



Good Shepherd Lutheran Church

ECHO the love of Christ

**We are a Christian community united in God's call
to serve others by sharing the love of Christ.**

A congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

DECEMBER 2024

From the thoughts of the pastor ...

We have been talking about the Seven Deadly Sins in the last few articles, and we will continue that discussion/lesson. But I feel this December article should be focused on the Church Seasons that happen in December – Advent and Christmas.

This year, we begin our season of Advent on December 1st – a somewhat rarity. Our Advent calendars – whether chocolate or scripture – get to follow the church calendar. I know this doesn't sound super great, and – in all reality – it isn't, but just a nice thing for once as we can prepare ourselves, our homes, and our church for the coming Christ Child; that is, after all, what Advent is all about.

Advent is traditionally seen as a time of waiting and preparing for the celebration of Jesus' birth on Christmas Day (yes, Christmas Day not Christmas Eve). But Advent is also the period we are in now as we are waiting and preparing for the celebration of the second coming of Christ, the Messiah, the Emmanuel (God with us). As we prepare ourselves, we take stock of our lives – the where we've done wrong or could have done better; the

what we left undone and wish we could have done. This sounds a lot like repentance or confession – a lot like Lent, if you will – and it is, it is a lot of repentance and confession; Advent is a mini-Lent, a mini time of repentance and reflection prior to the great celebration of Christ. But what, exactly, are we preparing, and what are we preparing for?

To answer the first question, we prepare ourselves, which we just discussed, and we prepare our homes and worship spaces, the places where we live and feel the most comfortable, the places where we want Jesus to feel welcomed, the places we feel we can honor Jesus the most. We want Jesus to enter our homes, our worship space, our lives, our hearts without any doubts or darkness or fear to allow Jesus to take and make a home in and around us. It is no surprise, then, that Advent begins the new Church Year as we – like we do for our other calendars – make new year resolutions to worship more, follow Christ more, and follow the greatest commandments to Love God and Love Neighbor more. This might mean letting go of the last year and

focusing on the could be – focus on the potential rather than regret of the past. This could be deciding to focus on God and your own spiritual health and well-being rather than holding on to grudges and pride. This could be focusing on “the other” rather than “the self” or “the one” putting the good of others and the community ahead of self...ahead of one. What a new year resolution means to you is for you; take this time of Advent to prepare yourselves to receive Christ in your heart, mind, body, soul; to receive Christ in your life to Love God and to Love Neighbor.

This now leads to the second question: what are we preparing for? This question is more theological as well as physical. Physically, we are making preparations – greening the church, cleaning the church, setting everything up in place for the Christmas season and the Christmas worship service. We are physically preparing for the Incarnation at Bethlehem (the birth of God on earth). Theologically, though, we prepare for Christ's presence in the sacrament of the Eucharist. Moreover, on this point, we

believe in the real presence of Christ in, under, and around the bread and wine (or grape juice) of the Holy Communion Meal (the Eucharist). But we believe in the perpetual presence of Christ in the elements and within us when we consume the elements. (Hence the reverence of the elements after service and the proper disposal of the elements.) It then can be said we only need Holy Communion once in our lifetime for Christ to be within us, around us, and under us. But a word of caution here, Christ is only within, around, and under us when we let Christ be within, around, and under us – which we, as humans, fail more than we know. Thus, it is good and proper to celebrate Holy Communion when we meet to have more chances for Christ perpetual presence within, around, and under us all the time.

Finally, the last theological idea we prepare for during this season of Advent is the second coming of Christ and the Final Judgement. We believe, and confess during the creeds, that Jesus will come again to judge the living and the dead. Now, our Lutheran belief tells us that we have been judged and our judgement has been atoned for

through the sacrifice of Christ on the cross. But that does not negate the need to prepare for this judgement – which we do by letting Christ within our hearts, mind, body, and soul.

And after all this preparation, after all the reflection and repentance and confession, after our houses and churches are decorated and our heart and mind and soul are ready for Christ, we get the most precious gift ever given to the world – God incarnate through this little baby Jesus.

