

Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Oak Park IL Volume 59, Number 1

Annual Meeting Reminder

Mark your calendars for our congregation's Annual Meeting on Sunday, January 28 following the 10:30a worship service.

See page 3 for more details.

New this year—a fun, engaging opportunity to hear about the ministries of Good Shepherd and how you can connect!

January Schedule

Saturday, January 6, Epiphany Party! Reconnect with your Good Shepherd family on Saturday, January 6 to celebrate Epiphany, share a meal, and play lots of games. We're planning the evening for people of all ages:

- \Rightarrow 4:30p 5:15p: Games and crafts for young children (and adults who want to participate too!)
- \Rightarrow 5:15p 6:00p: Potluck dinner
- \Rightarrow 6:00p 8:00p: Board games, card games, and more for older children and adults.

Sunday, January 7 – Back to Regular Sunday Schedule

8:30a and 10:30a Worship Blessed by Name: Blessed by a name given by an angel, Joseph and Mary name the baby Jesus. What names have we been given? How do we live out those names?

Social Ministry Volunteer Opportunities

Make it your New Year's Resolution to Volunteer in 2024!



Migrant Family Ministry - Help accompany a new family-that's right, Good Shepherd has received a donation of \$23,500 to help another migrant family make a start in a new home! Join a small team to be the "point

people" for this new family. This team will keep in regular contact with the family, help with driving for groceries and to appointments, assist with finding furniture and household items to set up their residence, and be an advocate for them to find work and gain the resources they need.

We will mentor you and Spanish is NOT required. Contact Pastor Kathy if you are interested!

Help our current family by hiring them to clean, cater (they make yummy arepas), braid your hair, or give you a haircut! Several members have done this already and have been very pleased. We can provide references. Gift cards to Pete's and Walmart are also welcome! Contact Mary or Meinrad Scherer-Emunds.



Meinrad gets a haircut

Other Ways to Help Migrants:

Visit the Community of Congregations' website to find out other ways to help, by sorting and distributing clothing, cooking meals, etc. Note that the ministry that was at St. Catherine/St. Lucy Church is moving to the old St. Edmund School site in January.

Housing Forward - Sign up to make lunches twice a year for residents at the Write Inn. Contact Bill Peterman.



Bethel Lunch Program - Help serve lunch to our West Garfield Park Neighbors on the 4th Thursday of the month. Meet at Good Shepherd to carpool. Contact Pastor Kathy.

Volunteer at a Local Organization of Your Choice:

Beyond Hunger, Ten Thousand Villages, Opportunity Knocks, Kids Express, Greater Chicago Food Depository, etc., etc.

9:15a: Christian Education resumes.

Lent – A Wandering Heart

Valentine Hearts and a Wandering Heart intersect this February 14, which is both Valentine's Day and Ash Wednesday. Ash Wednesday worship begins at 7:30p. Let either Pastor Kathy or Pastor Kerstin know if you wish ashes, but are not able to connect at that time.

This year we leave the usual lectionary to follow the faith life of the apostle Peter, who walks on water only to lose faith and sink. Through the lens of his Wandering Heart, we are able to explore our own Wandering Heart journey more fully, which ebbs and flows as we engage in life experiences. In doing so, we affirm that wandering is exploration, not necessarily distance from God.





Grounding our Lent journey, we will watch and discuss the documentary, *American Symphony*, which follows the lives of Jon Batiste and Suleika Jaouad as he is composing the title symphony for its Carnegie Hall premier. Simultaneously, he is nominated for 11 Grammys and she learns that after five years in remission, her leukemia is back. The movie gives our discussion, about how life's journey intersects with our faith journey, a sense of reality. There will be options to watch the Netflix movie on your own and participate in online discussions or individual study.

On Wednesdays, February 21 through March 20, there will be gatherings for food and fellowship from 6:30p – 7:30p, followed by a simple worship service at 7:30p. These nights allow time for reflection and connection, as well as prayer and song. Those who have participated in this meal and prayer ritual in the past will tell you that it is an amazing way both to connect deeply with other members, as well as prepare one's

heart for the banquet of joy that we call Easter.

