

February 25, 2022

Dear St. Luke's Brothers and Sisters,

"If My people, who are called by My name humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land" (2 Chronicles 7:14).

War in Ukraine, division in our country which even creeps into the church and many families, pandemic fatigue, struggles of all kinds (emotional, financial, etc.) which impact so many individuals – this is a time we certainly need to respond wholeheartedly to God's invitation in 2 Chronicles 7:14 to turn to Him! He promises to hear and to answer earnest prayer! He was, is and always will be the loving Lord of all! In light of all this, I am calling on each of us, myself included, to participate in **40 Days of Repentance and Prayer** during the season of Lent, which starts Ash Wednesday, Mar. 2. Here are some ways you can participate:

1 – Dedicated personal prayer time at home each day. Take time to praise and thank the Lord, do personal spiritual inventory and confession, and pray for the world, the church, and those in need. I especially ask your prayers for St. Luke's for God's guidance and for spiritual renewal in the short and long term (more on this below). I have included at the end of this newsletter some prayers in case they may be helpful to you, and the prayer list each Sunday is always available as a resource.

2 – Participation in church services, in person ideally or online as necessary. See below for the schedule of services in March.

3 – Attending prayer meeting Saturday mornings 9:30-10:30am (9-9:45am March 26) – Saturday March 5 will be a special 'prayer summit' so if you can only make one Saturday then that would be a good choice.

4 – Joining the interchurch prayer meeting the first Tuesday of each month at 7pm (watch for details – March 1 will be online - call the church for a link).

Feel free to come up with other ways to join in the **40 Days** (e.g. pray with a few friends over the phone or in any way you wish). Here are some other St. Luke's updates:

1/ MOVING FORWARD IN RENEWAL: As restrictions begin to lift, I will be consulting with Parish Council and leaders, as well as our bishop and other churches, as we seek to discern the Lord's lead in opening up ministry more fully while keeping everyone safe. We would welcome your input as we consider next steps. Watch for updates on service details, coffee hours, various ministries/teams, programs, etc.

2/ VESTRY MEETING SUN., FEB. 27 3pm: This is our required annual meeting, which we plan to be a basic vestry only doing essential business. You can join in person, in car, or by zoom – contact the church office for more information or to register. Note that we are planning a **special Vestry meeting in the spring (tentatively May 15) to do long range vision and planning.** We will be seeking your prayers and input in preparation for that meeting.

3/ FAMILY, YOUTH & CHILDREN'S GATHERING SAT., MAR. 26 10am-noon: We are inviting young people to come together for a time of fellowship, encouragement, and planning for a 'reboot' of this important area of ministry and church life.

4/ WORSHIP SERVICES IN MARCH:

a) Our current pattern of online and in-person services at 9 and 11am continues each Sunday with children's ministry at both indoor services. Again, watch for possible changes as we seek to open up ministry while keeping everyone safe.

b) Ash Wednesday March 2 indoor services will take place at 10am and 6:30pm If you have palms for burning, please bring them by Tuesday morning March 1.

c) Lenten mid-week services for those who are more vulnerable among us will take place in-person Thursdays at 10am starting March 3.

Remember you can always join any service in your car in the parking lot listening on FM 88.1.

5/ DISCIPLESHIP:

a) Tim's Trending Topics (or Tim's Bit) – encouraging biblical reflections on current topics – will return online at least twice per month starting the first week of Lent – check our website or YouTube.

b) Bible Studies take place Wednesday afternoons at 2pm and Thursday evenings at 6:30pm starting March 9/10. We will continue our study of the Sunday readings – note bible study questions are available each week for personal, family or group study.

c) Online Alpha continues each week (except Ash Wednesday and Holy Week) on Wednesdays at 6:30pm – contact the church for a zoom link.

6/ PASTORAL CARE: Please call the church if you have a **prayer request** for the prayer chain or prayer list if you have a **pastoral need** of any kind. We want to help! Remember that private communions or visits can be arranged.

7/ ANIC: We rejoice in the consecration of our **new Bishop Dan Gifford** who will succeed Bishop Charlie at the end of the year. We also give thanks for **our recently published ANIC history book** which can be borrowed from the church library – copies are available to buy online or in-person soon. Check out the **ANIC website** for Bishop Charlie's weekly talk and for other encouraging items and news.

I plan Lord willing to send out another letter by the end of March to update you on our 'moving forward in renewal' and our plans for Holy Week and Easter. **Thank you to everyone who prays for and supports St. Luke's by your help, offerings and in so many ways, including looking after our property!**

Despite the challenges of these days, I pray this will be a blessed Lent for us all as we seek the Lord in **40 Days of Repentance and Prayer**. He who loves us is faithful! Jesus has died and is risen!

Yours in His great love,


Tim Parent

PRAYERS

Prayer for Lent

Almighty and everlasting God, You hate nothing You have made, and You forgive the sins of all who are penitent: Create and make in us new and contrite hearts, that we, worthily lamenting our sins and acknowledging our wretchedness, may obtain of You, the God of all mercy, perfect remission and forgiveness; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Prayer for St. Luke's

Gracious God, we praise and thank You for all Your blessings showered upon us in Jesus Christ. We thank You for our parish family of St. Luke's and for all You have done for us. We ask You to fill us with Your Holy Spirit that we may know and do Your will, love You and one another, and shine as lights to the world around us. May many lives be touched for Your kingdom through us, and may we become the church You mean us to be. We pray that You would guide and bless our clergy, lay leaders, and all who serve in various ministries.

We pray for each individual member of our congregation, that You may bless, protect, and guide each one, providing for their needs and accomplishing Your purpose in their lives. We pray especially for any who are sick or in special need, and for those who are struggling in any way. May You be glorified, and Your people blessed! All this we pray in the name of Jesus our Saviour. **Amen.**

For the Unity of all Christian People

O God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, our only Saviour, the Prince of Peace: Give us grace to take to heart the grave dangers we are in through our many divisions. Deliver Your Church from all enmity and prejudice, and everything that hinders us from godly union. As there is one Body and one Spirit, one hope of our calling, one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism, one God and Father of us all, so make us all to be of one heart and of one mind, united in one holy bond of truth and peace, of faith and love, that with one voice we may give You praise; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God in everlasting glory. **Amen.**

For the Peace of the World

Almighty God, from whom all thoughts of truth and peace proceed: Kindle, we pray, in the hearts of all people the true love of peace, and guide with Your pure and peaceable wisdom those who take counsel for the nations of the earth; that in tranquility Your kingdom may go forward, till the earth is filled with the knowledge of Your love; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**