



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"

Worship times: 8:30 & 10:15 AM (5th Sundays 9:15 AM)

Volume 21, Issue 2

FEBRUARY 2026

Our Travels



The life and ministry of Jesus was never static. He was always on the move—walking dusty roads, crossing seas, climbing hillsides, and entering towns both welcoming and resistant. Scripture gives us snapshots, almost like sacred photographs, capturing where He went, who walked beside Him, what He encountered, and what unfolded along the way. Each scene tells a story not just of movement, but of purpose.

Jesus traveled through Galilee, Samaria, and Judea. He stopped at wells and dined in homes. He stood on mountainsides teaching crowds and sat quietly with His disciples, explaining the deeper meaning of what they had witnessed. Sometimes He was surrounded by multitudes; other times, only a few faithful companions shared the road. Wherever He went, something happened—lives were healed, minds were opened, hearts were challenged.

Now pause for a moment and consider your own travels.

Think about the pictures you carry—actual photographs or the ones stored in your heart. Where were you when that picture was taken? Who was with you? What was happening in that moment, and why were you there? Was it a season of joy, transition, struggle, or growth? Often, what stands out most in a picture isn't the scenery, but the people beside us or the story behind the image.

Those moments mattered. They shaped who we are today.

Now, shift your focus to the present. Imagine taking a picture right now—of your life, your faith, your walk with God. Who would be in the frame with you? What are you seeing? Are you standing still, or are you in motion? Are you where you expected to be, or has the journey taken an unexpected turn?

Ask yourself honestly: *Why am I here?*

What is God teaching me in this place?

Who has God placed beside me for this season?

Jesus never traveled aimlessly. Even when the destination wasn't clear to those following Him, He knew there was purpose in every step. Each road led to teaching, healing, or transformation—sometimes for others, sometimes for His disciples, and sometimes for both.

And then there is the future—the road ahead.

Where are you going? What direction are you heading spiritually, emotionally, and faithfully? Are you moving toward deeper trust, greater love, and a stronger sense of calling? Or are you simply drifting, letting circumstances decide your path?

Jesus was always heading somewhere for a reason. And as His followers, we are invited to do the same.

So we ask ourselves, thoughtfully and prayerfully:

Why were we there?

Why are we here?

And why are we heading in the direction we are going?

May we walk forward with intention, awareness, and faith—trusting that God is present in every place we've been, every place we are, and every place we are yet to go.

Rev. Christopher L. Thompson, D. Min



“For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope.” (Jeremiah 29: 11)

My thoughts this morning echoed this verse. I like this message and have often used it with high school and college graduates as they contemplate the future. Now I am using it to reflect on my life and the changes I have seen in the past five years. They have definitely been plans for our welfare. We decided to sell our home in Punxsutawney and our Hilton Head condo. We had been snowbirds for ten years, traveling between Hilton Head and our home in PA. We loved our condo on the island but knew we couldn't live there fulltime. We bought our house in Bluffton which we have loved from the first day. We have the greatest neighbors anyone could ask for, and then we found St. Luke's.

I was driving by the church on a Saturday (during Covid). We had talked about where we wanted to go to church but hadn't tried any specific place yet. I saw cars in St. Luke's parking lot and God told me to stop. I went into the old fellowship hall where two women were working on a computer. That was my first meeting with Pat Simmons and Mary Goldfinch. They answered questions for me and encouraged us to attend on Sunday and that was the beginning.

Since we joined St. Luke's we have participated in a variety of activities that were new for us. We agreed to serve in positions we hadn't tried in our former church. I found the Missions Committee which is so important to me. Now I am serving along with Charlene King and Michelle Cramer as your lay leaders. So far it has been an interesting journey. Charlene plays the piano at Canterfield which is a lay servant ministry. Michelle and I have both served communion. I am attending committee meetings and am learning so much about what keeps St. Luke's going. All three of us are working with Pastor Chris to learn how to write and deliver sermons.

