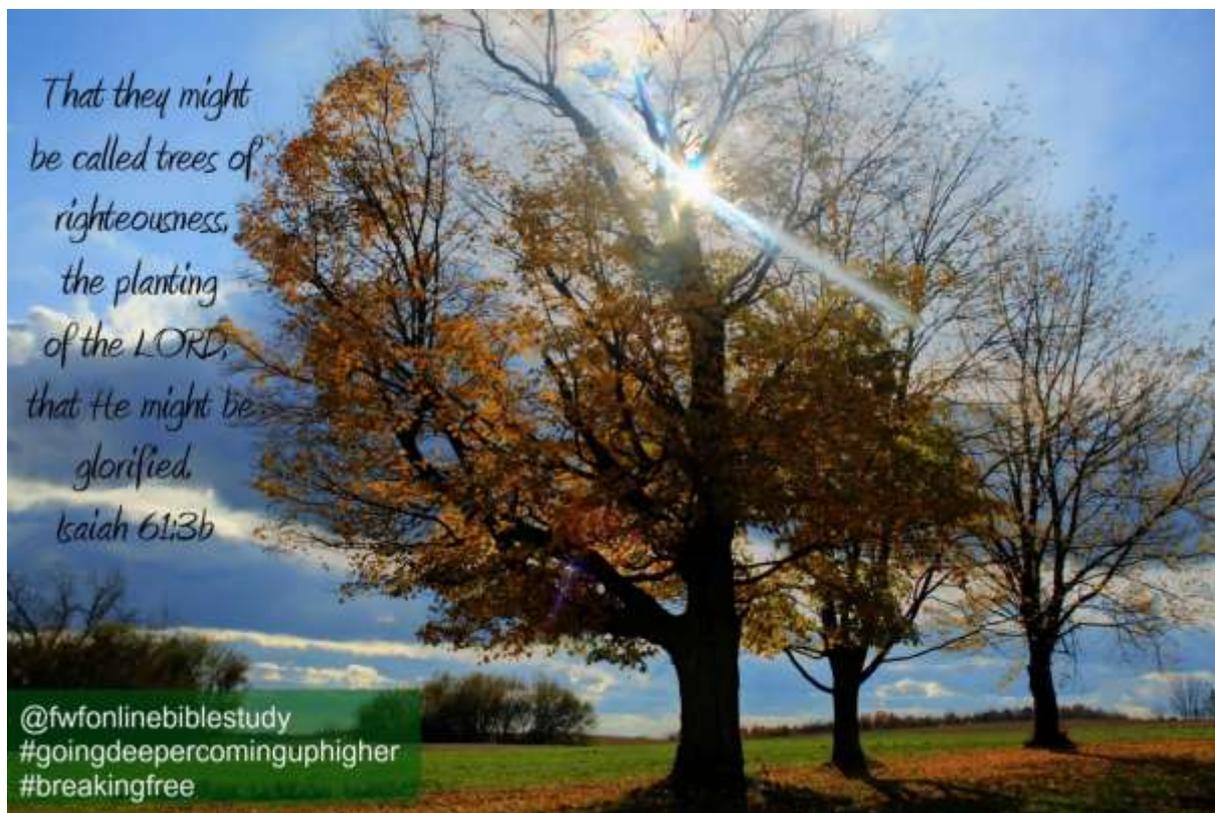


*This Sunday at St. Luke's Blue Ridge  
January 3, 2020*

**One service 9:30 a.m., MANY WORSHIP OPTIONS:  
In-church, in-pavilion, drive-in and online**

## **The Second Sunday after Christmas**



This Sunday's Focus

**Be a Tree!**

**(one of God's plantings)**

It's that time of year. As soon as we flip the page of the calendar to another year – especially for those brought up in the country – thoughts of seeds and planting begin. Often such thoughts are encouraged by the

(Continued on next page)

arrival of seed and nursery catalogues in the mail. Today's Epistle (actually an Old Testament passage) has a horticultural reference. Here, God's people are called to be 'trees of righteousness'. What a lovely image. Trees, especially stately oaks, represent strength and stability. They also provide an important service: they give shade in the summer time. If you think about it, are not the same qualities required of Christians? You and I are called to stand sure and strong in the midst of the winds of culture, a culture that has set itself up in opposition to God and His precepts. We are also called to provide a place of shade for the weary. "Come stand under my branches and find peace and rest," we call out to those who race by in the pursuit of things which will never satisfy. Resolve to be an oak, a planting of the Lord, in 2021

### *The Collect for Christmas 2*

ALMIGHTY God, who hast poured upon us the new light of thine incarnate Word; Grant that the same light enkindled in our hearts may shine forth in our lives; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

### *The Collect for Christmas*

ALMIGHTY God, who hast given us thy only-begotten Son to take our nature upon him, and as at this time to be born of a pure virgin: Grant that we being regenerate, and made thy children by adoption and grace. may daily be renewed by thy Holy Spirit; through the same our Lord Jesus Christ, who liveth and reigneth with thee and the same Spirit ever, one God, world without end. Amen.

