



*This Sunday at St. Luke's*  
*March 12, 2023*

**8:15 a.m. – Holy Communion (said service)**  
**10 a.m. – Morning Prayer and Sermon together with**  
**Shortened Holy Communion**

## **The Third Sunday in Lent**



### **The Danger of an Empty House**

The Gospel for the Third Sunday in Lent includes the strange tale of the evil spirit and his seven companions. The eight of them only got into the man's soul (likened here to a house) *because it was empty*. No soul can remain permanently empty, as Isaac Watts the hymn writer, well knew when he wrote: "Satan finds some mischief still For idle hands to do."

## THE COLLECT FOR LENT 3

WE beseech thee, Almighty God, look upon the hearty desires of thy humble servants, and stretch forth the right hand of thy Majesty, to be our defence against all our enemies; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

## THE COLLECT FOR THE SEASON

ALMIGHTY and everlasting God, who hatest nothing that thou hast made, and dost forgive the sins of all those who are penitent; Create and make in us new and contrite hearts, that we, worthily lamenting our sins and acknowledging our wretchedness. may obtain of thee, the God of all mercy, perfect remission and forgiveness; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

## THE EPISTLE – Ephesians 5:1-14 (J.B. Phillips)

*Living in love*

**5<sup>1-4</sup>** As children copy their fathers you, as God's children, are to copy him. Live your lives in love—the same sort of love which Christ gives us and which he perfectly expressed when he gave himself up for us in sacrifice to God.

**3-4** But as for sexual immorality in all its forms, and the itch to get your hands on what belongs to other people—don't even talk about such things; they are not fit subjects for Christians to talk about. The key-note of your conversation should not be nastiness or silliness or flippancy, but a sense of all that we owe to God.

**5-14** For of this much you can be certain: that neither the immoral nor the dirty-minded nor the covetous man (which latter is, in effect, worshipping a false god) has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. Don't let anyone fool you on this point, however plausible his argument. It is these very things which bring down the wrath of God upon the disobedient. Have nothing to do with men like that—once you were “darkness” but now you are “light”. Live then as children of the light. The light produces in men quite the opposite of sins like these—everything that is wholesome and good and true. Let your lives be living proofs of the things which please God. Steer clear of the activities of darkness; let your lives show by contrast how dreary and futile these things are. (You know the sort of things I mean—to detail their secret doings is really too shameful). For light is capable of “showing up” everything for what it really is. It is even possible (after all, it happened to you!) for light to turn the thing it shines upon into light also.

Thus God speaks through the scriptures: “Awake, you who sleep, arise from the dead, and Christ will give you light.”

NOTE: In this portion of the ethical section of the Epistle, Paul says that the child of God imitates his Father. (See Matt. 5:48.) He then goes on to contrast righteousness and wickedness with the metaphor of light and darkness so familiar in the First Epistle of St. John. (William Sydnor)

## **THE GOSPEL – St. Luke 11:14-28 (J.B. Phillips)**

### *Jesus speaks about evil*

**11**<sup>14</sup> Another time, Jesus was expelling an evil spirit which was preventing a man from speaking, and as soon as the evil spirit left him, the dumb man found his speech, to the amazement of the crowds.

<sup>15</sup> But some of them said, “He expels these spirits because he is in league with Beelzebub, the chief of the evil spirits.”

<sup>16-20</sup> Others among them, to test him, tried to get a sign from Heaven out of him. But he knew what they were thinking and told them, “Any kingdom divided against itself is doomed and a disunited household will collapse. And if Satan disagrees with Satan, how does his kingdom continue?—for I know you are saying that I expel evil spirits because I am in league with Beelzebub. But if I do expel devils because I am an ally of Beelzebub, who is your own sons’ ally when they do the same thing? They can settle that question for you. But if it is by the finger of God that I am expelling evil spirits, ‘then the kingdom of God has swept over you unawares’!

<sup>21-22</sup> “When a strong man armed to the teeth guards his own house, his property is in peace. But when a stronger man comes and conquers him, he removes all the arms on which he pinned his faith and divides the spoils among his friends.

<sup>23</sup> “Anyone who is not with me is against me, and the man who does not gather with me is really scattering.

### *The danger of a spiritual vacuum in a man’s soul*

<sup>24-26</sup> “When the evil spirit comes out of a man, it wanders through waterless places looking for rest, and when it fails to find any, it says, ‘I will go back to my house from which I came.’ When it arrives, it finds it cleaned and all in order. Then it goes and collects seven other spirits more evil than itself to keep it company, and they all go in and make themselves at home. The last state of that man is worse than the first.”

