

ST. LUKE'S  
METHODIST CHURCH  
DENTON, MD

# THE VOICE

DECEMBER 2022 THE SEASON OF ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS



## IN THIS ISSUE:

- MUSINGS FROM PASTOR DAN 1-2
- OUR SHARED LIFE 3
- FAITH FORMATION 4-5
- PRAYER CONCERNS 6
- PRACTICING ADVENT 7
- THANKS! 8
- DECEMBER CALENDAR 9
- FINANCIAL UPDATE 10
- SUMMARY CHURCH COUNCIL MTG 11

### Musings from Pastor Dan

As we continue to persevere through these curious times, we must remember that ultimately God is in control. I continue to read and hear of an increasing number of people who believe these events are signs of the end; maybe so, maybe not. For a Christian, it doesn't matter as we are eternal and our life is not of this world but is of God in the heavenly kingdom. Thanks be to God that His Son, our Savior, Jesus Christ bought, with his blood, our redemption and place in the heavenly kingdom.

Given the unmitigated lunacy of politics, the ever-increasing depravity of our culture, along with the fact that we are lied to with such an astounding consistency, it has become almost impossible to discern the truth. It causes me to reflect once again upon Pilates question to Jesus, "What is truth?". As Christians, we know the answer... *Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life.*

Remain steadfast in the Word and trust in the Lord, for the world is going to do what it will and God always was and always will be sovereign.

As we will always focus upon God and His Word, I want to present another enticement to participate in our upcoming study of Revelation. These are given not only as a means of discussion and study, but prayerfully to bring another avenue for the reception of God's grace through the tranquility given to us by the Holy Spirit unto our spirits. In addition, we can continue to learn the warning signs of non-biblical thoughts and ideas that seek to turn us to false gods.

It is interesting to note that God caused the Apostle John to write five New Testament epistles. Other than the Apostle Paul, no other biblical author wrote more in N.T. than he did.

As I have stated numerous times, the literary structures are the ultimate means to gain the deepest understanding of God's Word. That not only means the internal arrangement of the text itself, it also includes the entire construction of the 66 books of the Bible. In last week's mid-week letter, I highlighted a few parallels between Genesis and Revelation.

Now look at the parallels across the five letters of John:

<u>The Gospel of John</u>	<u>The Epistles of John</u>	<u>Revelation</u>
Speaks of Salvation	Speaks of Sanctification	Speaks of Glorification
The Past	The Present	The Future
Christ the Prophet	Christ the Priest	Christ the King
The Cross	The Fellowship	The Crown

Furthermore consider as your read

<u>The Gospel of John</u> The sheep in God's fold	<u>The Epistles of John</u> Members of God's family	<u>Revelation</u> Priests in God's Kingdom
--	--	---

Notice that in our present time, we are within the time John refers to in the Epistles whereupon we are to be in fellowship with each other.

### ***But what is fellowship?***

The Greek word for "fellowship," *koinonia*, presents the notion of being together for mutual benefit. Hebrews 10:24-25 shares this idea, saying, *"And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near."* Here, we see that fellowship helps express love to one another and it encourages good works. It also requires us to "meet together."

Another reason for Christian fellowship is its impact on unbelievers. Jesus told His disciples, *"By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another"* (John 13:35). The love we have and share for one another does empirically influence others toward faith in Jesus Christ.

Fellowship also gives us the ability to pray together. Early believers were committed to group prayer. In James 5:14-16, elders were called together to pray for the sick as well as for those who had sinned. This required being together.

Christian fellowship is also important for how our congregation makes decisions. In Acts 6 and Acts 15, the early church gathered together to make important decisions about the future direction of the church. These required fellowship in community, prayer, and close discussion.

Christian fellowship is required for Baptism and Holy Communion. Though many believers today do not recognize the importance of fellowship, it is nonetheless essential to spiritual growth. Many aspects of our spiritual lives depend on being together with other believers to encourage, teach, serve, and share life together.



In brief:

*Fellowship is not:*

- Standing around talking with a cup of coffee in your hand.
- A one-way street wherein one believer gives to or helps another.
- Electronic church.

*Fellowship is:*

- The mutual, reciprocal sharing of our life in Christ and with each other.
- The fulfillment of the commands of Scripture.

