



# ANNUAL REPORT 2018

**stLUKE**  
Presbyterian church

## Dear St. Luke Members, Visitors and Friends,

Our Annual Report presents the opportunity to reflect on the year that was here at St. Luke: the laughter and love we shared, the challenges we navigated and the work to which God has called us together.

St. Luke regulars will notice that we've taken a very different approach with this year's Annual Report. Rather than sharing a bundle of reports and minutes, we are offering an overview of highlights, stories and happenings from our year together. This is new for us, so I warmly welcome your feedback. Our hope is to paint a picture of our time together that is more formational than informational; something that folks will feel encouraged to read, retain and share. Please note that full reports, minutes and fine level details may still be obtained by contacting the church office ([office@stluke.mn](mailto:office@stluke.mn)). Now, enough about this document. Let's talk about our community.

What a year! After a time of significant soul-searching, 2018 provided our community the chance to begin a new chapter. With two new pastors and a renewed commitment to putting our faith into action, we shared a banner year together. We launched a new Social Justice Collaboration Team to help us find focus and strategic collaboration. We celebrated as families with children and youth reengaged with our programs. We saw worship attendance and advocacy efforts grow by leaps and bounds. We cared for one another as a community, celebrated the passing of several saints and loved ones from St. Luke and beyond. In short, we lived into our calling to be a compassionate community on a spiritual journey while doing justice, making peace and walking humbly with our God.

On a personal note, I want to simply name that 2018 was a deep gift to me and my family. We were warmly welcomed into a new faith family by each of you at a time when we ourselves were preparing to welcome our daughter into the world. As we celebrate the year behind us and look ahead with hope towards our future, I want to lift up this wonderful gift of welcome - one of the simplest and greatest gifts that we have to share with the world. If 2018 provided the opportunity to begin anew and reengage with our calling, then may 2019 prove a time to reach outward and welcome others into life and story of St. Luke.

Great things are happening here and great needs are calling us into new work together. May love and an intentional spirit of welcome lead us to new heights in the year ahead. May God's joy and justice continue to sustain and guide us.

Brennan Blue, Senior Pastor



# Worship

Worship remains a vital part of our life together, with attendance up nearly 20% over last year.

We launched on number of new services this year, including a Maundy Thursday meal, a candlelit Good Friday service, and a summer “Blessing of the Animals” service on our green space.

Beautiful choral offerings and a vibrant children’s pageant were highlights of our holy seasons.

Forum Sermons featuring reflections from our congregants were a surprise hit this summer.



We launched a new tradition this year with “Christ the Servant Sunday,” making over 2,000 sandwiches to feed the hungry with this multigenerational in-worship service project.



“At St. Luke, the creative spark opens us to new ways of being and knowing and loving.”

—Ann Woodbeck

We shared memorial services and gave thanks to God for the lives of Doris Costello, Janet Johnson, and Jan Malone.

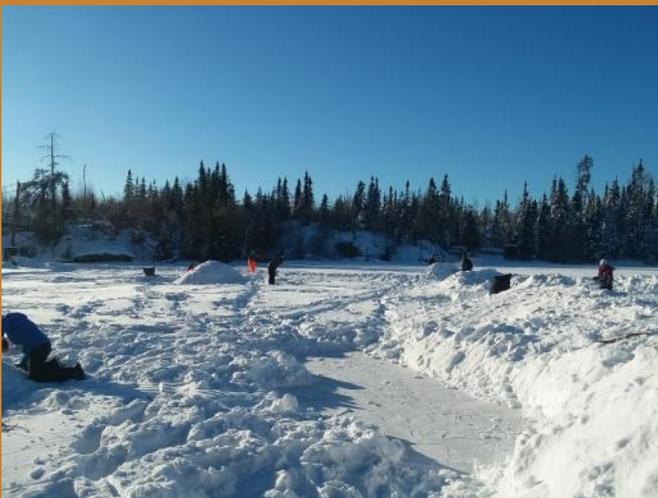


# Youth and Children



Nurturing the healthy development of our children and youth is at the core of faith formation ministries at St. Luke. 2018 was a watershed year for faith formation ministries. It saw new leadership and revitalized energy for lay-led programs, as well as formalized 3-year plans for regular future offerings. In the spring, newly ordained Associate Minister, Colin P. Elliott, worked with the Faith Formation Focus Group (FFFG) to ensure healthy expectations for youth and family programs, as well as for leadership and oversight. Meeting roughly 10 times a year, the FFFG is an open forum facilitated by Colin, who have been tasked by Session with oversight of St. Luke's Safe Church Policies for ministries with minors. Email the office to get involved with the FFFG.

