

Parish Rebuilder

St. Luke's Lutheran Church - 5150 Wilson Street, La Mesa, CA 91942

www.st-lukes-la-mesa.org

December 2023
Monthly Newsletter
Volume 23 Issue 12

Christmas Sermon by Luther on John 1:1-14

We invite you to attend

St. Luke's Lutheran Church

Please contact Lupita in the office to discuss
a visit or to arrange an appointment with
Pastor Mark:

619-463-6633 or office-sllc@att.net

In 1522, Luther preached a Christmas sermon on John's gospel. The first three verses of the gospel lesson are, "1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was with God in the beginning. 3 Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made." Here are the opening paragraphs to Luther's sermon:

"This is the highest of all the Gospel readings, and yet it is not, as some think, obscure or difficult. For here the high article of the deity of Christ is established most clearly, which all Christians should know and which they can certainly understand. Nothing is too high for faith. Therefore, we want, as much as we can, to treat it most plainly, and not as the scholastics, who have hidden it from the common man with their invented subtleties and frightened them away from it. There is no need of much pointed and sharp consideration, but only of plain, simple attention to the words.

"First, we should know that all that the apostles taught and wrote they took out of the Old Testament, where all the things are proclaimed that were to be fulfilled later in Christ and were to be preached, as St. Paul says when he talks about "the Gospel of God, which He promised beforehand through His prophets in the Holy Scripture" (Romans 1 [:1-2]). Therefore, all their preaching is based on the Old Testament, and there is not a word in the New Testament that does not look back into the Old, where it had been foretold. Thus we have seen in the Epistle how the deity of Christ is confirmed by the apostle from passages in the Old Testament. For the New Testament is nothing more

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**Special
Congregational
Meeting**

Sunday, 03 December, 2023

**After Church
Services.**

than a revelation of the Old. Just as if someone had a sealed letter at first, and then broke it open, so the Old Testament is the testamentary letter of Christ, which He has opened after His death and caused to be read and proclaimed everywhere through the Gospel. This is shown by the Lamb of God who alone opens the book with the seven seals, which no one else could open, neither in heaven nor on earth nor under the earth [Rev. 5:1-5].

“Now, so that this Gospel may be clearer and more easily understood, we must go back to the Old Testament, to the place on which this Gospel is founded—and that is when Moses writes at the beginning of his Book of Genesis: “In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form and void, and it was dark over the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering on the water. Then God said, ‘Let there be light,’ and there was light” (Genesis 1 [1:1-3]), etc. Then Moses relates how all the creatures were created in the same way as the light, namely, by the speaking or the Word of God. For example, God said, “Let there be an expanse”; or, again, God said, “Let there be sun, moon, and stars,” etc.

“From these words of Moses it clearly follows and is concluded that God has a Word, through which He spoke, before any creatures were created; and this Word may not and cannot be a creature, since all creatures were created through this divine speaking, as Moses’ words clearly and forcibly state, since he writes: “God said, ‘Let there be light,’ [278] and there was light.” The Word must therefore have preceded the light, since light came by the Word; consequently, it was also before all other creatures, which also came by the Word, as Moses writes.

“But let us go farther. If the Word preceded all creatures, and all creatures came into being and were created by the Word, then [the Word] must be of a different nature than a creature and was not made or created like a creature. It must therefore be eternal and without beginning. For when all things began it was already there, and [it] cannot be contained in time nor

in creation, but is above time and creation; indeed, time and creation are made and have their beginning through [the Word]. Thus it is undeniable that whatever is not temporal must be eternal, and that which has no beginning cannot be temporal, and that which is not created must be God. For outside of God and His creation there is nothing—or no being. Thus we learn from these words of Moses that the Word of God, which was in the beginning and through which all creatures were made and spoken, must be the eternal God and not a creature.

“Further, the Word and He who speaks [the Word] are not one person, for it is impossible that the speaker is Himself the Word. What sort of speaker would He be who is Himself the Word? He would have to be a mute, or the Word would have to sound of itself without the speaker and speak itself. Scripture here speaks in strong and clear words: “God said,” and thus God and His Word must be two. If Moses had written “there was a saying” or “there had been a saying,” it would not be as clear that there were two, the Word and the speaker. But when he says, “God said,” and names the speaker and His Word, he forcibly states that there are two, that the speaker is not the Word and that the Word is not the speaker, but that the Word comes from the speaker and has its being not of itself but from the speaker. But the speaker does not come from the Word nor does He have His being from the Word, but from Himself. Thus Moses concludes that there are two persons in the Godhead from eternity before all creatures, that one has His being from the other, and the first has His being from no one but from Himself. [279]

“Again, Scripture confirms and establishes that there is only one God, since Moses begins by saying, “In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth” [Gen. 1:1]. And later: “Hear, O Israel: Your God is only one God” (Deuteronomy 6 [4]). See, Scripture proceeds with simple, comprehensible words, and teaches such high things so clearly, that everyone may well understand them, and so forcefully that no one can oppose them. Who is there that

cannot here understand from these words of Moses that there must be two persons in the deity, and yet only one deity, unless he would deny the clear Scripture?