Keep in mind also that the early Christians emphasized the importance of fellowship. Acts 2:42 notes, *"And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers."* In the early church, *"day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having favor with all the people"* (Acts 2:46-47).

Let us continue to rejoice in our relationship with God and each other as we study His Word and live out our days in faithfulness.

Peace!

Pastor Dan



# Our Shared Life As the Body of Christ

**ST. LUKE'S METHODIST CHURCH**



**BREAKFAST  
with SANTA**  
Saturday, Dec. 3rd  
9am-12pm

Visit the *Children's Shoppe*  
Open 9am-12pm  
Children can shop for gifts for their  
parents, siblings, & grandparents  
Wrapping included!

The Living Creche  
Presented by  
St. Luke's Children  
Sunday, Dec. 18th @ 10am



**Opportunities  
for Service and Fellowship**

Exercise Class Mon & Wed @ 5pm

Cards of Comfort 1st Wed @ 1pm

Prayer Fellowship Wed @10am

Become a Youth Group Assistant!

Join the Pastoral Care Team  
(visits and phone calls to those at home)

Seeking Greeters for all Services

Help with setup of Altar Paraments

**Christmas Services**

Sat., Dec. 24th—Christmas Eve  
7:00pm Contemporary Worship  
11:00pm Traditional Worship

Sun., Dec. 25th -Christmas Day 11:00am



Jan. 7th—Men's Breakfast  
Jan 29th— Fifth Sunday Service @ 10am  
Feb. 18th—Share Shop & Breaking Bread

# Faith Formation



Starting Monday, January 16th, Pastor Dan will lead a Bible study  
*that explores three reasons  
the apostle John wrote the Book of Revelation:*

- To encourage the faithful to do everything they could to resist the worship of the false gods of that culture and to stand firm in their faith.
- To provide remarkable solace to those persecuted for their faith in Jesus Christ (persecution which continues to this day).
- To provide warnings of judgment that God pronounced against his church through the seven letters to the seven churches. The reason for such pronouncements should be somewhat obvious to the extent that the church has (and still does) corrupt itself by trying to stay relevant to the world.



***Come to the class  
and let's study Revelation together!***



## Sunday Programs For Children and Youth (and Adults!)

Children’s Chapel & Cherub Choir	9:30am
Sunday School (PreK-12th Grades)	9:45am
Adult Sunday School & Bible Study	9:30am
Youth Group	5:00pm



**PRAY**  
**IN THE SPIRIT**  
**AT ALL TIMES AND**  
**ON EVERY OCCASION.**  
**STAY ALERT AND BE**  
**PERSISTENT**  
**IN YOUR PRAYERS**  
**FOR ALL BELIEVERS**  
**EVERYWHERE.**  
**EPHESIANS 6:18**

*Oh Immanuel, God with us, truly in this Advent season we celebrate that you are not hidden in some faraway cloud, but you chose to be with us in the blur and mystery of our lives.*

*In the midst of lists and rush, you are with us as a song that echoes in our minds, as the light of a candle, as a card from a friend. They are signs of your presence.*

*We turn to you this season and pray that you would birth joy and healing, blessing and hope in us. Let something wonderful begin in us — something surprising and holy.*

*May your hand be upon us. Let your love fill us. Let your joy overwhelm us. Let our longing for you be met on a coming holy night. Immanuel with us once again.*

### Prayer Concerns for December 2022

Owen Wise, Carrie Lacy, Sheila Orr, Lindsey Fowler, Pat Brown, Barbara Callahan, Barbara Bimonte, Marcy Barbier and her father, Kyle Tilghman, Robert Horner, Tom Gedman, Tom and Tony Keating, Brian Saathoff, Steven Anthony, Marvin Taylor, Elaine Orme, Noel Dean, Gerry Penn, Sylvia Holland, Brenda Rhodes, Archie Carroll, Brenda Wooden, Amy Lee, Nicole Riddleburger's father, Kara Saathoff, Tiffany Caton & Family, Ziggy Zurek-Wellen, Emmary Sweeney, Lynn Gulrich, Marty Harris, Kimberly Wooters, Jason Lee, Grace Clopper, Amy Clopper, Chelsea Abrams, Lisa Barge, Sandy Stubbs, Janet Bassford, Glenn and Cricket Williams, Freddie Adams, Jr, Jimmy and Diane Johnson, Tina Kennedy, Grea Curtis, Alan Flynn, Potsy and Kelly Kemp, our country, and those who are being persecuted and killed around the world.

