



St Luke's Vestry

*Reset to the New Normal:
The Work Continues*

Class of 2026

Yvonne Hall

Beverly Turner, Jr. Warden

Joni James

Errol Porter, Sr. Warden

Class of 2027

Angela Blalock

Robert Green

Joseph Ray

Rudolph Wise

Class of 2028

Edwina Fields

Cynthia Goines

Herman Hickman

Cynthia Parker Reed

Clerk of the Vestry

Patricia Ancrum

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- Sabbatical Proposal & Response
- Member Highlights
- Reflections from DOK Retreat
- Liturgical Calendar & Servants for the Lord
- Parish Calendar

From the Desk of the Rector

Dear Parishoners,

This poem was shared with me in my clergy cohort. This is a poem from Jan Richardson's book, *The Cure for Sorrow*. The poem rested gently with me, and it is my hope that you will find as introspective and transformative as did I. Think of the poem as a contemporary reinterpretation of Psalm 46. It looks at the chaos honestly and invites us into solitude, to find God right where we are. Take your time with this one today.

In Peace,

Fr. Raphiell+

Rector

1 May 2026

BLESSING IN THE CHAOS

By Jan Richardson

To all that is chaotic in you, let there come silence.

Let there be a calming of the clamoring, a stilling
of the voices that have laid their claim on you,
that have made their home in you,

that go with you even to the holy places but will not
let you rest, will not let you hear your life with wholeness
or feel the grace that fashioned you

Let what distracts you cease. Let what divides you cease.
Let there come an end to what diminishes and demeans,
and let depart all that keeps you in its cage.

Let there be an opening into the quiet that lies beneath
the chaos, where you find the peace you did not think possible
and see what shimmers within the storm.

Interested in publishing information in the newsletter? Submit all articles and photos (jpeg or other photo format) to shaunahicks24@gmail.com by the 20th of the month for the following month's publication.

Sabbatical Proposal to +Bishop Richards

Dear +Bishop,

This email is to share with you my sabbatical proposal and ask for its approval. Tonight, we had the first part of our Vestry retreat, during which there was a presentation of my sabbatical proposal. IV (Fr. James Fraser Lyon, IV) was present and he walked the Vestry through both the Diocesan Guidelines for Sabbaticals and my sabbatical proposal. They had good questions and exhibited a very positive attitude regarding my sabbatical. I felt very much affirmed as they voiced words of support.

As for the fiscal aspect of the sabbatical, the treasurer reported that funds are currently being set aside and that there should be a satisfactory balance to cover expenses by the time of my departure, which will be June 1st.

I want to let you know that they seemed to be very pleased that IV is serving as my sabbatical mentor. They understand that he will serve in that role until the sabbatical is complete.

I hope you find my proposal satisfactory. I have spent considerable time with IV trying to refine my vision for a sabbatical into something that will have a meaningful impact on my spiritual life and on-going priestly formation.

By the way, I very much appreciate that you passed on to IV the recommendation that I include music as a part of my sabbatical experience. Music has always fed my soul and I am eager to expand my knowledge and skills as a someone who happens to be both a priest and a musician.

Once I receive your approval, I will move to finalize arrangements with the different entities involved with the sabbatical.

I look forward to this opportunity for rest, renewal and learning. My sincere thanks to you for your support.

Faithfully,
Raphiell+

From the Desk of the Rector continued

The Sabbatical Proposal for the On-Going Priestly Formation and Spiritual Renewal of The Reverend Charles Raphiell Ashford

This has been reviewed by the Reverend Dr. James Fraser Lyon IV, Sabbatical Mentor, and it will be submitted for final approval to the Right Reverend Daniel Paul Richards, Bishop, following the January 16-17 retreat of Saint Luke's Vestry.

The dates for this three-month sabbatical are from June 1, 2026 to August 31, 2026.

Attached to this document you will find the Sabbatical Leave Policy of the Episcopal Diocese of Upper South Carolina.

