



Sharing Our Faith

St. Luke's United Methodist Church

3080 Okatie Highway, between the back gates of Sun City on Hwy 170

"Praising and Serving God Thru the Ages"

Volume 15, Issue

JANUARY 2021



As we say goodbye to the year of 2020, there seems to be a sense of relief that this trying year is finally over. The year

marked by the Covid-19 pandemic, lock downs in our homes, churches and businesses being closed, riots and social unrest, and elections that are still ongoing or being challenged. What a year this has been! Most people are glad to see this year come to an end. Yet in the midst of all these things, we still find God's blessings everywhere we turn.

We at St. Luke's have witnessed the blessings of God. At the beginning of the year, we successfully received pledges to move forward on the fellowship hall renovations. We have been blessed with financial support from each of you leaving St. Luke's financially strong beginning the New Year. We have been blessed with a beautiful new venue in which to worship along with 6 months of beautiful weather for worship. We have continued to see the power of prayer and the movement of God in the lives of so many. Maybe this year has not been as bad as we remember when remembering God's blessings.

So as the date on the calendar changes from 2020 to 2021, remember the God we worship and serve is the same yesterday, today and tomorrow, still fulfilling promises with power, love, grace and mercy and pouring out blessings every day, even in a pandemic!

Happy New Year!

Brian

Contact Info for Pastor Brian

Cell: 803.686.0794

Home: 843.707.7991

Email: bpreveaux@umcsc.org



By the time you read this it will be 2021. Many of us, including me, can't wait for the Times Square ball to drop at midnight Dec 31, 2020. Seems as though this will be a year to remember...or forget. It will be easy for the naysayers to downplay any significant milestones that happened in 2020. Most of the news centered around the coronavirus and the effects it had not only on the people who caught it, but also the effects it had on the economy as a whole.

Many small businesses might be closing their doors permanently. — Victims of a blight that they did not cause. Disruptions in the schools may prove to have a lasting effect on our children's ability to learn. Nobody can say what may be uncovered in the weeks and months ahead.

So, most of this doom and gloom is certainly overshadowed by some good things. Good things you say? Yes. Good things. Through all these mundane months of hibernation we were able to worship our Lord every Sunday at St. Luke's. While most churches and synagogues were "closed", we were able to have Sunday services in the rear of the property. Most Sundays included the same dedicated group of parishioners who enjoy being in church every week. We bring our folding chairs and masks and our thirst for religion. We love our Lord. We love St. Luke's. We beat Covid-19.

So, if there is any bright spot about 2020, it surely must be St. Luke's. The place where small miracles abound. We refuse to be beaten. Praise be Jesus Christ!

Happy New Year!

See you in "church",
Ron Pozsonyi, Lay Leader



My personal thanks to all of you who have stood by your God and your Church in this past, trying, year. By your continued financial support (mailing it in) we have been able to keep St. Luke's solvent and assure that in the future months we can all be together again in worship.

A very special thanks to our "silent angels" of St. Luke's who have continued to work behind the scenes to make it all keep happening. While there are those who I am not aware of, I want to call out Pat S. and Mary G. who keep the records and get the bills paid. Jim Seymore and the Trustees maintain the property and are planning for the new renovations. Nancy Sariscak and the Worship Committee have allowed us to keep having services.

Thank you to all of you who work unseen in our Church.

Rob Clark

Stimulate St. Luke's

This past trying year, most of us received "stimulus" checks from the government. This will likely happen again in the near future. For some, these have been a critical financial help line in a time of distress. For many of us, they are an unexpected windfall.

If you are among the fortunate that don't really need the bonus, I urge you to consider giving part or all of it to St. Luke's. You may support either the general fund or our building fund. Both need your ongoing support. Note your preference on your donation check.

Bless you for your ongoing support of your Church in doing the work of God.

Rob Clark,
Finance Committee Chairperson



MAIL IT IN

Even when we are "shut down", many of our operating expenses at St. Luke's have continued. Please continue to "mail it in" to support St. Luke's until "normal" times finally arrive. To the many of you who have been supporting your church the past several months – a big THANK YOU!

