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# Spring Messenger

## PASTOR’S CORNER

***“If anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new!”***  
**2 Corinthians 5:17**

At this time each year, Lent invites us into a 40-day journey of reflection, repentance, and renewal. It is a season where we look honestly at our lives and the world around us, opening ourselves again to God’s limitless grace. It is a journey through wilderness places, both personal and communal, but it never leaves us there. At the end of these forty days, we remember who we truly are: an Easter people. Resurrection is not just something we celebrate once a year; it is the pattern of our lives together - God continually bringing new life where hope seemed lost, calling us again into trust, compassion, and courageous love.

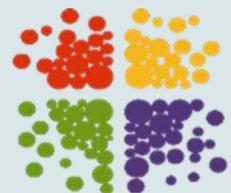
And in times like these, when so much can feel uncertain or heavy, this Easter faith carries us. We walk together, trusting that God is still at work among us, shaping us into a community that embodies hope for one another and for our neighbors. As spring unfolds, I am filled with gratitude for this congregation and looking forward to gathering with you in worship and upcoming community events, where we will celebrate the new life God continues to bring forth among us and through us.

Blessings and love,  
**Pr. Patti**

St. Luke Lutheran Church  
 4595 SW California Street  
 Portland, OR 97219

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E-mail:  
[office@stlukechurch.com](mailto:office@stlukechurch.com)



**St. Luke**  
 LUTHERAN CHURCH

## SPECIAL SPRING DATES

**Mar 1: Second Sunday of Lent**

**Mar 8: Third Sunday of Lent**

**Mar 15: Fourth Sunday of Lent**

**Mar 22: Fifth Sunday of Lent**

**Mar 29: Palm Sunday**

**9:15 a.m.:** Modern Worship

**11:00 a.m.:** Combined Worship  
with St. John Fisher

**Apr 2: Maundy Thursday**

**6:30 p.m.**

**Apr 3: Good Friday**

**12:00 p.m. & 6:30 p.m.**

**Apr 4: Easter Eggstravaganza**

**10:00-11:30 a.m.**

**Apr 5: Easter Sunday**

**8:00 am | 9:00 am | 10:30 am**

**Apr 19: Creation Care Sunday**

**Apr 26: HS Senior Sunday  
Quilt Sunday**

**May 17: Volunteer Appreciation  
OASIS Dedication  
Mortgage Burning Celebration**

**May 24: Pentecost Sunday**

**May 31: Holy Trinity Sunday  
with Confirmations**

## SAVE THE DATE

**June 7: Threads of a Nation  
3:00 p.m. | See Page 4**

**June 15-19: VBS Summer Camp  
9:00 a.m. — 12:00 noon**

## WORSHIP

Join us for worship as together we explore the work of God's restoring, healing power!

**Modern Worship:** Sunday at 9:15 am

Band-led

**Traditional Worship:** Sunday at 10:30 am

Organ, St. Luke Ringers & Rejoice Choir



## WORSHIP AT ST. LUKE

### Sunday Morning Education Ministries

**Children's Ministry:** Meet in Fellowship Hall, classes held in Room 109

**Middle School Ministries:** Lower Shalom

**St. Luke Youth:** Vermont House

**Parent Group:** Upper Shalom

Children's Church held during the **9:15 a.m.** service.

Nursery care for children birth to five years continues at both services.

### Serve in Worship!

#### Share Your Faith as a Reader or Prayer Leader

Readers and prayer leaders are a vital part of our worship at St. Luke. Reading the scriptures aloud and leading the Prayers of the People bless both the reader and the congregation.

#### Readers and prayer leaders, sign up for slots during Lent and Easter!

#### Help with Communion

Have you ever wanted to help with Communion? You can volunteer to serve Communion, set the table, or help with cleanup after the 10:30 service.

We are also seeking volunteers to assist with setup and cleanup on special days including **Maundy Thursday and Easter.**

Your help is truly appreciated!

### Virtual Worship

Not able to join us in person? Worship with us online! Our **9:15 a.m. and 10:30 a.m. services** are livestreamed on Facebook and saved on YouTube and Facebook.

Access recordings on [St. Luke's Facebook page](#) or our website: [stlukechurch.com](http://stlukechurch.com).

You'll want your bulletin to participate online! Download your Worship Bulletins at [stlukechurch.com](http://stlukechurch.com).

# MUSIC MINISTRIES

*“The whole earth is filled with awe at your wonders, where morning dawns, where evening fades, you call forth songs of joy. The meadows are covered with flocks and the valleys are mantled with grain; they shout for joy and sing.” — Psalm 65*

## A SPRING SONG

Spring has a way of teaching us to sing again.

As the days grow longer and the light lingers into the evening, something in us begins to soften and open. The first crocuses push through the soil, trees hint at green, and even the air feels different—lighter, expectant. Studies tell us that increased sunshine and the presence of flowers can lift our mood and increase our sense of well-being. But long before science named it, the psalmists sang it: creation rejoices, and we rejoice with it.

Spring reminds us that growth is often gradual, but always faithful. Notes become phrases. Phrases become songs. Seeds become blossoms. And in it all, God continues to “make the valleys shout and sing together for joy.”

In music ministry, we often talk about “opening our voices,” but spring invites us to open more than that. It invites us to open our hearts to beauty, to one another, and to the quiet work God is doing beneath the surface. Just as the earth stretches toward the sun, we stretch toward hope—toward harmony—toward community.

