

# ST. LUKE'S NEWSLETTER

Demonstrating God's Love through Christ to the Community and to the World

## Who's New in the Pews?

Continuing our Who's New in the Pews Column, we get acquainted with two new families. Pg. 6-8

## Behind the Scenes

In our new Behind the Scenes column we learn more about St. Luke's Music program and the Thrift Shop. Pg. 3-5 & 9-10

## A Look Back

We go back before the Pandemic to take a look at all the fun we had and what we look forward to now that things are opening up! Pg. 13-14

## The Pastor's Corner

Read a new message from Father Mike in "The Pastor's Corner" on Pg. 19-20

## And More.....



St. Luke's Weeping Cherry, Spring 2021, Photo by Doug Abdelnour

## Welcome to the St. Luke's Summer edition newsletter!

What a difference a few months make. We recently lifted restrictions for in person services and things are starting to feel like normal again. We've had three baptisms in recent months and the community continues to bless the Food Pantry, making it possible to accommodate our patrons. Good things are happening!

In this quarter's issue learn more about our "Discovery Hour" series. Go "Behind the Scenes" with our music director and organist to learn more about their background and the music program here at St. Luke's, and also learn about the hard working team behind the Thrift Shop.

Get to know two of our families in "Who's New in the Pews" and learn more about the Columbarium we will be housing from St. Andrew's Church in Brewster. We also take a look back at some past events we've enjoyed, and have added something fun for the kids too. We hope you enjoy this latest issue!

# Spring Baptisms!



*We recently welcomed three new Christians into the Church in May.*

Nathan Alexander Juisto on May 1st, Claire Anne Trodden on May 15th, and Valerie Grace Dowd on May 22nd.

*Congratulations to the families!*



Mellisa and Nicholas Juisto with Nathan on May 1st



Michael and Alison Trodden with Claire and son on May 15th



Victoria and Dennis Dowd with Valerie Grace on May 22nd



## Upcoming events and ongoing outreach

### Events

- St. Francis Blessing of the Animals
- Harvest Weekend

### Outreach

- Food Pantry
- Drive for Mothers & Babies

Learn more about outreach ministries on our website [www.slcsomers.org](http://www.slcsomers.org). Details of events will also be emailed. If you are not on our email list, sign up on our website!

## Behind the Scenes with Joyce & Lester Ottinger

By John and Duanne Simon

How often do you find yourself so emotionally overcome that you're moved to tears when listening to a special piece of music during services at Saint Luke's? And it's not just because of the magnificent von Beckerath Organ we're so blessed to have. There's a devoted, talented couple that works tirelessly to bring the music of St. Luke's to life. We are so incredibly fortunate to have Joyce Ottinger as Music Director and her husband Lester as our organist.

Personally, I'll admit I can't help but tear up when Joyce sings "How Great Thou Art". Or swell with pride when Lester launches into the opening notes of a patriotic favorite. I'll bet many of us find ourselves humming snatches of refrains throughout the week. One of our parishioners recently stated that her toddler stops in his tracks whenever he hears the sounds from the loft on our streamed Sunday services.



In the Episcopal faith, music plays an important part every Sunday. This is especially true at Saint Luke's, and there's a lot more that goes into preparing the music selection than meets the ear. Each week, Joyce follows a fairly complicated schedule to match the appropriate music selections to the liturgical calendar. And Lester's seeming unlimited talent brings it all together. We thought you might appreciate a glimpse "behind the scenes" and discover exactly what happens before Lester and Joyce lead our choir in each Sunday's musical program.

***First of all, please tell us a little about how you met and about your musical training.***

**Joyce:** Lester and I met at St. John's Church in White Plains. Lester was the organist/choir director at the time. I was looking for a choir to sing in. The choir sounded great, so I went up to the choir loft to see how I could join. The rest, as they say, is history.

**Lester:** I started piano lessons at the age of six after my family was given a piano. I began trumpet around the age of ten. By the time I was in high school I received a full scholarship to Interlochen Music Camp and was the alternating first chair trumpeter in their orchestra. I began learning the organ when I was in high school, and started playing services at the Methodist church in Elgin, Ill. My music lessons and jobs were wedged in between farm chores.

At the age of 22 I went out to California. One of my first jobs was the role of Lt. Cable in a revival of *South Pacific* starring Mary Martin. This role changed the course of my life. I began to work in television and on Broadway as Tony in *West Side Story*, in *Once Upon A Mattress* with Carol Burnett and National Companies of *Camelot*, *On A Clear Day* and *West Side Story* to name a few.

# Behind the Scenes with Joyce & Lester Ottinger

By John and Duanne Simon

Over the years, I performed in over 32 shows and Operettas. Whenever I was doing a show in NY, I was also singing concerts and services at various churches and temples in Manhattan. After about 20 years of life lived largely on the road, I began a transition to teaching and found my way back to the organ.

