From the Pastor’s Heart...

Dear Friends,

Recently, I read the story of Eugene Lang, a wealthy businessman who was invited to speak to 59 sixth-graders at an inner-city school. What could he say to inspire these students, most of whom were planning to drop out of school? He wondered how he could even get these students to look at him as he spoke. Scrapping his prepared speech, Mr. Lang spoke from his heart. “Stay in school” he admonished “and I’ll pay the college tuition for every one of you.” At that moment the lives of these students changed. For the first time they had hope. One student said after the speech: “I had something to look forward to, something waiting for me.” Nearly 90% of the class went on to graduate from High School of which Eugene Lang gave scholarships to continue their education.

On Sunday December 3, 2017, we commence a new journey through the Christian year. It is the season of Advent and the first word of this season is “hope.” What is “hope?” For the student with no chance of a college degree, it is the promised gift of further education upon graduation from High School. For the people of God, it is the belief that God’s purposes will always be victorious. Just as Jesus was victor over the grave, so too will God bring complete healing to the brokenness of this world. As Isaac Watts penned so long ago these words to a world in turmoil and distress: “O God, our help in ages past, our hope for years to come, our shelter from the stormy blast, and our eternal home.”

Advent is a season of expectation and “hope.” It is a time to prepare our hearts and minds for the birth of the Christ Child. It is time to prepare for the return of Jesus when God’s kingdom will fully come to fruition. It is also a time to remember that no matter how dark and dreary the world may be, the light of Jesus Christ shines in the darkness and the darkness will never overcome it. This is our hope as a people of faith. May we travel through the coming days celebrating God’s eternal hope in Jesus Christ.

Advent Blessings, Pastor Joe

Join us Wednesday, November 29th after F.E.A.S.T. for an Advent adventure creating crafts, wreaths & calendars for the festive season. There will be games and more. Make plans now to be part of this holiday event.

VISION STATEMENT
“To love the Lord our God with all our heart, soul, and mind, and to make disciples of all people for the Glory of God.”
Welcome New Members

On Sunday, October 29, 2017 we welcomed Will and Rose Arant who joined us by transfer from Viewmont Baptist Church, Hickory. Both are retired and involved in the Church.

Steve and Angie D. Hunt joined us by transfer and Profession of Faith and Baptism on November 12, 2017. Angie transferred from Three Fork Baptist Church in Taylorsville. Steve was baptized on November 12th at the 10:55 a.m. service. They have four children, Tyler Rogers who was confirmed this year, Allison Rogers, Christen Smith and Nicholas Ryan Hunt. Steve is employed with Market Basket and Angie is in the nursing profession.

Brittany Moore Post joins us by Profession of Faith and Baptism. She is married to Murphy Post and both work at St. Stephen’s High School.

The E-Team (Evangelism) is hosting a Christmas Reception for the Child Development Center Families

Friday, December 15th from 8:30 a.m. until noon.

Our desire is to enjoy fellowship with these children and their families and support them at their Christmas performance that morning. Come out and show your support and love for these families.

IN MEMORIAM

Revaughn Taylor Snow
March 21, 1938 - November 19, 2017

“Blessed are the dead who died in the Lord for they cease from their labor and their works do follow them.”

Sincere sympathy of the pastors and the congregation is extended to the family of Revaughn upon her homegoing.

IN MEMORIAM

Edythe Townsend Stevenson
March 10, 2018 - October 31, 2017

“Blessed are the dead who died in the Lord for they cease from their labor and their works do follow them.”

Sincere sympathy of the pastors and the congregation is extended to the family of Edythe upon her homegoing.

IN MEMORIAM

Leslie Reid Sherrill
April 25, 1925 - November 2, 2017

“Blessed are the dead who died in the Lord for they cease from their labor and their works do follow them.”

Sincere sympathy of the pastors and the congregation is extended to the family of Leslie upon his homegoing.

Church Wide Christmas Caroling
Sunday, December 17th, 4:00 PM

Do you enjoy singing Christmas carols to our St. Luke’s shut ins? If so, please plan to attend our annual church wide Christmas Caroling Sunday, December 17th at 4:00 PM. We will gather in the FLC Lobby to warm up our voices and then divide up in teams to travel to homes of our shut-in members.

We will return at 6:00 PM so that we can participate in the Los Posadas Service. For more information, please contact Pastor Joe at 828.327.9837.

Christmas Breakfast & Clothing Giveaway
in the Fellowship Hall

Saturday, December 2nd, 10 a.m. till 12 p.m.