### **FOR THE EPISTLE – Isaiah 61:1-3 (RSV)**

*The beginning of God's new day*

<sup>1</sup>The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me,  
because the Lord has anointed me  
to bring good tidings to the afflicted;  
he has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted,  
to proclaim liberty to the captives,  
and the opening of the prison to those who are bound;  
<sup>2</sup>to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour,  
and the day of vengeance of our God;  
to comfort all who mourn;  
<sup>3</sup>to grant to those who mourn in Zion—  
to give them a garland instead of ashes,  
the oil of gladness instead of mourning,  
the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit;

that they may be called oaks of righteousness,  
the planting of the Lord, that he may be glorified.

NOTE: Here is the first stanza of a poem on the good tidings of salvation to Zion (61:1-11). We associate the description with the Lord and His ministry. The poetically stated objective of this ministry contains these provocative words: “that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord.” (William Sydnor)

## **THE GOSPEL (H.C.) – St. Matthew 2:19-23 (J.B. Phillips)**

*Jesus is brought to Nazareth*

<sup>19-20</sup> But after Herod’s death an angel of the Lord again appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, “Now get up and take the infant and his mother with you and go into the land of Israel. For those who sought the child’s life are dead.”

<sup>21-23</sup> So Joseph got up and took the little child and his mother with him and journeyed towards the land of Israel. But when he heard that Archelaus was now reigning as king of Judea in the place of his father Herod, he was afraid to enter the country. Then he received warning in a dream to turn aside into the district of Galilee and came to live in a small town called Nazareth—thus fulfilling the old prophecy, that he should be called a Nazarene.

NOTE: The account of the flight of the Holy Family into Egypt and of their return might be thought of in terms of Isaiah 52:2—“he grows up before him as a tender plant, and as a root of a dry ground.” (William Sydnor)

## **OLD TESTAMENT LESSON – Isaiah 44:1-8, 21-23 (RSV)**

*God’s Blessing on Israel*

- 44 “But now hear, O Jacob my servant,  
Israel whom I have chosen!  
2 Thus says the LORD who made you,  
who formed you from the womb and will help you:  
Fear not, O Jacob my servant,  
Jesh’urun whom I have chosen.  
3 For I will pour water on the thirsty land,  
and streams on the dry ground;  
I will pour my Spirit upon your descendants,  
and my blessing on your offspring.  
4 They shall spring up like grass amid waters,  
like willows by flowing streams.  
5 This one will say, ‘I am the LORD’s,’  
another will call himself by the name of Jacob,  
and another will write on his hand, ‘The LORD’s,’  
and surname himself by the name of Israel.”  
6 Thus says the LORD, the King of Israel  
and his Redeemer, the LORD of hosts:

“I am the first and I am the last;  
besides me there is no god.  
7 Who is like me? Let him proclaim it,  
let him declare and set it forth before me.  
Who has announced from of old the things to come?[b]  
Let them tell us what is yet to be.  
8 Fear not, nor be afraid;  
have I not told you from of old and declared it?  
And you are my witnesses!  
Is there a God besides me?  
There is no Rock; I know not any.”

*Israel Is Not Forgotten*

21 Remember these things, O Jacob,  
and Israel, for you are my servant;  
I formed you, you are my servant;  
O Israel, you will not be forgotten by me.  
22 I have swept away your transgressions like a cloud,  
and your sins like mist;  
return to me, for I have redeemed you.  
23 Sing, O heavens, for the Lord has done it;  
shout, O depths of the earth;  
break forth into singing, O mountains,  
O forest, and every tree in it!  
For the Lord has redeemed Jacob,  
and will be glorified in Israel.

NOTE: This passage is part of two poems. God’s people are the plantings of the Lord. Because He pours His spirit upon them they shall spring up like willows by flowing streams” (vv. 3-4). Again, we see that in their redemption God will be glorified. (Williams Sydnor)

## **The Second Sunday after Christmas**

9:30 a.m.

