



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

JANUARY 2026

From the thoughts of the pastor...

Recently, as of the time of writing this, I've been talking, and thinking, a lot about our reason for existence. Last year, we reaffirmed our Mission Statement as "We are a Christian community united in God's call to serve others by sharing the love of Christ". Now, I wonder how best to fulfill that statement in Conneaut and surrounding neighborhoods. This is a much wider topic to discuss than the thoughts of the pastor as we all are responsible for carrying out this mission. But something I think I can address is the reason for this building.

I think something that some of us, even I, take for granted is why we gather under this roof. You've heard me say in public and privately we are here to worship God. This seems like an obvious answer, right? Of course, we here to worship God. But I think both you and I sometimes miss everything that is behind this – we are here to worship God. I think one way to explain this, and to help at least me understand, is to say what we are not here for; why we do not come to this building and this place.

The first, and clearest, is we are not a social club; Good Shepherd Lutheran Church does not exist for or as a social club. We make friends here, have social gatherings here, even have our little clicks and groups here, but that is not a reason to exist; that is not a reason for this building and its associated costs. We come and gather under all these roofs to worship God, not to catch up on the latest gossip, not even for recreation. While we have gathering around similar interests and activity, the primary reason to come to this building is to have personal and intimate communion with God.

Another difference between social clubs and this church is all are welcome here. Membership at a church differs from membership at a social club as church membership gives the public a visible commitment to a specific body of believers and a public willingness to be part of Christ's body. While membership is required to vote within congregational meetings on church decisions, all people are welcomed to input suggestions and policies for the church. Social clubs, such as the Moose, Elks, or Masons, usually do not allow guests with some exceptions and guests are usually not allowed for any decision-making meetings.

We come to worship God, all people, all walks of life, regardless if we like them or not, regardless if we agree with them or not. We come to worship God. It makes it easier to worship God in a place where you feel comfortable and welcomed and it makes it easier for other people to worship God in a place where they feel comfortable and welcomed. For some people that means to catch up with people we haven't seen in a week, for others that means just saying hello – and acknowledging a hello was said – as we enter the sanctuary. Sometimes people just want to "sneak" into the sanctuary and "sneak" out immediately after the service and sometimes people want to hang around and chitchat. All these are perfectly good and orderly provided it doesn't take away from the primary point to worship God.

Another "we are not" is a business. There are times where we have to think of the administration of this church as a business, but our goal is not to become rich or profitable or even have customers. Our most

public ministry (other than worship services, the food pantry) does not say they have customers, rather friends or, in a pinch, clients, never customers. As part of this, we make decisions – both members and boards – that have a monetary cost but will serve the larger purpose of worshipping God.

For example, the screens in the sanctuary had a monetary cost to them; but they allow people to keep their eyes upward to the cross – or the Jesus's – allowing them to connect to God in their way.

Another example, the solar panels that are planned to be installed have a monetary cost to them; but they are a public affirmation and decision of our endeavor to be good stewards of the creation we are entrusted to from the God whom we worship.

Final example, the salary of the staff has a monetary cost to them; but having staff allows the rest of the church, especially worship services, to run smoothly. It is human nature to find and focus on problems, especially when it interrupts – or vacates – their worship experience. Staff allows us all to focus solely on worship of God rather than where we are in the worship service, the cleanliness of the floors, even the safety of children. There are times when being staff interferes with personal worshipfulness of God.

For any businessperson within this congregation or outside of it who would see our decisions and actions and accounts will see we continually have a deficit and a business model that cannot survive. Any for profit business that has our model will go out of business. But our business is worshipping God; our business is allowing our community – our neighbors, friends, family, political rival – to worship God. Each day we have a worship service where God is praised and worshipped, are the most lucrative days for us, because our business has succeeded.

Finally, a good analogy for the church is liking it to an embassy – the Embassy of the Kingdom of God. The church is more than the building – as you've heard me say time and time again. The church is and is about the people, wherever they may be gathered. As an embassy, we are all ambassadors working for the Most High in the Kingdom of God. We share what the kingdom we serve is all about, what it stands for and against, and the protections we have regardless of where we go. We are given the utmost and ultimate diplomatic immunity from the evil/wicked foe. The church building, then, is the fortress of protection, a mighty fortress (if you will) upon which all who enter and worship God are protected from the constant assault from the evil/wicked foe. And we are strongest when we stand as a unit in full commitment to ourselves, each other, and to God, full of faith with praise and worship to God.

