

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 9, 2020

Pointing to Christ

Devotional for the week of December 6th, 2020

Mark's gospel opens with fanfare: a herald announcing the good news that the Lord is on the way! It's time to prepare for the Savior! The role model for this process of preparation is an unusual character. He lives in the wild, wears animal skins, and eats insects. Because of his extreme lifestyle, John the Baptist is often portrayed as a madman living on the fringes of society.

Yet, the text makes clear that John was a respected faith leader. People from all over the region were coming to him to be baptized. In John's context, living in the desert and eating a foraged diet were signs of spiritual commitment, not lunacy. We might imagine John as a precursor to the Christian desert mothers and fathers who came after him, wise teachers who lived in voluntary isolation. People made a point to come hear what these teachers had to say.

John used his influence to point to Jesus. Although he had a popular ministry of his own, John understood that his call to prepare the way for Jesus involved humility and service. He told others he wasn't even worthy to untie Jesus' sandals, a sentiment that was meant to elevate Jesus, not to demean John. He wanted to communicate how transformative Jesus' ministry would be. "I have baptized with water," John proclaimed, "but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit" (Mark 1:8).

As we declare in our baptismal rite, that same Holy Spirit calls us into baptism and seals us with the mark of Christ forever. We, like John, are called to humble service for the sake of God's mission in the world, to use our unique gifts and vocations to point to Jesus. We become messengers proclaiming the good news: God has come to dwell with us.

*Devotional message based on the readings for December 6th, reprinted
from sundaysandseasons.com.*

To join us for Worship online:

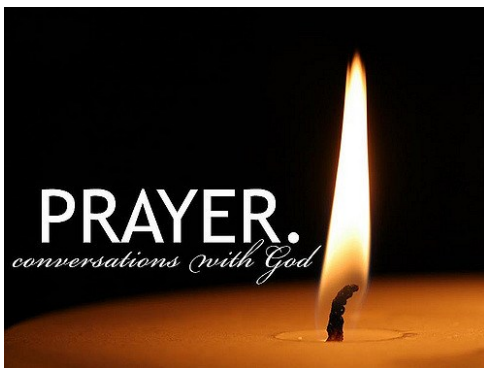
There are several options for you to join us for online worship:

- 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, December 13th 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.



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: 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.

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@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=YVdkcEZRWdwU1hXRHILZEg3enA0QT09>

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/u/kd3PY1Desa>

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

Advent 3 - Obedience

Responses are in **bold print**

'You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end. '

Luke 1:31-33

There were safer places
more comfortable places
palaces and wealthy places
Yet you chose a daughter of the soil
Who would have otherwise
lived a good and honest life
grown and harvested crops
cooked and washed and cared for others
and been forgotten
to be your temporary home
to be exalted for all time

**My soul glorifies the Lord
and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,
for he has been mindful
of the humble state of his servant.
From now on all generations will call me blessed**

When does an ordinary life
Become extraordinary
A mundane day
Become revolutionary
A moment in time
Change history?
When God enters in
Forgives sin
Allows us to
Begin again
When we repeat
Those words of Mary
**'May it be to me
As you say'**

Light the first, second, and third candles

'The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God. Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be barren is in her sixth month. For nothing is impossible with God.'

"I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered.

"May it be to me as you have said."

Luke 1:35-38

(**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)

Into the daily cycle of our lives
When all seems well
With us and with the world
When our yoke is easy
And the burden light
You break in

And scatter our complacency

Into the daily cycle of our lives
When we are comfortable
And at our ease
When the fire is lit
But eyes are closed
You break in

And challenge our dependency

You break into
Our daily prayers
Humble hearts
Lay souls bare
You break in
You break in

You break in
When defenses are down
With an Angel's shout
Or the quietest sound
You break in
You break in

And we change
And all things change
When you break in

O come, Thou Key of David, come,
And open wide our heavenly home;
Make safe the way that leads on high,

And close the path to misery.

**Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come again and with us ever dwell**

Scripture reading

A reading from the Gospel according to John, beginning with the first verse:

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. This is the testimony given by John when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?" He confessed and did not deny it, but confessed, "I am not the Messiah." And they asked him, "What then? Are you Elijah?" He said, "I am not." "Are you the prophet?" He answered, "No." Then they said to him, "Who are you? Let us have an answer for those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?" He said, "I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way of the Lord,' " as the prophet Isaiah said. Now they had been sent from the Pharisees. They asked him, "Why then are you baptizing if you are neither the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the prophet?" John answered them, "I baptize with water. Among you stands one whom you do not know, the one who is coming after me; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandal." This took place in Bethany across the Jordan where John was baptizing.

Intercessions - A circle prayer. Imagine throwing a pebble into the center of a pond, and the circles of ripples that move out from the center.

We pray firstly for those closest to us, our immediate family and closest friends - for their health, needs, joys and fears.

(Silent prayer)

God of creation, God of Salvation

Hear the prayers of our hearts

We pray for our extended family and friends who we might not see each week - for their love and concern, for their wellbeing.

(Silent prayer)

God of creation, God of Salvation

Hear the prayers of our hearts

As the ripples reach out toward the land we pray for those who we only have contact with annually or less - for a blessing this Advent-time

(Silent prayer)

God of creation, God of Salvation

Hear the prayers of our hearts

And as the ripples reach their furthest point we pray for this world and its people - for the needs of this week and the future.