Part One

Encountering the Holy through Sacred Art and Music

The first part of the sabbatical experience will be that of engaging the reality of the Holy through art and music. Father Raphiell will be enrolled in an iconography workshop directed by Veronica Royal, a world-renowned iconographer and director of the Royal Icon Studio. He will be in community with other students in daily prayer and corporate worship while receiving instruction in the writing of icons. This year's workshop will focus on writing an icon of Our Lady of Walsingham, which is a sacred image with deep roots in both the Anglican and Roman Catholic faith traditions. Upon successful completion of his icon, Father Raphiell will be granted a certificate of study.

Following the workshop, Father Raphiell will then engage himself in the study of music by learning and performing several major organ works that lend themselves to the worship of the Church. This will be under the direction of Henry Fulmer, a parish musician affiliated with the Association of Anglican Musicians and the American Guild of Organists. Mr. Fulmer has had a number of accomplished organ scholars under his direction and he welcomes the opportunity to provide Father Raphiell with advanced level tutorials. As a part of his study, Father Raphiell will publicly perform the works he has learned in a liturgical setting, under the direction of Mr. Fulmer.

Part Two

Encountering the Holy through the Life of the Mind

The second movement of the the sabbatical experience will involve an opportunity for study in a faith centered community of learners. This will take place at the University of Notre Dame. Father Raphiell will have an independent study program that will include attending classes in Biblical studies and liturgy. This will be coordinated with the help of the McGrath Institute of Notre Dame, which provides numerous continuing education opportunities for clergy and laity. While there he will have access the the vast resources of the University library and the library of Holy Cross Theological Seminary. He will also be able to participate in daily worship, which takes place through out the day in numerous chapels on the campus and is welcoming to the full participation of Anglican/Episcopal Christians. It should be noted that efforts are currently underway to make arrangements for Father Raphiell to have sacred music tutorials under the direction of Dr. Kola Owolabi, Professor of Organ, who has significant international experience in the Anglican, Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox liturgical traditions.

Part Three

Encountering the Holy by Living in a Monastic Community

The third part of the sabbatical will be that of living in an Anglican/Episcopal monastic community for the purpose of being with others who have made vows to know God through a daily rule of life that includes the following: holy silence, prayer, sacramental worship, work, study, contemplation, rest and re-creation. To accomplish this, Father Raphiell will be in residence with the monks of Saint Gregory's Abbey in Three Rivers, Michigan. Saint Gregory's is a Benedictine monastery that has a rich history of hospitality to both clergy and laity who wish to come for extended visits. Father Raphiell will participate in the daily work of the monks on the monastery's grounds, as well as attend worship, receive spiritual direction and take time for study in the library.

Final Notes

As with any sabbatical, there is to be an element of accountability on the part of all parties. The Vestry takes on the responsibilities set forth in the Diocesan Guidelines in support of Father Raphiell. Additionally, they are to insure that his sabbatical time is not to be disrupted. For that reason, the Senior Warden should be the only person from the parish designated to contact him during the sabbatical period. Those contacts should only be for matters of extreme significance, such as a death notification or a catastrophic circumstance involving the buildings and grounds. All things related to the daily details of parish life that Father Raphiell would normally be attending to are to be addressed by the Vestry during his absence, with the Senior Warden taking the lead in administration and work assignments.

It must be made clear before the sabbatical begins that if parishioners have a need or concern during the sabbatical period, they are to communicate directly to the Senior Warden. He will then respond appropriately.

Father Raphiell has accountability to the parish in that he must see to it that supply priests are assigned for all the Sundays he will be absent. Additionally, he is to insure that a supply priest can be called on for pastoral emergencies and pastoral liturgies, such as funerals. He is to share with the Senior Warden the contact information on all the priests who will be serving Saint Luke's during the sabbatical.

