



St. Luke's Episcopal Church Newsletter

Advent – Christmas 2014

Letter from our Rector

Dear People of St. Luke's,

We have again reached that part of the year when the days are much shorter, the temperatures much colder, and the heat used a lot more—which brings me to an important, if “un-Advent-like” topic: the heating system. St. Luke's is heated by steam generated by heat from the oil burner. The boiler is a bit less than 20 years old, the pipes are 65 years old, and they have begun to wear out. The past two weeks we have had four leaks, with several trips by the plumber to make patches. Meanwhile, we have received a \$20,000 bequest from an estate, and an additional grant of \$9,900 from a group called the “Northern Forest Council”, which is promoting use of pellets. The vestry met with Phil Maurais, who is our plumber and who installs a variety of heating systems. He gave us estimates for two systems: wood pellet boilers, and a propane system.

- Cost: Based on oil prices last month and current usage, burning pellets would cut our monthly fuel costs about in half; propane by about one-third. The propane system estimate was \$26,540, but there would be no grant, so we would have to come up with \$6,540 after using the bequest for a propane system. The pellet system is significantly more, \$39,631, but we would get the grant for nearly \$9,900 added on to the bequest. So the pellet system would cost us an additional \$9,731 after the grant, or about \$3,200 more than the propane. We would need to come up with that amount. We will consider options for doing this, including the possibility of a no interest loan from a diocesan fund we have used before. *Note that in any case we'll need to replace our existing pipes, though we can use the radiators.*
- Pros and Cons of each: A propane system costs less to install; it also burns efficiently, but it is burning fossil fuel. The vestry decided that the pellet system is more environmentally friendly, and also generates work for Maine people. *Both systems are high quality, high tech products, and a very large improvement over what we have.*
- Pellets would be delivered in bulk, not bags. Some simple annual maintenance would be done by the plumber, but no more than is necessary with an oil burner. Once every two weeks we would need to empty an ash pan, the contents of which are great for gardens.

The next step is a comprehensive energy audit. We had a basic energy audit a few years' back, but this will be more thorough (and it is free). Work would probably be done in late spring, far enough along that we don't need the heat during installation; because of course the old system has to come out.

This is a significant undertaking, but a necessary one; and the confluence of leaky pipes, a grant, and a bequest all seemed to be pointing us in this direction. So enjoy the clanking and banging of the pipes; the time will come when they won't (and it has been kindly pointed out to me that steam doesn't explode!).

Faithfully,
Fr. Tim

“GLORY TO GOD IN THE HIGHEST HEAVEN, AND ON EARTH PEACE
AMONG THOSE WHO HE FAVORS!” ~ LUKE 2:14

Santa's Workshop



Our annual outreach through Santa's Workshop will be here on **Saturday, December 13th from 9:00 to 11:30 am**. Every year we gather a large quantity of items which we make available at dime store prices for children to buy as Christmas gifts for their parents. The items are arranged on tables according to price—including a “free” area—and kids come in while their parents wait out in the kitchen. It is a lot of work, and gets hectic, but seeing the kids with their bags for their families makes it worthwhile.

Angel Tree: In the undercroft is a tree with tags on it representing items for a family in need. Putting out the **angel tree** is a longstanding custom at St. Luke's, and a number of the tags have disappeared already. The tags will disappear and packages appear by Dec. 21, when they will be delivered. Thanks to all who participated.



Caroling!

On Sunday December 21 at 4 pm, we're going to **carol around the neighborhood**. We'll gather at St. Luke's a little before for soup and to get organized. Lisa has procured some small books with the words to numerous carols. I had a flash of nostalgia when I opened one to “Good King Wenceslas,” which I used to sing to Rebecca when she was about two. (She doesn't remember). Anyway, it should be fun. Come along and sing.

Worship Outside St. Luke's



Nursing home worship is not limited to this time of year, but this time of year it is particularly important. Amidst all the snowmen, candy canes, and assorted Christmas decorations many elderly are lonely, and the monthly service makes a difference for them. In the same vein, **Eucharistic Visitors** have been taking Communion to people who are shut in is another important form of outreach. The regular contact helps people stay connected to the Church when they cannot attend.

Alternative Giving: As always there are other opportunities for giving this season: to Haiti, the Ecumenical Heating Fund, the Homeless Shelter, Heifer Project, and Episcopal Relief and Development. Any are worthy recipients of Christmas generosity.



(Preliminary mock-up provided by Michael Cooper)

Sanctuary Stage and Renovation Project

For the last several months the vestry has been talking through a proposal to do some sanctuary renovation and add a stage to the area behind the altar where the choir pews now are. It is too much to describe what we are considering in any detail in a newsletter article. Instead, we'll have some visual aids: a photo shopped picture, showing what we have in mind, and painter's tape on the carpet, indicating some proposed changes. Very briefly though, we are considering two basic changes: raising the area behind the altar about two feet, thus creating good sight lines and a place for (for example) chancel dramas); and then extended the altar area at its current 6 inch elevation in a semicircle, thus bringing the altar, pulpit, and lectern closer to the congregation. More verbal description than this I won't attempt at this point; *wait for the visuals*.

