



The people of the United Methodist Church

# E-MESSENGER

Open hearts  
Open minds  
Open doors

## Saint Luke United Methodist Church

Volume 2025, Number 02

Wednesday, January 22, 2025

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



### *I Will Be With You Always*

The story of Hagar showcases the intertwining of Wilderness experiences and God's Grace. Hagar, who bore a son to Abraham named Ishmael, meaning "God hears," found herself in a challenging situation because Sarah, Abraham's wife, was unhappy about it. Sarah requested Abraham to send Hagar and Ishmael away, a decision that could potentially lead them to the harsh realities of the wilderness, even death. Acting out of selfishness, malice, and cruelty, Sarah disregarded the potential consequences for Hagar and Ishmael.

The wilderness is a symbol of various aspects. It is a place where cattle are driven to pasture, solitary, barren, dry, lonely, representing a life that is fruitless and death-oriented. It also signifies a place testing and proving, presenting difficulties and uncertainties. A wilderness experience is often perceived as a challenging period where people endure discomfort and trials, unable to enjoy pleasant things or lacking encouragement.

Many of us are currently navigating through our own wilderness, facing life and death issues among other struggles. It can be difficult to acknowledge being in the wilderness. For instance, as a church community, we may find ourselves in a wilderness of unanswered questions, aging members, illness, lack of participation in worship, generational gaps, gossip, and a sense of disconnection.

There are no simple solutions when dealing with the wilderness. Although it is an undesirable place to be, we, as people of hope, must trust that God will lead us through it. Even though we may prefer prosperity and smooth sailing, we must recognize that both the garden and wilderness are creations of God. Trials and challenges will come, testing our faith, but the grace of God will meet us, even in the wilderness. The promise we have from God is that "I will be with you always."

Just as God did not abandon Hagar and her son Ishmael in the wilderness, they found God's provision, protection, and promise amidst their struggles. Therefore, it is essential not to lose heart, not to be discouraged, do not lose hope, but instead be patient, trust, and express gratitude to God.

May you encounter, know, and embrace God's presence in your personal wilderness journey throughout 2025.

*In Christian love and grace, Mel*



### Administrative Board Meeting:

February 16 • 12:00 p.m. • Fellowship Hall  
Lunch will be provided.

We will be meeting with our District Superintendent, Philip Rhodes to start discussions and visioning for the upcoming new pastor starting July 1, 2025.



What a great and exciting 99th birthday I experienced. Thank you to all who came in the Emmanuel Class to express birthday wishes. Thank you to the children who came in to sing to me and the class. Thank you to Mel who acknowledged my birthday and the choir and orchestra sang Happy Birthday to me.

I was blessed to feel so much love from my St. Luke friends. May you all have a blessed 2025.

*In Christian love, Ruby Lane*



## Upper Room Devotional

### Psalm 36:5-10

Your love, LORD, reaches to the heavens, your faithfulness to the skies. Your righteousness is like the highest mountains, your justice like the great deep. You, LORD, preserve both people and animals. How priceless is your unfailing love, O God! People take refuge in the shadow of your wings. They feast on the abundance of your house; you give them drink from your river of delights. For with you is the fountain of life; in your light we see light. Continue your love to those who know you, your righteousness to the upright in heart.

In the Christian tradition we lean heavily into the symbol of light throughout Epiphany. In this season we consider what is illuminated. Who do we understand the Christ child to be? What does it mean that God is with us? Or—even more fundamentally—who do we understand God to be?

Today's verses from Psalm 36 shed light on who God is. The psalmist offers a profession of faith as an act of worship. Who is God? God is love. God is faithful. God is righteous. God is just.

The activist, poet, and writer Maya Angelou followed this rule of life: "When someone shows you who they are, believe them." The psalmist has experienced God as completely dependable. God has shown God's character and the psalmist believes, writing about God's steadfast love using the Hebrew word *chesed*. English translations fall short of capturing the essence of this word that is central to the Hebrew Bible's understanding of faithfulness. To express *chesed* is to give oneself completely in love and compassion. It is often expressed as steadfast love toward God. But here the psalmist uses *chesed* to describe the heart of God's character. The psalmist writes of God's steadfast love because they have experienced God's love and compassion in every aspect of their lives.

These verses from Psalm 36 are placed in the context of a psalm that is crying out to God for help. What is the character of this God who will come to our aid and to the aid of all creation? God is *chesed*: steadfast love, faithful, righteous, and just.

