St. Luke’s Episcopal Church

Search for Our Next Rector

JANUARY 2022

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St. Luke’s Episcopal Church
1270 Poplar
Denver, CO 80220
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An Invitation

Welcome to St. Luke’s Episcopal Church!

Thank you for your interest in St. Luke’s, an Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Colorado, located in the Montclair neighborhood in the northeast Denver metropolitan area. We welcome all God’s people to our community. Our worship is uplifting and joyful and rooted in tradition; our ministries are varied and strive to reach all generations and those in need.

This profile tells our story, describing who we have been, who we are, and who God is calling us to be. Like many churches, St. Luke’s has many strengths, but is not without challenges. We pride ourselves on our resilience, and we believe that God has given us much to do to restore and re-engage the members of our church and our community as we emerge from a time of transition during the COVID pandemic.

We seek a rector who will help us as we do the work of realizing the opportunities and challenges that lie before us. We are looking for a leader who will walk with us and shepherd us into the future.
Our Mission

St. Luke’s is a loving, joyful, and inclusive community, embodying Jesus’ love and presence to all.

Our Journey

St. Luke’s was founded as a chapel for Jarvis Hall, an Episcopal boys’ military school, which was originally constructed in 1869 near Golden, Colorado, and subsequently moved to the site of the present-day Lowry neighborhood. The cornerstone for St. Luke’s Episcopal Church was laid on June 11, 1890, at the corner of 13th St. and Quebec St., Denver. The first service was held on October 18, 1890, St. Luke’s Day. In 1912, St. Luke’s was made a parish and called its first rector. The shape of St. Luke’s changed gradually over the next several decades. Church membership surged in the 1950s, so a new remodeling project began in 1960. The footprint of the building was transformed into a U-shape with the open end to the west, and a courtyard with Columbarium was built in that open area in 1975. In that same year, St. Luke’s was designated a historic Denver Landmark, in recognition of its importance to the local history and for its distinctive architectural style. The parking lot on the east side of the building fronting Quebec Street was expanded and resurfaced and landscaping was added in 1990. In 2020, St. Luke’s commissioned a Historic Structure Assessment (HSA), which identified several major and minor issues with the physical plant and suggested remedies to those problems. The HSA will allow St. Luke’s to apply in the future for historic preservation grants.

Who We Are

Strengths and Challenges

St. Luke’s is a lively and resilient congregation. We have faced troubling times throughout our long history as a parish and learned from those challenges. During the last two years, we have persevered in the face of a global pandemic, a burglary, and the departure of our rector. Our leadership and people adapted quickly to a virtual environment and purchased new audio-visual equipment and lighting so we could live-stream our worship services and educational programs to keep us connected.

In 2020, a break-in occurred at St. Luke’s: items were taken, and the altar was damaged. Fortunately, the Vestry engaged in a thoughtful process to find the right person to repair the damage, and it was done quickly and well. Measures were taken to avoid such incidences in the future, including the installation of a new security system with...
electronic locks. Our recently formed Preparedness/Safety Committee, with very strong lay leadership, took charge and completed a thorough safety assessment of the building and grounds. They prepared a comprehensive Preparedness Plan, which fulfilled a Diocesan requirement and further enhanced our safety.

Upkeep and maintenance on our historic physical plant is challenging and costly, but we found the means to provide a well-lit, warm, and welcoming space for parishioners and visitors. In the last few months, we have moved from worshiping and connecting online to a hybrid model of worship with in-person Eucharist. We have purchased the necessary equipment so that we can offer Bible studies, book discussions, and other educational programs in person and live streaming. St. Luke’s has worked hard to stay connected with our parishioners during this challenging time. We look forward to the time when all may feel comfortable worshiping and communing in person again. We are also discerning what the near future will look like at St. Luke’s: which ministries we will retain, which we will phase out, and which we will combine with other ministries to regain and strengthen a healthy and vibrant church community.

St. Luke’s has been blessed with enviable stability in the tenure of our rectors, with six rectors and two interim rectors serving the parish between 1944 and 2021. The Rev. Janet Oller was called as Interim Rector in July 2021.

**Ministry Profiles**

Christian Formation at St. Luke’s is a journey, a journey that embraces many paths, each path leading to individually defined Christian ministry, in keeping with our baptismal covenant (BCP 305): “Will you proclaim by word and example the Good News of God in Christ?” The objective of St. Luke’s Christian Formation program is to engage children and adults in meaningful opportunities for spiritual education and fulfillment.