Personal daily devotion guides will be available both via print and as a digital flipbook by the end of the month. Several small groups will form to share weekly learnings. Even children get into the theme at home with activities to bring the story alive, such as walking on a path made of pillows to imagine what it might have felt to Peter when he was walking on water.

This month we are looking for:

- 5 Wednesday Teams of 3-5 people to cook, set-up and clean-up a meal, under the direction of Phil and Joan Taylor.
- 3-4 people (or teams of 2 people) willing to lead a discussion group based on the Lenten theme, to be scheduled at the leader's convenience, under the guidance of Deaconess Debbie. Materials will be provided.
- People to read, sing, play an instrument, act, or dance at special worship services throughout the season of Lent and Holy Week, especially on Palm Sunday (March 24) and Easter (March 31).
- 1-4 people to create watercolor canvas banners and paraments under the direction of Pastor Kathy.
- 4-5 people to organize Watch Night (March 28).
- 2-3 people to help with Good Friday children's service, under the direction of Deaconess Debbie (March 29).
- 6 families to work with the ushers to greet worshipers on Sunday and pass out bulletins (ages 5 & up).
- 6 families to work with the Altar Guild to set-up and clean after communion (ages 7 & up). Perhaps you could try baking bread.



Jazz Prayer – January 19

Let Your Soul Glow as we welcome the Chicago Soul Jazz Collective.

They are known for spirit-lifting original music influenced by the sounds of classic soul-jazz. According to Chicago Reader, CSJC produces music that is "a prime portal for listeners who don't limit their music by category but are driven simply by the groove."

Doors open at 7:10p for making connections. Music starts at 7:30p. Bring a friend – bring an appetizer – mostly, bring yourself.

Can You Join Us on January 14?

Our Sunday worship would not be the same without the members who make it happen, some behind the scenes and others up in front. We can definitely use more volunteers. We'll have a short introductory gathering after the 10:30 service on January 14. You can learn about what each role involves and think about where your talents can be used. If you are interested in serving but can't make that gathering, please contact Judy Beisser.

Why Attend a Congregation Annual Meeting?

An annual meeting is an important event in the life of the congregation. We vote for new leadership, and we thank the leaders who have fulfilled their terms. We look back at 2023 and towards 2024. We consider and vote on the coming year's budget, which determines how we best use the treasures that have been pledged for the year to keep the ministries of our congregation alive.

Annual reports will available starting on January 14. These reports include what our various ministry committees have done this past year, reports from council leaders and staff, and bios for new leadership. The proposed budget for 2024 will also be included.

We will start with lunch after the second service and then move to the business portion of the meeting. Childcare will be provided.

Gail Frost, Council President

Not Another Boring Meeting

At this year's annual Congregation Meeting ...

- \Rightarrow We will celebrate the accomplishments of 2023, which were many!
- ⇒ There will be a fun game to connect us with one another. Maybe you will win a prize!
- \Rightarrow Children will have their own fun activities.
- ⇒ We will have a meal prepared by our own professional chef in our updated kitchen!

Not boring, but needed ...

- \Rightarrow We will pass a budget for 2024.
- \Rightarrow We will vote new people into office.

Annual Reports will be available to be picked up at church on January 14.

If you would like to join a discussion about the budget prior to the congregation meeting, please join us in-person on Sunday, January 21 after the 10:30a service, or via Zoom on Monday, January 22 at 7:00p (contact church office for Zoom link).

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Welcome to Worship for Children

Join Deaconess Debbie during the Sunday School hour

on Sunday, January 21 as she leads a "Welcome to Worship" workshop. This activity is designed for children in Kindergarten/1st grade who are ready to experience the worship service more fully. Each child will receive a stuffed bear that they will "teach" the basics of a worship



service. RSVPs are requested so there are enough supplies on hand. Contact Deaconess Debbie or sign up on the Prayers and More form.

Sunday School News

Sunday School classes will resume on January 7 (with a break on January 14 for the long weekend). We are in need of Sunday School teachers for the next month or two. Please speak with Deaconess Debbie if you are able to help out.

Middle School/Confirmation Schedule

January 7, 21, and 28: Sunday morning classes (note no class on January 14)

January 9: Tuesday evening class

January 23: To be rescheduled due to a date conflict. Watch for more info on a new date for this joint meeting with students and parents.

