Sermon "Fulfilled in Your Hearing"
October 18, 2026
Patronal Feast of St. Luke
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St. Luke's Church, Wilton

"Remember the past, plan for the future, but live for today, because yesterday is gone and tomorrow may never come." Luke the Evangelist

Perhaps you may have seen that quote on a poster? If you Google it, it comes up as the #1 quote from St. Luke. But alas and alack just like two weeks ago with a popular quote from St. Francis that he never really said, there is no evidence that St. Luke ever said this either! But so what! I'm sure he could have said it, would have said it if someone gave him the chance. Because it is a perfect beginning to a good old-fashioned three point sermon: remember the past, plan for the future, live for today.

Remember the past - I hope you will all have a chance to take some time to look at the wonderful bulletin board Lisa has put together downstairs - photos and articles from St. Luke's events through the years. The Vestry then was mostly men, mostly in suits and ties. You have that on today and someone is going to ask you, "Who died?" but maybe not even then. The women of the church organized a variety of church fairs and even a lobster supper where they cooked whole lobsters. What I noticed, being the person who keeps the yearly and annual records, was the numbers: within four years of establishing the mission in Farmington, numbers had swelled to ____ congregants and ____ children. Within four years! This Sunday marks me being here four years at St. Luke's and while we've had a modest increase in attendance it sure isn't anything like that. Did you know that in 1966 the parish records showed that there were 191 communicants and 328 baptized members – And it wasn't that there were more people – population of Franklin County in 1966 was around 21,000, today a little over 30,000.

But the 1950s through the early 60s were the heyday of church attendance in the US, at least for mainline Protestant denominations and Roman Catholics. First there was the fear factor as we were in the middle of the Cold War and there was the fear of nuclear annihilation. But it was also a time of optimism, we had survived a World War, progress was everywhere: average families could afford to buy a house, people had jobs as the mills and factories were booming and just like in Lake Wobegon all the children were above average – and there were a lot of them! The good old days? Many think so

and long for them but society changed, new varieties of churches sprang up, and our numbers, like the Episcopal church all over but particularly in New England declined