

## WE TELL OUR STORIES



### A GREAT CLOUD OF WITNESSES

By Warren Fisher

I love the idea of our Year of Gratitude, because I have so much to be grateful for... and so many people to thank. Dr. Pace's challenge has caused me to think anew about all of the people who have touched my life and influenced my faith journey. It starts with my parents, of course, who made it our family habit to be in church every Sunday morning, and took my brother and me back for choir practices and Methodist Youth Fellowship. More significantly, they modeled faith for us at home and everywhere else.

Then I think about my extended family. Some of the people who have had the greatest impact on my life are my ancestors, including many I never knew. Some had the courage and faith to leave homes and family to come to frontier Texas or booming Houston, to make new lives as circuit riding preachers, merchants, ranchers, or construction contractors. Others were teachers or salesmen or homemakers. Many struggled through wars and droughts and "hard times." All made sacrifices to ensure that their children and grandchildren and great-great-grandchildren had better lives and grew up in homes of faith.

I am also especially grateful to the Sunday School teachers, youth group leaders, pastors and church staff who shaped my life and faith. They gave up many nights and weekends and even vacations to teach, to organize activities, to put on summer musicals, to lead trips, and most significantly to share God's love with me and many more. I learned not only from their words but so much more from their actions.

The story is still being written, however, as I am touched by friends and colleagues who teach Sunday School, lead small groups, and on a very personal level encourage me, counsel me, support me, and hold me accountable. And I am blessed beyond measure by my wife, Liz, and our children.

Thinking of this "great cloud of witnesses" humbles me, but also challenges me to do my part, to "pass it forward." I try to honor the lives and sacrifices of those who have influenced me by doing the same for others, by finding ways to serve, to teach, to encourage, and to share God's love every day. I've also come to realize that lives are transformed one touch at a time, and we may never know the difference made by even the smallest acts of kindness.

And now, I have a lot of Thank You notes to write!



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## ST. LUKE'S FIVE HABITS

## WE STUDY THE BIBLE AND WORSHIP



Isaiah 58:10-12

<sup>10</sup> If you offer your food to the hungry and satisfy the needs of the afflicted, then your light shall rise in the darkness and your gloom be like the noonday.

<sup>11</sup> The Lord will guide you continually, and satisfy your needs in parched places, and make your bones strong; and you shall be like a watered garden, like a spring of water, whose waters never fail. <sup>12</sup> 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 live in.

### Sermon Notes

#### *The City*

#### First in the Series, *A City Transformed*

February 10, 2019

- 1) Remembering who we are
- 2) A pivot point in Scripture (Matthew 9:35-10:5)
  - a) Good news
  - b) Good deeds
- 3) The three cities
  - a) Our city (Isa 58:10-12, Jer 29: 4-7)
  - b) The city on a hill: the church (Matt 5:14)
  - c) The coming city of God: Zion (Isa 2:1-4, Rev 21:1-7)

#### Possible next best step for you

- Identify one place that St. Luke's can make an impact on our city and send an email to [acitytransformed@stlukemethodist.org](mailto:acitytransformed@stlukemethodist.org)
- Every Wednesday evening, the community around our Gethsemane campus is invited to dinner. We are looking for friends to gather a group to cook and serve dinner. For more information, please contact Meredith Davis ([mdavis@stlukemethodist.org](mailto:mdavis@stlukemethodist.org))

### Key Verse for the Week

*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 live in.*

Isaiah 58:12

### Questions for Conversation and Reflection

What do you do in your workplace or community that you would consider a ministry? Where do you think St. Luke's can make the most impact in our city?

## WE PRAY

### Sunday, February 10

Loving God, we confess that we cannot even begin to fathom your understanding. Thank you for the gift of Scripture that illustrates your great love and that guides us to righteousness. Thank you for small groups that give us discipline to read and study your word. Thank you for the way that you speak to us through your written word. Keep growing us in your ways and moving us forward on our journey of faith. Amen.

### Monday, February 11

Dear Heavenly Father, Thank you for the many blessings we receive from you every day. Please help us be good stewards of all that you have bestowed on us. Help us understand what these blessings mean and how we should use them to help others and to do your work. In your son's name, we pray. Amen.  
-Prayer by Don Sinclair, St. Luke's Board of Trustees

### Tuesday, February 12

God of the future, thank you for being in control of all of the things that we cannot control. Thank you for going before us and preparing the way. Thank you for preparing us over the years and giving us what we need for this exact moment. God, help us rise to meet to the challenges of today and guide us so that our actions are pleasing to you. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

### Wednesday, February 13

Heavenly Father, thank you for creating me as your personal masterpiece. Thank you for being my Father and reminding me that I am a child of the one true King.

Help me to remember that you are always with me and that you will never leave me. May your hand and your favor be with me in all that I do. Amen.

