

THE SHEPHERD'S VOICE

GOOD SHEPHERD LUTHERAN CHURCH

January 2023

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The date, January 6th, has taken on a lot of meaning in the US these days. As it approaches again, it is good to remember that it is also the Day of Epiphany! On this day, we remember the light of Christ shining with justice and joy for all the world. We remember the wise ones who visited Jesus, Mary, and Joseph at their home, who blessed that home with their presence and gifts. To help us live out God's justice and joy in our homes, our lives, and our world, it can be helpful to do a blessing of our own homes (houses, apartments, condos, dorm rooms, care facility rooms etc.) around the Day of Epiphany. Two options for that are included in this newsletter on pages 5-8.

As the Day of Epiphany approaches and a new year begins, it can also be helpful to hold onto a blessing for the year ahead. Author Jan Richardson asks us to imagine "the coming year as a house—a space in time that is opening itself to all of us. How will we inhabit the coming year? How will we enter it with mindfulness and with intention? How will we move through the rooms of the coming months in a way that brings blessing to this world?"[i]

The Year as a House: A Blessing by Jan Richardson

Think of the year
as a house:
door flung wide
in welcome,
threshold swept
and waiting,
a graced spaciousness
opening and offering itself
to you.

Let it be blessed
in every room.
Let it be hallowed
in every corner.
Let every nook
be a refuge
and every object
set to holy use.

Let it be here
that safety will rest.
Let it be here
that health will make its home.
Let it be here
that peace will show its face.
Let it be here
that love will find its way.
(continued on next page)

BELOVED OF GOD,

Here
let the weary come
let the aching come
let the lost come
let the sorrowing come.

Here
let them find their rest
and let them find their soothing
and let them find their place
and let them find their delight.

And may it be
in this house of a year
that the seasons will spin in beauty,
and may it be
in these turning days
that time will spiral with joy.
And may it be
that its rooms will fill
with ordinary grace
and light spill from every window
to welcome the stranger home.

May your homes and the year ahead for you be full of blessing.

Peace to you,

Pr. Amy

[i]<https://paintedprayerbook.com/2009/12/31/epiphany-blessing-the-house/>

PRAYER FOR THE GOOD SHEPHERD CONGREGATION

Offered by Jane Jakoubek

God of new beginnings, help us begin this new year by giving thanks. Thank you for life. Thank you for the people who love and care for us. Thank you for this earth that feeds and sustains us. Thank you for ways to serve others. Thank you for community and celebration and joy. Thank you for Jesus who shepherds us as we begin a new year. For these gifts and so much more, we give thanks.

God, you are with us in all things. Give us courage to embark on the challenges of this new year. Help us be open to changes, those we seek and those that come unbidden. Help us hear your invitation to grow closer to you all things. Help us to be generous with others, especially the most vulnerable among us. Help us to care for earth you created and which sustains us.

God of hope, open our hearts to see you at work in our world today, amidst the conflict and brokenness, amidst discouragements and setbacks. Help us know that you are at work in and through all things. Help us to turn to you, for you are our strength, our refuge, our hope. God of new beginnings, be with us as we move forward into this new year. Amen

