



100 West 86th Street, Indianapolis stlukesumc.com • 317-846-3404

Dear St. Lukers,

The title of our sermon series during Advent is **A Weary World Rejoices: Finding hope in the songs of Christmas**. I know we are weary in many ways: weary of the virus, life being very different, worshipping at home, loneliness, economic trials, political unrest and division, zoom meetings and more. But I believe this Advent we have a reason to rejoice. We can find hope in our Savior, Jesus Christ. And, I think the Songs of Christmas can help us do just that.

We are sending you this Advent Kit believing it will bring you hope by helping you engage deeper in online worship, Scripture reading, prayer, and serving the needy.

Take time to look through this booklet at all the ways you can engage with St. Luke's both in person and online. Create your Advent Wreath and light it with us each Sunday during worship. Mark the dates of the Christmas Concert on your calendar. Take an Advent class, participate in serving opportunities, and plan to support our local mission efforts by shopping by phone or in person at *Connections*, our church gift shop.

I also appeal to you to participate by giving a special year-end financial gift to places that need additional funds. Prayerfully study the Giving Guide.

Plan to follow the Scripture reading and Spiritual Practice Section in this booklet. Take a few minutes everyday for devotions. Follow the spiritual practices suggestions. Listen to the carols.

And finally, begin planning now for Christmas Eve. Determine how you can create a space in your home for beautiful worship and the lighting of your candle with me during Silent Night.

Thank you St. Luke's for your faithfulness to God and to St. Luke's in 2020.

This Advent give the Lord your weariness. Let it go. Put it at the feet of a baby that comes in love to bring hope to you, hope of a world filled with peace and joy.

Rob Fuquay

Sr. Pastor, St. Luke's UMC



#### SURVIVING THE HOLIDAYS

Sunday, November 22 & Sunday, December 6
Register at stlukesumc.com/holidaygrief

This is an online special seminar to help those grieving cope with the holiday season. Once registered, you will be on the list to receive the Zoom link and passcode the day before the seminar.

## SILENCE & OTHER SURPRISING INVITATIONS OF ADVENT ZOOM BOOK STUDY

Monday nights at 6:30, November 30 – December 21 Register at stlukesumc.com/christmasmeditations

The Advent story we so often associate with the joy of Christmas actually begins with deep sorrow and longing. But thankfully, in the kingdom of God, there is always more to the story than meets the eye, Enuma Okoro writes. In her beautifully written, imaginative meditations for each day of Advent, Okoro looks closely at the doubts and longings of



Zechariah and Elizabeth. As you explore their story, Okoro guides you to reflect on your own experiences of waiting and longing, of grief and the need for community, and of hungering for God. Order book on Amazon or your favorite local bookstore.



### 2020 CHRISTMAS CONCERTS

Friday, December 4, 7PM & Saturday, December 5, 7PM

We know St. Luke's Christmas Concerts are a favorite tradition for thousands of St. Lukers and their friends! This year, although online, won't disappoint. Plan now to watch the amazing, talented musicians of St. Luke's present a beautiful, moving Christmas Concert. Be sure and share with friends the dates and how to watch online. Tune in Friday, Dec. 4, 7PM or Saturday, Dec. 5, 7PM at stlukesumc.com.

## **ANGEL TREE**

Angels are all around us! Get fitted for your wings and donate Christmas toys to a family in need this Christmas by December 7. Then join the feel of angels as we deliver toys on Sunday, December 13 to over 300 children. Please sign up at <a href="stlukesumc.com/angeltree">stlukesumc.com/angeltree</a> to either sponsor a child or deliver gifts.



## **JOY OF CHRISTMAS**

2 - 3:30PM, Sunday, December 13

Experience some of your favorite Christmas Traditions – Bring your mask and travel throughout the building to enjoy Live Nativity Animals, Baked Treats from our United Methodist Women, and a Family Advent Box activity! You'll also have the opportunity to deliver Angel Tree gifts after this event. Pre-Registration is

required for this event. Reach out to Lauren Hacker (hackerl@stlukesumc.com) about the Advent Box, or Rev. Nicole Caldwell-Gross (caldwellgrossn@stlukesumc.com) about Angel Tree.

### **HOME FOR THE HOLIDAYS**

During this unprecedented global pandemic, many families are struggling to keep a roof over their heads. Join St.Luke's in keeping families "Home for the Holidays" by donating to provide \$50,000 in rental assistance to struggling families this holiday season. Visit the Give page on the St. Luke's website and select "Home for the Holidays" to donate or include "Home for the Holidays" in the memo of gifts sent into the church office.

