

# the shepherd's

# VOICE

wherever you are on your spiritual journey, st. luke's welcomes you

st. lukes episcopal church • 435 peachtree st. ne • atlanta, ga 30308 • 404.873.7600 • www.stlukesatlanta.org

**big love  
in  
the park**



**sun, june 27  
FOOD, FUN  
AND  
SEE YA LATER**

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Letting go has demanded both my theological reflections and my spirituality recently.

In order for us to say a healthy hello to our new rector, Winnie Varghese, it has been important for me to mark the letting go of many facets of my interim rector role. Healthy hellos depend on healthy farewells. Hence, I have been practicing what in spirituality is called the art of letting go.

I recently had my last Sunday evening Storytime, my last Wednesdays at St. Luke's PowerPoint class, my last Sunday Forum conversation. I'm fortifying myself now for my last Vestry meeting, Executive Committee meeting, staff meeting, and Sunday sermon. I'm having farewell emails, coffees, meals, and I understand there will be a fun send off on June 27.

As the Holy Spirit would choreograph it all, during May, I was called to minister to two families, praying the last rites of beloved family members just hours before their death. It was clear to me that each of them was in the sacred business of letting go. Jesus told us we could not bear the whole truth but that he would send the Spirit to teach us and lead us into all truth. I am feeling the leading and instruction of God's Spirit during these last weeks of my institutional role as I experience the art of letting go. I am learning that letting go is the threshold of an even deeper and more wondrous life.

One of the most inspiring truths of the Book of Common Prayer is its phrase in the funeral liturgy that "life is changed, not ended." Love is energy and thus it never dies; it changes, without ending. Those who have loved one another have set up residence in one another's hearts - forever. Thus, I have become aware that the people of St. Luke's now are our friends at the level of the soul, which is to say, at the level of the eternal. That's the richest relationship there is - the dimension and realm of the eternal. Roles definitely end, yet, the soul friendships undergirding them do not end.

Speaking of religion in the 21st century, one of my favorite theologians, Sister Ilia Delio writes, "To be religious will be to live in the art of letting go and engaging new structures of relationships of life." Theologian Richard Rohr claims, "Big Life Includes Small Deaths." It is Rohr, whose email to me where he signed off, "In Big Love," gave us the gift of what has become a household term during these beloved, glory attack-filled two-and-a-half years in this role - the term "Big Love." Every morning when I have meditated and prayed, I have experienced the depths of God's Big Love. And every morning, in order to experience the Big Love that is everyone's when we go beneath Quiet to get to Stillness, I have had to go through layers and layers of Letting Go. And so it is now.

As I am on the cusp of now becoming a member of the great St. Luke's diaspora throughout the world, I bow deeply and affectionately and gratefully to each of you. I love you. I love St. Luke's. I love St. Luke's mission. I love what you have helped cause me to become. And now let us embrace in practicing the Big Love Art of Letting Go so that we can love one another even more intensely within one another's eternal Soul.

Yours always in Big Love,

While we wait for our next rector's arrival at St. Luke's, you may offer words of welcome to her and her family online:

<https://www.stlukesatlanta.org/say-welcome/>



Friday, May 7, 2021

Dear Friends,

On behalf of the vestry, we are thrilled to announce that the Rev. Winnie Varghese will be our 23rd rector. After a comprehensive national search spanning more than two years, St. Luke's successfully identified a leader who exemplifies the aspirational attributes and experiences that we envisioned in our parish profile, and we are so pleased that Winnie accepted the call to lead St. Luke's and our amazing congregation.

Winnie is one of the most prominent, inspiring voices in the Episcopal Church today and the vestry is so happy that she accepted our call. She has the experience, the passion and a vision that will bring great things to our already remarkable parish.

Bishop Wright has known Winnie for nearly 20 years and says she is widely regarded as someone who is thoughtful about what it means to live for Jesus Christ in the 21st century. He said he is excited to welcome her to the diocese and looks forward to working with her.