**Joyce:** I began studying voice seriously around the age of 20. As my voice developed, it became obvious that opera was where I belonged. I did some local musical theatre productions and then began working with some of the smaller opera companies in NYC. Along the way I was always studying, and had the privilege of working with some really great coaches from the Metropolitan Opera. My biggest break was being accepted into the International Opera Studio at Zurich Opera.

I lived in Zurich for almost 2 years. During that time, I did some small roles on the Zurich stage, and was then hired back as a guest artist singing Suzuki in *Madame Butterfly* and a Valkyrie in *Die Walkure*. I also did concert work and oratorios in Lisbon, Mexico City, Padova, and Venice. I made my Carnegie Hall debut as the alto soloist in the *Mozart Requiem*. In addition, I was always working in a church. Even in Zurich, I had a job at the International Protestant Church as one of their soloists.

**For those of us who are new to St. Luke's, please tell us how long you have been here and how you chose St. Luke's as your employer.**

**Joyce:** I have been at St. Luke's for approximately 20 years. I began working at St. Luke's when we had a Saturday 5:30 service. I did that for several months, and then I was asked to be the alto section leader on Sunday mornings. At that time, we had a professional quartet as part of the choir. From there, I was asked to direct a children's choir, which I did for several years. Along the way, we had a few changes in organists. I was the one overseeing those transitions, which is when it was decided that I would take the role of Music Director.

**Lester:** I started at St. Luke's about seven years ago. The church found itself between organists again, and it just seemed like the right time. I've lived in Somers for over 40 years, and always wondered what was inside the doors at Saint Luke's. I hadn't stepped inside until Joyce started working there. It's great working in the town we call home, and getting to know the people of St. Luke's. Playing the von Beckerath organ is an extreme pleasure.

**Please describe the process for choosing each Sunday's hymns as well as those for special occasions such as Christmas and Easter?**

**Joyce:** The process of choosing music begins with the readings for that particular Sunday or holiday. There are standards from the hymnal that we all know and love and those hymns are used as they fit the readings. We also move beyond that into two other hymnals of the Episcopal Church. One is, *Lift Every Voice and Sing*, which is a collection of spirituals. The other is *Wonder, Love and Praise*, which houses our more contemporary hymns. After many years together, the choir has a large repertoire of pieces that we can call on for various services. Now that we are back together, we will begin learning some new music as well.

## Behind the Scenes with Joyce & Lester Ottinger

By John and Duanne Simon

For each service, I try to combine a variety of musical styles. I like to think that everyone can hear something that speaks to them at any one of our services.

### *Were you at St. Luke's when our renowned organ was installed?*

**Joyce:** The organ was installed in 2003/2004 and I was working at St. Luke's at that time. The church desperately needed a new organ. The donation of the von Beckerath organ was a tremendous gift to the church. The organ installation was an exciting and a chaotic time. The organ, which was manufactured in Hamburg, Germany, arrived in pieces. I remember running a children's choir rehearsal, and having all of these pieces of the new organ laid out all over the church. The pipes were laid across the pews on the main floor of the sanctuary. It was quite a sight! The organ was installed by Meloni and Farrier Organ Builders. The dedicatory recital was played by the renowned organist, Anthony Newman, and was followed by a lovely reception.

### *What are your all-time favorite pieces to perform for St. Luke's? We would also love to know what you prefer to listen to personally?*

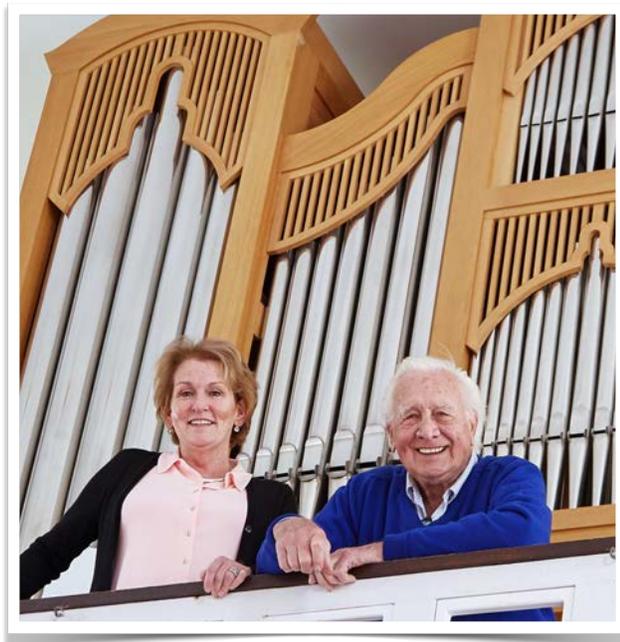
**Joyce:** I always find it hard to choose a favorite. My favorite thing is when the music and the message really connect, and then the music connects with the listeners. When all of those things happen, it's a great day. In terms of our private listening, Lester is very much a classical listener, especially loving orchestral works. I listen to a wide variety, depending on my mood; Broadway, pop, opera, piano and violin concertos. Lately, it's gospel music on the morning drive.

