

ACTS of ST. LUKE'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

FEBRUARY 2021



Jessica Hitchcock

I Can't Believe We Are Going to Have to Do Lent and Easter From Home AGAIN

Soon we will all hit the one year mark. Bishop Mariann closed the church building on March 11 and MCPS sent the kids home early for Spring Break on March 13. When did things change for you? On February 26, 2020 we observed Ash Wednesday together. Lesley and I were close enough to you to hold your heads in our hands as we drew the sign of the cross on your foreheads. We ate pancakes together the night before. In early March, we practiced sharing the peace without shaking hands and we went without wine at our communion celebrations. And then everything changed so quickly.

We had no idea how long the road ahead of us was. In some ways, I think that was a blessing; for so many of us, we could say “just a month or two more...” It will probably end up being an 18-month journey—away from our church building yes, but also away from our friends, our family, our workplaces and school, away from our teammates.

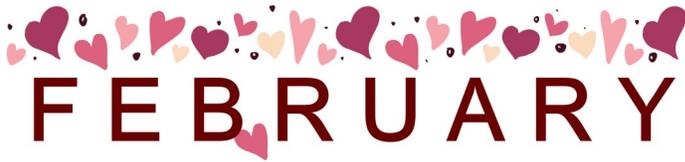
This Lent, we will be focusing on the themes of wilderness, exile, and wandering in the Bible. In seminary, I learned a lot about wilderness times—how being in the wilderness is a normal, regular part of seeking God. The Bible is full of examples of God’s people feeling lost, abandoned, untethered, and completely beyond one’s comfort zone. I know, at least in my head, that God is with us in the wilderness and that God works great transformation during times such as these. That knowledge has helped me through this time of great uncertainty, and I want to make sure you all have that same lens to interpret experiences like the one we are all going through together at this time.

Unfortunately, I don’t think this will be the last wilderness experience for any of us. We don’t usually do wilderness moments together—and in fact, for many of us, local and personal wilderness moments have been layered on top of our communal loss and confusion. This Lent, we will practice looking and listening for what God might be doing in our lives when we find ourselves wandering around in what feels like the desert.

Many people have the practice of giving something up for Lent. I hope you will also consider taking something on, something that will help you connect with God a little more in this time of reflection and repentance. We will make available to you a variety of spiritual practices to take on during this season of Lent. Try to find one that works for you, perhaps one to fill in the spot left open by whatever you give up for the season of Lent.

(AGAIN, continued on page 4)

PARISH



FEBRUARY

FEBRUARY

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| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 |
| 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 |
| 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 |
| 28 | | | | | | |

February

| | |
|------------------|----|
| Edward Len | 1 |
| Samantha Lowe | 1 |
| Fred Heiken | 7 |
| Sandra Swab | 7 |
| Brian Katulis | 8 |
| Justine Miller | 9 |
| Sarah Hutchins | 17 |
| Phil Taylor | 20 |
| Amy Elsbree | 21 |
| Sebastian Leal | 26 |
| Stuart Wilkinson | 27 |

February Special Dates

| | |
|-------------|----------------------|
| 5 February | Men's Shelter Dinner |
| 12 February | Chinese New Year |
| | MCPS no school |
| 15 February | MCPS no school |
| 16 February | Shrove Tuesday |
| 17 February | Ash Wednesday |

March

| | |
|--------------------|----|
| Ann Blandamer | 4 |
| Margie Orrick | 4 |
| William Bryan | 5 |
| Lucy D'Agostino | 6 |
| Mandisa Griffin | 6 |
| Alex Votaw | 10 |
| Clay Miller | 11 |
| Kevin Curtin | 12 |
| Logan Zimmerman | 23 |
| Julia Schneider | 24 |
| Renata Gonzalez | 24 |
| Alby Williams | 27 |
| Bridget Legates | 27 |
| Stephane Le Bouder | 27 |



MARCH

MARCH

| S | M | T | W | T | F | S |
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| 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 |
| 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 |
| 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 |
| 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 | | | |

March Special Dates

| | |
|------------|-------------------------|
| 2 March | Book Lovers |
| 5 March | Men's Shelter Dinner |
| 14 March | Daylight Savings begins |
| 20 March | Spring Equinox |
| 27 March | Passover begins |
| 28 March | Palm Sunday |
| 29 March – | |
| 5 April | MCPS no school |

The ACTS is now distributed electronically using the email address that we have for you on file in the office. If you did not receive it, please update your email address. admin@stlukesbethesda.org.

