

ACTS of ST. LUKE'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

SEPTEMBER 2020



Jessica Hitchcock

Striving for Justice

It has been 3 months since George Floyd was killed, 5 months since Breonna Taylor was killed, and 6 months since Ahmaud Arbery was killed. This summer the call for racial justice and an end to racial oppression was heard and echoed across the globe. We are at a tipping point. And I believe that the church has a critical role to play in keeping us moving forward. As followers of Jesus, I believe we are called to settle in for the long haul and commit ourselves to this work, even though the work seems endless. And it might even be endless. We might spend our whole lives struggling for racial justice - within our judicial, education, and economic systems. We might spend our whole lives striving to rid our hearts and minds of the sin of racism that lives within each of us.

And this would be a worthy use of this one precious life we have been given.

I have a friend who works in Human Resources and she set about learning about racial injustice within her field - that was an area where she had influence, a realm in which her actions have real impact. If your passion is equal access to healthcare, I invite you to spend some time learning about racial inequalities within our existing and broken healthcare system. In Maryland, Black people make up a disproportionate number of our COVID cases and COVID deaths. If your passion is for the environment and you are concerned about climate change, learn about how people of color are more likely to be affected by our lack of care for God's creation: In Maryland, 68 percent of African Americans and 40 percent of Latinos live within 30 miles of a coal-fired power plant. If you believe in the power of education to change the world, take some time to learn about the school to prison pipeline and what we can do to stop that devastating trend.

I believe that increased justice for our Black, Brown, and Asian siblings does not mean less justice for me as a White person. I believe improving the educational system for some improves the world for all. But increased economic security might mean less economic security for me. A commitment to listening to BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) voices might mean I get to do less talking and I have to do more work in listening. I want us all to feel convicted about our role in the systems in our country that tend to benefit white people to the detriment of people of color. In my focus on this issue, I am not trying to make anyone feel ashamed or guilty. I want us to feel

(Justice, continued on page 4)

PARISH



September 2020						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

September Special Dates

- 7 September Labor Day
MCPS no school
- 18 September Rosh Hashanah begins
- 22 September Fall begins
- 27 September Yom Kippur begins
- 28 September MCPS no school

September Birthdays

- Marie Holbrook 1
- Walter Tining 5
- Alice Bradley 9
- Myrtle Mason 11
- Lily Hutchins 14
- Sadie Hutchins 14
- Edwin Grosvenor 17
- Elaine Hiruo 17
- Melissa Oppenheimer 20
- Amy Stern 21
- Rick Paisley 21
- Barbara Roybal 23
- Amy D'Agostino 24
- Courtney Schneider 28



October 2020						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

October Special Dates

- 4 October Blessing of the Animals
- 31 October All Hallows Eve

October Birthdays

- Michelle Canick 1
- Sandra Stewart 1
- Paul Canick 2
- Bob Dufour 8
- Joanne Kennedy 11
- Jack Ellert-Beck 14
- Sylvia Lu 14
- Marie Welsh 16
- Sam Miller 16
- Betsy Davis 24
- Austin Marks 25
- Judy Rice 25
- Leslie Roberts 31

The ACTS is now distributed electronically using the email address that we have for you on file in the office. If you did not receive it, please update your email address. admin@stlukesbethesda.org.

If you do not see your birthday listed during the year, please contact the office.

SENIOR WARDEN



Amy Elsbree

Taking Stock and Looking Ahead

It's been one year since St. Luke's called Jessica to be our rector. While Jessica has been a presence here at St. Luke's for over ten years, her one-year anniversary as our rector is cause for celebration, even if it feels hard to celebrate anything these days.

When the Vestry met for our August meeting, we took the opportunity to reflect on the successes and challenges we've faced in our shared ministry with Jessica over this past year. There was agreement that St. Luke's has responded to the pandemic crisis well by many measures: our attendance at online worship is still strong; our outreach programs continue; our pledge payments are coming in at a steady pace; and we are busy making plans for how to return to in-person worship when it is deemed safe by our local authorities and the diocese.