Please donate your clean, gently used winter clothing, shoes, boots, gloves, etc. You may bring them by the Church Office between now and December 1st.

Our Annual Christmas Party with Hartzell UMW and our Hispanic ladies which will be held in the FLC on Tuesday, December 12th at 6:00 p.m. Don’t miss this very special event with our dear sisters in Christ---always fun --friends---food!

F.E.A.S.T. (Fellowship, Eat and Study Together) at 5:00 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall

November 29th - Soup, Sandwich & Pasta Salad
December 6th - Spaghetti, Salad & Garlic Bread
December 13th - Philly Cheesesteak, Chips & Pasta Salad
December 20th - Traditional Christmas Dinner (Ham)
See you January 3, 2018.
**PRAYER CONCERNS**

(For ongoing prayer concerns, please go to House of Prayer List.)

Jeff Milam  
Eleanor Apple  
Emily McClandrock  
Jim Crawford  
Rufus Walker  
Jean Pollock  
Susan Lyerly  
Mary Bradshaw  
Jim Pendleton  
Dianne Thompson  
Martha Reese  
Peggy Huick  
Lee Jackson

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**STEWARDSHIP NEWS**

To love the Lord our God with all our heart, soul, and mind, and to make disciples of all people for the glory of God.

**By Our Attendance**

**October 29, 2017**

8:45 Awakening Service .......... 69  Sunday School .......... 167  
Bilingual .......... 20  
TOTAL .......... 338

**November 5, 2017**

8:45 Awakening Service .......... 85  Sunday School .......... 168  
11 Bilingual .......... 20  Young Adults .......... 16  
TOTAL .......... 461  The Gathering .......... 50

**November 12, 2017**

8:45 Awakening Service .......... 86  Sunday School .......... 165  
11 Bilingual .......... 19  Nicaragua Team .......... 9  
TOTAL .......... 424

**By Our Gifts - Financial Stewardship**

**YTD Income Actual**  $ 855,368.79  **YTD Expenses Actual**  $ 909,446.50  **<$ 54,077.71>**

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**By Our Service... October 2017**

**November 26, 2017**

Altar Guild: Judy Cain  Candy Sapp  Jamie Smith  Debbie Cashion  
Sanctuary 10:55 am  Stuart Deans, Capt.  
Donny Brown  Dan Causey  John Everley  Doug Holman  
Mark Holman  Steve Renner  Tom Stewart  Dave Willoughby  
Nursery: Mary Nelson

**December 3, 2017**

Altar Guild: All Altar Guild Volunteers  
Sanctuary 10:55 am  Keevan Johnston, Capt.  
Jim Hollomon  Ron Kyle  
Mark Romeo  Andrew Straw  
Nursery: Jim Kerley

**December 10, 2017**

Altar Guild: All Altar Guild Volunteers  
Sanctuary 10:55 am  Keevan Johnston, Capt.  
Jim Hollomon  Ron Kyle  
Mark Romeo  Andrew Straw  
Nursery: Mildred Roberts

**December 17, 2017**

Altar Guild: All Altar Guild Volunteers  
Sanctuary 10:55 am  Richard Chevrier & Carolyn Henson, Co-Capt.  
Dennis bell: Steve Brown  Alex Corpening  
David Craft: Gary Henson  Ernie Sills  
Nursery: Kathy Marshall

**December 24, 2017**

Altar Guild: All Altar Guild Volunteers  
Sanctuary 10:55 am  Richard Chevrier & Carolyn Henson, Co-Capt.  
Dennis bell: Steve Brown  Alex Corpening  
David Craft: Gary Henson  Ernie Sills  
Nursery: Sandy Fletcher

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**Altar Guild Christmas Poinsettias**

Help decorate our worship areas, the Fellowship Hall and the Sanctuary, for the Christmas season. The cost of one poinsettia is $12, and payment should accompany your order. Fill out the form below and return to the Church Office by Tuesday, December 19th. (Please PRINT your information clearly.)