### *And finally, what are your hopes and aspirations for the music program and aspirations for the music program and choir in the future at St. Luke's?*

**Joyce:** Through the many changes we have had at St. Luke's, the choir has endured and thrived. That is something I admit to feeling very proud of. I think every choir director wants to expand their program. A new choir member is always a great thing! We continue to hone our singing skills.

There is always one more thing to work on. I would love to have a children's choir program. As St. Luke's is such a great space for music, it would be great to host some concerts again. In the meantime, we aspire to give the congregation music that moves them and elevates the worship experience.

And something we really cannot wait for? The day when the congregation is singing with us once again and we can raise the roof at Saint Luke's!



## Who's New in the Pews

By Lynda Magrath

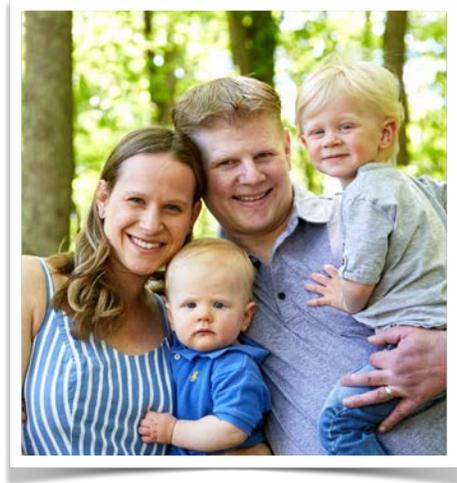
### *Meet Corrine and Curt Hoffman*

***How did you find out about St. Luke's, and when did you attend your first service?***

We found out about St. Luke's after researching and visiting numerous churches in the area. Curt grew up Presbyterian and I grew up practicing Catholicism, so Episcopalian was a wonderful middle ground for our family. Our first service was during the summer of 2019, right after our first son was born.

***Tell us a little about yourself.***

Curt and I have two sons, Curtis (2 years), and Ashton (10 months). We love spending time outdoors. On the weekends you can find us outside at the playground, or playing soccer in our backyard. We love exploring different parks and finding new kid-friendly activities for the boys.



Corrine, Curt, Curtis, and Ashton Hoffman

***What do you like best about St. Luke's?***

We love how welcoming and friendly Father Mike and all of the parishioners have always been. From the beginning, no one seemed to mind that there was a baby making noise during the sermon, instead they welcomed us with open arms. Every service gives us a sense of tranquility and peace. Surrounded by the beauty of the church itself, Father Mike's rhetoric, and the booming voices of the choir, it's hard not to feel completely at ease.

***What has been your favorite sermon of Father Mike's?***

The sermons that Father Mike did for both of our children's christenings were memorable for us. They were from the heart and filled with hope for the future of our two boys.

***What are you most interested in experiencing at St. Luke's?***

We'd love to be involved with more volunteer opportunities. Corinne had helped with the Christmas Bazaar in 2019, before Covid-19 hit. It would be wonderful to jump back in again once we return to "normal".

***What do you think God laughs at or smiles at?***

Children. The constant sense of curiosity and honesty is astounding and a wonderful thing to witness.

***If you were a food, plant/flower, or animal what you be and why?***

Our family would be an elephant. They're gentle, lovable animals that are smart and very close with their immediate and extended family (herd). They are also symbolic of good luck and we consider ourselves extremely fortunate to have each other, our health, and to live in a tight knit, safe community, surrounded by a wonderful parish.

# Who's New in the Pews

By Lynda Magrath

## *Meet Amanda and Ryan Loveless*

***How did you find out about St. Luke's, and when did you attend your first service?***

We found out about Saint Luke's by looking for Episcopal Churches on Google and serendipitously attended our very first service on November 18, 2018, the same day Father Mike was sworn in as Priest-in-Charge. I was 6 months pregnant at the time and we had been searching for a church since we moved to Katonah in May of 2018. At Saint Luke's we instantly felt an overwhelming sense of community, peace, faith, and acceptance, and knew this was where we wanted to call our church home.