This is the significance of Christmas, that God has entered the world to take on the form of human to be like us. Recently, at least in my mind/scholarly world, the focus has been more on the date of Christmas rather than the meaning of Christmas. But it doesn't matter if Christ was born December 25th or September 9th, or March 22nd, or whatever. (Truth be told, Christ is born – God is born and with us – every day and especially the days we are baptized or confirmed or came back to faith or need God or...or...or...) What matters about Christmas is the idea that we celebrate God entering the world in human form, to live the life of humanity, and eventually

to die and raise again for us and the world. Christmas is the first chapter of the story, not the end of the story or the middle of the story, and Easter (the Resurrection of Christ) is another chapter of the story, not the end of the story. Christmas and Easter are intertwined together to show that God loves the world, that God became human – became incarnate – became one of us. The song, *One of us* is the reality and trueness of Christmas asking “What if God was one of us?; God became “a slob like one of us, a stranger on the bus”.¹ The celebration of Christmas is the celebration this happened, is happening, and will happen again.

These seasons that happen in December and continue to Epiphany in January give us a chance to prepare ourselves – heart, mind, body, soul – for Christ to enter and come within and also to celebrate that Christ is born again – that God is incarnated again – to be with us, for us, and with us now and forever.

Amen+

السلام عليكم

(Peace be upon you)

The Reverend Joshua Krenz

The Reverend Joshua Krenz

¹ *One of Us* by Joan Osborn, Relish Album, 1995.

The Big Churchy Word



Advent Wreath A wreath made with pine branches or other materials with four candles that are lit during the four weeks of the Advent season. A center or Christ candle is lit on Christmas Eve or Christmas Day. A short ceremony is often used for the lighting of the candles in churches or homes.²

The Advent Wreath is something rather special in the church. It's a piece of equipment that is used so rarely but is also so important that it takes a prominent place in the worship space and worship service. At Good Shepherd, the current Advent Wreath sits on the stand that holds the Christ Candle (or Pascal Candle) making this wreath the focal point of the light of Christ. Any baptisms or funerals or weddings that make the necessary use of the Christ Candle get lit off the Advent Wreath instead. This can also be seen as a physical sign of Christ coming again when we return the Christ Candle to its stand during the season of light (Epiphany).

However, this idea is not in all churches. In Christ Lutheran

Church in Santa Fe, the Advent Wreath is hung – suspended on a rope – with just the four Advent Candles. At home – granted not a church – four candles are in a window in a line. Your practice might be different and practices around the world that celebrate Advent and use an Advent Wreath are different, but the concept and meaning is the same – to symbolize the passage of the four weeks of Advent in preparation of Christmas. And yet, some questions remain – or at least happen – which we can answer now – as long as the meaning of the Advent Candles are not lost: why a wreath, why evergreens, why candles, and when did this practice start?

Traditionally, Advent Wreaths are round – wreath shaped – to symbolize the infinity of God's love; there is no beginning and – more importantly – no end to God's love. A circle or round wreath gives us the representation that God loves us and will continue to love us always. A traditional Advent Wreath uses greens – evergreens – from pine trees or other evergreen trees to represent the hope of eternal

life brought by Jesus Christ. This is the same reason we use evergreen trees as Christmas Trees – and why green is a primary color of Christmas – to symbolize and represent the eternal life given to us through Jesus Christ.

The candles are used to represent the light of God that is coming into this world in the infant baby Jesus. Each week, a different candle is lit to represent one attribute of this baby Jesus: hope, peace, joy, and love. Most Christian denominations use three or four blue or purple candles (the color of the liturgical season), but the Anglican Church in the United Kingdom has a more common tradition to use four red candles and these linked to the coming of Christ in: the hope of all God's people, the Old Testament Prophets, John the Baptist, and Mary the mother of Jesus, each linked with the Sunday Revised Common Lectionary reading for Advent (the readings, I'll add, that we read during worship service as well). Finally, in the Eastern Christian Church, the wreath consists of six candles, differently colored, to celebrate

² McKim, Donald K. *The Westminster Dictionary of Theological Terms* 2 Ed.

