

St. Luke's Voice

St. Luke's Lutheran Church, New Rochelle, NY December 2025~January 2026

The mission of St. Luke's Lutheran Church is to share the good news of Jesus through word and sacrament, serving, teaching, and welcoming our community.

St. Luke's Lutheran Church

95 Eastchester Road
New Rochelle, NY 10801

Rev. John Backe
917-795-2392

**Sunday Worship:
10 A.M.**

Phone: (914) 632-2116
StLuke654@aol.com
SLNR.org

Visit us on Facebook!

Newsletter
Editor: Pat Fredericks

A MESSAGE FROM PASTOR JOHN

At this time of year, I need to slow down, I need a break. That's why I like the season of **Advent**. It provides a refuge from all the noise, the pressure, and the Hallmark movies that "commercial Christmas" bombards me with. The slower pace of anticipation as the light from the **Advent** wreath grows from week to week. The quiet prayers and readings that are shared during **Advent** vespers on Wednesday evenings. The daily devotional readings specifically written for **Advent** contemplation. The small surprises that we find when opening the windows of an **Advent** calendar. Lately, I've become confused by some of the calendars I've seen. Though they are still called **Advent** calendars, they have themes like Harry Potter, the Wicked movie, Star Wars and other cultural references. Other than counting down twenty-five days, they have nothing to do with Christmas itself. They are just one more distraction (or attack) on the true Good News of God's coming among us, as one of us, for us. I hope you will join me finding a more meaningful **Advent** experience with the following resources, in addition to our Sunday morning worship:

ADVENT VESPERS: Wednesdays, December 3, 10 & 17 at 7 p.m. A time to share in prayer, song and contemplation, a quiet respite at the end of a hectic day;

ADVENT DAILY DEVOTIONS: There are several resources available. The first is "Hark A Thrilling Voice is Sounding". It is available online at: <https://www.luthersem.edu/godpause/advent-devotional/> It is produced by Luther Seminary. If that is difficult to access, we have printed versions, in both large print and regular, available in the narthex. I personally use a set of reflections more directly addressing contemporary issues like hunger, immigration and more.

(Pastor's message continued from page 1)

To subscribe for free, use this link: [Unsettling Advent | Substack](#). This is produced by A Public Witness.

However you choose to engage **Advent** this year, I hope you have a peaceful and spirit nourishing journey to Bethlehem and join us for our Christmas services. Invite a friend to join you. The full schedule of Christmas worship and other activities is elsewhere in this newsletter and on our website.

CHURCH COUNCIL

We are so blessed for this Church Family and all of you that are part of it.

PLEASE make every effort to be present Dec 7th at our Annual Budget Meeting. We need a Quorum to have a vote. Thank you for your support.



This past Sunday, the 23rd, was Christ the King!, Harvest Home, Loyalty Sunday and Hymn Sing. We were also joined by the Asst. to the Bishop, Pastor Nicole Schwalbe. Thanks to all in the Congregation who made a special effort to be present. Pastor Schwalbe, along with our newly elected Metro New York Bishop, Katrina Foster, brings a new energy and dedication to revitalizing our churches. She chatted with congregants at coffee hour and then met with the Church Council. Pastor Schwalbe was able to offer a concrete path for resuming the process of securing more permanent pastoral coverage. She was both friendly and candid and expressed enthusiasm about our church's prospects. The Council members came away newly inspired, as we work together to rebuild our community. It will still take time, but thanks to Pastor Backe for helping to get us here. As we promised transparency, the more that is revealed to us, we will share with you.

Thank you to all that supported our Holiday Boutique. We raised over \$2500 for the church, and we had a lot of new faces who come to shop! Thank you to our amazing Holiday Boutique Crew... you all were key to our success, and the fun and fellowship!

I'm repeating what I wrote in the last newsletter... upcoming events!