I believe so strongly that we are all fulfilling the plans that God has for us. In my case, I never saw myself as a lay leader. I like it so far; it's part of my present and my future. Be ready to answer the call when God makes plans for you. The joys and challenges are part of God's plan.

Kathy Smith,
Lay Leader



It's February already and one twelfth of the year has already passed. Did you make a New Year Resolution? How are you doing?

There are essentially three types of resolutions. The first are those designed to improve ourselves. Maybe we resolve to lose weight. After all, reducing our weight can improve our overall health, prolong our life and just feel better. Maybe we want to eat healthier. Or should we be better organized, read more, watch less TV? Did we resolve to go to the fitness center and exercise more? These are all good practices and worthy of accomplishing.

The second type of resolutions are designed to help others. Some resolve to visit the sick or those in nursing homes. Others may wish to devote more time to your church, which is always appreciated. Still another is to tutor a struggling child, in any subject they are falling behind in. Your local school counselor can provide you a list. How about increasing your charitable donations? Some people join groups that pick-up litter on our roadways. These are all noble resolutions that help others.

The third, and one of my favorite type of resolutions is what I call "Two For". That's where one change can improve ourselves and improve the life of others around us. Here are some examples: Resolve to be more patient. It's easy to see how improving your patience within ourselves improves our relationship with others. "A patient person calms disputes and demonstrates great understanding, while quick temper stirs conflict." (Proverbs 15:18, Proverbs 19:11)

Resolve to be kinder. The Bible teaches that kindness is a core command, a fruit of the Spirit and a reflection of God's own character. (Galatians 5:22) Resolve to be more punctual, so that others don't have to wait on us. (Proverbs 21:5) Viewing consistent lateness as disrespectful and wasteful, contrasting with the orderly conduct expected in faith. Resolve to share with all the abundance that we have. Resolve to show love. Jesus gave a "new commandment" to love one another as He loved them. (John 13:34-35)

Resolve to be more forgiving. When asked how many times to forgive, Jesus responded, "Not seven times, but seventy times seven," indicating unlimited forgiveness. (Matthew 18:21-22)

These examples of "Two For" resolutions are the greatest of resolutions. They are both a gift to us and great gifts to others. They also help us build the important relationship with God and ease our path to eternity, at peace with God.

So, if you're falling behind on your new year resolutions, don't give up. Keep trying and trying until you accomplish your goal. If you haven't started, start now. Pick one of these. We don't need to wait until January 1st to better ourselves, help others, or strengthen our relationship with our Father in Heaven.

Happy New Year

Will Ross,
Lay Servant

WORSHIP

Hello Church Family! The next couple of months are going to be busy.



On February 8th we will have **one Service at 9:15 AM** followed by **our 3rd Annual Souper Bowl Lunch**. It will be a Football Theme Event since the Super Bowl is later that day. We will be serving 10 delicious soups made by members of our congregation along with dessert and beverages. You are welcome to wear your favorite team shirt or team colors if you like. It will be fun!!!

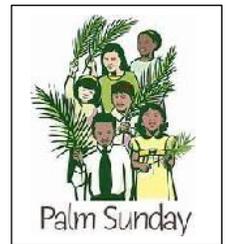
The next couple of months are special times in the life of the church.

February 18th is Ash Wednesday. We will participate in a service at Church of the Palms at 6:30 PM.



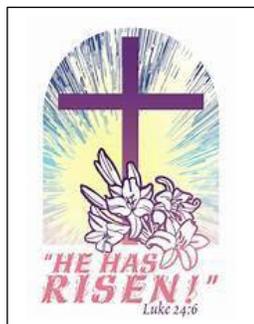
We will have 4 afternoon Lenten Services followed by a light lunch. March 4th will be at Bluffton UMC, **March 11th at St. Luke's UMC**, March 18th at St. Andrew's Church, HHI, and March 25th at Church of the Palms.