Therefore, we are a Christian community – a group of people who gather together to support one another allowing us to worship God – united in God's call to serve other – united as a mighty front, a unit of people committed to the belief God called us to Conneaut, to Good Shepherd, to keep out the evil/wicked foe, and help others to fight the constant temptations and tricks of the evil/wicked foe – by sharing the love of Christ – by using what Christ has taught us through scripture and example using our words and deeds.

This place under this roof is a place of and for worshipping God; nothing more and nothing less. Our own failure because we're human tries to make this place something that it is not. So, let this be a place of worship – a welcoming place for new and existing attendees to worship – so that we can – through our words and deeds – worship our most excellent God.

Amen+

السلام عليكم

(Peace be upon you)

The Reverend Joshua Krenz

The Reverend Joshua Krenz



ECHO Word January 2026

This month, we are going to define several words for those who assist with and during worship.

Assistant Pastor A pastor who assists another (often “senior”) pastor with the ministerial duties of a church.¹

Acolyte (Gr. *Akolouthos*, “follower”) A nonordained persons who assists in a worship service by performing actions such as carrying a cross or lighting candles.²

Crucifer (Lat. *Crux*) One who carries a cross in a church procession.³

Thurifer (Lat. “incense carrier”) One who carries a censer or thurible during a liturgical procession.⁴

Book Bearer One who carries a religious book to the pastor, to and from the altar (or its dedicated position), and during a religious procession.⁵

You may be asking yourself, why did pastor define so many words this month? The answer comes simply as these are the regular people for a procession. During a high liturgy service, there are people who line up and process in at the beginning and then process out at the end of the service. The church, of course, has a fancy word for each one of the people who processes in or out. And, of course, order matters.

The first person in the procession is the Thurifer. Their primary responsibility is to spread incense (usually Frankincense) in the place to make a pleasing smell. This tradition goes back to the first altars and sacrifices on the altar where animals were burned to give God a pleasing smell. The idea was that with the pleasing smell, God would be pleased and grant graces upon all who offered a sacrifice. In today’s Christian churches, Frankincense is used as a reminder of one of the gifts the Magi to Christ at his birth and in the Book of Exodus to bless the altar or before the Ark of the Covenant. Frankincense is more associated with giving of life than Myrrh since Myrrh was used for the dead. In a high liturgical service, everything that is used for the worship leadership of God is first enveloped in the smoke from the Thurifer.

The next in line is the Crucifer (if space allows the acolytes would be on either side of the cross), who carries the cross. Within – especially protestant – Christian churches, the cross is the primary symbol of our faith. The cross is a symbol of the church to remind those who look upon it of the sacrifice Christ made for us. Moreover, an empty cross, used in primarily protestant denominations, reminds us of the victory Christ had over death and that we are saved by grace; that death has no sting for us. The cross is carried in at the beginning to symbolize Jesus entering this place and for us to follow Jesus into the

¹ McKim, Donald K. *The Westminster Dictionary of Theological Terms* 2 Ed. Westminster John Knox Press: Louisville, Kentucky, 2014.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ <https://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/book-bearer>

place, and then out again at the end symbolizing Jesus entering this world and for us to follow Jesus (and his teachings which we just hear) into the world.

If space doesn't allow for the acolytes to be next to the cross, or there is only one acolyte, the acolyte comes next following the cross. Just like the cross symbolizes Jesus entering and leaving the sanctuary, the acolyte brings the light of Christ in and then carries the light of Christ out. Their other primary responsibility is to light the candles on the altar, the Pascal Candle (if appropriate) and all other candles as needed. And they are to make sure they stay lit and relight if necessary.

Next comes the Book Bearer who carries either the Lectionary Book or a Lectern Bible (a large bible with large print). This book not only symbolizes the word of God coming among us but is literally the word of God entering our worship space. When we read the readings, we are reading the word of God. The Lectionary Book takes the appropriate readings of the service and combines them into a single book, rather than having to flip through the bible to find the right part within the bible. But the meaning is the same, the symbology is the same as the word of God is coming into our midsts and we should, need to, listen to what is said. And, with everything before, the Book Bearer takes the Book/Bible out for us to not only follow the word into the world but do the actions the word calls us to do in the world. Finally, the Book Bearer also symbolizes the Word (Logos, Christ) entering and leaving our worship space as well.