If you do not see your birthday listed during the year, please contact the office.

SENIOR WARDEN

Warden's Word



Mike Bernier

I write this after the events of January 6 and before the inauguration of President-elect Biden. By the time you read this, the inauguration will have occurred, and I pray that events surrounding the inauguration and protests expected at state capitals were peaceful.

The stress associated with the pandemic, racial injustice and a bitterly contested election reinforced for me how important church is in my life. I know I am not the only one who finds a church community to be comforting during times of crisis. Sunday worship attendance at St. Luke's online has on many Sundays exceeded in-person attendance. And we all had the opportunity to meet parishioners who attended different services when we worshiped in person. We are also blessed that Bishop Mariann has been a strong faith-based voice for the nation during this time. If you haven't checked out her writings, see the

Bishop's Writings (<https://www.edow.org/about/bishop-mariann/writings>). She and Presiding Bishop Curry have been visible, outspoken opponents of racial injustice and violent protests. The Episcopal Church may not have the number of members it did in the 1950s, but our reach and voice remain strong.

So, what's next in our life together? I don't know. But one thing I do know is that St. Luke's will continue to be there for all of us. I can't say enough positive things about Jessica, who I believe God brought to us specifically for this time. I could go on and on about her gifts to our community. I thank God for bringing her to us.

In other good news, our pledge income in 2020 exceeded expectations. Actual giving exceeded amounts pledged so that 108% of pledges were received. For 2021, pledges met our goal. I don't have the final number, but I do know that the people of St. Luke's came through big time. Thanks to everyone's generosity, we were able to hire a part-time bookkeeper to help with the work that volunteers have been doing for decades. The books are in good shape thanks to our St. Luke's treasurer.

Whether you are new to St. Luke's or have worshiped here for decades, please reach out to Jessica or any member of the Vestry if we can be of help. We'd be happy to go grocery shopping for those who can't, or drive you to a doctor's appointment. That's what we do at St. Luke's.

Mike Bernier

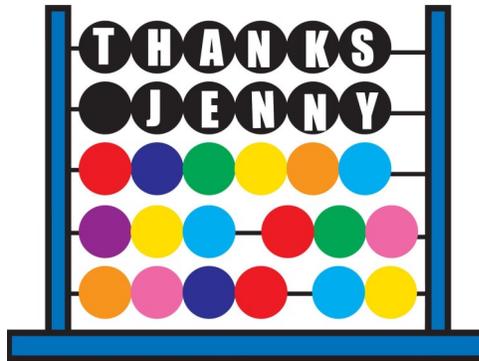
Senior Warden, srwarden@stlukesbethesda.org

PARISH

(*AGAIN, continued from page 1*)

One last suggestion for your season of Lent. Think about the lessons you have learned over the past year—we are different and the world is different. Consider what kind of new normal you want to build as we slowly resume “normal” activities. Did you like being less busy, did you miss something in particular that you didn’t expect to miss so much, did you connect with people from far away, do you want to maintain those connections? Lent offers a good time to reflect on learnings that God has offered during this wilderness time of being away from our normal lives. We can’t go back. Let’s let love guide us as we go forward.

Jessica



Thank You, Jenny

Jenny Bradley has retired from her position as St. Luke’s treasurer; her last vestry meeting was December 2020. Jenny served over 10 years as the parish treasurer. Which means she’s attended vestry and finance meetings two Mondays a month *for the past decade*. Yes, Jenny is good with numbers, but she brought so much more to the ministry of treasurer than just her mathematical skills. She shared her gifts of translating and teaching, did some regular detective work trying to find out the donor of various stock gifts, kept in touch with our investment manager—and still so much more.

