

COME JOIN THE  
*Celebration!*





“ They dreamed of a church that would be extraordinary in its impact for Christ, built in a way that would leave a legacy for generations to come. ”

The first time I heard the story was in 1985 while serving as Minister to Youth right here at St. Luke's. It was the 40th anniversary of this congregation, and a man spoke in worship, telling about a group of women and men who gathered in 1945 in the living room of Loyal and Exa Nelms, just a few blocks from where the church building is today. The people in that room had a vision of a church that would reach the folks "way out west of town." But they also dreamed of a church that would be extraordinary in its impact for Christ, built in a way that would leave a legacy for generations to come. The man who spoke told about that first worship service at Lamar High School, the singing of "Holy, Holy, Holy," and "God of Grace and God of Glory," a fairly new hymn by Harry Emerson Fosdick. Because they were laying a foundation for future generations, they sang "The Church's One Foundation," and Rev. Durwood Fleming preached a sermon titled "Spiritual Foundations from the First."

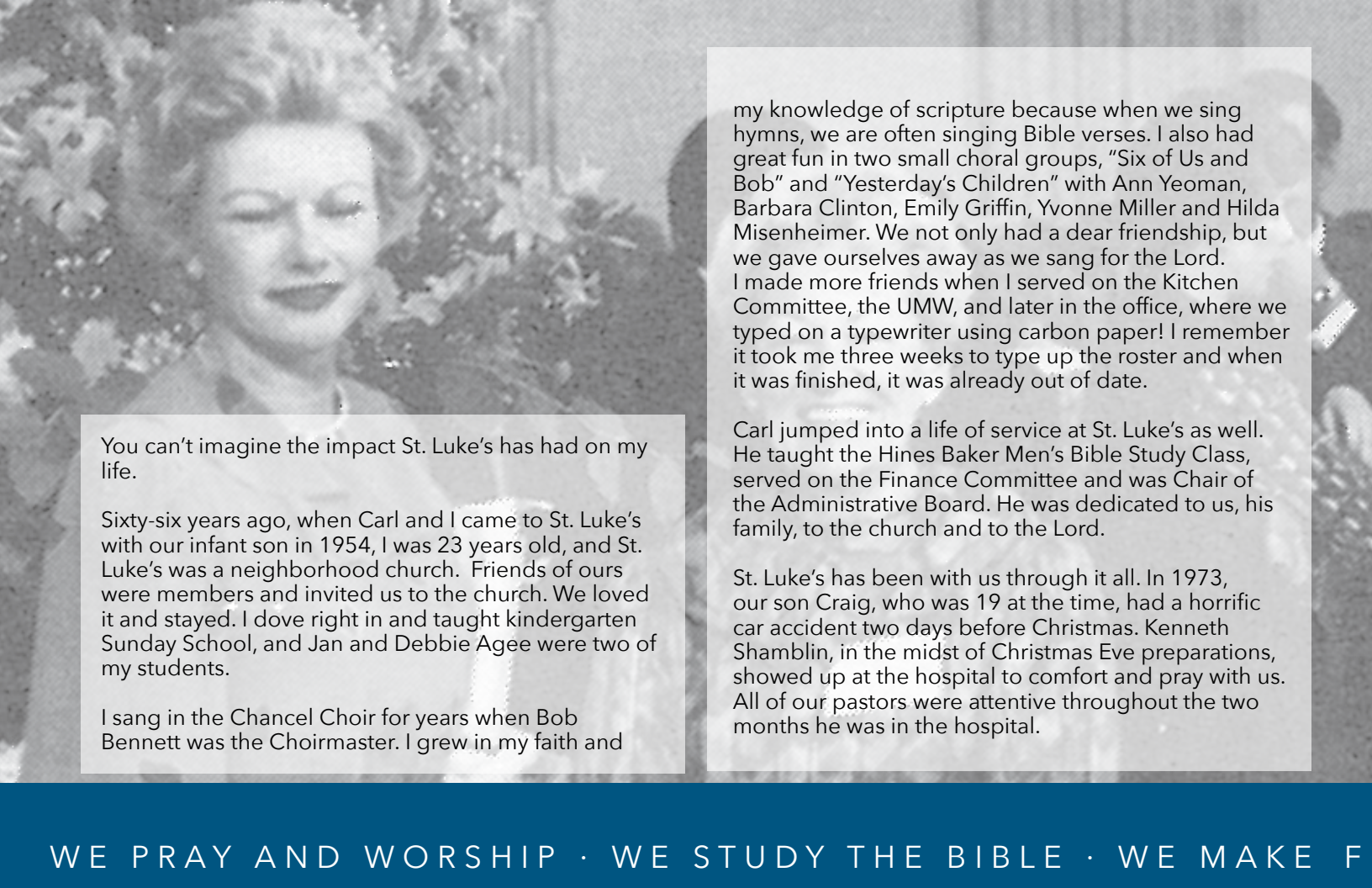
When you go to an organization's website, there is always a tab that says "About." It might list the mission and/or values of the organization. But perhaps the most significant page in this section is a narrative, usually titled "Our Story." Both people and organizations are products of their stories, the events that helped to form them and the "DNA" that was established at their genesis, the men and

women whose influence drove them during various periods, and the challenges, victories and defeats they encountered along the way. Our stories matter a lot.