But with the prospect of many more months before we are able to operate as we used to and gather without worry or fear, we are challenging ourselves to move beyond crisis mode. We want to return our focus to some of the primary goals for our congregation: ensuring a vibrant, spiritual community and growing and developing the St. Luke's family.

It can't be enough for us to just hunker down and muddle through. Instead, we need to embrace this period and build on the unexpected gifts we've received. Top of everyone's list, of course, is the joy of seeing St. Lukers who are away from DC on our Zoom church services. Snack-sized church has offered a chance to worship without a set schedule. Online pledge payments rather than weekly envelopes in the collection plate have reduced the administrative burden on our volunteers and staff.

I hope we keep all of these changes when we "go back to normal."

As you read this, we will be approaching fall, the school year will be starting, and it will be time to dig into the regular work of the church. Our fall season is always a busy one. We will have our Annual Giving Campaign, Bless the Pets, St. Luke's Day, and an annual meeting with elections for a new Vestry and Senior Warden (the Nominating Committee's work is underway!).

Sure, none of it will look the same. This is our challenge and our opportunity in the coming year. How do we each continue our spiritual journey in these crazy times? How do we equip Jessica to lead us on that journey? How do we invite newcomers to join us on that journey?

My request for each of you is that you join the Vestry and Jessica in taking the step out of crisis mode. Try a new way to engage with St. Luke's this fall that feels like an investment in our long-term vitality and your own spiritual journey. Tune in for a Wednesday or Saturday service. Watch the Annual Meeting if you've never been able to attend before. Participate in an outreach activity you haven't done before.

And, share any one of these ideas with a friend and invite them to join.

Amy

PARISH

(Justice, continued from page 1)

responsible but only in so much that awareness of our responsibility ignores within us a desire to use our power and influence to bring about change. If we are responsible and we want things to change, that means change is possible. Things can be different. The world can be different. Justice is possible.

In July and August, people of St. Luke's gathered via zoom to share lessons learned from different books and articles they had read about issues of racial injustice. On Wednesday, September 9th at 7:30 pm we will begin an 8-week series: Race and Christianity in the United States. It is my intention that we will follow that up with a program called Be the Bridge, and that we might do a day retreat on Howard Thurman. I want to fuel your desire to be a part of God's transforming work in the world, I want you to know with your head and your heart that racial justice and an end to the systemic oppression and marginalization of people of color - that this work is pleasing in the eyes of God. I ask God's blessings on the work that all of us are doing around this issue individually, in other communities of which we are a part, and within the St. Luke's community. Mark your calendars and join us on September 9th!

Jessica

Who or What is "dewmarks" and Why are They Emailing Me?

Ever since St. Luke's switched to online services, the St. Luke's staff/team/leadership has made every effort to create a welcoming and meaningful worship experience with this format. One aspect of being welcoming is including as many voices from our parish family as possible. Perhaps you have noticed that, each Sunday, a different group of people leads us by reading the scriptures, prayers, and other parts of the service?

Each week, I email approximately ten people/families, and invite them to read for a Sunday service. Using this list, Jessica then contacts volunteers directly, with service details. Readers may participate live during the service via the Zoom link, either online, or by phone. Our ever-inventive and receptive Jessica is equally ready to use pre-recorded video and/or audio contributions.

So, "dewmarks" is just me, Deb Marks, emailing you with an invitation to be part of the Sunday service as a reader. Please consider replying, even if you do not wish to read (*that* Sunday, or *ever*) and I will reschedule you for a different date, or quit asking you. Chances are that these emails end up in some Junk Folders, as I'm not on everyone's mail list; however, I assure you that I am not advocating for a foreign princess, or seeking personal ID information. *Occasionally*, I even manage to answer questions or otherwise be of assistance.

I look forward to connecting with you, and hopefully, hearing your voice on Sunday mornings!