***Tell us a little about yourself.***

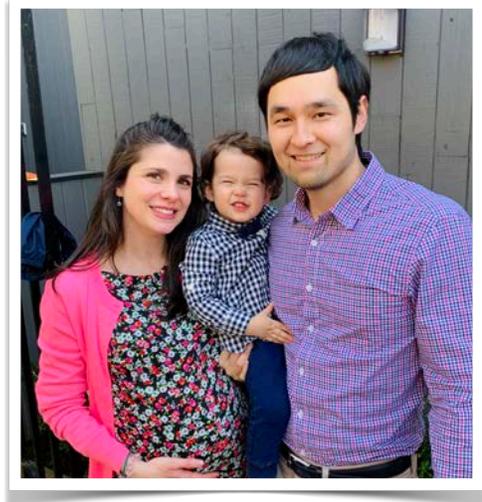
Ryan and I have been together since our senior year of high school (2006) and got married in August 2015. I was raised Catholic but began attending Christian nondenominational churches in college. Once Ryan graduated from college, he began joining me at these services. We moved in together in Stamford, CT after we got married, and discovered St. Francis Episcopal Church which immediately made us feel a deep and renewed connection to our faith. After purchasing our first home in 2018 we joined St. Luke's and have been joyful members ever since! We welcomed our first son in February 2019 who was beautifully baptized by Father Mike, and we are so excited to be welcoming our second son in May 2021. He will be named Luke, a name which has added significance given this church.

***What do you like best about St. Luke's?***

St. Luke's immediately made us feel welcome, appreciated, and accepted just the way we are. Its parishioners are inspiring in the many ways, large and small, that they contribute joy, care, and love to their surrounding community. We are grateful for all the ways St. Luke's makes its parishioners feel connected and provides opportunities to give back to the community. We appreciate that the parishioners have respect for every person, recognizing the gifts that they have and providing an atmosphere of praise, support, opportunity for growth, encouragement, and love.

***What has been your favorite sermon of Father Mike's?***

We truly enjoy each of Fr. Mike's sermons, especially the way that he delivers meaningful and applicable messages with humility and grace. But by far, our favorite sermon was the one delivered on June 9, 2019, the day of Zachary's baptism. The sermon was so beautiful and Fr. Mike made the entire service one that we will never forget. We truly felt enveloped in the beauty of God's love that day because of Fr. Mike and the entire parish.



Amanda, Zachary, Ryan, and baby Luke on the way



## Ongoing Ministries at Saint Luke's

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Some of the many ongoing ministries at St. Luke's:

- Altar Guild
- Counters
- Eucharistic Ministers
- Plant Sale
- Thrift Shop
- Food Pantry
- Morning Prayer Services
- Discovery Hour
- Sunday school
- Music

Full ministry reports including the Wardens' and Treasurer's reports are available in the Annual report on our website

[www.slcsomers.org](http://www.slcsomers.org)

### *What are you most interested in experiencing at St. Luke's?*

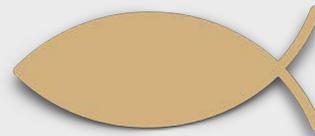
I am interested in serving as a reader in the future, as well as increasing my involvement in the food pantry, especially as it pertains to serving women and children.

### *What do you think God laughs at or smiles at?*

I think God smiles at "cheerful givers" and those who encourage one another, and build each other up.

### *If you were a food, plant/flower, or animal what you be and why?*

If I could be an animal, I would love to be a dog, since they constantly bring people joy, happiness and love. If Ryan could be an animal, he would be an eagle, for its freedom and ability to fly.



### New to St. Luke's?

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If you are new to St. Luke's and want to be featured in this section of an upcoming newsletter, or just want to get involved, talk to one of our Vestry or Communication Committee Members. We would love to include you!

**WELCOME**

## Thrift Shop Treasures: Most for Sale, Some Not

By Sue Willis

Where in Somers can you purchase brand named clothing, quality jewelry, good-as-new housewares, and gently used toys and be startled into thinking the price tags have been mismarked? Not only can you find a beautiful array of items, but you can also shop in a friendly, home-like setting. Welcome to the Thrift Shop, an outreach project of

St. Luke's Church. Serving the community and the church since 1994, the Thrift Shop is lovingly and competently managed by the dedicated duo of Dorothea Mangieri and Pat Schilpp. Wanting to learn more about this vibrant ministry, I recently entered the Thrift Shop, its periphery dotted with pretty purple flowers and its flagpole unfurling a welcoming banner.



*How long have you two been minding the shop? I wondered.*

From behind the cashier's pandemic-installed plexiglass, Pat hesitated. "I couldn't tell you. She then quipped, "Dorothea runs the place. I'm just here for comic relief." I knew this was going to be a fun interview. Since the rooms were abuzz with bargain seekers, I warned Pat I would return for more of her input and wandered into the inner sanctum (the sorting room teeming with bundles and boxes) where I found Dorothea hard at work. I was immediately drawn to a shelf containing a canister labeled "milk bones."

"It's full of dog bones for our shoppers who come with their pooches," Dorothea explained. (Don't expect Kohl's to be so accommodating to their customers' canines!)

