



God
is still
speaking,

The Comma

November 2011

No matter who you are or where you are on life's journey — you are welcome here at St. Luke's.

November Dates to Remember

- Living the Questions 2, Tuesday, Nov. 1, 12 noon
- Strategic Planning Team Meeting, Thursday, November 10, 7:15 pm
- "Jump Start" AA Meeting every Friday, 7-8 am @ the church
- Prayer & Reflection, Monday, November 7, 7 pm
- Theology at the Theater, Tuesday, November 15, 7:30 pm @ the church
- Theology Pub, Thursday, November 17, 7:30 pm @ O'Donnell's Irish Pub
- First Sunday of Advent Sunday, November 27

St. Luke's United Church of Christ

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Let the Mission Begin

What is Mission: 1?

ONE UNITED CHURCH on a shared mission for 11 powerful days to feed the hungry and confront food related injustice.

Mission: 1 is an opportunity to make real Jesus' prayer for his disciples: "That they may all be one." It is also an opportunity to live out our faith — in unity — by offering the worship that God most desires from us: loosening the bonds of injustice and sharing our bread with the hungry. The staggering facts compel us to act with compassion and to be voices for justice. 925 million people still suffer from chronic hunger worldwide, nearly 90 million higher than in 2000. In the United States alone, 50.2 million people (up from 35.5 million in 2006), including 17.2 million children, are food insecure. They don't have the money or assistance to provide food for themselves and their families. We can be God's instruments of change.

For the first 11 days of November (11.1.11 - 11.11.11), United Church of Christ congregations, colleges, seminaries, and health and human service agencies, will join together in a collective mission campaign to collect more than 1 million food items for local food banks, raise \$111,111 in online donations for Neighbors in Need and \$111,111 for East Africa famine relief, and write 11,111 letters to Congress (in support of Bread for the World's 2011 Offering of Letters campaign) asking that U.S. foreign assistance be reformed to more effectively serve the world's poorest people.

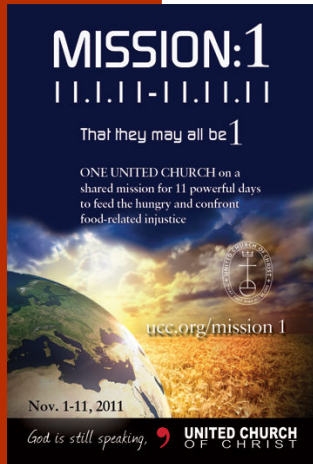
What will we do at St. Luke's to support Mission: 1?

1. **Food for the hungry.** We are asking each person to bring in as many non-perishable food items as possible. All the foods collected will go to Hope Outreach Ministries, one of our sister UCC-affiliated churches in Kensington. Hope Outreach has a very active ministry which feeds the hungry in Kensington through Soup Kitchens, the Emergency Food Pantry, Senior Box Meals and Sunday Breakfasts. Food items can be brought in on **Sunday, November 6 & 11.**
2. **Support the Neighbors in Need offering.** Even though October was our designated Neighbors in Need Mission of the Month we are asking that you consider making an extra gift to Neighbors in Need on **Sunday, November 6th.**
3. **An Offering of Letters.** Our letter-writing campaign is focused on one key point: We want Congress to protect and reform U.S. foreign aid to make it more

(Continued on page 2)

Mission: 1 (Continued from page 1)

effective in reducing hunger and poverty. We will have letters prepared for you to sign after church on **Sunday, November 6th**, or if you choose you can communicate via the Internet. Web forms are actually the preferred mode of communication for most senators and representatives. You can find your respective senators' or representatives' offices online at <senate.gov> or <house.gov>. Our letters will make an important difference for people who are hungry and poor.



Here is a sample letter that you can send:

Dear Senator _____,

I am a member of St. Luke's, a congregation of the United Church of Christ, and we are passionate about the need to sustain funding for programs for hungry and poor people in the United States and around the world. My church is committed to serving hungry people in our community, but I also expect the U.S. government to take a lead in addressing hunger in systemic ways.

I am deeply concerned about some of the budget cuts Congress is considering. We need to cut the federal deficit, but we must not do it on the backs of poor people.

My church is already helping by feeding the hungry and homeless in our communities, but I also expect my country to take the lead in combating global hunger.

We need to form a circle of protection around the people who benefit from these programs — struggling women and children in developing countries. Poverty-focused foreign assistance is less than 1 percent of the federal budget, so chopping it would do little to reduce the deficit.

At the same time, we need to make sure every taxpayer dollar is spent wisely. More efficient U.S. foreign aid programs will ensure that our tax dollars are used effectively and that the aid we give is what local people in poor countries really need. These reforms will help foster economic growth and opportunity and contribute to our own national security as well. As Former Secretary of Defense Robert Gates has stated that helping countries develop "is a lot cheaper than sending soldiers."

Please protect families and children from cuts that cost lives, and support reforms to U.S foreign aid so that the world's most hungry people are the ones who actually benefit from our assistance.

