

the CHALLENGE



December
2021

From the Desk of Brennan Blue

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Making Room in the Inn

December is here and Advent is upon us. As we turn once again to “the grand old story,” I find myself thinking anew of that fateful night in which “no room in the inn” led to a miracle in the manger.

With all due reverence and respect for the Christmas story, I find myself wrestling with the mindset of that Inn and its innkeeper. Was there really no room? Was there really no way to make space for a nine-months pregnant Mary, set to give birth at any moment?

In recent months, we’ve begun bumping into our own issues of room and space. Did you know that over 20 outside user groups utilize our building for their gatherings? While several of these groups are spread out throughout the week, sometimes there’s a bit of a time crunch. Thursday evenings, for example, are particularly popular: so much so that we’ve had to ask a couple of groups to either change their gathering time or consider meeting in another location. There simply isn’t enough room in the Inn!

...or is there?

Friends, it’s an incredible privilege to own a private building for our worship and formational needs. With that privilege, I believe, comes the responsibility to be good stewards of our spaces. And if the community around us is looking for safe spaces to gather, work, and grow, then it’s our privileged opportunity to make room in the Inn.

This winter, while we’re still navigating pandemic limitations, St. Luke will undertake an extensive cleaning and organizing effort to free up our usable rooms and storage space, all in the effort to create flexible,

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available spaces where St. Lukers or community groups can gather together. I share this here intentionally to let everyone know that:

- There will be more spaces for groups to meet during this long pandemic winter
- We will likely be redecorating with some long-buried treasures of St. Luke's past
- We will guard against the church being a gathering site for hand-me-downs or "just in case" items that quickly overrun our storage and takeover our meeting spaces

In truth, we have plenty of wonderful, flexible space here at St. Luke – if we tend to it. There's plenty of room in the Inn, if we're willing to keep our closets clean and organized. And when we do, dear friends, we may find that there is space to form new partnerships while entertaining angels in our midst.



Social Justice

The St. Luke Social Justice Collaboration Team has allocated \$80,650 in funds for outbound mission giving and support in the following ways. This includes \$61,150 from St. Luke's budget and \$19,500 resulting from the Stimulus Check redistribution program.

Category	Category Total	Organizations
Garden	\$ 6,032.00	Food donated to Department of Indian Work
Climate	\$ 10,500.00	Honor the Earth to oppose Line 3
Hunger	\$ 11,000.00	ICA and Meals on Wheels
Housing	\$ 12,224.00	Families Moving Forward, Beacon Housing, and Simpson Housing Project
Native American	\$ 13,500.00	Division of Indian Work and Pine Ridge
Racism	\$ 20,894.00	Liberty Church, Stop AAPI Hate, Isaiah, Northside Achievement Zone
Immigration	\$ 6,500.00	Casa Alitas
	\$ 80,650.00	

Additional funds for local food shelves are being raised now as a part of our Community Kitchen project.

Fair Trade



**SHOP
NOW**

30% OFF FALL WINTER COLLECTION
FREE SHIPPING ON \$75+ ORDERS
FREE RETURNS

DIVASFAIRTRADE.ORG

Just Coffee

St. Luke is now back to selling 1-pound bags of fair-trade Just Coffee (which markets the organic coffee grown by indigenous people in Chiapas, southern Mexico). We have plenty of bags of decaf and regular for sale, at \$10 per bag. If interested, see Frank Babka. Also, you can view the coffee in 2 open boxes sitting at eye level just beyond the doors of the garden court closet. You can leave money in one of the boxes, or pay Frank later. Decaf coffee bags (both ground and beans) have a small orange tab on the top of the bag, and regular bags have a green tab.

Fair Trade Bazaar

St. Luke will be once again be back to having our annual Fair Trade Bazaar in the Garden Court, the Sunday mornings between Thanksgiving and Christmas (Nov. 28 and Dec. 5, 12, and 19). We will have fair trade food, beverage, clothing, jewelry, and craft items for sale! More info to follow soon. Frank Babka

Donations Drive for DIW

DIW Donation Drive Continues

All the generous items donated to DIW are much appreciated and needed! And they go out their door quickly. Lori Cocking said the last time she dropped off items, the donation room was almost bare. So the need is great.

Please bring your items to church either on Sunday or during the week, Monday-Thursday.

Thank you!

The Book Group

The St. Luke book group is in person for VACCINATED and MASKED people.

