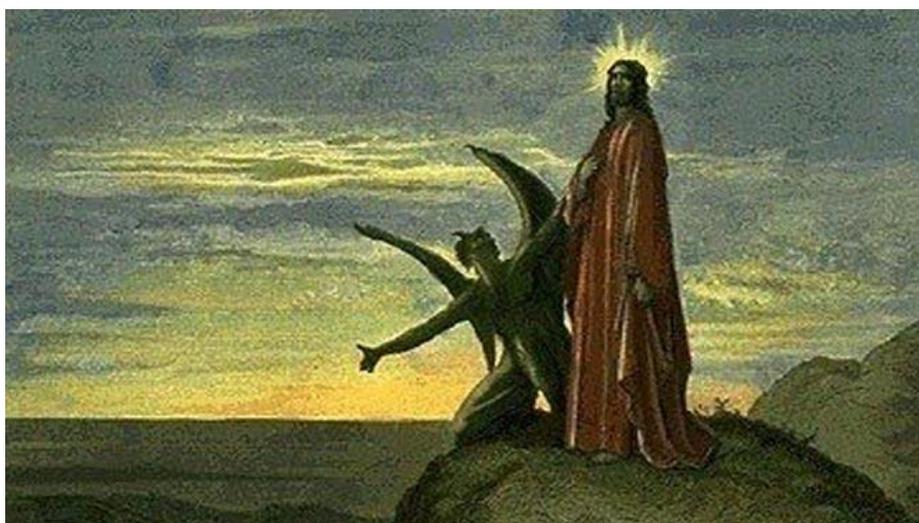




This Sunday at St. Luke's
February 22, 2026

8:15 a.m. – Holy Communion (said service)
10:15 a.m. – Holy Communion with hymns, choir
Susan Gooch, pianist

First Sunday in Lent



Staying on Track

This Sunday's selections are concerned with self-discipline, especially the discipline of bodily needs and desires – “such abstinence that our flesh is subdued to the Spirit”. Ultimately, it is the Spirit of God that we want our lives to be atuned with.

In the Epistle Paul speaks of the hard disciplines of a missionary's life (going without food is only one of them!), and how he and his fellow missionaries prove themselves “genuine ministers of God, with sincerity, with insight and patience; by sheer kindness and the Holy Spirit; with genuine love, speaking the plain truth, and living by the power of God.” Neither criticism, hardship nor sorrow can turn them from their purpose; theirs is a life of integrity.

Paul adds that whether they are ministers or rank and file Christians, all are called to be co-operators with God – to work with Him to establish His Kingdom – and they most certainly all need grace.

The Gospel shows that the strictest self-discipline will not set us free from temptation; it happened to our Lord and it happens to us. Our Lord faced and mastered

the temptation to use three unworthy ways of establishing God's Kingdom on earth; such temptations come to us and we need God's grace – His daily help – if we are not to let Him down. It is all too easy to resort to methods of setting forth the Christian Faith which will fall short of the mark. If the Church's hands were cleaner, we would be far stronger.

Note, too, that in the fight against temptation our Lord knew His Bible and how to use it. Do you know yours? (H.W. Dobson)

COLLECT FOR LENT 1

O LORD, who for our sake didst fast forty days and forty nights; Give us grace to use such abstinence, that, our flesh being subdued to the Spirit, we may ever obey thy godly motions in righteousness, and true holiness, to thy honour and glory, who livest and reignest with the Father and the Holy Ghost, one God, world without end. *Amen.*

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 – 2 Corinthians 6:1-10 (J.B. Phillips)

The hard but glorious life of God's ministers

6 ¹⁻² As co-operators with God himself we beg, you then, not to fail to use the grace of God. For God's word is—'In an acceptable time I have heard you, and in the day of salvation I have helped you'. Now is the "acceptable time", and this very day is the "day of salvation".