Meanwhile, the primary question: Why? There are two primary reasons. First, and most important, such modification would enhance the worship space, as we now use it. It would do this by creating better sight lines, which many churches have; and by creating less distance and more intimacy between congregation and those leading worship. Our worship space is fairly large, and suited to larger, formal worship. Our congregation currently is smaller, and while God willing that will change at some point, the current effect is to create a sense of emptiness. Instead, doing this would capitalize on what now is, and create intimacy and less distance, which are our strengths. I know it's one thing for me to say this, and another for you to attempt to imagine it, but I have spent significant time standing in various places, trying to get a feel for what it would look like.

The second reason "why" is the stage area would give us the opportunity to do a variety of things, including hosting various events. By this I don't mean trying to duplicate what goes on at Nordica or even the renovated Old North Church, which is where the former Skye Theater holds productions. I'm thinking more of home grown talent, whether music, poetry, or panels of people addressing topics. The purpose would not be to make money but to invite folks into our midst. We can begin that sort of thing now, and hope to in the near future.

So how much would this cost? It would be a whole lot less than a new heating system. We have some preliminary estimates, but we are still seeking more details, so we don't have any firm figures yet. My purpose now is to let you know about what we're thinking of, and in the near future be able to show you pictures, etc. The "what" will become clearer; but I wanted to speak to the "why" right now.

A final question you may be wondering about: is this essential? No, not like heating; but it is readily doable, and I believe it would do very good things for us as a worshipping community seeking to offer hospitality.



HANNAFORD GIFT CARDS FOR THE HOLIDAYS!



Do you know someone who could use convenient gift certificates for the holidays?

Would you like to gift a student with groceries or other staples/supplies this semester?

Hannaford Gift Cards are a simple solution! *Using the card for regular purchases and gifts benefits the church, as St. Luke's receives 5% of every \$1000 purchased, an easy way to support valued programs at St.*

Please remember our Food Pantry needs this season!

For the month of **December we are collecting BAKED BEANS**

for **January we will collect CANNED TOMATOES**

and for **February we will collect EVAPORATED MILK**

These collections will be for the food pantries in Farmington and Wilton.

Please bring these items to church with you. Thank you!



Attention Youth Acolytes & Crucifers:

Brenda Holman will be providing training on Sunday, December 14th at 8:45 a.m. in preparation for Christmas Eve.

Advent Worship and Bible Study

I want to put a plug in for our "Wednesday evenings in Advent." We begin at 6:30 pm with an introductory portion of evening worship from the prayer book, and transition to a Bible study on the Old Testament lessons appointed for Advent. The Bible study is structured: I go through the text two or three verses at a time, and discussion flows naturally from that and is keyed to the text. While doing this we share tea, coffee and cookies. At the end of the hour we conclude with the final portions of evening worship. All of us enjoyed it very much and I commend it to you.

Coat Closet at St. Luke's

Every year about this time we get warm jackets/coats for adults and children from the Salvation Army, which we make available. This year they have gone out in unusual numbers, thanks in part of sending some bags to Rumford and in part to advertising. Various case managers from service agencies have come to get coats to pass out to their clients in need. In seeing an increased need, we have accepted gently used warm clothes (including boots, hats, mittens, etc.) from friends and community members. **If you have kids or grandkids who have outgrown snow pants, jackets, etc. we would gladly accept them.** We think that having St. Luke's as a resource in this regard is a positive thing and something we have the ability to expand on a bit.



Christmas Eve Worship



*Celebrate at St. Luke's on
Wednesday, December 24th at 5:30 pm
Full Eucharist Service
Chancel Drama by Michael Cooper*



Stopping By Woods on a Snowy Evening, By Robert Frost

Whose woods these are I think I know.
His house is in the village though;
He will not see me stopping here
To watch his woods fill up with snow.

My little horse must think it queer
To stop without a farmhouse near
Between the woods and frozen lake
The darkest evening of the year.

He gives his harness bells a shake
To ask if there is some mistake.
The only other sound's the sweep
Of easy wind and downy flake.

The woods are lovely, dark and deep,
But I have promises to keep,
And miles to go before I sleep,
And miles to go before I sleep.

St. Luke's Episcopal Church

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St. Luke's Who to Contact

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Deacon:	Rev. Corey Walmer	778-5252
Sr. Warden:	Kevin Howley	645-4981
Jr. Warden:	~By Committee~	
Clerk:	Irene Berry	
Treasurer:	Dick Condon	

Other Vestry Members:

John Sytsma, Carolyn McLaughlin, Jeannine LeVigne, Janet O'Neil,
Michael Cooper, Rick McKinney

Secretary:	Lisa Lindsay	645-2639
Altar Guild Directress:	Janet Morris	778-6019
Eucharistic Ministers:	Rev. Corey Walmer	778-5752
Church School:	Justy Nazar	645-2783
Acolyte Mentor:	Brenda Holman	778-3397
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