Winnie is a national leader in the Episcopal Church and is known for her inspired writing, teaching, and preaching. She is currently serving as Priest for Ministry & Program Coordination at Trinity Church Wall Street in New York City. Prior to Trinity, Winnie served as Rector and Priest-in-Charge at St. Mark's in the Bowery in New York. Winnie was also chaplain at both Columbia University and University of California Los Angeles. She is a published author, editor, and podcaster. Winnie is a native of Dallas, Texas and is married to Elizabeth Toledo, a public relations executive. They have two grown children.

Winnie serves on the Board of Trustees of Union Theological Seminary, she chaired the General Convention's Committee on the State of the Church from 2015 to 2018, and she served on the Board of Trustees of the Episcopal Divinity School, 2013-2016.

Winnie's parents immigrated to the United States from India, and Winnie spent part of her early childhood years there. She attended Agnes Scott College and earned her bachelor's degree from Southern Methodist University in Dallas. She then attended Union Theological Seminary and graduated with her Master of Divinity degree in 1999. She was ordained to the diaconate in Los Angeles in 1999 and to the priesthood six months later in 2000.

St. Luke's will spend the coming weeks celebrating and thanking our wonderful interim rector, the Rev. Ed Bacon. Winnie is expected to start in August. Her message to each of you: "I am so excited to join the community of St. Luke's in ministry in Atlanta! I have been so inspired by the people of St. Luke's in the search process, and I pray the same discerning, creative, and adventurous Spirit marks the years ahead."

Blessings,

Melba Hughes  
Senior Warden

Carrie Teegardin  
Junior Warden



# BIG LOVE IN THE PARK *celebrate Hope & Ed*

Sunday, June 27 immediately following the 10 am Eucharist

*Lunch, fun -including blow-ups for the kids - and an opportunity to say "until we see you again"*

**RSVP PLEASE online or by phone 404-873-7777**

[CLICK HERE TO RSVP ONLINE>>>](#)



## SUNDAY IN PIEDMONT PARK

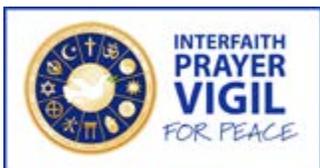
On June 20 at 10 am you are invited to outdoor worship in Piedmont Park at the Legacy Fountain (the North end of the park near the Promenade) This location has a splashpad, green space, and some shaded seating. Bring a blanket or chairs, sunscreen, and even a bathing suit for kids. We will worship together out in the world! And then stay for fun and fellowship. We hear King of Pops may be in the park too. Be sure to sign up to receive texts from St. Luke's so we can communicate any changes due to weather (Text: stlukesatl to 64600).

**Our usual worship services will continue onsite at St. Luke's as well.**



Sunday, June 6 is Gun Violence Awareness Day when St. Luke's remembers Georgians who have been victims of gun violence in the past year. We invite you to wear orange as we

pray for an end to this pandemic of violence.



**Please join us Monday, June 7 at 6 p.m.**

Our leadership will also rotate among the interfaith community. The Atlanta Baha'i Community will host in June, led by Imara Canady. Join us for a powerful litany of interfaith prayers on Monday, June 7 from 6-6:45 p.m.



## FUN FOR EVERYONE

CYF invites you to have some fun on **Sunday, June 13 from 2-3 p.m. in the Park**. Bring your kids, bring your grandparents, bring your neighbors, and yourself, for a masked sing-a-long, group activities, and games. Now that we can be together at St. Luke's, let's do it! Fun for all, St. Luke's style.

*Being a young adult, especially in your 20s, is both an exciting and challenging time. The Rev. Elizabeth Shows-Caffey, Senior Associate Rector, spoke last month at the 20th-anniversary celebration of the Johnson Service Corps, where she was founding director.*

*She shares with us both the history of the program and why it's important for the church to support and engage with young adults.*

At the end of August 2001, I left Los Angeles to return to North Carolina, traveling across the country. Along the way, I stopped at pay phones to have conversations with members of the Chapel of the Cross in Chapel Hill, North Carolina. They had formed a steering committee to start a year-long residential program for young adults that centered around service, learning, and intentional Christian community living—all key components of the Chapel of the Cross. I had just completed a similar program in Los Angeles called the Episcopal Urban Intern Program (EUIP), in fact the very same program that our new rector, the Rev. Winnie Varghese, had participated in a few years prior.

