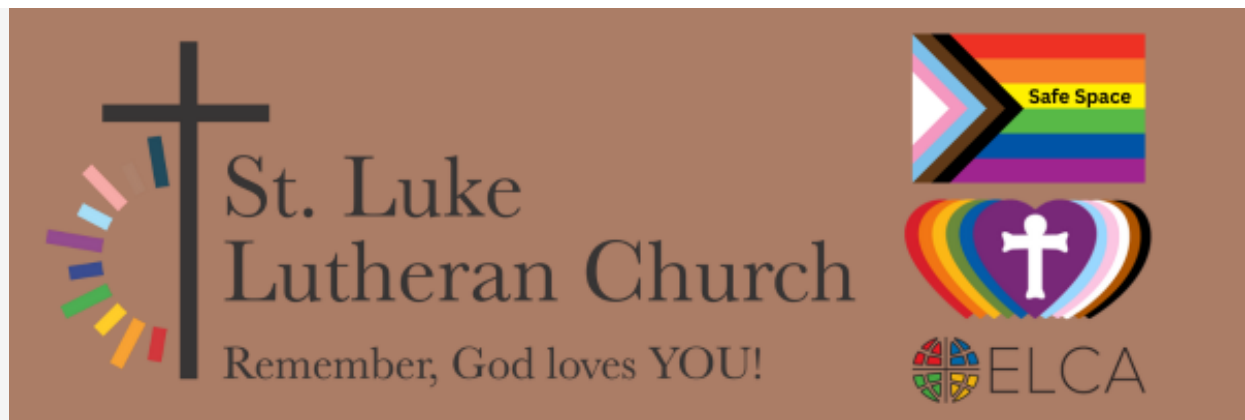
*After the holidays, the St. Luke Office will be open: Mon. 1 pm-5 pm, Tues. 9:30 am-1 pm,
Wed. 8am-4pm, Thur. 9:30 am-5pm, Fri. 9:30 am-1pm*

***If you would like to be removed from this list, please reply or [send us an email](#) with UNSUBSCRIBE in the subject line. We will be sad to see you go.
Remember, God loves you!***

Website

Give

Calendar



Service of Holy Communion ~ Sundays at 10:00 am

St. Luke is a **Reconciling in Christ Congregation** of the **ELCA**. As a Reconciling in Christ Congregation, the people of St. Luke Lutheran Church are called by God to be a community of Christians, a part of the body of Christ. Because we believe we are one in God's eyes, we welcome the mix of ages, races, gender identities, physical and mental capabilities, and sexual orientations with which God's children are blessed. Everyone is invited to share in God's grace. We rejoice in the knowledge that nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus--not our wealth, nor our poverty, nor our nationality, nor our political convictions, nor whom we love, nor anything else in all creation. We are called to follow God's mission of reconciliation and justice with all humanity, and we celebrate our journey of discipleship with a special appreciation for the privileged responsibility of our campus related ministry.

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Our mailing address is:
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