At St. Luke, that song of renewal is alive and well each week:

## WEEKLY MUSIC ENSEMBLES

### **Songbirds (K-3)**

Wednesdays, 5:00–5:45 p.m.  
Upstairs Music Room

### **St. Luke Ringers (High School-Adults)**

Wednesdays, 7:00–8:00 p.m.  
Upstairs Music Room

### **Modern Worship Team (Middle School-Adults)**

Thursdays, 6:00–7:15 p.m.  
Sanctuary

### **Rejoice Choir (High School-Adults)**

Thursdays, 7:30–9:00 p.m.  
Choir Loft



There is a place for every age and every stage.

Whether you've sung your whole life or are just beginning to wonder if you might, I encourage you to join us.

Please reach out with any questions or curiosities about music ensembles at St. Luke.

We would love to welcome you.

# MUSIC MINISTRIES

## Lenten Taizé Vespers

**March 4, 11, 18, & 25 at 6:30 p.m. | Sanctuary**

As spring unfolds, we also walk the reflective path of Lent. **Taizé Vespers Services** will be held each Wednesday during Lent.

These simple, contemplative services center on traditional Taizé chants, scripture, silence, and poetry. The repeated melodies create space for prayer, stillness, and listening—like watching a candle flame or noticing the slow turning of the season. All are welcome to join us.



## UPCOMING CONCERTS

### American Voices at the Keyboard & Harp

**Wednesday, May 6 at 7:00 p.m.**

*Pre-Concert Lecture at 6:00 p.m.*

Join us for an evening celebrating American and immigrant composers, performed by St. Luke staff and special guests.

Free admission. Donations welcomed to support St. Luke Music Ministries.

### Threads of a Nation: An American Tapestry

**Sunday, June 7 at 3:00 p.m.**

Featuring choral and instrumental works by American and immigrant composers, this program will trace a musical journey from early America to contemporary voices.

Free admission. Donations welcomed to benefit St. Luke Music Ministries.



May this season bring renewed light to your home, renewed warmth to your spirit,  
and renewed song to our shared life at St. Luke.

*Steven Schaefer, Director of Music Ministries*  
[steven@stlukechurch.com](mailto:steven@stlukechurch.com)

# CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES

## SPRING EDUCATIONAL OFFERINGS

**Invite your friends and grandchildren to come by and visit us any Sunday!**

### Sunday Morning Programming

**9:15 Worship:** Children's Church is a hybrid program during the 9:15 service in which children attend worship with their families, then step out for a breakout session during the sermon; children return for communion. Children enjoy small group sharing, snacks (of course!), and reading storybooks.

**10:30 Worship:** Children's Ministry hosts education hour from 10:30-11:30 a.m. alongside Middle School (MSM), High School (SLY), and Parents Group.

Our hour together nurtures faith formation through community building and Godly Play Bible storytelling. Our community building time celebrates fun, God's creation, and relationships with activities like science experiments, baking, music games with music director Steven, and service projects.

We share Bible stories told in the Godly Play style and invite the children to participate following their curiosity, asking questions like:

*I wonder what part of the story you like the best?*

*I wonder what part of the story is the most important?*

*I wonder what part of the story is about you or where you might be in the story?*

*I wonder if we could leave out any part of the story and still have all the story we need?*



### Nursery

**Open Hours:** 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 noon

Every Sunday, year-round

**Drop off:** Ages Birth – Age 5



### Children's Ministries Spring Break Schedule

**Classes will not meet on 3/22, 3/29 or 4/5**

**Classes resume on 4/12**

**Nursery will remain open on Sunday mornings for children birth to 5 years**

*Thank you for your continued support of St. Luke Children's Ministries!*

*Kim Weber, Director of Children's Ministries*  
[childrensministry@stlukechurch.com](mailto:childrensministry@stlukechurch.com)

# VBS Summer Camp at St Luke "Who is My Neighbor"



**June 15-19, 9-Noon**  
**Ages 4-5th Grade**

**Register Today!**



## CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES

**SUMMER PLANNING? SAVE THE DATE!**

**VBS 2026 SUMMER CAMP at ST. LUKE**

**Monday-Friday, June 15-19**

**9:00 a.m. – 12 noon**

**Registration: [www.stlukechurch.com/vbs](http://www.stlukechurch.com/vbs)**

**Open to Campers: Preschool (age 4) – 5th Grade\***

**\*5th Grade Flex Option:**

**Fifth graders may opt to be campers or camp leaders in-training**

**Volunteers Needed: 5th Grade up to Adults**

**CONTACT KIM WEBER: [childrensministry@stlukechurch.com](mailto:childrensministry@stlukechurch.com)**

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**VBS AFTERCARE PROVIDED**

**June 15-19 | 12:15 - 5:00 p.m.**

**Scheduling and pricing are customizable**

**CONTACT JULIA HERNANDEZ (through KinderPrep):**

**[egfoundations@icloud.com](mailto:egfoundations@icloud.com) | (971) 331-4229**

## CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES

### SAVE THE DATE!

#### EGGSTRAVAGANZA! Egg Hunt

Saturday, April 4, 10-11:30

During our breakfast, enjoy a Ukrainian children's dance troupe performance

Thank you to our Ukrainian community, to our Scouts Troupe 150, and to our Council who are all providing tremendous support to make our EGG-stravaganza a success!

Join us for a Godly Play story, Egg Hunt, Pancakes, Ukrainian children's dance performance, a Pysanky egg demo, crafts, and more – Open to the Whole Community!