On Palm Sunday, March 29th, we will have **One Service at 9:15 AM**. We will be handing out Palms and the Choir will be performing a Cantata.



April 2nd we are going to have a Maundy Thursday Evening Service.

Friday April 3rd a Good Friday Service. (Details to follow.)



Sunday April 5th is Easter Sunday.



Lois Willig will be taking orders for Easter Lillies to be purchased in memory or in honor of a loved one. More information to follow.

If anyone has comments, questions or suggestions please feel free to call or email me.

In God's Love and Service
Nancy Sariscak, Worship Committee Chair
412-770-8092; nlsack72@gmail.com



Two more people are needed for our ad hoc audit committee. There will be 2-3 meetings between early February and mid-March, with a final report due to the Finance Committee, who recommends adoption by the Church Council. Once adopted, the audit report is submitted to the District Office. Please let me know if you are interested in, and willing to serve on, the 2025 Audit Committee. Thank you.

Alan Jordan, Finance Chair
akkcjordan@gmail.com



MEETINGS IN THE FELLOWSHIP HALL

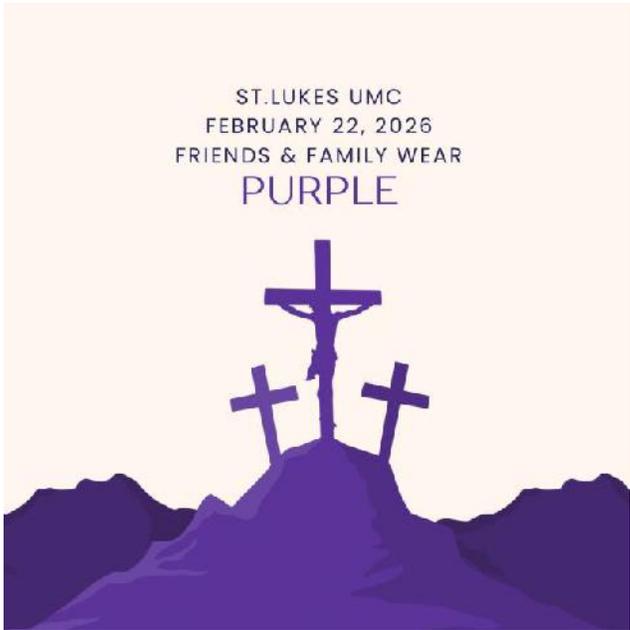
- Every Monday—Men’s Bible Study, 8:00 AM
- Every Tuesday—Choir Practice, 7:00 PM
- Every Thursday—Women’s Bible Study, Meet & Greet, 5:30; Study 6:00-7:00 PM
- Tuesday, 02/03—Trustees, 9:00 AM
- Wednesday, 02/04—Vision Committee, 4:00 PM
- Wednesday, 02/11—Missions, 1:00 PM
- Thursday, 02/26—Church Council, 3:30 PM

OTHER EVENTS FOR ST. LUKE’S FAMILY

Ash Wednesday Service—February 18th, 6:30 PM at Church of the Palms UMC.



Please wear **“Purple”** on the 4th Sunday of the



Saturday, Feb 28th, BINGO & Mexican Train Game night beginning at 4:00 PM in the Fellowship Hall





Spotlight on our Youth:

One of my favorite things about St. Luke's is our strong sense of community and the feeling that everyone truly belongs here. On Sundays when our students are present, it is a joy to see them participate in worship. Unlike places where children are expected to be seen and not heard—or where participation must be perfectly rehearsed—we encourage our youth to be involved just as they are.

Often, students are invited to help as soon as they walk through the door. What we witness isn't polished or perfect, and that is what makes it beautiful. We lead with grace, encouragement, and love.

There are many simple ways we can continue to support and uplift our youth: greet them by name, ask about school or activities, pray for them, or attend their events and cheer them on. These small acts make a big impact and help our young people know they are valued, supported, and deeply loved.



Aaron & Cambell will be playing the Delancy Brothers in Newsies.