SCRIPTURE FOR THE MONTH

	First Reading	Psalm	Second Reading	Gospel Reading
Jan. 1 <i>Service of Lessons & Carols</i>	Luke 2:1-7	Luke 2: 8-16	Matthew 2:1-12	John 1:1-5;14-18
Jan. 8	Isaiah 42:1-9 <i>The servant of the Lord brings justice</i>	Psalm 29 <i>The voice of the Lord is upon the waters. (Ps. 29:3)</i>	Acts 10:34-43 <i>Jesus' ministry after his baptism</i>	Matthew 3:13-17 <i>Revelation of Christ as God's servant</i>
Jan. 15	Isaiah 49:1-7 <i>The servant brings light to the nations</i>	Psalm 40:1-11 <i>I love to do your will, O my God. (Ps. 40:8)</i>	1 Corinthians 1:1-9 <i>Paul's greeting to the church at Corinth</i>	John 1:29-42 <i>Revelation of Christ as the Lamb of God</i>
Jan. 22	Isaiah 9:1-4 <i>Light shines for those in darkness</i>	Psalm 27:1, 4-9 <i>The Lord is my light and my salvation. (Ps. 27:1)</i>	1 Corinthians 1:10- 18 <i>Appeal for unity in the gospel</i>	Matthew 4:12-23 <i>Revelation of Christ as a prophet</i>
Jan. 29	Micah 6:1-8 <i>The offering of justice, kindness, humility</i>	Psalm 15 <i>Lord, who may abide upon your holy hill? (Ps. 15:1)</i>	1 Corinthians 1:18- 31 <i>Christ crucified, the wisdom and power of God</i>	Matthew 5:1-12 <i>The teaching of Christ: Beatitudes</i>

"FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT" UPDATE

Good Shepherd is truly gathering and sharing God's abundance. The Fruit of the Spirit is evident everywhere! We want to share with you the wonderful news that the people of Good Shepherd are continuing to offer financial gifts with such generosity. We exceeded our goal of 100 households making a Statement of Intent with 103 Intents received. We had hoped for \$10,000 in new giving for 2023. The total dollar amount of intended giving for 2023 is \$15,000 higher than last year!

BLESSING FOR A DWELLING AT EPIPHANY

Matthew writes that when the magi saw the shining star stop overhead, they were filled with joy. "On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother" (Matt. 2:10-11). In the home, Christ is met in family and friends, in visitors and strangers. In the home, faith is shared, nurtured, and put into action. In the home, Christ is welcome.

Twelfth Night (January 5), Epiphany of Our Lord (January 6), or another day during the time after Epiphany offers an occasion for gathering with friends and family members for a blessing for the home. Someone may lead the greeting and blessing, while another person may read the scripture passage. Following an eastern European tradition, a visual blessing may be inscribed with white chalk above the main door; for example, 20 + CMB + 23. The numbers change with each new year. The three letters stand for either the ancient Latin blessing *Christe mansionem benedicat*, which means "Christ, bless this house," or the legendary names of the magi (Caspar, Melchior, and Balthasar). This blessing can also be adapted for a nursing home room, dorm room, condo or apartment.

Greeting:

May peace be to this house and to all who enter here.
By wisdom a house is built
and through understanding it is established;
through knowledge its rooms are filled
with rare and beautiful treasures. (*Proverbs 24:3-4*)

Reading:

As we prepare to ask God's blessing on this household, let us listen to the words of scripture.

In the beginning was the Word,
and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.
He was in the beginning with God.
All things came into being through him,
and without him not one thing came into being,
and the life was the light of all people.
The Word became flesh and lived among us,
and we have seen his glory,
the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth.
From his fullness we have all received,
grace upon grace. (*John 1:1-4, 14, 16*)

continued on next page...

BLESSING FOR A DWELLING AT EPIPHANY

Inscription:

This inscription may be made with chalk above the entrance:

20 ✚ C M B ✚ 23

Write the appropriate character (left) while speaking the text (right).

The magi of old, known as

C Caspar,

M Melchior, and

B Balthasar,

followed the star of God's Son who came to dwell among us

20 two thousand

23 and twenty-three years ago.

✚ Christ, bless this house,

✚ and remain with us throughout the new year.

Prayer of Blessing:

O God, you revealed your Son to all people

by the shining light of a star.

We pray that you bless this home and all who live here

with your gracious presence.

May your love be our inspiration,

your wisdom our guide,

your truth our light,

and your peace our benediction;

through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

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BLESSING A DWELLING AT ANY TIME

Thank you, God for sheltering us and for making a home with us in Jesus. Today we ask your blessing on this house/dwelling/room and (name/s) who make it their home. Amen.