The final item is the matter of Father Raphiell communicating regularly with the parish and his sabbatical mentor. At the end of every week, he will send a brief email to the Senior Warden, copied to Father Lyon, that will have words of greeting and blessing to the parish and outline the status of his sabbatical experience. This email is to read to the parish at the Sunday announcements by the Senior Warden. If the Senior Warden has to be absent, then it is to be read by the Junior Warden or other designated person.



Good Friday



Preparing the Memorial Garden for Easter



Flowering of the Cross



Easter Sunday



Cheryl Caution-Parker and niece Michelle



CMSI Announces its first Cohort of MSI Humanities Leadership Academy Fellows! - The Rutgers Center for Minority Serving Institutions (CMSI) will host the MSI Humanities Leadership Academy conference in Princeton, NJ, from August 4 - 7, 2026.

Dr. Angela Small Blalock has been chosen along with 18 others from around the country to be in the inaugural cohort of MSI Humanities Leadership Academy Fellows. Angela is a graduate of Savannah State College (University), the Ohio State University, and the University of South Carolina, where she earned the Doctorate of Musical Arts in Vocal Performance. She currently serves as Chairperson of the Music Department and Director of Concert Choir at Allen University.



Kennedy Johnson has been elected Student Body Vice President for her upcoming Junior Year at Ridge View High School.



Baptism of Rueben Troy Thompson, grandson of **Stephanie and Brian Baldwin**.



Happy Birthday wishes to

- 1 - Patricia Ancrum
- 3 - Irma Scott
- 8 - Karen Castelli
- 14 - Erica Baker
- 21 - Cynthia Parker Reed
- 25 - Daryl Hammonds, Sr
- 29 - Timothy Kirby



Happy Anniversary

- 21 - St. Luke's Episcopal Church
- 27 - Oliver and Audrey Smith



I am grateful to share that I graduated from Queens University of Charlotte in December 2025, and I look forward to attending the graduation ceremony on May 9th. I earned my degree with great honor, Summa Cum Laude with a 4.0 GPA, in International Studies, with minors in Spanish and Chinese. As I prepare for my next chapter, I am filled with hope and gratitude to have been accepted to McColl School of Business at Queens University, where I will begin my MBA studies this summer. I want to sincerely thank my church family for the unwavering love, support, and guidance you have shown me throughout my journey. I truly believe I wouldn't be where I am today without your encouragement and prayers, and I carry that blessing with me as I move forward. Sincerely,
Peyton Parker-Smith.



Daryl Lamar Hammonds, Jr., DNP, FNP-C, MSN-Ed, son of Valencia and Daryl Hammond graduated from the Medical University of South Carolina with a Doctorate in Nursing Practice.



Chorister **DaVanye' Kight** has been accepted to Loyola University, New Orleans, where she will pursue a Master of Music Therapy degree.



Solomon Spann, IV, grandson of Gwen Spann has been accepted to the University of Detroit, where he will play for the University of Detroit Hornets. He is graduating from Jesuitt High School and Academy on May 21st.



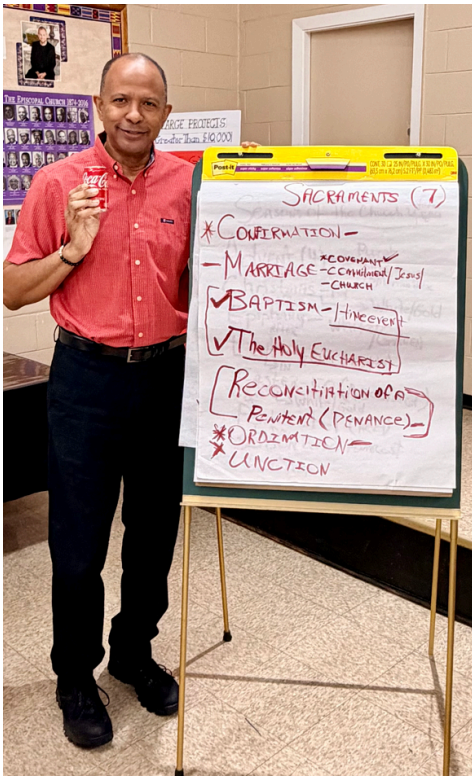
Chorister **Elliott Brown** earned a MBA from Allen University. The commencement ceremony will take place on Saturday, May 9th.