**Sympathy to the family and friends** of those who have passed away since the November issue of the Voice including Brenda Pritchett, Martin Voss, Donna Peltzer, and Wanda Ewing.

**Prayers for those serving in the U.S. Military:** Chelsea Bunker, Seth Gill, Gabe Griffith, Ethan Lister, Teagan Lister, Matthew Parker, and Andrew Robbins.

To add names to any of our lists, we ask that you either call (410-479-2171), e-mail, ([stlukesdenton@gmail.com](mailto:stlukesdenton@gmail.com)), or put a prayer card in the collection plate. Please be sure to include your name and telephone number so that we can contact you regarding the status of the person needing prayer; otherwise, the name will be removed after a couple of months.

The prayer team is continuing to remember many on our list who ask for prayer, but do not wish to be on the public list. Please know that we try to honor all requests and often call for updates. If someone has been in a stable situation in a nursing home or is homebound, please contact us if that changes. Also, **except for phone calls, please give information in writing, as there are too many changes to remember otherwise.** Thanks for your care, concerns, and prayers for our church family members and beyond.

## Practicing Advent



**Advent Themes, Images, Symbols, and Practices.** There are a number of historic and traditional themes observed during Advent:

- ⇒ *Preparing to celebrate the coming of Christ:*
  - ◇ The coming of the Messiah to the Jews.
  - ◇ The coming of Jesus into the world at Bethlehem.
  - ◇ The second coming of Jesus in final victory.
  - ◇ The continual coming of Jesus into the hearts and lives of believers.
- ⇒ A time of penitence and fasting, austerity, seriousness, reading of Scripture, hearing and proclaiming the Word in sermon and song; waiting and longing for the Messiah's coming
- ⇒ **Symbols:** Chrismon tree with its white monograms, the Jesse tree, Advent calendars, trumpets (for Isaiah), the messianic rose, star of Jacob, and fleur-de-lis. Modern innovation includes the use of an Advent wreath with four candles and themes around hope-peace-love-joy, John-Elizabeth-Joseph-Mary, or some other pattern.
- ⇒ Our *Book of Worship* (page 238) calls for the following themes for the Sundays of Advent:
  - First Sunday: the final return of Christ in victory; the Second Coming
  - Second and Third Sundays: John the Baptist, his role, his words, his teachings
  - Fourth Sunday: the events immediately preceding Jesus' birth

(source: <https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/resources/understanding-advent> )



Thank you to everyone who helped with the "Coming Home" Christmas Tree for the Hospice Festival of Trees!



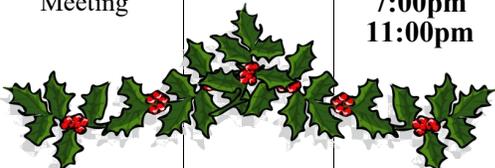
Quarterly UMW Meeting, Tuesday, January 18th, at 6:30pm

The ladies of St. Luke's would like to thank Laura Patrick for hosting a lovely Holiday Brunch on the Fretterd Farm! The fellowship and food were both wonderful!





**Sun                  Mon                  Tue                  Wed                  Thu                  Fri                  Sat**

