

In Response to God
Activities for the week of December 17, 2023

Today's Lectionary: Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11; Psalm 126; 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24; John 1:6-8, 19-28

Sunday	December 17	9:00 am – Church School 10:00 am – Worship Congregational Meeting 11:00 am – Fellowship & Refreshments Chancel Choir Rehearsal
Monday	December 18	3 -7 pm – Houston Dragon Academy
Tuesday	December 19	3 -7 pm – Houston Dragon Academy 10 am-2 pm – CCSC food collection
Wednesday	December 20	3 -7 pm – Houston Dragon Academy 6:00 pm – Dragon Academy Christmas program
Thursday	December 21	3 -7 pm – Houston Dragon Academy
Friday	December 22	7 am -7 pm – Houston Dragon Academy
Sunday	December 24	9:00 am – Church School 10:00 am – Worship 5:30 pm – Music of the Christmas season 6:00 pm – Candlelight Service of Lessons & Carols
Save the Date:	December 31	10:00 am – Carol Sing



Advent and Christmas 2023

December 24

Casual, shortened Worship at 10:00 a.m.

Christmas Concert at 5:30 p.m.

St. Luke's musicians will perform music of the Christmas season

Service of Lessons and Carols at 6:00 p.m.

The Christmas Story unfolds through scripture and song as we celebrate the eve of Jesus' birth.

December 31

Carol Sing at 10:00 a.m.

An opportunity to sing your favorite Christmas carols one more time.



FEAR NOT

ST. LUKE'S STAFF

Pastor	The Rev. W. Scott Harbison
Parish Associate	The Rev. Dr. Bill Wade
Director of Music-Organist/Choirmaster	Marvin Gaspard
Business Manager	Patti Ernst
Assistant to Head of Staff	Mary Ann White
Artists in Residence	Sarah Bunk, Ann Guercio, and Laura Smith



St. Luke's Presbyterian Church
 8915 Timberside Drive
 Houston, Texas 77025
 713.667.6531
www.stlukespres.org

St. Luke's Presbyterian Church
 December 17, 2023

The Order of Worship

December 17, 2023

THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

GATHERING AROUND THE WORD

Please begin quiet preparation for worship as the Tolling begins.

PRELUDE Mary, Did You Know?
Mark Lowry and Buddy Greene
Inspired by PENTATONIX, arr. Micah Sanders

WELCOME/PASSING OF THE PEACE

THE ADVENT WREATH O Come, O Come, Emmanuel
Richard Cabrera & Khanh Nguyen 12th c. Latin melody

Choir: "O Come, Thou Wisdom from on high...
And order all things, far and nigh..."

**Congregation: "Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel!"**

✦ OPENING HYMN 56 The First Nowell
THE FIRST NOWELL v. 1-4

CONFESSION OF SIN AND ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS

Congregation: Thanks be to God

HEARING THE WORD

SCRIPTURE READING (OT p. 572) Psalm 126
Reading today, Marty Moore

SCRIPTURE READING (NT p. 205) 1 Thessalonians 2:11-14

REFLECTION ON THE WORD Rev. W. Scott Harbison
"Wait 'Till the End"

RESPONDING TO THE WORD

✦ APOSTLE'S CREED Hymnal p. 14

I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth. And in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; he descended into hell; the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead. I believe in the Holy Ghost; the holy catholic church; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. Amen

SHARING OF JOYS AND CONCERNS

PASTORAL PRAYERS

OFFERTORY Gesu, Bambino
Pietro Yon (1886-1943), arr. Benjamin Harlan

✦ OFFERTORY RESPONSE 23 Please join the choir in singing
"Gloria in excelsis Deo. Gloria in excelsis Deo"

✦ COMMUNION HYMN 49 Once in Royal David's City
IRBY

SACRAMENT OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

Minister: The Lord be with you.

People: And also with you.

Minister: Lift up your hearts!