“Again, whose thinking is so acute as to speak against this? He has to allow the Word to be something different from God, the speaker; and he must confess that [the Word] was before all creatures and that the creatures were made by [the Word]. Consequently, he must surely have [the Word] be God, for outside of creatures there is nothing but God. He must also confess that there is only one God. Thus Scripture forces the conclusion that these two persons are one complete God and that each one is the only, true, complete, and natural God, who has created all things; that the speaker has His being not from the Word, but that the Word has His being from the speaker; and yet all of this is eternal and from eternity, outside of all creatures” (LW 75: 277-279).

Reminder -

Christmas Tree Decorating Party

This year's Christmas tree decorating party will take place on Friday, 08 December, at 6:00 pm – 8:00 pm. This annual event provides an opportunity for people young and old to prepare the sanctuary to celebrate Advent and Christmas. Please RSVP with the church office if you plan to attend.



German Christmas Carol Service

St. Luke's is again planning to hold its annual German Christmas Carol Service. The service is scheduled for Sunday, 17 December, at

7:00 pm. A Christmas reception with light refreshments will be held after the service in the Lower Level. If you would like to help with the reception, please contact Pastor Mark or Angie Hauk. Even if you do not plan to attend, if you know of someone who might be interested in attending, please invite them to the service.

Fourth Advent and Christmas Eve

In case you have not consulted your liturgical calendar, the 24th of December is both the Fourth Sunday in Advent and Christmas Eve. So, in the morning St. Luke's will celebrate the Sunday with an Advent service at 9:00 am, and in the evening the church will celebrate the nativity of Christ at 6:00 pm. Christmas is a lovely time to be together, especially as a church family. So, please invite your family and friends to St. Luke's for Advent and Christmas services.

New Church Council

At St. Luke's October quarterly congregational meeting, a new church council was elected. The following persons in the specified positions have agreed to serve for the prescribed term lengths: Judi Cole, President (three year term), Bob Gray, Vice-President (three year term), Kim Emerson, Secretary (three year term), Scott Brown, Treasurer (three year term), and Tania Salas, Parish Education (two year term).

The church council wishes to thank and to honor outgoing Vice President, Tom Stubbs, for his many years serving on council. Tom's willingness to create a vacancy on the council, in order to elect members from the former Reformation Lutheran Church, is commendable and further advances the successful integration of both churches.

St. Luke's Theological Academy - Winter Courses

St. Luke's Theological Academy (SLTA) will be offering XX courses in the new year.



Coffee Hour

Hosts for December

December 3rd — TBD

December 10th — Pat Kettler

December 17th — Stephanie Brown

December 24th — Judi Cole & Tania Salas

December 31st— TBD

Gleaner

Noun

A person who gathers small amounts of grains or other produce left behind by harvesters; nowadays often for charitable use.

What Is Gleaning? Gleaning is simply the act of collecting excess fresh foods to be provided to those in need. Many years ago, members of St. Lukes were having dinner at Panera in Grossmont Center. As the restaurant was in the process of closing, they noticed that large trash bags of bread and boxes of pastries were being put into disposal bins. When asked, the employees said they were throwing away baked goods that had not been sold.

A series of discussions and meetings ensued with the result of volunteers from St. Lukes showing up to Panera on Thursday nights as they were closing, gathering the unsold breads and pastries and then delivering them to the Third Avenue Charitable Association (TACO) the following morning to be used to help feed those in need.

This article is a call for one volunteer to take a separate Thursday night each month and continue this act of modern-day Gleaning. This past year, two longtime volunteers have found themselves unable to continue and we thank them for their many years of faithful service. The commitment we are looking for involves arriving at Panera on an assigned Thursday night shortly before they close at 9 pm, gather the bags and boxes of breads and pastries, then on Friday morning, deliver these to TACO, located at First Lutheran Church on Third and Ash St. downtown San Diego between 7 and 7:30 am.

This is a year-to-year commitment, I check with the volunteers late in the year to see if they are willing to continue for another year. I am looking for someone to take the second and someone to take the third Thursday of each month.

If you are willing to take on this task, please contact me by phone at 619-772-2754 or email me at ted.olsen@outlook.com or just come see me after service.