Sincerely,
Your name

4. **Friend-Raising:** Invite your friends and family to come to church! The first Sunday of November, All Saints Sunday, is traditionally our annual "Stillspeaking Friend-Raising Sunday," a day in which we are intentional about inviting newcomers to visit us in worship. Mission: 1 is a grand opportunity to showcase the passion and compassion that St. Luke's has. What better opportunity could we have than to invite people to experience the UCC during this time of great mission, service and advocacy?

Will you accept the Mission: 1 challenge?

We hope that you will participate in one or all of the Mission: 1 opportunities that our church will be involved in. Let's all work to make this mission a success.

"My church is already helping by feeding the hungry and homeless in our communities, but I also expect my country to take the lead in combating global hunger."

We've Got a Whole Lot Going On!



Friends,

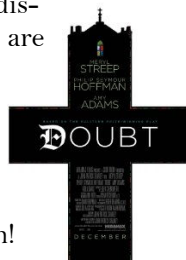
What an eventful October we have had! St. Luke's is a congregation on the move, and I'm grateful to everyone who has been working hard to help further our mission and ministry. On October 9th, we had a wonderfully successful Blessing of the Animals service, with a number of friends, both old and new. We also hosted the fall meeting of our Philadelphia Association, and the reviews were glowing! Thanks again to everyone who helped to make it a great day. And, our Strategic Planning Team has begun its work, and we are off to a great start envisioning the future of our ministry together.

We've also had another great discussion at Theology Pub, and our first Theology at the Theater gathering. In addition, our efforts to reach new people through social networking have already begun to show results, and our Facebook page now has over 750 followers! Whew...we've got a lot going on! There is definitely a new energy in the air, and it's an exciting time to be a part of this community. Now that November has come, we are getting ready to welcome a new season of the church year, as Advent is just around the corner. I'm excited to celebrate the season with you all, and eagerly anticipating the decorations, the music, and the joy of the season. In the meantime, let's continue to gather for worship, to keep each other in prayer, and to anticipate God's exciting future for us.

Yours in the journey,
-Trent

Theology at the Theater

Our first Theology at the Theater in October got off to a great start. Seven folks who have a love for the movies, including Pastor Trent, gathered at St. Luke's to look and discuss the topic—through the Hollywood lens—“Is there more to life than just this?” The group watched “Groundhog Day” and “The Truman Show” where much discussion centered around the topic. If you love movies and are like Pastor Trent and others who see spiritual meaning in films—then you'll want to come to the next gathering of Theology at the Theater on **Tuesday, November 15th** at 7:30 pm. We will be viewing the film “Doubt,” and asking some questions about the nature of faith in our world today. Come join us for a movie and some lively discussion!

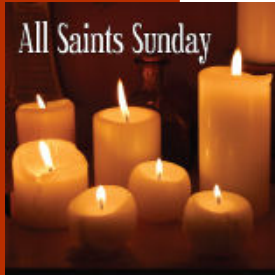


Odds n' Ends

- We want to thank everyone that brought cleaning supplies for the National Greyhound Adoption Program on “Blessing of the Animals” Sunday. We delivered three bags of supplies. The folks at NGAP were much surprised and truly appreciated our care and concern for these beautiful dogs. The public is invited to come and visit the Greyhounds everyday from 1:30-4:30 pm when the Greyhounds are out for their daily exercise. NGAP is located at 10901 Dutton Rd.
- Most of us “Jump Start” our morning with a hot cup of coffee, but at St. Luke's folks with alcohol addictions can “Jump Start” their morning by attending an AA meeting. This new group meets at St. Luke's every Friday from 7-8 am.
- The holidays are coming fast and very soon you'll want to put your shopping list together. To make your shopping easier—give Scrip. Scrip gift cards are a fast and convenient way to shop. You select the gift cards you want, give your order to Lynne Fiato, and your cards are delivered to the church! No hassle on your part—and the church earns some money. So get shopping.
- Can you believe snow in October! If this is any indication of what winter will be like then we need to get busy and make sure we have enough hats, scarves, gloves and socks for the men, women and children who may possibly live on the streets. We have been collecting your items—but know that more is needed to ensure that all the diners receive a “Gift of Warmth” at the **December 17th** Dinning with Dignity feeding. If you need suggestions on what is needed, please speak to Lynne Fiato.

All Saints Sunday

On Sunday, November 6th, we will commemorate All Saints Sunday at St. Luke's with a roll call of all those among our community who have died in the past year. All Saints is an ancient tradition in the church, dating back to the 600's, and has traditionally been a commemoration of the saints—Christians considered to be particularly holy or heroic examples. In recent years, it has become a time to recognize those in our community and those close to us who have passed from this life over the course of this year. Our German forbears called this celebration "Totenfest," and always included a roll call of the deceased and a tolling of the church bell. This year, we will read the names of those who have passed and include a time of silence in their honor. If you have loved ones or friends that you would like to be named, please let Pastor Trent know by Wednesday, November 2.