So many exciting things happening at St. Luke's, please see flyers and bulletin for more information:



December 13th, Julia, and Iryna will lead us in a second Christmas Concert. See flyer elsewhere in this issue. PLEASE join us! It will be another fabulous event. Invite all your friends.

Our congregation Christmas Party and Pageant will be December 21st.

(Council President's message continued from page 2)

**Advent Vespers will be Wednesday evenings at 7pm.
Pastor Backe will be leading us in worship.
Please join us on Wed., Dec 3rd, 10th and 17th.**

Christmas Eve we again have 2 services planned, 4pm and 8pm.
Pastor Backe will be leading both. We are adding the earlier service
so all members of St. Luke's can celebrate and worship on Christmas Eve!

We continue to look forward to seeing everyone at church and at coffee hours. Thank you to the committees for helping to make coffee hour so successful!

Thank you to Pastor John Backe for his continuing service as our Coverage Pastor, and to he and Pastor Mark Brown, who lead us in worship every week. We are so grateful to you. They will be leading us well into April and Easter!

God Bless our Congregation and our beloved church!

If you are on Facebook, please join our page. "St. Luke's New Rochelle". Please visit our Website at SLNR.org.



Thank you to our Church Council for their time and dedication to our beloved church. May we all have a Blessed Christmas and a bright shiny New Year!

Yours in Christ
Dawn McEvoy
Church Council President

Church Council: Denise Tolles VP, Steve Olsen Treasurer, Traci Daniele Financial Secretary, Karen Fontecchio Secretary, Lydia Bersito, Brett Buehrer, Donna Elmer, Camille O'Garro and Julia Ungewitter

CAN YOU HELP???

HELP WANTED Job Openings, no pay, but great joy and fellowship. Be part of making a difference. Committees are the heart and soul of St. Luke's. The more people sharing the work makes everything run smoothly. Consider joining the Fellowship Committee, or the Choir, or the Church Council, or any other group that makes St. Luke's so special. We'll talk about this more in January, in the meantime, talk to Pastor John for details.

PLANNING FOR OUR FUTURE

Pledges are an important part of our financial planning process and an expression of our faith and our gratitude to God for our blessings. Our thanks to the following who have submitted their pledges to date:

Name

1. Mrs. Judith Amato
2. Mrs. Jennifer Archer
3. Ms. Cathie Behrend
4. Mrs. Lydia Bersito
5. Mrs. Irene Breen
6. Ms. Thyra Brooks
7. Mrs. Traci Daniele
8. Mr. & Mrs. Henry Doerr
9. Mr. Joseph Ferraro
10. Mrs. Karen Fontecchio
11. Mrs. Patricia Fredericks
12. Mr. & Mrs. Kris Haymon
13. Mrs. Susanne Kuligowski
14. Mr. Jacob Kuligowski
15. Mr. & Mrs. Leam McEvoy
16. Ms. Melissa McEvoy
17. Mrs. Alexandra Palmeri
18. Ms. Fernita Ross
19. Mrs. Angelika Ridulfo
20. Dr. & Mrs. Melbourne Taylor
21. Ms. Denise Tolles
22. Mrs. Alexandra Palmeri
23. Mr. & Mrs. Martin Ungewitter
24. Ms. Kathleen Wirak



MERRY CHRISTMAS &
HAPPY NEW YEAR
from the
FELLOWSHIP COMMITTEE



Welcome to the Season of Advent, Blessings for Christmas and a Happy and Healthy New Year!

THANK YOU to all that supported our Holiday Boutique on Nov. 8th. We had many new vendors, Photos with Santa, face painting, great food in the café, delish baked goods and of course rummage and raffles galore! We raised over \$2500!

We have a fabulous Christmas Concert planned for Dec 13th. It is only \$10 per person. Please share the flyer enclosed, and ask Julia for invitations, to give to all your friends, neighbors etc. PLEASE share (re-share) on social media. The more the merrier. The festivities start at 5:30pm.

