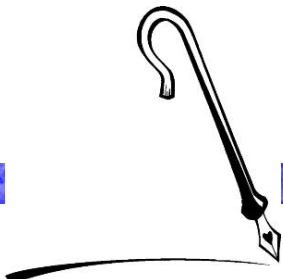




Gospel Echoes

December 2011



A Word from Pastor John...

Dear members & friends of the St. Luke's UMC:

As I write this newsletter, we are *once again* on the verge of *Advent* with the promise of all that the *Christmas season* will offer for our church family. As you know from past newsletters, this is my favorite time of the year because of "memories past" as well as new memories that will be forged with family and friends in the weeks ahead. I trust that each of you will have a joyous and blessed Christmas season this year.

I want to use this newsletter to give an update on what's happening in regard to the prayer ministry at St. Luke's. The *Staff Parish Relations Committee* met on Tuesday, November 1st, and made a decision to ask Jim Richey to be our part-time *Prayer Chain Coordinator*, and for Paula Shrock to be our part-time *Prayer Ministry Director*, and they have both agreed to serve in these capacities. Each job will require approximately ten hours per week, and they will be paid a small salary for the work they'll be doing.

As the *Prayer Chain Coordinator* Jim Richey (and his *right-hand woman—Alice*) will:

1) Oversee and implement the Prayer Chain Ministry:

- a) Collect the prayer cards from the Sunday services
- b) Distribute all prayer requests via email on the prayer chain, unless the person has requested that their request be kept confidential

c) Keep the pastoral staff updated on upcoming surgeries, medical tests, etc.

2) Send *Get Well, Sympathy, Encouragement and Welcome Cards*

3) Maintain a policy for administering the email prayer chain, including documenting how to get added to the list, how we do not share email addresses without owner permission, confidentiality limitations, etc.

4) Establish a prayer web page linked from the St. Luke's main page to post news, the above policy, contact information and other items related to this ministry

As the *Prayer Ministry Director*, Paula Shrock will be asked to:

1) Oversee and implement the Prayer Ministry:

a) Recruit and schedule persons to pray silently for the service during both Sunday services and other special services

b) Recruit a *pastoral prayer team* who will pray regularly for the pastors

c) Recruit and train *altar counselors* who will be available to assist persons who come forward to pray at the conclusion of our worship services

d) Develop opportunities for our congregation to involve themselves in prayer:

- Prayer walks and prayer vigils

-Prayer teams

-Prayer seminars

-Concerted church efforts (Like our present 40 day *Prayer & Fast*)

e) Help motivate the "whole church" to become more involved in prayer so that St. Luke's literally becomes a *House of Prayer*

f) Practice extended prayer ministry as invited, including but not limited to:

-Prayer in *District or Conference* settings

-Local ecumenical prayer events such as *National Day of Prayer*

-Other community prayer events

In closing, I want to encourage all of us to ask God to send revival into our personal lives, our local church, our community and our nation. Can you imagine what 2012 would be like if God were to send a sweeping revival across our land?

Onward & Upward

Pastor John

Pastor Mitch's Corner

Come Home for Christmas!

Wow!! The Advent and Christmas season is already upon us. In many ways, this year has been a difficult one. With several tragedies and the loss of loved ones and friends, this may be a hard time for many people to get through. Lots of people begin searching for something to believe in or for the meaning of life during the holiday season. What better time to invite them "home," to the church, than now! The church can provide a message of hope through the birth, death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ.

There are also families that have drifted away from the church for various reasons. Why don't we invite them to come "home," to the church, so they can experience once again God's love in a way that only He can provide.

As we prepare for the coming of Christ during Advent, and as we celebrate his birth this Christmas, let us be reminded that a big part of Christmas celebration revolves around family. Let's all try to rid ourselves of the selfish nature we have and make this season as stress-free as possible. Remember that Christmas is not about "us" or "me!" It's about celebrating the birth of our Lord and Savior, and spreading this good news to those around us. The family time spent in this process is priceless. Make the most of it. And join your church family in the times of celebration we are observing this year. Let's be there for each other as we gaze into the manger in wonder and awe this year.

This is an invitation to come "home" for the holidays! And let us be a beacon of hope to those around us who are struggling this season, reaching out as we celebrate Christ's birth.

Grace & Peace,
Pastor Mitch

St. Luke's Youth Ministry

Sunday, December 4, 2011—Open House at Pastor Mitch's

There will be no youth group this evening. Please try to stop by the parsonage with your family sometime between 2pm and 5pm.

