

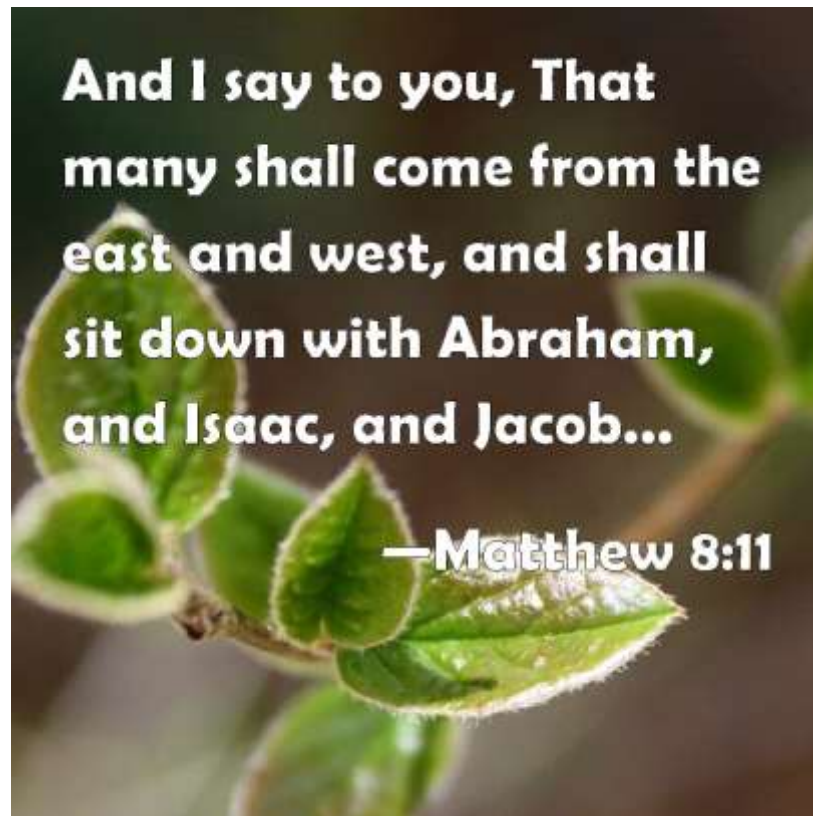


This Sunday at St. Luke's
January 29, 2023

8:15 a.m. – Holy Communion (said service)

10 a.m. – Holy Communion with Hymns

The Fourth Sunday after the Epiphany



Faith is the victory

In this Sunday's Gospel, we witness Christ the merciful. Both a leper and a paralytic are restored to full bodily health. It was something they wanted very much but could never have gained for themselves. It was Christ's free gift to them.

The importance of faith is also emphasised. The centurion, in particular, exhibits remarkable faith as he seeks healing for his paralysed servant. He sees no reason for Jesus coming to where his servant is. “Speak the word only, and my servant will be healed,” he tells Jesus. Jesus marvels at this Gentile’s faith and says in response, “I have not found faith like this, even in Israel.”

As time moves on, especially after Jesus’ death, resurrection and ascension, it becomes clear that people out of all nations will come and be joined to Israel’s Messiah and receive the blessings promised to Abraham and his offspring . . . “In Christ there is no east or west, north or south,” in the words of the hymn writer John Oxenham.

THE COLLECT FOR EPIPHANY 4

O GOD, who knowest us to be set in the midst of so many and great dangers, that by reason of the frailty of our nature we cannot always stand upright; Grant to us such strength and protection, as may support us in all dangers, and carry us through all temptations; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

THE EPISTLE – Romans 13:1-7 (J.B. Phillips)

The Christian and the civil law

13 ¹⁻² Every Christian ought to obey the civil authorities, for all legitimate authority is derived from God’s authority, and the existing authority is appointed under God. To oppose authority then is to oppose God, and such opposition is bound to be punished.