It's an understatement to acknowledge what a special place the Thrift Shop is. Working with only 4 to 10 volunteers (depending on snowbirds' schedules and people's quarantine concerns), these two Titans manage to donate anywhere between \$31,000 and \$42,000 annually to the church. That is an avalanche of sales when you consider what shoppers are charged! The motto, as Dorothea tells her volunteers preparing the items for display, is "There are no mistakes regarding prices." Commerce continued to be remarkable despite the daunting challenges of the pandemic. During the shop's 3 month requisite closure, Pat and Dorothea endured bouts of frustration and disappointment (although one member of this treasured team confessed that she snuck in regularly to prepare the place in anticipation of patrons' return.)

Another hurdle they had to surmount was the Nor'easter destroying the tent that had aired out donations as part of the pandemic's safety protocols. Other challenges range from trying to comprehend a donation of dirty socks to groping to find the charity behind garbage bags weighing 50 pounds and filled to some extent with — well — garbage.

“Kudos to Mike Basile who regularly hauls items to the dumpster,” Dorothea remarked with gratitude and relief in her voice.

But neither Pat nor Dorothea is one to be mired in negativity. In fact, when I asked each woman what constituted a perfect day at the Thrift Shop, Pat did not equivocate and chuckled: “making money!” Dorothea supplemented the “lots of customers and good sales” with “lots of laughter.” A poignant memory occurred when a regular shopper returned to say she had passed her nursing licensure exam.

The laughter, the interaction with shoppers, the philanthropy toward the church: it’s what keeps these ladies going! Dorothea has been serving here since 1997. Think about all those times she has (in her words) “schlepped” the seasonal items from the basement to the sales



rooms. At the end of the season, a 50% off sale is held. Remaining items are donated to such places as the Community Center of Northern Westchester. Additionally, Dorothea collaborates with Lynda Magrath (Food Pantry Chair) to provide clothing for families experiencing acute need. On top of that, did you know that the Thrift Shop loans surgical supplies (such as wheelchairs) at no cost? As I left the sorting room (this nosy reporter told Pat she would be back), Dorothea resumed “washing elephants”, which I had interrupted earlier. I, too, wondered what that was about. She was referring to recently donated onyx and china figurines. Occasionally two of the

Shop’s volunteers will sell more refined or lucrative pieces (on Ebay, for instance) and, of course, deposit the earnings in the Thrift Shop’s coffers.

As if managing a busy shop were not enough, I found Pat knitting. I should not have been too surprised at the deft multitasking, for I have observed both her and Dorothea conducting sales and producing adorable baby clothes (which do not last very long on the shelves of “Granny’s Corner”!) A reliable but unnamed source explained that as seven-year-olds, these women mastered the art of riding a bicycle and chewing gum at the same time!

My moments with Dorothea and Pat in the midst of their ministry were inspiring (and, of course, punctuated with laughter.) Their love for the church and their humility regarding the thousands of dollars they have funneled to its works are manifest in their long standing dedication (with no “sell by” or “expiration date” for them, as far as my sources tell me.) The Thrift Shop continues to thrive, so move over Marshall’s and take a hike Home Goods! I recently read an Episcopalian treatise entitled “Soteriology of the Thrift Shop Manager” and was pleased to learn that when the time comes, Dorothea and Pat will be ensconced in a rewarding place in Heaven. This prized pair will enjoy such amenities as cuddly cats, angelic-made lasagna, Netflix, and cozy armchairs with comfy footstools.

Though the interview ended, there were still 15 minutes left to shop before closing!

# Columbarium and Connection

By Sue Willis

*“That it may please you to grant him/her a place of refreshment and everlasting blessedness...we beseech You to bear us, good Lord.”*

“O God whose mercies cannot be numbered.....grant him/her an entrance into the land of light and joy, in the fellowship of your saints.” Both of these reassuring prayers are from *Book of Christian Prayer* (“Burial of the Dead” Rite II). Of course, one of the goals of the faithful Christian is heaven – the ultimate and enduring presence of God. However, here on earth, loved ones mourn the passing and appreciate an opportunity to connect with a symbol or some physical presence of their beloved. While a person’s soul has reunited with God, his or her remains are interred in the ground or in a Columbarium. When St. Andrew’s Church, Brewster, closed, Bishop Dietsche chose St. Luke’s to house its Columbarium.

The Vestry discussed theological, pastoral, and practical matters, and on December 3, 2019, a motion was made to accept the Columbarium. Unanimous consent was given to the resolution, and plans began for the transfer of this sacred receptacle of cremains to our Church. This involved legal action (communicating with Canon John Perris to arrange for court permission) as well as practical issues (constructing a suitable place in our sanctuary.) Soon it will be installed, and loved ones will have the comfort of a physical sign of their departed.

This is just one example of the important collaborative dimension of the Episcopal Church.

