



St. Luke's Episcopal Church Newsletter

Advent – Christmas 2017

A Letter from Our Rector



Smarties to Share

This is a story about generosity, giving, kindness, sharing, stewardship and tithing.

“You remember Smarties, a row of multicolored chalklike, bite-size candies wrapped in clear plastic, about ten to twelve pieces in a pack? They are perfect for sharing.

I am not a huge fan of Smarties, but when I saw little Dustin come into church with a fresh roll, I just had to ask for one. Dustin peeled out a piece and handed it over with a smile. From that day on, for the next two years, every time Dustin got a pack of Smarties, he took out the first one and set aside for me. Every Sunday morning before the worship service, Dustin would track me down at church and offer me a Smarty. Sometimes Dustin would open a pack of Smarties during the week, but he would still save me the first piece. By the time Sunday came, the Smarty was a little mangy and furry with lint, but he never forgot to bring it for me. I would thank him and put the candy in my pocket so I could enjoy it later. Sharing Smarties was a kind of Communion for Dustin and me. Jesus was present as we shared a conversation and candy.

Dustin's mother viewed this ritual as a kind of tithing; out of ten pieces in a pack, Dustin gave the first tenth to his pastor. What I saw was a little boy who loved to share and who understood the power of generosity. Since that time, I have asked myself many times, “How am I doing with my Smarties?” (Kevin G. Harney)

The Bible contains more than 500 references to prayer and almost the same number of references to faith, but there are more than 2,000 references to money and possessions. Out of the 38 parables that Jesus told in the Gospels, 16 deal with how we handle our money. Jesus said more about money and possessions than about heaven and hell combined. One out of every 10 verses in the Gospels deals with money or possessions-288 verses in the four Gospels.

We have all heard the tired phrases such as, “The Lord loves a cheerful giver”, and “He gives us 100%, so giving back 10% is a good deal.” When we give because we want to honor God and say thank you for all of his blessings toward us, that is what is called, “Grace”. Grace is God’s gift to us, unearned and undeserved; a gift that he gives us because of his love for us and for his son, Jesus. It is through Jesus that this gift of grace is utilized and becomes tangible.

Dustin had the right idea when he gave freely the first candy in the pack to his pastor. He understood the ‘gift freely given’ was his choice and he did it because he wanted to do it.

How are you doing with your Smarties?

God’s Peace,
Mother Sue+

Notes from the office

Your secretary wishes to apologize for the delay of this newsletter. It was (is) a fall full of challenges and hiccups!

Congratulations to Mother Sue on her Celebration of New Ministry. It was a lovely service. Thank you to the hospitality committee for the reception. May she and Jack have a blessed time here in western Maine. I’m really enjoying working with her.

The construction project is nearing completion as I type. It went through numerous iterations and ended with the following accomplishments: an arched first step, bringing the altar forward toward the congregation; an arched second level giving a little better “view”; a back wall erected to create a hallway from the organ room to the sacristy (including new doorways), a fresh coat of paint; new carpet; and pews oriented at a slight diagonal, toward the new arch. There will be a new railing installed on the first level. Carolyn has asked for a bid for a shampoo of the upstairs carpet.

Finally, I was asked to be on the discernment committee to find the next bishop for Maine. I attended the first retreat over last Friday night. The diocese has hired an outside consultant (a retired priest who now does this for a living) and an outside dedicated administrative assistant to support the three committees (standing, discernment, and transition). We learned a lot about how this is going to work and the timing. I should be (mostly) finished with the committee work by next October/November. We then hand it over to the transition committee. Like in our own parish search, there will be a survey, focus groups, and a profile created before we advertise the job. That is months out. The new bishop will start in June 2019 and Bp Steve and Gretchen will depart.

Santa's Workshop



Our annual outreach through Santa's Workshop will be here on **Saturday, December 9th 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.

Due to the timing of the newsletter, this event will be nearly past. I want to personally thank Justy for seeing this project through year after year. It never really stops. We also have dedicated elves who make and buy gifts to donate. This is our largest outreach project and is wildly popular in the area. I can't thank Justy and all volunteers enough!

Friday Night Dinners

In the past Jack and I have enjoyed getting together with a group of church members for a casual dinner at a local restaurant on Friday nights, Dutch treat. Some weeks 15 may show up and other weeks four or five, which is fine. We need some advice for a location and time. An inexpensive place with a varied menu would be best. My Dad's Place in North Jay has come to mind- good food cheap, but may be out of the way for some or a bit too casual. Please see Jack or me with your suggestions!

Men's Breakfast

Mothers Sue's husband, Jack, will be in Maine for much of the winter and would like to get together a Men's Breakfast Group one morning each week at a local restaurant or diner--early enough so those that have a job to get to could also attend. Back on Mount Desert Island there was a group of Episcopal men, a Lutheran and one Jewish man that got together each week for breakfast and to solve the problems of the world. It was a lot of fun and good camaraderie so Jack would like to try it here. It would not need to be limited to St. Luke's men, but open to any guys that would like to attend. No sign-ups needed, just come if you want, when you want. Some days they would have four, others 12 or so. Please give Jack or Mother Sue your ideas as to where to meet. Jack would like to start this in Late December or early January.

Thank you

I wish to thank all of you for the flowers, cards, food and prayers that I received when my mother died in early November. Her death was not unexpected but sudden all the same. She had lung cancer that had spread to her bones by the time it was discovered in September. She did not suffer and I was able to see her the day before she died. "May the soul of Barbara and all that have gone before, rest in peace."