³⁻⁴ The honest citizen has no need to fear the keepers of law and order, but the dishonest man will always be nervous of them. If you want to avoid this anxiety just lead a law-abiding life, and all that can come your way is a word of approval. The officer is God’s servant for your protection. But if you are leading a wicked life you have reason to be alarmed. The “power of the law” which is vested in every legitimate officer, is no empty phrase. He is, in fact, divinely appointed to inflict God’s punishment upon evil-doers.

⁵⁻⁷ You should, therefore, obey the authorities, not simply because it is the safest, but because it is the right thing to do. It is right, too, for you to pay taxes for the civil authorities are appointed by God for the good purposes of public order and well-being. Give everyone his legitimate due, whether it be rates, or taxes, or reverence, or respect!

NOTE: Paul gives instructions as to how those who have come to Christian faith ought to live out their faith in regards to the civil authorities. (William Sydnor)

THE GOSPEL – St. Matthew 8:1-13 (J.B. Phillips)

The power of humble faith

8¹⁻³ Large crowds followed him when he came down from the hillside. There was a leper who came and knelt in front of him. “Sir,” he said, “if you want to, you can make me clean.” Jesus stretched out his hand and placed it on the leper saying, “Of course I want to. Be clean!” And at once he was clear of the leprosy.

4 “Mind you say nothing to anybody,” Jesus told him. “Go straight off and show yourself to the priest and make the offering for your recovery that Moses prescribed, as evidence to the authorities.”

5-6 Then as he was coming into Capernaum a centurion approached. “Sir,” he implored him, “my servant is in bed at home paralysed and in dreadful pain.”

7 “I will come and heal him,” said Jesus to him.

8-9 “Sir,” replied the centurion, “I’m not important enough for you to come under my roof. Just give the order, please, and my servant will recover. I’m a man under authority myself, and I have soldiers under me. I can say to one man ‘Go’ and I know he’ll go, or I can say ‘Come here’ to another and I know he’ll come—or I can say to my slave ‘Do this’ and he’ll always do it.”

10-12 When Jesus heard this, he was astonished. “Believe me,” he said to those who were following him, “I have never found faith like this, even in Israel! I tell you that many people will come from east and west and sit at my table with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of Heaven. But those who should have belonged to the kingdom will be banished to the darkness outside, where there will be tears and bitter regret.”

13 Then he said to the centurion, “Go home now, and everything will happen as you have believed it will.” And his servant was healed at that actual moment.

NOTE: These are the opening incidents in the healing ministry of our Lord following the Sermon on the Mount (chapters 5-7). (William Sydnor)

LECTIONARY READINGS

OLD TESTAMENT LESSON – Isaiah 61 (RSV)

The Good News of Deliverance

61 The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me,
because the LORD has anointed me
to bring good tidings to the afflicted;

he has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted,
to proclaim liberty to the captives,
and the opening of the prison to those who are bound;
²to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor,
and the day of vengeance of our God;
to comfort all who mourn;
³to grant to those who mourn in Zion—
to give them a garland instead of ashes,
the oil of gladness instead of mourning,
the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit;
that they may be called oaks of righteousness,
the planting of the LORD, that he may be glorified.
⁴They shall build up the ancient ruins,
they shall raise up the former devastations;
they shall repair the ruined cities,
the devastations of many generations.
⁵Aliens shall stand and feed your flocks,
foreigners shall be your plowmen and vinedressers;
⁶but you shall be called the priests of the LORD,
men shall speak of you as the ministers of our God;
you shall eat the wealth of the nations,
and in their riches you shall glory.
⁷Instead of your shame you shall have a double portion,
instead of dishonor you shall rejoice in your^[d] lot;
therefore in your^[e] land you shall possess a double portion;
yours^[g] shall be everlasting joy.
⁸For I the LORD love justice,
I hate robbery and wrong;
I will faithfully give them their recompense,
and I will make an everlasting covenant with them.
⁹Their descendants shall be known among the nations,
and their offspring in the midst of the peoples;
all who see them shall acknowledge them,
that they are a people whom the LORD has blessed.
¹⁰I will greatly rejoice in the LORD,
my soul shall exult in my God;
for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation,
he has covered me with the robe of righteousness,
as a bridegroom decks himself with a garland,
and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.