Next, if present, comes the choir to bring the song of God into the worship space. Followed by the Assisting Pastor (or Assisting Minister if the assistant is not ordained). In some denominations, the Assisting Pastor/Minister is named the Deacon. However, because Deacon has a special meaning within the ELCA (and special calling), we try not to confuse the two terms. We have had, and currently have, a Deacon who assists(ed) with worship services, but our current Deacon acts as the Assisting Minister during the worship service, rather than the Deacon. (Believe me, it can get confusing real fast.). The Assisting Ministers' primary role is to be the voice of the people. Long ago, the tradition was the Pastor was the representative voice of God and the Assisting Minister was the representative voice of the people. While the ideas have changed, the tradition still holds, hence the Assisting Minister saying the Prayers of Intercession (also known as the Prayers of the People), the Offering Prayer (to offer to God the offerings and sacrifices of the people) and the Post-Communion Prayer (to thank God for coming to us in the Holy Meal).

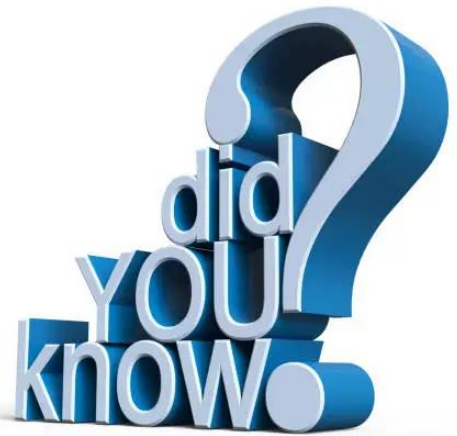
Finally, bringing up the rear, is the Pastor/Presider who, as we remember from last month's word, is the leader of the worship service.

This concludes the simple procession. But, like anything else within the church, it can become very elaborate. There could be a person who carries the Church Banner (if present), a set of lay ministers to carry all the vessels used in Holy Communion (Paten, Chalice, trays, etc.), a person who carries the seasonal banner, there can be multiple crosses and multiple Acolytes carrying lighted candles. And when the bishop is here, another cross, banner, clergy and bishop can all be present within the procession. There can be as many as 22 people (or more in some denominations), not including the choir, within the procession.

What matters, though, is not the number of people, but what the procession means – God (Jesus, the Christ, the Word/Logos) entering this place to bring blessings upon us and then leading us into the world to do God's Work with Our Hands.

Did you know...

When the discussion occurred a few years ago to return the library into the Family Room, a possibility was raised to place a computer in that room for the general public to use free of charge. However, the computer never was placed in that room. But a computer does exist and is available for use in the Church Office for anyone to use. The computer is a basic system but is good for checking email, checking Facebook, or writing any documents. Any and all are welcomed to use this computer when the Church Office is open Mondays through Thursdays, 8:30 AM to 1:30 PM.



January Birthdays



Kevin Manniko
Wes Combs

Beth Vendetti

Gail Burlingham
Kris Cameron



ATTENDANCE

11/30	55
12/7	65
12/14	49



WORSHIP SERVICES will only be
CANCELED if there is a LEVEL 3
SNOW EMERGENCY

The OFFICES will be
CLOSED if the
Schools are CLOSED

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 at
440-599-8908. To add someone to the prayer chain,
you can call Betty at 440-265-2452.

TREASURER'S REPORT: NOVEMBER 2025

[illegible]

NEWS & UPDATES



American Red Cross Blood Drive
Jan. 21st 1-6pm
Save a Life, Give Blood



\$7 cash
 Additional charges
 apply for online/credit
 card sales

Nisua Bake January 24th
 Volunteers Welcome
 Order on or before January 18th



FEBRUARY 7, 2026
 DOORS OPEN AT 5, **BINGO STARTS AT 6:30 SHARP**
 COST \$50
 water, coffee, and meal provided (BYOB)
 TICKETS AVAILABLE DURING OFFICE HOURS or QR code



February 8th
before & after services
 If you would like to make a soup,
 sign up sheet is in the Narthex

PLEASE JOIN US

CONGREGATIONAL
MEETING

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 15TH 12:30PM

ASH
 Wednesday
 RETURN TO THE LORD YOUR GOD

Services 12pm & 7pm February 18th Soup & Bread 6pm



Lenten Suppers Soup & Sandwiches
 6:00-6:45pm
Service at 7:00pm
Feb 25th - Mar 25th

Lenten Offering Envelopes are available in the Narthex.

Free lunches & Food Pantry
 Tuesdays 9:00am-2:00pm
 Saturdays 10:00am-2:00pm*
 *until further notice

Volunteers always welcome



For food emergencies, call 440-381-1018

Committee News

Christian Education

Our Annual Bowling Event will be coming up in late February or early March. We'll have the exact date in the new year.

