

**Evangelical Lutheran
Church in America**
God's work. Our hands.



Good Shepherd Lutheran Church Weekly Update Wednesday, February 16, 2022

Our mission is to be more visible, to become more connected, and to draw closer, with Christ as our center.



A joyful heart is good medicine. Proverbs 17:22

I had two close friends who decided (and I agreed!) that they were deficient in having a sense of humor. They were serious people with concrete, literal thought patterns. Humor often left them blank, or confused. These two friends actually enrolled in a course on humor. They were required to study classic jokes, see irony and practice slapstick. They both wrote serious papers on the various topics of humor. Sadly, both failed the class! "Many people don't get humor", their instructor told them. "Not everyone has a sense of humor". The instructor went on, "But, everyone has the power to LAUGH!"

Laughter is the natural birthright of every human. Research has shown that laughter is healing to body, mind and spirit. Chinese therapists and now, others hold laughing times and meditation in parks. No jokes are told, no sense of humor is needed. The leader begins energetically laughing. If you picture this, you can imagine how others just spontaneously start to laugh along. There is no "why", there is no joke. People laugh, because laughter is infectious. And it feels good.

In pre-pandemic times, our Worship at Good Shepherd often included laughter. Far from disrespect, this revealed laughter as holy and healing. It eased burdens and lifted spirits.

Nowadays, it's harder to laugh with big face masks on, but laughter still happens. Thirty five years ago, a study done revealed that many church going Christians did not believe one should ever laugh in church. Even more astonishing, many Christians found the idea that Jesus laughed as irreverent and offensive. The laughing Christ. You may find it a valuable image to contemplate in prayer. "It's good to laugh", is an old German saying, "Never at the expense of others, but laughter as a good gift of God that creates a feeling of community, warmth and genuineness.

LV
PD

Worship Information -

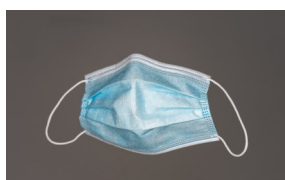


We have two in person Worship Services per week. They are held on Sundays at 8am and 10:30am.

As hospitalizations decrease and positivity rates have gone down, (after the surge of Omicron) we now return to drinking the Eucharist wine. Pastor will be unmasked for the sermon, but members and guests are still required to wear masks when inside any part of the GSLC building.

Hymnals are available for use. Please note that if you are uncomfortable using the hymnals, there will be a limited number of freshly copied "Hymn Packets" available upon request at each service.

Please continue to read Friday's weekly "Worship E-mail", or check our Facebook Page for any updates / changes.



If you prefer to join us for prerecorded online worship instead, you can:

1) Go to the Good Shepherd website www.gslc-ct.org. Under "News & Events", click on youtube to be directed to our church's YouTube page.

2) Go to our Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/Good-Shepherd-Lutheran-Church-220717937953573/> Scroll down until you see the post with the current "Church Service (date)". Click on it to be directed to our church's YouTube page.

3) To find us directly on Youtube <https://www.youtube.com/> enter Good Shepherd Monroe CT in the search field and you will be directed to our page. From there, select the worship video you would like to see. Subscribe to our channel to make it even easier.

Whichever worship choice works best for you, we are delighted to have you worship with us!

Prayer List -



He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds.

Psalm 147 vs. 3

Please keep the following people in your thoughts and prayers:

Audrey, Miriam, Scarlet, Ryan, Sharon and Rosemary.

Do you wonder how to put a loved one, friend, neighbor, or yourself on the prayer list?

Simply email the person's first name to the church office at office@gsic-ct.org, or give us a call at 203-268-7596. If you would like a prayer card sent to your loved one, friend or neighbor, please include the full name and address.

Do you have something you would like to discuss with Pastor Doug?

Should you be in need of pastoral care, please contact Pastor Doug Ryniewicz. You can reach him by text, or phone at: 860-595-9560. His email is: dearynos@gmail.com



Regular Worship schedule - Sunday Services are held at 8am and 10:30am. (* If the weather is bad, please check our Facebook page, or call a member of Worship & Music to see if there is a schedule change.)

2/20/22 - Choir Practice will resume at 9:45am.

2/27/22 - Sunday School & Confirmation classes held at 9:15am.

2/27/22 - Choir Practice will meet at 9:45am.