The book group will meet at 9:30, Wednesday, DECEMBER 8, at St. Luke. Judy Leatham will host.

We will read and discuss *Akin* by Emma Donoghue:

"Noah Selvaggio is a retired chemistry professor and widower living on the Upper West Side, but born in the South of France. He is days away from his first visit back to Nice since he was a child, bringing with him a handful of puzzling photos he's discovered from his mother's wartime years. But he receives a call from social services: Noah is the closest available relative of an eleven-year-old great-nephew he's never met, who urgently needs someone to look after him. Out of a feeling of obligation, Noah agrees to take Michael along on his trip. Much has changed in this famously charming seaside mecca, still haunted by memories of the Nazi occupation. The unlikely duo, suffering from jet lag and culture shock, bicker about everything from steak fries to screen time. But Noah gradually comes to appreciate the boy's truculent wit, and Michael's ease with tech and sharp eye help Noah unearth troubling details about their family's past. Both come to grasp the risks people in all eras have run for their loved ones, and find they are more akin than they knew. Written with all the tenderness and psychological intensity that made *Room* an international bestseller, *Akin* is a funny, heart-wrenching tale of an old man and a boy, born two generations apart, who unpick their painful story and start to write a new one together."

We hope you can join us.

Liz Heuser

January 12 - *Tears We Cannot Stop* by Michael Eric Dyson

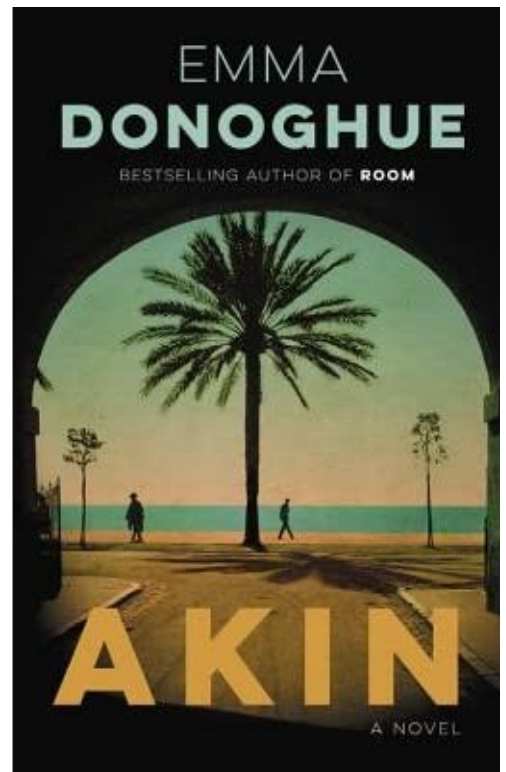
February 9 - *Cher Ami and Major Whittlesey* by Kathleen Rooney

March 9 - *Sold on a Monday* by Kristina McMorris

April 13 - *Virgil Wander* by Leif Enger

May 11 - *A Woman of No Importance* by Sonia Purcell

June 8 - *Klara and the Sun* by Kazuo Ishiguru



Adult Education

Sundays at 9:15 am in the East Room or on Zoom

December 5 - Ambiguous Loss Facilitated by Jill Engeswick and other BeFriends

What does Ambiguous Loss mean, especially in light of the pandemic? How does it affect our daily lives? How can we live with it and even learn to be resilient in spite of it? Opportunities for small group discussion.

December 19 – TBD

Join us live or via [Zoom](#)

Meeting ID: 849 5696 8408

Password: peace

Women Connecting

What Does Giving Mean to You? Join Women Connecting on Sunday, Dec. 12.

In the spirit of the Christmas season, let's explore our values and experiences around the giving of gifts at the next Women Connecting on **Sunday, December 12 starting at 5:00 pm**. Come ready to share an example of a gift that means a lot to you and an example of gift you have given that was particularly joyful for you. This event is open to all who identify as women and is a great way to get to know some of the wonderful women of St. Luke - whether you are a member or a visitor.

Because Covid is surging in Minnesota, we will be utilizing Zoom to get connected. If you want help getting started on Zoom, contact Adele by calling 952-292-0392 or via email at adele_jennig@outlook.com.



