

Good Shepherd Lutheran Church

Weekly Update

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



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



Wednesday, March 10, 2021



"I know all the birds of the hills. Beside them the birds of the heavens dwell ; they sing among the branches."

Psalm 50,104

For the Birds

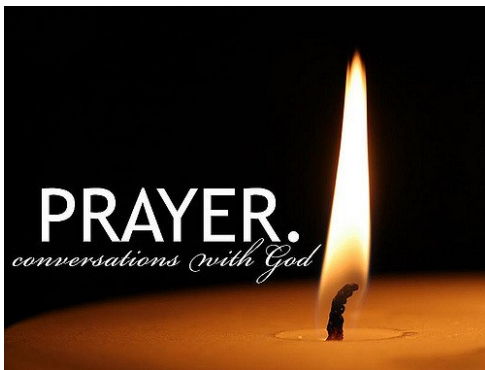
A new study reveals that human happiness correlates to the number of bird species in a given area. The presence of 14 additional bird species provided as much satisfaction as earning an additional \$150 a month, leading scientists to conclude that conservation is as important for human well being as more financial security.

People who know things about birds keep telling me that my traditional idea of robins as harbingers of spring is wrong. Apparently, they don't go anywhere in the winter. (the robins I mean) Yet in all my life I have never seen a robin in winter! I truly see them appear in the spring and they stay through the summer. Maybe I too argue with science sometimes! Bird songs are recorded in all kinds of online spaces so that people may listen to the recordings to wake up or to fall asleep or to become more calm. Jesus, ever in touch with nature around him, speaks frequently of the birds of the air. I look forward to spring this year for many reasons but one of those reasons is keeping my bedroom window open so that the birdsongs of spring and summer can bring a bit of calm and happiness as I listen.

I'm having a memory here. Towards the last years of his life, my father used to get very upset hearing birds fighting outside. He would run out yelling "Break it up Break it up! Be nice now." Hmmm, kind of like he'd say to us when we were very young. Interacting with the gift of nature is the Way of a Christian. AND acting in all the ways we can to protect God's holy creation is also our way.

As spring arrives, be attentive to the songs in the trees and in the air.
These songs are not just for the birds.

LV
PD



Pour out your Spirit on all people living with illness, as well as their loved ones and caregivers. Help them to know that you claim them as your own and deliver them from fear and pain; for the sake of Jesus Christ, our healer and Lord. Amen.

A Community of Prayer

For those in need of healing and comfort:

Members and Friends of the Congregation: Vic, Lauren, Ray, Tim, Joan, Marie, Audrey, Elizabeth, Gordon, Sarah, Miriam, Scarlet, Jason, Brian, David, Tricia, Cate, Cecilio, Donna, Anthony, Steve, the Wilk family.

Military (on active duty), Fire fighters, and Police: Ryan, Teddy, Tyler, Ben, Kenny, Brian, Bill, Ken, John, Glen, and Vic.

Front Line workers in the COVID-19 pandemic: Diane, Alicia, Brittany, Loretta, Jay, Alyssa, Monica, Rachel, June.

He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds.

Psalm 147 vs. 3

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

Simply email the church office at office@gscl-ct.org. If you would like a prayer card sent to your loved one, friend or neighbor, please include the full name and address. Prayer requests may also be made by phone (203-268-7596) and will be included by the church office.

For privacy, only the first name of each individual will be listed.

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 by cell phone (860-595-9560—text if you like!) or by his email (dearynos@gmail.com).

To join us for Worship online:

There are several options for you to join us for online worship:

- 1) go to the Good Shepherd website www.gslc-ct.org. Click on youtube on the menu under News & Events 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 this 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, then select the worship video you would like to see. Subscribe to our channel to make it even easier.

To join us for Worship in person: This Sunday, March 14th at 10:00 am. We will have Drive In Church, weather permitting (If it is extremely cold, snowy, or a steady rain, the service is cancelled).

This is how it works:

- Pastor Doug will be on a platform at the rear (east edge) of the large, main parking area.
- Cars should park facing that direction (east – towards the wooded area) with taller vehicles closer to the main road. This will allow shorter vehicles visibility by parking in front of the taller ones.
- The radio frequency of the broadcast is **FM 94.9**. Please tune your car radio to that station to hear the worship service.
- You should stay in your vehicle and keep your windows closed.
- Bring your own bread (as you did for Outdoor Worship) for communion.
- You must wear a mask if you exit your vehicle.
- Other recommendations of social distancing apply when you are outside your vehicle.