Westminster John Knox Press: Louisville, Kentucky, 2014.

the six weeks of the 40-day Advent/Christmas period. The candles are (in order): green candle – symbolizing faith; blue candle – symbolizing hope; gold candle – symbolizing love; white candle – symbolizing peace; purple candle – symbolizing repentance; and red candle – symbolizing communion. It is traditional in these wreaths to not include the Christ Candle in the center.

Now, we know the symbols behind the wreath, where did it come from? Well, just like lights on the Christmas tree, the tradition started in 16th century Germany with the German Lutherans; however, it might not have looked like the wreaths we see today, the modern Advent wreaths. Apparently, a Lutheran

pastor in Germany – Johann Hinrich Wichern (1808-1881) – is credited with the “invention” of the modern Advent wreath. Legend has it, he taught children at a mission school in Hamburg where the kids would daily ask if Christmas had come. (Side note: remember, a calendar (like we have) in the home or school was extremely rare. Important dates were linked to religious holidays, so the church told people when it was.) Getting tired from the kids constantly asking if Christmas had come, Pastor Wichern took a large wooden ring and decorated it with 24 small red candles and four large white candles. Each day, Pastor Wichern lit a small red candle and every Sunday he lit a large white candle. Protestants around Germany began to

follow suit and in the early 1920s, the Roman Catholic Church adopted this custom. The Advent Calendar was created, and the modern Advent Wreath was trimmed down – mostly due to the dropping of daily worship services – to the four candles we have today. It should be noted that an Advent Wreath (aka Advent Crown) is not the same thing, and holds no connection to, the crown of candles of St. Lucy – the celebration of St. Lucy on December 13th, where traditionally a crown (or wreath) with candles is worn on the head of a young girl.

Thus, Lutherans do have a substantial claim to fame for any and all churches who practice worship with an Advent Wreath. Go Lutherans.

December Birthdays



Laurie Bidwell
Paul Gauvin
Pastor Josh Krenz
Chrisann Lewert

Renee Montagano
Katrina Pavolino
George Peterson
Abigail Rigolizzo

Amy Sanford
David Thompson
Jan Uveges
Mike Vendetti



ATTENDANCE

10/27	60
11/3	57
11/10	50
11/17	58

Prayer and visitation requests may be submitted in the box in the Narthex or box in the airlock by the offices, using the cards provided.

PRAYER

If you know of someone who is hospitalized, sick, or needs a visit, you may also call the church office (440-599-8908) so that a visit can be arranged.



GENERAL FUND BALANCE AS OF OCTOBER 31, 2024

\$7,724

MONTH	OFFERING INCOME	OTHER INCOME	YTD INCOME	%ESTIMATE BUDGETED REVENUE	EXPENSE	YEAR TO DATE	% ESTIMATED OPERATING COST
January	\$10,527	\$ 369	\$10,896	68.2%	\$18,831	\$ 18,831	115.3%
February	\$15,228	\$ 508	\$26,632	81.9%	\$16,885	\$ 35,716	105.9%
March	\$10,184	\$1,263	\$38,079	76.6%	\$15,319	\$ 51,036	103.4%
April	\$11,021	\$1,006	\$50,106	76.5%	\$18,836	\$ 69,872	108.5%
May	\$ 7,233	\$ 375	\$57,714	70.9%	\$13,381	\$ 83,179	100.6%
June	\$10,063	\$ 225	\$68,003	70.0%	\$15,481	\$ 98,660	100.8%
July	\$ 7,776	\$ 225	\$76,004	69.4%	\$14,960	\$113,619	100.8%
August	\$ 9,124	\$ 225	\$85,352	66.3%	\$12,514	\$126,133	97.5%
September	\$ 9,340	\$ 225	\$94,917	65.6%	\$16,033	\$142,166	98.4%
October	\$ 7,759	\$ 225	\$102,902	64.1%	\$12,786	\$154,952	96.8%
						Budget income YTD	Budget expense YTD
						\$	\$