The mailing address is: St. Luke's UMC, PO Box 2779, Bluffton SC 29910.

Fellowship Hall Update



The county's Historic Preservation Review Board cancelled their December meeting that we were going to attend. However, we are on their agenda for the January 21st meeting. This review board is a sub-committee in the Beaufort County Planning and Zoning Department. Both of our plans, A and B, will be reviewed by the board. Our plan A has the kitchen and storage areas in the rear of the building and Plan B has them on the front corner near the parking lot.

The committee will review both our plans at that time. The positive outcome of this delay is that we will have time for our building committee to review and discuss our Plan B instead of me making the decision unilaterally.

Pray for a positive decision for us from the review board and Happy New Year to everyone.

Jim Seymore



To the Congregation,
As we celebrate Christmas, we want to say thank you for the blessings you have bestowed on residents in Sun City who are facing life's challenges. Your past donations to Staying Connected have allowed us to help hundreds of folks who are in need of a little help. We're hopeful that you find it in your hearts to renew your support in 2021.

Forever grateful,
Hugh Armstrong



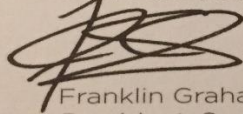
Warmest thoughts and Best Wishes for
a wonderful **Holiday Season** and
Healthy New Year!
Your friends at Staying Connected

SAMARITAN'S PURSE – CHRISTMAS CHILD SHOEBOXES

Thank You!

We deeply appreciate each shoebox gift you packed with prayer and dropped off to begin its journey to a child in need. As Samaritan's Purse sends these Operation Christmas Child gifts around the world, we partner with local churches to deliver them and share the Gospel of Jesus Christ with boys and girls and their families. Many of these children also participate in our follow-up discipleship program, The Greatest Journey. Through 12 exciting lessons taught by trained volunteer teachers, millions of children are learning how to follow Christ and share Him with others. To learn more, visit samaritanspurse.org/tgj.

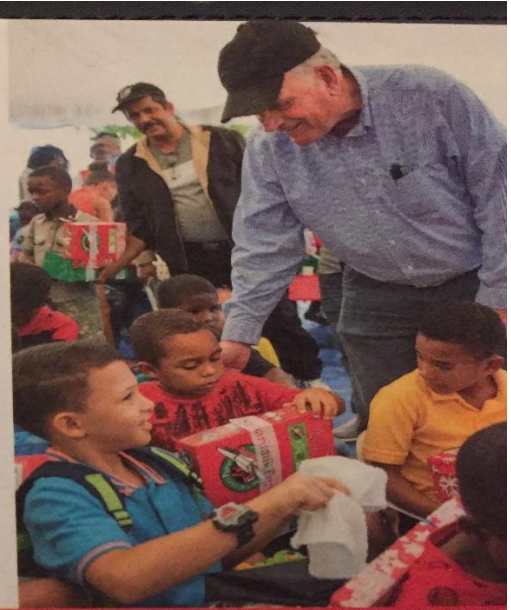
God bless you,



Franklin Graham
President, Samaritan's Purse



"Go into all the world and
preach the Gospel." MARK 16:15



St. Luke's Missions Efforts in 2020

Despite a very difficult 2020 for all of us, our Congregation's giving spirit soared during the year. A few highlights:

Bluffton Self-Help food donations remained high – We successfully expanded our monthly food drives for Bluffton Self-Help to two pickups a month, now on the first Sunday and third Monday of each month. This has permitted those unable to attend Sunday Services to donate as well and we have found that many are able to contribute on both dates.

Samaritan's Purse Christmas Child Shoeboxes - St. Luke's far exceeded previous efforts this year and prepared and donated over 70 shoeboxes for the global drive in November.

Donations to Local Groups – In December, St. Luke's made \$1,000 donations to five local deserving organizations with whom we have had a close relationship. Those organizations are:

Bluffton Self Help
Second Helpings
Family Promise
Child Abuse Prevention Center
Hopeful Horizons

A special thanks to Bill Trainer and Mary Goldfinch for their input and efforts in this process.