Holy Week and Easter 2021

We on the Worship and Music Committee are carefully planning the worship events of the most holy week of the year, March 28 - April 4, including an Easter Sunday Service *back inside our building*. Palm Sunday will start us off with outdoor, probably Drive-In worship with a procession of palms in cars around our block. Maundy Thursday and Good Friday will be pre-recorded Services. Easter, we will celebrate an indoor Service at 8:30. Because of the strictures of health and safety that Service will be **sign - up only**. Sign ups will begin on Monday the day after Palm Sunday and we will have to close sign ups after we have reached the numerical limit of people for the size and arrangement of our church. A second Easter Service will be held outdoors at 10 AM depending on the weather; on the lawn **or** Drive - In. As you can imagine, there is excitement after one whole year, in slowly and safely returning to inside worship. Yet as you also know, this takes careful thought and infinite small detail planning because the health and well being of ALL our members is of the utmost concern to us in this time of pandemic. We all wish Holy Week could be as it was two years ago and twenty years ago. However, this does signal what may be the beginning of the end of our time of exile. As always, we will watch carefully in the months ahead. Questions can be addressed to me with a phone call or by email. More information will appear in the coming Newsletters.

PD

Lenten Activities Abound

Confirmation and Sunday School students are baking pretzels, creating Lenten caterpillars, and learning about faith. Each Lent in a Bag contained some ingredients for making pretzels. It's all part of your Lenten journey this year.



Upcoming Events



EMILY DICKINSON and the POETRY OF LENT

A LENTEN
DEVOTIONAL

This year we're trying something different and invite you to join us on Wednesday evenings during Lent at 7:00 pm for a 45 minute Zoom get together to discover "Emily Dickinson and the Poetry of Lent".

Please join us tonight - **Wednesday, March 10th at 7:00 p.m.**

Topic: EMILY DICKINSON AND THE POETRY OF LENT: A LENTEN DEVOTIONAL

Time: This is a recurring meeting Meet anytime

Join Zoom Meeting

[https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86398759484?](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86398759484?pwd=WC9yemptSTVpRlNBSy9MNnFMM05mZz09)

[pwd=WC9yemptSTVpRlNBSy9MNnFMM05mZz09](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86398759484?pwd=WC9yemptSTVpRlNBSy9MNnFMM05mZz09)

Meeting ID: 863 9875 9484

Passcode: 195625

One tap mobile

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THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT

READ

Scripture:

John 2:13-25

Poem:

"Some keep the Sabbath going to church," by Emily Dickinson

Making a whip
of cords, he drove
all of them out of
the temple...

+ John 2:15

MEDITATE

Here Jesus is filled with fierce and righteous anger. Why? Because the temple – "my Father's house" – has lost its way, becoming a crass sacrificial system (money for buying animals to sacrifice). Jesus' love for the temple runs deep, and he doesn't want access to God's presence to be limited by finances or profiteering.

And at the same time, his actions provoke the question of where "the temple" really is. Does the sacred ground end at the sanctuary door? Or does it include the woods, the birds, and the sky, as both Genesis 1 and Dickinson's sly poem would suggest? Does the temple include Christ's own body, and so all of our bodies as well, since we are "the Body of Christ" (John 2:21)? And if it does: how shall we fiercely love and defend and participate in "the temple" today?

MORE LIGHT

For another exploration of both the world's sacred status, see Dickinson's "We should not mind so small a flower" – a poem likely about the gentian, a little, late-blooming flower in New England.





PRACTICES

- + This week begin each day by lighting a candle of creation, praying, "God of love, help me live today in ways that consecrate the world, defend the vulnerable, protect what is good, and honor creation. In Jesus' name, Amen."
- + Take a flower walk this week, intentionally looking for blossoms and buds, or the places they soon will be. As you go, reflect on Dickinson's line, "So instead of getting to Heaven, at last — / I'm going, all along." A variation on this way of walking is the Japanese practice of "forest bathing": mindfully exploring a forest, immersing our senses in the refreshing power of creation.
- + Try some "guerilla gardening" this week (or schedule some for later in the season), planting sunflower seeds — or other seeds or bulbs — in neglected or unexpected public spaces, sometimes called "orphaned land." Check out guerillagardening.org for tips and best practices.
- + In the spirit of "creation care," try eating more vegetarian or vegan meals this week than you normally would. Or consider fasting from accumulating any more "stuff" for the rest of Lent, not least because the amount of stuff humans have created now outweighs all life on earth (incredible but true - search for the online story from National Geographic)!
- + What does "righteous anger" look like in the world and in your own life? What should we be angry about? Where is your temple, the place or time or way you sense God's presence? Explore these questions with family or friends over a meal or online.