**God, your love is steadfast. Come to the aid of the world. Shine your light of love in my life that I may go into the world embodying your profound love for others. Amen.**



**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; 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; Bonnie Richards

**This Week's Concerns:** Clifford & Marilyn Smith; Art Gordon's brother; Byron & Gloria Lechler; Marylou Moore's sister-in-law, Daisy; Darryl Miller; those affected by the fires in California; 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

## EMMANUEL CLASS:

We had eight in attendance Sunday. We had a good lesson and shared a good discussion from the lesson last week with the follow up questions this week. It was so good to see Linda Schmidt back teaching the children. Prayers concerns: Mary and George Paris.

*Mary Ross*

## GENESIS CLASS:

We had a small group in class on this frigid Sunday morning. We'll pick up on page 91 next week and try to finish the chapter. Seven ladies made it to LNO last week. We missed all of you that couldn't make it. Hopefully we can get back on track next month. Keep Art's brother and Amy W's friends in your prayers.

Doughnuts:

January 26—Art & Cathy Gordon

February 2—Amy West

February 9—George & Karen Angle

Stay safe and warm. See ya Sunday. *Anita Bookout*

## UPPER ROOM CLASS:

Greetings and blessings from the Upper Room Class. We had nine in attendance. Prayer Concerns: Delisa, (surgery went well and she is home), Darryl, Michelle, Bonnie Richards, Byron and Gloria Lechler.

Thank you to Ann and Virgil for the devotional and refreshments. If you wish to mail a card to Bonnie, her address is 4928 Sabelle Lane, Haltom City, TX 76117.

Birthdays: Bonnie Richards—January 27

Resale Shop: \$205

Devotion/Refreshments: Debbie/Gloria

Prayer Group: January 29 • 9:30 a.m. • Fellowship Hall

Lesson: John 21 *Gloria Lechler*



### *Holy Communion Sunday, February 5, 2025*

*Communion will be served during our in-person worship service. We will invite all who are able to come to the altar to receive communion. As usual during our online worship service we will invite you to participate in communion by having your own elements ready.*

## Youth News:



This Sunday we shared with the youth about finding rest in Christ. Our Bible verse can be found in the book of Genesis 2:2-3.

The Bible says that God rested on the seventh day. This year, let us learn to rest in the Lord. It is okay to tell God that: Lord, I am tired, I need rest. Amid all our daily duties, we can take a day off. And why not a week off? Why not have a month off? Why not have a year off? Taking a day off allows us to think of our lives, think of the goodness of God and worship him in a quiet place. Yes, God can be found in our everyday business, but he can also speak to our heart, in a soft whisper.

Amen.

*Stanislas Ndecky*



## Financial Report:

### Receipts:

November 2024:  
\$20,847

December 2024:  
\$25,134



The next *E-Messenger* Newsletter will be published **February 5** and all submissions need to be in the church office by **February 3**. Thank you!



### *Wednesday Morning Prayer Group & Bible Study*

January 29, 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.

Senior Pastor: Rev. Mel Bishara  
 Phone: 817/838-6834  
 Website: [stlukeumchaltomcity.org](http://stlukeumchaltomcity.org)

Editor: Susan Briles  
 Fax: 817/838-7631

E-mail: [office@stlukeumchaltomcity.org](mailto:office@stlukeumchaltomcity.org)

Horizon Texas Conference website & phone: [htcumc.org](http://htcumc.org) • 817/877-5222

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 26, 2025

3rd 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 27, 2025

No Activities

### Tuesday, January 28, 2025

No Activities

### Wednesday, January 29, 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 30, 2025

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

### Friday, January 31, 2025

10:00 a.m. Second Chance Resale Shop

### Saturday, February 1, 2025

10:00 a.m. Second Chance Resale Shop

### Sunday, February 2, 2025

4th Sunday after the Epiphany † Communion Sunday

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, February 3, 2025

9:00 a.m. Newsletter Submission DEADLINE

### Tuesday, February 4, 2025

No Activities

### Wednesday, February 5, 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 26, 2025 • 10:30 a.m.  
 3rd Sunday after the Epiphany  
 Sunday School • 9:15 a.m.

### Weekly Attendance • January 8, 2025

Prayer Group—0  
 Bible Study—0  
 Youth Activities—5  
 French Congregation Bible Study—9  
 UMM Breakfast • January 9—3

### Sunday, January 12, 2025

Sunday School—51  
 In-Person Worship—50  
 Online Worship—237  
 French Congregation Sunday School—14  
 French Worship Service—24

### Weekly Attendance • January 15, 2025

Prayer Group—6  
 Bible Study—15  
 Youth Activities—5  
 French Congregation Bible Study—10  
 UMM Breakfast • January 16—3

### Sunday, January 19, 2025

Sunday School—53  
 In-Person Worship—38  
 Online Worship—236  
 French Congregation Sunday School—6  
 French Worship Service—26