### KINDERPREP IS ENROLLING!

Come visit Julia Hernandez's preschool at St. Luke

CONTACT JULIA HERNANDEZ:

[effoundations@icloud.com](mailto:effoundations@icloud.com) | (971) 331-4229

Check out Kinderprep's socials!

[Website](#) | [Instagram](#)

Kinderprep  
ECE

# MIDDLE SCHOOL MINISTRIES

*Immersing Middle Schoolers in the love of God...  
so that they can minister with hope & love in St. Luke and the wider world.*

## Looking Forward

Our Spring Retreat is **Friday, April 24-26!** We meet at St. Luke for dinner and a shared activity with our Christ Kin, then travel to Seaside for a two-night overnight, filled with faith formation, games, worship, service, and community.

We will have a planning gathering for MSM & SLY students who want to have input into our Spring Retreat!  
Our tentative date for this is **Sunday, March 1** after the 10:30 service.

**Christ Kin continues!** Christ Kin is a 1:1 caring ministry where a member of the wider St. Luke community is paired with a middle school student. Interested in Christ Kin? Contact Pr. Beth.

**We gather Sunday mornings at 10:30am in Lower Shalom:**

March 1, 8, 15; April 12, 19, (Apr 26 – away at the Spring Retreat); May 3, 10, 17, 24

### May 31: Confirmation at the 10:30 Service!

When students near the end of 8th grade, we give them their first opportunity to affirm their baptism – to be Confirmed. This is when they first get the chance as adults to say “yes” to the God who has claimed them in love.

**Eighth Graders & Parents:** Meet with Pr. Beth on **March 2** in Lower Shalom after the 10:30 service to learn about Confirmation. Anyone seeking to affirm their faith will meet 1:1 with Pr. Beth in April or May.

**High school students and adults: Get Confirmed!** You are also welcome to affirm your faith – Please contact Pr. Beth if you'd like to take this next step in your faith journey!

### Middle School Helpers at Vacation Bible School

We love having Middle Schoolers as helpers for Vacation Bible School!  
Reach out to Kim Weber at [childrensministry@stlukechurch.com](mailto:childrensministry@stlukechurch.com) for more information.

### Confirmation Camp at Camp Lutherwood Oregon

We're heading to Camp Lutherwood Oregon for Confirmation Camp **June 28-July 2, 2026!**

Rising 6th graders thru rising 9th graders are welcome to participate— see Page 12 for more info.

We are working to provide scholarships for our St. Lukers who attend summer camp at Camp Lutherwood. Stay tuned.

## Looking Back

**Thank you** to all who made our Winter Retreat a fantastic time!

**Over 30 adults** including Christ Kin, photographers, bus drivers, activity leaders, and volunteer chaperones made this event a rich experience for our students!

**Pr. Beth Brashear**  
[pastorbeth@stlukechurch.com](mailto:pastorbeth@stlukechurch.com)



# SLY HIGH SCHOOL MINISTRIES

## *St. Luke Youth (SLY): Growing in Faith, Community, and Leadership*

Sunday mornings at St. Luke have been full of learning, laughter, and meaningful connection for our high school youth. We meet weekly in Vermont House from 10:30–11:30am, where we begin our time together with breakfast—generously made by awesome volunteers—before diving into scripture, conversation, and fun activities that help us connect with one another and with God.

**New students are always welcome!** Whether a teen has grown up at St. Luke or is brand new to church, SLY is a place where they can show up just as they are and know they belong. If you're a parent of a high school student who hasn't connected with SLY yet, consider this an open invitation. We would love to welcome your teen—whether they come every week or are just curious enough to try it once. I'm always happy to meet with you and them to answer questions and connect them to others in the group. Please let me know if that's of interest. I'm also happy to talk more about what SLY offers and what's coming up.

By the time you read this, we will have just celebrated our **“Fat Tuesday Comes Early to St. Luke” pancake breakfast FUNdraiser**. Thank you to everyone who helped, donated, attended, and cheered on our youth. Events like this remind us how deeply supported our young people are by the wider congregation, and how meaningful it is for teens to be visible and active in the life of the church.

Looking ahead, we are especially excited about **Peer Ministry Training on Saturday, February 28th**. This is a unique opportunity for youth to learn and practice ways of supporting their peers. While we've invited other churches to join us, this training is intentionally focused on empowering *youth themselves*—giving them tools to listen well, show care, and respond thoughtfully when friends are struggling. It's an important step in helping teens live out their faith beyond the walls of the church. Please encourage your high schooler to contact me to sign up or if they have any questions. And YES! As always, they may bring a friend!

All St. Luke high school seniors and their families are invited to worship on **Sunday, April 26th at the 10:30am service**, when St. Luke will take time to honor and celebrate our graduating seniors. Each senior will receive a handmade quilt created by the **St. Luke Quilters**—a meaningful reminder of the prayers, care, and support of this congregation as they prepare for what comes next. Seniors are encouraged to attend whether they have been involved in SLY recently or are reconnecting during this milestone season. We look forward to celebrating this important moment together as a church community.

SLY is going to Camp Lutherwood, **July 26-30! Registration is now open**. Camp is a meaningful opportunity for teens to build friendships, grow in faith, and experience God in a unique and powerful way. Please contact me to talk about funding.