2020 is the 75th anniversary of St. Luke's, and this year we will remember some of the people and events that make up our story and the way they have shaped our congregation to be who we are today. More importantly, we will consider how those 75 years are a springboard for what God has in store for us in the decades ahead. Even 35 years ago, when I heard our story for the first time, I was proud to be a part of it, to have the privilege of joining in the procession of saints who give of ourselves to God's work as a part of this family of faith. I wonder... what legacy will we leave for those who come after us? I only hope we can be as open to God's leading as those who sat in that living room 75 years ago.

A handwritten signature in white ink that reads "Tom Rael III". The signature is stylized, with a large, sweeping initial "T" and "R".





You can't imagine the impact St. Luke's has had on my life.

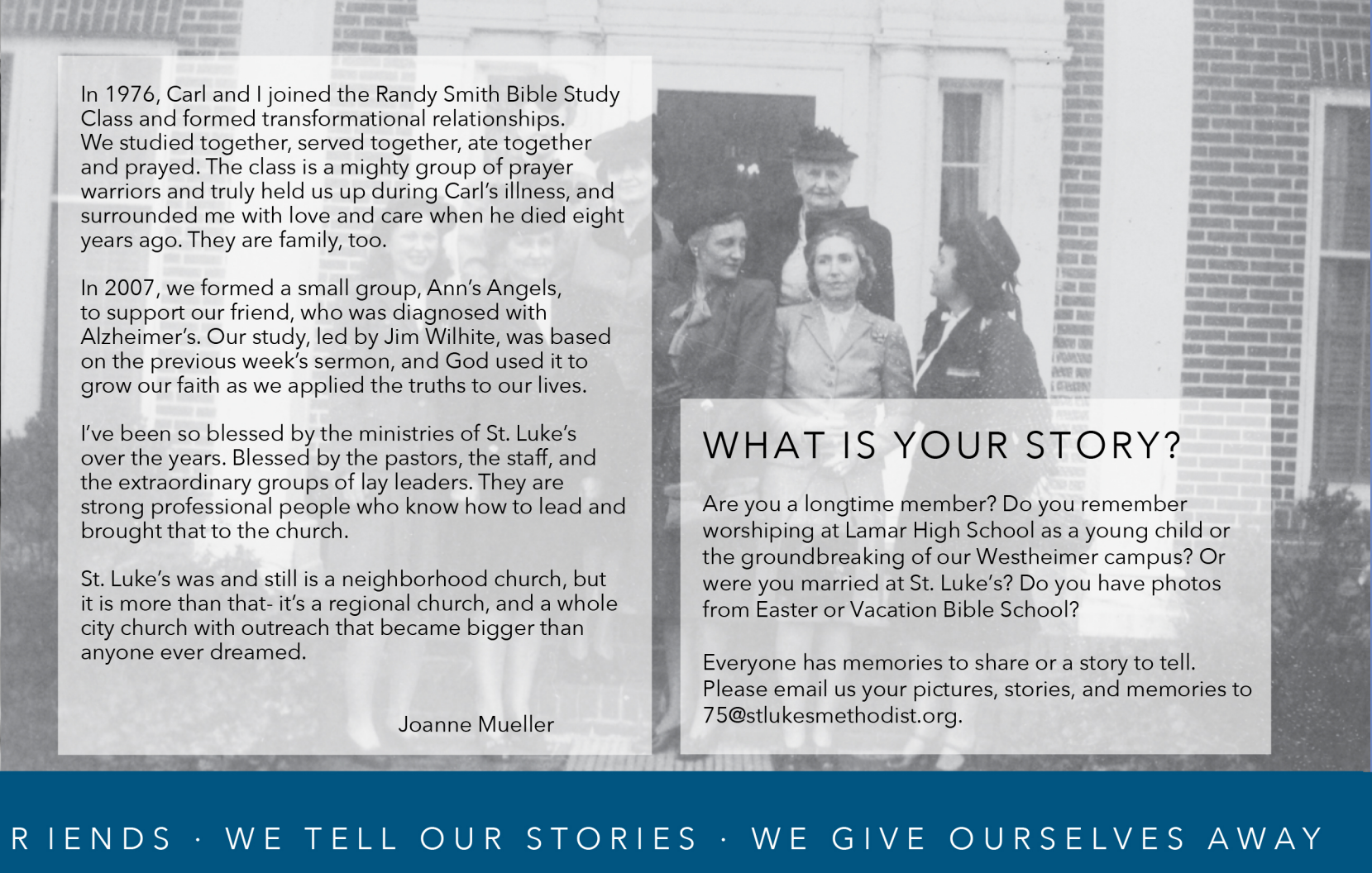
Sixty-six years ago, when Carl and I came to St. Luke's with our infant son in 1954, I was 23 years old, and St. Luke's was a neighborhood church. Friends of ours were members and invited us to the church. We loved it and stayed. I dove right in and taught kindergarten Sunday School, and Jan and Debbie Agee were two of my students.

