



The people of the United Methodist Church

# E-MESSENGER

Open hearts  
Open minds  
Open doors

## Saint Luke United Methodist Church

Volume 2025, Number 01

Wednesday, January 8, 2025

Available at: [stlukeumchaltomcity.org](http://stlukeumchaltomcity.org)



### Let Us Build a House

The start of a new year always brings a sense of excitement and inspiration, prompting us to reflect on the previous year - our successes and failures, the memories we cherish, and those we would rather forget. It is a time to evaluate the past and look ahead to the future.

Recently, a friend posed a thought-provoking question about the future of United Methodism, which has been a recurring topic of discussion throughout my ministry. This time, the urgency of the question struck a chord when a church member openly voiced concerns about the fate of St. Luke United Methodist Church after my departure. While I cannot predict the future, I feel compelled to share some insights from history and signs of hope, emphasizing the timeless call Jesus extends to every disciple: "follow me."

Amidst uncertainties, I firmly believe that St. Luke United Methodist Church has a promising future and will continue its mission without closure. The path we choose moving forward will shape our mission, witness, and structure, echoing the sentiment that true life's work transcends individual lifetimes. Wes Jackson puts it, "If your life's work can be accomplished in your lifetime, you're not thinking big enough." We have the power to redefine Christianity and Methodism by challenging established assumptions of power and influence within societal norms, paving the way for a fresh start filled with surprises and possibilities.

The vision we hold for our church aligns with a heartfelt aspiration captured in a song - a welcoming and inclusive community where love, forgiveness, service, and acceptance reign supreme. This vision epitomizes the essence of St. Luke United Methodist Church, a place striving to embody the love and grace of Christ in all aspects of communal life, fostering unity and a sense of belonging for all. The following are the words to a song:

*Let us build a house where love can dwell and all can safely live. A place where all God's children tell how hearts learn to forgive. Built of hopes and dreams and visions, rock of faith and vault of grace. Here the love of Christ shall end divisions All are welcome, all are welcome, all are welcome in this place.*

*Let us build a house where hands will reach beyond the wood and stone. To heal and strengthen, serve and teach and live the Word they've known. Here the outcast and the stranger bear the image of God's face. Let us bring an end to fear and danger. All are welcome, all are welcome, all are welcome in this place,*

As we strive to become the church we envision with God's guidance, we can have faith that our journey will not end in closure but in a future filled with hope. Samuel Wells writes of *A Future that is Greater Than the Past* in this way,

*The church is a work of art. God is the artist, who makes the church, through the action of the Holy Spirit, in the form of Christ, out of the material of human beings... The church is not beautiful in a detached, distant sense: but if and when it is well and honestly made, it exhibits that overflow of presence that generates joy. Reflecting on Ephesians (2:10) Wells says "we [the church] are God's 'work of art,' or perhaps better, 'God's poem.'"*

Ephesians 2: 10, *For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.*

*In Christian love and grace, Mel*



### RESALE SHOP VOLUNTEERS

We want to recognize and thank the volunteers who work at the Resale Shop.



Rev. Mel Bishara with Resale Shop volunteers listed from left to right: Mary Paris, Lou & Barbara Provenzano, Dr. Martha Chapman, Gloria Lechler, George & Karen Angle



Resale Shop Volunteers: Darryl Miller, Debbie Chapman, George & Mary Paris, George Angle, Barbara Provenzano, Dr. Martha Chapman and Amy Bibb



The church office will be closed due to the observance of the Martin Luther King Holiday:  
Monday, January 20, 2025



Thank you St. Luke UMC families and Sunday School classes for participating in mission outreach to our community by bringing food for NEED during the Thanksgiving and Advent season. Thank you St. Luke UMC volunteers who loaded and delivered it to the distribution center on Broadway Avenue.

Thank you Susan Briles, our office manager, for providing our membership with the communication that helped the food drive succeed. *Amy Bibb*