As SLY continues to grow, I am deeply grateful for the many parents, volunteers, and congregation members who make this ministry possible. Over the past year, I've moved from volunteer to interim to permanent staff as Director of High School Youth Ministry, and I'm continually reminded that this work is not something I do alone. Your encouragement, time, prayers, and trust make a real difference. Thank you!

*Jodi Swigart, Director of High School Youth*  
[jodi@stlukechurch.com](mailto:jodi@stlukechurch.com)



**Camp Lutherwood offers camps for Elementary—High School.**

**St. Luke will send Middle Schoolers to Confirmation Camp 6/28-7/2.  
YES! Your rising 5th grader (6th grade fall 2026) IS eligible to attend.**

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**SLY is headed down to Altitude Camp July 26-30.**

**YES! Your rising 8th grader (9th grade fall 2026) IS eligible to attend.**

**SLY Youth Leader Jodi Swigart will be attending all week.**

**Encourage your High School student to attend Camp Lutherwood.**

**[CLICK HERE TO REGISTER NOW!](#)**

**Get your campers signed up between now and March 31st to get the  
Early Bird Special: \$50 off weeklong sessions!**

**Questions about scholarships? Ask Kim or Pastor Beth:**

**[Childrensministry@stlukechurch.com](mailto:Childrensministry@stlukechurch.com) | [PastorBeth@stlukechurch.com](mailto:PastorBeth@stlukechurch.com)**

**Did you know discounts are stackable?**

**Save even more when you register siblings! Tiered pricing and camperships are available to ensure that every family can afford a fantastic summer.**

## ADULT EDUCATION

**“Do not be conformed to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of the mind, so that you may discern what is the will of God.” (Romans 12:2)**

Highlights of our Adult Education winter season included the launching of a six-week grief group on Thursday, January 22. Additionally, a two-day Spiritual Gifts class was held on Saturday, January 24 and 31, led by the Stewardship Committee.

We also held two Lenten Retreats: the Men’s Lenten Retreat, February 20–22, led by Rev. Mark Brocker on the theme “Life Together: The Dynamics of Christian Community” and the Women’s Lenten Retreat, February, 27–March 1, led by Pastor Patti Welch on the theme “Awakening the Holy Within: Walking with the Wisdom of the Women Mystics.” Both retreats were held at the Alton Collins Retreat Center in Eagle Creek, Oregon.

Table Talks, led by Theologian in Residence Mark Brocker, continued this winter on a monthly basis. December’s theme was “How Do We Keep Showing Up without Burning Out?” January’s theme was “Are We on the Cusp of a Revival?”

Most recently, the theme of the February Table Talk was: “Does ICE Need to Be Abolished?” Topics for the coming spring months will be selected early in the month a Table Talk is held. People are encouraged to suggest topics.

A number of groups continue to meet on a regular basis: Tuesday Men’s Bible Study, Tuesday AM Women’s Bible Study, Men’s Friday Morning Bible Study, Parents Group, Women’s Circles, Good Words Book Group, and FAB (Fifty and Beyond). All these groups welcome new participants.

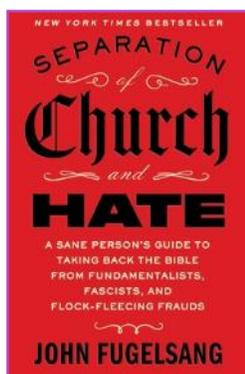
On the Spring horizon is a Centering Prayer class after Wednesday Lenten services and a one-Saturday Spiritual Gifts class.

Christian Education is a core ministry initiative in Evangelical Lutheran congregations. Being nurtured in our faith and equipped for ministry is a lifelong process. We encourage persons of all ages at St. Luke to be intentional participants in this educational process.

**Rev. Mark Brocker**  
**Adult Education Committee Chair**

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### **Book Review: *Separation of Church and Hate: A Sane Person’s Guide to Taking Back the Bible from Fundamentalists, Fascists, and Flock-Fleecing Frauds* by John Fugelsang**



This book came recommended to me by unchurched friends, and it did not disappoint. Mixing in-depth biblical scholarship and a hefty dose of snark, Fugelsang offers a theme-by-theme biblical debunking of the key Fundamentalist and Christian Nationalist talking points. He dials down to the Bible verses quoted (out of context) by these groups and presents the wider contexts and other verses that debunk the hurtful uses of Scripture. If ever you wanted to be able to refute the “Biblical” condemnation of immigrants, queer people, abortion, feminists, gun control, poor people, Black people, this is a handy (and humorous) resource.

Feel free to check it out of our library! [\*Separation of Church and Hate: A Sane Person’s Guide to Taking Back the Bible from Fundamentalists, Fascists, and Flock-Fleecing Frauds\*](#) is also available at book retailers everywhere.

**Review by Pr. Beth Brashear**

# ADULT EDUCATION

## SPRING PROGRAMMING

### **Women's Chronological Bible Study** **Tuesdays, 8:00 a.m., Zoom**

All are welcome! Ever wonder how things in the Bible fit together? We're "chronologically" reading the Bible, with the aid of different annotated Bibles and the combined wisdom and life experiences of the dozen or so women who attend on Zoom each week.

We are now in the New Testament exploring the work of the apostles following Jesus's death and resurrection, primarily through the letters of Paul.

We have great discussions every week! Join in and we will share the reading list! Join and we will share the reading list!

### **Men's Bible Study** **Tuesdays, 8:00 a.m., Zoom**

For more information please contact the Church Office.