Deb Marks

Singing A New Song to the Lord

Fall typically marks the beginning of our new “season” for the music ministry at St. Luke’s, and while we won’t have our normal choir boot-camp Saturday (which, in addition to being a marathon rehearsal, also serves as a chance for a much-anticipated potluck lunch) and we won’t have our normal kickoff-weekend singing and playing together, I wanted to let you know that your music ministers are still hard at work preparing to be part of worship into the new program year.

We have been so fortunate to have so many of our musicians bravely step up to meet this new situation, stretching themselves to find creative ways to still bring their ministry to the community through audio and video recordings over the last few months. For this spirit of adventure and perseverance, I am so grateful, as I’m sure so many of you are as well. As we approach the Fall, I wanted to give you a preview of a few things we have in the works for this unusual start to the program year.

Since March, the choir has been working through both old pieces of music and looking at new repertoire through weekly email check-ins, and this has not only allowed us to refresh our memories on previous work and look toward new things but has also provided points of connection among the choir members. Going into the Fall, we’re expanding into a few more areas.

Firstly, we have had several choir members volunteer to lead some hymns, so you will start to notice a few familiar faces during the songs on Sunday Zoom liturgies. We will continue to include the music for the hymns at the end of the Sunday bulletins so you can sing along from home.

Secondly, our choir will also be working toward recording an average of one new anthem per month remotely. This is quite a change from our normal way of singing, so I thank them for taking this technological leap with me.

Thirdly, we are taking this time as an opportunity to expand some of our hymnody. We are embarking on a Bach chorale project that will be tied to some music theory practice, so you will notice some new hymns folded into the services. These will serve both as an enrichment to our congregational singing and as pedagogical tools for the choir.

Fourthly, our instrumentalists are brainstorming all kinds of ways to stay involved from brass meditations for communion to fiddle tunes for Christmas.

Finally, we will continue to draw on older recordings of anthems and other musical events from past years. These are not only an excellent chance to hear our fabulous musicians but let us see our community worshipping together and help us hold fast to the hope that we will worship again with each other someday soon.

I can’t wait to share in this ministry with our talented and dedicated musicians, and I ask that you keep all of our music ministers in your prayers. St. Luke’s is blessed beyond measure to have such courageous, creative, and compassionate people in the music ministry program, and they can use all our support and encouragement as they work together through this difficult time and strive to find new ways of connecting with each other and with you, the community of faith.

Sarah Horick



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Community Engagement and COVID – Some Summer Updates

Thank you so much for your collective in-kind, financial, and in-person support of St. Luke's various Community Engagement efforts to respond to urgent, ongoing needs since the COVID-19 pandemic began. You truly do live out your baptismal promises and your generosity and kindness are much appreciated by fellow parishioners, clergy, our neighbors near and far, and our organizational partners.



Given the ongoing needs in our community, the difficulty in obtaining large orders from their suppliers, as well as the lack of clarity around continued unemployment benefits and other COVID relief, **St. Luke's will continue collecting food for Bethesda Help at least through September.** Non-perishables can be left inside the building in front of the church office, or in the secure bins in front of the red doors; see E-News for detailed instructions, as well for updated lists of needed items).

Special kudos to drivers Deb Marks, Mary Kimelblatt, and Sally Curtin, pictured right at a successful July drop-off! *Thank you to those who have contributed so much food to our neighbors in need!!*



In June, our Deacon Lesley introduced St. Luke's to Small Things Matter (STM), a local organization dedicated to helping our neighbors in eastern Montgomery County, where the COVID-related food insecurity needs remain acute. On the first and third Fridays of the month, the group packs produce bags for families at the Takoma Park Silver Spring Food Coop – and also distributes baked goods, canned goods, and more. **Through July 2020, STM distributed 200,000 pounds of fresh produce and helped 900 families in Takoma Park and Silver Spring.** St. Luke's bakers of all ages can contribute home-made goods (cookies, bread, brownies, muffins) - which families very much appreciate - and for those interested in helping in-person, just wear a mask. SSL hours are available. Watch the E-News for upcoming opportunities!