Need \$15,622 ea Mo.	\$187,465/year	EXPENSE V BUDGET	\$(5,092)
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	9/30/2024	10/31/2024
Capital Improvement Endowment Fund	\$ 959,810	\$ 950,200
<i>Money Market Fund</i>		
Family Center Endowment Fund Balance	\$ 39,357	\$ 38,654
Mission & Education Endowment Fund	\$ 123,579	\$ 122,289
Thrivent Fund	\$ 14,517	\$ 14,517
Capital Improvement	\$ -	\$ -
Youth Missions Fund	\$ 12,067	\$ 10,653
Abiding Memorial	\$ 7,627	\$ 7,793
Detroit Street	\$ 2,178	\$ 1,960
Sandusky St	\$ 2,834	\$ 2,992
Reserve Account	\$ -	\$ -
10% Biblical Tithe to Synod		\$ -

Stacy Racut, Treasurer

NEWS & UPDATES

Dates to Remember:

- Dec 1st: Welcome New Members; Potluck; Hanging of the Greens
- Dec 7th: Nisua Bake (order by Dec 1st)
- Dec 8th: Last day to order Poinsettias and take the survey
- Dec 13th: Bell Ringing for Salvation Army at Golden Dawn
- Dec 14th: Christmas Party 4-6pm (All Welcome!)
- Dec 24th: Christmas Eve Services, 6:00 Contemporary, 9:00 Traditional
- Dec 25th: Christmas Service 10:00 Traditional
- Dec 29th: Service 10:00 Contemporary
- Dec 23-Jan 1: Administrative Office Closed
- Dec 24-26 & Jan 1: Pastor's Office Closed



December 1st
Rite of New Members during services
Potluck at 12:30pm
Hanging of the Greens to follow

Please place orders for
Poinsettias
on or before December 8th
\$10 each



Forms are in the Narthex
 & on p. 10



Sign-up sheets are in the Narthex



December 14th 4-6pm
ALL WELCOME!
 If you want to volunteer, see Jen



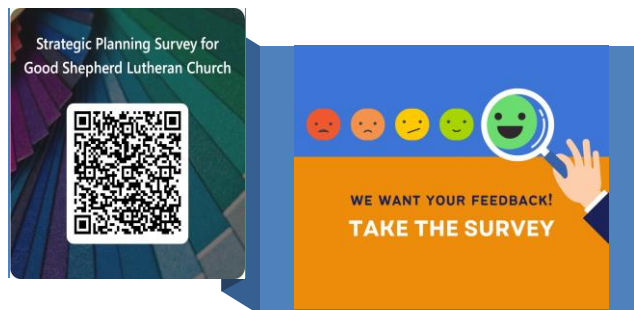
MONTHLY MINISTRY FOCUS:
MUSIC
Sunday, December 22nd 10am
 All are welcome to attend.

QUILT RAFFLE

Tickets:
1 for \$1 6 for \$5 14 for \$10

Order through the office
or through the Square link

Monthly Drawing- December 22nd





Greetings, members of Good Shepherd Lutheran Church!

I'm Drew Tucker, Executive Director of HopeWood Outdoors. We've been invited by your leaders to support your congregation as you discern the vision, mission, and values God is calling you to in this season of ministry. We're honored to accompany you on this journey.

One way that we're offering support is surveying the community to best understand Good Shepherd's past and present communities, as well as appreciate the hopes you have for the future.

The survey is now open and will remain so until December 8th at 11:59PM. Once completed, survey responses will be compiled and collated by our staff in ways that hold your identity in confidence. The goal of this survey is to help Good Shepherd's leaders understand the community's perceptions of and hopes for the congregation.

You can access the survey by using the QR code included in this newsletter, as well as seeing your recent emails from the church for direct links to the survey. QR codes will also be present in church building while the survey is open.

This survey is being conducted by HopeWood Outdoors, under my direction. I bring more than a decade of research and consulting experience in both the higher education and nonprofit realms. HopeWood Outdoors has more than 80 years of helping people discover their callings and develop relevant skills, which we're now expanding to support community organizations like Good Shepherd through strategic planning support.

Remember, this survey will close on December 8th, so please take the time to complete it today. You can always reach out directly to me by email (drew@hopewoodoutdoors.org) if you have any questions regarding the survey or strategic planning process.

Once again, thank you for inviting us into this sacred journey. We're excited to see where God is leading you!