Student Activities:

Aaron – Mark your calendars now for March 5-8, or 12 -15. Aaron will be performing in Newsies with Main Stage Community Theater on the island at the Seahawk Cultural Center. The Sunday shows (March 8 and 15) are at 2 PM. We would love to see our church family come out and support him! Tickets can be purchased at: <https://msctheatre.org/newsies>

Randy Pryor let us know that:

Kennedy Pryor is trying out for High school Soccer at May River High the beginning of February!

Hudson and Dash Pryor are starting practice in February for travel and recreation baseball which begin in the end of February!

Schedules will be sent once we get them. Mom and Dad could not be more proud! Go get'em kiddos!

Change for Change

This quarter we will be collecting for St. Jude's Children's hospital again.



*Michelle Cramer,
Youth and Children's Ministry*



St. Luke’s Missions Committee supports local organizations that not only help the hurting in our community but also provide many opportunities for service. You can donate food to Bluffton Self Help for families in need, meet those seeking help at Agape’s food pantry, and support homeless children and their parents at Family Promise. You will have several opportunities throughout the year to support needy children at Pritchardville Elementary. You can join us monthly when we gather to make prayer blankets for our church family and friends experiencing health issues.

Throughout the year, you may also support ministries beyond our community, such as Epworth Children’s Home, Samaritan’s Purse, and ministries of the United Methodist Church.

If you would like to be a part of the planning or implementing of St. Luke’s missions’ outreach, we invite you to attend our next Missions Committee meeting in the Fellowship Hall on Wednesday, February 11th, at 1:00 PM.

Thank you for your continued support!

Linda Fisher & Elizabeth Vance
St. Luke’s Missions & Outreach Co-Chairs

Bluffton Self Help First Sunday Food Drive, Feb. 1st

In 2025, Bluffton Self Help distributed over 700,000 pounds of food! They are deeply grateful for the monthly donations from St. Luke’s that helps them provide for our neighbors in need.

Lois Willig will be in the parking lot between our worship services on Sunday, February 1st, to collect our food donations. If you miss the 1st Sunday collection, please feel free to drop off any donations in the Fellowship Hall’s BSH basket. Although all donations are appreciated, here is a list of the most-needed items at this time:

Unfortunately, they cannot accept open, expired, or damaged packages.



- | | |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Canned Peas, Canned Beans | Canned Fruit, Applesauce |
| Cereal & Oatmeal | Shelf Stable Dressing |
| Pancake Mix & Maple Syrup | Peanut Butter, Jelly |
| Canned Tuna, Canned Chicken | Macaroni & Cheese |
| Cream Soups & Hearty Soups | Broths & Gravies |
| Rice, Rice Sides | Canned Tomatoes |
| Canned Chilli, Canned Beef Stew | Skillet Meal Kits |
| Taco Kits, Salsa, Black Beans | Canned Beans |
| Shelf Stable Almond Milk | Shelf Stable Cheese (Velveeta) |
| Shampoo, Conditioner | Deodorant, Toothpaste |
| Shaving Cream | Feminine Products |
| Baby Wipes | Diapers (sizes 4, 5, 6, 7) |

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In January Family Promise began a remodel of the Freedom House, adding walls and doors, which will give their families more privacy during their stay. Currently they have five families (17 people) residing at the Freedom House. St. Luke’s will be continuing our support of these families by providing dinners for them on **February 17th (Tuesday)** and **February 19th (Thursday)**. If you would like to help with these dinners, we will have a sign-up sheet with the needed items posted on the sanctuary bulletin board on February 1st.

Other volunteer opportunities are available at Family Promise. If you would like to interact with the families, you can help with transportation to appointments, work, or school, or spend time with them at the shelter on the weekends. If you would prefer to help at the Family Promise office in Bluffton, you can assist with filing, inventory, or answering the phone. No experience is required; they will train you! If you would like to know more about these opportunities, please contact Linda Fisher at dlfisher4@hotmail.com.