Don't forget to be working on your family sermon notes!

High School Youth

Students AND parents are asked to attend our Youth Gathering planning meeting on Sunday, January 14, following the second service (around 11:45a).



Sunday Morning Bible Study

All are welcome to join in our Sunday Morning Bible Study, Sundays at 9:15a. On January 7, we invite you to join us for our monthly Adult Forum. Regular Bible Study resumes on January 14.

Adult/Teen Forum

Join us for a once a month opportunity to explore a topic of interest more deeply. Presentations are typically made by Good Shepherd members, but we are open to your speaker suggestions. All are welcome at our Forums!

Taylor Made Retirement Plan

Sunday, January 7, 2024, 9:15a Presenters: Joan and Phil Taylor

The Taylors describe their nomadic volunteer life: "In 2000, when we were in our mid '50s, after much thought, we decided to retire. We hit the road to travel, play, and volunteer shortterm. After two years, we decided to



begin full-time volunteering in various locations around the country. We continued that for about 10 years and found it rewarding and exciting."

<u>Living the Christian Life in India</u> Sunday, February 4, 2024, 9:15a Presenter: Ruth Mortha

The forum welcomes Good Shepherd member Ruth Mortha, who will describe the joys and challenges of living as a Christian in a country where only four percent of the majority Hindu population is Christian. She is a member of the Andhra Evangelical Lutheran Church (one of several Lutheran church bodies in India), which is the third largest Lutheran church body in the world.

THANK YOU!

The youth of Good Shepherd would like to extend a sincere thanks to all of you for your support of time, dollars, and baked goods to support our fall fundraising efforts! Thanks to you, we earned more than \$2300 through Donut Day, more than \$700 at our Bake Sale, and several hundred more through our gift card sale.

Your generosity will support the six students and three adults that will attend the 2024 ELCA Youth Gathering in July, as well as other youth activities.

GS CONNECTS

JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

Timothy Maly DiAne Boese Billie Navarro Carl Fisher **Beth Houle** Liesl Orenic **Charlotte Dolan Rachel Salzman** Carson Cook Lars Bostrom Liam Campbell Kellie Campbell Vivienne Pope Ken Orenic Paul Irwin Laura Darlington Matt Breitenbach Joan Taylor **Cindy Larson** JJ Turner David Bernat **Finn Darlington** Laura Knitt Spencer Abbott **Colin Hayes Nicolas Prestinary-Emunds**

JANUARY ANNIVERSARIES

Stacey & Scott White Stefan & Susie Prestinary-Emunds Ken Snyder & Rebecca Vnuk Brian Flora & Kay Kuhlman

Find us online!

Instagram: @gslcoakpark Facebook: goodshepherdlc.org YouTube: @GoodShepherdLutheranOakPark Website: goodshepherdlc.org

Annual Women's Retreat

Mark your calendars for our Annual Women's Retreat, taking place at Good Shepherd on Saturday, January 20 from 9:00a-12:00p. Our time together will include small and large group discussion, time for personal journaling, and creative prayer.



Our theme this year is, *Through the Long Winter: Finding Life in Unexpected Places*. Like the bud nestled in the cold soil, growth continues even in the winter times of our lives. In happier spring days, we can see evidence of what has been happening all along. But how do we get through those long, cold winter days?

Daytimers

Avoid the doldrums of winter by joining the Daytimers as they travel to the Elmhurst History Museum on January 16, 2024, to view the exhibit of Lost Chicagoland Department Stores. We will meet at church at 11a and travel to Elmhurst for lunch. After lunch we will visit the museum. For more information, contact the church office.

Book Club

Reading is fun, especially on cold winter days. Join Flock o'Readers for a discussion of books by the favorite authors of group members. This discussion should generate a list of books suggested by members. We will meet at church January 24 at 2:30p. For more information, contact the church office.

Whiskey with Cocktail Historian, Dave Hudson

Is it Whiskey or Whisky? (spoiler, the spelling isn't really a big deal)

Bourbon, Scotch, Rye, and much more - this is a great chance to learn about the ins and outs of the world of whisk(e)ys from spirits and cocktail historian Dave Hudson. Last year, Dave led us through the intricacies of gin and martinis. This year we will focus on the fascinating world of whiskey. By the end of the night, you'll have a deeper understanding and appreciation of this fascinating spirit.