Also, none of our 2020 successes would have been possible without the hard work of Pat Simmons and Jane Disney in keeping all of us notified about upcoming events. And as always, Brian, Joy and Angie and the Board's support has been invaluable.

Rick Hoel,
Missions Chair

(Please see Thank You letters on the next page)



December 23, 2020

St. Luke's United Methodist Church

Dear Friends,

On behalf of the Child Abuse Prevention Association (CAPA), I would like to offer our sincere appreciation for the support you have given us this Holiday Season. It is through generosity and dedication like yours that CAPA is able to do the work we do. There is no other way to express our gratitude for your thoughtful donation of \$1,000.00.

You are making a lasting investment in the children of the Lowcountry. In 2019, CAPA delivered 789 lessons to 9,493 elementary students about child abuse, personal safety, feelings, and getting along with others. CAPA's Positive Parenting Program served 179 parents, our Safe Sleep program provided 38 expectant and new parents with portable cribs, our new Exchange Parent Aide Program worked with 47 at-risk parents of 121 children in their homes, our Resource Family Program licensed 17 foster families and placed 40 children in homes, and there were 51 children in our Open Arms Children's Home with a total of 4,181 days in care. Your gift makes a difference to so many of your neighbors.

Thank you for making our community a happier, safer place for children to grow and learn in a healthy environment. We hope you have a safe and happy Holiday and a Happy New Year!

Sincerely,

Victoria Dye
Operations Assistant
Child Abuse Prevention Association

December 23, 2020

St. Luke's Methodist Church

Dear Friends,

On behalf of everyone at Family Promise of Beaufort County but most importantly the homeless children and parents we serve, we thank you for your support. Your \$1,000.00 donation allows Family Promise to continue assisting families in need by not only providing safe shelter, but also assistance in equipping them with the skills and resources needed for lasting independence.

During these unprecedented times, we have had to modify the lodging portion of our Shelter Program until our partner congregations reopen. For the foreseeable future our families will be staying at a local extended-stay hotel where they have a fully equipped kitchenette and access to complimentary laundry facilities and a business center. This, of course, is no easy task as there are many issues to consider as you can well imagine. Most of these, such as access to childcare, employment opportunities, and testing for COVID-19 are out of our control. That said, we continue to gather information and revise our plan of action in order to keep the Family Promise doors open to assist this vulnerable population.

Because of caring supporters like you we continue to provide safe lodging and access to nutritious meals during these uncertain times. For this support, we cannot thank you enough! Our community has pulled together to assist many organizations over these past months and this has been a bright spot in these otherwise challenging and sad times.

Again, thank you from our Board of Trustees, staff, and the families we serve. Stay safe and healthy and be sure to take care of those around you.

Very Gratefully,

Lynda Halpern
Executive Director

**FIRST SUNDAY & THIRD MONDAY
FOOD MISSION DRIVE**



The First Sunday Food Mission Drive is now under the leadership of Rick Hoel, Missions Chair. If you have any questions regarding Missions and the Food Bank in particular, please contact him at 843.295.9002 or rickhoel12@gmail.com

Helping to feed the hungry is an important mission of St. Luke's. As you know we expanded our efforts to include two drop offs to provide more opportunities for those not attending Sunday services to participate and for those who can donate more. In addition to our regular drop off on the first Sunday of the month, we added a drop off on the third Monday of the month.

Specifically, for January 2021, please drop off your contributions in the back-parking lot at the church ON Sunday, January 3rd. We will be loading before and after the service. You can now also drop off at the church on Monday, January 18th from 9:00 to 10:00 a.m. "Social distancing" will be observed to avoid any risk of virus transmission.



Your contributions are vital as the community needs are extreme due to the pandemic. Feeding the hungry is truly part of us doing God's Work!

PLEASE help us with our **FIRST SUNDAY** and **THIRD MONDAY** FOOD MISSION DRIVES for our local food pantry, **Bluffton Self Help**. PLEASE help us stock the pantry with the most desired/requested items.

These include:

- cereal – Cheerios preferred, instant grits/oatmeal,
- peanut butter, jelly, dried pasta, pasta sauce,
- boxed or bagged dinner mixes such as Hamburger Helper, Beefaroni, etc., dried beans, and rice.