#### LONGEST NIGHT WORSHIP SERVICE

(Online only) December 21 at 7PM

(Will remain available for viewing until Dec 24)

This year, everyone has felt a sense of loss of normalcy, if not some other loss. Join us for a service of hope on the day each year that we have the least hours of sunlight. This service symbolizes a move out of the darkness and is for anyone who has had a loss of any kind.

#### **CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES**

For Christmas Eve, St. Luke's will provide everything possible to help you experience the glory and majesty of Christmas Eve. As the situation with COVID-19 is ever changing, please check our website or call the church office for up to date information on worshipping in person with us on Christmas Eve.

You can join us throughout the day as we stream Christmas Eve worship on our website. As you join us online, plan to use the elements in this kit to create a beautiful worship space in your home.

### **CHRISTMAS EVE FAMILY SERVICE**

A Christmas Experience for the whole family! Join us online at a time for family-friendly worship service, as we hear the Story of Christmas told by our students and children. Watch online.

See more about all of these events and find links to sign up/watch at stlukesumc.com/christmas

Did you know that our Children & Youth Ministries have been finding creative ways to keep connected during this time? Visit their pages on the St. Luke's website to find out more about small groups, virtual lessons, and more!



## ADVENT KIT & HOW TO USE IT

In this Advent Kit you will find the following:

#### Advent Wreath Kit to assemble

- Choose a plate from your home, (not paper) to be the base of your wreath.
- Place the wreath around the white candle on your plate.
- Place the four tealights around the wreath.
- Feel free to add more decoration.
- Put your Advent Wreath in a place convenient to light the candles along with the lighting of the Advent Wreath in online worship service each Sunday morning and on Christmas Eve.
- Take precautions when lighting candles.

#### 2. Canned Good

- Read the label on the canned good. It explains the huge food drive we are doing for our food pantry, Crooked Creek. This food will help the pantry in January with tremendous needs.
- Save the brown paper grocery bag the Advent kit came in to use for food collection.
- Note the canned items most needed and collect them throughout Advent. Plan to purchase a few cans each week to fill your bag.
- Bring your canned goods to St. Luke's and put in the large bin inside Door 7 any day between Jan 5-11. Of course, if these dates are hard for you, the bin is always there for donations.

#### 3. Advent Candy

 Enjoy the Advent Candy made with love for you by volunteers in your St. Luke's family. Candy was made in the church kitchen following all Safe Serve and Covid-19 safety procedures.

#### 4. Stewardship Mug

- For all of you who pledged, you should have a St. Luke's 2021 Mug in your bag with a thank you note from our children and youth. St. Luke's thanks you. We pray your giving brings peace and joy to you and spreads hope to a hurting world. Thank you!
- Anytime you are drinking out of your St. Luke's mug, take time to pray for our church and our church's ministry to the community and the world.

#### 5. Advent Kit Booklet

- Be sure and read this entire booklet. It has all the information you need
  to feel connected to St. Luke's during Advent. You will know what's going
  on, find out how to participate in classes and serving events, learn about
  special giving opportunities, and experience daily connection to God
  through scripture and study.
- Finally, thank you to the dozens of volunteers that shopped, assembled, cooked, and delivered 1,000 Advent Kits! All work was with masks, social distancing, and prayers.

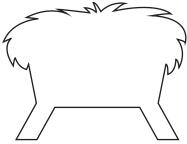
# ADVENT SCRIPTURE & SPIRITUAL PRACTICES GUIDE

Our theme in worship is **A Weary World Rejoices: Finding Hope in the Songs of Christmas**. Take time each day reading these Scriptures and praying. The Scriptures follow the theme of the worship series. At the end of each week is a spiritual practice. Participate in these activities. Also, notice a list of Christmas carols. Let the power of music bring you hope and joy!

#### **GETTING STARTED**

Before you begin day one, take time to complete this spiritual exercise. If more than one person in your household is using this book, use a separate paper to answer these questions:

- 1. Take a minute to close your eyes and slowly breathe in and out. While you are doing this, think about this past year and consider the feeling of being weary. Where in your life are you weary? What are you weary of?
- 2. As a way of giving your weariness to God, write down a few words in this manger that describe what you are weary of: (you may choose words like: loneliness, isolation, financial strain, joblessness, family turmoil, health, fear, anxiety...)



3. Now that you have written down words describing your weariness in the manger, pray the following prayer:

Dear Jesus,

As 2020 ends, I am weary but I am thankful. Thankful that you come into a world of chaos and fear, a world of conflict and injustice, and a world of sickness and anxiety.