The gift I am most thankful to Jenny for sharing with the St. Luke’s community is her contemplative approach to matching the resources of this church with the vision the community articulated. So often Jenny was able to see where the community wanted to go—felt called by God to go—and would work to figure out how to make that dream and vision financially feasible.

Jenny’s heart is full of compassion and wisdom, and she graciously shared that with the vestry and finance committee. Personally, I can say for certain that Jenny’s approach to church finances has shaped the kind of priest I am today, and for that I am incredibly blessed.

Please join me in thanking Jenny for her 10+ years of ministry as St. Luke’s treasurer.

Logistical notes: If you have a church finance question, please email administrator Kim Desmond at admin@stlukesbethesda.org and she will get you connected to the appropriate person. Susie Casson continues in her role as Assistant Treasurer and Arlene Antonicelli continues in her role as our Contributions Officer.

Jessica

FELLOWSHIP

Warden Accolades for Jenny

When asked to stand for Senior Warden, I immediately started to worry about financial issues since that is not my strength, but then I remembered Jenny's updates as treasurer at Vestry meetings, and knew that this was not something I had to worry about. All was in good hands.

Mike Bernier

Jenny Bradley has retired as treasurer of St. Luke's church. In my years serving at various times on vestry, as senior warden, as junior warder, and as chair of the finance ministry, I have been able to see "firsthand" the dedicated tenure of Jenny as treasurer of our church. All who have served as treasurer (or financial contributions secretary) for St. Luke's have truly given so much of their time and talent to the financial stability and integrity of our parish; Jenny is right at the top of that list of "angels." She has served us with knowledge, flexibility, and constancy in an ever-changing and more complex environment over these many years of service. On behalf of myself and all past and current members of St. Luke's, I want to congratulate her on her retirement and thank her for all that she has done for St. Luke's church.

Cliff Johnson

Thank you, Jenny, for your calm, stalwart service to St. Luke's. You made all things financial easy for me with your patience and your tireless generation of reports and budgets and projections and whatever we needed. But I'm mostly thankful for the love and care you have shown St. Luke's as an organization and all the people that make up St. Luke's over these many years. You are always ready with a smile and a willingness to try the next idea and welcome the next new face. We are so blessed to have you among us. With love,

Amy Elsbree

Jenny Bradley's service as Treasurer brought many years of steady financial management to St. Luke's. Significantly, she introduced the use of real accounting software for St. Luke's finances, the automation of payroll processing, and has an amazing memory for the historical details underlying our financial condition. So many Vestries have benefited from her service and explanations of our financial reports.

Bill Casson

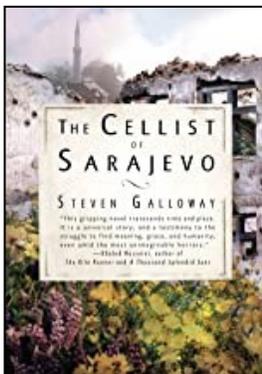
Book Lovers

In January we had 18 people join a discussion with Dr. Linda Freeman about Louisa May Alcott's slim volume of letters called *Hospital Sketches*. We thank Linda for sharing her expertise with us all!

In March we will discuss the *Cellist of Sarajevo* by Steve Galloway. The discussion will be led by Betsy Davis on **March 2, 2021 at 7:30 pm** via Zoom.

If you'd like to be on the Booklovers email list, please email Nancy Reding. All are welcome! You can come and go as you like.

Nancy Reding



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Thanks to the Parish

Despite the ongoing pandemic, our adapted holiday collection this year was remarkably successful and will make a positive difference to our neighbors locally and around the globe! Thank you for living out your baptismal promises so faithfully, and for your support of these organizations doing God's work in the world.



Our efforts to benefit Episcopal Relief & Development (known to us as "Holy Cow") focused on the "1,000 Days of Love" Campaign. It emphasized the importance of the first six years of a child's life which ensures that children everywhere get off to a healthy start.