Sunday, December 11, 2011—We Care Park Volunteering

Meet at the church at 4:00pm and we'll travel to We Care Park where we'll help out running the evening by collecting donations, serving refreshments, and other stuff! We'll be back at the church by 10:30pm.

Sunday, December 18, 2011—Youth Christmas Party 6-8:00pm

Bring a wrapped "white elephant" gift and come join the group at church as we have some Christmas fun and fellowship. Also bring some kind of appetizer type refreshment to share.



Christmas Open House

Pastor Mitch's Parsonage

Sunday, December 4, 2011

2:00pm to 5:00pm

2996 Springwater Court

(in Highland Springs subdivision)

The St. Luke's congregation is invited to stop in at Pastor Mitch's parsonage anytime between 2pm and 5pm and enjoy some light refreshments and a tour of the new parsonage.

Children's Christmas Program

Friday, December 16th

We're helping out by serving the meal before the Children's Christmas Program. You need to be at church by 5:00pm wearing khaki's and a red or green shirt or sweater. Dinner will be served at 6:00pm and will be over at 7:00pm. Plan on staying also for the performance from 7:00pm until 8:00pm if you would like to!

You are always encouraged to invite friends to our activities!!

No Youth Group on Sunday, December 25th or Sunday, January 1st.

CHRISTIAN ED NEWS!



Don't forget about our CHRISTMAS DINNER THEATER!! We will be offering a HOMEMADE lasagna dinner with all the trimmings AND the best kids' Christmas play EVER!! It's called "Star of Wonder" and in our list of characters, we have "Shining Star" - she's a real diva; "Falling Star" - he's always making us laugh; "Shooting Star" - she's our Annie Oakley, complete with pig tails and cowboy boots; "Lucky Star" always has her 4 leaf clover!; Our "Rock Star" will be sure to rock your socks off; The "North Star" is a grouchy guy who is definitely set in his ways! We also have singers and dancers galore! All this for the low price of \$6 per person! You can't beat that anywhere! Get your tickets from Julie in the office or from me!!



Blessings,
Melinda

Our Birthdays for the month of December...



Irma **DINWIDDIE**, Bob **HUDSON**, Abby **HANSEN**, (1); Martie **BOLLET**, (3); Violet **RICE**, Paul **LEWIS**, Nancy **McCLURE**, Deanna **WRIGHT**, Melissa **TROYER**, (4); Ben **CLINGAMAN**, (6); Shawn **MAYFIELD**, Eric **TANNER**, (7); Philip **HOROHO**, Grant **HOROHO**, (8); Mark **FACKLER**, Emma **UNCAPHER**, (9); Jerry **YARD**, (10); Cason **COHEE**, (11); Beverly **BUNNELL**, Ginny **HOLDER**, (12); Linda **BOWSER**, (13); Dennis **CLINGAMAN**, Seth **HANDY**, (14); Ashlin **HADDEN**, Brock **HILTNER**, (15); John **MYERS**, Donovan **HARRISON**, (16); Carole **TRIBUTSCH**, David **MANLOVE**, (18); Laura **ANDERSON**, (19); Geneve **GATES**, Jodi **GALBRAITH**, (22); Jennifer **SNYDER**, Beck **KWAIIT**, (23); Sharon **O'HAIR**, Mary Rosalene **McELFRESH**, Derrick **COHEE**, (24); Geneva **TAYLOR**, Barbara **LEWIS**, Amy **O'HAIR**, Carina **KWAIIT**, (27); Chris **JONES**, Travis **MAURER**, (28); Armil **MOORE**, Ed **BAKER**, Rhoda **BARKMAN**, Lori **MICKLE**, (29); Sandy **PRICE**, Hazel **ROBERTS**, Joe **LEWIS**, Sharon **LAMBERSON**, Bob **BASZNER**, (31).

Happy Birthday to you!



Monetary Seeds of Faith

St. Luke's Roofing Project

As our building ages, major upkeep projects like our current roofing project are going to have to be addressed. We have been approached by a church member wanting to begin a new fund to help pay for the church's new roof, rather than having to take out a loan for the entire \$86,000. Several other church members have also expressed interest in this project.

Upon approval of the Finance Committee, a seed offering of \$1,000 has been accepted to start this fund with a challenge to others to step out in faith and help the mission of St. Luke's continue well into the future by giving to this fund above and beyond your pledged gifts and tithes. Please mark checks and envelopes plainly with "Roofing Project" so it is directed into this fund. Thank you for your support.