Also needed are recycled shopping bags & diapers (sizes 4, 5 & 6) and toilet paper. Unfortunately, we can't accept any open, expired or damaged items.

In case of rain and church services are cancelled on January 3rd, we will be at the church parking lot on Monday, January 4th from 9:00 – 10:00 AM. Please remember to show your willingness to be of service by signing up to deliver the food donations for an upcoming month.

Thank you.

Prayer Requests

Let us remember with cards, and prayers...

CHURCH MEMBERS

Jim & Jane Seymore, 23 Clairborne Ct, Bluffton 29909
Bob Lee, 7 Becket Place, Bluffton 29909

**CHURCH MEMBERS IN NURSING HOMES,
ASSISTED LIVING OR HOMEBOUND**

Nancy Adkins, 49 Heron's Bill Drive, Bluffton 29909
Elnora Ekholm, 173 May River Rd., Bluffton 29910
Jane Slayton, NHC, 3039 Okatie Hwy. Rm. 331 Okatie 29909; Tel: 843-705-1319
Jane and Jerry Wick, 2 Devant Court, Bluffton 29909
June Hamilton, 4 Concession Oak Dr., Bluffton 29909

FAMILY AND FRIENDS OF MEMBERS

Roland & Vivian Smith, 297 Landing Lane, Bluffton 29909
Hannah Nystrom, friend of Marie & John Baldauf
Toddler, Iris Duque, and her family, family of Ouida Dell
Hugh & Sue Ross, brother and sister-in-law of Will Ross
Mongin & CJ Smyly, father and mother of Joy Preveaux
Michele Elek, sister of Nancy Sariscak
Health care workers
Mary Lou Bryant
Jill, cousin of Nancy Sariscak
Jamie Hoel
Jennifer and Dot Tate, friends of Ouida Dell (Covid-19)

Happy Birthday!

January Birthdays

- 06 Laura Beall
- 11 Jack Hills
- 14 Mary Goldfinch
- 15 Norm Stark
- 17 Bob Heck
- 18 Ottice Atkins
- 20 Mickey Ewing
- 26 Bob Antoine

January Anniversaries

NO Anniversaries listed



February Birthdays

- 09 Linda Metcalf
- 10 Walker Hamilton
- 13 Bill Trainer
- 18 Shelley Valentine
- 19 Linda Fisher
- 21 Marge Skinker
- 23 Bill Husson
- 26 Linda Batten

February Anniversaries

- 02 Letty & Bill Husson
- 26 Nancy & John Sariscak
- 27 Ellie & Bob Antoine

THE YEAR CHRISTMAS KEPT US

My mother loved to write—poetry, short stories, sermons; she wrote as a lay leader in her local small United Methodist Church. I spent some of my time during this pandemic sorting and re-reading all of her writings—this precious gift she left us.

One story seems particularly poignant for us during these recent times. It's a Christmas story—one that takes place during WWII. My mother grew up in a close extended family. Her mother had three sisters and four brothers. They all lived in the same small town in Missouri. They all celebrated the holidays together. Years later I spent some Christmas holidays there. It was



wonderful—trimming the tree with homemade ornaments and strings of cranberries and popcorn, traditional foods and desserts, Christmas caroling, sitting in front of the fireplace with my grandfather reading the Christmas story, hanging the

stockings, putting out Santa's milk and cookies, shuffling the children off to bed, and finally, the adult's nightcap of a glass of sherry.

But this Christmas was different. The world was at war. In a small town, where everyone knew everyone else, nearly every household had been touched by the tragedy war always brings. My Mother's favorite cousin was reported "Missing in Action" and another cousin's husband was killed in battle. Sadness was heavy and some family members suggested the large family gathering and celebration should be cancelled.

But my grandmother and her two sisters would have none of that. They insisted that Christmas would be celebrated. And they warned their four brothers that there would be "consequences" if they refused to participate. I once asked my mother what the "consequences" would be. She had no idea. "The sisters rule. They always have," was all she would say.