Faith formation ministries, rich in history and scope, had been limping into 2018 sustained by the vital care of several dedicated parents and volunteers at St. Luke. These are folks blessed to be able to weather the long storms of change, with a calm patient center. Their care and compassion, to provide sacred peer groups and safe spaces for children and youth to be challenged and grow, kept the fields fertile. Gail Hall, Chris van Lierop, Peter Frederick, Bob Haskin, Jeff & Ruth Klepfer, Chip Goodall, and many others gave countless hours and soul strength to continuing the meaningful peer groups that shape our children's lives.





In the summer, we offered many opportunities for community building, had some new experiences at some familiar places, and did the work of launching new programs in the fall. Our Whole Lives (OWL) a faith-based program of sexuality education for both 7<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> grade and 10<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade started up, as well as regular Sunday night programs and age-specific focus groups. When they weren't playing

Name That Tune, or facing off in a physical challenge, the Junior High and Senior High groups each got time together to bond and face their developmentally appropriate growing edges. The younger group engages in confidence building and abstract thinking exercises, while the older group faces the difficulties of our day and develops personal care techniques. All children and youth also have opportunities to learn about our faith tradition and explore our rich cultural history of justice and peace work during Sunday morning break-out faith groups.



Writing annual reviews at the beginning of the calendar year can often leave out much of the excitement of our current programs. A linear writing style would list activities and outcomes throughout the year wrapping up with a conclusion about the previous twelve months. However, Faith formation ministries is anything but linear, and even if we were, our calendar is the school calendar and it starts in August and ends in June. We are right in the middle of our programmatic year and getting excited to finish out the OWL program, as well as this generation's first ever Youth Sunday, and awarding the championship trophy at our first annual end of the year banquet and awards night.

The roots of care and compassion, sown throughout many generations in this community, are alive and well today. Don't wait until the 2019 annual report to find out how these programs turn out! Come be a judge on game night, make a meal for the group, or bring your specific talents for peace, justice, and education forward and find a place it fits. We can always make our circle wider for you to join in and play.



# Social Justice



St. Luke's new Social Justice Collaboration Team launched in 2018 with the goal of strengthening collaboration and communication across all of our justice and peace endeavors.

Gun safety reform, environmental stewardship, immigration justice and gender equity were major themes of our 2018 learning, advocacy and activism work.

St. Lukers marched and advocated with Beacon Interfaith Housing Coalition, March for Our Lives, Moms Demand Action, Families Belong Together, and Minnesota Interfaith Power and Light.

"All of our social justice concerns are so interrelated. We all benefit from working closely together."

—Katie Williams





"At St Luke our social justice work embodies the conviction that **we together** won't remain silent or still. We work **as one** to learn and engage in service that supports the fight for creation and for those that have to fight for the dignity and respect that allows access to basic human rights." —Lori Cocking

"We've come together with differing but not conflicting passions and have been able to offer support to each other. This makes a big difference in our wider community." —Judy Gregg



Between our annual budget and capital campaign contributions, St. Luke gave away over \$70,000 to our community partners, including major gifts to our long-time partners:

- \$15,000 to Division of Indian Work
- \$10,000 to The Healing Space, 21<sup>st</sup> Century Academy, ICA Foodshelf, Families Moving Forward
- \$5,000 to MNIPL

# Community and Care

Seasoned Lukers offers a special opportunity to build community through unique events, service projects, retreats and gatherings.



"Seasoned Lukers brings friendships and a variety of new experiences into our lives." —Janet Kramer-Barr





We launched a new “Earth Care” team this year to steward the incredible natural resource that is our property. Earth Care will essentially take on the “grounds” work of Buildings and Grounds, providing strategic leadership for our gardens, trees, and green spaces.