This Sunday’s Focus

**Be a Tree!**

**(one of God’s plantings)**

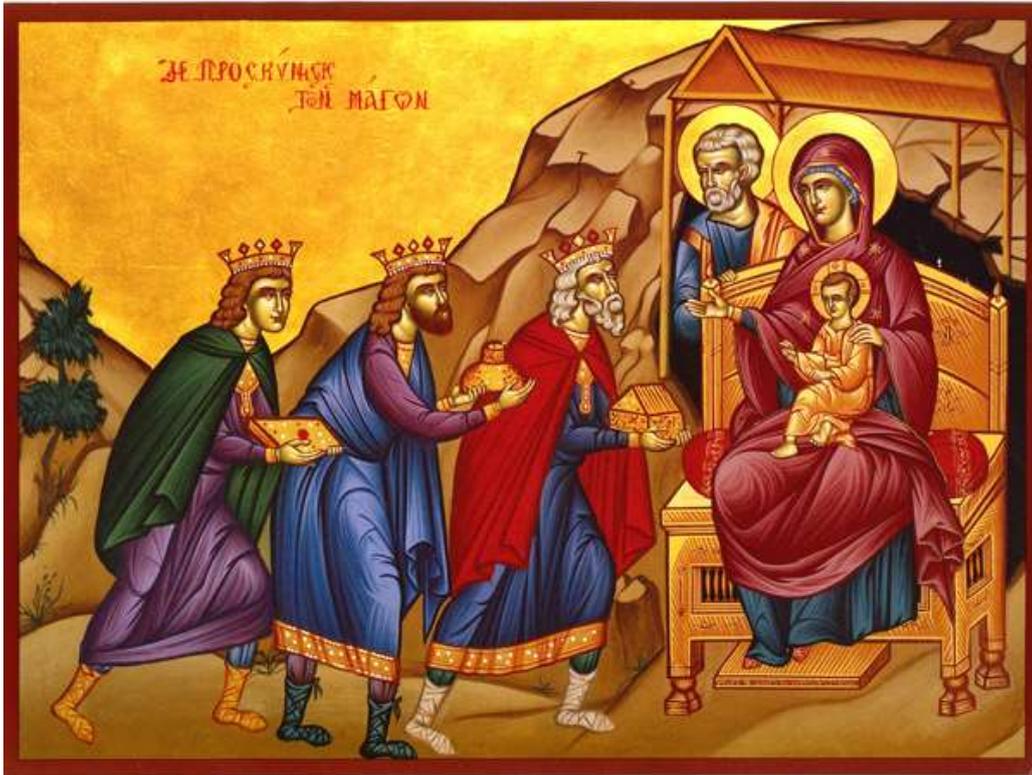
**The Rector will be this week’s preacher.**

## **Sunday Worship Options**

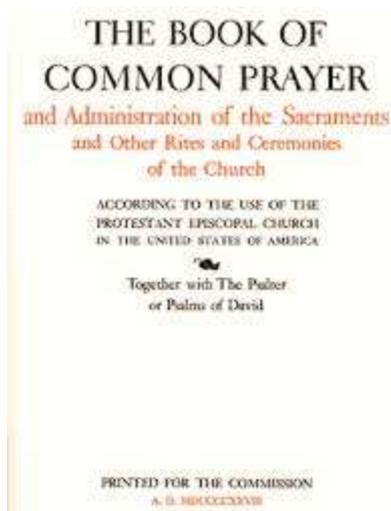
1. **In-church.** Those who wish to worship in the church are asked to seat in designated areas to ensure social distancing.
2. **Drive-in.** Those choosing this option are asked to remain in their automobile and listen to the service via their car radio (FM 98.1). Holy Communion will be delivered to cars in plastic bags.
3. **In-pavilion.** As the weather becomes warmer, a speaker has been set up in the church pavilion. Those choosing this option should space themselves out. Dogs are welcomed if kept quiet and under control.
4. **Online.** Services will continue to be live-streamed on Facebook and available for viewing following the service on You Tube. To access both

put “Parish Church of St. Luke, Blue Ridge, Ga.” in the search bar.

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Holy Communion  
**The Feast of the Epiphany**  
Wednesday, January 6  
12 noon  
(online & in person)