We continue to look forward to seeing everyone at church and at coffee hours. Thank you to the committees for helping to make coffee hour so successful!

Thank you to Pastor John Backe for his continuing service as our Coverage Pastor, and to he and Pastor Mark Brown, who lead us in worship every week. We are so grateful to you. They will be leading us well into April and Easter!



We were happy to welcome Asst. Bishop Nicole Schwalbe on Sunday, November 23rd. Thanks to all in the Congregation who made a special effort to be present. Pastor Schwalbe, along with our newly elected Metro New York Bishop, Katrina Foster, brings a new energy and dedication to revitalizing our churches. We had a great meet and greet with her as she chatted with congregants at coffee hour and then met with the Church Council. Pastor Schwalbe was able to offer a concrete

path for resuming the process of securing more permanent pastoral coverage. She was both friendly and candid and expressed enthusiasm about our church's prospects. The Council members came away newly inspired, as we work together to rebuild our community. We also celebrated Harvest Home, Loyalty Sunday, Hymn Sing and Christ the King Sunday!

DON'T forget, bring in your Toys for Hope to be placed under the Christmas Tree on Dec. 7th, and our Christmas Party on Dec 20th. Bring your family and friends, ALL are Welcome!

God Bless our Congregation and our beloved church!

(Fellowship Committee message continued from page 5)

If you are on Facebook, please join our page. "St. Luke's New Rochelle". Please visit our Website at SLNR.org.

Thank you to our committee and all those with the time and talents to support our mission of unity and oneness in Christ. Our church is an amazing family because we are all part of it.

Yours In Christ

Dawn McEvoy email: Mmcevoy33@aol.com cell: 347-604-3969

Committee members: Julia Ungewitter, Angelika Ridulfo, Leam, Melissa and Vicky McEvoy,

Committee members: *Julia Ungewitter, Angelika Ridulfo, Leam, Melissa and Vicky McEvoy, Susanne and Jacob Kuligowski, Renee, Bill and Shari Taylor, Lydia Bersito and Traci Daniele*

BUDGET MEETING

SUNDAY DEC 7, 2025

IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING
SERVICE



IN THE FELLOWSHIP HALL
ALL MEMBERS ARE URGED TO
ATTEND !!!

(members are those that have received communion and made a contribution of record in the last 12 months)

Thank you, the Church Council

St. Luke's Church presents

"Holiday Happiness"

a musical extravaganza

December 13, 2025

Featuring

Julia Breannetta Simpson

with her

Rhythm & Jazz Ensemble

Mario E. Sprouse, Musical Director

Also on the program will be the incomparable

Iryna Arbatska, Pianist/Organist

St. Luke's Choir, led by Iryna Arbatska, Director

The night ends with a Holiday Sing-along.

\$10 per person admission includes

Coffee, Tea, Soft Drinks, Hors D'oeuvres and Desserts

BOOK CLUB CORNER

There never yet have been, nor are there now, too many good books.

--- Martin Luther

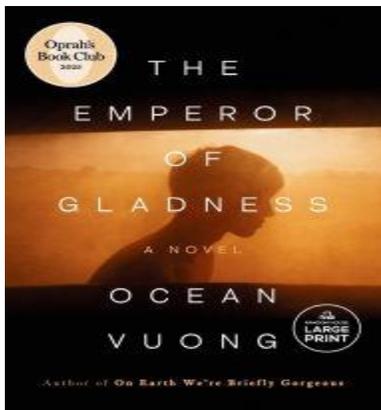
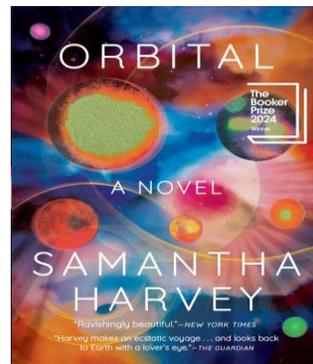
St. Luke's Book Club met to discuss *The Correspondent* by Virginia Evans. This first novel is a remarkable book and a challenging read. We shared lunch at Barnes & Noble in Scarsdale on Thursday, November 20. *The Correspondent* is poignant and fascinating. Evans explores the power of finding solace in literature and connecting with people we might never meet in person.

