

WE TELL OUR STORIES



WHY I JOINED A SMALL GROUP

By Kelly Phelan

When I was asked to write about my reasons for joining a small group, and what I have gotten out of the experience, I started to think about my journey at St. Luke's. After an invitation from friends, I began my journey the weekend following Hurricane Harvey. Without that invitation, I would not have recognized how much I wanted to find a community in which my faith would grow and strengthen. I had been attending different churches throughout the Houston area for years, and not finding what I was looking for. I wanted a church community with an adult education program.

As I attended the Sunday services, the sermons were exactly what I needed to hear and made me want to become a part of the community at St. Luke's. I also appreciated how the congregation was encouraged to find a small group or Sunday School class to get involved in to continue faith development. The first group I joined was the Inside-Out Habits class. In this class, I was introduced to five principles to help strengthen my relationship with God. Through this group, I had the opportunity to meet others on a similar journey as myself. Because we were all in different stages of our journeys, the discussions were very open and honest. This group helped me begin to feel more comfortable speaking about my strengths and weaknesses in finding a faith community.

As the class was coming to an end, I began to look for another small group with the help of the facilitators of the Inside-Out Habits class and the church's website. The in-person groups were not compatible with my work schedule, but I continued to check back weekly in case new groups were added. I'm glad I did because The Well was added to the list. I reached out to the leader requesting to join. I was nervous and felt inferior in the beginning because I could not recite specific passages from the Bible. With each session, I became more and more comfortable with asking questions and sharing my thoughts on the Bible verses we were studying. I also began to feel more comfortable praying out loud, sharing my prayer requests, and discussing my faith with those outside my church community. The ladies in this group have helped me become more secure in my faith. They have become my friends and family.

If you are looking for a way to grow in your faith and build a stronger faith community around you, I highly recommend joining a small group.

Register for the Small Groups Launch: StLukesMethodist.org/small-groups-launch



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/stlukeshouston

We have a church app! Search *St Lukes UMC Houston* to download from the app store.

ST. LUKE'S INSIDE-OUT HABITS

WE STUDY THE BIBLE AND WORSHIP

1 Corinthians 12:12-26 For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. ¹³ For in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.

¹⁴ Indeed, the body does not consist of one member but of many. ¹⁵ If the foot would say, "Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body," that would not make it any less a part of the body. ¹⁶ And if the ear would say, "Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body," that would not make it any less a part of the body.

¹⁷ If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole body were hearing, where would the sense of smell be? ¹⁸ But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose. ¹⁹ If all were a single member, where would the body be? ²⁰ As it is, there are many members, yet one body. ²¹ The eye cannot say to the hand, "I have no need of you," nor again the head to the feet, "I have no need of you." ²² On the contrary, the members of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, ²³ and those members of the body that we think less honorable we clothe with greater honor, and our less respectable members are treated with greater respect; ²⁴ whereas our more respectable members do not need this. But God has so arranged the body, giving the greater honor to the inferior member, ²⁵ that there may be no dissension within the body, but the members may have the same care for one another. ²⁶ If one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honored, all rejoice together with it.

Sermon Notes for September 15, 2019

Every Voice Matters

Second in the Series *Better Together*

- 1) We need one another
- 2) Body building practices
 - a) Have a conversation
 - b) Choose respect
 - c) Demonstrate empathy
 - d) Serve, don't fix

Possible next best steps for you:

- Deepen your faith by joining a small group: www.stlukesmethodist.org/group-life
- Join us for Men's Life on Wednesday morning, September 18, at 6:30 a.m. in the Fellowship Hall. Register: www.stlukesmethodist.org/group-life/

Key Verse for the Week

The eye cannot say to the hand, "I have no need of you," nor again the head to the feet, "I have no need of you." 1 Corinthians 12:21

Questions for Conversation and Reflection

With whom might you have a curious conversation? What is one thing you can do to serve someone with whom you disagree?

WE PRAY

Sunday, September 15

Gracious and Loving Father, I praise you for all the ways you are revealing yourself to me this day. I see you in the shining sun and the coolness of the cloud cover. I see you in the smile of a stranger and the belly laugh of a co-worker. I see you amidst the shadows of life too. You are present in the conflict with a loved one, the political discord in our nation, the traffic jams, the mistakes I make. I ask that you would continue to awaken me to your presence in all things. And as you awaken me, give me the willingness to accept your invitation to extend holy love to those right in front of me. May I be a piece of your love in my everyday world. Amen.