*We wish everyone a Happy New Year from St. Luke United Methodist Church!*



**The church office has a new email address, please update your contact info for Susan:**

*office@stlukeumchaltomcity.org*



**PLEASE REMEMBER IN YOUR PRAYERS THIS WEEK...**

**Continued Prayer Concerns:** Jeanne Anne Pharis; French Congregation & the people of the Congo; Pat Farmer; Jack & Jerrie Lucko; Betty Holshouser; Scott Paris; Barbara Jones; Charles & Pat Hooper; Byron Lechler, Melissa Lechler & her son, Lucas; Christin Osborn; Buddy & DeeDee Hill's grandson, Milo; Darren Isbell; Ed Baker; Sandra Mason; Mel & Susan Bishara's family in Nazareth and their nephew, Jimmy; Bob Watkins & family; David Stapp; Joe Crawford; George & Karen Angle's daughter, Sarah & daughter-in-law, Kristine; Roy & Joan Hudson's son, Richard; Barbara Kimbrough; Ann Kiker; Barbara Provenzano; sister, Lynn; Kelly Roberts; Lydia Acosta & her husband; Jean P. Isbell; Peggy Fallin; Ruby Lane's nephew, Dan Reynolds; Mary Steward; Mel & Susan's friend, Lisa Hart; Burt Moore; Art & Cathy Gordon; family of Toni Hood; Anita McCullar; Doris Crocker; John Kasonga

**This Week's Concerns:** Bonnie Richards; those affected by Hurricane Helene & Milton; the people of the Nazareth, Israel, Gaza, Lebanon & Syria; those affected by flooding; wildfires; isolation & loneliness; gun violence each day in our country; the people of Ukraine & the world; prayers for our nation

**Our Military:** Ryan Kelly Hampton; Kyle Johnson; Krystal Calvert; Evan Hill; Matt Miller; Nathaniel Hill; Alex Sullivan-Green; Harrison Lenox; Junior Chowe



Please continue your financial support of St. Luke United Methodist Church. There are several ways to contribute that include mailing your offering to the church office or giving online through our website, [stlukeumchaltomcity.org](http://stlukeumchaltomcity.org).

You may also use your banking online payment services to make your contributions every month.

Thank you for your continued support of St. Luke United Methodist Church!

# SUNDAY SCHOOL NEWS

## GENESIS CLASS:

Here's hoping everyone had wonderful holidays. I know several were sick with various viruses, but it looks like all survived, eventually. Happy 2025! We will be picking up on page 84 of the book *A Case for Jesus* during our next lesson. This Sunday we will have a Brunch and Business meeting. Bring any ideas you have to the table for the direction you would like to see us, as a class, to go in moving forward. We need to get started on time - 9:15 am. LNO will be postponed till next week, January 16, because of the probability of bad weather this week. We will meet at Hoffbrau's at 5:30 pm. Art is doing better, still doing therapy and has progressed from walker to cane. Yay for the little things. Keep Amy Bibb and her friend, Sharon, in your prayers. Sharon is also a client on our Meals on Wheels route. Have a great week, stay safe and warm, and we'll see you all next Sunday at 9:15 am. *Anita Bookout*

## UPPER ROOM CLASS:

Greetings from the Upper Room Class and Happy New Year. May we as a church and Christians be a beacon to spread God's light throughout the world in 2025. This is a time of great opportunity for all Christians to humbly serve our Lord and make a difference in the lives of others by bringing the Gospel and God's love to our community. Our attendance for January 5 was nine. We were happy to have Carol Negozio visit our class. Our joys this week were for the gift of another day, the celebration of our Savior's birthday and the beginnings of a new year. Let our new year goals and resolutions be Christ centered. Our concerns are for: Mel, Bonnie Richards, Byron Lechler, Cindy Lasiter, Ronnie Pippen, family of Toni Hood, Charlie and Pat Hooper, Mary Ruth Ellis and Anita McCullar. Thank you, Ann, for our refreshments. Ronnie delivered our morning prayer and Virgil presented our devotion on "Advice for Sixty Year Olds." Birthdays for January: Sussie Khoury, 1/6; Ronnie Pippen, 1/18; Earline Vinnedge, 1/22; Rose Mascari, 1/22; and Bonnie Richards, 1/27.

Resale Shop: \$204

Devotion/Refreshments: Lorna & Jack Bostick

Prayer Group: January 15 • 9:30 am • Fellowship Hall

Lesson: John 19:28

*Submitted by Gloria Lechler*

## Youth News:



This Sunday we shared with the youth the importance of living the Joy of Christ in our lives. Our verse is found in the book of Exodus 34:32. In this verse, the Bible says that Moses spent time with God and when he came down from the mountain, his face was radiant with the Glory of God. This image is teaching us that, spending time with God makes our faces shine. The presence of God is joy, peace and worship. The presence of God is absence of tribulations. God told Isaiah that, even if he walked through fire, he will be with him. Can anybody look back and say: God, I don't know how I survived this time of my life, but you have kept me, and you have been good to me. You have experienced difficulties where you don't know where help would come from but, it came. And that is why we say that the joy of the Lord is our strength. Amen. *Stanislas Ndecky*



*Congratulations to Marthe Ditu & Rachidy Mukanda in the birth of their daughter:*

*Janiyah Kapinga Mukanda*

*Born: December 30, 2024*

*9:15 a.m. ♥ 7lbs*

*Big Brother: Jayce*

*Grandparents: Abel & Esther Ditu*



The next *E-Messenger* Newsletter will be published **January 22** and all submissions need to be in the church office by **January 20**. Thank you!