I sang in the Chancel Choir for years when Bob Bennett was the Choirmaster. I grew in my faith and

my knowledge of scripture because when we sing hymns, we are often singing Bible verses. I also had great fun in two small choral groups, "Six of Us and Bob" and "Yesterday's Children" with Ann Yeoman, Barbara Clinton, Emily Griffin, Yvonne Miller and Hilda Misenheimer. We not only had a dear friendship, but we gave ourselves away as we sang for the Lord. I made more friends when I served on the Kitchen Committee, the UMW, and later in the office, where we typed on a typewriter using carbon paper! I remember it took me three weeks to type up the roster and when it was finished, it was already out of date.

Carl jumped into a life of service at St. Luke's as well. He taught the Hines Baker Men's Bible Study Class, served on the Finance Committee and was Chair of the Administrative Board. He was dedicated to us, his family, to the church and to the Lord.

St. Luke's has been with us through it all. In 1973, our son Craig, who was 19 at the time, had a horrific car accident two days before Christmas. Kenneth Shamblin, in the midst of Christmas Eve preparations, showed up at the hospital to comfort and pray with us. All of our pastors were attentive throughout the two months he was in the hospital.



In 1976, Carl and I joined the Randy Smith Bible Study Class and formed transformational relationships. We studied together, served together, ate together and prayed. The class is a mighty group of prayer warriors and truly held us up during Carl's illness, and surrounded me with love and care when he died eight years ago. They are family, too.

In 2007, we formed a small group, Ann's Angels, to support our friend, who was diagnosed with Alzheimer's. Our study, led by Jim Wilhite, was based on the previous week's sermon, and God used it to grow our faith as we applied the truths to our lives.

I've been so blessed by the ministries of St. Luke's over the years. Blessed by the pastors, the staff, and the extraordinary groups of lay leaders. They are strong professional people who know how to lead and brought that to the church.

St. Luke's was and still is a neighborhood church, but it is more than that- it's a regional church, and a whole city church with outreach that became bigger than anyone ever dreamed.

Joanne Mueller

## WHAT IS YOUR STORY?

Are you a longtime member? Do you remember worshiping at Lamar High School as a young child or the groundbreaking of our Westheimer campus? Or were you married at St. Luke's? Do you have photos from Easter or Vacation Bible School?

Everyone has memories to share or a story to tell. Please email us your pictures, stories, and memories to [75@stlukesmethodist.org](mailto:75@stlukesmethodist.org).

“The basic talents and abilities and resources represented in this congregation were and are incredible. More than once I preached on the subject, 'Unto much is given, of them much shall be required.'”

Dr. Durwood Fleming, Founding Pastor



It all started with a **vision**  
for a church that would reach the folks  
“way out west of town.”

**1945**  
Founding Pastor  
Durwood Fleming



**1947**  
Boy Scout Troop 46  
was founded at St.  
Luke's.



**October 8, 1950**  
Ground breaking  
service for St. Luke's  
original sanctuary,  
now Fellowship Hall.



**June 1961**  
J. Kenneth  
Shamblin  
became St.  
Luke's second  
Senior Pastor.



**25**  
YEARS

**1970**

**1976**  
Walter L. Underwood  
became St. Luke's third  
Senior Pastor.



**September 1984**  
James W. Moore  
became St. Luke's  
fourth Senior Pastor.



**50**  
YEARS

**1995**

**1996**  
The Seniors Place,  
now Amazing Place,  
was established to  
serve adults with  
memory loss.



**June 2006**  
Thomas J. Pace III became  
St. Luke's fifth Senior Pastor.



**February 11, 2007**  
St. Luke's founded Encounter  
Contemporary Worship.



**February 22, 2015**  
The Story Houston  
began its weekly  
worship in the St.  
Luke's Activity Center.



**September 9, 2018**  
Oasis Comunidad  
Christiana launched  
its first worship  
service in Spanish at  
Gethsemane.



**1945**

**December 11, 1961**  
St. Luke's Methodist Church Foundation,  
Inc. was established.

**1963**  
St. Luke's sent its first mission team  
into the field for six weeks in Bolivia.

**1977**  
St. Luke's gave its first two Houston Project  
grants to Wesley Community Center and  
Bear Creek United Methodist Church.