Right now, I choose to give you my weariness. I give you the thing(s) I have written down. (Pause, breathe, and visualize yourself putting these things in the manger of Jesus.)

As I move toward Christmas, I choose to leave these things with you in the manger. I claim you as my Savior, to trust you with all this weariness knowing you come into this world to replace weariness with love, hope, peace and joy in ways no pandemic can stop. Thank you. Amen.

# **WEEK 1: REJOICE IN HOPE**

## O Come, O Come Emmanuel

Daily Scripture Readings:
$\square$ Sun, Nov 29 – Isaiah 64:1-4 and Psalm 13
☐ Mon, Nov 30 – Romans 15:12-13
☐ Tues, Dec 1 – Isaiah 40:28-31
☐ Wed, Dec 2 – Ephesians 1:17-18
☐ Thurs, Dec 3 – Psalm 130:5-7
□ Fri, Dec 4 – Hebrews 10:23-25
☐ Sat, Dec 5 – Lamentations 3:19-23

## **Spiritual Practice of the Week:**

☐ Make a phone call or write a note to someone you think could use a word of hope and encouragement.

## **Songs to Enjoy this Week:**

- ☐ O Come, O Come, Emmanuel
  - ☐ Oh Little Town of Bethlehem
  - ☐ When Hope Came Down by Kari Jobi

# WEEK 2: REJOICE IN REDEMPTION Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

# Daily Scripture Readings:

☐ Sun, Dec 6 – Luke 2:8-14
☐ Mon. Dec 7 – Isaiah 44:2

 $\square$  Tues, Dec 8 – Romans 5:10-11

 $\square$  Wed, Dec 9 – Lamentations 3:57-58

 $\Box$  Thurs, Dec 10 – 2 Peter 3:8-9

☐ Fri, Dec 11 – Job 19:23-27

☐ Sat, Dec 12 – Psalm 111:9

## Spiritual Practice of the Week:

☐ Call, write a note, or send a card or small gift to someone and let them know they are valuable and matter to God.

## Songs to Enjoy this Week:

- ☐ Hark! The Herald Angels Sing
- $\square$  Be Near Me Lord Jesus
- ☐ Redeemed by Big Daddy Weave

# WEEK 3: REJOICE IN PEACE It Came Upon a Midnight Clear

25	Daily Scripture Readings:
	☐ Sun, Dec 13 – Isaiah 2:1-5
	☐ Mon, Dec 14 – Romans 5:1-2
	☐ Tues, Dec 15 – Psalm 4:6-8
	□ Wed, Dec 16 – Isaiah 26:3
	☐ Thurs, Dec 17 – Philippians 4:4-7
	☐ Fri, Dec 18 – John 14:25-27
	$\square$ Sat, Dec 19 – 2 Corinthians 13:11
	Spiritual Practice of the Week:
T	☐ Pray each day for a person or place that desperately needs
	peace.
	☐ Spend a moment enjoying inner peace. Perhaps try
	breathing slowly in and out, thanking God for the day's
	blessings. Take time to appreciate God's creation. Sit
	quietly looking at Christmas tree lights. Listen to beautifu
	Christmas hymns and carols.
	Songs to Enjoy this Week:
	☐ It Came Upon a Midnight Clear
	☐ I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day

☐ Grown-Up Christmas List by Amy Grant

# WEEK 4: REJOICE IN JOY Joy to the World



## **Daily Scripture Readings:**

- ☐ Sun, Dec 20 Luke 1:46-55
- ☐ Mon, Dec 21 Psalm 47
- ☐ Tues, Dec 22 John 15:10-12
- ☐ Wed, Dec 23 James 1:2-3

## CHRISTMAS EVE: REJOICE IN CHRIST Silent Night



## **Daily Scripture Readings:**

- ☐ Thurs, Dec 24 Romans 5:1-5
- ☐ Fri, Dec 25 John 15:10-12
- ☐ Sat, Dec 26 Hebrews 12:1-3

## **WEEK 5: REJOICE IN PROCLAMATION**

## Go Tell it on the Mountain



## **Daily Scripture Readings:**

☐ Sun, Dec 27 – Matthew 28:19-20



## **Spiritual Practice of the Week:**

- ☐ Find a way to wish Merry Christmas to someone who is isolated or lonely during this pandemic and winter season.
- ☐ Tell someone in your family or neighborhood how much their singing, Christmas decor, playing, or presence bring you joy.



### Songs to Enjoy this Week:

- ☐ Joy to the World
- ☐ Oh Come all Ye Faithful
- ☐ Silent Night
- ☐ Away in a Manger
- ☐ Mary Did You Know by Pentatonix