Pictured: (in back)
Valerie Blount, Program Manager;
John Trinh, Executive Director
(front) Brittany McClennon, Case Manager;
Shani Clark, Office Manager



PRITCHARDVILLE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



Ms. Owlett, School Social Worker, Pritchardville Elementary was very appreciative of your continued generosity in helping with the needs of the students. Their healthy snack supply usually comes from Bluffton Self Help. BSH receive their items from Second Helpings Truck pickups of overage at Grocery Stores.

The “Trickle Down Effect” has limited any surplus items from being available for school snacks.

We appreciate your immediate response when we received the call.





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Blanket Ministry, Monday, February 23rd

The Blanket Ministry is in full swing for the new year. Twelve of us made seven blankets, cutting, knotting and chatting. We decided to make sure each child had a blanket so we chose 13 blankets that would be appropriate for a variety of girls and boys from 2 months old to 17 years old. We are continuing to provide blankets for family and friends who need the comfort of blankets made with love. Join us on February 23rd at 10:00 AM for an opportunity to participate in a cuddly mission.



Agape Family Life Center Food Pantry, 5855 Okatie Hwy, Hardeeville

Volunteers are needed every Wednesday and Saturday from 10:00 – 12:00 to help distribute fresh food, donated by local grocery stores and delivered by Second Helpings, to families and seniors in need. You do not need to sign up in advance. Just show up, sign in, and they will give you an assignment. You will not do any heavy lifting. Last month, we had eight people from St. Luke’s who volunteered. This is a wonderful way to meet the clients they are serving, as well as other volunteers. If you can, please wear your church nametag. Please contact Leslie Richards at lesliarichards717@gmail.com for more information.



If you are going through an illness or another crisis and could use some support, please let us know. Marie Baldauf leads this ministry, which can help by providing a meal, a visit, or caring phone calls. Please contact Marie at baldaufmarie@gmail.com, if you need support or would like to help in this ministry.



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Connectional Giving in Action

The United Methodist Church is built on connection—local churches joining together to make a difference far greater than we could on our own. Our generosity is one way we live out this connection. Giving isn't just an act of kindness—it's a reflection of our faith and discipleship.

In 2026, you will have an opportunity to participate in five churchwide special offering Sundays. The first one, on **February 15th**, will be a special offering for **Peace With Justice**. The Bible has always prioritized working for peace with justice as a core practice of faith. If you would like to give, an envelope will be provided in the worship bulletin. Half of our gifts stay with local ministries in our conference and half support the work of Church and Society globally. Together, we lift up ministries of the United Methodist Church that seek to build a more just and compassionate world.

“He has shown you, O man, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy; and to walk humbly with your God.” Micah 6:8 (NIV)

Peace with Justice Sunday - A Special Sunday in The United Methodist Church that Supports Efforts to Build Peace with Justice

Raises awareness to promote peaceful and just efforts and sustainable solutions to conflict. Donations on this Sunday support programs that reflect God's call for a faithful, just, disarmed, and secure world.



What is Peace with Justice Sunday? Peace with Justice Sunday is one of six churchwide Special Sundays designated to support ministries and causes important to the entire United Methodist Church. One this day, we come together to support ministries that work for peace and fairness around the world. It's a day when the church speaks out against violence and inequality and renews its commitment to be peacemakers—just as Jesus taught.

Why Does It Matter? The world is full of conflict, division, and injustice. Peace with Justice Sunday reminds us that the church has a role to play in making things right. United Methodists believe that working for peace means addressing the deeper causes of conflict—like poverty, racism, and oppression. It's not just about ending war, but about building a world where everyone is treated with dignity.

Peace with Justice Sunday matters because it equips United Methodists to advocate for change and support ministries that challenge systems of inequality and violence.