### *Jesus brings sentimentality down to earth*

<sup>27</sup> And while he was still saying this, a woman in the crowd called out and said, “Oh, what a blessing for a woman to have brought you into the world and nursed you!”

NOTE: Our Lord teaches that there is no halfway house between being one of God’s faithful ones and being His enemy. This might be considered an elaboration of the meaning of Matthew 6:24. (William Sydnor)

## LECTIONARY READINGS

### OLD TESTAMENT LESSON – Deuteronomy 6:1-9, 20-25 (RSV)

#### *The Great Commandment*

**6** “Now this is the commandment, the statutes and the ordinances which the Lord your God commanded me to teach you, that you may do them in the land to which you are going over, to possess it; <sup>2</sup> that you may fear the Lord your God, you and your son and your son’s son, by keeping all his statutes and his commandments, which I command you, all the days of your life; and that your days may be prolonged. <sup>3</sup> Hear therefore, O Israel, and be careful to do them; that it may go well with you, and that you may multiply greatly, as the Lord, the God of your fathers, has promised you, in a land flowing with milk and honey.

<sup>4</sup> “Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord; <sup>5</sup> and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might. <sup>6</sup> And these words which I command you this day shall be upon your heart; <sup>7</sup> and you shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. <sup>8</sup> And you shall bind them as a sign upon your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. <sup>9</sup> And you shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

#### *Teach God’s statutes to your children*

<sup>20</sup> “When your son asks you in time to come, ‘What is the meaning of the testimonies and the statutes and the ordinances which the Lord our God has commanded you?’

<sup>21</sup> then you shall say to your son, ‘We were Pharaoh’s slaves in Egypt; and the Lord brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand; <sup>22</sup> and the Lord showed signs and wonders, great and grievous, against Egypt and against Pharaoh and all his household, before our eyes; <sup>23</sup> and he brought us out from there, that he might bring us in and give us the land which he swore to give to our fathers.

<sup>24</sup> And the Lord commanded us to do all these statutes, to fear the Lord our God, for our good always, that he might preserve us alive, as at this day. <sup>25</sup> And it will be righteousness for us, if we are careful to do all this commandment before the Lord our God, as he has commanded us.'

NOTE: Take God's statutes seriously, says the writer, live by them, and teach them to your children. How are these great truths to be taught? By the way the family lives. Explanation as to the meaning of the way one lives come later when children begin asking questions. (William Sydnor)

### **NEW TESTAMENT LESSON – 1 Corinthians 3:1-23 (J.B. Phillips)**

*But I cannot yet call you 'spiritual'*

**3** <sup>1-4</sup> I, my brothers, was unable to talk to you as spiritual men: I had to talk to you as unspiritual, as yet babies in the Christian life, And my practice had been to feed you, as it were, with "milk" and not with "meat". You were unable to digest "meat" in those days, and I don't believe you can do it now. For you are still unspiritual; all the time that there is jealousy and squabbling among you you show that you are—you are living just like men of the world. While one of you says, "I am one of Paul's converts" and another says, "I am one of Apollos'", are you not plainly unspiritual? <sup>5-8</sup> After all, who is Paul? Who is Apollos? No more than servants through whom you came to believe as the Lord gave each man his opportunity. I may have done the planting and Apollos the watering, but it was God who made the seed grow! The planter and the waterer are nothing compared with him who gives life to the seed. Planter and waterer are alike insignificant, though each shall be rewarded according to his particular work.

*We work on God's foundation*

<sup>9</sup> In this work, we work with God, and that means that you are a field under God's cultivation, or, if you like, a house being built to his plan.

<sup>10-15</sup> I, like an architect who knows his job, by the grace God has given me, lay the foundation; someone else builds upon it. I only say this, let the builder be careful how he builds! The foundation is laid already, and no one can lay another, for it is Jesus Christ himself. But any man who builds on the foundation using as his material gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay or stubble, must know that each man's work will one day be shown for what it is. The day will show it plainly enough, for the day will arise in a blaze of fire, and that fire will prove the nature of each man's work. If the work that the man has built upon the foundation will stand this test, he

will be rewarded. But if a man's work be destroyed under the test, he loses it all. He personally will be safe, though rather like a man rescued from a fire.

