

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, December 16, 2020



"I think that I shall never see something lovely as a tree."

I would add the adjective Christmas to "tree." Ancient peoples saw power in trees particularly "evergreens". They are ever full of life. Mysteriously they have the power to preserve life in the winter when life is threatened and fears prevailed that life might not return. Decorating with evergreen branches and trees existed in Northern lands. For example Germanic and Celtic lands held certain trees to be sacred, to hold mysterious life giving power. The power of love was even assigned to the mistletoe plant. Martin Luther is given credit for adding candle lights to the pine trees kept in homes at Christmastide. Upon a dark night walking home, Luther saw stars and had the insight to wire small candles to his tree. Being German this was a natural development. It was the German Prince Albert husband of Queen Victoria who introduced this custom to England. There is at least one carol *Oh Tannenbaum* which is dedicated to the Christmas tree.

I was surprised to learn that this year, 2020, the year that has brought such suffering in it, Christmas trees are selling like hotcakes. Many places were empty of trees weeks ago. Perhaps this is good in that cheer and beauty and that which lifts the spirits can be very healing and helpful right now.

"O Christmas Tree, Oh Christmas tree how lovely are your branches"

Happy and Blessed decorating
PD

To join us for Worship online:

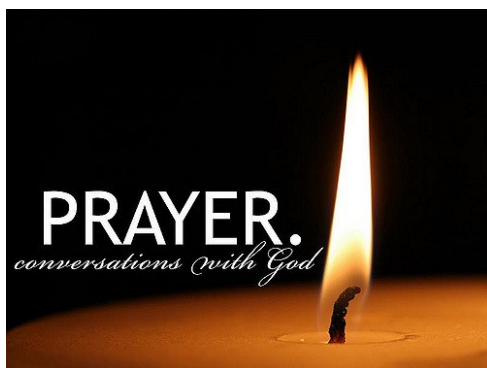
There are several options for you to join us for online worship:

- 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, December 20th at 10:00 am. We will have Drive In Church, weather permitting (If it is 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.



A Community of Prayer

For those in need of healing and comfort:

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

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.

Psalms 147 vs. 3

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.

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. 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).



Advent Lighting

We will meet together via ZOOM at 5:00 pm on Sunday afternoons in Advent to light our Advent wreaths. The weekly wreath lighting meeting will be about 10 minutes.

Here is the Zoom invite and password.

Topic: Good Shepherd Advent

Time: This is a recurring meeting Meet anytime

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84654520497?pwd=YVdkcEZRZWdwU1hXRHILZEg3enA0QT09>

Meeting ID: 846 5452 0497

Passcode: GSLAdvent

One tap mobile

+13017158592,,84654520497#,,,,,0#,,476037716# US (Washington D.C)

+13126266799,,84654520497#,,,,,0#,,476037716# US (Chicago)

Dial by your location

+1 301 715 8592 US (Washington D.C)

+1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago)

+1 929 205 6099 US (New York)

Meeting ID: 846 5452 0497

Passcode: 476037716

Find your local number: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84654520497?pwd=YVdkcEZRZWdwU1hXRHILZEg3enA0QT09>

Here is the service we will follow for the fourth Advent Wreath Lighting. It is adapted from a Celtic Advent Liturgy from the Faith and Worship website:

Advent 4 - Birth and Re-Birth

Responses are in **bold print**

'While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.'

(Luke 2:6,7)

Beneath the surface of your story
is an inescapable fact
You entered this world
as vulnerable as any one of us
in order to nail that vulnerability to the cross.
Our fears, our insecurities and our sins
all that can separate us from God
exchanged by your Grace for Love.
We cannot comprehend the reasoning
only marvel that Salvation comes to us
through a baby born in a stable,
who reaches out to a world in need.

Light all four candles

'Jesus answered, "I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit. Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit. You should not be surprised at my saying, 'You must be born again.' The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with every-one born of the Spirit.'

(John 3:5-8)

(**A moment of silence** - During the silence, you may like to read and reflect on the words that have been read, gaze at the lights - or simply enjoy the peace and calm)

If you, O Lord, kept a record of sins,
O Lord, who could stand?
But with you there is forgiveness;
Therefore you are feared.
I wait for the Lord, my soul waits,
And in his word I put my hope.