St. Luke's Book Club is open to everyone! You are invited to join us at Barnes & Noble, Scarsdale at 12:30pm any month! See the church calendar for the exact date each month.

December 2025 Selection:

ORBITAL

by Samantha Harvey



January 2026 Selection:

THE EMPEROR OF GLADNESS

by Ocean Vuong

*The greatest gift is a passion for reading.
It is cheap, it consoles, it distracts, it excites, it gives you knowledge of the world
and experience of a wide kind. It is moral illumination.*

--- Elizabeth Hardwick.

HOPE

COMMUNITY SERVICES

Holiday TOY DRIVE

OCTOBER 24 - DECEMBER 5

*Help Bring a Little Joy to Over 550 Local Children
Newborn - 12 Years*

Accepting Donations Monday - Friday 10AM - 3PM

**Drop-off
Location:**

HOPE Community Services
50 Washington Avenue
New Rochelle, NY 10801

Your gift of a new unwrapped toy will be distributed on December 15, 2022



Amazon Wishlist

*For more information contact:
Sylvia B. Hamer
(914)380-9716
Shamer@hope-cs.org*



Donate Your Way

COOKING FOR HOPE

November's Hope Team consisting of Angelika Ridulfo, Joan Bast, Bill Rodreguez, Leam McEvoy and Denise Tolles prepared a hearty meal of Adobo chicken, rice and vegetables. The next Hope Cook is Sunday, December 14th.

Please see the note below from Hope's scheduling coordinator, Ellen Berman, expressing Hope's continuing gratitude for the contributions and efforts of the Hope Team and the entire Congregation.



"These are such difficult times for all who are truly suffering with food insecurity. For an individual on one's own and for a family in need of balancing food, housing, health issues, etc. the stresses are many. You were there for our clients facing the challenges of COVID, with the hope that as that situation eased, life would be easier. As we have realized, one challenge is replaced by others. Through thick and thin you have been steadfast in your commitment to HOPE providing wonderful meals."

We are truly thankful to have such wonderful partners in helping make HOPE's mission a reality. This wouldn't be possible without the assistance of you and your many ready-willing and able committee members as well as the generous support of the organization you represent. Please convey our thanks and wishes to all for a Thanksgiving and Holiday Season of good health, safe times and joy hopefully in being with those you hold dear.

With gratitude and my warmest wishes for joyful times, much happiness, and good health during this season and in the New Year.

*All the very best,
Ellen*



The deadline for submission of information and articles for the FEBRUARY issue, will be Thursday, January 22nd.



St. Luke's Lutheran Church
Annual Congregation
Christmas Party

~
***Sunday, December 20th,
2025***
*(immediately following Worship
Service and Sunday School
Pageant)*

~
*Continental Breakfast
Caroling
Visit from Santa*

~
ALL ARE WELCOME!

~
*Please rsvp to mmcevoy33@aol.com or
Sign up in the Narthex.*





Coffee Hour
Assignment Sheet
Fall Winter 25-26

<u>Date</u>	<u>Committee</u>
Nov 2	Senior Choir
Nov 9 – Boutique clean up	Sunday School
Nov 16	Social Ministry
Nov 23 – Harvest Home/Loyalty Sunday	Fellowship
Nov 30	Church Council
Dec 7 – Budget Meeting?	Sunday School
Dec 14	Altar Guild
Dec 21 – Christmas Pageant & Party	Sunday School
Dec 28	Senior Choir
Jan 4, 2026	Social Ministry
Jan 11	Fellowship
Jan 18	Church Council
Jan 25	Altar Guild
Feb 1	Senior Choir
Feb 8 – Souper Bowl – Annual Mtg?	Fellowship
Feb 15 (Pancake Supper 17 th , Ash Wed 18 th)	Social Ministry
Feb 22 – Lent	Church Council
Mar 1 – Lent	Sunday School
Mar 8 – Lent	Altar Guild
Mar 15 - Lent	Senior Choir
Mar 22 - Lent	Social Ministry
Mar 29 – Palm Sunday	Fellowship
Apr 5 – Easter	Sunday School
Apr 12 – Koinonia Women’s Retreat	Church Council
Apr 19	Altar Guild
Apr 26	Senior Choir

