



This Sunday at St. Luke's
January 26, 2026

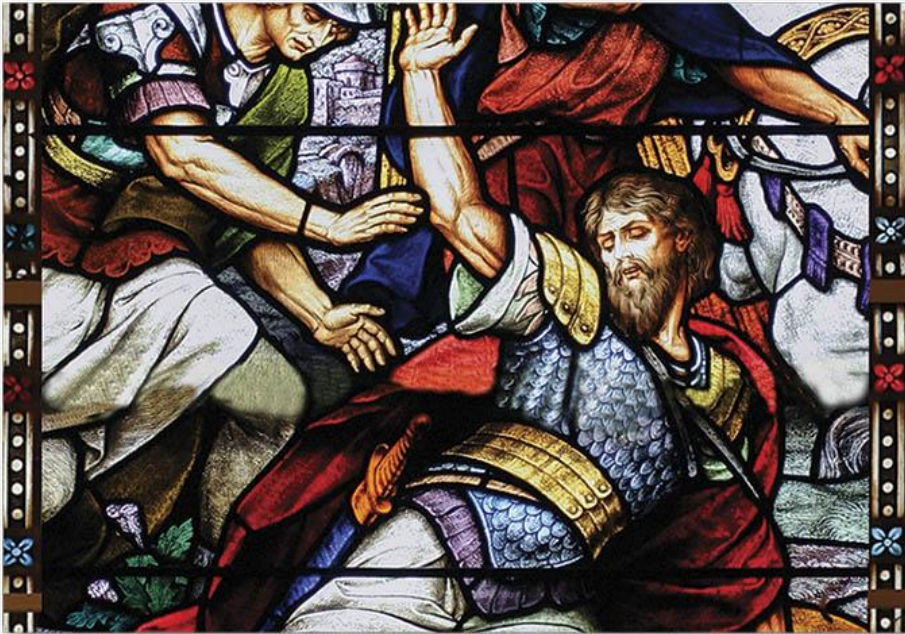
8:15 a.m. – Holy Communion (said service)

10:15 a.m. – Holy Communion with Hymns

Diana Burden, pianist; Charles Lutz, singer / songwriter / guitarist

The Conversion of St. Paul

The Third Sunday after Epiphany



Conversion

Almost all the saints are remembered on the traditional day of their death or martyrdom; the exceptions are the Virgin Mary, John the Baptist and Paul.

It is not surprising that Paul's day (Jan. 25th) is the day of his conversion, when he "turned right round" (for that is what "conversion" means), changing the whole

direction of his life; no longer fighting against Christ but serving under his banner. Saul the persecutor became Paul the apostle. He saw the vision and made the greatest surrender that any man can make – the surrender of himself. Before, he had done what

he thought best; now, it was to be Christ's way: "Go into the city and there you will be told what you must do." Paul obeyed. (H.W. Dobson)

COLLECT FOR CONVERSION OF ST. PAUL

O GOD, who, through the preaching of the blessed Apostle Saint Paul, hast caused the light of the Gospel to shine throughout the world; Grant, we beseech thee, that we, having his wonderful conversion in remembrance, may show forth our thankfulness unto thee for the same, by following the holy doctrine which he taught; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

COLLECT FOR EPIPHANY 3

ALMIGHTY and everlasting God, mercifully look upon our infirmities, and in all our dangers and necessities stretch forth thy right hand to help and defend us; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

THE EPISTLE – Acts 9:1-22 (J.B. Phillips)

The crisis for Saul

9 ¹⁻² But Saul, still breathing murderous threats against the disciples of the Lord, went to the High Priest and begged him for letters to the synagogues in Damascus, so that if he should find there any followers of the Way, whether men or women, he could bring them back to Jerusalem as prisoners.

³⁻⁴ But on his journey, as he neared Damascus, a light from Heaven suddenly blazed around him, and he fell to the ground. Then he heard a voice speaking to him, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?"

⁵ "Who are you, Lord?" he asked.

⁶ "I am Jesus whom you are persecuting," was the reply. "But now stand up and go into the city and there you will be told what you must do."

⁷⁻⁹ His companions on the journey stood there speechless, for they had heard the voice but could see no one. Saul got up from the ground, but when he opened his eyes he could see nothing. So they took him by the hand and led him into Damascus. There he remained sightless for three days, and during that time he had nothing either to eat or drink.

God's preparation for the converted Saul

¹⁰ Now in Damascus there was a disciple by the name of Ananias. The Lord spoke to this man in a dream. calling him by his name. "I am here, Lord," he replied.

¹¹⁻¹² Then the Lord said to him, "Get up and go down to the street called Straight, and enquire at the house of Judas for a man named Saul from Tarsus. At this moment he is praying and he sees in his mind's eye a man by the name of Ananias coming into the house, and placing his hands upon him to restore his sight."

¹³⁻¹⁴ But Ananias replied, “Lord, I have heard on all hands about this man and how much harm he has done to your holy people in Jerusalem! Why even now he holds powers from the chief priests to arrest all who call upon your name.”

¹⁵⁻¹⁶ But the Lord said to him, “Go on your way, for this man is my chosen instrument to bear my name before the Gentiles and their kings, as well as to the sons of Israel. Indeed, I myself will show him what he must suffer for the sake of my name.”