3/1/22 - Book Club at 2pm. We will discuss, "The Personal Librarian", by Marie Benedict and Victoria Christopher Murray. New members are welcome!

3/6/22 - Choir Practice will meet at 9:45am.

3/13/22 - Sunday School & Confirmation classes held at 9:15am.

3/13/22 - Choir Practice will meet at 9:45am.

Shepherd's Flock Quilters - generally meet at 10am each Monday, Wednesday and Saturday. * Please contact Barbara Abraham by phone, or text at: 203-305-0321 if you wish to come on a Monday morning. If you'd like to join on a Wednesday, contact Ellie Noll at: 203-888-7009, or Eileen Holleran at: 203-426-0005. If you prefer to quilt on a Saturday, please text Donna Duessel at: 203-482-5598. Anyone is welcome!

Choir Update -



The Covid numbers are going down. That is great news and also means that our Choir will be able to sing in Church again. Sunday, February 20th, is our first day back and you are welcome to join us at 9:45am!



Scam Alert -

If you get a text, or email from "Pastor Doug" asking you to buy him Apple, or iTunes gift cards, please DO NOT comply. Please know that PD would never ask you to do this. Someone has been using his name and it is a scam. Please block the offending number, or email address and let us know.



Spring is less than 6 weeks away!

Vegetable planting season will start soon for the “Monroe Food Pantry Gardens”. In 2021, the gardens located at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church and the Food Pantry grounds helped to provide for those in need. Over 100 families benefitted and received fresh, chemical free vegetables.

Our sincere thanks to Shari, Bruce, the staff at Benedict’s Home & Garden and Pat at O’Hara’s Nursery for donating supplies. Also, thanks to Rob, Sue and Pete for their help maintaining the gardens.

We look forward to Spring and the 2022 gardening season, with hope for another very successful year!

-Dave Wang



O'Hara's Nursery



**BRIDGEPORT
RESCUE MISSION**
Expanding Hope. Rebuilding Lives.

Keep our pantry full!

HELP NOW →

**PLEASE INCLUDE US IN YOUR NEXT SHOPPING LIST
WITH THE FOLLOWING ITEMS!**

- Mac & Cheese (boxed)
- Tuna
- Hearty soups
- Cold & hot cereals
- Peanut butter and jelly (plastic jars)
- Canned vegetables
- Canned meats

Winter is here... so hot, nourishing meals for the men, women, and children in our communities are even more important.

For our neighbors who are hungry, nutritious meals are absolutely critical to strengthen their bodies and their health right now. **In fact, we expect to provide 54,636 meals just this month.**

Imagine grocery shopping for that many people!

We invite you to help keep our shelves full.

- Bring canned goods and nonperishable food to our Donation Center. Learn more at https://bridgeportrescuemission.org/ways-to-give/#_immediateneeds
- [Send a gift to keep our pantry full.](#)

Please help now. However you choose to give, you'll not only fill our pantry with food... you'll fill those who are hungry and hurting with much needed hope. Thank you!

Dan Rogers
President & CEO

P.S. Drop off food donations at our Donation Center at 1069 Connecticut Avenue, Unit 2B, in Bridgeport, Tuesday through Saturday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Thank you!

GRATITUDE

Monastic Wisdom for Everyday Living

Br. David Vryhof *lives at the Monastery in Cambridge where he serves as Communication Brother. He loves that his day is grounded in the Daily Office (while his actual office is grounded in plenty of post-it notes and to-do lists!). He is the community's sole sports fan.*



I have a memory of my fifth-grade teacher asking us to write a short paragraph describing the things in our lives for which we were thankful. I sat for the longest time just staring at that piece of paper. I couldn't think of a thing for which I was thankful.

I was surrounded by gifts, but I didn't *recognize* them as gifts, and so I couldn't begin to express my gratitude for them. I naively assumed that everyone had food and clothing, a loving family and a comfortable home. I was unaware of how privileged I was to enjoy these things on a daily basis, and simply took them for granted.

Gratitude springs from the *awareness* that we have been given a gift. Often this awareness comes upon us in sudden and unexpected ways. We are walking along and suddenly our breath is taken away by the beauty of the autumn leaves, or we are talking with a close friend and suddenly we realize what a gift this person has been to us. We've been given a gift: something has come to us from outside ourselves – something unexpected and even undeserved – and our lives have been enriched by it. We feel grateful.