We have a Nursery for newborns to age 3. Church School is offered for children and youth of the parish, ages 3 to 18. During the COVID-19 pandemic, St. Luke’s Christian Formation program encountered a formidable challenge. Between March 2020 and summer 2021, all in-house worship and programs, including Church School and Adult Education, were presented virtually using the ZOOM electronic platform. Despite these
challenges, Church School and Adult Education endured and, in some cases, even thrived. Many opportunities are now offered with a hybrid model of in-person and virtual involvement.

Attendance in Church School at St. Luke’s has declined over the last several years, as shown in the chart below. We do not have data for 2020 and 2021 because we were live-streaming class sessions. Fewer families join us each Sunday for worship, which affects Church School attendance. Nevertheless, our Church School program serves our children well, even with declining attendance. We hope that our next rector can help and encourage us to search energetically for ways to attract families to St. Luke’s and revitalize our Church School and youth programs.

Following up on what has become an annual tradition at St. Luke’s, we held a no-rehearsal Christmas Pageant during the family service at 5 p.m. Children dressed in their favorite animal or angel costume, and the entire congregation participated enthusiastically in the story of Jesus’ birth.
The Covid-19 pandemic presented significant challenges for the Adult Education program. Our classes could not meet in person, but the ZOOM platform offered a way to engage members of St. Luke’s and other congregations with interesting and challenging classes. St. Luke’s clergy and lay leaders met these challenges and presented intellectually and spiritually challenging classes on a broad spectrum of topics on Sunday and throughout the week. We continued our interfaith study and fellowship with our Jewish friends from Congregation Rodef Shalom. St. Luke’s and Rodef Shalom have successfully collaborated on topics of mutual interest for the last five years and our studies together will continue in 2022. Our Adult Education programs are thought provoking, engaging, and welcoming. We enjoy fellowship with our Christian and Jewish partners in faith, and we are physically and spiritually nourished.

A group of parishioners has faithfully been gathering for several years in the morning during the week for fellowship, contemplation, and Lectio Divina, to check in with each other and engage in conversation with God in Scripture. In their way, they are building up the communion of saints/the body of Christ in our brave new world.
Below is a brief review of other events that occurred at St. Luke’s this past year.

Blessing of the Animals is a traditional Episcopal service that St. Luke’s has enjoyed with our neighbors for years. This year we welcomed Chip from Longhopes Donkey Shelter as a special guest. We raised $361 in a goodwill offering to support their work.

We needed to shred excess paper and also to recycle electronics. We offered our neighbors a chance to bring their excess paper and electronics. Everybody benefitted.

Worship is integral to St. Luke’s – not limited to Sundays. This year we celebrated on Sundays, and in honor of the 20th Anniversary of September 11th. We also celebrated the Feast of St. Michael’s, a special day for St. Luke’s.

A Little Free Library was installed on the front lawn of St. Luke’s. It was dedicated, blessed, and filled with books between services on September 19.
St. Luke’s has an outstanding Outreach program. We understand that the mission of the church also lies outside our parish. An always-generous congregation widely supports our Outreach mission. We have an active Outreach ministries program that is funded outside our annual operating budget. The Outreach Committee is made up of interested and committed lay persons. The Committee has identified a group of core ministries that receive cash support from Outreach funds and, for several, regular in-kind contributions from parishioners. Currently, these ministries include:

- **National Alliance on Mental Illness**
- **St. Francis Center**
- **Capital Hill United Ministries, The Women’s Homelessness Initiative**
- **Aurora Interfaith Community Services**
- **Ashley Elementary School**
- **Gateway Women’s Shelter**
- **Project Angel Heart**
- **Colfax Community Network**
- **Lutheran Family Services**
- **Lenten Sock Drive**

For the future, we will be looking for ways to partner with neighboring organizations and invite our greater community into service with St. Luke’s. It is our hope to have more hands-on activities and especially ones that engage the community outside our doors.
Worship Service Schedule

Before the pandemic, St. Luke’s had two Sunday morning worship services, one at 7:45 a.m. and the second at 10:15 a.m. During the height of the pandemic, we migrated to a single service at 10:00 a.m. As the effects of the pandemic began to decline in 2021, we moved first to an in-person gathering at 10:00 a.m. in St. Michael’s Courtyard and then eventually to in-person gathering in the Church at 10:00 a.m. (with participants spaced appropriately and wearing masks). This service was live streamed for those who could not or chose not to attend in person. Finally, by summer 2021, we resumed both services at 7:45 and 10:15 a.m. with distribution of the bread and wine (in individual cups). Our 7:45 AM service is mostly spoken and held in person only. The 10:15 a.m. service includes the St. Luke’s Choir and is streamed live to our YouTube channel. Coffee & Formation Hour is at 9:00 a.m. In early 2022, we are facing a new variant of COVID, so it remains to be seen how we will adjust to these new circumstances.