Name ___________________________  Phone ___________________________

Email ___________________________  
No. of Red Poinsettias for FH _________ x $12 = __________

No. of Red Poinsettias for Sanctuary _________ x $12 = __________

In Honor of ___________________________  
In Memory of ___________________________  

Given by ___________________________  

Payment  CASH _______  CHECK _______  (Make checks payable to SLUMC, Memo: Poinsettia.) Poinsettias may be picked up on Christmas Eve after the 5:00 p.m. Fellowship Hall Service and after the 7:00 p.m. Sanctuary Service.
2018 Mission Planning Retreat
The Mission Team is inviting those with a passion for missions (local, regional, or overseas) to join us for a Retreat, Saturday, January 20th 10:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m. in the Youth Building to revision where and how God is calling us to reach out and be in serve in the world. For more information or to register, contact Rev. Monica Childers, monica@slumc.org

Nicaragua Mission Team Ham Sale
This Nicaragua Mission Team will be selling hams for the holidays. Watch your Eblast for details! Janice Garrard, Beth Steelmon, Bruce, Becky, and Maya Beerbower, Kim Towery, Vicky Villanueva, Dr. Larry Gage, and Dr. Kevin Clark.

Las Posadas, (Spanish: “The Inns”) is a religious festival that commemorates the journey that Joseph and Mary made from Nazareth to Bethlehem in search of a safe refuge where Mary could give birth to the baby Jesus.

Join us Sunday evening, December 17th, at 6:00 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall as we knock on doors and celebrate our gift from God!

Bring a covered dish for the Fiesta that will follow.
Sunday, December 10th
6:00 - 8:00 p.m.

YOUTH CHRISTMAS PARTY

Ugly Sweater & White Elephant Gift Exchange

Wear your ugly sweaters & bring a $10 gift for white elephant gift exchange.

1st Annual Young Adults’ Day Light Savings Retreat
with Chris, Catie, Caden & Claire Kale,
Jamey & Stephanie Nelson Carter,
Robert & Erin Deans Roberts, Will & Kasie Morgan
Adam & Caroline Windham, Pat Hinson McKim & Jesus!

Taekwondo practices at St. Luke's, Saturday's at 10 AM in the Youth Building (Room 500). It is open to youth and adults. Stop in and see what it’s all about! For information please contact Kevin Grell.
Practice schedule at St. Luke's United Methodist Church during the holidays:

Saturdays at 10 AM in the Youth Building (Room 500):
- November 25, 2017
- December 2, 2017
- December 9, 2017
- December 16, 2017
- January 6, 2017 (resume normal schedule)

Youth Advent Small Group Study for Boys
Wednesday Nights during Advent
6:00 to 7:30 p.m.
Youth Building
Kids of the Kingdom Live! Present

“The Special Gift” A Musical

Join us at F.E.A.S.T., Wednesday, December 13th
following the meal at 5:00p.m.
Following the program we will share in making
an ornament to give away to our homebound members
and one to take home

Sunday, December 24th at 9:45 a.m. in the Children’s Building
we will celebrate A Birthday Party for Jesus!
Cake, piñata, games and a mission project for the homeless are
part of the fun!
Check in at the Nursery Entrance just past the Sanctuary (watch for signs and greeters)
Tube Socks, Lance cracker packs (other brands are fine) and bottle waters are needed.
Collection baskets will be located in the Church Office prior to the December 24th
event (outside Pat’s Office Room 208.)

Give the Best Gift to your Spouse this Christmas!
Couples of all ages are invited! Childcare provided
Join us at 6:00 p.m. on January 27th, February 24th, March 24th and April 28th for a 30
minute introduction to our theme and then head out with some questions and sharing with
your spouse.

Registration and gift certificates for Christmas presents begin December 17th.

A Parenting Study begins Sunday January 14th from
3:00-5:00 p.m. and continues each Sunday through February 11th in the
CORE Classroom #106, Fellowship Hall.
A special children’s event will be taking place at the same time. Copies of the
study are available in the church office. Cost of the book is $10. This study is for
all parents of children and teens.

9:45 a.m. Sunday Mornings! Get Ready to Walk!!
Watch for clues Children and Parents!!!!!! 2018!!!
Open for your opportunity to start the New Year right! We have something for everybody.

St. Luke’s Church
Spiritual Growth Opportunities 2018

“Five Means of Grace” Experiencing God’s Love, the Wesleyan Way

Author and scholar, Elaine A. Heath invites her readers to “Recharge, Reboot, Reorder” as we begin a new year. Whatever you want to call it, we need a process that helps us continuously renew our relationship with God so that we don’t drift away from our faith. Based on The Wesley Covenant for Renewal, Five Means of Grace is a six-week study that will show you how to reorder your life through prayer, searching Scripture, receiving the Lord’s Supper, fasting, and conferencing (worshipping together). You’ll learn how to recognize and affirm the outward signs, words, and actions of an invisible divine grace, deepening your relationship with God and making your faith more complete. Class is facilitated by Pastor Joe and begins Wednesday, January 3rd at 6:30 p.m. in the Conference Room #202.