Many miles and countless pay phone conversations later, I was hired by the steering to design the program, and then I served as the director for two years before heading to seminary.

Margaret Johnson was an amazing librarian at the University of North Carolina who was a member of the Chapel of the Cross, and her modest lifestyle enabled her to leave a generous bequest. The leadership at the Chapel of the Cross spent considerable time discerning how to honor who Ms. Johnson was and the many ways that her gifts and passion intersected with the parish's values and its desire to support the spiritual development and leadership potential of young people. And so with her bequest and knowing her value for lifelong learning and service to others, the Johnson Intern Program came into being.

Each intern worked 30 hours per week in the Chapel Hill/Durham area. Some were assigned to housing agencies, advocating for affordable housing while assisting low-income families with home ownership or finding homes for people living with HIV. One intern worked at a nonprofit alcohol recovery day-treatment program for men. Another was assigned to a day program for people living with Alzheimer's. Ten hours every week was dedicated to spiritual and leadership development under professors from both Duke University and the University of North Carolina. This time included regular community meetings, and there were retreats designed to help interns dive deeper into faith leadership development.

The program also focused on Christian community living. Selected from all over the country and not acquainted, the interns experienced a situation similar to the 1990s MTV show, "Real World," which began with these words:

*"This is the true story ... of seven strangers ... picked to live in a house ... work together ... and have their lives taped ... to find out what happens ... when people stop being polite ... and start getting real"*

## Supporting Young Adults

Indeed, this "Real World" introduction perfectly describes the Christian community living component of the Johnson Intern Program. With a modest living stipend of \$400 per month, they not only shared meals as a requirement of their community covenant but also out of necessity.

Let me be clear, this community was not taped, although the interns often asked me jokingly where the cameras were hidden. But it would be great to have a record of their voicing how intense and challenging it is to strive for and live in intentional community. They prayed together, broke bread together, studied together, took the same time for rest, and played together—all key components of healthy community living.

As director, I led them through developing their own community "Rule of Life" based loosely on the Benedictine tradition and designed to bring clarity to the rhythm of their intentional communal living.

The first year of the program, three community members lived together in a bright pink house near the church and their work placements. The following year we had five and moved to a larger house. Now, 20 years later, there have been 125 interns from 32 states and five countries. Together they have given 200,000 hours of service to the Durham and Chapel Hill communities. They have spent 20,000 hours on spiritual engagement and shared 3,500 community meals.

Another facet of the program was the interns introduced the church community to new nonprofit organizations on a more relational level. By their visible presence and engagement with the parish, the church became more of a place of welcome for other young adults.

For a long time, we--the Episcopal Church--has said young adults are important and we need more young adults to be active in our community. Yet we haven't figured out how to serve their specific psycho-emotional and spiritual needs. They are in a unique and exciting phase of development as they continue to sort out who they are becoming, what they believe, and how they want to live in the world.

Being a young adult is such a rich period of life—a time of discovery, adventure, trying on, and questioning. Our faith community needs to invest more in the spiritual and emotional development of young adults. I am beyond thrilled that this small program that I helped shape 20 years ago continues to thrive in such a powerful way. May we, the church, continue to find more ways to support and engage young adults, not only for their benefit, but for ours.



Following the success of Midweek Meals, the St. Luke's Kitchen will continue to feed the flock through Summer Sunday Lunch. Every week, we'll offer individually packaged lunches to be picked up after church and enjoyed when you get home or wherever you choose.

