

THE EPISTLE

The Monthly Newsletter of St. Luke's United Methodist Church

Get to Know Our New Staff!



Larry Blanks

My name is Larry Blanks, I have been married for 37 years, to Merlean Blanks. I have two children: a daughter 35, married and a son 33. We were raised in Gautier, MS. I am a retired Army Veteran with 28 years of service. I am a member and deacon of Grey's Creek Church in Arlington TN. We have lived in Oakland, TN for 13 years. I enjoy being here and looking forward to building a good relationship with all the members and staff of St. Lukes UMC.



Carolyn Joiner

My name is Carolyn Joiner and I am joining St. Luke's as the Church Administrator. I was born and raised in Arkansas, I am a graduate of Arkansas State University. I enjoy cooking and trying new recipes, I love reading and watching old sitcoms. I am most satisfied when helping others and volunteering in my spare time.



Rev. Amy Martin

I am so pleased and grateful to be joining you at St. Luke's as Minister of Music and Worship. In this role I'll be directing the Chancel Choir and the Joyful Ringers, planning and leading in worship, and also teaching music classes at the Day School and we'll see what else comes along! I've had the blessing of serving in music ministry in various churches for over 30 years (including 10 years at St. Lukes from 1991-2001) and in 2021 I was ordained as a Deacon in the United Methodist Church. A primary role of the Deacon is to help connect the church with the needs of the world, so I look forward to serving with you as we join God's work beyond the walls of our church to serve others in Christ's name and spirit. My husband Rob and I are pleased to be back in Memphis together. He is the Lead Pastor at Emmanuel UMC. We have two daughters, Brittany and Ashley, who were both baptized at St. Luke's and are now living their best lives in the Carolinas. Besides church work and family, I love a good roadtrip, hiking, boardgames, puzzles, tofu, and debut novels.

CARE TALK

A New but Old Ministry is coming our way.

On Sunday August 17, 2025 we will be launching of The Life's Ride Pastoral Care Initiative.

How long has it been since my returning to St. Luke's to be on staff? Three years I think. The joy has been mine. I hope yours.

There was yet another reason to land back at beloved St. Luke's. It was to launch the Life's Ride Pastoral Care Initiative which is a ministry consisting of 5 Care Talks. They collectively and individually are dedicated to making our life's ride, often compared to a roller coaster ride of Ups and Downs, a lot easier and satisfying.

Outside the ascents, the deep dives, twists, turns, loops, lurches, and sudden halts that make a roller coaster ride exhilarating are by no means looked forward to in our daily ride. In these Studies, Christ centered care plans from 5 perspectives are offered to significantly lessen the dives, twists, turns, loops, lurches, and sudden halts experienced with too much regularity. The premise of this endeavor is that the life's wallops stilling or stealing life need not be to the extent thought of by many as "humanities lot."

Initially, I thought this endeavor could be quickly implemented but I was mistaken. In my ministry the doing has always been easier for me than formally putting it on paper for presentation and study.

Consequently for these past three years I have been laboring to that end or beginning. Finally, 1,093 days later, I am ready.

On July 27, 2025, the Church Council approved the launching of the Life Ride Pastoral Care Initiative. All the matters addressed in this endeavor are courtesy of every appointment since 1970, most especially my 42 years with Wesley Senior Ministry as Pastoral/Spiritual Care provider.

Our first Care Talk will be on **Sunday, August 17, 2025**. It centers on our formal and informal Congregational Care outreach.

The days events include:

9:00 -10:00: A Sunday school Bible Study on THE CARING WAYS of CHRIST which will be recorded to resource at your convenience.

10:30-11:30: A Worship Service focused on Congregational Care with a message titled Shoulder Work Ahead. It is what we do!

11:45-12:20: Lunch

12:20-1:45 : A Care Talk on how to be Care Wise. We address the Basic Care principles and Insights that contribute to effective church and community caring in both troubling seasons and happy times.

1:45-2:00: We will conclude with a list of invitations inviting the church family of all ages to participate in various specialty congregational outreach.

A full day for sure with lots of learning, spirited conversation, and fellowship. Mark your calendar now for a full day at St. Luke's.

Sincerely,
Pastor Neenan

Make Sunday Count!

SUN. AUGUST 24, 10AM

Meet our Sunday School classes in Hospitality Hall. Come visit and learn more about St. Luke's Sunday School while enjoying a sweet treat. You will find a group of friends inviting you! All ages welcome!



ST. LUKE'S PIRATES & PRINCESSES BACK TO SCHOOL BASH



AARGH! BACK TO SCHOOL BASH WAS A BLAST

Thanks so much to all of the volunteers who helped make the Pirates and Princesses Back To School Bash a success. With perfect weather, we had a wonderful time providing our church and our community an opportunity for fun, food, & fellowship. It was a truly intergenerational event, with pirates and princesses ages 3 to 93 in attendance. Thanks again to everyone who supported this event where we reach out in a spirit of fun and hospitality.