### **Men's Breakfast Bible Study** **Fridays, 7:30-8:30 a.m.**

Join us to study the appointed Bible readings for the coming Sunday. BYOB (Bring your own Bible).

### **Lenten Contemplative Prayer** **Wednesdays, after Taizé Prayer**

Following the Taizé Services, there will be a brief time of Contemplative Praying in the sanctuary. These sessions invite you to join us in this practice of being present with God.

### **WELCA Gather Bible Studies** **Second week of each month**

The Gather Bible study groups meet during the second week of each month, offering various options to accommodate your schedule. Please feel free to attend the group that best fits your availability.

**On the second week of each month, we meet:**

**Sundays, 6:30-8:00 pm** in the St. Luke Library

**Mondays, 9:30-11:00 am** in the St. Luke Library

**Mondays, 1:00-3:30 pm** in rotating members' homes

### **Parent Group** **Sundays, 10:30 a.m., Upper Shalom**

This is a great opportunity to sit still, enjoy coffee, share discussions, and build meaningful friendships.

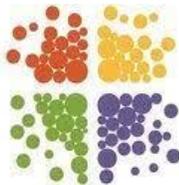
For parents of littles to parents with kids in college to parents who are empty nesters. A Sunday morning ministry carefully built into our Sunday morning schedule, to give you options for worship.

### **WELCA Spring Programming**

As in years past, WELCA is looking forward to providing Easter Baskets to the kids at West Women's and Children's Shelter. But this year will be a bit different! Instead of creating a basket for each child, we have been asked to provide **24 baskets** and the goodies to fill each basket. More details will be shared soon!

**Join us on April 12th in the Narthex after the 10:30 service**, when we will assemble Personal Care Kits to send to Lutheran World Relief. We will have the items needed and ready for you to join us in putting the kits together.

It promises to be a fun time for fellowship and a great opportunity for the Women of St. Luke to help others!



**St. Luke**  
LUTHERAN CHURCH

# CHURCH UPDATES

## COUNCIL PRESIDENT'S CORNER

As I take on the role of Council President for 2026, I am praying that God will walk beside me to help and guide me. I ask that you join me in that prayer, but also that you all help and guide me.

For those who don't know me, probably the primary thing you need to know is that I love St. Luke and the light that I feel it is in the community and in the world. I hope to do all I can to carry that light.

I have served on Social Concerns, on the 1994 (!) Vision Task Force, on the 2013-18 Master Plan Implementation Team (the last capital campaign), as a Sunday School and then Middle School Ministries teacher (collectively for over 20 years), as a parent-chaperone on two SLY service trips to Mexico, on the Return to Worship team during COVID, on the Lay Visitation team, and in other capacities that I've forgotten.



I am currently on the Women of St. Luke Board, help coordinate our Tuesday morning and Sunday evening women's Bible studies, and have been on Council now for two years.

I appreciate the great work that our past Council President did leading us this past year and particularly appreciate her helping prepare me for this role. I celebrate with her everything St. Luke accomplished in 2025. I hope you were there for the January Annual Meeting slide show celebrating the vibrancy of those ministries.

We are all very excited to see the tangible products of the LIFT Campaign that you supported so generously. You've seen the OASIS come to life and will shortly be noticing the work being done on the elevator and our new HVAC system (air conditioning in the sanctuary by June!). Please plan to join us on **May 17th** after the second service for a celebration at OASIS of all these projects, and the burning of our main Church mortgage, which has now been paid off with LIFT funds! Thank you, thank you!

## TRUST FUND COMMITTEE

### Benson Foundation Scholarships

It's that time of year for students to be planning on how to fund college this coming fall.

Are you interested in learning about scholarships to help pay for tuition at a Lutheran university or college? Go to the [Benson Scholarships webpage](#) to get all the information about who is eligible to apply for these funds.

If the scholarship looks like a good fit, fill out the application, gather all requested materials, and submit them electronically per the directions on the application.

There will be a Zoom meeting on **March 5th at 7:00 p.m.** to answer questions about this process. The Zoom link for this meeting is in the Weekly Press, both in the week of February 24th and March 3rd. The application submission deadline is **March 31st, 2026**. Students will be informed by April 3rd of the amounts awarded.

We currently have nine students receiving grants and there are 18 seniors at St Luke who graduate this spring. We assume there will be a couple of more students added to the group of scholarship recipients. We are very grateful to the Benson Family for this generous legacy that is administered by the St. Luke Trust Fund Committee.

# CHURCH UPDATES

## STEWARDSHIP MINISTRY

Your Stewardship Ministry Team finished the 2026 Fall Appeal entitled **Courageous Generosity** in early January.

We had **143** members return a financial Statement of Intent for 2026 totaling **\$644,990**. Thank you for your generosity as your commitment provides great guidance in planning for our 2026 ministry!

The Stewardship team's current focus is our Spiritual Gifts class and Ministry Teams' Description document.



### Spiritual Gifts Class

- Held January 24th and 31st from 9:00 to 12:00.
- 10 participants
- Class evaluations reviewed
- Course book review and updates will occur in March
- Next class is to be held two Saturdays in May (dates not yet set)

### Ministry Team Descriptions

- Descriptions document published entitled "Spirit of Unity through Ministry"
- Ministries are organized according to Mission statement "Worship, Connect, Serve"
- Hard copies of the document will be made available on table in the Narthex
- Link and QR code have been created for access
- Location of document on website is under review
- Descriptions document update will occur yearly

Stewardship is about how our congregation can engage in God's work.