The lunches are designed to be served cool or at room temperature. And, for those of you who like to have a casserole or four in the freezer, we're offering our frozen entrees for pick-up after Sunday church. And, never fear—you can order our sour cream pound cake and pimento cheese.

Our first Summer Sunday Lunch, June 6, features a ham slider with St. Luke's dressing, okra fries, summer salad, deviled egg, and dessert. Cost is \$12 per person. Deadline to order is each Wednesday at midnight. [Order weekly online: StLukesAtlanta.org](http://StLukesAtlanta.org)

**SUPPORT THE KITCHEN, SUPPORT CROSSROADS**

We're also continuing our partnership with Crossroads, the urban ministry arm of St. Luke's, to raise funds to purchase food from the Atlanta Community Food Bank for clients who have housing but need food boxes. Sure, we can send them across town to a pantry, but why not have some food boxes to offer right here?

Our goal is to raise \$500 so we can purchase at least 1000 pounds of food to turn into 200 or more food boxes for the summer. Many thanks to those who have donated, as we've already raised \$175.

After all, if you donate money, the Food Bank can leverage every dollar into \$9 worth of food. Remember, the Food Bank was started at St. Luke's in 1970, so it's a fitting partnership.



**Plans are in the works for a 2021 St. Luke's return to Kanuga.**

**PENTECOST COMFORT**

On the day of Pentecost, those gathered witnessed the miraculous movement of the Holy Spirit and were reminded of Jesus' promise that he would send the Comforter to them. Likewise, we, the Church, are sent out to the world to offer this holy comfort. Again, Tony Johns and I are so very grateful for the generosity you showed on Pentecost Sunday with the donations that you provided for the comfort of our Crossroad neighbors.

Tony shared with me that "Crossroads is grateful to our St. Luke's family for the generous gifts given on Pentecost Sunday! We received enough food donations to bless 30 households with a week's worth of food and supplies as they move into their new homes! Thank you for sharing BIG LOVE with our neighbors." Thank you.

The Rev. Horace Griffin  
Associate for Pastoral Care  
and Community Ministries



## Seminarian Marisa Sifontes to be ordained June 5

I'm sure you've heard the African proverb, "It takes a village to raise a child." I have always deeply felt the truth of this, as a child and as a parent. It speaks to the interconnected nature of our lives, of how we have the opportunity to pour into each other. But it is equally important to note that the word "child" in that sentence doesn't only refer to those who are young chronologically, but also those who are young-at-heart, or said differently, those who never give up their desire to learn and grow and love. Further, we can have many villages, in the different stages of our lives, some that last for a season and others that remain a part of us long after we've moved on.

Over the past two years at St. Luke's I have had the chance to attest to its corollary, "It takes a congregation to raise a seminarian."

There's something special about a congregation that raises up seminarians and takes the time to help form those going into ministry. Perhaps it's a combination of things: a place that provides ample opportunities to grow, a system that doesn't take itself too seriously so people can make mistakes, a team that isn't too busy to share with someone seeking to learn, a congregation that is willing to support those just starting to use their gifts, and of course, a healthy dose of just plain loving one another.

I am thankful for the ways this congregation has poured into me, especially in this time of disruption, or as Ed likes to call it, our portal for transformation.

St. Luke's is a complex system which is one of the things that drew me to this parish in the first place. It takes a lot to keep 435 Peachtree running. If you only ever come to a Sunday service, you'll miss so much of what makes this place special. Even after two years, I feel like I've only scratched the surface.

From my very first Sunday, I was welcomed into the rich dialogue that this place is known for. I watched with interest the conversations happening on issues of injustice, of how we serve the community around us, of building bridges, and ministries. I found a congregation doing its best to lean into the work of the Gospel and also set the table for others to do so.

Each Sunday, you can see the result of the amazing work of the flower and altar guilds whose impeccable staging and careful choreography set the backdrop for much our time together, but you may not know how the Property Committee tackles management of the structures and systems that we rely upon, carefully stewarding the resources of the congregation to do so, or how our facilities team is the backbone that keeps everything together.

