

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



## Good Shepherd Lutheran Church Weekly Update Wednesday, December 22, 2021

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

**“And she gave birth to her firstborn son. She wrapped him swaddling clothes and laid him in a manger because there was no room for them in the inn.” Lk. 2:7**



**A holy and blessed ChristMass to all of you, your friends and loved ones. Safe travels.**

LV  
PD

**\* Christmas Eve Worship is on Friday at 5:30pm. Please:**

- Consider inviting a friend, or neighbor to Christmas Eve Service.**
- Have your children bring a bell, or any tinkling, ringing small musical instrument.**

## \* Holiday Worship Schedule and Worship Information -

**December 24th - Christmas Eve Service at 5:30pm.**

**December 26th - One Service offered at 9:30am.**

**Masks are required for anyone entering the Church.** 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.

Also, please keep our committee in your thoughts and prayers as we continue to provide guidance to the best of our abilities. We are delighted that our congregation has remained healthy through this crisis and look forward to the day when these considerations are no longer necessary.

Yours in Christ,

The Worship and Music Committee  
Susan Chin, Chair



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

1) Go to the Good Shepherd website [www.gslc-ct.org](http://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!

## A Community Of Prayer -

For those in need of healing and comfort:



*He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds.*

*Psalm 147 vs. 3*

Members and Friends of the Congregation: Joan, Vic, Lauren, Ray, Marie, Audrey, Elizabeth, Gordon, Miriam, Denise, Sharon, Rosemary, Paula, Sarah, Misty, Jim, Darcy, Scarlet, Jason, Brian, David, Cate, Cecilio, Donna, Anthony, the Wilk family, Linda, Todd, Noreen and family, Maureen, Lynn, Barbara, Scott, Johanna, Glen, Durbin, Marie.

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.

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

Simply email the church office at [office@gslc-ct.org](mailto:office@gslc-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. 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. You can reach him by text, or phone at: 860-595-9560. His email is: [dearynos@gmail.com](mailto:dearynos@gmail.com)



**12/24/21 - Christmas Eve** Service at 5:30pm.

**12/25/21 - Christmas**

**12/26/21 - Worship Schedule Change** - Only one service at 9:30am.

**1/2/22** - Back to regular Worship schedule with 8am and 10:30am Services.

**1/4/22 - The Book Club** will meet again at 2pm to discuss "Whereabouts", by Jhumpa Lahiri.

**1/9/22 - Sunday School & Confirmation classes** will reconvene at 9:15am.



**Choir Meetings** - Each Sunday at \*9:45am. (\* Please note slight time change)

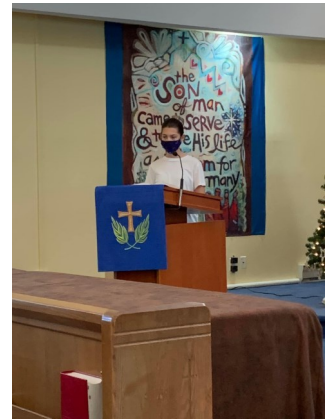
**Shepherd's Flock Quilters** - generally meet at 10am each Monday, Wednesday and Saturday. New members are welcome!



## CHRISTMAS PAGEANT -



A few Sunday School children presented a brief Christmas pageant during 10:30am service on December 19th. Great job, Students!



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## POINSETTIAS -

The beautiful Poinsettias decorating the Sanctuary were donated by:

Barbara Abraham in memory of Blanche Abraham

Dottie and Bill Kaiser in memory of Elizabeth Cukan

Vic and Ellie Noll in memory of their parents

Doris Schwarz and Schwarz Family in memory of Pastor Charles R. Schwarz



# HOLIDAY GREETINGS -

“May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit”

(Romans 15:13).

How wonderful is the hope found in the birth of Jesus Christ! May it fill your heart and bring you peace, during this holy season and always.

Merry Christmas,

*Elizabeth L. Eaton*

ELCA Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton & the churchwide organization

*To all my Good Shepherd Family,*

*May the Peace, Joy and Love of this Christmas fall gently on you, and be with you Always!*

*Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!*

*Dagny*





Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you.

I do not give to you as the world gives.

Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid.