Our ATTENDANCE for the month of NOVEMBER...

11/06/2011:
8:30: 187; 11:00: 89

11/13/2011:
8:30: 154; 11:00: 55

11/20/2011:
8:30: 187; 11:00: 86

11/27/2011:
8:30: 174; 11:00: 77

The 2011 St. Luke's stewardship campaign desires to teach the basics of Christian stewardship. Here is our message for December:

God uses money to illustrate His power.

"Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this,' says the Lord Almighty."
(Malachi 3:10)

Our GIVING for the month of NOVEMBER...



October total: \$50,314.11

October needed: \$49,815.08

October difference: \$ 499.03

11/06/2011: \$16,042.03

11/13/2011: \$12,888.02

11/20/2011: \$ 9,666.81

11/27/2011: \$13,702.74



UMW News



Hope Circle will meet on Tuesday, December 6th, at 1:00 PM, in the church Parlor. Mary Miner will do the calling, Barb Lewis will give the devotions, and Lois Hoban will present the lesson. Pat Hudson will serve snacks.

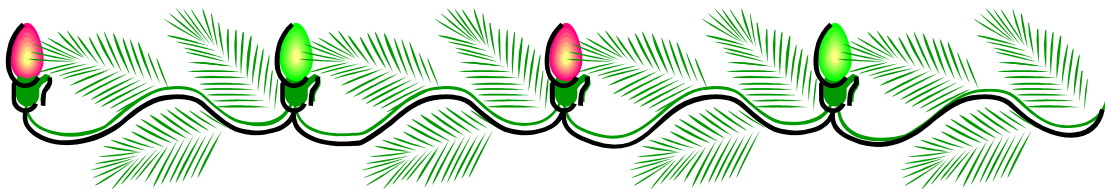
Naomi Circle will meet on Tuesday, December 6th, at 6:00 PM, at the home of Nancy Slaubaugh, for a carry-in dinner. Brenda Hutto will present the lesson. Please bring white elephants for Urban Outreach 's "Secret Santa Shop," paper goods for CAM, and a covered dish. If you have not signed up, please call Nancy at 963-3261 to do so. Join us for this special Christmas party!



UMW NEWS FROM NANCY:

- ◆ Congratulations to Grace Harshman, who is the 2011 UMW "Jewel of a Woman."
- ◆ We will be having a mitten and scarf tree for Bashor Home. Please place all donations on the tree in the narthex.
- ◆ Rada knives make wonderful gifts!! UMW will be selling them in the narthex for the next few Sundays.
- ◆ Thanks to everyone who helped donate to our Thank Offering boxes.
- ◆ I hope you have purchased a ticket and will attend our Christmas lunch and enjoy "Celebrate with the Seiferts" on December 3rd.
- ◆ Join a circle—receive a blessing.

—Nancy Slaubaugh, UMW President



J **JOY FELLOWSHIP** will meet on Friday, December 2nd, at St. Luke's in the chapel at

11:00 AM. The Choraliers, under the direction of David Britton, will present the program. After the meeting, we will enjoy a fellowship lunch. Hamburger sandwiches will be provided. Please bring a covered dish, a white elephant, and a friend!

O **JOY FELLOWSHIP**, St. Luke's seniors' group for church folks and friends from the community, will meet on Friday, December 16th, at 11:00 AM, in the chapel. Judy Weaver, vocalist, will sing some Christmas songs. She will be accompanied by pianist, Nancy Slaubaugh. The fellowship lunch will be prepared by the JOY helpers.

Y Come and enjoy this special Christmas party! This will be the last JOY Fellowship meeting until March, so don't miss it!