Church Membership and Financials

St. Luke’s membership, Average Sunday Attendance (ASA) and financial details are summarized graphically in the following charts. Membership and ASA have markedly fluctuated over the last eight years, influenced by a myriad of factors.

![Graph showing membership fluctuations from 2013 to 2020]
How We Have Adapted During COVID

A Re-opening and Vaccination survey was sent to parishioners of St. Luke’s during the summer of 2021. We received a final total of 77 responses, which represented a respectable 32 percent return rate, from a mix of household and individuals. The survey results were encouraging, as summarized below.

- Most people surveyed were engaged in hybrid worship, in person or online.
- More than 85 percent of the respondents indicated that they would return to worship and 71 percent indicated that they would return to Christian Formation events and social gatherings.
- More than 58 percent of the respondents favored the resumption of two Sunday services.
- For parishioners with children, 62 percent thought it was safe to send their children to Church School and 64 percent thought it was safe to leave their children in the nursery.

St. Luke’s has done well to comply with mask, spacing, and vaccination mandates while remaining hospitable and welcoming. When we were able, we reopened with two in-person worship services, the choir returned at the second service, and we continued to offer online/live streaming worship. Most parishioners appreciate the transparency and attention to health and safety.
Where is God Calling Us?

To assist us in determining our vision for the future of St. Luke’s, we commissioned a questionnaire survey and convened several focus groups towards the end of 2021. We found the results to be valuable and instructive.

Questionnaire Survey

The survey consisted of 17 questions and were sent to the congregation on November 19, 2021. An electronic version of the survey was distributed through the weekly eNews and the church website, and hard copies were made available to homebound parishioners or to individuals who did not wish to complete the electronic version. The survey closed on November 30. A total of 66 individuals responded to the survey. The results were appraised, and the following conclusions were drawn.

Nearly half of the respondents are well educated with post-graduate or advanced degrees, and more than half do not have children (under 18) in their household. A small number of young people (under 18) acknowledged that they come to church “To learn about God” and to be with people of their own age.

When asked what drew them to St. Luke’s, most of the respondents cited the style of worship and community/fellowship as the most enticing factors. The responses to a question on how well St. Luke’s did during the COVID-19 were mostly positive, including such comments as “St. Luke’s was a faithful community” and “Implemented effective measures to remain in community” to “We did what we had to do.” Many were glad to be back in church when in-person services resumed. A smaller number of respondents were disappointed and felt isolated, with no sacraments and no interaction.

More than half of the respondents believe that St. Luke’s leaders display a spirit of faith, humility, and service. Many respondents noted that the parish keeps its members informed about the decision-making process and should continue to do so in the future. Communication is best served by email and the weekly Sunday Bulletin.

The last section of the survey focused on important qualities in a Rector. The most admired administrative quality is the ability to supervise staff. Many believed strongly that the Rector should preach inspiring sermons and be enthusiastic and energetic. Prior experience as a Rector is the least critical quality. Respondents want a Rector who welcomes racial/ethnic diversity and communicates well with members of all cultures.
A Rector who welcomes ALL people to partake in the Eucharist was ranked highly. Finally, the most important characteristics that people of St. Luke’s would like to see in our new Rector is someone who welcomes the diversity and inclusion of all people.

Focus Groups

Focus groups were convened on two successive Sundays in December 2021 following the 10:15 a.m. service. Six groups of six persons per group, including a member of the Search Committee and one member of the Vestry (who served as the scribe), met in different areas of the church. Each group was asked the following three questions:

1) **What is your best past experience at St. Luke’s and how does that inform your vision for St. Luke’s future?**

   St Luke’s has evolved into a church that is welcoming to all. The vision for St. Luke’s is to have a strong family-oriented church community, no matter what that family looks like, with a strong focus on fellowship and adult formation. Despite a dwindling number of children within the parish during the last decade, they remain a critical focus for the church, with a continued focus on their education and involvement in part of the liturgy.

2) **What are the positive aspects of St. Luke’s that could lead us into the future?**

   With a nineteenth century classic church architecture, our church community has continued to evolve into a more modern, tech savvy parish. In 2021, we have incorporated state of the art live stream access to service alongside in-person worship, with continued updating of our parish website.