¹⁷ Then Ananias set out and went to the house, and there he laid his hands upon Saul, and said, “Saul, brother, the Lord has sent me—Jesus who appeared to you on your journey here—so that you may recover your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit.”

^{18-19a} Immediately something like scales fell from Saul’s eyes, and he could see again. He got to his feet and was baptised. Then he took some food and regained his strength.

Saul’s conversion astounds the disciples

^{19b-21} Saul stayed with the disciples in Damascus for some time. Without delay he proclaimed Jesus in the synagogues declaring that he is the Son of God. All his hearers were staggered and kept saying, “Isn’t this the man who so bitterly persecuted those who called on the name in Jerusalem, and came down here with the sole object of taking back all such people as prisoners before the chief priests?”

²² But Saul went on from strength to strength, reducing to confusion the Jews who lived at Damascus by proving beyond doubt that this man is Christ.

NOTE: This is St. Luke’s initial account of St. Paul’s conversion. He later records two other versions of this pivotal event in the apostle’s own words (Acts 22:4-16 and 26:9-18). (William Sydnor)

THE GOSPEL – St. Matthew 19:27-30 (J.B. Phillips)

Jesus declares that sacrifice for the kingdom will be repaid

²⁷ At this Peter exclaimed, “Look, we have left everything and followed you. What is that going to be worth to us?”

²⁸⁻³⁰ “Believe me,” said Jesus, “when I tell you that in the next world, when the Son of Man shall sit down on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones and become judges of the twelve tribes of Israel. Every man who has left houses or brothers or sisters or fathers or mother or children or land for my sake will receive it all back many times over, and will inherit eternal life. But many who are first now will be last then—and the last first!

NOTE: As our Lord explained to Peter, true discipleship means forsaking all for the service of the Son of man. This is certainly what St. Paul did. (William Sydnor)

LECTIONARY READING

OLD TESTAMENT LESSON – Isaiah 45:18-25 (RSV)

God is at work in the world

¹⁸ For thus says the LORD,
who created the heavens
 (he is God!),
who formed the earth and made it
 (he established it;
he did not create it a chaos,
 he formed it to be inhabited!):
“I am the LORD, and there is no other.
¹⁹ I did not speak in secret,
 in a land of darkness;
I did not say to the offspring of Jacob,
 ‘Seek me in chaos.’
I the LORD speak the truth,
 I declare what is right.

²⁰ “Assemble yourselves and come,
 draw near together,
 you survivors of the nations!
They have no knowledge
 who carry about their wooden idols,
and keep on praying to a god
 that cannot save.

²¹ Declare and present your case;
 let them take counsel together!
Who told this long ago?
 Who declared it of old?
Was it not I, the LORD?
 And there is no other god besides me,
a righteous God and a Savior;
 there is none besides me.

²² “Turn to me and be saved,
 all the ends of the earth!
For I am God, and there is no other.

²³ By myself I have sworn,
 from my mouth has gone forth in righteousness
 a word that shall not return:

‘To me every knee shall bow,
every tongue shall swear.’
²⁴ “Only in the LORD, it shall be said of me,
are righteousness and strength;
to him shall come and be ashamed,
all who were incensed against him.
²⁵ In the LORD all the offspring of Israel
shall triumph and glory.”

NOTE: The almighty Lord is ultimate ruler over nature, men and history and his sovereign will cannot be thwarted. This principle is played out in the conversion of Saul (Paul) in the New Testament. (William Sydnor)

THIS SUNDAY

Preacher: The Rector

Lector – OT: Daniel Foster

Acolyte – Sally Hess

Verger – Dr. Alvin Cash

Ushers: Tim Kirby and Neil McDonald

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 Tom Wall accepting the office of Junior Warden.



JOIN THE CHOIR!

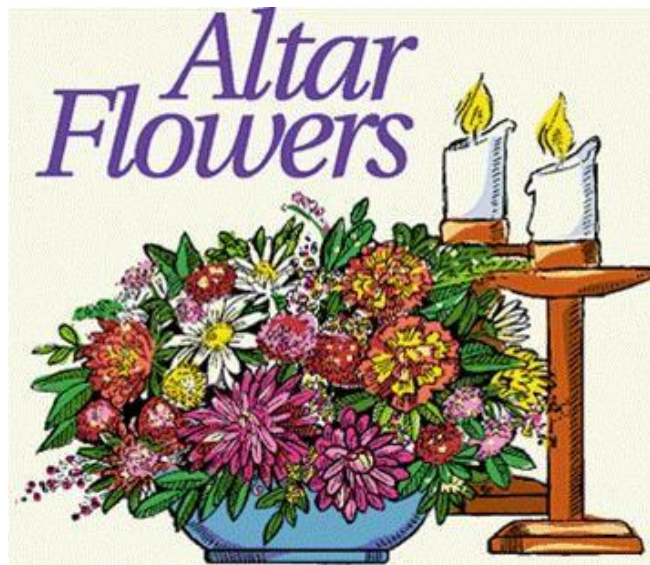


For information, contact, Diana Burden at 678-852-6907 or email dburden6907@gmail.com.



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 2025

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.