We at St. Luke’s were happy to help, recognizing that we are not a sole entity, but a part of something much larger and more beautiful. Locally, we are in the Saw Mill clericus. Beyond that, we belong to the wider geographical organization known as the Diocese of NY (with Bishop Andrew Dietsche as its leader). Nationally, we are part of the 2.4 million member Episcopal Church (established in 1789) with Bishop Michael Curry presiding. Well beyond America’s boundaries, we are a member of the worldwide Anglican Communion, comprised of 70 million worshippers in 64,000 congregations spread across 164 countries.

I have been blessed to experience some of this spiritual connection through worship at York Minster, Durham Cathedral, Westminster Abbey, and Canterbury Cathedral (the Mother Church of the Worldwide Anglican Communion and its spiritual head, with The Most Rev. and Rt. Hon. Justin Welby presiding). A particularly memorable day was a recent Easter spent at Winchester Cathedral beginning with Matins and Festal Eucharist (followed by an afternoon exploring literary sites of Jane Austen and John Keats). I returned to the Cathedral for Evensong (and capped the day with some refreshment at nearby St. James Tavern, the starting point for medieval English pilgrims headed to Sanitago de Compostela.) This was a day of such joy and peace and recollections redolent of the spiritual connectedness beyond Somers.

But we do not have to travel far to feel the rich traditions and partake in a vast spiritual community. St. Luke’s Church, incorporated in 1835, is a small yet viable part of the global Anglican Church. Through prayer and through ministry, we reach beyond our pretty grounds to (in the words of our mission statement) “demonstrate God’s love through Christ to the community and to the world.”

# Discovery Hour

A spiritual discovery series led by Mary Churchill

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*Have you ever wondered what we “discover” in our Discovery Hours here at St. Luke’s?*

That’s a fair question so I’d like to start by giving an overview of what we do. We meet, via Zoom for now, on Wednesday nights from 6:30pm - 7:30pm. We start by selecting a book or movie to discuss. Then we break it down into sections and discuss one section each evening. No tests or quizzes, just open discussions.

For example, right now we are watching the second season of a series called, “The Chosen.” It’s the first multi-series show about the life of Jesus. Trust me when I say it’s not just another Jesus movie. The actors cast to be Jesus, His disciples, and the supporting roles are phenomenal.

The director of the show, spent a fair amount of time developing the characters during the first season so that now when something happens to one of them, I feel drawn into the story. This show has had a profound effect on how I hear the gospels and readings each week at our Service. Each week during our Discovery Hour, we talk about one episode.

We’ve also read and discussed numerous books such as “Love is The Way” by Bishop Michael Curry, “Gilead” by Marilynne Robinson, and a “A New Vision” by Marcus Borg. We usually talk about 1 or 2 chapters

What DO we discover during our Discovery Hours? For me, I’m discovering more about how to put my faith into action, how to really listen without passing judgment, and how to slow down and be present. I also discovered, after the solitude of the past year, I could still connect with people who share the same faith. That was a game changer for me. We meet for an hour each week. At the end of our meeting, I am refreshed and sometimes come away with a new perspective. If nothing else, I have just spent an hour with others who love the Lord and want to live their best lives to glorify Him. That’s a pretty good use of an hour in my book.



# Looking Back (and ahead)

There was a lot we missed this year. Here is a look back at some events we enjoyed pre-pandemic, and ones that we hope to enjoy again!

## *Bishop Dietsche's visit and confirmation ceremony, January 2020*



# Looking Back (and ahead)

## *Annual Holiday Bazaar, November 2019*



## A Special Bid Farewell

*Richard and Lisa Hadad were long time parishioners of St. Luke's. Lisa was also a member of the St. Luke's Choir. In 2019 we were saddened by Richard's passing and celebrated his life at a funeral that December. Lisa continued to attend church and sing in the choir but ultimately decided to move in order to be closer to her family. Lisa gave a touching speech during her last service with us and we celebrated her afterwards. Bon Voyage Lisa, we will miss you!*



# What's Cooking at the Food Pantry

We have a wonderful community here in Somers. Several groups have organized many great events for the Food Pantry and our Patrons. Here's a look at what's been going on.

## *Girl Scout Troop 1448 in April*



The girls prepared grocery bags for distribution, and stocked and organized donated goods.



## *Boy Scout Troop 376 in March*



The Troop's Spring food drive collected over 120 grocery bags of non-perishable items from family, friends, and classmates!

# What's Cooking at the Food Pantry



*Heritage Hills Food Drive, May 2021*



Thanks to Jack Mattes and his fellow Heritage Hills crew for coordinating the May 6th food drive for the Food Pantry. Assisted by Pantry volunteers, 90 bags of non-perishable food and household items were transported to St Luke's! And HH residents generously contributed over \$2,500 which will be used to buy fresh produce and eggs.