There is a transformation that takes place
within the warmth of your embrace
That certain knowledge that you are
refuge, shelter, fortress and stronghold
against which no army can succeed
That you are Brother, Sister, Mother, Father
the love that knows no bounds
That you are God
And I am lost outside of your arms
Create in me a pure heart, O God
And renew a faithful spirit within me
Restore to me the joy of your salvation
And a willing spirit to sustain me
O Lord, open our lips
And our mouths will forever declare your praise

O come, O come, Emmanuel,
And ransom captive Israel,
That mourns in lonely exile here
Until the Son of God appear.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come again and with us ever dwell

(**Scripture reading** Luke 1:26-38)

The Holy Gospel according to Saint Luke:

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" The angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born [4] will be holy; he will be called Son of God. And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. For nothing will be impossible with God." 38 Then Mary said, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her.

(**Intercessions** - A circle prayer)

Circle us, Lord
Circle us with the light of your presence, bright within this dark world
Enable us to be overcomers of fear and temptation
Enable us to be victors over sin and despair
Enable us to become that which you would desire
(Silent prayer)
Lord of creation, Lord of Salvation

Circle us with the light of your presence

Circle us, Lord

Circle our family within the shelter of your outstretched arms

Protect them in each moment of their daily lives

Protect them in the decisions that they face

Protect their homes and relationships

(Silent prayer)

Lord of creation, Lord of Salvation

Circle our families with the light of your presence

Circle us, Lord

Circle this nation with Advent love and hope

Create a desire to listen to the Advent message

Create a willingness to understand and respond

Create a need to reach out to the Christ Child

(Silent prayer)

Lord of creation, Lord of Salvation

Circle our nation with the light of your presence

Circle us, Lord

Circle this world with the joy of your Salvation

Where there is sickness and disease bring healing

Where there is hunger and despair bring hope

Where there is torture and oppression bring release

(Silent prayer)

Lord of creation, Lord of Salvation

Circle this world with the light of your presence

I arise today

Through the strength of heaven;

Light of the sun,

Splendor of fire,

Swiftness of wind,

Depth of sea,

Stability of earth,

Firmness of rock

I arise today

Through God's strength to pilot me;

God's might to uphold me,

God's wisdom to guide me,

God's hand to guard me.

Afar or anear,

Alone or in a multitude.

Christ shield me today

Against wounding;

Christ with me,

Christ before me,

Christ behind me,

Christ on my right,

Christ on my left,

Christ beneath me,

Christ above me,

Christ in me.

I arise today

Through the mighty strength

Of the Lord of Creation

(attr. St. Patrick)

Go in Peace, serve the Lord.

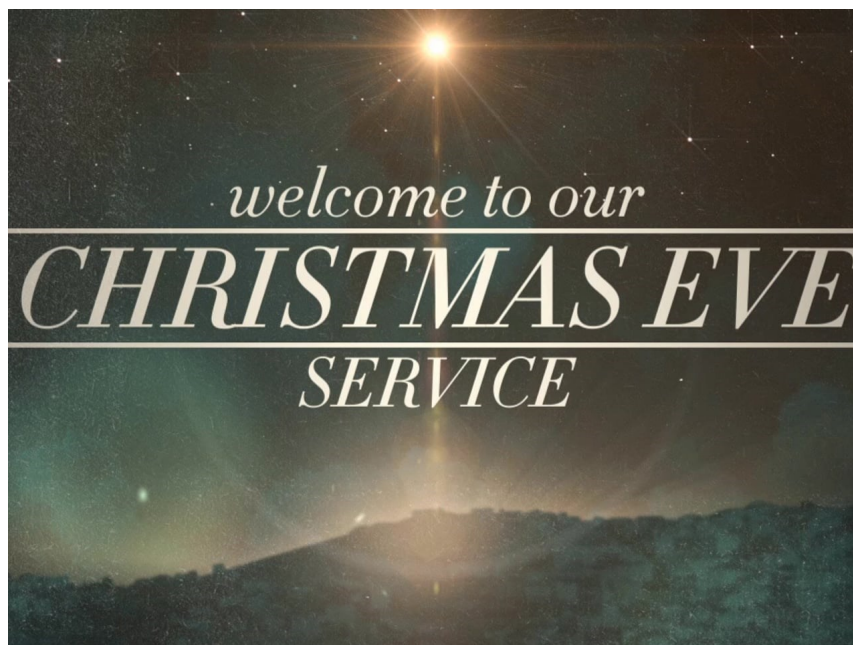
Thanks be to God!