Evangelism

Purse Bingo is February 7th. Volunteers are welcome; see Michelle or Jen. Tickets are available now; you can order them online with the link or QR code, before or after services, or during office hours.

We'll have a **SOUP-er Bowl Fundraiser** on February 8th. If you're interested in making soup, see Michelle.

Volunteers are greatly appreciated for unloading trucks and helping prepare lunches in the kitchen, especially on Tuesdays.

Fishes & Loaves – Hours are Tuesdays from 9:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m., and Saturdays have been extended to 10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. until further notice. For food emergencies, call 440-381-1018. Volunteers are always welcome to assist.

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!

Please remember to keep **doors closed** to help with climate control. Also, please remember to **turn off the lights** when you leave the room.

Offices will be closed if the schools are closed for **snow** accumulation. Worship services will only be cancelled if there is a level 3 snow emergency.

Social Ministries

Volunteers welcomed to serve **hospitality** after each service. See the sign-up sheets in the Narthex.

If you're interested in **leading Social Ministry** or have ideas about Social Ministry events, see Pastor.

Nisua bake is on January 24th. Order on or before January 18th.

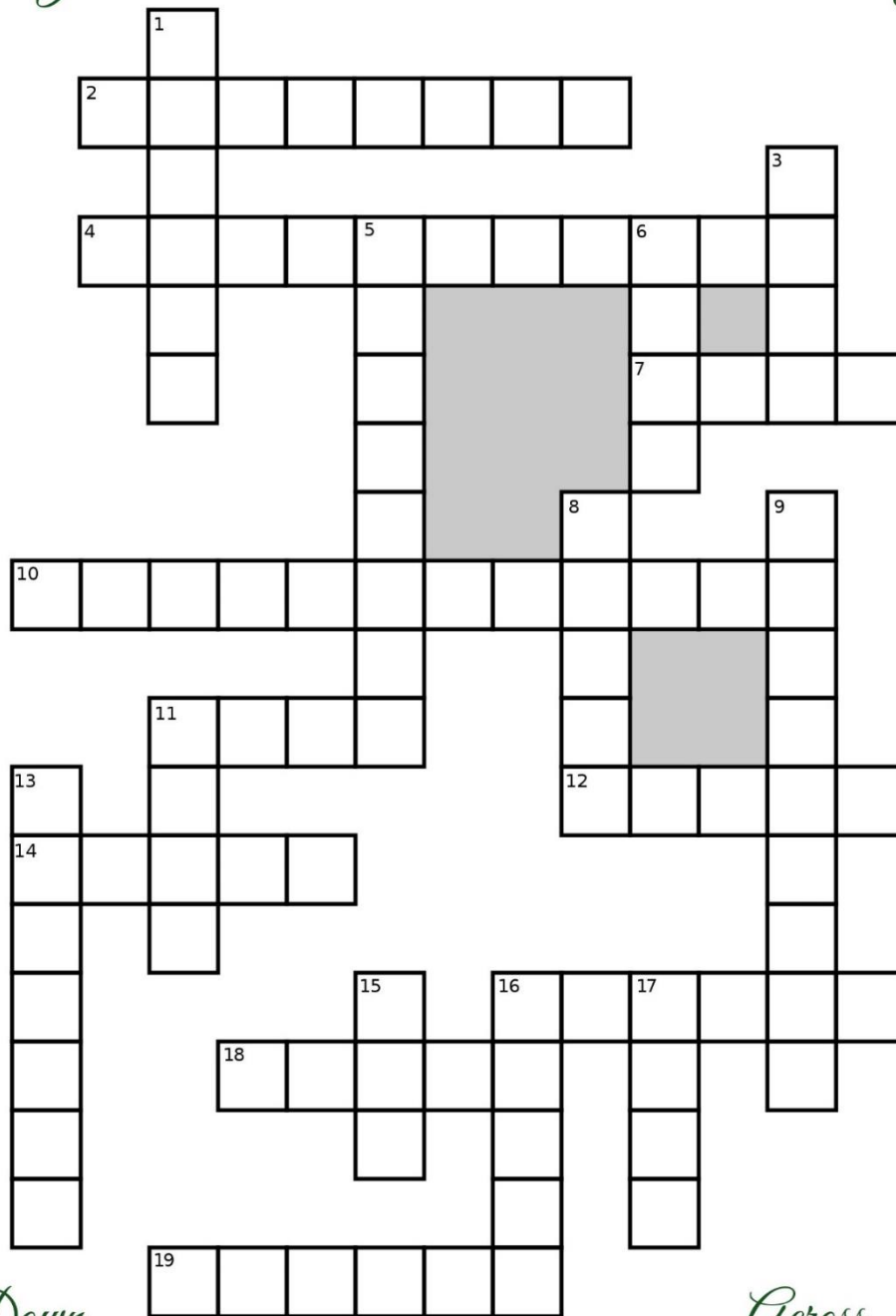
Worship and Music

Make a **joyful noise** with us! **Bell Practice** meets on Mondays. **Choir practice** meets on Wednesdays. Come try it out! All are welcome to join. See Sandra.

