

# WITAMAL

*signs*

THE PULSE OF SAINT LUKE'S PARISH LIFE

Volume 20 Issue 10 November 2023 St Luke's Episcopal Church Camillus, New York



*Let us come before Him  
with Thanksgiving  
Psalm 95:2*



## Warden's Message

With completion of the basement wall repair, the wardens are nearly at a loss for words this month. As such, Warden Milt has decided to share a recent personal experience. While in Utah last week I was fortunate to have listened in on Dr. Catherine Meeks' keynote address to attendees of our CNY Episcopal Diocese Convention. On the theme of "all humanity is one family" she spoke of befriending the less fortunate, the forgotten, the lonely. Little did I know at the time that I'd be practicing just that later in the day.

Mary and I ventured to the remote southern end of the Canyonlands National Park, *The Needles*, and parked for the 2.4 mile long Slickrock loop hike. It was a warm day and not many people venturing out. About a quarter mile in we ran into an elderly gentleman who was obviously disoriented. We inquired "are you on your way in or out?" to which he replied, "in...I think, I just can't find the trail." It was a bit difficult at times as we were walking mainly on mountains of smooth, weather-worn rock. There was an occasional cairn to guide one but it was a bit tricky. Seeing that he was obviously alone and challenged, Mary and I offered to accompany him the final two miles. As it turned out, John was a joy to hike and converse with. We each shared bits of our life story. He slowed us down a bit but I'm convinced that he might not have made it out had we not stumbled by. We all have moments in life when chance encounters offer us an opportunity to unexpectedly do God's work.

Published monthly by  
 St. Luke's Episcopal Church  
 in Camillus, NY  
 The Rev. Jon White.....Rector  
 Sedona Brown.....VS Editor  
 Carolyn Muratore..... VS Designer  
 Deb Denny.....Secretary  
 Contact 315.487.1771  
 parishadministrator@stlukescamillus.com  
[www.stlukescamillus.com](http://www.stlukescamillus.com)

As we were reminded in Father Jon's sermon this past Sunday, there are two great commandments: "to love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, soul and mind" and the second is similar, "love thy neighbor as thyself." It wasn't in our plans when we set out on that hike to be doing God's work but it certainly gave us a warm feeling when we reflect back on it.





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## A Word

I recently heard someone describe the months of October and November as the weekend months of the year. And that made me laugh a little because it has the ring of truth to it. If the whole year is compared to a single week, November is definitely like Sunday, unfolding slowly as Fall transitions to Winter, and Thanksgiving is definitely like an old-school Sunday dinner. December, on the other hand, definitely feels like a Monday, full of lots of things to do and catch up on. And just as I don't want to think about Monday on the weekend, I really resent retailer's insistence on pushing Christmas on me before its even Halloween.



But in the life of the church, this is a really fruitful season.

November begins with a three day cycle of feasts, All Hallows Eve, All Saints Day, and All Souls Day. In the medieval church these days were known as Allhallowtide and was a time to remember those who had died, including martyrs, saints, and all faithful departed Christians.

The end of November also brings us the end of the church year as we prepare for the beginning of Advent. As I have mentioned before, the church year is divided between a time to re-experience our ancient ancestors encounter with Christ, from a season of anticipating his arrival (Advent) through his whole life, death, resurrection, Ascension, all the way to the gift of the Spirit at Pentecost. The other half of the year, in our Sunday readings, we are called to examine our own lives and to ask ourselves "what does the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus mean for me?"

In November, our Sunday Scriptures invite us to explore the trajectory and endpoint of our own faith journey and what the promise of Christ's return means to us and how it impacts our lives. So enjoy this "weekend" part of the year, and I hope the blessings of God may be with you throughout these years.

## SACRED GROUND

Our Sacred Ground program had our last meeting on Tuesday October 24<sup>th</sup>. Over more than a year, we have met and talked and learned from one another and from the program materials. We encountered stories we never heard before, wrestled with questions about our won identities and the stories we were taught as children, and became aware of deeper currents in our community that we may have never noticed before.

Sacred Ground is a film- and readings-based dialogue series on race, grounded in faith. Small groups are invited to walk through chapters of America's history of race and racism, while weaving in threads of family

story, economic class, and political and regional identity.

Sacred Ground is part of Becoming Beloved Community, The Episcopal Church's long-term commitment to racial healing, reconciliation, and justice in our personal lives, our ministries, and our society. Participants are invited to peel away the layers that have contributed to the challenges and divides of the present day – all while grounded in our call to faith, hope and love.

Fr. Jon would like to invite everyone to participate and so is considering hosting another session in the coming year. If you are interested, please let him know.

