St Luke UMC
501 E 19th Street N
Newton, IA 50208
641-792-5736
December 15, 2024

BI-WEEKLY
THE Flame
CATCH THE FIRE!

Fill the Grocery Cart for the Jasper County Salvation Army Food Pantry Advent/Christmas 2024

We are continuing to collect different focus items each week of Advent and Christmastide this year. We are so thankful to those that have already donated items during the first half of our food and supply drive. Please continue to bring these items with you on Sunday mornings.

- **December 22** PEANUT BUTTER/JELLY/HONEY - if it's nut butter, jelly, jam, or honey bring it and fill the cart.
- **December 29** PAPER PRODUCTS – facial tissues, paper towels, TP… if it's in a paper product bring it and fill the cart.
- **January 5** ANY ITEMS IN ANY FORMAT… canned, boxed, jarred, bottled, paper… bring it and fill the cart.

*The generous will themselves be blessed, for they share their **food** with the poor. Proverbs 22:9*

Let's continue to flood the Salvation Army Food Pantry with an offering of Love and Support as they end one year and begin a new one.

Corinne - NOW Missions

Advent/Christmas Offering 2024

This year, the NOW committee has chosen to split our Advent/Christmas offering between two very worthy Mission recipients – One local and one in Dallas Texas (with local ties). Half of our offering this December will go to the Local Salvation Army, to be used where they need it most. The 2nd Half of the offering will be designated for Christ's Foundry UMC / La Fundicion de Cristo in Dallas Texas. For the past several years, we have chosen to donate to Christ's Foundry -a Missionary Church in Dallas. Their pastor, Rev. Amy Spaur grew up in our midst, she has worked in the mission field for many years. First with the General Board of Global Ministries and most recently as the senior pastor of this Bilingual Missionary Church in Dallas.

THE SALVATION ARMY DOING THE MOST GOOD

LA FUNDICIÓN DE CRISTO CHRIST'S FOUNDRY MISIÓN METODISTA UNIDA

For more information about each of these recipients, check out their website: https://centralusa.salvationarmy.org and www.fdcdallas.org.

Corinne – NOW Missions

Poinsettias

Poinsettias are welcome during Advent Season to decorate the Altar. If given in honor or memory, please write your name and theirs in an email or note and send to the church office. If you order the flowers to be delivered, have the florist call ahead before delivering to be sure someone is available to receive them. You are also welcome to bring them on Sunday morning.

The SPRC invites St Luke to Continue Our Tradition

If you would like to give a Love Gift for our pastor and staff you can put it in one of the gift boxes at the church or mail it to: St Luke UMC, 501 E. 19th St. N., Newton, IA 50208 through the month of December. Please be sure and put it to the attention of "Love Gift." Thank you!

Lori Leix

Sunday, January 5 Guest Speaker Rev. Paul Witmer Women at the Well

On Sunday, January 5 we will be welcoming guest speaker Rev. Paul Witmer to St Luke. Rev. Paul Witmer is the Minister of Reentry and Congregational Care at *Women at the Well* UMC, Iowa Correctional Institution for Women.

Did you know the church is in prison? *Women at the Well* is a sister congregation, a United Methodist congregation within the walls of the Women's Correctional Institution in Mitchellville, Iowa. The lead pastor involved in this ministry, Rev. Paul Witmer, will be sharing with us the many years of weekly worship, supportive community, faith nurture groups, and aftercare we have offered to the women there. Maybe you'll find your own place in prison—in ministry with these women, our sisters in Christ.

Women AT THE WELL

Discover Hope Thank You

We would like to give a big thank you for everything that was donated for the December Discover Hope meal. We greatly appreciate the generosity of our St Luke family and we can't thank everyone enough. The meal that we provided was ham loaf, cornbread, broccoli and cauliflower with cheese, apple salad and Christmas cookies for dessert. A big thank you to those that came and helped with preparing the food and all those that came and helped serve the meal at Discover Hope. Below is a photo of our wonderful volunteers that served the meal for December. We couldn't do this without all the help from our St Luke family. Thank you!

Merry Christmas & Happy New Year!
Jan Lewis & Joyce Stonehocker

Weather Cancellation Policy

If school is cancelled/dismissed early due to weather, then St. Luke activities are cancelled that day/evening as well. Sunday Worship is rarely cancelled. Check our Facebook page and watch for text messages for announcements. If the weather and road conditions are questionable, use your best judgement and be safe.