JOHN 2:13-25

The Passover of the Jews was near, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. In the temple he found people selling cattle, sheep, and doves, and the money changers seated at their tables. Making a whip of cords, he drove all of them out of the temple, both the sheep and the cattle. He also poured out the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables. He told those who were selling the doves, "Take these things out of here! Stop making my Father's house a marketplace!" His disciples remembered that it was written, "Zeal for your house will consume me." The Jews then said to him, "What sign can you show us for doing this?" Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." The Jews then said, "This temple has been under construction for forty-six years, and will you raise it up in three days?" But he was speaking of the temple of his body. After he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this; and they believed the scripture and the word that Jesus had spoken.

When he was in Jerusalem during the Passover festival, many believed in his name because they saw the signs that he was doing. But Jesus on his part would not entrust himself to them, because he knew all people and needed no one to testify about anyone; for he himself knew what was in everyone.



FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT

READ

Scripture:

John 3:14-21

Poem:

"Wild Nights – Wild Nights!"
by Emily Dickinson.

Indeed, God did
not send the Son
into the world to
condemn the world,
but in order that
the world might be
saved through him.

+ John 3:17



MEDITATE

Jesus speaks here of both grace and judgment, but his emphasis is on grace: after all, in Numbers 21 (the story Jesus references in this passage) the bronze serpent Moses lifted up saved all the afflicted Israelites, not just a few; and likewise, God's Son came not to condemn the world but "in order that the world might be saved."

Dickinson's poem is typically read as erotic, and it is – but we can also read it as riffing on the ancient tradition that uses erotic poetry as a way to explore the love between God and humanity (the Song of Solomon being the most famous example). And reading John and Emily side-by-side helps highlight a particular idea: Dickinson writes of abiding "in Thee," the beloved; and John writes not only of believing but also of acting "in God": "their deeds have been done in God" (John 3:21). Both texts, then, invite us to consider a radical intimacy between lover and beloved, divine and human, so intimate, in fact, as to be a kind of communion, "rowing in Eden." In the end, if the Song of Songs is any guide, it's this closeness, this sweet, wild companionship, that God wants with us.

MORE LIGHT

For another of Dickinson's love poems that include theological dimensions, see "That I did always love" – a compact little argument that love is life, that life is immortal, and that these truths are shown nowhere more clearly than in Christ's death and resurrection.

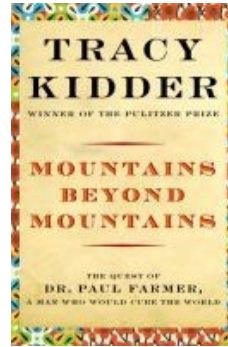
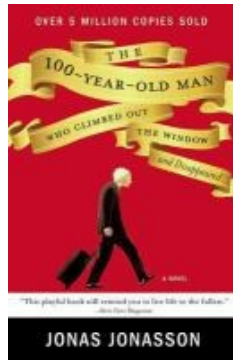
PRACTICES

- + This week begin each day by lighting a candle of love, praying, "God of love, help me love, and abide, and live in communion with you. In Jesus' name, Amen."
- + We all know we should love one another – but what if, following the ancient tradition of poetically seeing divine love in and through human love, we thought of our acts of love as manifestations, channels of God's love for the world? How would that change our decisions? This week, take one action each day with this idea in mind: being a conduit of God's love. Read the Song of Solomon – and then reread "Wild Nights – Wild Nights!"
- + The writer and botanist Robin Wall Kimmerer has a lovely idea: while we may love the world, she writes, in a quite tangible sense it's also true that the world loves us: providing for our day to day, moment to moment needs, from the air we breathe to the food we eat to the colors we behold and on and on. This week, try to experience the world around you in this way: as a tangible, sensuous expression of God's love. Record your experiences and reflections in a journal.
- + The apostle Paul wrote that "Love is patient, love is kind." Be on the lookout this week for moments – a conversation, a social media post, a phone call – in which you might be tempted to impatience or unkindness, and instead offer words or acts of love.
- + What (specifically!) makes you feel most loved? How do you most typically show others that you love them? Explore these questions with family or friends over a meal or online.



John 3:14-21

And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life. "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life. "Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. Those who believe in him are not condemned; but those who do not believe are condemned already, because they have not believed in the name of the only Son of God. And this is the judgment, that the light has come into the world, and people loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil. For all who do evil hate the light and do not come to the light, so that their deeds may not be exposed. But those who do what is true come to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that their deeds have been done in God."