(Silent prayer)

God of creation, God of Salvation

Who speaks to us through thunder and whisper

Who loves us as if there were but one of us to love

Hear the prayers of our hearts

May God the Father bless us;

may Christ take care of us;

the Holy Ghost enlighten us all the days of our life.

The Lord be our defender and keeper of body and soul,
both now and for ever, to the ages of ages.

(Æthelwold c 908-984)

Amen

Go in peace, serve the Lord.

Thanks be to God!



Upcoming Events

This coming Sunday, December 13 - Annual Congregational Meeting at noon will be held via Zoom. To attend the meeting, using your computer or smart phone—you may click on the link below or using your telephone, you may call the number below. Please note it is not a toll free number so charges may apply. This invitation and a pdf copy of the Annual Report will be sent to all active members this week. In addition there will be print copies of the Annual Report available for pickup at the Drive In Worship Service on Sunday morning.

Topic: Good Shepherd Annual Meeting

Time: Dec 13, 2020 12:00 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting

[https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88454905663?](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88454905663?pwd=ZitLY1o5Wm9vdHE4YmM0dkFwUTgwZz09)

[pwd=ZitLY1o5Wm9vdHE4YmM0dkFwUTgwZz09](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88454905663?pwd=ZitLY1o5Wm9vdHE4YmM0dkFwUTgwZz09)

Meeting ID: 884 5490 5663

Passcode: GSLAnnual

One tap mobile

+19292056099,,88454905663#,,,,,0#,,740751421# US (New York)

+13017158592,,88454905663#,,,,,0#,,740751421# US (Washington D.C)

Dial by your location

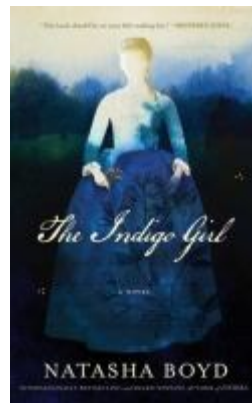
+1 929 205 6099 US (New York)

Meeting ID: 884 5490 5663

Passcode: 740751421



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:

Covenant to Care Christmas Gifts

For Christmas, we have a plastic bin out in front of the church in which you are invited to deposit unwrapped toys that will then be distributed according to need. Deadline for gifts is **this Sunday, December 13**. The bin is available Monday through Thursday from 9 am to noon, Saturday from 10 am to noon, and Sunday morning during worship. Here are some suggested items:

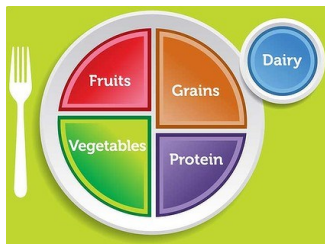


- | | |
|------------------------------------|--|
| Books (fiction and non-fiction) | Kid/family DVDs |
| Card games | Ear headphones/headsets |
| Board games and electronic games | Remote control cars |
| Puzzles | Action figures and Transformers |
| Journal sets | Bath products/toys |
| Art, jewelry, nail, and craft kits | Barbie dolls/baby dolls (no stuffed animals) |
| Science kits | Gift cards |
| Building sets and Legos | |

Thank you for your generosity in continuing these outreach efforts, especially under the current circumstances. Blessings for a happy and healthy holiday season to all!

Jane Fieberts

Food for Summerfield Update



Our heartfelt thanks for your abundant generosity in supporting the "Food for Summerfield" program. In the summer, Pastor Gaston made us aware of a critical need for nutritious food for the kids at Summerfield. GSLC Council decided to challenge the congregation to provide funds for the purchase of nutritious food. GSLC will match donations from members for up to \$250 per month. **In November we sent a check for \$580 to begin our commitment and this month we are sending a check for \$2,955.00.** We will continue this needed outreach program throughout this upcoming year. **Your dedication to helping those in need is 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.





Thank
you!

To my Good Shepherd family,
Thank you for all of your prayers, cards, notes, phone calls,
food and well wishes. It means so much to me. Extra special
thanks for the beautiful quilt made by the Good Shepherd
Quilters!

Audrey Heim



Thank you to Miriam Kursawe for her donation of wreaths for the
front of Good Shepherd. The wreaths are in loving memory of her
husband, Jack.

Prayer of the Day: Stir up the wills of your faithful people, Lord God, and open our ears to the words of your prophets, that, anointed by your Spirit, we may testify to your light; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Readings for Sunday, December 13, 2020

Third Sunday of Advent

First Reading: Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11

Psalm 126 or Luke 1:46b-55

Second Reading: 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24

Gospel: John 1:6-8, 19-28



There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light.

This is the testimony given by John when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?" He confessed and did not deny it, but confessed, "I am not the Messiah." And they asked him, "What then? Are you Elijah?" He said, "I am not." "Are you the prophet?" He answered, "No." Then they said to him, "Who are you? Let us have an answer for those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?" He said, "I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way of the Lord,'" as the prophet Isaiah said. Now they had been sent from the Pharisees. They asked him, "Why then are you baptizing if you are neither the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the prophet?" John answered them, "I baptize with water. Among you stands one whom you do not know, the one who is coming after me; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandal." This took place in Bethany across the Jordan where John was baptizing.