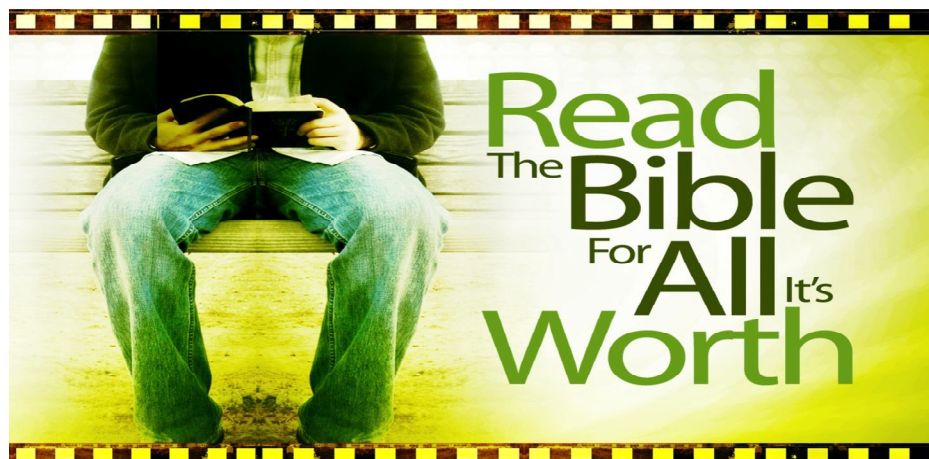
St. Luke's Library Desk schedule: Please recruit a substitute if needed.

	9:50-10:00 a.m.	11:00-11:10 a.m.
Dec 4	Fannie Rody	Mary Lott
Dec 11	Nancy McClure (one service)	Sandy Price
Dec 18	Wayne Sozansky	Nina Sozansky
Dec 25	One service — Merry Christmas!	



Holidays are great times to curl up with a Christian read! We have Fiction and Non-Fiction, novels and short stories or devotions. Have to wait in the car or at the physician's office? Take a book out! You say you're going to be traveling for Christmas,; why not borrow one of our many books on audio CD? We also have Christmas and other music.

St. Luke's Library has the Holy Bible in various translations as well as on CD and DVD!



For more information, please contact Nina Sozansky, St. Luke's Librarian, by phone 437-6712 or by email: soz@vfemail.net

ANNOUNCEMENTS

2011 Year End Giving

It's not too late to consider a special year end gift above your current pledge in order to take advantage of the tax benefits for this year.

All donations that are intended for the 2011 tax year must be in the church office by **Friday, December 30, 2011.**



"Let Us" Ministry scripture: "Let us encourage one another." - Hebrews 10:25

How are you doing?

To believers at St. Luke's:

Aloha and greetings in the matchless name of Christ Jesus. It is with abiding joy and appreciation I compose this letter, even after I have departed your friendly confines. Thank you for the privilege of sharing ministry in your midst.

Thank you for your generous contribution toward my ministry of proclaiming Christ in preaching and teaching settings near and far. You enable and empower me to bring biblical ministry to a variety of peoples and places. Some have a crying need, but lack resources to access ministry such as mine. You help that happen. In that way, St. Luke's influence is spread beyond your doors and shores.

Time, distance, and ministry have passed since we shared together. As you receive this I will be in Thailand training young missionaries to impact that nation and beyond. There is a real spiritual need among the people of that land, and presently, there is crying humanitarian need with extreme flooding. I will rely upon your prayers both in the spiritual and practical realm.

Our partnership is truly rewarding and empowering. I am in great anticipation of our time together next year. And, I promise to behave next year....if your pastor behaves...

Privileged to Proclaim,
Rev. N. Stan Hankins

FRUIT FOR KUO CHRISTMAS SACK LUNCHESES:

St. Luke's has been asked to provide 2,000 pieces of fruit for the KUO lunch sacks that go out on Christmas day with their presents. We had a very successful campaign last year through your generous donations.

Donations need to be marked "FRUIT" and turned in by December 18th. Any extra money will be donated to Kokomo Urban Outreach.

Thanks,
Alice Richey



December 2011 Parish Nurse News by Cindi Myers RN, BSN



News I hope Right Now You Are Using!

I am excited about this call to Fast and Pray for Revival and Renewal. St. Luke's Footprints SS class took some time out of our regular Bible Study in The Book of Acts to explore what Fasting and Praying is, and what it might look like when we " ... **Humble** ourselves, pray, and seek God's Face..." The Library has many books on Fasting that are very good. My favorite is: Richard Foster's Celebration of Discipline . There is a whole chapter on fasting. The other is Arthur Wallace's: A Chosen Fast. In the Bible there were many "forms" of fasting. There was the supernatural fast of Moses, Daniel's **Partial Fast** outlined in Daniel 10, Esther's 3-day **Absolute Fast** that she asked her Uncle Mordecai to pronounce to all the other Jewish People, Jesus' Fast illustrated in Luke 4. I appreciate the challenge offered us in the bulletin insert, which would fit our personal call from God. If you haven't chosen a fast, but now feel "called" to do so, I don't think it is ever too late to humble oneself before God.