At the entryway:

A reading from the Psalms: The Lord will watch over your going out and your coming in, from this time forth forevermore. (*Psalms 121:8*)

A reading from Romans: Welcome one another, therefore, just as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God. (*Romans 15:7*)

- O God, watch over (name/s) in all their going out and their coming in; keep all evil away from their door. May all who visit this home find warmth and peace and welcome. Amen.

A place where common activities are shared, such as a living room:

A reading from Ecclesiastes: So I commend enjoyment, for there is nothing better for people under the sun than to eat, and drink, and enjoy themselves, for this will go with them in their toil through the days of life that God gives them under the sun. (*Ecclesiastes 8:15*)

- O God, you set apart time for rest and enjoyment of the world you made. Bless everyone who gathers here for fun and play, that they know the delight you want us all to experience. Amen.

A place for preparing meals, such as the kitchen

A reading from Joel: I am sending you grain, wine, and oil, and you will be satisfied. Be glad and rejoice in the Lord your God. (*Joel 2:19, 23*)

- O God, you fill the hungry with good things. Send your blessing on those who prepare food here, and make us grateful for the daily bread you provide. Amen.

A place for sharing the gift of food, such as a dining table

A reading from the Psalms: The eyes of all wait upon you, O Lord, and you give them their food in due season. You open wide your hand and satisfy the desire of every living thing. (*Psalms 145:15-16*)

- O God, bless the food and the conversation that happens around this table. Use it all to nourish this family for lives of faith and service. Amen.

A place for recognizing the gift of clothing, such as a laundry area

A reading from Exodus: So Moses went down from the mountain to the people. He consecrated the people, and they washed their clothes. (*Exodus 19:14*)

- O God, you are our clothing, wrapping us in love. We bless you for the gift of clothing, and we pray that (name/s) may be clothed and blanketed in safety. Amen.

continued on next page...

BLESSING A DWELLING AT ANY TIME

A place of caring for the body, such as a bathroom or an exercise area

A reading from the Psalms: You yourself created my inmost parts; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I will thank you because I am marvelously made; your works are wonderful, and I know it well. (*Psalms 139:13-14*)

- O God, you came to us as human being with a body just like ours. Bless us as we care for our ordinary, marvelous bodies. Amen.

Near the bedrooms

A reading from the Psalms: In peace, I will lie down and sleep; for you alone, O Lord, make me rest secure. (*Psalms 4:8*)

A reading from Colossians: 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. (*Colossians 3:14-15*)

- O God, grant rest and renewal each night to (name/s). When they rise each day, may they clothe themselves with love. Amen.
- Guide us waking, O Lord, and guard us sleeping, that awake we may watch with Christ, and asleep we may rest in peace. Amen.

A child's bedroom

A reading from the Psalms: The Lord watches over you; God will not fall asleep. (*Psalms 121:5, 3*)

- O God, hold (name/s) in your unfailing love. May they each dream peacefully and grow in health and strength. Bring them in safety to each new day. Amen.

A place where a pet sleeps

A reading from the Psalms: Praise the Lord from the earth, you sea monsters and all deeps, wild beasts and all cattle, creeping things and flying birds, young men and maidens, old and young together. (*Psalms 148:7, 10, 12*)

- O God, we thank you for this beloved companion and friend to (name/s). May they and their dear pet all know and receive tender care and joy in life together. Amen.

Dwell here in peace. Christ is with you. **Thanks be to God.**

From Sundays and Seasons, adapted by Pr. Amy

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JANUARY YOUTH & FAMILY EVENTS:

Tie-Dye Sunday: Sunday, January 22nd, 2-4pm in the Fellowship Hall. All families are invited to come tie-dye together! The tie-dye supplies and light snacks will be provided. Participants just need to bring something cool to tie-dye!

Middle School and High School game night: Friday, January 20th, 7pm-9pm. All middle school and high school youth are invited to another game night! Friends are welcome as well. Soda and juice will be provided. Participants are invited to bring a snack that starts with the letter of their name!