Chorister **Carmen Jordan** earned a her degree in Music with a concentration in Voice from Allen University. She has been accepted the U of SC School of Music where she will pursue her Master of Music in Vocal Performance degree.



Chorister **Kaiyah Robinson** was accepted to an internship at Savannah River Nuclear Solution as a PPO intern. She will start immediately after graduation,



Kennedy and Nadia participating in Confirmation class with Fr. Raphiell.

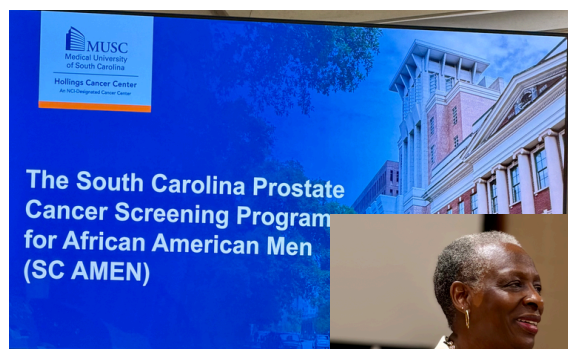


Morning Prayer and Adult Formation with Rev. Cannon (Lutheran Pastor).



Father Raphiell participates in EDUSC Chrism Mass and Renewal of Ordination Vows

Father Raphiell was invited to speak at Bethlehem Baptist Church in North, South Carolina for Good Friday Service. He gave a reflection on the first two of the last Seven Words of Christ



Father Raphiell participates in a prostate cancer screening education program for African American men. Local fraternities participated in the event led by MUSC.

St. Luke's Mildred Murray Chapter of Daughters of the King attend DOK Spring Retreat

Submitted by Corliss Wise, Worship Chair

St. Luke's DOK held its Spring Retreat at St. Martin's in the Field Episcopal Church. Here are reflections from members

Reflections: "Beacon of Hope"

From Corliss Wise - Wow, seeing close to one hundred and twenty (120) Daughters assemble as a new community at our DOK Spring Retreat at St. Martin's-In-The-Fields on April 18th was spiritually uplifting. Upon entering Sr. Martin's Parish Hall, the welcoming atmosphere created by St. Martin's Hospitality Hosts and DOK members from across the Diocese was clear. The gathering of over 20 DOK chapters for the first time fostered a memorable and unified spiritual community in Christ. As worship chair, I aimed to share both my perspectives and key insights gained from the Daughters' Assembly. This includes highlights from their reflections and participation in the healing service, Holy Eucharist and the "Blessing of the Bags" for the unhoused community as our Diocesan Service project, which supports our commitment to prayer, service, and evangelism.

The Diocesan Assembly of Upper South Carolina Spring Retreat provided a spiritually enriching experience, commemorating Easter from crucifixion to resurrection with both celebration and contemplation. Along with the Daughters, we were all delighted to welcome our National DOK President, Jane Searcy, who eloquently addressed the Theme of "Hope" and shared how being a Daughter of The King can be spiritually transformative. President Deborah Dunlap graciously led our spiritually enriching and meaningful Retreat.

Here are few key insights expressed by Chapter Daughters of DOK, focused on Joy and Hope:

Maxima - "I think that we were engaging the two Rules of the Order: 1) the rule of prayer, then we had the healing prayer. 2. The Rule of Service, when we prepared the bags for the homeless. Overall, it was very uplifting for me, spiritually and emotionally."

