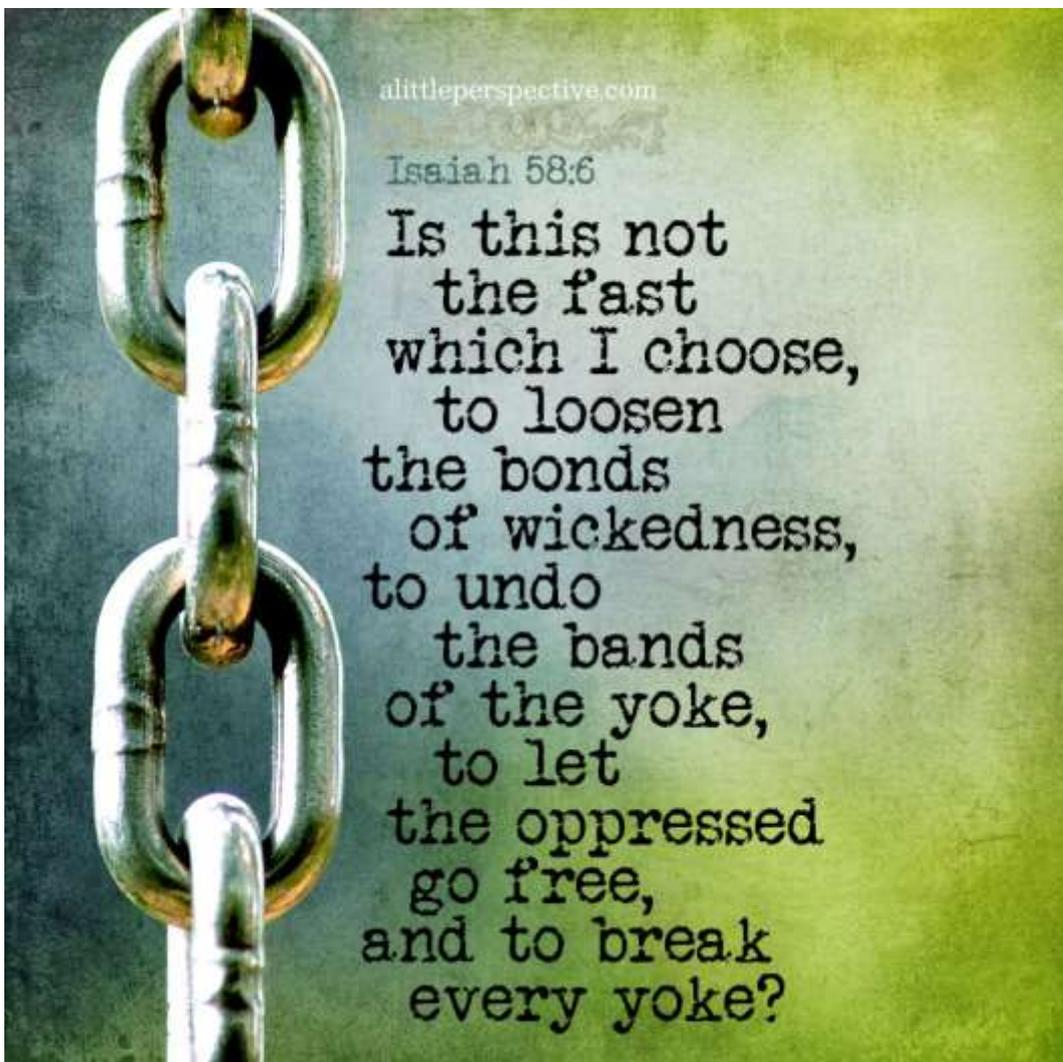


*This Sunday at St. Luke's Blue Ridge
February 21, 2021*

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

The First Sunday in Lent



Worship that is real.

John Calvin famously said “the human heart is a perpetual idol factory.” His observation has been born out in history. It is possible to get worship wrong. It may not be that we set up actual physical representations of false deities in our homes and churches, but that we zealously go about offering worship to the real

God – the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ – but that we offer it outwardly and not inwardly. Such worship never penetrates to the heart and causes us to do the things God commands. Lent and all the little things people give up may fall into this category. Let us, therefore, hear and heed what God says about the worship He desires as delivered by Isaiah in today’s Old Testament reading. (VHM)

THE COLLECT FOR LENT 1

O LORD, who for our sake didst fast forty days and forty nights; Give us grace to use such abstinence, that, our flesh being subdued to the Spirit, we may ever obey thy godly motions in righteousness, and true holiness, to thy honour and glory, who livest and reignest with the Father and the Holy Ghost, one God, world without end. *Amen.*