Diaper Sewing Days

Our next Diaper Sewing Days are scheduled for Tuesday and Wednesday January 7 & 8 from 9:00 AM - 3:00 PM in Fellowship Hall. Bring your sewing machine, light colored thread, basic sewing tools, and your own sack lunch. No sewing skills required! We also have jobs such as fabric cutting, pinning, and pressing, or just come for the fellowship. These diapers will go to Midwest Missions on our next trip. If you have any questions please contact Karen Clark.

Walking with Those Who Grieve

The holiday season can be difficult for people who are grieving a death or deep loss. As Christians, we do well to be aware that not everyone feels wholehearted joy this time of year. How can we support them?

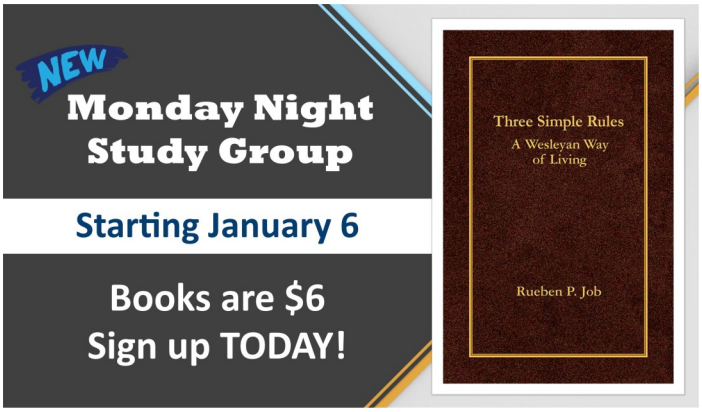
Grief counselor Alan Wolfelt explains that walking alongside — "companioning" — one who grieves "is not about assessing, analyzing, fixing or resolving another's grief. Instead, it is about being totally present to the mourner, even being a temporary guardian of [his or] her soul."

Among Wolfelt's 11 tenets for "companioning the bereaved":

- It's about being present to another person's pain, not taking it away.
- It's about listening with the heart, not analyzing with the head.
- It's about walking alongside, not leading.

More tips are available at: www.centerforloss.com/2019/12/

May God bless you as you share the love of the Christ Child, his caring parents and his compassionate heavenly Father with people who are hurting.



New Monday Night Book Study

We will be starting a new Monday night book study on January 6. There will be an in-person study at 5:30 pm in Sam's Place and an online study via zoom at 6:30 pm. We will be reading the book "Three Simple Rules: A Wesleyan Way of Living" by Rueben P. Job. Books are $6 and you can sign up at the servant's counter if you are interested in joining us.

"It is good to be children sometimes, and never better than at Christmas, when its mighty Founder was a child himself."

—Charles Dickens

Blue Christmas Service

If you are grieving, feeling sad or lonely this Christmas season we welcome you to join us on Sunday, December 22 at 5 pm for a Blue Christmas Service at St Luke UMC. This is a service of prayer, music and reflection that invites us into hope and healing.

What is a blue Christmas service? It is a worship service that names and holds space for the sadness that accompanies the holidays. Heightened by the advertising of our consumerist culture, there is a definite Christmas ideal that includes neatly iced gingerbread houses, smiling children, and an excessive amount of neatly wrapped packages. These standards and the church's sometimes solitary focus on joy can make the holidays an isolating time for anyone who can't muster happiness or meet the criteria. A blue Christmas service is an invitation for anyone who wants to come and set their burden down, for a community to hold pain collectively.

Mat Mondays

In Newton, Iowa, the **Looms of Love** programs is making a delightful difference!

This heartwarming resourcefulness program involves the entire community. Coming together to create **sleeping mats** for those who find themselves homeless. Volunteers process plastic shopping bags into these durable mats, providing comfort and warmth to those in need. It's like a cozy hug wrapped in recycled love! And guess what?

You can join the mission coalition on Mondays from 1pm - 3pm at the First Christian Church in Newton, where we work on creating these mats. Your contribution could make a significant impact!

Let's weave some kindness together!

Pictured to the left is Robbie Robinson from Discover Hope holding one of the completed mats that were donated to Discover Hope to give out to those in need.

St. Luke United Methodist Church

Rev. Mark R. Johnson, Pastor

Friends of St. Luke,

As we approach the sacred season of Christmas, I pray this message finds you filled with the hope, peace, joy, and love that Christ brings into the world.

Advent is a season of anticipation, a time when we reflect on the light of Christ coming into the world. It's a reminder that, even in the darkest of times, God's light shines brightly. As we reflect on this season, we see how God's light is revealed in our lives, often in small, everyday moments—through acts of kindness, in our worship, and in the ways we care for one another. These glimpses of light remind us of God's constant presence and call us to be that same light in the world.