*Make no mistake: you are God's holy building*

<sup>16-17</sup> Don't you realise that you yourselves are the temple of God, and God's Spirit lives in you? God will destroy anyone who defiles his temple, for his temple is holy—and that is exactly what you are!

<sup>18-19</sup> Let no one be under any illusion over this. If any man among you thinks himself one of the world's clever ones, let him discard his cleverness that he may learn to be truly wise. For this world's cleverness is stupidity to God. It is written: 'He catches the wise in their own craftiness'.

<sup>20</sup> And again: 'The Lord knows the thoughts of the wise, that they are futile'.

<sup>21-23</sup> So let no one boast of men. Everything belongs to you! Paul, Apollos or Cephas; the world, life, death, the present or the future, everything is yours! For you belong to Christ, and Christ belongs to God!

NOTE: Paul explains that, while we grow up slowly in the Christian life, we always belong to God. His Spirit lives in our bodies and souls. We should therefore treat them with respect, never forgetting whose they are. (William Sydnor)

## **The Third Sunday in Lent**

**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 Pat Dearing who so ably oversees St. Luke’s Education program, including Teaching Tuesdays.**

## **TEACHING TUESDAYS**

*From Pat Dearing, Education Committee chairman*

Teaching Tuesdays Spring Class Schedule features our favorite author and teacher, Bishop N.T. Wright, with the video series:

“Do you know the real story behind the New Testament?”

Classes begin on Tuesday, March 7.

We all share a fascination for discovering ‘the rest of the story.’ We enjoy learning behind-the-scenes facts about seemingly familiar events. In this eight-session video Bible study, well-known Bible scholars N.T. Wright and Michael F. Bird team up to take you on a tour of the story behind the explosive story of the New Testament.

You will discover things you never knew about Jesus’ baptism and journey into the wilderness, the meaning behind his parables and miracles, the significance of his death and resurrection, the incredible expansion of the early church into the Greco-Roman world, and how the transforming mission of Jesus can still turn the world upside down today.

Through reading the New Testament we continually discover that God indeed keeps his promises, but those promises don’t always look like what people expected. Especially when it comes to Jesus. So, come join the journey with N.T. Wright and Michael Bird and they will help you understand the New Testament you never knew.

Class schedule:

1. March 7, The Books of the New Testament, FR. Morgan
2. March 14, The World of Jesus and the Apostles, Pat Dearing

3. March 21, The Life and Death of Jesus, D. J. Fulton
  4. March 28, The Resurrection of Jesus, Claudia Beth Pound
  - BREAK---
  5. April 18, The Ministry of the Apostle Paul, Fr. Morgan
  6. April 25, The Early Christians and the Church, Claudia Beth Pound
  7. May 2, The Mission of the Church, D. J. Fulton
  8. May 9, The Creation of the New Testament, Pat Dearing
- Class registration in advance is requested so that we can order Study Guides for those attending.



### 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

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Address

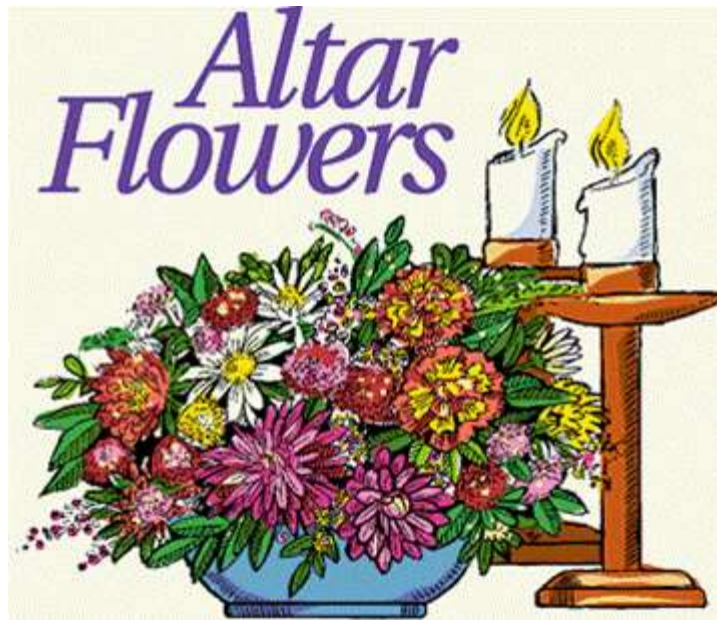
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Amount

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\_\_\_\_\_ 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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(Please tick the appropriate blank)



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