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**St. Luke's Episcopal Church Vestry Minutes**  
**5402 West Genesee Street, Camillus, NY 13031**  
**October 23, 2023**

**Attendance**

Rector: Jon White

Wardens: Jack Young and Milt Stevenson

Vestry Members: Rich Conley, Sherry Brescia, Mary Parish, Debbie Kaszubinski, Jim Shake, and Eileen Robertson

Treasurer: Sherry Brescia

Vestry Clerk: Alison Conley

**Opening prayer**

Jon began the meeting at 7:01 p.m. with a prayer.

**Review of previous minutes**

Rich made a motion to approve the minutes from the September 25, 2023 vestry minutes. Eileen seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved.

**Reports**

Treasurer- verbal report given by Sherry

Sherry said our total cash balance was just under \$34,000 at the end of September. The checking/real estate balance is almost \$19,000 (that's where the Capital campaign income is placed under). We have almost another \$10,000 from St. Mark's. Under Revenues and Expenses, we're about \$10,000 short for contributions (Sherry feels this may be related to families also contributing to the Capital Campaign) and about \$6,000 short from rental income. Jack said Karen admitted recently that she knows she owes us about \$8,000 currently. We were at \$2,934 for the net operating total instead of \$9,831 as we anticipated for the end of September. The check for \$48,758 check to the Basement Brothers has cleared. Our checking balance was \$17,000 after that check cleared. (We gave the Basement Bros. \$20,392 as a downpayment and the engineering firm \$6,000 earlier which cleared prior.)

Mary asked why we pay real estate taxes, but Jon and Sherry said there are no exceptions for real estate taxes for a not-for-profit organization. Rich asked what the total amount that was pledged to the Capital campaign. Sherry will get that figure from Deb. We need to know that so we can see how much we can use to pay off our loan that is due to Solvay Bank in the spring.

Mary made a motion to accept the financial report. Eileen seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved.

Wardens: Jack and Milt

Jack said the Basement Brothers will finish up some landscape grooming on 10/25/23, and then the project will be done. We were lucky to have good weather during the construction work. Jack is very pleased with the outcome of the project.

Rector:

A couple of people have expressed interest to Jon about being a part of our festival planning committee. Jon will be doing another round of visiting folks from the parish this fall. The schedule for Christmas will be similar to last years', with an afternoon service at St. Mark's on 12/24 and an evening service at St. Luke's that day. Christmas Eve is a Sunday this year, but we will have our regular

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Sunday morning service as well. We reconfigured our set up for Livestream and zoom, and are looking for some additional people to help with this. St. Mark's is going to have a vestry retreat this Saturday to work on their financial issues. Jon will know more after that about any changes that may occur.

### **New Business**

ERD Partnership- verbal report given by Jim Shake

We were designated a Hope partner last year. We were only one of 8 parishes in the whole country that are Hope partners, and there were only two churches nationwide in each of the next two levels. Jim thinks we fulfilled our requirements for remaining a Hope partner for this coming year. ERD requires a contribution from the congregation (they do not have a specific amount). Jon said we'll ask if people can make an extra contribution to ERD through St. Luke's, and then the church could cover the difference for a \$500 contribution to the ERD general fund. Eileen asked if a contribution to the crisis in the Middle East would go toward the church contribution. Jim isn't sure but suggested we donate to the general fund again this year and then ask the congregation what they would like to support the following year. The donation covers the time period from 11/22 through 11/23.

Convention Report- verbal report given by Mary Parish

Mary reported on attending the on-line convention. Dr. Catherine Meeks presented at the convention. She wrote several books about racism and social healing. Dr. Meeks spoke about how we can make a difference in the world to reduce racism and improve mental health. Mary feels the message was to make people feel visible. She and Bambi feel we do a good job of that.

### **Old Business**

Repair Financing:

Discussed earlier in the meeting under the Treasurer's report.

Fundraisers:

*Memorial Day Fundraiser:* Debbie spoke to some nurseries and has one more appointment. The nurseries did not want to take back unsold plants. Debbie asked how many plants would we want, and do we want a variety? Eileen said we could have a Junk in the Trunk sale that day, too. Rich said we could do a pre-sale for the congregation to get an estimate of the number of plants needed.

*Fall Festival:* Jon will try to convene something soon for planning for the Fall Festival. Jon mentioned he'd love to have another church dinner. Eileen said there is no Hospitality chairperson currently, but perhaps we can have a committee of volunteers. Eileen would like to repeat taking donations for Sleep in Heavenly Peace as our Christmas charity project. Everyone agreed, so Eileen will put that in the next newsletter and will check with the organization to see if there are any special requests they may have this year.

Sherry asked if there will be a service on Thanksgiving because she will be in town then and would love to see everyone. Jon said we do not usually have one, but that the weekly service could be on Wednesday morning that week. Sherry won't be here until Wednesday night, however.

**Adjourn-** Debbie made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:42 p.m. Jim seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved.

**The next vestry meeting will be on November 27, 2023**

Respectfully submitted by Alison Conley, Vestry Clerk

# OUTREACH

The Thanksgiving food drive and mitten tree collection are under way. Please contribute so we can make Thanksgiving better this year for some needy families.

