



## St. Luke's Episcopal Church

22 South 6<sup>th</sup> Street  
Lebanon, PA 17042



**GOD IS FAITHFUL!**

Annual Membership  
Campaign 2022

*Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified . . . , for the Lord your God goes with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you.”*

Deuteronomy 31:6

Dear Friend of St. Luke's,

Churches have always been a lifeline for people during challenging times. The COVID-19 pandemic has proved one of those times as the church was forced to adapt itself in many ways to empower its ministry. At this time last year, we eagerly looked to the day when we could once more “return to normal.” Yet, within a few weeks, we heard the phrase “in the bleak midwinter” in a different and more visceral way. Consecutive waves of coronavirus infections washed over us, and many experienced became increasingly skeptical about the future not only of our parish but of the Church in general.

***Our experience, however, has once more proved that God is faithful.***

Despite the challenges we have faced, we now look to the future with hope and optimism as we gradually emerge from our bleak COVID winter.

We give thanks for the dedicated service provided by health care professionals, who courageously confront the challenges they faced in hospitals and care facilities across our nation. We give thanks for the knowledge gained and shared by research scientists, who continue to work tirelessly in laboratories and clinics to develop highly effective vaccines and therapeutic treatments. We give thanks for public health officials that endure anger and criticism as they become focus of our collective frustrations. These gifts – courage, knowledge, longsuffering – and more, find their origin in the Spirit of God and show us God at work among us in ways we could never have imagined.

We give thanks for insightful and forward-looking parishioners, who, long before COVID, introduced us to innovative technologies and techniques that enabled us to meet even while we are apart. We give thanks for musicians, whose profound and meaningful harmonies resonated in our hearts and minds as they gathered weekly to record hymns ancient and modern to comfort and inspire us when we could have just as easily become dispirited. We give thanks for mighty prayer warriors who relentlessly offered their intercession for the sick and troubled in our midst and in the world. We give thanks for those whose creativity allowed us to work around the limitations of the pandemic to share open air worship and fellowship.

***But most of all we give thanks for you – the parishioners of St. Luke's Church – who continue to support our collective mission and ministry in the face of relentless challenges. Without your spiritual and financial support, we would be unable to do what God has given us to do: to love and serve as faithful witnesses of Christ our Lord.***

Even though we have begun to *Begin Again!* challenges remain. What is clearer to us now, however, is that we have experienced God fidelity amid our hardships. We cannot fail to rise to these challenges if we rely, not on our own strength, but on the promises of God because *those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary; they will walk and not be faint.* (Isaiah 40:31)

This year, our Annual Membership Campaign (AMC) will begin on **Sunday, October 17<sup>th</sup>** as we celebrate the Feast of St. Luke the Evangelist. In the time that follows, we will explore our experience of God's faithfulness made manifest among us.

Until our official ingathering on October 31<sup>st</sup>, I ask you to reflect on the gifts we have received from God during these tough times and ensuring that we have the necessary resources to answer fulfill God's call. I know that I have become ever more confident in God's grace as he has guided our parish leadership through this bleak COVID winter. My faith has been strengthened as I have watched faith grow in you despite tremendous challenges.

I ask that you pray and discern how best you can help us live out our mission and ministry in the days to come. You can view information about the AMC on our website at the page dedicated to stewardship. You can register your pledge online or, if you prefer, submit the enclosed pledge card in the envelope provided by our ingathering on October 31<sup>st</sup>.

Remain steadfast in the Lord as we journey together as companions on The Way.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "David +". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial "D" and a plus sign at the end.

The Rev'd Dr. David A. Zwifka  
*Rector*