-Prayer by Rev. Michelle Manuel

Monday, September 16

God of love, as we interact with co-workers today, we pray that your light would shine through us. We pray that you would help us be quick to listen and slow to speak. Please let our thoughts and words at work be a reflection of **your great love. Amen.**

Tuesday, September 17

Heavenly Father, Jesus used the Parable of the Prodigal Son to show us how much you love us and how you rejoice over every sinner who repents. Today, we pray for our prodigal sons and daughters who have gone astray or have left the church. Give them what they need to turn back to you,

and then bring them home. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Wednesday, September 18

Heavenly Father, we pray for healing for broken relationships. Give us the strength we need to apologize, to ask for forgiveness, to offer forgiveness, and to love unconditionally. Help us to use our words to build each other up and restore our broken relationships. Amen.

Thursday, September 19

Lord, we thank you for the gift of small groups here at St. Luke's. We thank you for the staff, clergy, and volunteers that lead and organize these groups so that we may grow closer to you. We pray that you would bless our groups so that your love grows in us and between us. Amen.

Friday, September 20

Omniscient God, we thank you for the way you are always working in our lives to bring about positive change. Thank you for being a Master Creator who has a Master plan. All honor and glory is yours. Amen.

Saturday, September 21

God of all, we pray for our friends and loved ones who need to know about you and your love. We pray that you would soften hearts and open minds so that they may receive your Good News. In Jesus' Name, we pray. Amen.

PRAYER OPPORTUNITIES

Service of Prayer and Healing | First Wednesday of the month | 7-8 p.m. | Chapel
Rev. Thomas Harper leads a time of prayer and communion where we ask God for spiritual and physical healing for you or a loved one.

So many ways to pray...

- Now you can call or text your prayers: 713-228-7033
- Write your prayer request on one of the leaves found in the pew rack
- Visit the interactive prayer wall: StLukesMethodist.org/prayer

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

Children's Church for K-Grade 3 is back with the Contemporary Worship Band!
10:50 a.m.-12p.m. | 2nd Floor Johnson Bldg.

TODAY! Too many surgery treats? Come enjoy healthy snacks during our coffee fellowship time after worship!

Women of the Word – WOW!

TODAY! | 4-5:30 p.m. | Hines Baker Room

Get inspired by Rev. Michelle Manuel's testimony to the power of prayer. Jana Gaddy, St. Luke's Prayer Team Leader, will lead us in Praying Through Life, an interactive workshop where we'll consider how we pray and discover new strategies to go deeper. Register: StLukesMethodist.org/wow

Men's Life | *Etched Upon the Heart: The Power of Character in Life and Work* Starts this Wednesday, September 18 | 6:30 a.m. | Fellowship Hall

Men of all ages: join Dr. Tom Pace for teaching, breakfast and round table discussion about real-life issues.

Sr. Adult Day Trip – World of Neighbors Tour

Thursday, September 19 | 8:30 a.m.-4 p.m. | Cost: \$15

Rev. Greg Han, Director of Interfaith Relations at Interfaith Ministries of Greater Houston, guides us on visits to the Sikh Center of the Gulf Coast, The River Oaks Islamic Center, and Annunciation Greek Orthodox Church. Lunch on your own at Mia's Table. Register: 713-402-5087.

Not in a Small Group Yet? Small Groups Launch

Tuesday, September 24 | 6:30 p.m. | Fellowship Hall

Check out the 8 great reasons why you should join along the Sanctuary Hallway!
Register: StLukesMethodist.org/small-groups-launch

Scripture Shared Launch | September 29 | *Storytime: the parables of Jesus*

A good narrative draws you in and makes you feel like you're a part of the story. Jesus knew this and so he used stories as a way to draw in his followers and teach them truths about the kingdom of God. This fall, Scripture+Shared will examine the parables of Jesus and their enduring lessons for us today.

You can study with your small group or invite a friend to be your "Bible Buddy."

Download the app for weekly videos and daily readings:

Subsplash.com/ScriptureShared/app or StLukesMethodist.org/scripture-shared

Active Shooter Response Training | Sunday, September 29 | 4-5:45 p.m. Fellowship Hall

St. Luke's is one of the safest churches in the country thanks to our uniformed officers and our excellent usher group. However, since tragic active shooter events continue, we will offer another training session by Stephen Daniel of the Houston Police Department. Last year 600 people attended this event. We do not offer this training in fear, but to empower our members to react effectively in such an event.

And the survey says... Thank you to all who took time to respond to our first congregation-wide survey. We were overwhelmed by the response rate—over 1,300! For those of you who shared a bit of your story, made suggestions or gave us words of encouragement we are grateful. In response to the question "How likely is it that you would recommend St. Luke's to a friend or colleague?" 83% of the responses were a 9 or 10 (extremely likely.) We are doing many things right, but there is always room for improvement and your input will help us. Thank you. Next week, we will share more survey results.

WE GIVE OURSELVES AWAY

in generosity and service.

Give the Gift of Life! Blood Drive | September 22 | starts at 8 a.m.

The Gulf Coast Regional Blood Center Coach will be parked in front of The Story Houston building. Sign up here: https://www.commitforlife.org/donor/schedules/drive_schedule/281169