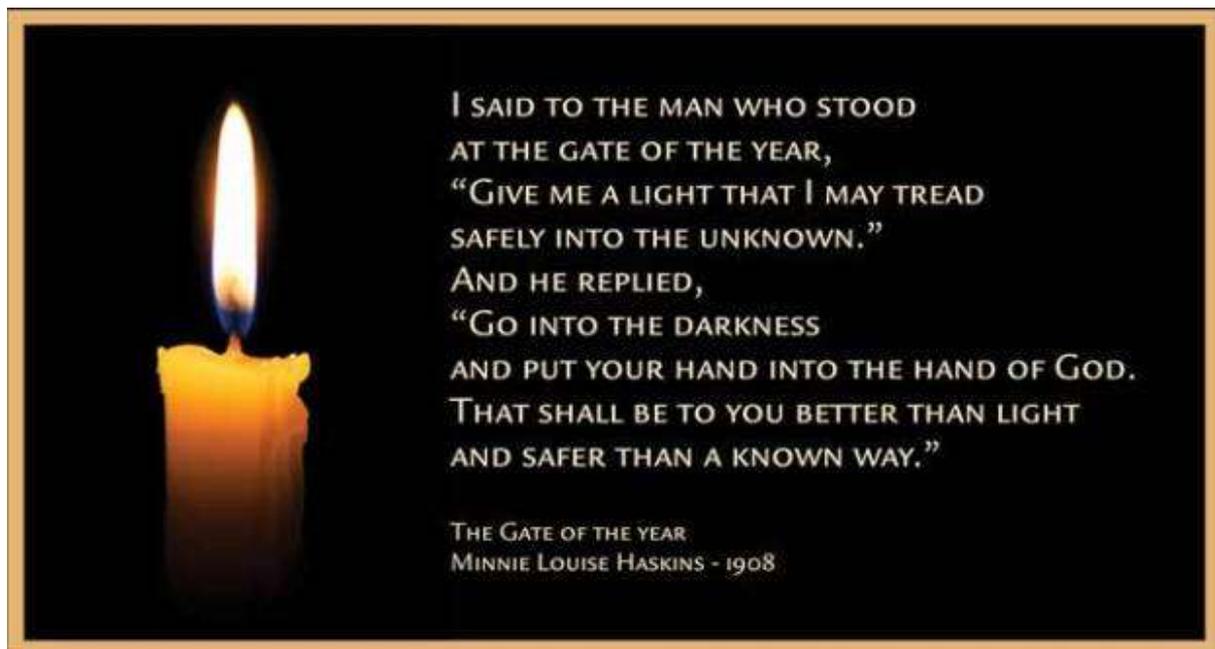


## NEED A PRAYER BOOK?

The Book of Common Prayer is a treasury of religious devotion. While in no way replacing the Bible, it turns the Bible into prayer, teaching God's people to think and pray biblically and Christianly. If you don't have one of your own or would like to share this treasure with a friend, call the church office [(706) 632-8245] to secure a copy of a new paperback edition.

These books are being mailed free to anyone in St. Luke's online congregation who requests one. Voluntary donations to assist with our online

ministry are appreciated.



## OUR MISSION

*St. Luke's mission is to grow spiritually in the knowledge and love of Jesus Christ and in the fellowship of the Holy Spirit and to share our faith, our hands and hearts for the sake of the Gospel, our community and the world.*

## Financial Pledge for the Year of our Lord 2021

*As stewards of God's gifts and in gratitude for all blessings, I pledge the following amount to the work of Christ through St. Luke's Church for 2021.*

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Amount \_\_\_\_\_

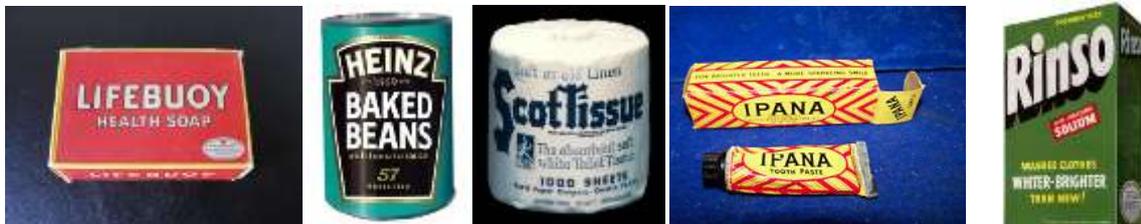
\_\_\_\_\_ Weekly \_\_\_\_\_ Monthly \_\_\_\_\_ Yearly

(Please tick the appropriate blank)

*Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him to store, as God has prospered him.*

1

## REMEMBER THE NEEDY EVERY TIME YOU COME TO CHURCH



*Please bring one or more item for the needy -- paper, soap products, tinned and dried food, etc. Leave in Narthex. Items will be distributed through North Georgia*

## *Community Action Agency*



### **NEW SIGN-UP SHEET FOR 2021 IS AVAILABLE**

A sign-up sheet for Altar flowers is available in Thomason Hall for 2020.  
Please sign up for days you wish to commemorate.

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St. Luke's Church, "The Parish Church of the Mountains," 7 Ewing St., (POB 1821),  
Blue Ridge, Georgia 30513; [\(706\) 632-8245](tel:(706)632-8245);  
[www.stlukesblueridge.org](http://www.stlukesblueridge.org); [stlukes@tds.net](mailto:stlukes@tds.net).