St. Luke established its first ruling elder for congregational care, Jean Worrell. Together, Jean and Brennan are working to integrate the thoughtful arms of our community’s care. Our Deacons provide hospitality, warmth and connection. We have BeFrienders who live into their care calling through the gift of intentional, compassionate listening. Our Comfort Choir makes personal visits to share the ministry of music with members and loved ones. We are a tight-knit community of caring souls and it’s wonderful to share so many avenues of care with one another!



“St. Luke is a very caring community!”  
—Nancy Rademacher



“I have often found during my time at St. Luke that a web of support is cast around me at just the right time. Last summer my mother passed away and these two (new-to-me and me new-to-them) pastors opened their hearts, offered their talents, and guided my way in creating her memorial service. That was incredibly helpful in itself. But St. Luke is more than just its pastors – as it has always been. Book group friends led the way with serving refreshments. Our Memorial Service Team and Deacons organized and offered incredible support. What could be better, I thought? But then I knew, as so many members came to my mother’s service – many who had never even met her. It deeply touched my heart. The support that me and my family felt was uplifting, nurturing and deeply caring. The experience fed my soul at a time of great need. A perfect reminder of the gift of a spiritual community.” —Cindy Eyden

# Creative Arts

In addition to celebrating an “Art and Open Mic” night, St. Luke shared seasonal installations of the works of Dale Woodbeck and Marilyn Cool.

Our Intergenerational Musical returned with a renewed rendition of “Creation” directed by Bob and Carol Thomas.

The St. Luke choir continues to inspire! Our Choir continues to grow in membership and is currently as large as it’s been in years. Their regular worship offerings were punctuated by two major works this year: “Kindling,” an exploration of the evolution and diversity of religious experience by Saint Paul composer Elizabeth Alexander, featuring a chamber ensemble of instrumentalists and the dancing of Tamara Rogers, and at the end of the year, a stirring suite of Christmas carol arrangements by Mark Riese.



“Arts and creativity are central to the St. Luke experience. They stimulate our minds and spirits and give us joy in our life together!” —David Cline



The St. Luke Folk Group continues to share their gift of music in worship and beyond!

# Learning and Growing

“St. Luke members and friends seek not only to learn but to transform our very selves into a more compassionate and committed congregation. Our awareness compels us to be actively engaged in doing social justice, bridging divides, and making peace while walking humbly with God.”

—Cindy Suplick



St. Luke continues to be a place of learning and growth for all ages. Regular Adult Education Forums throughout the year stretched and challenged us, while covering a wide variety of topics, including: sustainability, legacy workshops, immigration, mental health and wellness, Native Americans populations in MN, and justice/peace efforts in local policy work.



Our learning journey called us beyond our walls, as well. This year saw our community attending advocacy trainings with Moms Demand Action and informational fundraisers with several of our historic partners, including Division of Indian Work, Northside Achievement Zone and the Center for Victims of Torture.

# By the numbers in 2018:



**304** new or renewing members. **16** new members.



The joy of celebrating **2** baptisms

## Families Moving Forward

St. Luke's Library enters it's **23rd** year

Over **50** volunteers each of **2** weeks extended St. Luke hospitality to families experiencing homelessness with Families Moving Forward, providing a total of **8** families and **29** individuals housing for a week.

We shared our gratitude and goodbyes with Minnetonka Learning Center after **27** years of operation and welcomed a new tenant/partner in The Children's School.

We served meals at People Serving People emergency shelter **28** times.



**1,000+** lbs of fresh produce grown by St Lukers - donated to the DIW Farmers Market.

**20** more people in worship on average. We lifted our voices in song **312** times. We brought **413** prayer requests to the community.



**1-to-1** Fund newly created within our Legacy Fund. This new endowment fund will annually split its usable income equally between social justice and operational initiatives.



**256** cubic feet of gardening space offered by the newly created raised garden beds for DIW.



St. Luke began collecting organic waste in March. We have filled **162** blue bags — that's **5,346** gallons of waste that did not end up in the landfill.

**\$2,500** in scholarships distributed with the support of Dick & Jean Clarke and Nancy Woolworth.