In gratitude for you,

Drew

The Rev. Andrew (Drew) Tucker
Executive Director

www.hopewoodoutdoors.org

"Our vision is to connect all people with nature and faith to bless a changing world."

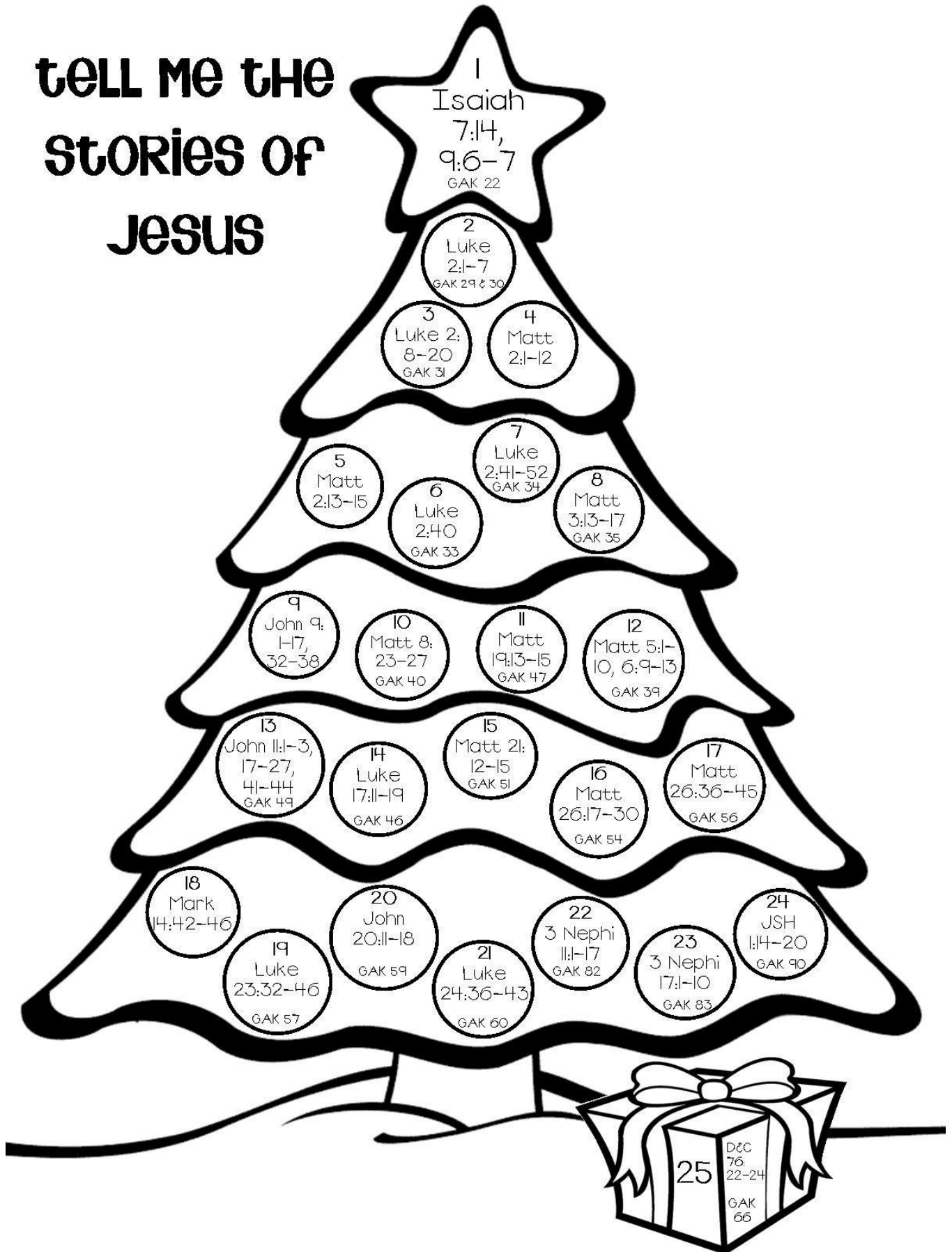
Email: drew@HopeWoodOutdoors.org

Phone: 919-370-0177

Pronouns: he/him



TELL ME THE STORIES OF JESUS



Committee News

Christian Education

In December, our monthly lesson is "Sing It". Our December theme reviews the advent songs from Luke's Gospel. Each one has a special message about Jesus coming to fulfill a promise by God, to save humanity, to bring peace, and to reveal God's truth. A summary of the theme will be covered in the next children's message on December 15th during the services. During class time this month, we will be dressing up for pictures that will

tell the story of Jesus's birth. We will not have Sunday School on December 29th.