Join us on Saturday, February 3 at 6:30 in Fellowship Hall for this exciting experience. There will be a charge of \$18 that covers the whiskeys being served. Attendees are asked to bring an appetizer to share. Not a whiskey drinker but want to join in the fun and learn about whiskey? We will have wine and soft drinks for you. There is a charge of \$8 for the non-whiskey drinkers. Look for ticket sales online and in-person soon!

DECEMBER IN PICTURES



Above and right: Christmas Marketplace and Bake Sale





Daytimers go to Garfield Park Conservatory



Above and below: Celebrating the season with a carol sing.



Lighting the Advent Wreath





Children tell the Christmas story.



Father-son A/V team!



Good Shepherd young adults play on Christmas Eve



Candles are lifted while singing Silent Night on Christmas Eve



Above and below: Serving at Bethel during Christmas week





See you next year, Santa!

FROM OUR PASTOR

The last few years have felt like we are an airplane stalled on the runway – ready for take-off, but not able to get lift-off.

Good Shepherd is finally back at a place where amazing things can happen. But that can only truly happen when you become invested with your time and involved in a ministry that matches your passions.

The 2018 fire interrupted lots of our plans, even as it helped us refine our processes and sense of mission. We became like the pilot and crew who go through the pre-boarding checklist with our eyes on the instrument panels, taking care to focus on those things that were the most important. That time gave us clarity to see that wherever we gather – that is where the church exists. Whatever building held the base of operations became "home base." There was a focus on ministry – with renewed energy in worship planning, Sunday School, and social ministry. Even coffee hour had renewed energy.

As the building neared completion, it felt like we were ready to begin boarding the plane. We moved in the office furniture, had the piano brought back, filled the youth room with comfortable sofas and chairs, and had our belongings returned from storage. Then, before the people could get up the ramp, we had another delay, and the plane was stuck on the tarmac. An expected monthlong delay due to COVID turned into more than a year of digital worship.

As we came out of the lock-downs, we finally boarded the plane. But it has been hard to gain enough momentum for lift-off. Vaccines were slow to roll out, especially for children. In January 2022 we had to shut-down for the month due to a Covid outbreak among members. There was another zoom annual meeting. Sunday School and worship had spotty attendance.

By 2023 things began to feel hopeful. There was more energy and less fear when we gathered in groups. The Prayground became filled with toddlers. Children could enjoy a real Easter egg hunt with other children present rather than one that was scheduled just for their family.

By September it was clear that we had lift-off. Hooray!! It was a long 5-year journey to get to this day, but the ministry of Good Shepherd finally is flying high. Things are looking great!

But-let's be honest-it isn't enough just to be up in the

air. We need everyone to be a part of the energy to truly fulfill the mission and vision of Good Shepherd.

We are a small, yet mighty

congregation, as recently noted when we took in 120 migrants. We are connected to the vital



Pastor Kathy Nolte

issues of our day, using our lens of faith in Jesus Christ to see where and how we engage in the world. Whether promoting solar energy or serving meals at Housing Forward, we seek to be the Body of Christ in the world. Our understanding of God's value for every person informs our relationship with Bethel, which is not just another feeding program, but part of our anti-racism commitment to be equal partners with people in ministry in the West Garfield Park neighborhood.

But small, mighty congregations depend on EVERY person finding a ministry to engage their passions. Only large congregations can afford people in the pews who show up on Sunday and never participate in anything else.

I always brag on the amazing talent of Good Shepherd's membership. No matter what field of study you work in, you accomplish great things at your day job. What you know and what you do – your physical presence – are the energy that keeps our plane in the air.

Perhaps you read the Lent article on page 2. It outlines many places to put your energy. Here are a few more:

- Do you love cooking? Prepare food for Housing Forward, a Wednesday in Lent, weekly coffee hour, dessert for Bethel lunches, or bread for communion.
- Do you like organizing? Serve on a committee, help with Altar Guild, be a counter, or help with hosting our migrant families.
- Do you like connecting with people? Serve as an usher, lead a small group discussion, have conversations with our migrant families, join the evangelism team.
- Do you like nature? Help tend our gardens, join the Sustainability Committee, provide greenery for our altar, lead a nature walk.