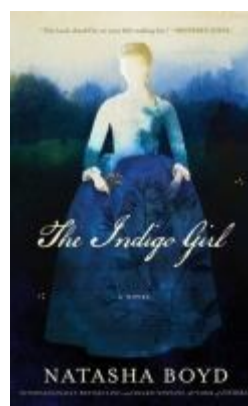
Upcoming Events

Christmas Eve Worship

Join us on December 24th for worship either online at a time of your choosing or at the Drive In Worship Services at 5:30 & 7:00 pm in the parking lot of Good Shepherd. Whichever you choose, we are delighted to worship with you!



The Book Club is meeting on January 5th at **1:00 p.m.** we will discuss "The Indigo Girl" by Natasha Boyd. In February, we will discuss "The Book Woman of Troublesome Creek" by Kim Michele Richardson. We will either meet via Zoom or possibly indoors using the new handler system if the infection rates are low. We welcome new members!



Reaching Out, Serving Others:

THANKS FROM COVENANT TO CARE



Thanks to everyone who contributed toys to support Covenant to Care's Christmas outreach. Your generosity lifts up those who normally struggle, but this year has been a real challenge and, as always, Good Shepherd came through. May God bless each of you with peace and good health in the new year.

Jane Fieberts

Thanks from Salvation Army Angel Tree



Good Shepherd did it again! Your generosity is awesome. The Salvation Army staff came to church and were thrilled by the 25 gifts to fill our Angel Tree wishes. Pastor Gaston from Summerfield came to our house and filled his car with a collection of donated items, from food to backpacks. We also presented him with a check to cover gift cards for his 15 shut in members. Additionally, he will be receiving a generous check from our regular donations to Summerfield. There is nothing else to say but Thank You. This is the spirit of Good Shepherd all year!

Trudi Black



Summerfield 2020 Update

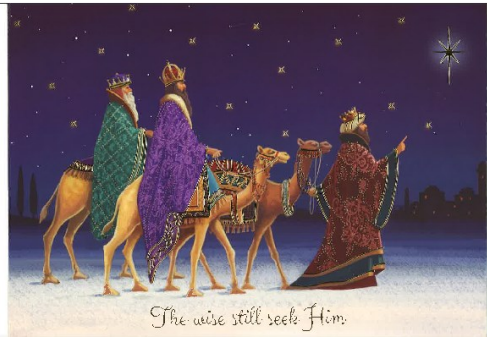
Our heartfelt thanks for your abundant generosity in supporting Summerfield United Methodist Church in Bridgeport throughout this year. To date we have sent checks totaling \$14,191.14 along with snacks, quilts, clothing, school supplies and more. Your outreach to those in need is simply amazing!



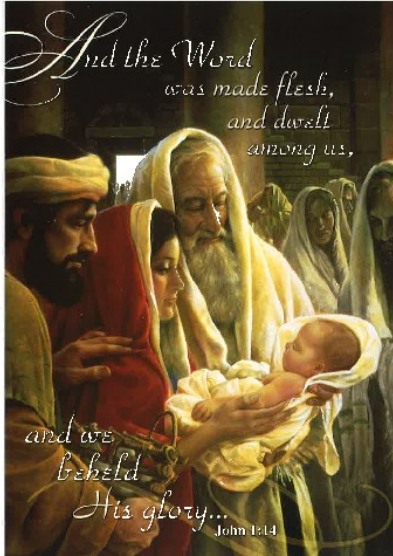
Offering Envelope Boxes for 2021

The boxes for the new year are on the table in the narthex. If you attend the Drive In Service, please stop in and pick yours up. If you would like to pick it up during the week, please make an appointment to stop by during office hours - Monday through Thursday, 9 am to noon. If those times are not convenient for you, just call the church office at 203-268-7596 or send an email so that other arrangements can be made.

Christmas Cards received at Good Shepherd



From Miriam Kursawe



From Mike and Marsha Beno



From the Lindsay family

Prayer of the Day: Stir up your power, Lord Christ, and come. With your abundant grace and might, free us from the sin that would obstruct your mercy, that willingly we may bear your redeeming love to all the world, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Readings for Sunday, December 20, 2020

Fourth Sunday of Advent

First Reading: 2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16

Psalm 89:1-4, 19-26 or Luke 1:46b-55

Second Reading: Romans 16:25-27

Gospel: Luke 1:26-38



In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" The angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. For nothing will be impossible with God." Then Mary said, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her.