<p><b>Regular Office Hours</b>  <b>Mon.—Thurs.</b>  <b>9am—4pm</b>  <b>(Closed 12-1 Lunch)</b></p>		<p><b>Advent</b>  <b>2022</b></p>		<p>1                  10am-3pm                  Blood Bank                  3-7pm                  Youth Group                  Denton Parade</p>	<p>2</p>	<p>3                  9am-12pm  <b>Breakfast with Santa &amp; Christmas Shoppe</b></p>
<p>4                  COMMUNION</p> <p>8:30 Trad'l Worship                  9:30 Adult SS Class                  9:30 Children's Chapel &amp; Choir &amp; Sunday School                  9:40 Ignite Worship                  11:00 Trad'l Worship</p>	<p>5</p> <p>12pm AA                  5:30 pm Exercise                  7:30pm NA</p>	<p>6</p> <p>7pm AA                  7pm Praise Band Practice</p>	<p>7</p> <p>10am Prayer Team                  12pm Cards of Comfort                  5:30pm Exercise                  6pm Youth Ministry Meeting                  6pm Bells Practice                  7:30pm Choir</p>	<p>8</p> 	<p>9</p>	<p>10</p>
<p>11</p> <p>8:30 Trad'l Worship                  9:30 Adult SS Class                  9:30 Children's Chapel &amp; Choir &amp; Sunday School                  9:40 Ignite Worship                  11:00 Trad'l Worship                  12pm Choir Luncheon                  5:00 Youth Group</p>	<p>12</p> <p>12pm AA                  4:15pm Worship Team                  5:30pm Exercise                  7:30pm NA</p>	<p>13</p> <p>7pm AA                  7pm Praise Band Practice</p>	<p>14</p> <p>10am Prayer Team                  5:30pm Exercise                  6pm Bells Practice                  7:30pm Choir Practice</p>	<p>15</p> 	<p>16</p>	<p>17</p> <p><b>10am-12pm Living Creche Dress Rehearsal</b></p>
<p>18</p> <p><b>10:00am Worship Service (Living Creche)</b></p> <p>5pm Youth Group</p>	<p>19</p> <p>12pm AA                  5:30 Exercise                  7:30pm NA</p>	<p>20</p> <p>7pm AA                  7pm Praise Band Practice</p>	<p>21</p> <p>10am Prayer Team                  5:30pm Exercise                  6pm Bells Practice                  7:30pm Choir Practice</p>	<p>22</p> <p>7:30pm Leadership Meeting</p> 	<p>23</p>	<p>24</p> <p><b>Christmas Eve Services</b>  <b>7:00pm</b>  <b>11:00pm</b></p>
<p>25</p> <p><b>MERRY CHRISTMAS</b></p> <p><b>11:00am Christmas Service</b></p>	<p>26</p> <p>OFFICE CLOSED</p> <p>12pm AA                  5:30pm Exercise                  7:30pm NA</p>	<p>27</p> <p>7pm AA                  7pm Praise Band Practice</p>	<p>28</p> <p>10am Prayer Team                  5:30pm Exercise</p>	<p>29</p>	<p>30</p> 	<p>31</p>