Thank you for your assistance,



Women of St. Luke's (WSL)

President: Doris Snashall | Treasurer: Nancy Kearns | Secretary: Karen Skullerud

St. Luke's woman will again collect gift cards for the Adopt A Family program at Crisis House. Crisis House located in El Cajon offers programs for individuals and families experiencing domestic violence and homeless. The Adopt A Family program providing funds for Christmas gifts for family members,

Walmart gift cards only in amount of \$25 or \$50

WSL will convert any cash or checks given into gift cards. Make checks payable to WSL for Adopt a Family

All donations must be received by November 30th please. (Any donation received after that date will be forwarded to Crisis House for general usage.)

No record of giving for the Adopt A Family program will be kept by St. Luke's or WSL



Ladies Retreat

Many thanks for the delightful time spent with new and familiar sisters-in-Christ Jesus at St. Luke's—a special time to grow closer as a church family. The thoughtful gifts and all the details of making the Lower Level look so welcoming made the day special and the luncheon served was outstandingly delicious. So, many thanks to Dianne Foreman who spearheaded this event and the following ladies for their love, their talents and their time:



The ladies who graciously took leadership roles are:

Laurie Floren—Music | Dianne Durrenberger—Music | Carol Prior—Our wonderful Food Chairwoman | Cheri Murrel—Tai Chi exercise leader & Get Acquainted Game Leader | Mary Ann Boulain—Altar Guild Ministry Rep | Shirley Carrington—Ladies Project Ministry Rep | Nancy Kearns—St. Luke's Women's Ministry | Terry East—Bennie Ministry | Colleen Olsen—TACO Ministry | Karen Skullerud—Bible Study Ministry | Our speaker was Sara Patrick

DECEMBER WORSHIP TEXTS

First Sunday in Advent — Dec. 3

First Lesson — Isaiah 64:1-9

Psalm— 80:1-7

Second Lesson — 1 Corinthians 1:3-9

Gospel — Mark 13:24-37

Second Sunday in Advent — Dec. 10

First Lesson — Isaiah 40:1-11

Psalm 85

Second Lesson — 2 Peter 3:8-14

Gospel — Mark 1:1-8

Third Sunday in Advent — Dec. 17

First Lesson — Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11

Psalm 126

Second Lesson — 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24

Gospel — John 1:6-8, 19-28

Fourth Sunday in Advent — Dec. 24

First Lesson — 2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16

Psalm 89:1-5 (19-29)

Second Lesson — Romans 16:25-27

Gospel — Luke 1:26-38

The Nativity of Our Lord—

Christmas Eve — Dec. 24

First Lesson — Isaiah 7:10-14

Psalm 110:1-4

Second Lesson — 1 John 4:7-16

Gospel — Matthew 1:18-25

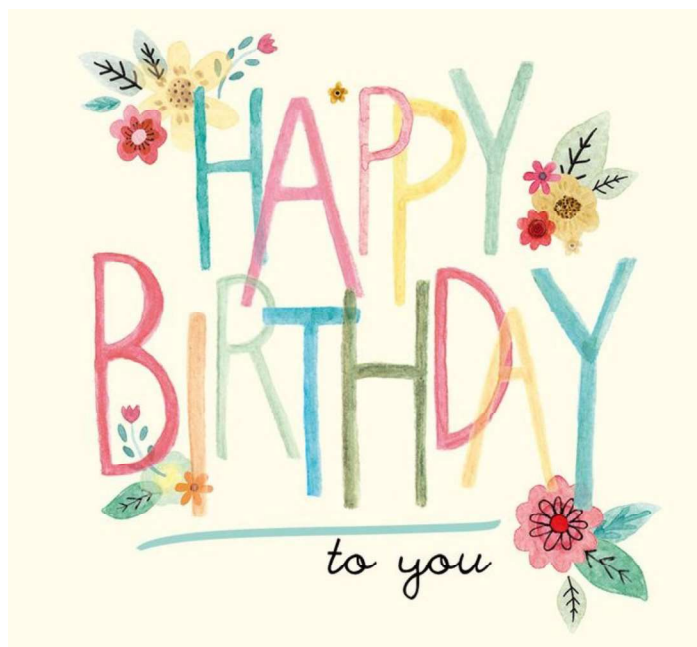
First Sunday after Christmas — Dec. 31

First Lesson — Isaiah 61:10-62:3

Psalm 111

Second Lesson — Galatians 4:4-7

Gospel — Luke 2:22-40



Debbie Parks 12/6

Raymond Yerger 12/13

Cal Borchardt 12/14

Liz Dunnigan 12/17

Joe Makowski 12/17

Mario Salas 12/18

Donald Smith 12/30

Happy Anniversary

Robin & Roy Wheeler

Jillian & Bob Barnard

Judi & Dan Cole

DECEMBER PRAYER CALENDAR
"The Father's Gift To US"