JOHN 14:27 NRSV

TO ALL MY FRIENDS AT GOOD SHEPHERD  
CHRISTMAS GREETINGS FROM EMMANUEL (PA)  
HOPE THIS HOLIDAY SEASON FINDS EVERYONE  
DOING WELL  
I'M ALL SETTED IN! NOW SCOUTING LUTHERAN  
CHURCHES, I'VE BEEN TO 7 SO FAR! STARTING  
THE SECOND TIME AROUND. VERY INTERESTING  
I WISH ONE! ALL A BLESSED CHRISTMAS  
SEASON & A HEALTHY! HAPPY 2022  
Love to all, Janet

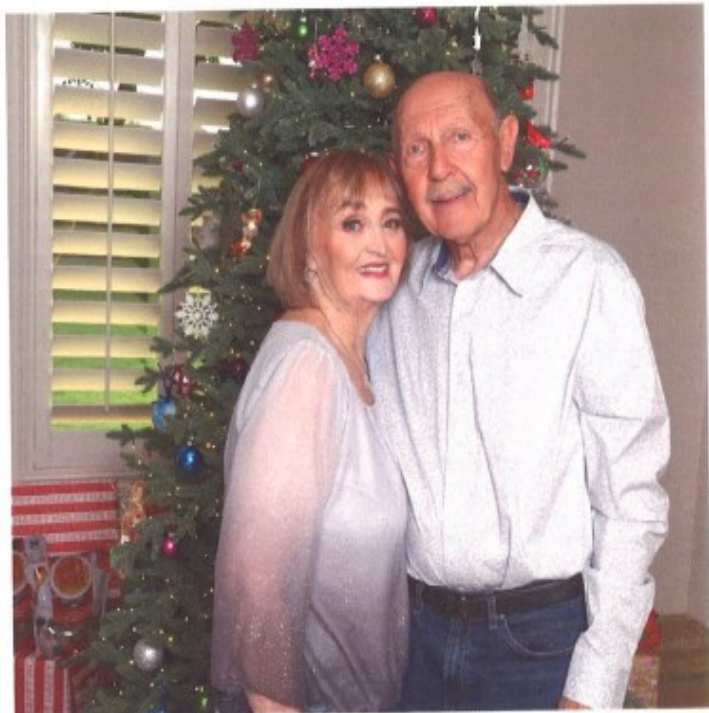


In this busy season, may peace be the gift  
Jesus brings to you when you need it most.

Merry Christmas  
Janet Bulgo

Merry Christmas  
2021

Michael and Marsha  
Beno



## BABY SHOWER UPDATE -



The GSLC virtual baby shower was such a success! The donations collected at GSLC included over 122 items and 388 diapers. The gifts were delivered a few days ago and the family was so surprised and extremely grateful. The new little baby girl was born early and is healthy. The family is overjoyed to have so many newborn necessities. It is such an exciting time for them! Thank you to everyone that donated to this lovely new family!

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Creator of the stars of night, bless the long hours  
of this night with the warmth of your presence.

**Come to all who suffer in any way.  
Grant rest to the weary,  
freedom to those who are burdened,  
and bright hope to those who despair.**

Strengthen us as we await your coming once  
again, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

*Blue Christmas: A Service of Night Prayer for the Winter Solstice*



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America ✓

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The holidays can be difficult. Let us pray for those experiencing grief, conflict, illness, loneliness or hardship this season. "The Lord is near to the brokenhearted, and saves the crushed in spirit" (Psalm 34:18).

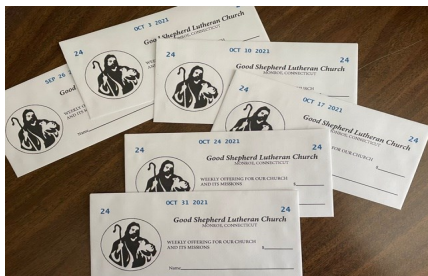


## FINANCIAL NEWS -

**\*\*2022 Envelope boxes for the new year are available and can be picked up on the wood table in the narthex.**

## FINANCIAL UPDATE -

We would like to thank everyone for the contributions that you have made over the last few weeks. As a result of your generosity, we are currently expecting our full year contributions to be at, or slightly below plan. If you are behind on your pledge, or if you would like to make a contribution to Good Shepherd, it would be very helpful and much appreciated!



## 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](http://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!

## Friday, December 24, 2021 Christmas Eve

**Prayer of the Day:** Almighty God, you made this holy night shine with the brightness of the true Light. Grant that here on earth we may walk in the light of Jesus' presence and in the last day wake to the rightness of his glory; through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

### Readings:

Isaiah 9:2-7

Psalm: 96 (11)

Titus 2:11-14

Luke 2:1-14 [15-20]



### Titus 2:11-14

For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all, training us to renounce impiety and worldly passions, and in the present age to live lives that are self-controlled, upright, and godly, while we wait for the blessed hope and the manifestation of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ. He it is who gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity and purify for himself a people of his own who are zealous for good deeds.

### Luke 2:1-14 [15-20]

In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. All went to their own towns to be registered. Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger." And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors!" [When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us." So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.]