*Mother's Day Treats  
May 2021*



On May 7th the Food Pantry volunteers distributed gift bags of homemade Mothers' Day cards and small flowering plants supplied by Somers Girl Scout Troop 1448, courtesy of Katonah Nursery. Pantry Patrons also received some of the 100 boxes of Girl Scout cookies donated anonymously via Primrose School Brownies.





## The Pastor's Corner

By the Rev'd Michael T. Watson

### *Our Worship During the Covid Pandemic*

A lot has happened in our parish over the last two years. Even though we have been fighting against all of the headwinds of the Covid Pandemic, we are strong in number, resilience and spirit. Below is a picture of our congregation outside the church on Sunday, September 22, 2019. We had a great outdoor barbecue on St. Francis day that year, and a fabulous pot-luck lunch.



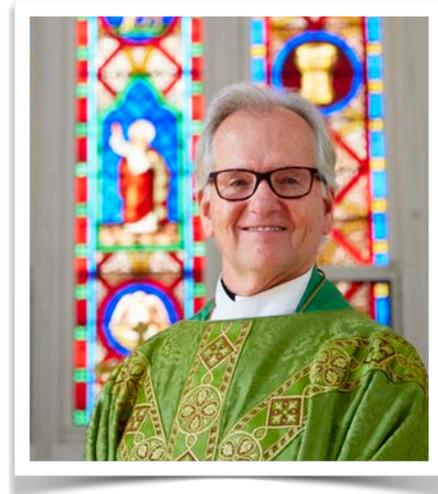
St. Luke's Congregation, Fall 2019 Photo by Doug Abdelnour

Our Sunday attendance on that day was ninety people, twenty-two of whom had begun worshipping with us during that past year. All of the people received Communion, our central Sacrament. Four months later, the Bishop of New York, the Rt. Rev. Andy Dietsche, came to our parish to formally receive and confirm thirteen new parishioners. At that time, our average Sunday attendance had risen to about sixty-five people, our Sunday School was functioning, and we felt like we were really "on a roll." In a meeting with your Vestry on that Sunday, the Bishop praised our parish for our hard work, growth, and spirit.

As you will remember, it was the next day that I was taken to the hospital, where it was determined that I needed a double bypass surgery. During that time, our Senior Warden, Duanne Simon, with many others at her side, coordinated our worship for the next two months, and kept the church going. I was finally able to return to worship and the pulpit on March 15, 2020. On the following day, we were told by the Bishop that we and every one of the 199 parishes in the diocese would have to shut down. We went into full-court press mode and began live-streaming our services over Facebook, and recording the service for YouTube as well, so that anyone who missed the service could watch it later. During that time, prior to re-opening, it was just me, Joyce and Lester, a reader, and a Lay Eucharistic Minister on Sundays. Janet and I were both working remotely as she was home-schooling her son and daughter. We kept on ticking even in the face of all the challenges. When we were finally allowed to re-open, with limited capacity on July 5, 2021, we put up a tent outside, to give us increased capacity and to give a level of comfort to those who were uncomfortable coming inside.

*“We are the only Episcopal Church in Northern Westchester that has been open every Sunday of the time we were allowed to be open.”*

All during the pandemic, we were unable to host our twelve-step groups. But we found a way to continue to serve our food insecure neighbors through our Food Pantry. A number of people, both parishioners and non-parishioners, gave of their time and energy to make it work. We have since developed a regular crew of volunteers who come every week to sort, pack and distribute food to the needy. They are an energetic and fun group. Our Food Pantry ministry is now thriving, thanks to its chair, Lynda Magrath and vice-chair, Karen Kellogg. The twelve-step groups have begun returning and paying a portion of the rent they previously paid.



We also re-opened our Thrift Shop as soon as we could. It is staffed energetically and lovingly by Dorothea Mangieri, Pat Schilpp, Vivian Peters, Janet Howard and Gail Bergman, and also assisted by Mike Basile, Bob Mundy and Pete Howard. Many thanks to them for all of their hard work. The income from the Thrift Shop is a large part of why we have been able to continue functioning without going into the red.

We are the only Episcopal Church in Northern Westchester that has been open every Sunday of the time we were allowed to be open. This has been HUGE for us and has only been possible by the hard work of those who have helped. Although we have been financially strapped during the pandemic, I know that all of you have attempted to keep your pledges coming in, which has allowed us to keep our staff paid. Many parishes in the whole diocese have had to lay people off and have not even returned to worship at all. We have been more blessed.