**January 22, 1995**  
Ribbon cutting ceremony  
for the new Activity Center  
and classroom wing.

**October 2016**  
Grand Opening of The Story Houston Building, the Student Ministries Building,  
the Johnson Education Building, and the St. Luke's/St. John's parking garage.



**November 11, 1945**  
First service held in Lamar High  
School auditorium, with more than  
200 joining in membership.



**September 10, 1950**  
The Wynn Blanton  
Memorial Building was  
opened.



**September 8, 1954**  
St. Luke's Weekday  
School opened.



**1958**  
St. Luke's opened the  
original Activities  
Building, now the  
Central Plant, complete  
with roller rink.



**1967**  
St. Luke's  
started its  
after-school  
care program.



**May 19, 1978**  
Under St. Luke's leadership,  
the Christian Community  
Service Center opened its  
doors to provide food,  
clothing, and financial aid to  
those in need.



**December 6, 1981**  
The Rotunda Theatre,  
additional classrooms,  
and expanded office area  
was completed on the  
Westheimer Campus.



**1996**  
Pure Sound  
Youth Choir  
was founded.



**1997**  
The Woodshop  
opened a Toy  
Program.



**2000**  
The Memorial Garden  
was consecrated.



**2008**  
St. Luke's Center  
for Counseling  
and Life  
Enrichment, later  
renamed Nick  
Finnegan  
Counseling  
Center, was  
established.



**September 27, 2009**  
St. Luke's merged with  
Gethsemane United  
Methodist Church.



**2012**  
Houston reVision was  
launched to serve  
gang-affected youth in the  
Gulfton/Sharpstown area.



**April 21, 2019**  
African Fellowship began  
worship services in  
Swahili at Gethsemane.

“The people of this church will never rest on their laurels. These are people who catch a glimpse of God’s preferred future not just for this congregation, but for our city and world, and know they are called to be useful to God in making that future a reality. I can only imagine what God will do in and through St. Luke’s in the next 75 years.”

Dr. Tom Pace, Sr. Pastor





# Our vision: A city transformed by the love of Jesus. **It's in our DNA.**

## Serve 75!

From the beginning, St. Luke's has focused on going beyond our walls to transform the city. We have started new non-profits and partnered with incredible organizations throughout Houston. To celebrate our 75th anniversary, let's challenge ourselves to serve more this year! To help, we've created a book with 75 different ways to serve. You can pick one up beginning January 26 at the Church Conference or online: [StLukesMethodist.org/75](http://StLukesMethodist.org/75). Opportunities range from one-time commitments to ongoing projects, including kid-friendly activities both at St. Luke's and in the community. There is a place where everyone can give themselves away in generosity and service. Let's challenge ourselves this year to transform the city by living and loving like Jesus!

## Children's Piggy Bank Challenge

On February 9, Children's Ministries will launch the Piggy Bank Challenge. As we celebrate our church and live out our vision of a city transformed by the love of Jesus, we challenge each family to raise a combined total of \$75 throughout the year through acts of service. Children will receive a piggy bank during Sunday School and Children's Church beginning February 9. Families may bring their offering to the celebration on Sunday, November 15 at Minute Maid Park.



# We Pray:

## 25 Hours of prayer for 75 years of Ministry

For 75 years prayer has been at the heart of who we are and whose we are. On February 19, St. Luke's Prayer Ministry will host 25 hours of continual prayer to thank God for all that has happened in the life of this church over the past 75 years, and to ask God to guide us for the next 75 years.

The prayer vigil will kick off with a special service in the chapel that evening at 7p.m. and will continue for the next 24 hours. Be one of the 75 or more people who commit to pray for an hour by contacting Rev. Thomas Harper at [tharper@stlukesmethodist.org](mailto:tharper@stlukesmethodist.org).

# 75TH ANNIVERSARY HIGHLIGHTS



January 5	75th Anniversary Kickoff
January 26	Serve 75! Challenge Launch
February 9	Children's Piggy Bank Challenge Launch
February 19	25 Hours of Prayer for 75 Years of Ministry
September 13	Church-wide Bible Study Launch
October 18	Special worship service including music commissioned for the Chancel and Handbell Choirs
November 1-30	Rotunda Gallery: St. Luke's Retrospective
November 15	Anniversary Celebration at Minute Maid Park





SAVE THE DATE | NOVEMBER 15, 2020

# *One Giant Celebration*

AT MINUTE MAID PARK

RIENDS · WE TELL OUR STORIES · WE GIVE OURSELVES AWAY

*O give thanks to the Lord, call on his name,  
make known his deeds among the peoples.*  
I Chronicles 16:8



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