## **Sunday, December 26, 2021    First Sunday of Christmas**

**Prayer of the Day:** Shine into our hearts the light of your wisdom, O God, and open our minds to the knowledge of your word, that in all things we may think and act according to your good will and may live continually in the light of your Son, Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

### **Readings:**

Samuel 2:18-20, 26

Psalm: 148 (13)

Colossians 3:12-17

Luke 2:41-52



### **Colossians 3:12-17**

As God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

### **Luke 2:41-52**

Now every year his parents went to Jerusalem for the festival of the Passover. And when he was twelve years old, they went up as usual for the festival. When the festival was ended and they started to return, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, but his parents did not know it. Assuming that he was in the group of travelers, they went a day's journey. Then they started to look for him among their relatives and friends. When they did not find him, they returned to Jerusalem to search for him. After three days they found him in the temple, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. And all who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers. When his parents saw him they were astonished; and his mother said to him, "Child, why have you treated us like this? Look, your father and I have been searching for you in great anxiety." He said to them, "Why were you searching for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?" But they did not understand what he said to them. Then he went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was obedient to them. His mother treasured all these things in her heart. And Jesus increased in wisdom and in years, and in divine and human favor.



# THE CROSS IS THE TRUE *GIFT* OF CHRISTMAS

By Elizabeth A. Eaton



I remember this jarring image: It was the Christmas Eve candlelight service at my home congregation. A banner depicting Mary and Jesus in the manger had been hung from the ceiling at the front of the nave completely obscuring the large suspended cross. I had seen that banner on Sunday mornings, but on this Christmas Eve in the semidarkness something else appeared. A spotlight that illumined the cross now shown on the banner with the effect of making the outline of the cross appear as the background of the Christmas scene.

The cross on Christmas? I didn't want the crucified Christ casting a shadow on the Christ child. Christmas is about angels and shepherds and the babe, lying in a manger, not betrayal and death. I didn't like it.

Christmas can be such a fraught season. It is forced to carry so much emotional freight. We must be merry. We must be filled with good cheer. We must be home surrounded by family. We must turn our lives into the happy endings of every TV Christmas special. There is a certain drivenness to get everything done, to get everything perfect by the stroke of midnight on Dec. 24.

Secular culture reflects this. *A Christmas Carol* and *How the Grinch Stole Christmas* are stories of redemption. The song "I'll Be Home for Christmas" and the film *Home Alone* are filled with wistful longing. I remember a *M\*A\*S\*H* episode where the doctors in the operating room turned the clock back to 11:59 p.m. on the 24th so a young soldier's death wouldn't be recorded on Christmas.

But what are we longing for?

Certainly we want peace in our homes and in the world. We want love and a place to belong. We want life and the end of all the deadly things in the world that bring death and destruction. We want reconciliation. We want rest. We want hope. We want the assurance that all of this means something. We want to know that someone cares. And so we try to accomplish all of those things and squeeze it all into the weeks between Thanksgiving and Christmas Day. No wonder we can find ourselves exhausted and empty on Dec. 26. The mall scene the day after Christmas—returning broken toys and ill-fitting

or unwanted sweaters, the picked-over look of marked down Christmas decorations and wrapping paper—is the retail version of the reality of a broken world that doesn't know peace or love or hope. Except ....

The hope of Christmas is fulfilled on Good Friday. The cross is part of Christmas. "Nails, spear shall pierce him through, the cross be borne for me, for you; hail, hail the Word made flesh, the babe, the son of Mary" (*Evangelical Lutheran Worship*, 296). All of our Christmas glorias are realized in Jesus' glorification on the cross. We have peace. We have hope. We are loved. And not just at Christmas.

The cross is the Christmas gift. Through it God reconciles and heals. Through it God's love is made known and in God's love we are known and have our home. And it is a gift. We don't have to spend our energy and time hoping to attract the gift or the Giver by making everything right by Christmas. If we aren't physically at home, if our lives have not turned into the happy endings of TV Christmas specials, if we are estranged from family, if we are not merry, even if we should die, this gift of life has come to us.

Let's be gentle with ourselves and each other this Advent and Christmas. Let's not fret about imperfect lives and incomplete holiday preparations. We won't ever get it completely right. That's God's work. It is the best gift exchange ever. Martin Luther wrote: "Is not this a beautiful, glorious exchange, by which Christ, who is wholly innocent and holy, not only takes upon himself another's sin, that is, my sin and guilt, but also clothes and adorns me, who am nothing but sin, with his own innocence and purity? And then besides dies the shameful death of the cross for my sake ... that I may live with him eternally" (*Luther's Works*, Vol. 51). †

A monthly message from the presiding bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. This is a reprint of her December 2014 column in *Living Lutheran*. Her email address is [bishop@elca.org](mailto:bishop@elca.org).