A Means of Grace?

Like the Roman Empire, today’s governments or organizations can become centered on power and believe their messages are the “good news.” As Christians, we’re called to proclaim God’s name in all the earth (1 Chron. 16:8), but how do we do that in the midst of false gospels? Discover how Paul communicated the Good News of Christ to Philippi, a Roman colony that worshipped false gods. Can you live the message as Paul did while he encouraged the church in Philippi to consider itself a colony of heaven, not Rome? Consider your citizenship—and the message you convey to the world—as Ray Vander Laan takes you deeper into the culture of ancient Philippi. Experience the Bible in historical context as you walk in the footsteps of the second missionary tour of the Apostle Paul in Greece -- in locations like Philippi, Thessaloniki, and Delphi. This study will begin Wednesday, February 14th and continue through March 21st, 11:00 a.m. until 12:30 p.m. in the Conference Room. Lisa Lail will facilitate this study.

MoneyLIFE

You are invited to take part in a Spiritual Growth opportunity beginning in February 2018…

Like the Roman Empire, today’s governments or organizations can become centered on power and believe their messages are the “good news.” As Christians, we’re called to proclaim God’s name in all the earth (1 Chron. 16:8), but how do we do that in the midst of false gospels? Discover how Paul communicated the Good News of Christ to Philippi, a Roman colony that worshipped false gods. Can you live the message as Paul did while he encouraged the church in Philippi to consider itself a colony of heaven, not Rome? Consider your citizenship—and the message you convey to the world—as Ray Vander Laan takes you deeper into the culture of ancient Philippi. Experience the Bible in historical context as you walk in the footsteps of the second missionary tour of the Apostle Paul in Greece -- in locations like Philippi, Thessaloniki, and Delphi. This study will begin Wednesday, February 14th and continue through March 21st, 11:00 a.m. until 12:30 p.m. in the Conference Room. Lisa Lail will facilitate this study.

In February 2018, please save February 1st, February 8th, February 15th and February 22nd in the Study #213 Administrative Building at 10:00 a.m. We will be gathering to consider ways to pray, understand and learn about how to talk with God. Come join us in this journey of exploration. Led by Dinah Bryant & Janice Garrard

The God We Can Know

The God We Can Know is a 7 week study designed to explore the “I am” sayings of Jesus found in the Gospel of John. This series will help you find and form an answer to the most essential question in the Christian faith, “Who do you say I am?” One by one, Jesus’s statements grab our imagination, reveal more about his identity and purpose, and connect us to the God of Moses, who spoke the first “I am.” These significant, yet ordinary images (bread, light, shepherd, vine, and more) give us insightful ways to experience Jesus and point us to a God who wants to be known. Filmed on location in the Holy Land, the DVD allows you to travel with Rob Fuquay and actually see the places where Jesus stood while disclosing his true identity, and in what context he spoke each “I Am.”

Join Pastor Monica on Thursday mornings at 10:00 a.m. beginning January 4th in the Study #213 Administrative Building. Journey with her through February 15th as we explore the “I am” statements of Jesus.

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### December Calendar

**Sunday, December 3rd**
- **First Sunday of Advent**
- **10 AM**: Staff Meeting (202)
- **6 PM**: Social Grace (107)
- **6 PM**: Christmas Caroling (202)

**Monday, December 4th**
- **10 AM**: Staff Meeting (202)
- **6 PM**: Social Grace (107)
- **6 PM**: Christmas Caroling (202)

**Tuesday, December 5th**
- **3 PM**: Challenge High School Christmas Concert (8, 418, Narrabeen)
- **4 PM**: Social Grace (107)