You may know that St. Luke's has served as an incubator for organizations that serve the community, but not have had the opportunity to directly serve at Crossroads or Church of the Common Ground. Although I hope you've had the chance to witness just how many sandwiches this congregation can make at one time when it gathers together.

There is so much more that I could point towards: the music ministry that has been and remains a gift, particularly hearing the voices of the choirs who found a way to come together even when we couldn't, or the eager faces that greeted me in Children's Formation each week over Zoom. (Shout out to the BEST 2/3 grade class!)

It goes without saying that I have learned so much from the dedicated staff and volunteers that pour their hearts and souls into making sure that everything runs as it should and smooth the waters when it doesn't.

I can think of no better preparation for the path ahead than the opportunities that St. Luke's has given me during this season.

And now, I'm ready to take my next steps, being ordained to the Transitional Diaconate on June 5 and accepting my first call to become the Associate Rector at St. John's Episcopal Church in Roanoke, Virginia and Diocesan Missioner for the Diocese of Southwestern Virginia.

I can say with certainty, however, that wherever I go from here, I will carry the rhythms and lessons and love of St. Luke's.

And for that, and for each of you, I am deeply grateful that we have had this time to walk together.

Thank you, village,  
Marisa

**Zoom By to Say Good Bye  
to Marisa**

**Sunday, June 13 at 6 p.m.**

**Bring a beverage of your choice and  
cheese straws. Ed will interview Marisa  
and then we'll have an open mic for  
everyone to offer their good wishes.**

**ZOOM LINK >>>**



By the Grace of God  
and with the consent of the people  
The Right Reverend Anne E. Hodges-Copple  
Bishop Suffragan of North Carolina  
will ordain

Angela Cheri Compton-Nelson  
Alice Graham Grant  
Mawethu Ncaca  
and  
Marisa Anne Sifontes

to the Sacred Order of Deacons  
in Christ's One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church  
Saturday, the fifth of June  
two thousand and twenty-one  
at half past ten o'clock in the morning at  
St. Peter's Episcopal Church,  
Charlotte, North Carolina.

The Rt. Rev. Samuel S. Rodman  
Bishop Diocesan, will celebrate.

You are cordially invited to view the livestream broadcast  
of the ordination via the Facebook page of the  
Diocese of North Carolina at  
<https://www.facebook.com/EpiscopalDioceseNC/>

## The lovely month of May at St. Luke's

St. Luke's hosted the Mid-Atlanta Convocation Confirmation last month. It was a glorious evening - one of our first large gatherings in over a year. Bishop Wright celebrated and preached at the service in The Park at St. Luke's, which was filled with energy and hope.

Congratulations to those who were confirmed, received, or who reaffirmed their confirmation.

Sydnee Adams	Richard Opsahl
Donna Briggins	Joyce Opsahl
Warner Burns	Maggie Opsahl
Melissa Crozier	Darryl-Christopher Payne
Alex Crozier	Johannah Phelan
Devon Ippolito	Wallace Putt
Rosemary Jean-Louis	Teresa Rivero
Angela Johns	Richard Rowe
Tony Johns	Deneta Sells
Eddie Krise	Bryan Sells
Violet Lorish	Adelaide Steedley
Katherine Marshall	Kim Sydnor
Kaleb Mason	Bryan Wagner
Tom Morphis	Michele Wagner
Jane Morphis	John Wallace



## Baptisms Resumed in May!



The Children's Sunday School Celebration of fourth and fifth graders is a rite of passage at St. Luke's marking the transition from our children's program into the Youth program. Each child is recognized, presented with a Bible and blessed by all gathered.

### Welcome to EYC:

Fletcher Anderson  
 Blakely Boyer  
 Owen Bryant-Molyneaux  
 Chloe Shows Caffey  
 Page Fougrousse  
 John Fowlkes  
 Henry Haer  
 Charlotte Kidd  
 Sylvie Lanier  
 Blakely Roberts



WE CELEBRATE THE LIVES THAT MAKE UP  
THE COMMUNITY OF ST. LUKE'S CHURCH.