1	Isaiah 9:6-7	
2	Isaiah 11: 1-5	<i>Let us all together praise our God</i>
3	Isaiah 61:1-3	<i>Before his glorious throne</i>
4	Isaiah 40:3-5	<i>Today he opens heaven again</i>
5	Matthew 12:18-21	<i>To give us his own Son,</i>
6	Luke 1:26-33	<i>To give us his own Son.</i>
7	Luke 2:8-14	
8	John 1:9-18	<i>Within an earth-born form he hides</i>
9	Luke 4:14-21	<i>His all creating light;</i>
10	I Peter 1:20-25	<i>To serve us all he humbly cloaks</i>
11	II Peter 1:1-8	<i>The splendor of this might,</i>
12	Titus 2:4-7	<i>The splendor of this might.</i>
13	Galatians 4:1-7	
14	I John 1:1-4	<i>He undertakes a great exchange,</i>
15	Philippians 1:6-10	<i>Puts on our human frame</i>
16	II Timothy 1:6-10	<i>And in return give us his realm,</i>
17	Romans 8:35-39	<i>His glory and his name,</i>
18	II Corinthians 4:6-11	<i>His glory and his name.</i>
19	Romans 6:1-5	
20	John 15:1-11	<i>He is the key, and he the door</i>
21	I John 5:18-20	<i>To blessed Paradise;</i>
22	Colossians 2:9-15	<i>The angel bars the way no more.</i>
23	I John 4:7-12	<i>To God our praises rise,</i>
24	Romans 5:6-11	<i>To God our praises rise.</i>
25	Romans 6:3-11	
26	Hebrews 4:14-16	<i>Hymn #47</i>
27	John 6:38-51	<i>Verses 1, 3, 4 and 6</i>
28	Ephesians 3:14-21	<i>LBW</i>
29	John 10:14-18	
30	John 3:16-18	
31	Isaiah 55:10-13	

DECEMBER WORSHIP TEAMS

	Reader(s)	<i>Laurie Floren</i>
	Altar Guild	<i>Terry East</i>
3rd	Communion Assistant —bread	<i>Randy Engel</i>
	Communion Assistants—wine	<i>Cheri Murrell & Terry East</i>
	Greeter	<i>Randy Engel</i>
	Prayers of the People	<i>Pastor Mark Menacher</i>
	Projectionist	<i>Shirley Carrington</i>
	Usher Team	<i>Randy Engel</i>
10th	Communion Assistant —bread	<i>Randy Engel</i>
	Communion Assistants—wine	<i>Cherri Murrell & Randy Engel</i>
	Greeter	<i>Randy Engel</i>
	Prayers of the People	<i>Jillian Barnard</i>
	Projectionist	<i>Shirley Carrington</i>
	Usher Team	<i>Emerson</i>
17th	Communion Assistant —bread	<i>Judi Cole</i>
	Communion Assistants—wine	<i>Cheri Murrell & Terry East</i>
	Greeter	<i>Randy Engel</i>
	Prayers of the People	<i>Randy Engel</i>
	Projectionist	<i>Shirley Carrington</i>
	Usher Team	<i>Randy Engel</i>
24th	Communion Assistant —bread	<i>Judi Cole</i>
	Communion Assistants—wine	<i>Jillian Barnard & Cherri Murrell</i>
	Greeter	<i>Randy Engel</i>
	Prayers of the People	<i>Pastor Mark</i>
	Projectionist	<i>Shirley Carrington</i>
	Usher Team	<i>Randy Engel</i>
31st	Communion Assistant —bread	<i>Randy Engel</i>
	Communion Assistants—wine	<i>Cheri Murrell & Terry East</i>
	Greeter	<i>Randy Engel</i>
	Prayers of the People	<i>Pastor Mark</i>
	Projectionist	<i>Shirley Carrington</i>
	Usher Team	<i>Randy Engel</i>

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Dated Material
December 2023

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

A WARM WELCOME TO ALL

- Sunday Worship: 9:00 am in the Sanctuary
- Sunday School: 10:30 am in the Lower Level
- Wednesday Choir Practice: 5:30 pm in the Fireside Room (Lower Level)
- Wednesday Pericope / Communion Service: 7:00 pm in the Fireside Room
- Hebrews Bible Study will meet the 1st and 3rd Wednesdays from 10-11:30 am in the Lower Level

St. Luke's Mission Statement:

We are called as a community of Christians saved by grace
—through faith alone in Jesus Christ—
to spread the Holy Gospel in word, sacrament, and action
solī deo gloria.