3) **What do you look for in a priest?**

   We are looking for someone who is dynamic and interested in getting to know parishioners individually. Someone who is inclusive and will work towards a greater diversity within our community, ensuring that all are explicitly welcome. Someone who can empower the people to connect with our community with an outward focus. Our location is especially suited for this type of ministry.

From all indications, St. Luke’s is in a relatively healthy place, despite the challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic, a burglary, and the unexpected departure of our previous rector.
What We Seek in a Rector

- A rector who is a shepherd, not a savior; someone who is empowering and approachable, and who will help us provide more opportunities for groups to share in fellowship outside the Eucharist, while leading us toward expanding our outreach.
- An inspired preacher and teacher, who is gifted at pastoral care and can guide lay people in providing care to each other and the broader community.
- A collaborative and inspired leader and administrator, with a sense of humor and an appreciation of music and education as we journey together to celebrate and live out Jesus’ love.
A Great Place to Live

St. Luke’s is located in the northeast Denver metropolitan area. Colorado offers four gorgeous seasons and world-renowned recreational opportunities as well as professional sports, arts, and culture. The Denver Metro area is experiencing incredible growth with a variety of burgeoning industries that provide ample employment opportunities, ranging from retail and service to high tech careers. The area is home to award-winning school districts in nearby Arapahoe, Adams, Jefferson and Douglas counties. Denver’s natural and cultural amenities are remarkable. It is a beautiful place to live and work for everyone, regardless of their stage of life.

St. Luke’s is surrounded by several charming neighborhoods. The following table provides demographic information on seven neighborhoods that are within two miles of St. Luke’s. The residents of these neighborhoods are young (median age in the mid-30s), relatively affluent (average income of nearly $114,000), with a total population of over 216,000 and a sizable number of households with children (over 26,000).
St. Luke’s has a variety of gifts to offer the community. We dream of becoming a spiritual and community center of northeast Denver through the worship, education, and fellowship opportunities that we have to offer. We hope the new rector will work with us as we explore, invite, welcome, and connect.

### Demographics of Surrounding Communities (2021)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NEIGHBORHOOD</th>
<th>HOUSEHOLDS WITH CHILDREN</th>
<th>MEDIAN AGE</th>
<th>AVERAGE INCOME</th>
<th>TOTAL POPULATION</th>
<th>DISTANCE FROM ST. LUKE’S (miles)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>South Park Hill</td>
<td>3,738</td>
<td>36.5</td>
<td>$104,888</td>
<td>30,126</td>
<td>0.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hale</td>
<td>4,103</td>
<td>36.9</td>
<td>$128,604</td>
<td>36,483</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hilltop</td>
<td>1,213</td>
<td>36.9</td>
<td>$113,729</td>
<td>11,909</td>
<td>0.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Aurora</td>
<td>5,441</td>
<td>31.4</td>
<td>$55,368</td>
<td>42,807</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lowry</td>
<td>1,244</td>
<td>39.2</td>
<td>$143,148</td>
<td>9,545</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Park</td>
<td>6,659</td>
<td>35.3</td>
<td>$123,348</td>
<td>49,088</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Montclair</td>
<td>4,103</td>
<td>36.9</td>
<td>$128,604</td>
<td>36,483</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTALS</strong></td>
<td><strong>26,501</strong></td>
<td><strong>36.2</strong></td>
<td><strong>$113,956</strong></td>
<td><strong>216,441</strong></td>
<td><strong>0.7 (avg.)</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, [http://www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov)
The Diocese of Colorado

The Episcopal Diocese of Colorado spans 95 congregations, nine Diocesan institutions, and 100,000+ square miles throughout the majestic state of Colorado. The Right Reverend Kym Lucas has served as Bishop since 2018. Bishop Lucas is the first female, as well as the first African American bishop, in the 132-year history of the Diocese of Colorado. More information about the Episcopal Church in Colorado can be found at https://episcopalcolorado.org/.

Concluding Statement and Prayer

St. Luke’s is a vibrant parish that is dedicated to serving our congregation and our community and reaching out to those in need. We hope you are interested in growing with us. To apply, please send your cover letter, résumé, OTM portfolio, and links to two sermons (video preferred) to the Rev. Canon Vanessa Stickler Glass, Canon for Transition and Wellness, at vanessa@episcopalcolorado.org.

For the Mission of the Church

Everliving God, whose will it is that all should come to you through your Son Jesus Christ: Inspire our witness to him, that all may know the power of his forgiveness and the hope of his resurrection, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen. (Book of Common Prayer pg. 816)