## *Cora Helon Gibbs*

*September 19, 1932—  
December 31, 2024*

*We received word that Helon Gibbs has passed away from her sister, Jane. She had been residing at the Mansfield Medical Lodge.*

*Please keep her family in your thoughts and prayers.*



## *Wednesday Morning Prayer Group & Bible Study*

*January 15, 2025*

*Prayer Group † 9:30 a.m. • Bible Study † 10:00 a.m.*

*Book of Exodus • Fellowship Hall*

*We invite you to join us.*



St. Luke United Methodist Church  
 3200 Denton Highway  
 Haltom City, TX 76117  
*Open hearts, open minds, open doors*

The *E-Messenger* newsletter is published bi-weekly online. Deadline for submission of articles is 9:00 a.m. Monday. The editor reserves the right to edit for content and space.

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Sunday Services: Sunday School • 9:15 a.m.  
 In-person and Online Worship • 10:30 a.m.  
 Expansion Hispanic Church Service • 1:30 p.m.  
 French Worship Service • 2:00 p.m.

Office Hours: Monday thru Thursday 8:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.  
 Friday 8:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

NEWSLETTER ONLINE AT:  
[www.stlukeumchaltomcity.org](http://www.stlukeumchaltomcity.org)

## Faith & Fellowship



### Sunday, January 12, 2025

#### **Baptism of Our Lord**

9:15 a.m. Sunday School  
 10:30 a.m. Morning Worship Service  
 1:30 p.m. Expansion Church  
 2:00 p.m. French Worship Service

### Monday, January 13, 2025

No Activities

### Tuesday, January 14, 2025

No Activities

### Wednesday, January 15, 2025

9:30 a.m. Prayer Group  
 10:00 a.m. Bible Study  
 6:00 p.m. French Bible Study  
 6:00 p.m. Youth Activities  
 6:30 p.m. Chancel Choir Rehearsal

### Thursday, January 16, 2025

9:00 a.m. UMM Breakfast—Bluebonnet Café

### Friday, January 17, 2025

10:00 a.m. Second Chance Resale Shop

### Saturday, January 18, 2025

10:00 a.m. Second Chance Resale Shop

### Sunday, January 19, 2025

#### **2nd Sunday after the Epiphany**

9:15 a.m. Sunday School  
 10:30 a.m. Morning Worship Service  
 1:30 p.m. Expansion Church  
 2:00 p.m. French Worship Service

### Monday, January 20, 2025

Church Office Closed in observance of MLK Birthday Holiday

9:00 a.m. Newsletter Submission DEADLINE

### Tuesday, January 21, 2025

No Activities

### Wednesday, January 22, 2025

9:30 a.m. Prayer Group  
 10:00 a.m. Bible Study  
 6:00 p.m. French Bible Study  
 6:00 p.m. Youth Activities  
 6:30 p.m. Chancel Choir Rehearsal



*Join us for worship every Sunday at 10:30 a.m. for  
 In-Person Worship or Online Worship  
 via our Facebook page: SLUMC—Haltom City*

**Sunday, January 12, 2025 • 10:30 a.m.**  
**Baptism of Our Lord**  
**Sunday School • 9:15 a.m.**

#### **Weekly Attendance • December 18, 2024**

Prayer Group—7  
 Bible Study—12  
 Youth Activities—0  
 French Congregation Bible Study—8  
 UMM Breakfast • December 19—3

#### **Sunday, December 22, 2024**

Sunday School—50  
 In-Person Worship—59  
 Online Worship—385  
 French Congregation Sunday School—12  
 French Worship Service—29

#### **December 24 • Christmas Eve Service**

In-Person Worship—55 • Online Worship—3780

#### **Sunday, December 29, 2024**

Sunday School—45  
 In-Person Worship—42  
 Online Worship—253  
 French Congregation Sunday School—9  
 French Worship Service—50

#### **December 31 • New Year's French Worship Service—60**

#### **Sunday, January 5, 2025**

Sunday School—62  
 In-Person Worship—55  
 Online Worship—372  
 French Congregation Sunday School—0  
 French Worship Service—35