And so, the traditional celebration was held. Every aspect of it. By "going through the motions" they kept Christmas. Amidst all the suffering, sorrow, constant worrying, the shortages, etc. they kept Christmas. But my mother ends her story: And so, Christmas kept us.

This story reminds me of our St. Luke's family. Despite this year of a pandemic, we kept our church going—weekly worship services online and under the old trees, following pandemic guidelines. We served our community through our mission work. Thanks to Joy for the Trekking with Christ mailings, to Judi Landen and the group she organized, the group of women sending cards of thanks and encouragement to health care workers in our area, to Pat who posted videos of our worship service and the monthly newsletter, to the Council members who continued their work, to Geoff for the music, to Pat and Will for their special music, to Will for bringing the organ and equipment every Sunday, to our family who continued their financial support, and of course to Brian for his constant messages of encouragement. And so, we kept our church functioning and because of that our church kept us.

Pam Hoel, Historian

Sunday mornings



"IN-PERSON" WORSHIP

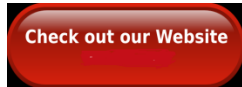
We continue to have "in-person" worship in the "back parking lot". We bring our chairs and do social distancing, plus we wear our face coverings. We have only **One** Worship Service at **9:15 a.m.** In the event of rain, services will not be held. We look forward to seeing you there!





IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO BECOME A MEMBER OF ST. LUKE'S – Please email Pat Simmons at st.lukesumc.hwy170@gmail.com for an “Invitation to Membership” form. Fill it out and mail it to St. Luke’s UMC, PO Box 2779, Bluffton SC 29910. You will then be contacted by Pastor Brian.

“Contact Us” using email. Our church website, www.stlukesumc-okatie.org is a valuable tool to attract people, share information and create interest in St. Luke’s. To enhance capabilities and provide a foundation for the future, a collaborative effort is underway that changes some website organization, layout, content and navigation. **For example, listen to the “Online Sermons by Pastor Brian,** and Newsletters are available through the “About Us” area. For more information or assistance using the website, please contact Dave Disney, 706.372.2178 or disneydw1@gmail.com



Many of you may not know that we are posting our “backyard” sermons on YouTube. Each Sunday, after 1:00 PM (that gives time to set everything up) you can click on the link below to listen and watch the sermon.

Here is the YouTube link:

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCj_gXL78wJ24jkl6HMBp02g

The link is also on our website under “Quick Links”: **This is the website address:** www.stlukesumc-okatie.org

(If clicking on the link doesn’t work for you, copy and paste it in your browser.)



Now this is interesting There must be at least one thing you did not know!!!

If you are right-handed, you will tend to chew your food on the right side of your mouth. If you are left-handed, you will tend to chew your food on the left side of your mouth.

The Mona Lisa has no eyebrows. In the Renaissance era, it was fashion to shave them off!

Because of the speed at which Earth moves around the Sun, it is impossible for a solar eclipse to last more than 7 minutes and 58 seconds.

Google is actually the common name for a number with a million zeros.

It takes glass one million years to decompose, which means it never wears out and can be recycled an infinite number of times!

Gold is the only metal that doesn’t rust, even if it’s buried in the ground for thousands of years.

Your tongue is the only muscle in your body that is attached at only one end.

Zero is the only number that cannot be represented by Roman numerals.

Kites were used in the American Civil War to deliver letters and newspapers.

The song, Auld Lang Syne, is sung at the stroke of midnight in almost every English-speaking country in the world to bring in the new year.

The roar that we hear when we place a seashell next to our ear is not the ocean, but rather the sound of blood surging through the veins in the ear.

Nine out of every 10 living things live in the ocean.

The banana cannot reproduce itself. It can be propagated only by the hand of man.

The University of Alaska spans four time zones.

The tooth is the only part of the human body that cannot heal itself.

In ancient times strangers shook hands to show that they were unarmed.

Strawberries are the only fruits whose seeds grow on the outside.

CHURCH COUNCIL FOR 2021

Committee of Nominations and Leadership I

A. Previously Elected

Class of 2021

Verna Crosby Jane Seymore

Class of 2022

Marie Baldauf Paul LoMonaco

B. Nominees Class of 2023

Pat Ross