Deacon Dianna - "Our time together on Saturday at St. Martin's-in-the-Field reminded me of the importance of community. I had the privilege of serving as the deacon for the healing service. Standing in the rear of the procession, I was filled with the Spirit as I saw the banners from other chapters file in line in front of me. As the homilist, I had the joy of sharing a story to pews filled with my blue-clad Sisters in Christ. As a member of the altar party, I had the honor of seeing the tear streaked faces of those coming to receive prayers for healing. It was then that I was reminded that even in this season of Eastertide and the joy of the resurrection, we are still in the midst of those who are still experiencing sorrow. Joy and sorrow can co-mingle, but the love of God is always still among us."

Helen- "The Holy Eucharist with prayers for Healing was deeply emotional and spiritual. It moved me to tears while experiencing joy. Leaving the retreat left me feeling strengthened and filled with hope."

Cynthia R. - "The tone of the Retreat was set by the powerful opening service, continued with the speakers, and crescendo with creating the essentials packs for the unhoused. The presence of the Holy Spirit was truly evident."

DeNeil - "I enjoyed the presentation of the meeting and the guest speaker. especially proud of the Mildred S. Murray Chapter. It was impressive, informed and well organized. " Sister in Christ"

Julia- "I have attended many of these DOK events, this was the best! We heard a great speaker, and then we got down to the real mission of packing those bags for those in need during a much-needed time in our community. I am but one, I can't do everything, but we as DOKS can do great things."

Beverly- “Participating in the Daughters of the King Spring Retreat at St. Martin’s in the Fields was more than an event—it was a sacred encounter that left a lasting imprint on my heart. For those who were present, you already understand the quiet power that seemed to rest over every moment. And for those who were not, I hope these words offer a glimpse into what made the experience so profoundly meaningful. There was a gentle stillness that surrounded us, as if time itself slowed to make room for God’s presence. Among all the moments we shared, the Healing Services touched me in a way that is difficult to fully express. It was not just the words spoken or the prayers offered—it was something deeper, something felt in the soul. As I sat in that space, I became aware of a closeness to God that was both humbling and comforting. It felt as though every burden, every unspoken concern, was being acknowledged without judgment. I was deeply moved, not in a fleeting emotional sense, but in a way that stirred something lasting within me. There was a sense of being seen, of being held in grace. What made the experience even more meaningful was sharing it alongside others with stories spoken aloud, others carried silently. Yet in that moment, we were united in a shared openness to healing, to renewal, and to God’s love. I left the retreat not only uplifted but changed. The Healing Service reminded me that God meets us right where we are—with compassion, with peace, and with a presence that restores the soul.”

Brenda – “The atmosphere at the Spring Retreat was one of love, compassion and acceptance all around. Jane and Deborah inspired me with vision and hope. The healing prayer service was uplifting. April 18 was truly a day to remember.”

Loretta – “My reflection of our DOK Assembly Spring Retreat is one word, “amazing! To see how so many women came together to create toiletry bags to service the homeless was simply amazing! Knowing only through prayer and service we could get it done successfully, what did He do but lay His hands on the Daughters in prayer.”

Eddie- “The words of the homily reaffirmed my vows of The Order of the “rule of service.” Service comes from the heart. Listen to your heart because the act of “service “can be in “plain sight”, where I least expect. The theme of the keynote speaker “HOPE: A Gift from God” put the DOK vows front and center by threading the needle of “hope” and stitching prayer, service, and evangelism together. With God we have faith, and our hope is said in our prayers, shown through our actions, and spoken by our words while spreading Christ’s kingdom.”

Cai- The Spring Retreat” provided valuable insights, especially regarding the unhoused community, as highlighted by the second speaker, Debbie Yoho, who presented her thesis on interactions with the unhoused population. The anonymous distribution of blessing bags underscored the importance of treating individuals with dignity.”