## St. Luke's United Methodist Church Treasurer's Report

For Period January through December 2022 as of October 30, 2022

Description	Annual Budget 2022	Actual		S/B 83%	Budget through October 2022	Actual		S/B 100%
		Income or Expense To Date	Variance			Income or Expense To Date	Variance	
<b>Income</b>								
Offerings	251,813.00	194,698.57	57,114.43	77.32%	209,844.17	194,698.57	15,145.60	92.78%
Offerings - Sunday School	100.00	0.00	100.00	0.00%	83.33	0.00	83.33	0.00%
Interest Income	30.00	32.34	(2.34)	107.80%	25.00	32.34	(7.34)	129.36%
Building Use	4,000.00	4,810.00	(810.00)	120.25%	3,333.33	4,810.00	(1,476.67)	144.30%
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>255,943.00</b>	<b>199,540.91</b>	<b>56,402.09</b>	<b>77.96%</b>	<b>191,957.25</b>	<b>199,540.91</b>	<b>13,744.92</b>	<b>103.95%</b>
<b>Expenses</b>								
<b>Pastor Expenses</b>								
Salary	59,740.00	49,783.30	9,956.70	83.33%	49,783.33	49,783.30	0.03	100.00%
Travel Reimbursement		0.00	0.00	0.00%	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00%
Cable TV at parsonage		0.00	0.00	0.00%	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00%
Hospitalization/Dental	18,876.00	17,660.00	1,216.00	93.56%	15,730.00	17,660.00	(1,930.00)	112.27%
Bishop's Retreat		0.00	0.00	0.00%	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00%
Continuing Education		0.00	0.00	0.00%	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00%
Pension Plan	9,753.00	8,164.50	1,588.50	83.71%	8,127.50	8,164.50	(37.00)	100.46%
Pastor Expenses - other		0.00	0.00		0.00	0.00	0.00	
					0.00			
<b>Total Pastor Expenses</b>	<b>88,369.00</b>	<b>75,607.80</b>	<b>12,761.20</b>	<b>85.56%</b>	<b>66,276.75</b>	<b>75,607.80</b>	<b>(1,966.97)</b>	<b>114.08%</b>
<b>Staff Expenses</b>								
Staff Salaries	77,254.00	52,735.00	24,519.00	68.26%	64,378.33	52,735.00	11,643.33	81.91%
Wage and Tax Expenses	7,725.00	4,800.04	2,924.96	62.14%	6,437.50	4,800.04	1,637.46	74.56%
Worker's Compensation	1,000.00	1,037.00	(37.00)	103.70%	833.33	1,037.00	(203.67)	124.44%
Expenses - other		0.00	0.00		0.00	0.00	0.00	
<b>Total Staff Expenses</b>	<b>85,979.00</b>	<b>58,572.04</b>	<b>27,406.96</b>	<b>68.12%</b>	<b>71,649.17</b>	<b>58,572.04</b>	<b>13,077.13</b>	<b>81.75%</b>
<b>Other Operational Expenses</b>								
Accounting & Legal	800.00	1,148.11	(348.11)	143.51%	666.67	1,148.11	(481.44)	
Annual Conference expense	500.00	150.00	350.00	30.00%	416.67	150.00	266.67	36.00%
Christian Education/Sunday School	1,200.00	253.22	946.78	21.10%	1,000.00	253.22	746.78	25.32%
Conference Apportionments	22,868.00	18,494.00	4,374.00	80.87%	19,056.67	18,494.00	562.67	97.05%
Easton District Office	1,372.00	1,343.00	29.00	97.89%	1,143.33	1,343.00	(199.67)	117.46%
Janitorial Supplies	800.00	818.12	(18.12)	102.27%	666.67	818.12	(151.45)	122.72%
Electricity/Oil	15,700.00	12,380.64	3,319.36	78.86%	13,083.33	12,380.64	702.69	94.63%
Equipment Rental & Maintenance	4,400.00	2,906.94	1,493.06	66.07%	3,666.67	2,906.94	759.73	79.28%
Kitchen/ParsonageFuel	2,200.00	785.44	1,414.56	35.70%	1,833.33	785.44	1,047.89	42.84%
Grass and Shrubbery Maintenance	3,500.00	4,360.00	(860.00)	124.57%	2,916.67	4,360.00	(1,443.33)	149.49%
Insurance	10,000.00	8,984.00	1,016.00	89.84%	8,333.33	8,984.00	(650.67)	107.81%
Maintenance and Repairs	5,200.00	4,126.10	1,073.90	79.35%	4,333.33	4,126.10	207.23	95.22%
Miscellaneous	700.00	921.85	(221.85)	131.69%	583.33	921.85	(338.52)	158.03%
Music Committee	800.00	654.92	145.08	81.87%	666.67	654.92	11.75	98.24%
MYF Program	200.00	134.18	65.82	67.09%	166.67	134.18	32.49	80.51%
Office Supplies	1,500.00	673.44	826.56	44.90%	1,250.00	673.44	576.56	53.88%
Postage	1,300.00	476.87	823.13	36.68%	1,083.33	476.87	606.46	44.02%
Pastor/Organist, Substitutes		0.00	0.00	0.00%	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00%
Pastor's Moving Exp Escrow Acct		0.00	0.00	0.00%	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00%
Stewardship	1,300.00	1,470.65	(170.65)	113.13%	1,083.33	1,470.65	(387.32)	135.75%
Telephone & Internet	2,700.00	2,730.41	(30.41)	101.13%	2,250.00	2,730.41	(480.41)	121.35%
Water and Sewer	1,755.00	799.46	955.54	45.55%	1,462.50	799.46	663.04	54.66%
Spiritual Life	1,800.00	2,152.19	(352.19)	119.57%	1,500.00	2,152.19	(652.19)	143.48%
Worship Materials	1,000.00	64.90	935.10	6.49%	833.33	64.90	768.43	7.79%
					0.00			
<b>Total Operational Expenses</b>	<b>81,595.00</b>	<b>65,828.44</b>	<b>15,766.56</b>	<b>80.68%</b>	<b>67,995.83</b>	<b>65,828.44</b>	<b>2,167.39</b>	<b>96.81%</b>
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>255,943.00</b>	<b>200,008.28</b>	<b>55,934.72</b>	<b>78.15%</b>	<b>205,921.75</b>	<b>200,008.28</b>	<b>13,277.55</b>	<b>97.13%</b>
<b>Net Income over Expenses</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>(467.37)</b>	<b>467.37</b>		<b>(13,964.50)</b>	<b>(467.37)</b>	<b>467.37</b>	