What Does My Giving Support? Our generosity supports real change—both in your own community and around the world. Here's how the money is used:

- **Annual Conference Ministries (50%)**
Half of the funds collected stay local and support ministries that promote peace, fairness, and education where you live. Many areas also have a Peace with Justice Coordinator who helps lead local advocacy and learning opportunities. Learn more about local ministries [here](#).
- **Ministries and Grants (50%)**
The other half supports United Methodist efforts across the U.S. and beyond. Grants are available to churches and organizations working on initiatives that promote peace, challenge injustice, and empower underrepresented communities—especially Ethnic and Minority Local Churches. To learn more about grant applications email grants@umcjustice.org.



HISTORY HAPPENINGS

The History Committee is getting ready to launch our tour project. On March 19th we will conduct our first tour of the year. Members of St. Luke's and members of OLLI who didn't get to participate in October are invited to be our first participants. We will conduct tours of the graveyard and the church. Members of the committee will help with organizing the tours and several will debut as tour guides. Needless to say, we are very excited about this venture. Our long-term plan is to hold tours on the third Thursday of each month at 10:00 AM so if you can't come in March, there will be lots of opportunities for you to hear our docents share the history of our beautiful church,

Several weeks ago, Savannah College of Arts and Design (SCAD) students used our graveyard to film a Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson vampire movie. They used the graveyard for two days, including one overnight. They are submitting this film to several film festivals and are also using the film for class requirements. We will be able to view the film next year and plan to hold a showing in the Fellowship Hall.

*Kathy Smith,
Church Historian*



*The photos shown here are courtesy of @h0pebyrd.



A **LOOK** BACK AT JANUARY 2026

We started 2026 off with an “all-church” workday. Old flowers were removed from the graveyard and headstones were cleaned. Many thanks to those who participated in this necessary event!



A few days before our “workday,” a smaller group came out to dismantle the luminaries and check the light strings. We want to make sure they are ready for December 2026!!



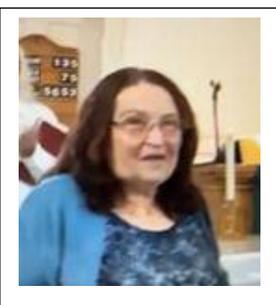
Saturday, Jan. 24th we enjoyed a game night of Mexican Train!!



The “word” is this Brunswick Stew made by Charlene King was delicious!



We were pleased to have Dawn Hall join our church family Sunday, Jan. 25th at the 8:30 AM worship service.



Prayer Requests

MEMBERS & CONGREGANTS

Ruth Dolan
Mim Mazon

Judi & Gary Landin
Andy & Sharon Makarick

Bill Trainer
Dave Fisher

George Batten
Lois Finch

FAMILY AND FRIENDS OF CONGREGANTS

Hannah Nystrom, friend of Marie Baldauf
Beverly Byrd, friend of Cynthia Thompson
Daughter of Don McKay
Persephone, sister of Penelope Power
Elaine, friend of Michele Elek
Debbie Hamilton, sister-in-law of Diana & Walker
Hamilton
Dale Lawrence, nephew of Jerry Vagnier
Michael, uncle of Megan Sytsma
Diane Gorden, mother of Megan Sytsma
Diana Oder, friend of Diana Hamilton
Steve Rose, friend of Candace Payne
Pete Burger, friend of Jane Tiffany
Jan Demcsak, neighbor of Jane Tiffany
John, grandnephew of Meg Carmody
Todd Rohde, son of Rich Rohde
Angie, Karl and Zahg, son and family of Bill Husson
Buffy Hopkins, friend of Dawn Hall
Pat Lawn, brother of Carol Jackson
Donna Lewis, sister of Tina Topoleski
Brian, brother of Kevin Coupland
Pat, neighbor of Janet Jacoby
Barbara Kuhlman, friend of Tina Blount
Tina, friend of Donna Hauck
Dottie Apgar, former member
Debbie, sister of Diana Hamilton
Carol Hubbard, friend of J.W. Harper



Our deepest sympathy and prayers to the family and friends of Carol Jackson, on her brother Bob's passing.