December Birthdays

December 1	Kathy Haskin	December 10	Becky Thacher-Bell	December 19	Marion McNurlen
December 1	Teta Pauldea Roberts	December 10	Lori Johnson	December 19	Jean Worrell
December 2	Rafe Williams	December 11	Jennifer Kirk	December 20	Kai Stevensen
December 3	Kevin Kirk	December 11	David Cline	December 22	Jeff Klepfer
December 5	Cliff Buikema	December 15	Marlee Clymer	December 25	Brent Williams
December 7	Evelyn Orr	December 16	Luci Drill-Mellum	December 25	Marcia Yockers
December 9	Alex Messenger	December 17	Janie Warner	December 26	Mary Lou Ratz
December 9	Dickie Smith	December 17	Nate Williams	December 31	Bob Haskin
December 10	Katherine Roubos	December 17	Ben Williams	December 31	Brad Johnston
December 10	Val Honey	December 17	Randall Lofgren	December 31	David Taintor

Youth and Families

Winter's closing in!

After some amazing fall programs where we gathered together again and enjoyed the glory of the outdoors, we're anticipating colder weather ahead with some adjustments for the winter season.



Our NEW Children's Loft, at the top of the ramp in back of the sanctuary, provides a physically distanced option for children and youth on Sunday morning, where they will find a Christmas mural coloring project.

In-person Sunday School will continue outdoors for children dressed in winter coats/pants/gloves/hat, Dec 5 - 19. Room 211 will be used as an indoor warm-up room if children are done outside before the service is over.



Online Sunday School for children at home, will feature a daily video found at [Facebook.com/StLukeMN](https://www.facebook.com/StLukeMN), where Pastor Nora will decorate our Jesse Tree and offer a video with story, prayer, and activities for kids ALL DECEMBER!

[CLICK HERE](#) to download the Jesse Tree ornament template to color at home

[CLICK HERE](#) for ideas of how to use a Jesse Tree at home

Youth programs will meet outdoors, in the youth room (with masks and vaccinations), or online, through the winter.

And Happy Birthday to Luke Elliott! Pastor Nora's newborn who has made it through the first year of life. Nora hopes we get to spend more time seeing him in person in 2022!

December Calendar

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
28 Advent 10:30 AM Worship	29 7:30 PM AA	30	1	2 3:00 PM Depression & Anxiety Support 4:15 PM Group Violin Class 7:00 PM ACA	3	4 9:30 AM Gift Making Workshop 1:00 PM Daisy Troop 3:00 PM Uhleman Rehearsal
5 9:15 AM Adult Education - Ambiguous Loss 10:30 AM Worship 11:45 AM Parent Support Group 1:00 PM Youth D&D 3:00 PM Senior OWL 6:00 PM Middle OWL	6 7:30 PM AA	7	8 9:30 AM The Book Group	9 3:00 PM Depression & Anxiety Support 4:15 PM Group Violin Class 7:00 PM ACA	10	11 8:30 AM Hermanos 11:30 AM DIW Supply Drive 2:00 PM Uhleman Recital
12 10:30 AM Worship 4:00 PM Youth Games 5:00 PM Women Connecting 6:00 PM Middle OWL	13 7:30 PM AA	14 6:30 PM Earth Stewards	15	16 2:00 PM Challenge Deadline 3:00 PM Depression & Anxiety Support 4:15 PM Group Violin Class 7:00 PM ACA	17	18 8:00 AM Haakenstad Recital 1:00 PM Brownie Troop
19 10:30 AM Worship 4:00 PM Youth White Elephant Christmas Party 6:00 PM Middle OWL	20 7:30 PM AA	21 First Day of Winter 6:45 PM Session Meeting	22	23 3:00 PM Depression & Anxiety Support 4:15 PM Group Violin Class 7:00 PM ACA	24 4:00 PM Christmas Eve Worship	25 Christmas Day
26 10:30 AM Worship	27 7:30 PM AA	28	29	30 3:00 PM Depression & Anxiety Support 4:15 PM Group Violin Class 7:00 PM ACA	31 4:00 PM People Serving People	1 New Year's Day

St. Luke Staff and Communications

Every member and friend, Ministers

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Joe Anderson & Brenda Davis, Sunday Morning Custodians

Anna Flekke, Childcare Worker (she/her)

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www.stluke.mn

NEWSLETTER SCHEDULE

The Challenge is published monthly.

The deadline for submitting articles

for the January newsletter is:

2:00 pm, December 16

to office@stluke.mn

St. Luke is a joyful, inclusive and compassionate community on a spiritual journey seeking to do justice, make peace, act mercifully, and walk humbly with God.