Please select members of your committee to honor your dates. You need to set up, clean up and bring milk, juice & dessert etc. You can use this time to promote your committee or upcoming events! If your committee would like to contribute coffee supplies that would be great too!

Coffee Hour has become a great Fellowship hour, Thanks to all of you!

**ANY questions or conflicts please contact Dawn McEvoy at email: mmcevoy33@aol.com
(cell) 347-604-3969. Thank you! *HELP and DONATIONS are WELCOME any Sunday!!***

AROUND THE PARISH



In Our Prayers this month are those hospitalized, with health concerns, or in transition or treatment, and all those in our Sunday prayers.

PRAYER LIST UPDATES: We are revising our Prayer List. We will remove names after a month or unless instructed otherwise. If you have a name to add, contact the church office.

DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES

Birthdays

12/1	Alessia Daniele	12/17	Joan Bast-Rodriguez
12/7	Andrew Link	12/18	Holly O'Neill Carolyn Zyloney
12/9	Renee Hamilton-Taylor Emily Archer	12/22	Cory Tupper
12/11	Lucy Hoffman-Guido	12/27	Gail Olsen
12/12	Lillian Alvarez Lucille Saavedra	12/30	Rebecca Daniele
		12/31	Rosemarie Doerr Peter Conroy

Anniversaries

12/1	Judy & John Amato Joy & Michael Mitchell
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JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

Birthdays

1/3	Karen Jantzen	1/14	Len Elmer
1/4	Michael O'Neill	1/16	Jackson Tamburro
1/5	Joseph LoPresti Jeniece Oliveras-Triolo	1/17	Henry Bast, Jr.
1/8	Martha Johnson	1/23	Kristen Ann Dassler
1/13	Amelia Blake	1/27	James Ross III
		1/28	Avery Harris

Anniversaries

ADVENT & CHRISTMAS WORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

You are invited to join your friends and family at St. Luke's Lutheran Church for any or all of the worship services listed here. Come to Advent Vespers to relax and reflect in preparation for the coming of the Christ Child. Then please join us for our Christmas Eve worship in celebration of the birth of our Savior Jesus Christ.

Join Us at
Advent Worship



Advent Vespers ~

**Wednesday evenings December 3rd, 10th,
and 17th, at 7pm.**

Pastor Backe will be leading us in worship.

Christmas Eve ~

December 24th, 2 services: 4pm and 8pm.

Pastor Backe will be leading both.

**We are adding the earlier service so all
members of St. Luke's can celebrate and
worship on Christmas Eve!**

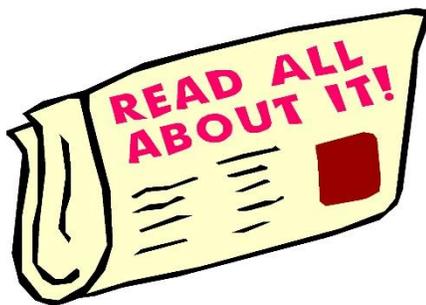


Thank you to the Patrons of St. Luke's Voice – 2025

Jennifer Archer
Art Rankis

Nancy Sigler
Ernest & Rosalind Wallace

Aija Sears



Patrons are those who wish to make a gift to help support the publication of St. Luke's Voice.