Your Stewardship Ministry Team's continuing goal is to encourage engagement and growth of our St. Luke Beloved Community.

## TREASURER REPORT

St. Luke ended 2025 with a record amount of **\$1,045,681** in general-fund giving. This is the first time we have ever exceeded \$1,000,000 in general-fund giving. We were able to achieve this by significant giving in December, which resulted in a close to breakeven year with expenses equaling giving.

This general-fund giving was in addition to giving toward our LIFT Capital Campaign in 2025 which ended 2025 with **\$904,390** in donations.

Our giving budget for the 2026 general fund is **\$1,050,000**. In January of 2026 we received **\$62,214** in giving towards our general fund budget. This amount compares to donations of **\$69,128** received in January 2025.

The continued faithfulness of the congregation to our St. Luke mission is so uplifting and I am confident we will meet our 2026 budgeted giving.



# LIFT Capital Campaign

*Leaping in Faith Together, Caring for Creation*



## SPRING 2026 UPDATE

As previously reported, our “Celebration Goal” of **\$1.75 million** in pledges was exceeded by a generous combination of promised gifts by members along with a matching gift of **\$500,000** from the Trust Fund. Again, thank you for your generosity in this campaign.

Currently, 61% of our pledged donations were given over eight months of the LIFT campaign. This is great news as these combined funds are sufficient to complete our priority “Must-Do” projects and pay off the main church building mortgage. We expect that continued giving over the next 2-3 years will allow us to complete other important LIFT projects and initiatives.

## LIFT Celebration: Sunday May 17, 2026

A combined celebration of LIFT projects is planned for **Sunday, May 17th** after 10:30 am worship. We’ll celebrate an official OASIS dedication, Mortgage Burning, and Elevator Modernization acknowledgement. The LIFT Capital Campaign’s 1<sup>st</sup> anniversary is June 1st.

## “Must-Do” Projects (Phase I)

### Outdoor Activity Social Intergenerational Space (OASIS)

Work continues on OASIS as more structures such as a slide, activity panels alongside the gravel, a nature kitchen, and a bench around the ash tree are coming this spring.

Beautiful planter boxes along the church wall and new patio furniture will complete the project. Our hearts are warmed to see so many members contribute to creating this beautiful multi-generational space that all of us can use and enjoy. Thank you to the team for the work on this project.

### HVAC project

**The HVAC Project** started in February and is scheduled to be completed by **June 30, 2026** in time for summer. Installation means the church building will have a newly-installed heating and cooling system to replace our existing heating system. HVAC work in the church lower level is expected to be completed in early March, followed by the offices and Sanctuary to be completed the third week of March. The church upper-level work will commence after Easter and go through the end of April. Work on the HVAC system will occur in May followed by start-up and testing in June.

### Mandatory Elevator Renovation

The Dover elevator will be brought into compliance with Oregon code by replacing the electrical software. This LIFT project started in mid-February and is expected to take a month to complete.

During the construction period, the elevator will be out of commission and not usable. **On Sundays, we are asking those who do NOT have mobility issues to park in the lower level to free up parking spots in front of the church for those that would normally use the elevator.**

Thank you to the Property Committee for the work evaluating, scoping and getting quotes for the HVAC and elevator projects.





# LIFT Capital Campaign

*Leaping in Faith Together, Caring for Creation*



## SPRING 2026 UPDATE (cont.)

### Phase II

LIFT donations that exceed what is required for the Phase I “Must-Do” projects will be used to fund the Phase II projects.

The Vermont House mortgage has a variable **3.7% interest rate growing to 5.9% in February 2027**. The pay-down of the mortgage on the Vermont House is a high priority for the LIFT Continuation Committee and the Finance Committee. So far **\$46k** has been paid on the Vermont mortgage, leaving a balance of around **\$215k**.

Fully paying off the Vermont House mortgage will have a dual benefit: First, it will complete the initiative in the Feasibility and Visioning study which was a high priority for members when surveyed in fall 2024. It will also eventually lower the mortgage cost on the church’s annual budget. The paid-off main church mortgage has already freed up **\$37k** in funds for St. Luke’s 2026 ministry.

After paying off the Vermont House mortgage, the remaining two Phase II items are installing new windows and doors in selected locations throughout the church and paying off the Commercial Property mortgage.

The Commercial Property mortgage has a variable interest rate of **3.7% growing to 5.9% in 2027**, but qualifies as a legitimate business expense which provides a tax benefit. The installation of new windows and doors in the church building will improve our energy efficiency. Both of these items were rated as a high priority by congregation members on the Fall 2024 LIFT survey.

### Phase III

Phase III will involve additional upgrades to the Vermont House and around the church campus. This phase is expected to start once Phase II is completed. For more detailed information on the LIFT projects and timelines, we encourage you to visit the LIFT section of the church website: [LIFT Webpage - St. Luke Lutheran Church](#).

***Thank you for your continued financial support!  
Please direct any questions to the LIFT Continuation Committee.***



*Construction of OASIS climbing wall*

# CONNECT

## FAB (Fifty And Beyond)

The FAB (Fifty And Beyond) Planning Team welcomes any suggestions for day trips and coffee-hour activities. Our Planning Team meets the **Second Wednesday of the month, from 10:00-11:30 a.m.** in the Conference Room.

Please contact one of the seven team members with any ideas you might have, or better yet, to say you'll join our team!