## Summary of Leadership Meeting November 15, 2022



CHURCH COUNCIL  
MEETING

### *Property and Investment Management Team Report*

- Settlement will be next week on the sale of the parsonage.
- The Trustees did a walk-through of the church building to identify and evaluate any issues needing to be addressed.
- Trustees voted to remove the dishwasher in the kitchen in Fellowship Hall (still deciding whether to sell or donate it).
- There is a mold issue in the choir room. Suggestions to address the problem were discussed and will be explored by the Trustees.
- HVAC system for sanctuary has been repaired.
- Tree limbs overhanging the parking lot will be trimmed.
- The Trustees have decided to remove the downstairs water fountains, which no longer work properly. A push button water cooler replacement is being considered.
- There are plans to put “mini-split” HVAC UNIT in the big classroom upstairs by summer.
- Ceiling tiles need replacing and the front railing needs painting, and the Trustees will delegate that work.
- Pastor Dan asked about the light out on the steeple, and they determined it has not yet been replaced.

### *Mission and Ministry Team – No report*

### *Youth Group Update*

- Pastor Dan reported that the Youth Group was going well and that he was pleased with Garrett’s effectiveness and drive.

### *Fund Management Team*

- The Treasurer’s Report was circulated and Pastor Dan read comments from Tracy Berrigan summarizing the church’s financial picture.
- Income is down slightly from what was projected, but so are expenses.
- At this point, we are expecting a small year-end loss, but overall the church is in good financial shape.

### *Staff Parish Relations Team*

- Pastor Dan reported Laura Patrick is the new head of the SPRT.
- The team has met to complete a church profile and perform the pastor evaluation. (They decided to keep him, one of the team members added with a laugh.)

### *Old Business*

- A motion was made and passed to approve the proposal from Caroline Cares to use our parking lot on May 13th for a Car Show to benefit His Hope Ministries.

### *New Business: Discernment about Disaffiliation*

- There was discussion about whether St. Luke’s should embark on a discernment process to ultimately determine if the church should disaffiliate from the conference.
- Pastor Dan stressed that the decision being made was about whether to enter the process set forth by the United Methodist Church to permit church members to decide St. Luke’s future. The process involves many steps, including notifying all members and inviting them to take part, and at any point the church can decide to halt the process. Under the current guidelines, should St. Luke’s decide to disaffiliate, the church would have to pay the conference around \$100,000, and the deadline to decide is Dec. 31, 2023.
- A motion was made and passed to allow everyone at the meeting to vote.
- A motion was made and passed to vote on beginning the discernment process.
- The vote was conducted by paper ballot — yes for beginning the discernment process; no against beginning the discernment process. The votes were 16 yes; 9 no.
- The next step is for the pastor to notify the district superintendent that St. Luke’s wants to begin the discernment process. Pastor Dan said he would contact the D.S. on Monday.

St. Luke's United Methodist Church  
100 South Fifth Avenue  
Denton, Maryland 21629

Office Phone: 410-479-2171  
Email: [stlukesdenton@gmail.com](mailto:stlukesdenton@gmail.com)

Return Service Requested

To:

# *The Voice*

## **of St. Luke's Methodist Church December 2022**

### St. Luke's Staff

**Rev. Dan T. Gedman– Pastor**

Director of Youth: Garrett Shull

Administrative Assistant: Carrie Soldano

Director of Music: Becky Zinser

Director of Ignite Band: Alicia Weippert

Nursery Coordinator: Alex Penn

Sexton: Denny Weaver

Visit St. Luke's Online at

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

or visit us on Facebook