³⁻¹⁰ As far as we are concerned we do not wish to stand in anyone's way, nor do we wish to bring discredit on the ministry God has given us. Indeed we want to prove ourselves genuine ministers of God whatever we have to go through—patient endurance of troubles or even disasters, being flogged or imprisoned; being mobbed, having to work like slaves, having to go without food or sleep. All this we want to meet with sincerity, with insight and patience; by sheer kindness and the Holy Spirit; with genuine love, speaking the plain truth, and living by the power of God. Our sole defence, our only weapon, is a life of integrity, whether we meet honour or dishonour, praise or blame. Called "impostors" we must be true, called "nobodies" we must be in the public eye. Never far from death, yet here we are alive, always "going through it" yet never "going under". We know sorrow, yet our joy is inextinguishable. We have "nothing to bless

ourselves with” yet we bless many others with true riches. We are penniless, and yet in reality we have everything worth having.

NOTE: The apostle points out that the ministers of reconciliation are workers together with Christ and have a pressing, present responsibility regarding diligence and discipline, on the one hand, and winsomeness of spirit, on the other. This kind of joyous yet serious Christian is equipped to face the various demands of daily relationships. (William Sydnor)

THE GOSPEL – St. Matthew 4:1-11 (J.B. Phillips)

Jesus himself is tempted

4 ¹⁻² Then Jesus was led by the Spirit up into the desert, to be tempted by the devil. After a fast of forty days and nights he was very hungry.

³ “If you really are the Son of God,” said the tempter, coming to him, “tell these stones to turn into loaves.”

⁴ Jesus answered, “The scripture says ‘Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God’.”

⁵⁻⁶ Then the devil took him to the holy city, and set him on the highest ledge of the Temple. “If you really are the Son of God,” he said, “Throw yourself down. For the scripture says—‘He shall give his angels charge concerning you,’ and ‘In their hands they shall bear you up, lest you dash your foot against a stone’.”

⁷ “Yes,” retorted Jesus, “and the scripture also says ‘You shall not tempt the Lord your God’.”

⁸⁻⁹ Once again the devil took him to a very high mountain, and from there showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their magnificence. “Everything there I will give you,” he said to him, “if you will fall down and worship me.”

¹⁰ “Away with you, Satan!” replied Jesus, “the scripture says, ‘You shall worship the Lord your God, and him only you shall serve’.”

¹¹ Then the devil let him alone, and the angels came to him and took care of him.

NOTE: This is the dramatic picture of our Lord’s temptations before He began His ministry. Here we see the ancient religious practice of fasting in proper perspective: as an aid to spiritual devotions. (William Sydnor)

LECTIONARY READING

OLD TESTAMENT LESSON – Isaiah 58 (RSV)

False and true worship; An active concern for the needs of others is more pleasing to God than spiritual acts of self-improvement which lead to self-righteousness

58 “Cry aloud, spare not,
lift up your voice like a trumpet;

declare to my people their transgression,
to the house of Jacob their sins.

² Yet they seek me daily,
and delight to know my ways,
as if they were a nation that did righteousness
and did not forsake the ordinance of their God;
they ask of me righteous judgments,
they delight to draw near to God.

³ ‘Why have we fasted, and thou seest it not?
Why have we humbled ourselves, and thou takest no knowledge of it?’
Behold, in the day of your fast you seek your own pleasure,^[a]
and oppress all your workers.

⁴ Behold, you fast only to quarrel and to fight
and to hit with wicked fist.
Fasting like yours this day
will not make your voice to be heard on high.

⁵ Is such the fast that I choose,
a day for a man to humble himself?
Is it to bow down his head like a rush,
and to spread sackcloth and ashes under him?
Will you call this a fast,
and a day acceptable to the LORD?

⁶ ‘Is not this the fast that I choose:
to loose the bonds of wickedness,
to undo the thongs of the yoke,
to let the oppressed go free,
and to break every yoke?’

⁷ Is it not to share your bread with the hungry,
and bring the homeless poor into your house;
when you see the naked, to cover him,
and not to hide yourself from your own flesh?

⁸ Then shall your light break forth like the dawn,
and your healing shall spring up speedily;
your righteousness shall go before you,
the glory of the LORD shall be your rear guard.

⁹ Then you shall call, and the LORD will answer;
you shall cry, and he will say, Here I am.