During this past year, we have done five baptisms of babies, three of which were in this past month. But we lost our Coffee Hour Hostess, Ginger Horvath, after a long illness. We laid her to rest on June 5. Ginger will be missed. We will soon figure out a way to have coffee hour as people return to worship, and if any of you would like to volunteer with coffee hour setup, just let me or one of the Vestry know. Since we began having an 8:30 service last Fall, we have regularly had between eight and fifteen people at that service, and at the 10:00 service we have now returned to regularly having more than forty people, and we even have some new faces in the pews. I feel that we are beginning a resurgence and are primed to grow, both in number, in spirit, and in service to the community outside our walls in Somers. Many new volunteers have stepped up to help in beautifying our grounds, serving the hungry, serving in the Thrift Shop, and in ushering and serving in the liturgy.

### *Parish directory*

It has been quite a few years since we have had a parish pictorial directory. One of our new parishioners, Vinnie Tuccillo, has offered to begin the creation of one. He and Mary Churchill will be working on setting that up, and you will be hearing more about in the next few weeks.

### *Stewardship, and other matters of finance*

By the time you receive this newsletter, we will already have begun meetings with our Finance Committee, so that we can plan for our financial future. Even though we have been able to keep all staff salaries intact, we will be trying to find ways to increase pledges and continue to be financially stable. There are ongoing projects that require building and equipment repairs and updates. Our Vestry, our Treasurer, Eric Rieder, and our head of Finance, Marion Comins, work very hard to keep us on a good financial track, and together with them and the rest of our finance committee we need to be able to keep abreast of all that needs to be done to facilitate the work that we do in our community. A stewardship committee has been established and we will begin preparation for a stewardship drive that will start in September.

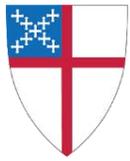
### *Upcoming Events*

Our Vestry has already scheduled a half-day retreat in July so that we can do some in-depth and long-range planning and talk about the future of the parish. We will collaborate on scheduling upcoming events, and plan for a full re-opening with all of our congregation. By the end of the Summer, we hope to be able to have all participate fully without masks and receive both the Bread and Wine during Communion. It will be great when we can kneel together at God's altar.

I have been in frequent dialog and discernment with others from our parishes in Westchester County about how we can all collaborate on ministries in our churches. I am focusing on collaboration with Saint James in North Salem, Saint Luke's in Katonah, and Saint Mark's in Mount Kisco. I will be meeting with the priests of other parishes in Westchester County in July to work on obtaining available grants for joint ministry. As one of only a small number of parishes in the diocese that have remained functioning and worshipping throughout the pandemic, I believe that we have the strength to lead in this endeavor. We have the strong backing of the diocese, a strong Vestry, many supportive lay leaders, and the energy to grow our ministries and to be true to our mission of Demonstrating God's love, through Christ, to the Community and the World.

As always, the Vestry, support staff and I welcome all who wish to participate in any way in the life of the parish. Our own individual strengths are made better when we collaborate with others in our community. If you see a need in the parish or the community around us and wish to find a way to serve, please don't hesitate to speak up. This beautiful church was built 185 years ago, and if we fulfill our call, we will only get stronger.

God bless you all,  
Father Mike +



# ST. LUKE'S NEWSLETTER



The St. Luke's Newsletter is one of the publications produced by the Communications Committee. Our charge is to implement St. Luke's Mission by sharing news of our worship and ministries to the parish and to the larger community.

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## Current Members

Doug Abdelnour, Photography, Printing

Duanne Simon, Contributor, Photography

Angela Garr, Print & Web Design, Social Media

John Simon, Guest Contributor

Ann Hansen, Contributor

Sue Willis, Editor, Contributor

Lynda Magrath, Contributor

Fr. Mike Watson, *ex officio*

Janet Repman, Parish Office Liaison

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We thank everyone who submitted articles and photos to this issue, and invite parishioners to share suggestions and material for future issues. Please speak to one of the Communications Committee members, or contact the Parish Office.

### St. Luke's Church

The Rt. Rev'd Andrew M.L. Dietsche, Bishop of NY

The Rt. Rev'd Allen K. Shin, Bishop Suffragan

The Rt. Rev'd Mary Glasspool, Assistant Bishop

The Rev'd Michael Watson, Priest-in-charge

Joyce Ottinger, Director of Music

Lester Ottinger, Organist

Janet Repman, Parish Administrator

Debra Ramnarace, Bookkeeper

Santos Cardona, Sexton

### St. Luke's Vestry

Karen Kellogg, Senior Warden

Joe Ciavardini, Junior Warden

Eric Rieder, Treasurer

#### Class of 2022

Regina Davenport, Michelle Kessel

#### Class of 2023

Angela Garr, Lynda Magrath

#### Class of 2024

Doug Abdelnour, Mary Churchill,

Herman Clarke

## St. Luke's Episcopal Church

331 Route NY-100 Somers, NY 10589

Tel: 914-277-3122/email: [fathermike@slcsomers.org](mailto:fathermike@slcsomers.org)