The Good Shepherd Book Club is meeting on April 6th at **1:00 p.m.** when we will discuss "The 100 Year Old Man Who Jumped Out the Window and Disappeared" by Jonas Jonasson. In May, we will discuss "Mountains beyond Mountains" by Tracy Kidder. We will indoors using the new handler system if the infection rates are low. We welcome new members!

Treasurer's Report - February 2021										
Contributions	February		YTD		Var	Expenses	February		YTD	
	Actual	Bdgt	Actual	Bdgt			Actual	Bdgt	Actual	Bdgt
Pledged	18,572	19,862	25,955	31,724	(5,769)	Pastoral Ministries	8,291	8,458	16,585	16,917
Unpledged	290	1,986	686	3,172	(2,486)	Mortgage	0	0	0	0
Prior Year	0	0	1,135	3,343	(2,808)	Music & Worship	3,454	3,454	6,848	6,907
Loose Offerings	0	247	103	493	(390)	Benevolence	1,777	2,225	2,869	3,979
Church School	0	19	0	38	(38)	Property	2,175	1,290	2,745	2,462
Lent & Easter	95	0	95	0	95	Office	2,251	2,497	4,503	4,694
Other	485	161	745	537	208	Utilities	964	1,710	2,099	3,689
Thanksgiving	0	0	0	0	0	Christian Educ.	0	31	0	63
Advent/Christmas	0	0	6	0	6	Interim Pastor	0	0	0	0
						Evangelism	0	18	0	18
						Youth	0	0	0	0
						Stewardship	0	0	0	0
						Insurance	506	526	1,012	1,052
						Altar Guild	0	37	0	75
						Social Ministry	0	0	0	0
Total	\$19,442	\$22,274	\$28,725	\$39,907	(\$11,182)	Total	19,417	20,246	36,661	39,855
Variance	(\$2,832)		(\$11,182)			Variance	(\$828)		(\$3,194)	
	Actual	Bdgt	Actual	Bdgt	Var		Dec '20	Feb '21	Var	
Surplus / (Deficit)	\$25	\$2,028	(\$7,936)	\$52	(\$7,988)	Cash/Investments*	126,523	50,835	(\$75,688)	
Future Seminarian Fund	19,254					Mortgage	68,616	-	(\$68,616)	
Capital Impr Fund	11,521					Campership	13,802	13,802	\$0	
Bathroom/Sidewalk Repair	2,334					Equity Share	77,900	77,900	\$0	
Parking Lot Fund	29,616					Memorial	11,300	11,730	\$430	
Pastor's Discretionary Fund	875									
Music Supplies	1,034									

* Excludes Memorial, Exchange, Intern, Pastoral Housing and Campership Funds

February Summary

Contributions were \$2,832 unfavorable to Budget for the month and are \$11,182 unfavorable YTD

\$28,725 February 2021

\$52,633 February 2020 (Excl \$10,000 from 2019)

\$48,162 February 2019

\$37,577 February 2018

Expenses for the month were \$828 below budget, as unfavorable snow removal offset favorable oil expenses

Surplus for the month was \$25

Deficit for the year is \$7,936, \$7,988 unfavorable to budget

Church Offering and Financial Statements

Financial Statements will be sent out in March. Please review your statement and if you have any questions, Roy Remlin will be happy to assist you.

As worship services are online and outdoor now, if you have a chance, please submit your offering to help with our expenses. Thank you for your contribution!

There are different ways to contribute. You may bring it with you to the Drive In worship service or you may mail a check if you are worshipping online with us or you may use your bank's online checking and have the bank issue the check and mail it—it's most often a free service offered by banks. Check with your bank to see if this works for you. In addition, our Finance Committee is working diligently on implementing PayPal/Venmo and plans to have it in place in the next few weeks. We will let you know as soon as it's ready to be used.

Let us know if you have any questions, we are always happy to help.

Reaching Out, Serving Others:

Covenant to Care Easter Donations



With the ongoing impact of COVID-19, this year for Easter, Covenant to Care is asking for donations of pre-made Easter baskets that are already shrink-wrapped instead of those assembled by hand as many of us have done in the past. Alternatively, they suggest donating health-related items such as hand sanitizer and Kleenex or other tissues, along with springy type items such as colorful pinwheels, chalk, etc. These can be placed in an open, plain paper bag like the ones we received for our Lenten activities so that the items can be redistributed according to the community needs on their watch.