### Thursday, February 14

Gracious God, grant us your love so that we are patient and kind. Let us not envy, boast, or be too proud. Keep us from dishonoring others or being self-seeking. Help us to be slow to anger and keep no record of wrongs. Let us shun evil and rejoice in truth. Guide us to always protect, always trust, always hope, and always persevere. Keep us from failing. Amen.

### Friday, February 15

Heavenly Father, YOU are love. Please forgive us when we forget this, and as a result, we forget you. Your mind-blowing, steadfast love is the fuel needed to bring glory to you and your kingdom, yet it is not always our priority to recognize or receive this wonderful gift. Today, God, we ask you to help us remember you are love and to integrate that into everything that we do. In doing so, we can face anything. Thank you so much for loving us without limitations. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.  
-Prayer by Louise McEvoy

### Saturday, February 16

Heavenly Father, thank you for the special people you have brought into our lives who make a difference for us. Thank you for the good times that we have shared together, and the special way that we connect with one another. Thank you for binding us together in your love. Please bless them as they have blessed us. Amen.

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Service of Prayer and Healing  
Every Wednesday during Lent | March 13 | 7-8 p.m. | Chapel

### So many ways to pray...

- ♦ Write your prayer request on one of the leaves found in the pew rack
- ♦ Visit the interactive prayer wall: [StLukesMethodist.org/prayer](http://StLukesMethodist.org/prayer)
- ♦ Call the prayer line: 713-402-5088

**We are here for you!** If you or someone you know needs prayer, a hospital visit or contact from a minister, call Rev. Bill Denham at 713-402-5156.

## WE MAKE FRIENDS

**Tapestry Players Auditions | TODAY or Tuesday, February 12 | 6 p.m.**  
Audition for one or both of our summer productions - *Barefoot in the Park* and Gilbert & Sullivan's *H.M.S. Pinafore!* Sign up: [StLukesMethodist.org/events](http://StLukesMethodist.org/events)

**Thirsty for Theology | Monday, February 11 | 6:30 p.m.**  
*The Polity of the United Methodist Church* led by Rev. Thomas Harper  
Join other young adults for frank conversation about spiritual topics. All gatherings are held at the Black Labrador, 4100 Montrose.

**Program and Luncheon: *What's Happening at Gethsemane* – Rev. David Horton**  
**Thursday, February 14 | 11 a.m.–1 p.m. | ES308 and ES313**  
Lunch (\$10) following the program. Advance registration: 713-402-5087.

**St. Luke's and St. John's Shrove Tuesday Luncheon | Tuesday, March 5**  
**11 a.m. Check in | 11:30 a.m. Lunch | Fellowship Hall**  
Rev. Elizabeth Matthews Duffin is the guest speaker as St. Luke's hosts their annual luncheon with The Church of St. John the Divine. Cost is \$20. Registration and payment can be made online:  
[StLukesMethodist.org/shrove-tuesday-luncheon](http://StLukesMethodist.org/shrove-tuesday-luncheon) or call 713-402-5094 by March 1.

**VOCES8 in Concert | Sunday, March 3 | 7 p.m. | Sanctuary**  
Britain's internationally-acclaimed vocal ensemble, VOCES8, returns to Houston and St. Luke's United Methodist Church for a combined performance of the Mozart Requiem with our Chancel Choir, plus additional selections from their repertoire. Free admission.

**Interfaith Ministries presents Caryl Stern, President and CEO of UNICEF USA**  
**2nd Annual Gershenson Lecture | Tuesday, March 5 | 7:30 p.m.**  
**St. Luke's Sanctuary**  
Tickets: <http://bit.ly/gershenson-lecture>

**Pray, worship, learn: The Footsteps of Paul Trip | April 25 – May 9, 2019**  
Trace Paul's footsteps on a memorable land and sea journey through Greece, Turkey and Rome. Hosted by Dr. Linda Christians and led by Dr. James Fleming.  
Contact: Karen Smith at 713-402-5086.  
Register: [StLukesMethodist.org/church-updates](http://StLukesMethodist.org/church-updates)

## WE GIVE OURSELVES AWAY

in generosity and service.

**Blood Drive | February 24 | 8:15 a.m.-12:30 p.m. | Blanton Building Parking Lot**  
Gulf Coast Regional Blood Center Donation Coach is coming to St. Luke's!  
Sign up: [https://www.commitforlife.org/donor/schedules/drive\\_schedule/281166](https://www.commitforlife.org/donor/schedules/drive_schedule/281166)



The more we practice gratitude, the more we experience it in our hearts. And the more we feel it inside, the more we express it in the way we live. One of the ways we will practice gratitude in 2019 is by challenging each member of the congregation to write 365 thank you notes. It is not too late to start!

This week, be sure and stop by the mail box in the Fellowship Walk and write a note to show our Children's Sunday School teachers how much we appreciate them.