We need help organizing the **archive room**. See Pastor for more info.

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

Religious Christmas Crossword Puzzle



Down

Across

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| 1. The coming of _____ | 2. Those tending their flock in the field |
| 3. The Wise Men followed a _____ | 4. _____, Holy Night (2 words) |
| 5. The birth scene of Jesus | 7. Jesus, _____ and Savior |
| 6. One of the Three Wise Men's gifts | 10. One of the Three Wise Men's gifts |
| 8. Mary's baby | 11. The mother of Jesus |
| 9. The town where Jesus was born | 12. Jesus came to save our _____ |
| 13. The Angel who visited Mary | 14. A heavenly messenger |
| 15. Jesus is the son of _____ | 16. Baby Jesus slept in a _____ |
| 16. One of the Three Wise Men's gifts | 18. "For the _____ of God" |
| 17. Christmas refrain | 19. Mary's husband |



January 2026

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Dec 28 10:00 Service	Dec 29 9:00 & 10:30 YMCA Fitness Offices Closed	Dec 30 Admin Office Closed	Dec 31 9:00 & 10:30 YMCA Fitness Admin Office Closed	1 5:00 Line Dancing Offices Closed	2 10:30 YMCA Fitness OFFICE CLOSED	3
4 8:30 Service 9:45 Christian Education 11:00 Service	5 9:00 & 10:30 YMCA Fitness	6 9-2 Food Pantry & Free Lunches Quilting 9-11	7 9:00 & 10:30 YMCA Fitness	8 5:00 Line Dancing	9 10:30 YMCA Fitness OFFICE CLOSED	10 10-2 Food Pantry 11-12:30 Free Lunches & Nick's Closet
11 8:30 Service 9:45 Christian Education 11:00 Service Install New Council Mems. Council 12:30p	12 9:00 & 10:30 YMCA Fitness Annual Reports Due	13 9-2 Food Pantry & Free Lunches Quilting 9-11	14 9:00 & 10:30 YMCA Fitness	15 5:00 Line Dancing	16 10:30 YMCA Fitness OFFICE CLOSED	17 10-2 Food Pantry 11-12:30 Free Lunches & Nick's Closet
18 8:30 Service 9:45 Christian Education 11:00 Service Children's Message	19 9:00 & 10:30 YMCA Fitness	20 9-2 Food Pantry & Free Lunches Quilting 9-11 Echo Articles Due	21 9:00 & 10:30 YMCA Fitness Blood Drive 1-6p	22 5:00 Line Dancing	23 10:30 YMCA Fitness OFFICE CLOSED	24 10-2 Food Pantry 11-12:30 Free Lunches & Nick's Closet Nisua Bake
25 8:30 Service 9:45 Christian Education 11:00 Service	26 9:00 & 10:30 YMCA Fitness	27 9-2 Food Pantry & Free Lunches Quilting 9-11	28 9:00 & 10:30 YMCA Fitness	29 5:00 Line Dancing	30 10:30 YMCA Fitness OFFICE CLOSED	31 10-2 Food Pantry 11-12:30 Free Lunches & Nick's Closet Maddow Sip & Paint 1p

DATE/ TIME	ASSISTING MINISTER	COMMUNION ASSISTANT	USHERS	GREETERS	READER	ACOLYTE	HOSPITALITY
1/4/2026 8:30	Rich Tulino	Katrina Pavolino		Nancy Altman	Rich Tulino		
11:00				Mary Lou Moisio			
1/11/2026 8:30	Amy Gallagher	Katrina Pavolino			Amy Gallagher		
11:00		Mark Lytle		Mary Lou Moisio	Mark Lytle		
1/18/2026 8:30	Jen Best	Katrina Pavolino		Nancy Altman			
11:00	Jen Best				Susan Tan		
1/25/2026 8:30		Katrina Pavolino		Katrina Pavolino			
11:00					Ron Young		

JANUARY ALTAR GUILD:



FEBRUARY ALTAR GUILD:

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

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