To become a patron, just make a contribution of \$25.00 send to:

St. Luke's Lutheran Church,
95 Eastchester Rd., New Rochelle, NY 10801.

Please designate the gift toward "Patron of Newsletter".



CHRISTMAS POINSETTIA

Order Now to help us Decorate the Sanctuary for Christmas!

*If you wish to contribute to the Christmas Poinsettia Fund in memory
for in honor of a loved one, please complete the form below.*

*Names of donors and loved ones will appear in the Christmas Bulletin.
Cost: \$35.00*

Deadline Date: *December 14, 2025*

CHRISTMAS POINSETTIA

In Memory of _____

or In Honor of _____

In Gratitude for _____

From _____

*Please send to: St. Luke's Lutheran Church
95 Eastchester Rd.
New Rochelle, NY 10801*

St. Luke's Lutheran Church December – 2025

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<p><u>All Sundays</u> 9a-Choir Rehearsal 10a-Choir 10a-Sunday School 11a-Coffee Hour</p>	<p><i>1</i> 7p-Basketball Group</p>	<p><i>2</i></p>	<p><i>3</i> 7p- Advent Vespers</p>	<p><i>4</i></p>	<p><i>5</i> 7:00p-Boy Scouts</p>	<p><i>6</i> 9:30a-A.A. Men's Group 12p-Sensory Taekwon-Do</p>
<p>7 Advent II 10a-Worship with Rev. Backe 10-Blessing of Crèche 10a-Sunday School 11a-Coffee Hour, Host: Sunday Sch. ANNUAL BUDGET MTG. AFTER WORSHIP HOPE TOY DRIVE</p>	<p><i>8</i> 7p-Basketball Group</p>	<p><i>9</i></p>	<p><i>10</i> 7p- Advent Vespers</p>	<p><i>11</i></p>	<p><i>12</i> 7:15p-Boy Scouts</p>	<p><i>13</i> 9:30a-A.A. Men's Group 12p-Sensory Taekwon-Do 5:30p-Christmas Concert "Holiday Happiness"</p>
<p>14 Advent III 10a-Worship with Rev. Brown 10a-Blessing of Christmas Tree 10a-Sunday School 11a-Coffee Hour, Host: Altar Guild & Cooking for HOPE</p>	<p><i>15</i> 10a-Hope Food Pickup 7p-Basketball Group</p>	<p><i>16</i></p>	<p><i>17</i> 7p- Advent Vespers</p>	<p><i>18</i> 12:30p-St. Luke's Book Club</p>	<p><i>19</i> 7:15p-Boy Scouts</p>	<p><i>20</i> 9:30a-A.A. Men's Group 12p-Sensory Taekwon-Do</p>
<p>21 Advent IV 10a-Worship with Rev. Backe 10a-Sunday Sch. Christmas Pageant & Congregation Party 11a-Coffee Hours, Host: Sunday School</p>	<p><i>22</i> 7p-Basketball Group</p>	<p><i>23</i></p>	<p>24 Christmas Eve 4p & 8p-Christmas Eve Services with Rev. Backe 4p-No Choir 8p-Choir</p>	<p>25 Nativity of Our Lord/Christmas Day Office Closed <i>Merry Christmas!</i></p>	<p>26 Office Closed No Boy Scouts</p>	<p><i>27</i> 9:30a-A.A. Men's Group 12p-Sensory Taekwon-Do</p>
<p>28 Lessons & Carols Worship with Rev. Brown No Choir or Sunday School 11a-Coffee Hour, Host: Sr. Choir</p>	<p><i>29</i> No Basketball</p>	<p><i>30</i></p>	<p><i>31</i></p>	<p>Jan. 1 New Year's Day Office Closed <i>Happy New Year!</i></p>	<p>Jan. 2 No Boy Scouts Office Closed Jan. 3 9:30a-A.A. Men's Group 12:30p-Taekwon-Do</p>	<p>Jan. 4 No Sunday School</p>