**Wednesday, December 6th**
- **10 AM**: Bible Study (101)
- **8 PM**: Bible Study (102)

**Thursday, December 7th**
- **10 AM**: Bible Study (101)
- **8 PM**: Bible Study (102)

**Friday, December 8th**
- **10 AM**: Joy Class to Billy Graham Library
- **6 PM**: GSA Gingerbread House (118)

**Saturday, December 9th**
- **9 AM**: Taesewon (500)
- **1 PM**: GSA Gingerbread House (118)

**Sundays for December**

- **Dec 3**: Mark 1:3-8
- **Dec 4**: Isaiah 40:1-6
- **Dec 5**: Isaiah 40:4-11
- **Dec 6**: Ezekiel 8:1-2, 8-9
- **Dec 7**: Isaiah 66:1-6
- **Dec 8**: Psalm 105:1-8
- **Dec 9**: Psalm 105:1-8
- **Dec 10**: John 1:4-5, 19-28
- **Dec 11**: John 1:4-5, 19-28
- **Dec 12**: John 1:4-5, 19-28
- **Dec 13**: Psalm 126:1-3
- **Dec 14**: Psalm 126:1-3
- **Dec 15**: Psalm 126:1-3
- **Dec 16**: Psalm 126:1-3
- **Dec 17**: Psalm 126:1-3
- **Dec 18**: Psalm 126:1-3
- **Dec 19**: Psalm 126:1-3
- **Dec 20**: Psalm 126:1-3
- **Dec 21**: Psalm 126:1-3
- **Dec 22**: Psalm 126:1-3
- **Dec 23**: Psalm 126:1-3
- **Dec 24**: Christmas Eve
- **Dec 25**: Christmas Eve
- **Dec 26**: Christmas Eve
- **Dec 27**: Christmas Eve
- **Dec 28**: Christmas Eve
- **Dec 29**: Christmas Eve
- **Dec 30**: Christmas Eve
- **Jan 1**: Christmas Eve
- **Jan 2**: Christmas Eve
- **Jan 3**: Christmas Eve
- **Jan 4**: Christmas Eve
- **Jan 5**: Christmas Eve

### Weekly Schedule

**Sunday, January 1st**
- **10 AM**: Battlefield Service (118)
- **11 AM**: Blended Worship Service (118)
- **12 PM**: SCOUTS (118)
- **6 PM**: GSA Anonymous (118)

**Monday, January 2nd**
- **9 AM**: GSA Anonymous (118)
- **12 PM**: SCOUTS (118)
- **6 PM**: GSA Anonymous (118)

**Tuesday, January 3rd**
- **9 AM**: GSA Anonymous (118)
- **12 PM**: SCOUTS (118)
- **6 PM**: GSA Anonymous (118)

**Wednesday, January 4th**
- **9 AM**: GSA Anonymous (118)
- **12 PM**: SCOUTS (118)
- **6 PM**: GSA Anonymous (118)

**Thursday, January 5th**
- **9 AM**: GSA Anonymous (118)
- **12 PM**: SCOUTS (118)
- **6 PM**: GSA Anonymous (118)

**Friday, January 6th**
- **9 AM**: GSA Anonymous (118)
- **12 PM**: SCOUTS (118)
- **6 PM**: GSA Anonymous (118)

**Saturday, January 7th**
- **9 AM**: GSA Anonymous (118)
- **12 PM**: SCOUTS (118)
- **6 PM**: GSA Anonymous (118)

### Coffee Makers & Servers/Clean Up
- **5 PM**: KOINOA & Friendship SS Classes
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**Weekend Schedule**

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**Non-St. Luke's Events**

ST. LUKE'S UNITED METHODIST CHURCH - IGLESIA METODISTA UNIDA SAN LUCAS - 52 16TH AVE NW, HICKORY, NC 28601 - (828) 327-9837
During the upcoming Advent season, St. Luke's will center its time in worship around the theme of “Giving.” Using the children's classic book by Shel Silverstein “The Giving Tree” and words from scripture, our time together this Advent and Christmas season will remind us of what a lifestyle of giving offers our world. From the Creation story to Bethlehem to Easter morning, we are recipients of a gracious and loving God. What happens when we follow God’s footsteps and offer ourselves to the world? There is vulnerability in living out this faith, and yet, so many possibilities! A lifestyle of giving, where we offer unconditional love and freely sharing our time, talents, and treasures, certainly makes the world a better place. It also transforms us into the people God has called us to be. Join us each Sunday in Advent as we gather to worship and challenge ourselves to live a lifestyle of giving.

Below is the schedule for the Sundays in Advent and Christmas. We will have all 3 services (8:45 a.m. Fellowship Hall, 10:55 a.m. Sanctuary & 11 a.m. Bilingual Chapel) each Sunday, including Christmas Eve & New Year's Eve.

December 3rd - “Vulnerability”
December 10th - “Creation” & Music Sunday
December 17th - “Purpose” & Christmas Brunch
December 24th - “Unconditional Love”
Christmas Eve Services - “The Birth”
  Candlelight Service at 5:00 p.m. in Fellowship Hall
  Communion Candlelight Service at 7:00 p.m. in Sanctuary
December 31st - “Spirit of Adoration”