Beacon of Hope, Halleluiah! FHS,
Worship Chair... Grateful and Joyful...
Corliss M. Wise



May Liturgical Calendar & Servants for the Lord

May 3 - 10:00 am - Nave - The Fifth Sunday of Easter - The Holy Eucharist: Rite II

Old Testament Lesson: Paulette Parker-Smith

Epistle: John Bowden

Prayers of the People: Daniel Ancrum, III

Chalice: Stephanie Baldwin

Oblation Bearers: Cynthia Parker Reed, Amy Hussman

Ushers: Judy Battiste, Brian Baldwin, Darnell Holmes

Acolytes: Jaylen Caldwell, DeNell Hickman

Supply Organist: Ezra Blackwell

May 10 - 10:00 am - Nave - The Sixth Sunday of Easter (Rogation Sunday) - The Holy Eucharist: Rite II - Bishop's Visitation with the Rite of Confirmation Mothers Day

Old Testament Lesson: Beverly Turner

Epistle: Patwin Lawrence

Prayers of the People: Amy Hussman

Chalice: Deacon Rocky Dworak

Oblation Bearers: Stephanie and Brian Baldwin

Ushers: Karen Castelli, Joseph Evans, Rachel Hall

Acolytes: Isabella Bracy, Jaylen Caldwell, Desmond Goines, Quintin Hammonds, DeNell Hickman, Kennedy Johnson, Levi Johnson, Jr.

Supply Organist: Ezra Blackwell

St. Luke's
EPISCOPAL CHURCH
1300 PINE ST.
COLUMBIA, SC 29204

THE SIXTH SUNDAY OF
EASTER
(Rogation Sunday)

THE HOLY EUCHARIST:
RITE II *with* THE RITE OF CONFIRMATION

SUNDAY, MAY 10TH, 2026
10:00 AM

CONFIRMATION CANDIDATES

Kennedy L. Johnson

Nadia J. Muhammad

THE REV. RAPHIELL ASHFORD
RECTOR & PRIEST

May 14 - 6:30 pm - Nave - Ascension Day. Guest Speaker The Rev. Taliaferro Robinson-Heyward

Old Testament Lesson: Valencia Hammonds

Epistle: Sheryl Belcher

Prayers of the People: Fr. Raphiell+

Chalice: Marie Martin

Oblation Bearers: Mary Mother Altar Guild

Ushers: TBD

Acolytes: Cynallyhia Indriago

Supply Organist: Ezra Blackwell

St. Luke's
EPISCOPAL CHURCH
1300 PINE ST.
COLUMBIA, SC 29204

THE FEAST OF THE
ASCENSION

THURSDAY,
MAY 14TH
@ 6:30 PM

GUEST SPEAKER:
The Reverend
TALIAFERRO
ROBINSON-HEYWARD

May 17 - 10:00 am - Nave - The Seventh Sunday of Easter (The Sunday after Ascension Day) - Holy Eucharist: Rite II**Old Testament Lesson:** Amy Hussman**Epistle:** Errol Porter**Prayers of the People:** Cynthia Parker Reed**Chalice:** Corliss Wise**Oblation Bearers:** Valencia and Daryl Hammonds**Ushers:** Stephanie Baldwin, Loretta Johnson, Ronald Turner**Acolytes:** TBD**Supply Organist:** Ezra Blackwell**May 24th - 10:00 am - Nave - The Day of Pentecost - The Holy Eucharist Rite II****11:45 am - Griffin Hall - Rector's Sabbatical Luncheon - Guests: Rector & Parishioners from the Episcopal Church of the Good Shepherd, Sabbatical Supply Priest****Old Testament Lesson:** Deadra Bowdeen**Epistle:** Paulette Parker-Smith**Prayers of the People:** Karen Castelli**Chalice:** Paulette Parker-Smith**Oblation Bearers:** Judy and Luther Battiste**Ushers:** Gloria Eaddy, Chris Evans, Rudolph Wise**Acolytes:** DeNell Hickman**Supply Organist:** Ezra Blackwell**May 31 - 10:00 am - Nave - The First Sunday after Pentecost (Trinity Sunday) - Holy Eucharist: Rite II - Youth Sunday****Old Testament Lesson:** Cory James**Epistle:** Kennedy Johnson**Prayers of the People:** Isabella Bracy**Chalice:** Patwin Lawrence**Oblation Bearers:** Karen and Chris Castelli**Ushers:** Pat Cokley, Darnell Holmes, Maxima Holmes**Acolytes:** Cori James, DeNell Hickman, Maxima Holmes**Supply Organist:** Ezra Blackwell