THE COLLECT FOR THE SEASON

ALMIGHTY and everlasting God, who hatest nothing that thou hast made, and dost forgive the sins of all those who are penitent; Create and make in us new and contrite hearts, that we, worthily lamenting our sins and acknowledging our wretchedness. may obtain of thee, the God of all mercy, perfect remission and forgiveness; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

THE EPISTLE – 2 Corinthians 6:1-10 (J.B. Phillips)

The hard but glorious life of God’s ministers

6 ¹⁻² As co-operators with God himself we beg, you then, not to fail to use the grace of God. For God’s word is—‘In an acceptable time I have heard you, and in the day of salvation I have helped you’. Now is the “acceptable time”, and this very day is the “day of salvation”.

³⁻¹⁰ As far as we are concerned we do not wish to stand in anyone’s way, nor do we wish to bring discredit on the ministry God has given us. Indeed we want to prove ourselves genuine ministers of God whatever we have to go through—patient endurance of troubles or even disasters, being flogged or imprisoned; being mobbed, having to work like slaves, having to go without food or sleep. All this we want to meet with sincerity, with insight and patience; by sheer kindness and the Holy Spirit; with genuine love, speaking the plain truth, and living by the power of God. Our sole defence, our only weapon, is a life of integrity, whether we meet honour or dishonour, praise or blame. Called “impostors” we must be true, called “nobodies” we must be in the public eye. Never far from death, yet here we are alive, always “going through it” yet never “going under”. We know sorrow, yet our joy is inextinguishable. We have “nothing to bless ourselves with” yet we bless many others with true riches. We are penniless, and yet in reality we have everything worth having.

NOTE: The apostle points out that the ministers of reconciliation are workers together with Christ and have a pressing, present responsibility regarding diligence and discipline, on the one hand, and winsomeness of spirit, on the other. This kind of joyous yet serious Christian is equipped to face the various demands of daily relationships. (William Sydnor)

THE GOSPEL (H.C.) – St. Matthew 4:1-11 (J.B. Phillips)

Jesus faces temptation alone in the desert

4 ¹⁻² Then Jesus was led by the Spirit up into the desert, to be tempted by the devil. After a fast of forty days and nights he was very hungry.

³ “If you really are the Son of God,” said the tempter, coming to him, “tell these stones to turn into loaves.”

⁴ Jesus answered, “The scripture says ‘Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God’.”

⁵⁻⁶ Then the devil took him to the holy city, and set him on the highest ledge of the Temple. “If you really are the Son of God,” he said, “Throw yourself down. For the scripture says—‘He shall give his angels charge concerning you,’ and ‘In their hands they shall bear you up, lest you dash your foot against a stone’.”

⁷ “Yes,” retorted Jesus, “and the scripture also says ‘You shall not tempt the Lord your God’.”

⁸⁻⁹ Once again the devil took him to a very high mountain, and from there showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their magnificence. “Everything there I will give you,” he said to him, “if you will fall down and worship me.”

¹⁰ “Away with you, Satan!” replied Jesus, “the scripture says, ‘You shall worship the Lord your God, and him only you shall serve’.”

¹¹ Then the devil let him alone, and the angels came to him and took care of him.

NOTE: This is the dramatic picture of our Lord’s temptations before He began His ministry. Here we see the ancient religious practice of fasting in proper perspective: as an aid to spiritual devotions. (William Sydnor)

OLD TESTAMENT LESSON – Isaiah 58 (RSV)

False and True Worship

58 “Cry aloud, spare not,
lift up your voice like a trumpet;
declare to my people their transgression,
to the house of Jacob their sins.

² Yet they seek me daily,
and delight to know my ways,
as if they were a nation that did righteousness
and did not forsake the ordinance of their God;
they ask of me righteous judgments,
they delight to draw near to God.

³ ‘Why have we fasted, and thou seest it not?’

Why have we humbled ourselves, and thou takest no knowledge of it?’
Behold, in the day of your fast you seek your own pleasure,
and oppress all your workers.

⁴ Behold, you fast only to quarrel and to fight
and to hit with wicked fist.

Fasting like yours this day
will not make your voice to be heard on high.

⁵ Is such the fast that I choose,
a day for a man to humble himself?
Is it to bow down his head like a rush,
and to spread sackcloth and ashes under him?

Will you call this a fast,
and a day acceptable to the Lord?

⁶ “Is not this the fast that I choose:
to loose the bonds of wickedness,
to undo the thongs of the yoke,
to let the oppressed go free,
and to break every yoke?

