



ST. LUKE'S CHURCH

232 WYOMING AVENUE
SCRANTON, PENNSYLVANIA 18503-1464
www.StLukesScranton.org
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(570) 342-7654

October 18, 2016,
The Feast of St. Luke

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Happy St. Luke's Day! Although this day, October 18th, is formally the day on the Church calendar when we remember St. Luke, the option exists for parishes to observe their patronal feast day by transferring it to a Sunday. We will be doing exactly that and celebrating The Feast of St. Luke this coming Sunday, October 23rd. Following the 9:30am service, we will have a festive reception at coffee hour.

On Sunday, we will also launch our Annual Stewardship Campaign. The theme of this year's campaign is *Live Simply*.

Stewardship is the ongoing practice of offering thanks to God by sharing your gifts, talents, and resources (and yes, this means your financial resources) with your brothers and sisters in a way that cooperates with God's steadfast purposes of love and reconciliation. Stewardship is not simply something we think about once a year when it is time to make our pledge so that the vestry can create a budget for the parish. Stewardship is a life practice of thanksgiving and gratitude. It is a way for you to contribute to the life of the community. It is a way for all of us to join together as the Body of Christ to give of the bounty we have received for the building up of the Body of Christ and God's kingdom.

Over the next month, we will explore what it means to *Live Simply* by focusing on four themes: Following Jesus, Face the Truth, Act Together, and Share Enough. In addition to the sermon each week, a themed insert will be included in the bulletin, and a brief reflection will be given at the Eucharist from one of our Body about the practice of stewardship and what St. Luke's means to them.

As in past years, we will have a communal meal together. This year's meal will be in keeping with the stewardship theme of *Live Simply* and will be a stew meal. There will be two meals on the weekend of All Saint's Sunday – on **Saturday, November 5th** following the 5pm Eucharist, and on **Sunday, November 6th**, following the 9:30am Eucharist. In the next week or two, a member of the parish Stewardship Committee will be calling to personally invite you to attend

one of these meals, make your reservation, and speak with you about our shared life here at St. Luke's.

On Sunday, November 13th, we will have the in-gathering of pledges and will bring them to the altar and offer them up in prayer and commitment to God – the God from whom all good things come and all blessing flow.

The Biblical recommendation for giving is the tithe, or ten percent. For some that is easily manageable, for others that may be a goal rather than a practicality. Additionally, for various reasons, one's income can vary throughout the year, therefore, many people find it helpful to give proportionally. To assist you in prayerfully discerning your contribution, a proportional chart has been enclosed in this mailing, along with a pledge card. We hope that everyone who pledged last year will consider increasing their level of commitment and that those who did not make a pledge will consider making one.

Additional pledge cards and proportional giving charts will be available in the back of the church, or you may contact the parish office at 570-342-7654, or via email at stlukesscranton@verizon.net

If you have any questions about stewardship or our *Live Simply* campaign, please do not hesitate to contact me, or Vernée Bonacci-Saar or Kathy Selemba, our Stewardship Campaign co-chairs.

May God's blessings be upon each of you as we journey together in this time of stewardship and living simply and may we as his Body "...take hold of the life that really is life."

Faithfully yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rebecca A. Barnes". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "R" and "B".

The Rev'd Rebecca A. Barnes
Priest-in-Charge



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September 21, 2016

Dear Brother and Sisters in Christ,

"...take hold of the life that really is life."

This coming Sunday's reading from the First Letter to Timothy exhorts the faithful to draw close to "God who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment" and to *"take hold of the life that really is life."*

What an extraordinary thought – *the life that really is life!*

We are made for relationship. We are made to be in right relationship with God and with one another. If you live in right relationship with God, the Letter to Timothy continues, it will show in this way – "doing good, being rich in good works, being generous and ready to share."

Each of us is called to live into a covenantal relationship with God, a relationship we share in together through our Baptism. As members of Christ's Body, we are called to use and share the gifts and talents we have been given for the building up of the church and being good stewards of all that God has so abundantly given to us. Indeed, as we more fully learn to follow and rely on Jesus while loving and serving in community, we can experience the joy of a simple yet generous and abundant life and faith - life that really is life.

So often when considering stewardship, we think only of the giving of our financial resources. Like many non-for-profit organizations that make appeals at the end of each year, we often focus on one event, the Annual Pledge Drive held over a few weeks.

When I arrived last November, St. Luke's had already completed its annual stewardship campaign and celebration of Consecration Sunday. I wish to thank all who pledged at that time and have been faithfully giving throughout the year(s) toward the ministry and mission of our parish.

Of course, from a theological perspective stewardship season comprises our whole lives. The reality of stewardship is the care of something that has been entrusted to the steward by another for the true owner's purpose. It is through our baptism and deeper journey in Christ we find that responsible stewardship is not really about money, but it is about fulfilling Christ's mission and ministry in the world through the right use of all God's blessings entrusted to us. In short, we are called to be stewards of all the gifts we have been given, and are called to use all our resources, and yes, our time, talent, and treasure, for the good of the Works of Love.

I believe that we do best when we take an holistic approach towards stewardship in our lives as baptized persons, and in our parish, by working towards incorporating an ongoing process of stewardship formation. This approach celebrates who we are in Christ, what God has called us to

do, and the resources God has given us to do this meaningful work. It also fosters gratitude and generosity in us as individuals and in our faith community as a whole. Naturally, this should be something we practice in our daily lives, hence the importance of understanding and developing a prayerful attitude and spiritual practices that help us to focus on stewardship as not a fall event, but something that we are committed to year long.

In a few weeks we will be launching our Annual Stewardship Campaign, which enables us to create a budget for the upcoming year and prayerfully consider how we use the resources we have to carry out the work that God has given us to do here "in the city for the city." If you pledged in the past year, you will find a pledge update letter enclosed in this mailing so that you may have a record of your pledge, and year-to-date giving. We currently have received 61% of giving pledged for 2016. Again, to all who have pledged, thank you for your generosity and commitment.

In the coming weeks, you will be hearing more about our 2017 stewardship program, *Live Simply*. You will also be receiving a pledge card and stewardship materials to assist you in prayerfully considering how you might contribute to the life and ministry of our parish. Additionally, you can expect to be hearing from a member of our Stewardship Committee in the coming weeks as we conduct an every member canvas, designed not only to help gather pledges but also to hear what you have to say about the work we are doing together in the parish. Please do not hesitate to be in touch with me or the churchwardens if you have any particular questions or concerns.

Faithfully yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Rebecca A. Barnes". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the typed name.

The Rev'd Rebecca A. Barnes
Priest-in-Charge