This awareness can rise in us suddenly and unexpectedly, but it can also be *cultivated*. We can *develop* our awareness, and learn to *practice* gratitude. Learning to see with eyes of gratitude, becoming more aware of the gifts that surround us on every side, is an ability that needs to be kept alive through constant practice. In the words of Rabbi Abraham Heschel, "*The insights of wonder must be constantly kept alive.*"

There is not much in our culture that encourages this sense of wonder or that leads us to gratitude. More often, we are seduced into thinking that we need to *acquire more* in order to be truly happy and fulfilled. The advertising that assaults us each day encourages us to be greedy for more gifts. Our neighbors or co-workers describe to us their latest purchases with a sense of pride and satisfaction, as if these things were proof of their personal importance and worth. If we listen to these voices, we won't feel much *gratitude*. Instead, we'll start thinking we don't have enough and that we need to get more...and more...and more. To resist the lure of voices that tell us we don't have enough takes courage and determination.

We can nurture a spirit of gratitude by cultivating our *awareness* that we are surrounded by gifts. But to become *aware* of these gifts is not enough. Gratitude moves beyond the recognition of

the *gift* to the recognition of the *giver*. In some ways, the gift itself is secondary in importance. What is more important is the exchange that takes place when we express our gratitude. The offering of the gift is only complete when we receive it with gratitude, and when that gratitude is *expressed*. Without the expression of gratitude, something is missing, for both the giver of the gift and the one who receives it.

Don Postema, author of a book entitled *Space for God*, tells of his experience of bringing a gift to a birthday party when he was a boy. "The birthday child met me at the door," he says, "grabbed the gift without a thank-you, ran into the room, and threw it among all the other gifts." "Why do I still remember that incident?" he asks. "Because the giving of that gift is not complete over all these years! *I never received the thank-you note needed to close the circle and establish a mutual exchange.*" True gratitude leads us *beyond* the gift itself and unites us with the giver, closing the circle and establishing a mutual exchange.

We Christians proclaim that God is the giver of all good gifts. We acknowledge that *all that we have* and *all that we are* is the result of God's divine goodness and love. God is the giver of every good gift: the gifts of nature, the gifts we receive in and through others, even the gift of our own selves.

"To be grateful is to recognize the love of God in everything He has given us," writes Thomas Merton, *"and (God) has given us everything. Every breath we draw is a gift of (God's) love, every moment of existence a grace... Gratitude therefore takes nothing for granted, is never unresponsive, is constantly awakening to new wonder and to praise of the goodness of God. For the grateful person knows that God is good, not by hearsay but by experience. And that is what makes all the difference..."*

"We live in constant dependence upon this merciful kindness of God and thus our whole life is a life of gratitude – a constant response to (God's) help which comes to us at every moment."

"Our *whole life* is a life of gratitude." Even in difficult times there are reasons to be grateful. We are alive. We are loved. We are surrounded by beauty and wonder. And God is near, loving us and supporting us and making a way for us. We know that nothing can separate us from God's love – no circumstance, no power on earth or in heaven, no trouble or hardship – *nothing!* We are and will be forever loved and held by God!

Can you look back on hard times you have known in your past with genuine gratitude for graces received? Perhaps you have become stronger through the trials; almost certainly you have learned from them something about yourself or about life that will help you going forward. Trials can make us more sensitive to the suffering of others, or help us to appreciate things we have taken for granted.

There is *always* reason for gratitude, which is why we say in our Eucharistic prayer, *"It is right, and a good and joyful thing, always and everywhere to give thanks to You..."* It is why Saint Paul instructs the Thessalonians to "give thanks in *all* things." He does not ask them to give thanks *for* all things, but *in* all things. Even in darkness, difficulty or despair, Paul found reasons to give thanks and praise to God. Expressing gratitude in difficult times is an expression of trust in God, and an acknowledgment that God is present and at work in every time and place, always bringing life out of death, hope out of despair, joy out of sadness – even when we can't see it.

I cannot stress enough how counter-cultural and how radical this practice of "giving thanks to God in all things" really is. Nor can I overstate how completely it will change our perspective on life. It will not take away every pain or sorrow, but it will transform us in the midst of them.]

Shepherd's Pantry -

The Monroe Food Pantry provides emergency food assistance for over 100 needy individuals and families in Monroe each month. The Social Ministry and Community Outreach Committee invite you to contribute items to the Shepherd's Pantry located in the narthex. You may drop them off during office hours, or on Sunday mornings. The items are delivered to the Monroe Food Pantry once a month.