December 22nd, Jim Fuller will be joining us for the Monthly Ministry Focus; our focus is music! All are welcome to learn about the GSLC music ministry and make a joyful noise!

Save the date for our Christmas party on December 14th, 4-6 pm. ALL ARE WELCOME! We will need volunteers to help for all the things we have planned: cookie bake, making candles, snow-

flakes, edible snowmen, pizza, hot cocoa, and more! We have 2 events coming up in February: The Youth Group will be having their 2nd Annual Purse Bingo on February 1st; in collaboration with Evangelism, the annual bowling event is set for February 22nd at 6:30pm. More details will be coming soon.

God's blessings,
Jennifer Best
Christian Education

Quilting

Quilting Ministry had its first quilt raffle! It was a huge success, bringing in over \$100 for the Quilting Ministry! Thank you to everyone who supported this new venture.

We will have 2 more quilt raffles, one for December and one for

January. Tickets are on sale now for the December Raffle: 1 for \$1, 6 for \$5, 14 for \$10. Order through the office Monday - Thursday 8:30-1:30, or online using the link below:

<https://checkout.square.site/.../REQOJNBVFC3GAXCHXCBT3SAK>

The drawing will be December 22nd. Also, quilts are available for purchase at \$40 each.

Please note there will be no quilting on December 24th or 31st for the holidays.

Many Blessings,
Quilting Team



Christmas poinsettia plants are available at a cost of \$10.00 per plant. Payment along with this form may be placed in the offering or mailed to the church office.

We would ask that one name or one couple be honored or memorialized for each plant ordered. Thank you!

In Memory of _____

In Honor of _____

Donor's Name _____

LAST DAY FOR ORDERING WILL BE SUNDAY, DECEMBER 8TH, 2024.
Plants may be left at the church through Sunday, December 29th, 2024.

Volunteer Opportunities

Planning has begun for Designer Purse Bingo. Contact Taylor at 440-812-7745 if you're interested in volunteering.

3Ms: Member's Maintenance Ministry – Pitch in a few hours a month to help preserve the maintenance and beauty of our church. All skill levels welcome!

Fishes & Loaves – Volunteers are always welcome to assist with the free lunches and food pantry. Hours are Tuesdays from 9:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. and Saturdays 11:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. For food emergencies, call 440-381-1018.

Hospitality Ministry – Volunteers welcomed to serve hospitality after each service. It doesn't take much, a plate of cookies from the store and a jug of juice will do. Sign-up sheet is in the Narthex.

Make a joyful noise and share your musical talents! Join the choir and/or bell choir. You'll be glad you did! Sign-up sheets are in the Narthex.

Drummer needed for the Praise Band.

For more info about GSLC ministries and volunteer opportunities, contact the office at 440-599-8908.