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



Additional Donations from the Community Engagement Committee

Most of the Committee’s budget that is authorized by the Vestry* goes directly to the 10 organizations that St. Luke’s supports financially, all of whom do God’s work every day and have put significant effort into responding to the pandemic’s severe impact on our neighbors in need.

However, a small portion of the budget is discretionary. During the late spring and summer, the Committee chose to support the following external organizations in response to COVID’s devastating impact on indigenous communities, and to contribute to the ongoing work of racial justice.

Amount	Organization	Description/Reason for Support	Logo
\$1,000	Official Navajo Nation COVID Relief Fund	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The community had the highest infection rate compared to any state in the U.S. - Approximately 14% of homes lack electricity and running water. - The Indian Health Service is funded very poorly in relation to other government support programs. 	
\$500	Equal Justice Initiative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Founded by Bryan Stevenson, author of <i>Just Mercy</i>. - Works to reduce mass incarceration, and racial and economic inequalities across the U.S. 	
\$500	Poor People’s Campaign	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Led by Rev. Dr. William J. Barber and dedicated to confronting systemic racism, poverty, ecological damage, and militarism. - The Episcopal Church is supportive and many fellow parishioners have participated in their virtual events. 	

*The Community Engagement Committee’s budget is \$25,000 for 2020 – a detailed breakout was published in the April issue of *ACTS*, as is required by the Committee’s Charter.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Hang Around After the Aug 30th Service to Hear About Samaritan Ministry

It is only a few minutes out of your day to help understand strife during the pandemic and find out how we might offer relief to those in greater need. As part of Samaritan Ministry's **Empower our Neighbors in Need** (ENN) Campaign, St. Luke's is hosting a Samaritan Ministry Sunday on Aug. 30 immediately following the 9 am service. The event will take place live via Zoom, and will feature Samaritan Ministry of Greater Washington/STRIVE participant-graduate Antoinette Green, with Rev. David Wolf, Samaritan Ministry's Executive Director. They will discuss Samaritan Ministry's mission and work in our community and participant-graduate Antoinette will tell her personal story about how Samaritan Ministry gave her the strength and confidence to turn her life around. After the discussion Antoinette and David will be available via Zoom for questions and conversation.

Please stay after the 9 am Zoom service on August 30th to learn more about Samaritan Ministry and its COVID-19 assistance. To contribute to Samaritan Ministry visit <https://bit.ly/ENN2020>. See you during and after the service on August 30th.

Samaritan Ministry of Greater Washington/STRIVE participant-graduate Antoinette Green

Antoinette Green, a native Washingtonian, discovered Samaritan Ministry in 2018 through the Skyland Workforce Center, where she enrolled in our STRIVE job readiness training course. After a challenging and unstable childhood, at age 19 Antoinette became pregnant with her son, Andrew, who is now 3 years old. She graduated from high school two months before Andrew's birth, but the challenges of being a single mother without a support system led to severe depression and she subsequently lost her job. Antoinette's life began spiraling out of control as she began moving from home to home with her son. Her attempts to find work were unsuccessful.

"With my last \$5 in my pocket, I was pushing my son in his stroller one day and noticed the Skyland Workforce Center office of Samaritan Ministry. Realizing I had nothing to lose, I went in." That decision changed her life. There she learned about SMGW's STRIVE three-week job readiness training and signed up to begin two days later. She was told that most people who begin drop out due to the rigor and challenges of the program, but Antoinette persevered.

Although she didn't feel that she had sufficient job skills, Antoinette subsequently attended a job fair at the recommendation of STRIVE Team Leader Deirdre Duffy. At the job fair, she was offered a front desk position at a hotel. Within six months, she was promoted to become the Front Desk Supervisor and now trains others to work at the front desk, saying that she wants to "pay it forward." Antoinette reports that she and her father now have a great relationship, he adores his grandson, and her faith is strong. She hopes to go back to school to get a degree in business, someday hoping to be a General Manager.