Christmas, too, is a time of celebration. It is a reminder of the incredible gift God gave us in Christ. St. Luke continues to be a place where God's love transforms lives, from our ministries to the ways we care for those around us. Through our shared efforts, we are creating a space where hope and renewal are felt, not only within our congregation but throughout our community.

This year, your generosity has been a powerful testament to Christ's light. Through your time, talents, and financial gifts, you have helped ensure that the work of St. Luke continues to shine brightly in the world. Your giving is more than just an act of support—it's a way of sharing the light we are called to carry as followers of Christ.

The story of Christmas reminds us that even in humble places, God's light shines brightly, transforming the world. Each gift, each act of service, no matter how small, is part of this larger work. Together, we are planting seeds of hope and creating a legacy of love, ensuring that St. Luke remains a place of light for generations to come.

As we enter the new year, I invite you to reflect on the ways God has been at work in our lives and to dream boldly about how we can continue to share Christ's light with the world. Thank you for being a part of this journey of faith! Your presence, prayers, and partnership are a true gift. I am deeply grateful to serve alongside you in this mission.

Wishing you and your loved ones a joyful and blessed Christmas, filled with the light of Christ,

Rev. Mark R. Johnson
St. Luke United Methodist Church

501 E 19th St. N, Newton, IA 50208 Phone: 641-792-5736 worship@stlukenewton.com

WORSHIP ASSISTANTS		
December 22	**9:30 AM**	
Ushers (2)	Amy Ryan	
Greeters (2)	Joyce Stonehocker	
Reader	Dennis Smith	
Acolyte		
Keyboard	Bev Thomas	
Projection		
Camera		
Care Core	Karen Clark, Joyce Stonehocker	
Coffee Time	Hiap Thongvanh	
December 24	**7 PM**	**11PM**
Ushers (2)		
Greeters (2)		Carolyn Cook/Allen Barr
Reader	Russ Leix	Jenni Patty
Acolyte	Payton & Brenna F	
Keyboard	Jan Lewis	
Projection	Stephen Pageler	
Camera	Ethan Pageler	
Care Core		
Coffee Time		
December 29	**9:30 AM**	
Ushers (2)	Peg Kimberley	
Greeters (2)		
Reader		
Acolyte		
Keyboard	Jan Lewis	
Projection		
Camera		
Care Core	Jenni Patty	
Coffee Time		
January 5	**9:30 AM**	
Ushers (2)	Mike & Barb Kaldenberg	
Greeters (2)		
Reader	Jeff Carter	
Acolyte		
Keyboard		
Projection	Karin Mills	
Camera	Joel Mills	
Care Core	Jenni Patty, Lisa Marston	
Coffee Time		

Worship Assistants

We have had a wonderful response of volunteers for 2024 and would like to thank everyone who has so graciously signed up. There are still some spots open and will be plenty of opportunities to volunteer in 2025. If you would like to volunteer or see what positions are available you can email the church office at: worship@stlukenewton.com, use the sign-up sheets on the servant's counter or you can add your name to our online sign-up sheet. Here is the link to sign up online:

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1LV73f57IkMBVLyocfiFvS7GsvYM03YPBSzoXUhXQL7s/edit?usp=sharing

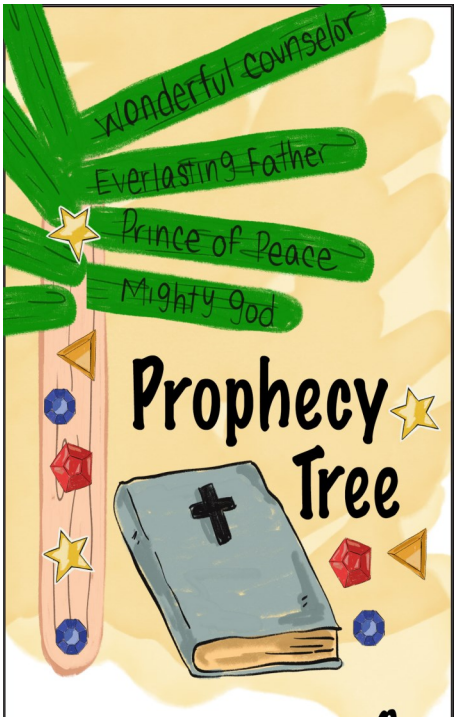
We appreciate all those who have so willingly volunteered to help on Sunday mornings. Thank you St Luke Family!

