

St. Luke's, Jamestown

What are some significant moments in the history of your church that have shaped its identity today?

St. Luke's has a long legacy of shaping and forming leaders for civic service in Jamestown and beyond. In addition to untold numbers of parishioners who have impacted not only our community, notable national leaders include: Reuben E. Fenton (NY governor; US senator); Robert H. Jackson (US Supreme Court Justice; US Chief Prosecutor at the Nuremberg War Crimes Trials); Charles E. Goodell (congressman; US senator; father of NFL Commissioner, Roger S. Goodell); and Stan Lundine (Jamestown mayor; congressman; NY lieutenant governor). Indeed, St. Luke's hosting Justice Jackson's funeral in October 1954 was the last time all sitting U.S. Supreme Court Justices gathered outside the Court at one time in the same location. Other significant moments in St. Luke's history include: (1) the founding in 1882 and



continuous operation of the St. Luke's Thrift Shop to provide donated, quality, gently-used clothing and household items to the community at give-away prices, and thereafter, donating over \$1 million to community charitable causes; (2) the creation of the Safe House in 1983—a facility for runaway and unhoused youth; (3) in recent years, taking a lead in welcoming and supporting immigrants to the community and offering services in Spanish; and (4) serving as an umbrella organization for critical grant-funded community programs such as New Neighbors Coalition and the Jamestown Farmers Markets, which extends the impact of the Church's loving ministry.

What makes your church unique in the region and the diocese?

St. Luke's Episcopal Church has stood as a downtown anchor on the corner of 4th and Main Streets for 180 years. A visionary community that erected its first building with a seating capacity of 340 despite having only 12 members, St. Luke's stands tall in the city as a beacon of faith, hope, love, and compassion through our Christ-centered outreach and civic service. St. Luke's stands not only at the center of downtown Jamestown, but it also serves as a crossroad linking the well-to-do of the wider community with the less well-off. Many parishioners drive over 20 minutes to arrive at St. Luke's, while others may walk from downtown apartments, and still others may come, having slept outside in our courtyard the night before. The current St. Luke's Church building, erected in 1894, is the third structure that has housed the congregation on this site. With its working, full-octave carillon of bells, St. Luke's iconic Clock Bell Tower has kept the city running on time for the past 130 years as its Westminster chime marks the quarter hours. St. Luke's has a history of long-termed Rectorships—since 1929, St. Luke's has only had five rectors (encompassing terms of 22, 25, 22, 12 years and with the current rector halfway through his 13th year). In

addition to long-serving Rectors, St. Luke's has a long history of raising up assisting clergy that serves its parish and the wider diocese. It is the only congregation that presently employs to full-time clergy. In 2022, St. Luke's and its Rector assumed responsibility of the Chapel of the Good Shepherd at the Chautauqua Institution.

What are the most vibrant ministries or strengths of your parish today?

St. Luke's is known as a church that serves its community. The St. Luke's facility is a hub of constant activity and a gathering place for the community. In addition to its own programming, St. Luke's serves as a community center with numerous non-profits and community agencies utilizing our facility (5 weekly recovery meetings, monthly concerts by the Chadakoin Chamber Ensemble, etc.). In addition to the Morning Prayer services offered daily, the weekly bible studies, the monthly Church of the Wild services, and our three weekend



Eucharist services, St. Luke's most noteworthy, vibrant ministries all are community outreach efforts that include the Thrift Shop, 4th Street Café, Monday Night Café, monthly Blue Bag collections, the Jamestown Farmers and Mobile Markets, and New Neighbors Coalition.

Describe a moment in your community's life when you felt the presence of the Holy Spirit moving among you. What made that moment possible?

St. Luke's is a church where the love of Christ abounds and the Holy Spirit moves continually in so many ways, especially during weekday (during the programmatic year) daily prayer, weekly Thursday Healing, Saturday Transcend contemplative Eucharist, Sunday 8:00 & 10:00am, and winter Service on the Ski Slopes services; monthly Church of the Wild and Kayak Mass services; as well as annual Tenebrae, Easter Vigil, Christmas Eve, Pride, Recovery Sunday, Veteran's Day, and Feast of St. Francis Blessing of the Animals services, to name but a few. Other notable times when we've felt the presence of the Holy Spirit moving amongst us include: (1) the interim search process for a new rector in 2012-2013, during which time intentional prayer and moving of the Holy Spirit throughout the entire process culminated in a result that only God could provide; (2) the summer reading



day camp held over four summers for disadvantaged grade-school children from a nearby public school that involved and inspired many parishioners, as well as community members, and positively impacted not only the children, but all who were involved—impelling the Jamestown Public School System to reinstate summer school after years of absence; and (3) in recent years, efforts unconditionally to welcome and

support immigrants in Jamestown by conducting 7 weddings in Spanish (among many other efforts).

How does your church engage with the local neighborhood, the civic life of your community, or diocesan and/or Episcopal Church-wide initiatives?

St. Luke's and its parishioners always have been in the forefront of leadership in the religious and civic life of our community, as well as in the diocese, and even in Episcopal Church-wide initiatives. Extending hospitality and opening our doors and facility as a meeting place to community and diocesan organizations, groups, and events, our engagement is diverse and far-reaching. On just about any day of the week, from morning to night, St. Luke's is a hive of activity. Church outreach ministries that include the Thrift Shop, 4th Street Café, Monday Night Café, Wednesday Group, Fictional Friends, monthly Blue Bag collections, Jamestown Farmers and Mobile Markets, New Neighbors Coalition, and partnerships with Chautauqua County Empty Bowls, Jamestown Pride, and the Mental Health Association directly and significantly impact our neighborhood and the community.

What are the hopes and dreams of your congregation for its next chapter?

Through service, prayer, and the leading of the Holy Spirit remain a vibrant church to continue and grow the good work for which our parish is known, and to find new and impactful ways to proclaim the Gospel, extend Christ's unconditional love, and to connect people to a life-changing relationship with God.