DeAtley Barrish



FINANCE

FINANCE REPORT JULY 2020

	2019 Actual	2020 Budget	'20 Actual Thru July	% of '20 Budget *
RECEIPTS				
Offering Plate	\$ 18,175	\$ 20,000	\$ 19,994	100%
Pledge Payments	479,984	460,000	349,511	76.0%
Donations for Facilities	49,796	48,000	16,117	33.6%
Altar Flower Donations	4,825	5,000	466	9.3%
Miscellaneous	186		38	
Operating Receipts	552,966	533,000	386,126	72.4%
EXPENSES				
Salaries & Benefits	\$ 308,102	\$ 324,214	\$ 178,533	55.1%
Program Support	18,418	25,000	4,680	18.7%
Parish Operations	107,090	123,900	58,914	47.5%
Outreach	22,527	22,000	8,123	36.9%
Diocesan Giving	50,139	52,000	26,010	50.0%
Operating Expenses	506,276	547,114	276,260	50.5%
Surplus/(Deficit)	46,690	(14,114)	110,875	
Additional Funding – 2019 surplus	0	14,114	0	
Net income	\$46,690	\$ 0	\$ 110,875	

ENDOWMENT FUND BALANCE

\$72,565

* YTD JULY = 58.3% of the year

Budget Analysis: Thank you! Your continued support is very impressive as we all manage through challenging times.

All financial obligations for the year to date have been met and bills paid. We will be catching up with Outreach payments in August.

If you need to be reimbursed for a purchase or need the Treasurer to pay an invoice, please obtain a Payment Request Form from the Office. An authorized person must sign the request. All requests for extra money or donations by committees, individuals or church members, should have prior approval of the Vestry before solicitation.

Jenny Bradley, Treasurer

CALENDAR

September 2020

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
30 9:00 AM Zoom Service Samaritan Ministry Zoom after Church	31	1 1:20 PM Staff Meeting	2 12:00 PM Zoom Service	3	4 Men's Shelter Dinner	5 5:00 PM Zoom Prayers
6 9:00 AM Zoom Service	7 LABOR DAY	8 1:20 PM Staff Meeting	9 12:00 PM Zoom Service 7:30 PM Race and Christianity	10 5:30 PM Community Engagement Committee Meeting	11	12 9:00 AM Garden Guild Work Day 5:00 PM Zoom Prayers
13 9:00 AM Zoom Service	14 7:00 PM Finance Meeting	15 1:20 PM Staff Meeting	16 12:00 PM Zoom Service 7:30 PM Race and Christianity	17	18	19 5:00 PM Zoom Prayers
20 9:00 AM Zoom Service	21	22 1:20 PM Staff Meeting 7:00 PM Vestry Meeting	23 12:00 PM Zoom Service 7:30 PM Race and Christianity	24	25	26 5:00 PM Zoom Prayers
27 9:00 AM Zoom Service	28	29 1:20 PM Staff Meeting	30 12:00 PM Zoom Service 7:30 PM Race and Christianity	1	2 Men's Shelter Dinner	3 5:00 PM Zoom Prayers

The calendar was accurate at publication.
 All events can change at a moment's notice.

CALENDAR

October 2020

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
27 9:00 AM Zoom Service	28	29 1:20 PM Staff Meeting	30 12:00 PM Zoom Service 7:30 PM Race and Christianity	1	2 Men's Shelter Dinner	3 5:00 PM Zoom Prayers
4 9:00 AM Zoom Service	5	6 1:20 PM Staff Meeting	7 12:00 PM Zoom Service 7:30 PM Race and Christianity	8	9	10 5:00 PM Zoom Prayers
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ACTS of St. Luke's

Newsletter for members and friends of St. Luke's;
published monthly, except January & August.

ACTS Deadline: 15th of the preceding month