“If you take away from the midst of you the yoke,
the pointing of the finger, and speaking wickedness,
¹⁰ if you pour yourself out for the hungry
and satisfy the desire of the afflicted,
then shall your light rise in the darkness
and your gloom be as the noonday.
¹¹ And the LORD will guide you continually,
and satisfy your desire with good things,^[b]
and make your bones strong;
and you shall be like a watered garden,
like a spring of water,
whose waters fail not.
¹² And your ancient ruins shall be rebuilt;
you shall raise up the foundations of many generations;
you shall be called the repairer of the breach,
the restorer of streets to dwell in.
¹³ “If you turn back your foot from the sabbath,
from doing your pleasure^[c] on my holy day,
and call the sabbath a delight
and the holy day of the LORD honorable;
if you honor it, not going your own ways,
or seeking your own pleasure,^[d] or talking idly;
¹⁴ then you shall take delight in the LORD,
and I will make you ride upon the heights of the earth;
I will feed you with the heritage of Jacob your father,
for the mouth of the LORD has spoken.”

NOTE: An active concern for the needs of others is more pleasing to God than spiritual acts of self-improvement which lead to self-righteousness. (William Sydnor)

THIS SUNDAY

Preacher: The Rector

Lector (Old Testament), Judy Brooten

Acolyte – Sally Hess

Verger – Dr. Alvin Cash

Ushers – Alvin and Martha Cash

CURRENT AND UPCOMING EVENTS

February

- **WSL Bible Study** – Starting Wednesday, Jan. 21, at 10 a.m. for 6 weeks. For more info contact Judy Brooten, 706-851-6296.
- **Eastern Orthodox service** – Sunday, Feb. 22, at 2:00 p.m.
- **AARP TAX PREPARATION** – Fridays, Feb. 6 – Apr. 10 from 9 a.m. – 4 p.m.
- **St. Matthias the Apostle** – Tuesday, Feb. 24, HC Jennus Chapel at noon.
- **AARP Smart Driver Class** – Saturday, Feb. 28, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Options

In-church.

Online. Services are livestreamed on Facebook and available for viewing following the service on YouTube. To access both put “Parish Church of St. Luke, Blue Ridge, Ga.” In the search bar.



Tip of the Canterbury Cap to Patsy Williams and Diane Bewes for serving on the Altar Guild in February.



JOIN THE CHOIR!

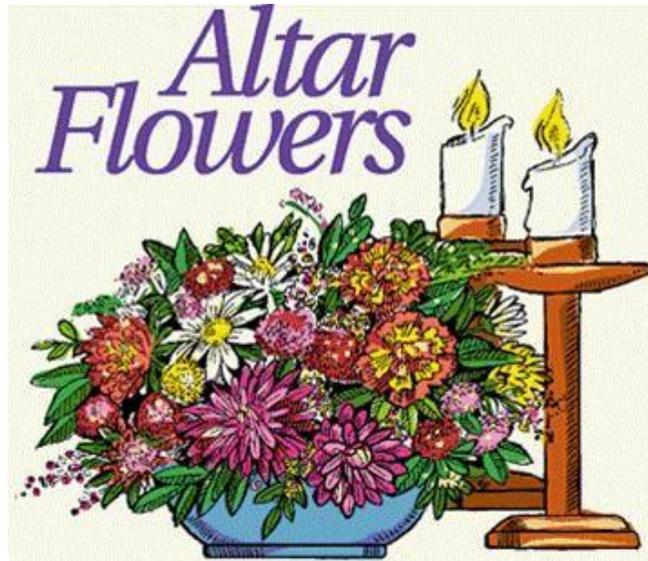


For information, contact, Diana Burden at 678-852-6907 or email dburden6907@gmail.com.



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.



SIGN-UP FOR FLOWERS

A sign-up sheet for Altar flowers is available in Thomason Hall for 2025.

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.

Financial Pledge for the Year of our Lord 2026

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 2025

Name

Address

Amount

_____ Weekly _____ Monthly _____ Yearly

(Please tick the appropriate blank)



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.