Lynne McAlexander Intergenerational Events
Coordinator



DAY SCHOOL NEWS

We completed a fantastic Summer Camp on July 18. Amber Braswell was our fearless summer director and everyone had a great time. We are taking a quick break before starting Professional Development July 29. "Meet the Teacher" will be Friday, August 1, 10 -12. All students will return Monday, August 4. We are so excited to be back in school! As always, if you would like to make a donation, we happily accept baby wipes and clorox wipes throughout the year. We also welcome volunteers to read to classes and make copies for teachers.

Sherwood Elementary School Supply Drive

Thank you, St. Luke's!

A carload of school supplies was just delivered to Sherwood Elementary School this morning. Our annual school supply drive is getting the teachers and students off to a great start for their 2025-2026 school year! This is just the beginning as your generous monetary donations will also be put to good use.

I was welcomed by (pictured) Jaclyn Linsey, Professional School Counselor, Mrs. Taylor, Assistant Principal, and Mr. Culpepper and Mrs. Owens, Specialized Teacher Assistants. Your overwhelming love and generosity is greatly appreciated!

Melinda Kaler, Bette Colter, Barbara Simpson, and Jacki Romey



Let's Talk!

Or Text or Email

An updated St. Luke's Directory is in the works.

After loads of discussion, including how to best update and safely share contact information, the Communications Committee has put together a plan for producing and distributing a new St. Luke's Church Directory. We will be contacting our members in a number of ways to make sure the information we include is correct. This Sunday we have begun the process by checking in with our members and friends during Sunday School and before and after worship. Those that we do not see, will receive a phone call. The committee invites you to help us with this update. Please contact Jane Pate at perijanepate@gmail.com if you are willing to assist.



A Speech Therapy Matter:

This is the first in a series of Speech Therapy articles that will be appearing in The Epistle. Let your conversations be full of grace, seasoned with salt. The you will know how to answer a every one. Colossians 4:6 Phillips

Casualties of Casual Conversation

Over the years this matter surfaces as the result of casual conversations amongst friends. In this setting any number of related subjects can pop up. All of us have engaged in such exchanges. When something is said or experienced troubling us in present time, our past conversations can end up having non intended consequences.

I have seen this unfold in telling ways. An example is a friend who remembers how circumstances beyond her control necessitated her to place her Mom in a long term facility. What heightened her hurt was sharing with friends some years ago that she would never do such a thing, just as they had expressed. Her words then were “Well in our family we take care of our own and besides they are not fit places to live.” My friend learned that there are fit and caring places but that casual conversation did a number on her.

Truthfully, many of us can recall times when we have been casualties of our own remarks or those of others. They do come back to bite, trip up, and/or ram. Perhaps this is a speech matter unaware of until now, but now that aware, we can keep it mind as we share. The ability is ours to stop this needless pain.

What to consider in minimizing being a casualty or causing others to go there?

Watch thy tongue.

Think before speaking.

Know this my beloved, let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger. James 1:9

Ponder the impact of how it could settle down the road. “Really?” Yes, REALLY!

Next months article will be on the “Gos” and the “Sip.” You can not have one without the other.

Sincerely,

Pastor Neenan



**Think
before
you
speak.**



The Fun Bunch

The Fun Bunch will meet at 11:00 am in the CLC Craft Room on August 20th. We will be making decorative fall wreaths. Bring your sack lunch and drink. We will be providing ice cream and toppings. Please sign up at the Hospitality Hall desk so we will know how much ice cream to bring!

Call Jim or Jeanne Debo for any questions: 413-3341

JULY 2025 HONORIUMS AND MEMORIALS:

Honoriums:

In Honor of Opal Hill on her birthday from United Methodist Men

In Honor of Ruth Morrison from Ann Al-Chokhachi

In Honor of Cathy Bowsher from Ann Al-Chokhachi

Memorials:

In Memory of Mary Evelyn Goodwin from Mary Lou Cushing, Carol Feisel, Rhonda Thayer,

Rose Hill, Betty McCormick

In Memory of Hudson from Barbara Simpson

In Memory of Merlin E. Johnson from Carol G. Craig

In Memory of Nina Barlow from Carol Feisal

In Memory of Barbara Caldwell from Christian Homebuilders Sunday School Class

In Memory of Rose Owen from Judith Owen



Break Bread Together *Again!*

Beginning September 7, each first Sunday, (Communion Sunday,) we will have seating reserved at Jason's Deli for a time of food and fellowship following worship. Lunch is Dutch treat and no reservations are needed. Just go through the line, sit down at the St. Luke's table, and enjoy a relaxed time with your church family. Everyone is welcome!



The church from individual and Sunday School classes donations fed the 9 interns for Project Transformation on July 23 at 6pm at Wesley Memphis. We were fortunate to feed them their first meal on June 6 and their last meal on July 23. Thanks to all who contributed to this special project.