When accounting for both online donations, Gifts for Life, and the parish match, we raised **more than \$19,000** this past Advent season. This also includes a record-setting \$480 in loose change! Thus, our cumulative total since 2007 **exceeds \$203,000**. That is amazing! Thank you to the "Holy Cow Team" of Betsy Davis, Melissa Oppenheimer, Jenny Bradley, Lesley Krauland, Susie Casson, the Mills Family—and to Alexa Pilone for her special presentation—for making this year so successful!

Our holiday collection of retail and grocery gift cards expanded beyond Samaritan Ministry family participants to also include Interfaith Works clients. For both Thanksgiving and Christmas, we collected more than:



80 gift cards for Samaritan Ministry program participants, and...
150 gift cards for those served by Interfaith Works programs!

THANK YOU!

CURRENT EVENTS: Our winter clothing/gift card collection for Bethesda Cares will continue through mid-February, and our food collection is ongoing. Please watch the E-News for upcoming Community Engagement opportunities!

Marta Montoro

News Update from Samaritan Ministry of Greater Washington

SAVE THE DATE!

Due to the ongoing COVID-19 Pandemic, our **2021 Next Step Breakfast** will be a virtual event.

Mark your calendars NOW for **Saturday, March 20th at 10 am.**

What a great way to start your weekend!

Here is the link to make in-kind donations to Samaritan Ministry of Greater Washington:

<https://samaritanministry.org/in-kind-wish-list/>

DeAtley (Dee)

CALENDAR

FINANCE REPORT DECEMBER 2020

| | 2019 | 2020 | '20 Actual | % of '20 |
|--------------------------------------|------------|-------------|------------|----------|
| | Actual | Budget | Thru Dec. | Budget * |
| <u>RECEIPTS</u> | | | | |
| Offering Plate | \$ 18,175 | \$ 20,000 | \$ 31,373 | 157% |
| Pledge Payments | 479,984 | 460,000 | 495,907 | 108% |
| Donations for Facilities | 49,796 | 48,000 | 24,347 | 51% |
| Altar Flower Donations | 4,825 | 5,000 | 566 | 11% |
| Miscellaneous | 186 | | 120 | |
| Operating Receipts | 552,966 | 533,000 | 552,313 | 104% |
| <u>EXPENSES</u> | | | | |
| Salaries & Benefits | \$ 308,102 | \$ 324,214 | \$ 303,020 | 94% |
| Program Support | 18,418 | 25,000 | 10,610 | 42% |
| Parish Operations | 107,090 | 123,900 | 88,917 | 72% |
| Community Engagement (Outreach) | 22,527 | 22,000 | 22,000 | 100% |
| Diocesan Giving | 50,139 | 52,000 | 52,000 | 100% |
| Operating Expenses | 506,276 | 547,114 | 476,547 | 87% |
| Net income: Surplus/(Deficit) | \$ 46,690 | \$ (14,114) | \$ 75,766 | |

* YTD December = 100% of the year

ENDOWMENT FUND BALANCE \$90,937

Budget Analysis: This was a challenging year. The building was closed for most of the year which resulted in forgone revenues in Facility Use and Flower donations. However, thanks to the generosity of the parish, both pledges and plate contributions exceeded the amount budgeted, resulting in total revenue beyond expectations. Expenses for Salaries, Program Support and Parish Operations were significantly under budget, again due to the closure of the building. Donations to Community Engagement and the Diocesan Support were equal to budget. All financial obligations for the year have been met.

Thank you! Your continued support is very impressive during these challenging times.

If you need to be reimbursed for a purchase or need the Treasurer to pay an invoice, please obtain a Payment Request Form from the Office. An authorized person must sign the request. All requests for extra money or donations by committees, individuals or church members, should have prior approval of the Vestry before solicitation.

Susan Casson, Acting Treasurer

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THE REV. JESSICA K. HITCHCOCK

Rector

email: jessica@stlukesbethesda.org

ACTS of St. Luke's

Newsletter for members and friends of St. Luke's;
published monthly, except January & August.

ACTS Deadline: 15th of the preceding month



Ash
WEDNESDAY

**WEDNESDAY,
FEBRUARY 17**