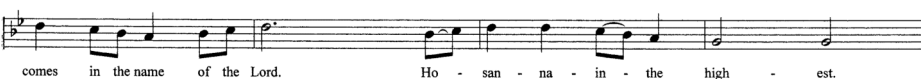
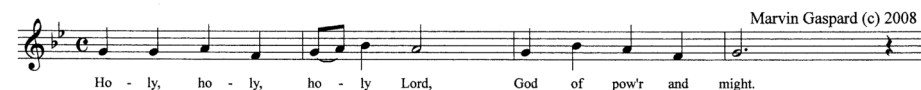
People: We lift them up to the Lord.

Minister: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

People: It is right to give our thanks and praise.

The prayer continues...

The congregation sings...



THE LORD'S PRAYER (Traditional) Hymnal p. 16

COMMUNION VOLUNTARY I Wonder as I Wander
John Jacob Niles (1892-1980), arr. Keith Christopher

✦ CHORAL RESPONSE Rejoice!
12th c. Latin/arr. Marvin Gaspard

✦ BENEDICTION

CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

POSTLUDE Postlude on CAROL
Richard Willis (1819-1900), arr. Gordon Young (1919-1998)

Welcome to St. Luke's Presbyterian Church! If you are looking for a church home in Houston, we invite you to unite with St. Luke's. If you would like more information, please speak to Rev. Harbison after worship.

Sunday School: Children's Sunday School meets at 9 a.m. in Room 115 with Don Mims teaching the class. **Adult Sunday School** meets at 9 a.m. in the Library and is currently studying the Gospel of Luke. **Our Youth Group** meets every other Sunday at 9 a.m.

Our musical guests today are Lauren and Micah Sanders. They are new to Houston and have become friends of St. Luke's. Thank you for sharing your wonderful gifts with us, Lauren and Micah, and welcome to St. Luke's!

The Adult Sunday School class is studying the Gospel of Luke this month. It seems fitting to read the 24 chapters of Luke, one each day ending on Christmas Eve. This is a wonderful daily assignment for our class and any other St. Luke's readers. You are welcome to join the class Sundays at 9 a.m. in the Library.

A Congregational Meeting will be held today immediately after worship to elect new officers of the church. Ordination and Installation of officers will be held during worship on January 14th.

The Advent Wreath: The three purple candles of the wreath symbolize the darkness of the world before the arrival of the Messiah. The fourth candle is pink and symbolizes hope and joy. In the center of the four candles stands one white candle: the Christ candle, symbolizing God's act of sending light into our world of darkness.

We are adopting several families for Christmas to help them celebrate the holidays. Please consider giving to this and to the Minister's Discretionary Fund, as this will be a tough holiday season for some of our neighbors. Please note "holiday families" in your donation.

The Christmas Families have been identified by Jim Mayer, a chaplain with Vitas Hospice. You can make your donation through St. Luke's or give to Jim or Karen Mayer and they will buy gifts for the families. You can also purchase gifts for family members. Pick up an *updated list* of the families on the narthex table with ages, sizes, and toy preferences and wrap your gifts and secure a name tag to the package.

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service at 6:00 p.m.: During the Christmas season we have many opportunities to share the love of Christ with our friends and neighbors. One of the special events we share together is our Christmas Eve Candlelight Service. The service of lessons and carols, Holy Communion, and carol singing concludes with the lighting of candles as we celebrate the birth of our Lord and the light of His life.

Come at 5:30 p.m., and hear our St. Luke's musicians in concert.

The Christmas Joy Offering: Your generosity provides assistance for those who have dedicated their lives to the service of the church, as well as racial ethnic education and leadership development at Presbyterian-related schools and colleges. St. Luke's traditionally takes the Joy Offering on Christmas Eve. Watch for bulletin inserts which will tell you more about this 70 year Presbyterian tradition of sharing our gifts with those who need our support.

We invited our neighbors to the Live Nativity and they came! Thanks to everyone who helped make this a success: the actors, the cookie bakers, the speakers, our choir, and many volunteers who helped bring it all together. We had a great evening sharing the love of Christ with our neighbors and friends.