The Monroe Food Pantry's needs for February include:

Oatmeal (regular and instant – original flavor or any variety)
Snack items (crackers, Goldfish, chips, nuts, etc.)
Ketchup
Mustard (yellow or brown)
Brownie mix
Strawberry and grape jelly
Baked beans
Pork and beans
Chicken or beef broth
Bread crumbs (regular or Italian)
Flour
Sugar
Salad dressings (Ranch, Blue Cheese, Balsamic Vinaigrette, Thousand Island, French)
Pasta and Rice sides
Olives (canned)
Jarred pasta sauce
Solid white tuna
Coffee (regular and decaf)
Black tea (regular and decaf)
Hot chocolate
Ramen noodles (chicken/beef/shrimp)
Paper towels
Toilet Paper
Cleaning supplies
Toiletries (deodorant/bar and hand soap/shampoo and conditioner/razors)

Thanks again for all your support. This community is amazing!



Summerfield -



There is an ongoing need for nutritious food for the kids at Summerfield. Protein is especially needed. GSLC Council has challenged the congregation to provide funds for the purchase of nutritious food. GSLC will match donations from members for up to \$250 per month. Pastor Gaston has told us that \$500 per month would meet their nutritious food needs. If you wish to donate, please write a check out to "Good Shepherd Lutheran Church" with the notation, "Food For Summerfield". Thank you!

FINANCIAL NEWS -

****2021 Financial Statements have been mailed out. If you do not receive yours in a timely manner, please contact the office. Also, please pick your 2022 envelope boxes up in the narthex if you have not done so already.**

VANCO - ELCA PREFERRED ONLINE GIVING PLATFORM -



Please feel free to try our online giving platform, Vanco. Vanco is an ELCA preferred vendor, that gives you the option of using their free mobile app to make donating to Good Shepherd easy and contactless. Simply download the Vanco Mobile App, select "Good Shepherd Lutheran Church - Monroe" and follow the prompts to donate.

If you are hesitant to download the app, just go to our website, www.gslc-ct.org, scroll down to the Vanco link, click and donate.

The traditional ways of giving, like bringing, or mailing envelopes to Church still stand. Vanco is just another way to make giving easy. If you do choose to use Vanco for online giving, please know that the Church will incur a fee per transaction. However, you can offset this cost by selecting the "cover processing fees" option at checkout.

If you are interested, but have questions, please feel free to contact Stephanie in the office!

Sunday, February 20, 2022 - Seventh Sunday After Epiphany

Prayer of the Day: O Lord Jesus, make us instruments of your peace, that where there is hatred, we may sow love, where there is injury, pardon, and where there is despair, hope. Grant, O divine master, that we may seek to console, to understand, and to love in your name, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Genesis 43:3-11, (15)

Psalms 37:1-11, 39-40 (11)

1 Corinthians 15:35-38, 42-50

Luke 6:27-38



1 Corinthians 15:35-38, 42-50

But someone will ask, "How are the dead raised? With what kind of body do they come?" Fool! What you sow does not come to life unless it dies. And as for what you sow, you do not sow the body that is to be, but a bare seed, perhaps of wheat or of some other grain. But God gives it a body as he has chosen, and to each kind of seed its own body. So it is with the resurrection of the dead. What is sown is perishable, what is raised is imperishable. It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power. It is sown a physical body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a physical body, there is also a spiritual body. Thus it is written, "The first man, Adam, became a living being"; the last Adam became a life-giving spirit. But it is not the spiritual that is first, but the physical, and then the spiritual. The first man was from the earth, a man of dust; the second man is from heaven. As was the man of dust, so are those who are of the dust; and as is the man of heaven, so are those who are of heaven. Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we will also bear the image of the man of heaven. What I am saying, brothers and sisters, is this: flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable.

Luke 6:27-38

"But I say to you that listen, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you. If anyone strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also; and from anyone who takes away your coat do not withhold even your shirt. Give to everyone who begs from you; and if anyone takes away your goods, do not ask for them again. Do to others as you would have them do to you. "If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. If you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. If you lend to those from whom you hope to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, to receive as much again. But love your enemies, do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return. Your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High; for he is kind to the ungrateful and the wicked. Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful. "Do not judge, and you will not be judged; do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven; give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap; for the measure you give will be the measure you get back."