December 2024

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1 8:30 Service 9:45 Sunday School 11:00 Service 12:30 Potluck & Hanging of the Greens	2 <i>9:00 & 10:30 YMCA Fitness</i>	3 9-2 Food Pantry Free Lunches 9:00 Quilting	4 <i>9:00 & 10:30 YMCA Fitness</i>	5 <i>5:00 Line Dancing</i>	6 OFFICE CLOSED <i>10:30 YMCA Fitness</i>	7 8:00 3M's Nisua Bake 11-12:30 Food Pantry Free Lunches & Nick's Closet
8 8:30 Service 9:45 Sunday School 11:00 Service Last Day to order poinsettias	9 <i>9:00 & 10:30 YMCA Fitness</i>	10 9-2 Food Pantry Free Lunches 9:00 Quilting	11 <i>9:00 & 10:30 YMCA Fitness</i>	12 <i>5:00 Line Dancing</i>	13 OFFICE CLOSED <i>10:30 YMCA Fitness</i> Ring bells for Salvation Army	14 8:00 3M's 11-12:30 Food Pantry Free Lunches & Nick's Closet 4-6 Christmas Party
15 Children's Msg. 8:30 Service 9:45 Sunday School 11:00 Service 12:30 Congregation Meeting	16 <i>9:00 & 10:30 YMCA Fitness</i>	17 9-2 Food Pantry Free Lunches 9:00 Quilting	18 <i>9:00 & 10:30 YMCA Fitness</i>	19 <i>5:00 Line Dancing</i>	20 OFFICE CLOSED Echo Articles Due <i>10:30 YMCA Fitness</i>	21 8:00 3M's 11-12:30 Food Pantry Free Lunches & Nick's Closet
22 8:30 Service 9:45 Sunday School 10:00 Monthly Mission Focus 11:00 Service Quilt Drawing	23 ADMIN OFFICE CLOSED <i>9:00 & 10:30 YMCA Fitness</i>	24 Christmas Eve OFFICE CLOSED 6:00 Contemporary Service 9:00 Traditional Service	25 Merry Christmas! OFFICE CLOSED 10:00 Traditional Service	26 OFFICE CLOSED <i>5:00 Line Dancing</i>	27 OFFICE CLOSED <i>10:30 YMCA Fitness</i>	28 8:00 3M's
29 10:00 Contemporary Service	30 ADMIN OFFICE CLOSED <i>9:00 & 10:30 YMCA Fitness</i>	31 New Year's Eve ADMIN OFFICE CLOSED	 <p>December nisu bake: Last day to order, Dec. 1; bake date, Dec. 7; pick-up date, Dec. 8</p>			

Key: *Italics* = Non-GSLC Programs & Events

DATE/ TIME	ASSISTING MINISTER	COMMUNION ASSISTANT	USHERS	GREETERS	READER	ACOLYTE	HOSPITALITY
12/1/2024 8:30	Rich Tulino	Katrina Pavolino		Nancy Altman	Rich Tulino		
11:00				Mary Lou Moisis			Potluck at 12:30
12/8/2024 8:30	Amy Gallagher	Katrina Pavolino	Shirley and Peggy Harco	Shirley and Peggy Harco	Amy Gallagher		
11:00		Mark Lytle			Mark Lytle		
12/15/2024 8:30	Jen Best	Katrina Pavolino		Nancy Altman			Christian Ed.
11:00	Jen Best				Susan Tan		Christian Ed.
12/22/2024 8:30	Rich Tulino	Katrina Pavolino		Katrina Pavolino	Rich Tulino		
11:00		Glenda Betteridge	Glenda & Greg Betteridge		Greg Betteridge		
12/24/2024 6:00 pm	Mike Malys				Mike Malys		
9:00 pm		Glenda Betteridge	Michelle Logan	Greg Betteridge	Greg Betteridge		
12/25/2024 10:00 am							
12/29/2024 10:00 am			Jen and Luna	Jerry Lampela			

DECEMBER ALTAR GUILD:
Ruth Brown, Katrina Pavolino,
Stephanie Newsome, Barb Talan



JANUARY ALTAR GUILD:
Please volunteer;
See Ruth Brown or Jen

Good Shepherd Lutheran Church

876 Grove Street
Conneaut, OH 44030
440-599-8908 / www.gslcc.org

Worship Times

Sunday 8:30 Contemporary
Sunday 11:00 Traditional
Holy Communion at all services

Office Hours

Monday-Thursday – 8:30 am to 1:30 pm

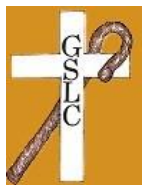
Pastoral Staff

Rev. Joshua Krenz, Pastor
gslcpastor@gwcmail.net

Office Staff

Jennifer Best, Administrative Assistant
goodshepherd@gwcmail.net

*A congregation of the
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*



Good Shepherd Lutheran Church
876 Grove Street
Conneaut, OH 44030