Please drop all donations in the plastic bin outside the church Monday through Thursday from 9 a.m. to noon, Saturday from 10 a.m. to noon, and Sunday morning during drive-in worship. Donations are due **before Wednesday, March 24**, when they will be picked up.

Thank you for your generosity in continuing these outreach efforts, especially under the current circumstances. Easter blessings and gratitude to all.

Jane Fieberts



Shepherd's Pantry



The need is great!

The Monroe Food Pantry provides emergency food assistance for needy individuals and families in Monroe. Their clients receive one week's worth of food per month and they serve more than 100 households per month.

The Social Ministry and Community Outreach Committee invites you to contribute items to the Shepherd's Pantry located in the narthex. You may drop them off during the Drive In Worship Service or in the blue bin outside the front door of the church Monday - Thursday mornings. The items are delivered to the Monroe Food Pantry once a month.

Items Needed:

- canned fruit - mandarin oranges, mixed fruit, peaches, pears, sliced/diced pineapple
- canned vegetables (regular and low sodium) - sliced/whole beets, creamed corn, French cut green beans, sliced/whole potatoes, olives, Sauerkraut, spinach
- canned beans (regular and low sodium/fat free) - cannellini, pinto, refried, vegetarian refried
- baked beans - regular, pork, vegetarian
- chili - with beans, vegetarian
- stock (regular and low sodium) - beef, chicken, vegetable
- canned tomatoes (regular and low sodium) - crushed, whole, sauce, puree, paste
- regular and low sodium jarred pasta sauce
- regular and whole wheat egg noodles
- Ramen - beef, shrimp
- cold cereal - corn flakes, raisin bran, Rice Krispies
- oatmeal
- packaged foods - Hamburger Helper, instant potatoes
- salad dressing - balsamic, blue cheese, Italian, ranch, Thousand Island
- condiments - mayo, ketchup, yellow mustard, pancake syrup, hot sauce, taco sauce
- crunchy peanut butter
- strawberry preserves
- beverages - black tea (regular and decaf), ground coffee (regular and decaf), hot chocolate, low sodium V8, Ensure, shelf stable milk
- household items - toilet paper, paper towels, household cleaners
- personal hygiene items - menstrual pads, face wash, deodorant, bar soap, shampoo, conditioner



Food for 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 to GSLC with the notation "Food For Summerfield" or place cash in the Summerfield box.

Devotional for the week of March 7th, 2021



God's Love Is Not for Sale

The trouble isn't that there are people buying and selling animals and exchanging money in the temple. Those things have always happened in the temple. No one is being corrupt; no one is getting rich. These are facets of temple life that exist to uphold God's law.

The trouble is that something has gone haywire: we have allowed our experience of the marketplace to shape the way we see God; if I give God this, God will give me that. Instead of God informing our understanding of the marketplace, it has come to be the other way around. Jesus has come to turn this haywire understanding on its head.

In the face of trouble, promising to give God something as a down payment will not make God any more likely to come to your aid. God has already come and made a home with you in your trouble.

In the face of death, bargaining with God will not attract God's favor for you, because God is already there. Your death is forever wedded to Christ's death, and likewise your resurrection to his resurrection.

In the face of helplessness, negotiating with God for help is useless because God was your helper long before you even asked.

Do you see? God's love is not to be bought or sold, only given freely and lavishly, even to those who could never pay if they wanted to.

As a result, the body of Christ today, the church, sets out to live in ways that are unfathomable to the modern-day market. We spend our communal life on hungry people who will never be able to invite us to their own tables, and on children who cannot contribute to our offering plate, on dying people who after receiving our most prized treasures are not there to enjoy them. Our life is senseless lived by the rules of the marketplace. Thanks be to God that Christ comes to overturn it.

Devotional message and art based on the readings for March 7th, reprinted from sundaysandseasons.com. Copyright © 2019 Augsburg Fortress. All rights reserved.

Sunday, March 14, 2021 — Fourth Sunday in Lent

Prayer of the Day: O God, rich in mercy, by the humiliation of your Son you lifted up this fallen world and rescued us from the hopelessness of death. Lead us into your light, that all our deeds may reflect your love, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

First Reading: Numbers 21:4-9

Psalm 107

Second Reading: Ephesians 2:1-10

Gospel: John 3:14-21



And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life. "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life. "Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. Those who believe in him are not condemned; but those who do not believe are condemned already, because they have not believed in the name of the only Son of God. And this is the judgment, that the light has come into the world, and people loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil. For all who do evil hate the light and do not come to the light, so that their deeds may not be exposed. But those who do what is true come to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that their deeds have been done in God."