⁷ Is it not to share your bread with the hungry,
and bring the homeless poor into your house;
when you see the naked, to cover him,
and not to hide yourself from your own flesh?

⁸ Then shall your light break forth like the dawn,
and your healing shall spring up speedily;
your righteousness shall go before you,
the glory of the Lord shall be your rear guard.

⁹ Then you shall call, and the Lord will answer;
you shall cry, and he will say, Here I am.

“If you take away from the midst of you the yoke,
the pointing of the finger, and speaking wickedness,

¹⁰ if you pour yourself out for the hungry
and satisfy the desire of the afflicted,
then shall your light rise in the darkness
and your gloom be as the noonday.

¹¹ And the Lord will guide you continually,
and satisfy your desire with good things,
and make your bones strong;
and you shall be like a watered garden,
like a spring of water,
whose waters fail not.

¹² And your ancient ruins shall be rebuilt;
you shall raise up the foundations of many generations;

you shall be called the repairer of the breach,
the restorer of streets to dwell in.
13 “If you turn back your foot from the sabbath,
from doing your pleasure on my holy day,
and call the sabbath a delight
and the holy day of the Lord honorable;
if you honor it, not going your own ways,
or seeking your own pleasure, or talking idly;
14 then you shall take delight in the Lord,
and I will make you ride upon the heights of the earth;
I will feed you with the heritage of Jacob your father,
for the mouth of the Lord has spoken.”

NOTE: In this passage God addresses His prophet and through him the people. Fasting is used as a symbol of all of man’s religious practices. An active concern for the needs of others is more pleasing to God than spiritual acts of self-improvement which lead to self-righteousness. (William Sydnor)

The First Sunday in Lent

9:30 a.m.

This Sunday’s Focus

Worship that is real

The Rev. Ronald O. Wikander 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 YouTube. To access both put “Parish Church of St. Luke, Blue Ridge, Ga.” in the search bar.

AARP FREE TAX SERVICE

AARP tax assistance will be held at St. Luke’s beginning Friday, Feb. 5. Because of COVID regulation, appointments are required. Please call Stephanie Laven at 770-312-2258 for more information.

LENTEN AND EASTER STUDY

“The Bible Course”

Feb. 24- Apr. 14

Big, complex, old ... just some of the words people use to describe the Bible. Sound familiar? That’s where *The Bible Course* comes in.

The course will increase your confidence, equip you to read the Bible better and help you to see its relevance to daily life. The course provides a birds-eye view of the world’s bestselling book. Sessions are from 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. beginning Wednesday, Feb. 24, and will be held in the Church Proper (with social distancing). A Zoom session will be held at 6 p.m. on Wednesdays. A preview of the course is available at:

<https://www.biblesociety.org.uk/explore-the-bible/the-bible-course/>

Those planning on participating are asked to call or email the church office so a course manual can be provided. A voluntary donation of \$5 per manual is suggested. A sign-up sheet and envelop for donations can be found in the narthex. Deadline for ordering a manual is Feb. 14.

BEGINNING WEDNESDAY, FEB. 24 . . .

Informative • Lively • Relevant
• Interactive

Eight Weekly Sessions Exploring the World’s Bestseller



Wednesdays, Feb. 24 - Apr. 14
11:30 – 12:30 a.m.

St. Luke's Church

The Parish Church of the Mountains

Blue Ridge, Georgia

(706) 632-8245

www.stlukesblueridge.org

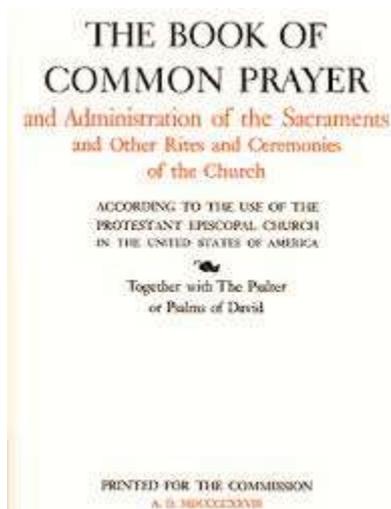
stlukes@tds.net

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.



NEW SIGN-UP SHEET FOR 2021 IS AVAILABLE

A sign-up sheet for Altar flowers is available in Thomason Hall for 2021. Please sign up for days you wish to commemorate. Flowers are needed for Jan. 31 (Septuagesima).

St. Luke's Church, "The Parish Church of the Mountains," 7 Ewing St., (POB 1821), Blue Ridge, Georgia 30513; [\(706\) 632-8245](tel:7066328245); www.stlukesblueridge.org; stlukes@tds.net.