Our deepest sympathy and prayers to the family and friends of Nancy, mother-in-law of Michelle Cramer, on Nancy's passing on January 26.

Let us remember with cards, and prayers...

CHURCH MEMBERS IN NURSING HOMES, ASSISTED LIVING OR HOMEBOUND

Ruth Dolan,
Summer Breeze
351 Wilmington Island Rd.
Memory Care, Room 107A
Savannah GA 31410

Elnora Ekholm, 173 May River Rd.
Bluffton SC 29910

June Hamilton, 4 Concession Oak Dr.
Bluffton SC 29909

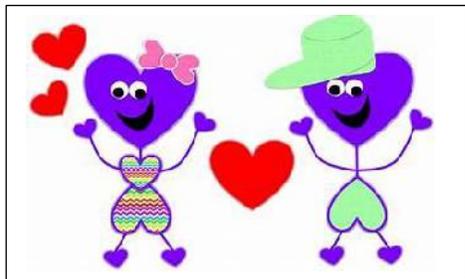
Jerry Wick, 740 Middletrail Court
Mt. Airy MD 21771



Happy Birthday!

FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS

- | | |
|--------------------|---------------------|
| 04 Tom Shelley | 13 Bill Trainer |
| 04 Rikita Thompson | 14 Bill Haskins |
| 06 Don McKay | 16 Meg Carmody |
| 06 Stan O’Rear | 19 Linda Fisher |
| 08 Tina Blount | 21 Marge Skinker |
| 09 Michael Brown | 23 Bill Husson |
| 09 Linda Metcalf | 24 Janet Baumeister |
| 10 Sam Rossa | 25 Tom Cook |
| 10 Walker Hamilton | 26 Linda Batten |
| 11 Jack Reed | 28 Candace Payne |
| 13 Gary Landin | 28 Rich Rohde |



OR WATCH “ON-LINE” AT

ST. LUKE’S YOUTUBE CHANNEL

<https://www.youtube.com/@st.lukesunitedmethodistchu8920/videos>

LET ME TAKE YOUR PHOTO! If you are attending St. Luke’s United Methodist Church, we would like to have you in our Photo Directory. We include visitors as well as members! Please see Pat Simmons to arrange a time to have your photo taken. It only takes a minute of your time!



IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO BECOME A MEMBER OF

ST. LUKE’S – you may pick up an “Invitation to Membership” form (located behind the last pew) also on the bulletin board and in the Fellowship Hall. Or email patsimmonsperdue@gmail.com for a copy. Fill it out, bring it back and Pastor Chris will get in touch with you.

Happy Anniversary

MARCH BIRTHDAYS

- | |
|---------------------|
| 02 Amy Erickson |
| 02 Elnora Ekholm |
| 06 John Sariscak |
| 09 Randy Pryor |
| 11 Armen Hagopian |
| 12 JP Moery |
| 15 George Batten |
| 16 Rich Schaltegger |
| 19 Sharon Melancon |
| 21 Joyce Haskins |
| 24 Linda O’Connor |
| 25 Sandy Lowry |
| 25 Diane Morey |
| 30 Aaron Metropolis |
| 31 Janet Jacoby |

FEBRUARY ANNIVERSARIES

- | |
|------------------------------|
| 01 Arlene & Rich Schaltegger |
| 02 Letty & Bill Husson |
| 15 Bonnie & Lee van Rensburg |
| 26 Nancy & John Sariscak |

MARCH ANNIVERSARY

- | |
|-------------------------|
| 26 Carole & Alan Bethel |
|-------------------------|



Donate through Vanco, go to our web page:

<https://stlukesumc-okatie.org/>, Click on the “Donate” button at the top of the page. This will link you to our Vanco donation tiles. Choose where your donation will be applied.



Please “like” our Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100082060615677&mibextid=LQQJ4d>

If you cannot come to church, we Thank You for “mailing” your donations to:

**St. Luke’s UMC
PO Box 2779
Bluffton SC 29910**