### Looking Forward

On **March 4th at 10:30 am**, FAB will gather in the Fellowship Hall for a coffee hour and to celebrate St. Patty's Day early with Celtic Music. An accomplished musician will share Scottish and Irish music on bagpipes, Irish whistle and flute, as well as songs and stories.

On **March 25th at 10:30am**, FAB will gather in the Fellowship Hall for a coffee hour and presentation about an Alaska-to-Argentina bicycle trip. From May 2017 to January 2019, our guest couple covered **27,000 kilometers!** Hear their stories about bears, bandits, sleeping in abandoned buildings and the generous and warm people they met along the way.

On **April 22nd at 10:30am**, FAB will meet at church for a short bus ride to Downtown Portland to visit the Chinese Gardens, followed by lunch at a Chinese restaurant (of course!) Look for details in future publications of the Weekly Press and Sunday bulletins.

On a **Wednesday in May**, FAB will visit Schreiner's Iris Garden in Keizer. Look for details in future publications of the Weekly Press and Sunday bulletins.

### Looking Back

On **December 17th**, 13 of us gathered in the Fellowship Hall to enjoy a coffee hour and watch the 2003 movie *Kitchen Stories*. We enjoyed viewing this is a quirky, bittersweet comedy about a Swedish researcher who is sent to observe and improve a Norwegian farmer's kitchen habits!

On **January 21st**, 16 of us gathered in the Fellowship Hall to celebrate FAB's 3rd annual **Valentine's Bash** with pizza, music, games, hearts, prizes and the movie *Valentine's Day*. Yes, it was a bit early, but who does not love hearts at any time!

On **February 18th**, we gathered in the Fellowship Hall to enjoy a coffee hour and presentation by Kimberly Shute, a certified downsizing coach and owner of Mature Moves Real Estate Team. She shared insightful steps to motivate us to declutter our spaces, so that we can feel more vibrant, confident and free.

## Memory Café

Memory Café is a monthly ministry for persons with memory loss and their family/friend care partners. We gather together on the **Second Thursday of the month from 2:30-4:00 pm** in Fellowship Hall.

Memory Café is open to the community, welcoming people of all faiths and no faith, to gather together on a monthly basis to enjoy fellowship, refreshments, and live singalong music. Our spring meetups are **March 11th, April 8th, and May 12th**.

**Photo at right is from December's Memory Café, with a record-setting 25 people in attendance!**

## CONNECT DATES

### Lenten Soup Suppers

March 4, 11, 18, 25

### Wednesday Church Night

May 6 (no gathering on April 1)

### FAB Team Meetings

March 11 — April 8 — May 13

### Memory Café

March 11 — April 8 — May 12

### Good Words Book Group

March 15 — April 19 — May 17

### Cancer Support Group

Contact Church Office for future dates



# CONNECT

## Join us for Lenten Wednesday Soup Suppers!

Start the evening off with fellowship around a simple meal of soup, salad, and bread after Songbirds (kids' choir) and before joining our Wednesday evening Taizé services of prayer.

Grow the connections of St. Luke by taking part in our own supper club for the season!

**When:** 5:30pm on March 4, 11, 18 & 25

**Where:** Fellowship Hall

**Cost:** Donate what you can towards St. Luke ministries

Do you have the spiritual gift of service? Can you join us 30 minutes early to set up, or stay a few minutes late to help clean up? Let us know!

**After our midweek Lenten soup suppers conclude, our next Wednesday Church Night will be May 6.**

**We won't have Wednesday Church Night on April 1, as it is the Wednesday of Holy Week.**

## Memorial Reception Committee Seeks Co-Chair for 2027

We are seeking a committee co-chair to begin in January 2027.

We have developed a robust team to assist with scheduling volunteers, cookie donations and flower arrangements.

You will meet with family members to plan the memorial reception, determine the number of volunteers needed, purchase needed supplies, plan the reception layout, assist volunteers & family members in the set-up, reception event and cleanup.

The chairperson's position comes with detailed information to assist you in moving into the role. This is a volunteer position but for larger events there is a stipend.

If you are interested in joining the team to help create a reception honoring the life of a church member please contact our Church Office.



## Good Words Book Group

Join **GOOD WORDS BOOK GROUP** in 2026 on the **third Sunday of the month at 9:15 a.m.** in the Conference Room.

We combine fellowship and good books of all kinds. New members are **always welcome!**

Here's our book list for the next few months:

Mar 15 *1984* by George Orwell

Apr 19 *The Many Daughters of Avong Moy* by Jamie Ford

May 17 *The Covenant of Water* by Abraham Verghese

Please join us!



## Memorial Reception Dishwashers Needed

We are looking to update our list of high school students who are interested in working as dishwashers at upcoming memorial receptions.

The receptions are typically on weekends. If you are interested, we will train you and add your name to our call list.

This is a paid position- **\$50.00 for approximately two hours of work.** The frequency of work varies each year depending on the need for a memorial reception, so work hours are not guaranteed.

If you would like the opportunity to join, please contact the church office staff.



# SERVE

## Community Table

Our campus food pantry distribution program, **Community Table**, is helping our neighbors in Portland and the surrounding area. We have had an increased number of guests visiting our food pantry and our twice-monthly distribution now serves around **200 households each month**.

If you are interested in lending a hand during the week to assist with deliveries or packaging or stocking shelves, or if assisting guests at one of our Saturday distributions interests you, contact Volunteer/Service Coordinator Caroline Eddy at [caroline@stlukechurch.com](mailto:caroline@stlukechurch.com).