¹¹ For as the earth brings forth its shoots,
and as a garden causes what is sown in it to spring up,
so the Lord GOD will cause righteousness and praise
to spring forth before all the nations.

NOTE: This poem describes the coming blessing to God's covenant people. Jesus makes the words of the prophet His own and says the time for their fulfilment was at hand in the synagogue of Nazareth (Luke 4:16-32). (William Sydnor)

The Fourth Sunday after the Epiphany

The Preacher – The Rector

Sunday Worship Options

In-church.

Drive-in. Those choosing this option are asked to remain in their automobile and listen to the service via their car radio (FM 98.1). Holy Communion will be provided.

Online. Services are livestreamed on Facebook and available for viewing following the service on You Tube.

To access both put “Parish Church of St. Luke, Blue Ridge, Ga.” In the search bar.



Tip of the Canterbury Cap to Al Cash for doing a health and safety check at the home of Dr. Thomas Heard and, in response to what he found,

transporting him to hospital. Dr. Cash's rapid response and wise action quite possibly saved Dr. Heard's life.



OUR MISSION

St. Luke's mission is to grow spiritually in the knowledge and love of Jesus Christ and in the fellowship of the Holy Spirit and to share our faith, our hands and hearts for the sake of the Gospel, our community and the world.

Financial Pledge for the Year of our Lord 2023

As stewards of God's gifts and in gratitude for all blessings, I pledge the following amount to the work of Christ through St. Luke's Church for 2023.

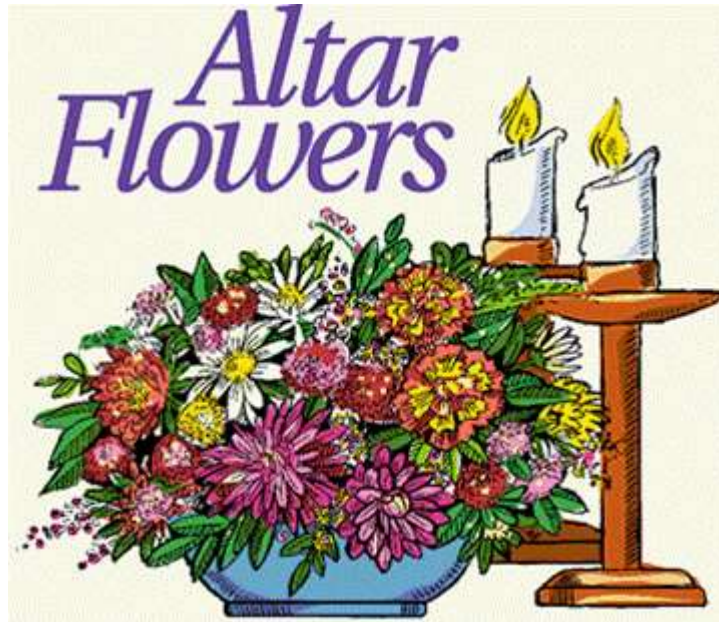
Name

Address

—
Amount

_____ Weekly _____ Monthly _____ Yearly

(Please tick the appropriate blank)



SIGN-UP FOR FLOWERS

A sign-up sheet for Altar flowers is available in Thomason Hall for 2023.

Please sign up for days you wish to commemorate.

Flowers are needed throughout the end of the year. Please email or call Kathryn Noblett at the church office to sign up.

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St. Luke's Church, "The Parish Church of the Mountains," 7 Ewing St., (POB 1821), Blue Ridge, Georgia 30513; (706) 632-8245;
www.stlukesblueridge.org; stlukes@tds.net.