Where to Find Us

Pastor: Rev. Mark Johnson
mark.johnson@stlukenewton.com
Office: 641-792-5736 Cell: 563-249-3287
Adm. Assistant: Jennifer Etter
Church Office Hours: Mon.-Thurs. 9 am -12 pm
worship@stlukenewton.com.
Phone: 641-792-5736
Newsletter Editor: Corinne Kleppe
corinne.kleppe@grinnellmutual.com
Phone: 641-831-2639
Article Submission by the 13th of month.
Website: www.stlukenewton.com
Website Manager: Stephen Pageler
Facebook: St Luke Newton
Prayer: prayer@stlukenewton.com

Worship Assistants

Please find a sub or trade if you cannot do it as scheduled. Then contact the church office so we can print correct names.



Prophecy Tree

Make this Christmas craft to display special names for Jesus.

What you need:

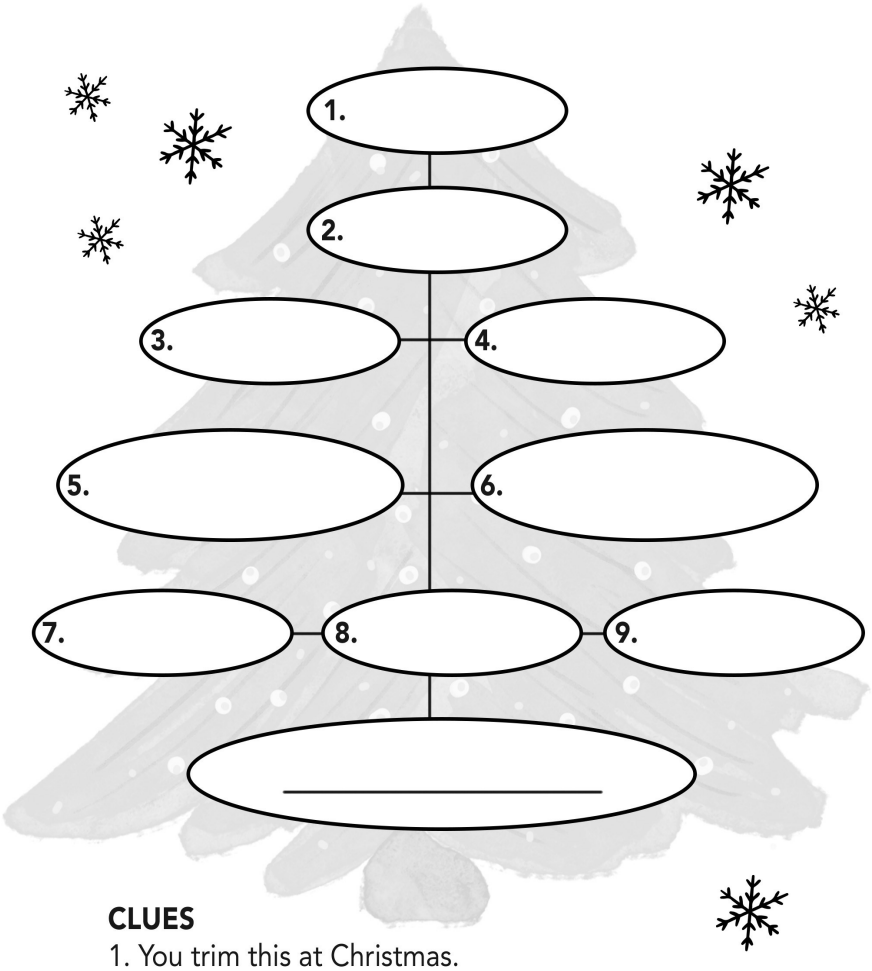
- Large wooden craft stick
- Small green wooden craft sticks
- Scissors
- Ruler
- Bible
- Permanent marker
- Craft glue
- Optional: star stickers or craft jewels

What you do:

1. Place the large stick on a table vertically, like a tree trunk.
2. Cut the green sticks into pieces that measure 4", 3½", 3" and 2½".
3. On each green stick, write a name for Jesus from Isaiah 9:6 — Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. (Write small or ask an adult for help.)
4. Use a dot of glue to attach each green stick to the large stick, like tree branches.
5. Decorate your Christmas tree with stickers or jewels.

Puzzle!

Write the answer to each clue in the correct circle. Then jot down the first letter of each answer and unscramble those letters to form a word about this season. Write that answer at the bottom of the tree.



CLUES

1. You trim this at Christmas.
2. One who governs
3. The first word of a popular carol, it means "Listen!"
4. You burn this to make the air sweet.
5. "For unto us is born this day a _____ …"
6. She was betrothed to Joseph.
7. Shepherds heard them sing.
8. A Christmas song
9. 'Tis the _____ to be jolly!"

Answers: 1. tree, 2. ruler, 3. hark, 4. incense, 5. Savior, 6. Mary, 7. angels, 8. carol, 9. season; Christmas