**Our spring distribution dates are:**

**March 14 and 28, April 11 and 25, May 9 and 30.**



## Grauer Back-to-School



The Grauer Back-to-School Project is a volunteer, non-profit collaborative partnership with local faith organizations, social services agencies and businesses, created to respond to the back-to-school needs of low-income children who attend school in the Ida B. Wells cluster of schools in Southwest Portland.

Each year, on the second Saturday of August, we provide a new winter coat, socks, shoes, underwear, T-shirt, and a backpack full of school supplies for each child who comes to Grauer.

**This year's Grauer distribution will take place on August 8th. Planning meetings start on March 17th.** We are looking for a liaison to other faith organizations, a backpack lead, a school supply lead, and co-leads for other areas. Contact Caroline Eddy to help prepare for this event.

## SW Hope

Our community partner, Neighborhood House, is doing their annual food and fundraising drive, **SW Hope**.

Throughout the Lenten season, we will be collecting non-perishable food and household items in the Narthex. There will be a series of Dine-Out Nights at local restaurants that will donate a portion of the proceeds to Neighborhood House. Keep an eye on the Weekly Press to see where you can dine to participate.

SW Hope will end with a **5K fundraiser run at Oregon Episcopal School on April 11th**. This includes a fun "Kids Chase the Bunny" run. If you are inspired to coordinate a crew from St. Luke or if you would like to participate in the run, please contact Caroline Eddy at the email below. Thank you!



*Caroline Eddy, Volunteer/Service Coordinator*  
[caroline@stlukechurch.com](mailto:caroline@stlukechurch.com)



## Social Concerns Committee Update: Spring 2026

### Financial Report

- **Treasurer Update:** Checkbook balance reported at **\$15,868** (January 1, 2026). It was noted refugee fund balances and confirmed that all 2025 pledges were met.
- Spreadsheet of 2026 approved amounts distributed to Committee, noting **\$20,000** from St. Luke Trust Committee in response to an invited grant request from Social Concerns in December 2025: **\$7500** – Grauer; **\$7,500** Community Table; **\$5,000** - Refugee Families Fund.

### February Financial Report

2026 Social Concerns budget set at **\$70,000 by congregation at annual meeting in January.**

Additional **\$12,500** available from Trust Committee upon request.

### LIFT Capital Campaign Benevolence

- In January, it was reported LIFT campaign goal **\$1.75M** has been met.
- **5% (\$87,500)** of LIFT campaign designated for benevolence, to be paid in **one lump sum at campaign end.**
- Committee members expressed concern about waiting three years given immediate needs. Distribution timing was confirmed with LIFT Committee: confirmed need to pay down church mortgages first, with benevolence paid at end of three-year period.

### Assistance to Sponsored Refugee Families

Immediate federal SNAP cut for all refugees; Committee discussed volunteer coordination and after-school help needs as well as funding. Financial actions:

- Approved **\$1000/month for 6 months** added to Family 1 budget for **rent**
- Approved **\$300/month for 6 months** for Family 1 Budget for **utilities.**
- Total rent/utilities benefit increased to **\$1,300/month for six months** for Family 1, then to be re-evaluated.
- Noted **\$5,000** currently in their account and **\$1,000/month** support through June.

**Other refugee families:** SNAP benefit cutoffs for refugees discussed. Committee approved **\$200/month for 6 months** to Family 2 for halal food. Re-evaluation in 6 months.

**Farewell: Members of Family 2** have moved to New Jersey where they hope to open a restaurant. Still in Portland are two older brothers and their families who arrived in the last two years, and younger brothers.

### Policy, Guidelines, and Planning

- **Social Concerns Benevolence Guidelines (March 2019) modified at February 2026 meeting.** Considering dramatic reductions in federal funding for food and housing support, as well as immediate cut-off of SNAP benefits for refugees, and our need to increase funding of our congregational intergenerational ministries, the Committee agreed to:
  - **Eliminate percentage distributions of benevolence in all categories:**
    - **Inter-generational ministries** (Grauer and Community Table). Was 30%
    - **Our Neighbors** (Non-profits). Was 60%
    - **Advocacy.** (Non-profits and St. Luke congregational). Was 10%
  - **Continue three-category focus with periodic nonprofit reviews.**
  - **Maintain Pastor's Discretionary emergency funds and Committee responsiveness to disasters.**
- **Nonprofit reviews** begin at March 2026 meeting. These reviews will be periodic, no longer annual.

# SERVE

Climate Justice Ministry

## St Luke Lutheran Church

April 19, 2026

9:15 and 10:30 services

## Celebrating Our Earth A Gift from God

Our planet  
Our power

Special creation-themed, liturgy,  
songs, prayers, scripture

### Mini Pantry: Our Non-Perishable Food Ministry

Help those experiencing food insecurity by keeping the Mini Pantry stocked for our neighborhood! Drop off food at the pantry anytime. And take what you need, when you need it.

We try our best to keep different food options and brown paper sacks available for those who may visit the pantry. Whenever possible, it's helpful to have the cans with pull tabs for opening rather than adding canned goods that require a can opener. Think simple hearty foods and simple prep.

Another way you may want to help is to sign up to tidy the pantry on Sundays or Wednesdays.

Questions? Contact the Church Office.



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**TIME DATED MATERIAL**

*Return Service Requested*

**WORSHIP † CONNECT † SERVE**