Advent Study

Starting on November 28th at 6:30pm, we began watching and discussing a four part study by Max Lucado called, "Because of Bethlehem". Max tells us how God who made everything chose to make himself nothing and come into our world. Jesus' birth gives us the promise that God is always near us, always for us, and always within us. We close with a short Compline service.



Christmas Open House at the home of Jack and Suzanne Cole.
16 Belmont Drive in Jay
Saturday, December 23
2:00 ~ 4:00 pm
All from the parish are welcome.



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. Luke's.*



Christmas Eve Full Eucharist Service

Sunday, December 24th, 5:30 PM

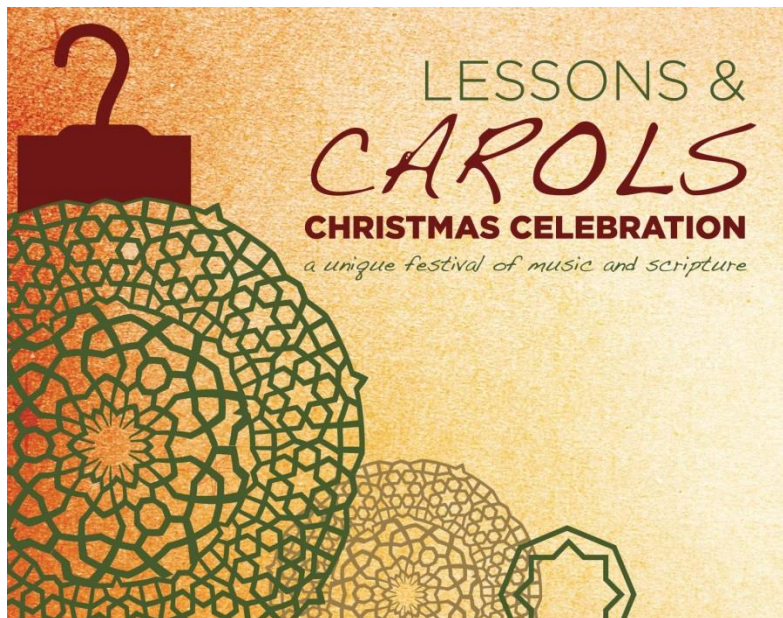
Nativity Play with St. Luke's Children

All are welcome

See Christ

Christ would have us see him more clearly in one another—in all our crazy diversity. And seeing Christ more clearly in each other brings us closer to what Paul calls the “mind of Christ”.

-Br. Mark Brown ~SSJE



Mother Sue will be away on December 31st, so it is up to the congregation to volunteer to read one of five lessons and enjoy singing Christmas carols between the lessons. Please let Lisa know if you would like to read on that Sunday.

In the bleak midwinter

By Christina Rossetti



In the bleak midwinter, frosty wind made moan,
Earth stood hard as iron, water like a stone;
Snow had fallen, snow on snow, snow on snow,
In the bleak midwinter, long ago.

Our God, Heaven cannot hold Him, nor earth sustain;
Heaven and earth shall flee away when He comes to reign.
In the bleak midwinter a stable place sufficed
The Lord God Almighty, Jesus Christ.

Enough for Him, whom cherubim, worship night and day,
Breastful of milk, and a mangerful of hay;
Enough for Him, whom angels fall before,
The ox and ass and camel which adore.

Angels and archangels may have gathered there,
Cherubim and seraphim thronged the air;
But His mother only, in her maiden bliss,
Worshipped the beloved with a kiss.

What can I give Him, poor as I am?
If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb;
If I were a Wise Man, I would do my part;
Yet what I can I give Him: give my heart.

Looking ahead

The next book study will start on Tuesday, January 9th at 9:30 am with the “New International Version Bible in 90 Days”. Mother Sue will use this in conjunction with the accompanying curriculum. The goal is to read and digest 12 pages a day. From the book jacket: “Once you break it down into bite-sized pieces, what may have seemed to be an overwhelming challenge becomes doable and enjoyable. This Bible is designed to help you accomplish your short-term tasks in a way that helps you not just achieve your ninety-day goal, but reap real dividends spiritually and practically in the process.”

Mother Sue will provide more details of the weekly study in the near future. Please let her know if you plan to attend this series!

-----cut here-----



Each Christmas Eve, the church is adorned with wreaths and poinsettias. St. Luke's purchases the poinsettias at \$12.95 each. If you would like to donate in honor/remembrance of a loved one, please provide the name(s) you would like printed in the Christmas Eve bulletin. Checks can be made out to St. Luke's Church. **Please return**

to the office by Sunday, December 17th. You may also use one of the envelopes located in the pews during Advent.

St. Luke's Episcopal Church

**59 High Street in Wilton, Maine
P. O. Box 249, Farmington, ME 04938
207-645-2639**

E-mail: stlukes@myfairpoint.net
Web Address: www.stlukeswilton.org

St. Luke's Who to Contact

Rector	Mother Sue Cole	897-5621
Sr. Warden:	TBD	
Jr. Warden:	Carolyn McLaughlin	645-2312
Clerk:	Jeannine LeVigne	860-8487
Treasurer:	Dick Condon	778-4425

Other Vestry Members:

Tony McLaughlin, Elecia Pillsbury, Ed Ferreira, Michelle Ouellette,
Kevin Howley

Secretary:	Lisa Lindsay	645-4899
Altar Guild Director	Chris Cox	645-2829
Eucharistic Ministers:	Mother Sue Cole	897-5621
Church School:	Justy Nazar	645-2783
Acolyte Mentor:	Brenda Holman	778-3397
Newsletter:	Lisa Lindsay	645-2639
Episcopal Church Women:	Carolyn McLaughlin	645-2312
Lectors/Lay Readers:	Lisa Lindsay	645-2639