*Birthdays during June*

1 Scott Inman Miranda Troy Bo Schill Kiki Schill Luz Culpepper	8 Jimmy Satterwhite Megan Patterson	Mary Doffermyre Allison Ezell Daphne Zintak	Frederick Bartels Robert Kennedy Nick Zamboni
2 Marilyn Grist Bill Grist Rogers Toy, III Andy Fordham Kailen Gilde Jack Jennings Zach Massey, III Blake Young	9 Jodi Weyman Erin Raitt Ryan Rasheed Regina Finan Erin Mueller Allison Nihiser	17 Nancy Allstrom Mike Wiggins Kim Basinger Jack Gresham Owen Bryant-Molyneux Hana Strack	25 Rich Greene Darryl Christopher Payne Dondra Hayes Ashley Ruys Jessica Tonge Davis Nunneley
3 Warren Williams Richard Turner James Vaught Thomas Clower William Bryan, III Hollie Hollis Caroline Howard Sarah McDuffie Elliot Dennis Dale Williams	10 Margot Graettinger Philip Lamson Bobby Mays Laura Giles Seth Mellen, IV Westlin Gifford Mary Fields Riley Fields	18 Roy Walton, Sr. Sue Crawford Jim Winer Sharla Jackson Beth Shorthouse Amy Duckwall William Fry George Smalley	26 Nancy Howard Michele Southwell Fielding Arnold Addie Eiland Ethan Richards
4 Susan Duckwall Mark Turner Mitchell Harbin Hannah Latham McKay Johnson	11 Snow Benedict Jeff Ashworth Geoff Halsema Dwayne Turner Susanna Roberts Haley Carr	19 Ginny Sikes Erica Brown Jeffrey Glover Wytch Rigger Sydney Marie Jones Ryan Nelson Penelope Matthews	27 Barbara Culmer-Illaw Mary Hair Graham Elizabeth Murphy Don Rigger, Jr. Ellie Satterwhite
5 Bob Wicker Chase Brock	12 Tom Claiborne, Jr. Denise Neely Liz Portwood Poncie Ansley Austin Bryan John O. Izlar Chase Kiseljack, IV	20 Jack Noland Emma Kate Tinsley Brad Currey Annie Mabley Amy Doyle Peter Duncan	28 Mary Ball Sharon McClure John Earles Richard Rowe, Jr Marcus Evans Mason Turner Nina Petiot
6 Jeff Hopper Flavia Gunter George Norman Matt Boyer Sarah Cook Scott McLeod Tommy Davis	13 Becca Eiland Frank Fernandez Kim Nelson Caitlin McClure Price O'Keeffe	21 Annie Mabley Amy Doyle Peter Duncan Chris Copley Marie Holbein Judi Holley Del Hawkins Claire Marie Huff Steely Hawkins, III Henry Portwood, Jr. Genevieve Johnson	29 Austin Bunch Paul Izlar Elaine Ward Conner Ball Holly Byrd Kortney Watkins Jasmin Cunningham Grace Lockhart Ryan Richards
7 Jennifer McCoy Angela Barringer Rod Ganske Allie Horne Zannie Fooshee Bob Fooshee	14 Carolyn Hollingsworth Meg Prince Scott Johnson-Tews CJ Finan, Jr 15 Elaine Fendt Stephanie Hillhouse Penson Sherrill 16 Al Sherrod Bonita Wright	22 Chris Copley Marie Holbein Judi Holley Del Hawkins Claire Marie Huff Steely Hawkins, III Henry Portwood, Jr. Genevieve Johnson 23 Rachel Wright Russell Currey Joy Ward Luke Hutchison 24 Beau Weidman, III Vincent Dobbs, Jr.	30 Grif Griffith Emily Huie Kinley Roberts Leela Mehta Van Lanier

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Caroline Fooshee	Ray Uttenhove
David Gillon	John Zintak

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