*"I'm proud and privileged to be your pastor and to work alongside you in this journey."
-Pastor Trent*

Philadelphia Association

It was wonderful to see all the people from the Philadelphia Association. Our sanctuary was filled with clergy, delegates and guests from the Association churches, the music by Lois was, as always, upbeat and inspirational, the news of the Conference was informational and the testimonies of how the churches are doing ministry was exciting. But, the best part of the meeting was the delicious dinner afterwards where about sixty people dined in the social hall. We want to say thanks to all those who helped make the Philadelphia Association meeting a success. To everyone who helped set up & decorate, prepare the food, serve, and clean up afterward, thank you for giving your time and talents to the ministry of St. Luke's.

Blessing of the Animals

They came by the numbers—dogs, a cat, rats, birds, a turtle—and their two-legged companions to our Blessing of the Animals service on October 9th. Pastor Trent welcomed each one into our sanctuary and gave them a blessing. John was the official photographer on that day and took over 600 pictures. Check out some of our photogenic friends. More can be seen at www.facebook.com/stlukesphilly



Editorial: Witness for Justice

— Power in Numbers

Written by Kelly Burd
October 21, 2011

A few years ago, Lending Tree ran a commercial featuring a man showcasing his great life; he had a four bedroom house in a nice community, a new car, swimming pool and the likes. "How do I do it?" he asked. "I'm in debt up to my eyeballs. I can barely pay my finance charges. Somebody help me!" The ad is effective because it taps into the personal shame and secrecy that people experience when they incur debt and have a hard time paying it off. When I first saw it, I couldn't help but wonder how many people silently struggle behind a façade of financial success.

Now I think of that commercial as I watch the masses take on Wall Street and what it represents. Consumer debt is a widespread reality, but Occupy Wall Street somehow captures the backstory. It offers a prophetic word about how corporate culture and greed managed to bamboozle us into believing they have proprietary rights to the American Dream. Corporations have bought our politicians, usurped the power our democracy intended for the people, and taken our money. And our silence and shame has made the victims look like the problem – until now. For those in the thick of the struggle for social justice who have fretted about the apathy of our nation, these images of streets bursting with people taking back their power is a beauty to behold.

In just over a month, what began as Occupy Wall Street has become a global movement. Media coverage has grown over the past month as the numbers have swelled and Occupy moved from local to global. The movement offers a place for people who are fed up with a myriad of social ills: lost jobs; foreclosed homes; the ongoing war; the struggle for affordable health care; and the chipping away at collective bargaining rights, just to name a few. If a big chunk of the discontented 99 Percent is in the streets, building power and amplifying voices, it feels as if the rest are watching live via social media and wondering how to join the party.

I pray that the Occupy movement is proving to ordinary people that we can each contribute to social change. We each have a story and a voice and a vote. We matter. Our problems matter, and we're not the only ones faced with them. Wherever our location, we have the ability to be witnesses for justice together, exercising our power with our wallets, our voices, our votes, our bodies in the street and our presence online. United, we become the people we've been waiting for.

Witness for Justice (WFJ) is a weekly editorial opinion column for public distribution which identifies timely or urgent justice issues. WFJ is a theologically based perspective founded on historic commitment to justice and peace of the United Church of Christ. Witness for Justice is intended to engage readers and encourage prophetic witness and action.

November Mission of the Month

The Philadelphia Protestant Home Founders Fund is a benevolent fund that provides financial assistance to care for residents whose resources have diminished and can no longer meet the cost of their living expenses at PPh. Throughout the years, PPh provides over \$550,000 in charitable assistance to enable residents to live out their life at PPh with dignity.



2012 Offering Envelopes

Offering envelopes will be ready to pick up in December. If you do not already have offering envelopes and would like them for next year, please see Janet McManus.

November Birthdays



Eve Kenny	4
Jessie McDowell	5
Bud Hamman	19

Nice to see & hear from...



Beulah Behm ~ Evelyn Sonet
Barbara Weidman ~ Jane White
Gavin White ~ Emily Yemm



St. Luke's United Church of Christ
 11080 Knights Road
 Philadelphia, PA 19154

We invite you to come grow with us as a community of faithful people open to the Spirit and seeking to do God's will in our everyday living.

Join us on Sundays for:

10:30 a.m. Worship

12 noon Coffee & Conversation


(Holy Communion: 1st Sunday of every month; and Service of Healing Prayers offered every 5th Sunday throughout the year.)

Pastoral Staff

Rev. Trent S. Williams, Pastor

Evelyn C. Kenny, Licensed Minister

November 2011

		1 LTQ2 Study 12 noon	2	3	4 "Jump Start" AA Mtg. 7-8 am	5 
6 Worship w/Holy Communion 10:30 am	7 Prayer & Reflection 7 pm	8 Election Day	9	10 Strategic Planning Team Mtg. 7:15 pm	11 "Jump Start" AA Mtg. 7-8 am	12
13 Worship 10:30 am Consistory 12 noon	14	15 Theology at the Theater 7:30 pm	16	17 Theology Pub 7:30 pm	18 "Jump Start" AA Mtg. 7-8 am	19
20 Worship 10:30 am	21	22	23	24 Happy Thanksgiving	25 "Jump Start" AA Mtg. 7-8 am	26
27 Worship 10:30 am	28	29	30	December 1	2 "Jump Start" AA Mtg. 7-8 am	3