Monday

4th, 11th, 18th, 25th - Rector's Day Off
25th - Memorial Day - Parish Office Closed

Tuesday

5th - Rector Meets with Wardens - 5:30 pm - Rector's Office
- Griffin Hall Reserved - 6:30 pm - Rector
12th - Archives Committee. - 10:30 am - 1:00 pm - Archives Room
- Historic Waverly Neighborhood Association - 6:00 pm - 7:00 pm - Bishop's Memorial AME Church - 2221 Washington Stree
19th - Finance Committee - 4:00 pm - 5:15 pm - Griffin Hall
- Vestry Meeting - 6:00 pm - 7:15 pm - Griffin Hall
26th - Buildings and Grounds - 5:30 pm - 6:30 pm - Griffin Hall

Wednesday

6th - Adult Formation with Morning Prayer Rite II - (MP) 10:30 am - Nave; (AF) 11:00 - Griffin Hall - Presenter: Fr. Raphiell+
6th, 13th, 20th, 27th - Choir Rehearsal - 6:00 pm - Nave
20th - Quilters & Crafters - 10:30 am - 1:00 pm - Griffin Hall – **MARK YOUR CALENDAR - Quilters and Crafters will meet every 3rd and 4th Wednesday through October.**

Thursday

7th - First Thursday Advocacy Lunch and Learn - Theme: Cinco de Mayo - 12:00 noon - 12:30 pm (lunch); Program - 12:30 pm – 1:30 pm, followed by networking 1:30 pm - 2:00 pm - Griffin Hall
7th, 16th, 21st, 28th - Fresh Start Ministry - 9:00 am - 12:00 noon - The O'Neal Center
21st - The 155th Anniversary of the Founding of St. Luke's Parish

Friday

1st, 8th, 15th, 22nd - Parish Office Closed; Rector's Spirituality Day. - Sermon Prep/Spiritual Direction Day

Saturday

9th - Confirmation Rehearsal - 11:00 am - 12:00 noon - Nave
9th, 16th, 23rd - Parish Office Closed
9th - 2nd Saturday Feeding - 12:00 noon - 1:00 pm - Griffin Hall Entrance Doorway
16th - Daughters of the King (DOK) - 3:00 pm - Griffin Hall
23rd - 4th Saturday Feeding - 12:00 noon - 1:00 pm - Griffin Hall Entrance Doorway

Sunday

See Liturgical Calendar

17th - Memorial Garden Committee - 11:45 am - Griffin Hall
24th - Rector's Sabbatical Luncheon - Guests: Rector & Parishioners from the Episcopal Church of the Good Shepherd, and Diocesan House Staff - 12:00 noon - Griffin Hall

**St. Luke's Episcopal Church 1300 Pine Street/Columbia,
South Carolina 29204 (803) 254-2327**

The Reverend C. Raphiell Ashford, Rector

Sheryl D. Belcher, Parish Secretary

~

Karen Castelli, Website Administrator

Shauna Hicks, Newsletter Editor

Valerie Riley, Executive Director—Fresh Start Ministry

~

Patricia Cokley, Parish Treasurer

Darnell Holmes, William Smith, Jr., Asst. Parish
Treasurers

Sheryl D. Belcher, Assoc. Parish Treasurer

stlukescolumbia@gmail.com (Email) <http://www.stlukescolasc.org> (Website)

www.facebook.com/stlukescolumbia YouTube: @Fr.Raphiell6290

“The Episcopal Church is a secret too well kept. Many are starved for what we experience daily and too easily take for granted. Invite others to come to your parish to experience this joy.”

Louie Crew, author of 101 Reasons to be Episcopalian