God is with us on this adventure of being God's hands and feet in the world. With you on board, we can truly soar!

Good Shepherd Lutheran Church

611 Randolph, Oak Park, IL 60302 708-848-4741 | goodshepherdlc.org churchoffice@goodshepherdlc.org

Good Shepherd Lutheran Church is a congregation of the Metropolitan Chicago Synod (mcselca.org) of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (elca.org).

Staff 708-848-4741

Rev. Kathy Nolte, Pastor (ext. 2)
Rev. Kerstin Hedlund, Associate Pastor (leave message with Admin. Asst.)
Deaconess Debbie Speer, Director of Christian Education (ext. 4)
Dr. Carl Heine, Music Director
Kimberly Adami-Hasegawa, Office Administrator (ext. 3)

Council Officers

Gail Frost, President Pete Chapman, Vice President, Personnel Richard Sehl, Secretary Dan Feiertag, John Jackson, Co-Treasurers

Council Liaisons

Rose Mabwa, Social Ministry, Evangelism, Worship, Music & Arts Carrie Cook, Finance, Sustainability, Stewardship Lee Fritz, Property, Christian Education, GS Connects

Committee Chairs

Christian Education – Kristin de Groot Evangelism – open Finance – Laura Knitt GS Connects – Joan & Phil Taylor Property – Rich Novak Social Ministry – Mary Scherer-Emunds Stewardship – Mark Ledogar Sustainability – Michelle Sukup Jackson Worship, Music & Arts – Lynn Railsback

Office Hours*

Monday - Thursday: 9:00a - 3:30p Friday: 9:00a - noon

> Pastor is available by appointment: calendly.com/revk

*Please note the church office will be closed on Monday, January 15.

Learning Communities by LSTC



Join the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago's (LSTC) Learning Communities

2024. These are no-cost theological education programs via Zoom designed to enhance theological education. You can register at <u>www.lstc.edu/events</u>.

Theological Intersectionality for the 21st Century Church

Engage in a thought-provoking 4-part series on intersectionality with LSTC's Dr. Linda E. Thomas. Delve into the intersections of race, class, gender, and more, and explore anti-oppressionistic approaches to theology and parish life. Sunday sessions begin January 7; Wednesday sessions begin January 10.

Liturgy and the Natural World

Join LSTC faculty member Dr. Benjamin M. Stewart for an inspiring 4-part series on nature and liturgy. Reimagine communal liturgies and daily rituals as you explore the sacredness of the cosmos, sacraments, and our bodies. Sunday sessions begin April 7; Wednesday sessions begin April 10.

That Old Car is Worth Money...

Victory Auto Wreckers may be closing its doors, but you can still find value in that old car, boat, or riding lawn mower! Several members have donated their cars through the NCS Vehicle Donations program.



To get started <u>link to NCS</u>, or call the NCS Vehicle Donations at 866-829-2918. Let them know you are donating for Good Shepherd Lutheran Church. The process is swift and painless.

For further information, go to goodshepherdlc.org. If you have questions, contact Kenn Sinko at ksinko605@aol.com.

FINANCE UPDATE

Please Note: For privacy reasons, the website version of our monthly newsletter does not contain birthdates, Caring Shepherd prayer lists, personal contact information, or church financial information. If you would like a full newsletter by mail or email, please contact us at churchoffice@goodshepherdlc.org.

Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church Listening Sessions

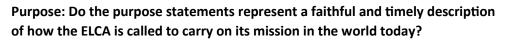
2022 ELCA Churchwide Assembly action on the Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church

To direct the Church Council to establish a Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church comprised of leaders of diverse representation from all three expressions that, working in consultation with the Conference of Bishops and the Church Council, shall reconsider the statements of purpose for each of the expressions of this church, the principles of its organizational structure, and all matters pertaining thereunto, being particularly attentive to our shared commitment to dismantle racism, and will present its findings and recommendations to the 2025 Churchwide Assembly in preparation for a possible reconstituting convention to be called under the rules for a special meeting of the Churchwide Assembly. [CA22.01.06]

Questions for Discussion:

Theological discernment: The Spirit is at work across the church, calling us into ways of being new and old. What are those ways, and how should they inform how the ELCA organizes itself?