For this Christmas season we will again collect bedding for Sleep in Heavenly Peace. Sleep in Heavenly Peace makes beds for children that typically sleep on the floor or on a sofa or need to double up with a sibling. They supply the bed, a mattress, sheets set, a comforter,

blanket or bed spread. We are checking with Sleep in Heavenly Peace to see if there is a need for any specific items. If so that will be included in the weekly bulletin.



**NO KID SLEEPS  
ON THE FLOOR  
IN OUR TOWN!**

## Diocesan Celebration

Mark your calendars now for “Celebrate Dio CNY,” a one-day opportunity to be together as a diocese. We’ll eat together and spend time reconnecting. Through different offerings throughout the day, we’ll have chances to learn, to explore our faith, and to prepare offerings of prayers, service, and joy that will all come together at a festive diocesan Eucharist to wrap up the day. All ages are welcome to join us. Accessibility accommodations will be available so that we can heartily welcome everyone and, for those for whom travel to Utica is not possible, there will be hybrid online elements of the day.

Our teams who were working toward what would’ve been our revival weekend are reorganizing plans for this new direction. We’ll share a registration link and final details about this free diocesan event as they become available. For now, please mark your calendars for Saturday, December 2 and make plans to join us for “Celebrate Dio CNY” at Grace Church in Utica.



**THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE  
OF CENTRAL NEW YORK**

## Report of The 155th Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Central New York

The Convention was held via Zoom on October 21, 2023. The theme was “Refresh Us for the Journey.”

All resolutions were passed and all nominees for open Diocesan positions were elected. These positions include the Diocesan Board, Disciplinary Board, Standing Committee and Delegates to General Convention. The proposed 2024 Diocesan Budget passed.

The Keynote speaker was Dr. Catherine Meeks. Dr. Meeks focused on the experience of

loneliness and how it impacts the success of racial healing efforts in our country. After her initial remarks all attendees met in small groups and were asked to discuss that question. Each group submitted a response and Dr. Meeks and Bishop DeDe responded.

The day was beautifully interspersed with prayer!

Respectfully Submitted,  
Bambi Carkey and Mary Parrish



# THANKS & PRAYERS

## November

### ***We Ask Your Thoughts & Prayers for...***

Tish, Doug and Carol Law, Diane Synakowski, Shirley Chrisfield, Michael, Stephen, Jennifer Brady, Mary Lynch, Carol Greis, Andy, Lynn, Sue Fullerton, Joe Marshall, Mark Miller, Kristen O'Hara, Elizabeth, Anna, Ken and Barb Guy, Donna Sweeney, Carol Andrews, Silas, Audrey Kerswell, George Hoare, Peter Henderson, Nick & Mary Alice Zimmer, Carolyn Woodworth, Marilyn Farrell, Dawn Noble, Sandy Vitagliano, Jacki, Ann Klackzo, Boston Wiley, Kathleen Hart-Zavoli, Maryjane, Sherry, Mariano and Deb True.

*(Note: Call the church office to add anyone to our Sunday prayer list. However, the name will stay on for only one month. You must call each month to have the name put back on the list.)*

### ***Happy Birthday***

- 11/2 Peter Woodworth
- 11/3 Milt Stevenson
- 11/3 Jeremiah Hart-Zavoli

### **All Saints Memorials**

We especially remember those who have died in the past year: Carolyn Crosby, Charlotte Luther, Joan Conley, Fran Smith, Adam Muratore, Steve Carpenter and Dick Chrisfield.

**Dick Chrisfield**, long time member of St. Luke's passed away October 27th. Our deepest sympathy to his wife Shirley and family. Rest eternal grant to him, O Lord. And let light perpetual shine upon him.

- 11/5 Bob Tackman
- 11/6 Peter Bullock
- 11/7 Jerry Williams
- 11/10 Elisabeth Beebe
- 11/11 Jim Nightingale  
Margaret Harvey
- 11/14 Megan Conley
- 11/17 Elizabeth Eichelberger
- 11/24 Christine LaPage
- 11/28 Nikki White
- 11/29 Jennifer Latter
- 11/30 Mary Stevenson

### ***Happy Anniversary***

- 11 Peter and Heather Woodworth



## Advent and Christmas

Advent again begins on December 1<sup>st</sup> this year. This year, we will be providing materials from "The Way of Love: Practices for a Jesus-Centered Life" which offer daily reflections and opportunities to try different faith practices that can strengthen your faith and deepen your relationship to God.

As happens occasionally, this year the fourth Sunday of Advent is December 24<sup>th</sup>, Christmas Eve. We will have our regular Sunday morning worship as well as our Christmas Eve Services.



In honor of the beloved saint, Francis of Assisi, many churches hold animal blessings and promote his vision of pastoral care for the whole of Creation. At St. Luke's we mark the life of this important saint with a special service, our annual Blessing of the Animals