Just yesterday, November 17th I was browsing in the Library's "books for sale room," and my eye was caught by a book that Richard Foster recommends, Frank Laubach's: PRAYER: THE MIGHTIEST FORCE IN THE WORLD! I felt so challenged when I read these words, that I feel prompted to share them with you! On the one hand you say: "Why would the Parish Nurse recommend such things as prayer or fasting? That has nothing to do with health!" Oh, really? I am firmly convinced that we are body/mind/spirit, and all is interconnected in ways we do not understand on this side of Heaven!

Mr. Laubach's words, page 45:

"Dear Church Member;

We are going to form a conspiracy today, [in the next 40 days, interjects Cindi] to pray while our pastor is preaching. Don't shut your eyes unless you wish to, but keep asking God to speak through the pastor's lips and in our hearts!

It will be an exciting experiment. *Remember, you are the church, and the pastor is your servant. Each of you is just as important in making a great service as he is. He can't do his best alone. Your prayers set the spiritual atmosphere without which no sermon can be great. Together we can lift the pastor and the service to new heights. Miracles happen when a congregation makes this unanimous. It will not be unanimous unless it includes **you**.*

*You want to help our world out of its deep trouble but you can't do it **alone**. Christ must be able to work through you to make the world safe, and bring a lasting peace. Praying together in this church today is one grand way in which we help Christ to give us vision and power to lift the world.*

So pray inwardly every minute, and see what happens."

Isn't this a wonderful experiment? A glorious prayer and fasting experiment! Let us conclude with the St Paul's words in Ephesians 3:20, "And now to Him who is able to do exceedingly and abundantly more than all we ask or think or imagine, according to HIS power that is at work within us, to HIM be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen!"

Yes, "So—be—it!" Amen!

December 2011

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1 8:00am Seekers 6:30pm Nominating Committee 7:00pm Praise Team Practice	2 11:00am Joy Fellowship	3 9:00am UMMW Advent Program
4 8:30am Worship 10:00am Sunday School Hr 11:00am Worship 1:00pm Boy Scout Venture 6:00pm Youth Group	5 11:45am Altar Prayer 6:00pm Upward Meeting	6 1:00pm Staff Meeting 1:00pm Hope Circle	7 1:00pm Prayer/Bible Study 6:00pm Mentored HandBells 7:00pm Chancel Choir Practice	8 8:00am Seekers 7:00pm Praise Team Practice	9 4:00pm Upward Evaluations	10 8:00am UMM Breakfast @ Golden Corral 9:00am Upward Evaluations
		7:00pm SPRC Meeting 7:00pm Naomi Circle				
11 9:00am Sunday School Hr 10:00am Worship - Cantata 6:00pm Youth Group	12 11:45am Altar Prayer 4:00pm Prayer and Share 5:00pm Stephen Ministry	13 12:00pm Staff Christmas Luncheon 4:30pm Missions Committee Meeting	14 1:00pm Prayer/Bible Study 6:00pm Mentored HandBells 7:00pm Chancel Choir Practice	15 8:00am Seekers 6:00pm Maryann Holsepple - Tupperware 7:00pm Praise Team Practice	16 11:00am Joy Fellowship 7:00pm Childrens Christmas Play	17 11:30am Luttrell Christmas 1:00pm Food Pantry
		6:30pm Trustee Meeting				
18 8:30am Worship 10:00am Sunday School Hr 11:00am Worship 1:30pm Boy/Scout Venture 6:00pm Youth Group	19 11:45am Altar Prayer 6:00pm Gideons Meeting	20 8:00am Newsletter Deadline 1:00pm Staff Meeting	21 1:00pm Prayer/Bible Study 6:00pm Mentored HandBells 7:00pm Chancel Choir Practice	22 8:00am Seekers 7:00pm Praise Team Practice	23 12:00pm OFFICE CLOSING- AT NOON	24 5:30pm Christmas Eve Service 10:30pm Christmas Eve Service
		7:00pm Finance Meeting				
25 10:00am Worship	26 8:00am OFFICE CLOSED	27 1:00pm Staff Meeting	28 1:00pm Prayer/Bible Study 6:00pm Mentored HandBells 7:00pm Chancel Choir Practice	29 8:00am Seekers 7:00pm Praise Team Practice	30 12:00pm OFFICE CLOSING- AT NOON	31