- 1. Identify one way in which the Holy Spirit is at work in your congregation/ community.
- 2. Where does your congregation/community experience hope?



- 1. Which elements of the statements of purpose (for congregations, synods, churchwide) do you believe are vital to the ELCA?
- 2. Which elements of the statement of purpose (for congregations, synods, churchwide) do you believe are unnecessary to the ELCA and should be modified?

Structure and power: Does the current configuration of structure and power in the ELCA enable the flourishing of the ministry of the gospel in our diverse world?

- 1. Describe a time/situation where the current structure/power configurations of the ELCA supported the flourishing of the gospel in your context.
- 2. Describe a time/situation where the current structure/power configurations of the ELCA inhibited the flourishing of the gospel in your context.

Lay members of ELCA congregations are invited to a listening session with Wartburg Seminary President Largen for the Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church (CRLC) on **Friday, January 26 at 10:30a**. No registration is required, use this <u>Zoom Link</u> (or contact the church office for the link). All times are in Central Time Zone.

Feel free to use this <u>document</u> (or contact the church office for a copy of document) prior to attending the session.



Saturday	6 4:30p Epiphany Party	13			20	9a Women's Retreat		27						ned)
Friday	5 Pastor's Day Off 8p AA	12 Pastor's Day Off		8p AA	19 Pastor's Day Off 12p Jazz Prayer Set-Up 7:30p Jazz Prayer 8p AA		12p Jazz Prayer Set-Up 7:30p Jazz Prayer 8p AA	26 Pastor's Day Off 10:30a ELCA Listening Session (zoom) 8p AA		8p AA		Regular Sunday Schedule	9:15a Christian Ed for all ages 10:30a Worship (in-person & livestreamed)	
Thursday	4	11		7:30p WMA	18	12p Jazz Prayer Set-up		25	10:30a GS to Bethel					10:30
Wednesday	 7:30a Matins (offsite) 7:30a Matins (offsite) 7:30a Matins (Offsite) 		7:30a Matins (Offsite)	7:15p Choir	17 7:30a Matins (Offsite) 7:15p Choir		7:15p Choir	24 7:30a Matins (Offsite) 2:30p Flock o' Readers 7:15p Choir		31 7:30a Matins (Offsite) 7:15p Choir				
Tuesday	5	6		7p Confirmation	16	Pastor at Synod	11a Daytimers 7p Finance	23	Pastor at Synod			30	Pastor at Synod	
Monday	Happy	8 DK at ES Training	10:30a Staff Meeting 12p Worship Planning	7:30p AA	15	OFFICE CLOSED Deadline: Newsletter	7p Council 7:30p AA	22	10:30a Staff Meeting 12p Worship Planning		7:30p AA	29	10:30a Staff Meeting 12p Worship Planning	7:30p AA
Sunday		7	9:15a Forum 1p Ray of Hope 7:30p AA			(No Christian Ed) 11:45a Youth Trip 11:45a Worshin Halners	1p Personnel 1p Ray of Hope 7:30p AA	21	10a Scratch Choir	1p Ray of Hope	7:30p AA	28	12p Annual Meeting	Bp AA

Good Shepherd Lutheran Church 611 Randolph, Oak Park IL 60302

ΚΕΤURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America



are open wide to people from all backgrounds. Welcome to Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, where our doors

We want to be a place of blessing. If you are just beginning to wonder about Christianity, this is a safe place to ask questions and to explore possibilities. If you have been journeying with christ for some time, this is a place to grow deeper in your walk as a disciple. If you have wandered here and there or up and down in your spiritual journey, this is a place to speculate,

And whether you live out your faith primarily through study, meditation, emotional experience or social activism, you can find others at Good Shepherd who share your spiritual temperament.

This is a place of open doors, open minds, open hearts, open hands.

Гитћегал Сћигсћ Сооd Shepherd

A congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA)

611 Randolph St, Oak Park

Worship Services: 8:30 & 10:30a (10:30 service also livestreamed) www.GoodShepherdLC.org

708.848.4741 ChurchOffice@GoodShepherdLC.org