Youth Group Fellowship Hour: Sunday, January, 29th, Once a month, youth group members and families are asked to host fellowship hour. (Many youth mentioned their interest in helping on the Blessed Together surveys.) Kelli is looking for 2-3 youth group families willing to help. We can anticipate youth fellowship hour will be held the 4th Sunday of each month. Please sign up on the SignUpGenius. Fellowship Hour can be simple and set up in a way that works for your family!

THANK YOU!

The 2022 Christmas program was a big success! It was a fun and beautiful program, and a new tradition was started with the camel puppet! The program would not be possible without the help and wisdom from the Education Committee and church staff, parent volunteers, and our wonderful children and youth. Thank you to all who had an important role making this a positive experience for our kids.



UPDATE FROM SEMINARIAN KATHRYN THOMPSON

Dearest Good Shepherd,
Greetings and peace to you in the name of Love.
There is much to share from my first few months of my formal internship for Word and Sacrament ministry! I am grateful to be held in prayer and love from our home congregation during this time of formation and transformation for ministry. Thank you, Good Shepherd, for your continued support for me and my family. We think of you all often, and you also remain in our prayers.

Sara, Greta, and I have officially settled after a summer of transition in La Crosse, WI. We spent much of the summer preparing our house through renovations, which we continue to work on as we have time. We are grateful for a home that suits us well during the demands of this time. We made it through our first round of covid in late September. Now we continue to battle the never-ending rounds of colds that are inevitable when there is a toddler running around the house. If you can believe it, Greta turned two at the beginning of December! She continues to grow "like a weed" and give her parents a run for our money. Sara continues to stay at home to care for Greta and our family and is also slowly returning to work part-time in midwifery as well.

My time at the hospital for my internship has been incredibly affirming in my call to ministry, particularly my call to serve as a Chaplain Educator. Right now, I continue to live into that call through my work as a chaplain and through further education in Clinical Pastoral Education. In my work as a chaplain, I have had a wide range of experiences. Many of my experiences in this first third of my residency have been around accompanying the dying, as well as their families. This has been unique and beautiful, albeit intense and difficult work. Through it, I am privileged to be witness and bear witness to God's presence at the time of the Great Transition. In my work as a student, I continue to learn about myself and my unique presence in the world. Through that, I continue to grow, which helps me in my ministry, life, and relationships. Continued on the next page is a reflection about where I see God in the midst of chaplaincy work.



UPDATE FROM SEMINARIAN KATHRYN THOMPSON

There is no space like that of a hospital room – all is quite literally stripped away, and we are at our most vulnerable. News of a life-altering or life-ending diagnosis, a sense of loss after surgery, chronic or extreme pain, an emergency that will change things forever: the hospital is a place of the unexpected, and inevitably a place of suffering. And it is most certainly a place where God's presence is most poignant. Because God gently but urgently clamors for presence with the suffering, bringing us close to the cross. Our cries in these life-changing moments are echoes of Jesus' cries: "Why oh God have you forsaken me?" God is comfortable with us asking the hard, pointed questions, and asking them directly. Despite what we feel in moments of doubt, suffering, or hopelessness, God is not silent because God's presence, even if *quiet*, is *not silent* in our hearts. There is one way that we know this in our tradition.

We know this because of transformation: God's redeeming work through the resurrection of Jesus Christ. This transformation is accessible to us as God's beloved children. We, too, experience moments of transformation in our life, often born out of moments of suffering, doubt, or hopelessness. Often born out of moments of great vulnerability. In Jesus's ministry with and to the vulnerable, we hear very consistent and necessary messages, messages that we carry through our faith but often need reminders of, whether from loved ones or from a stranger, from a chaplain in the hospital or our pastor.

First, **peace-be-with - you.** In the times of our deepest vulnerability, in our times of greatest fear and doubt, God shows up with this introduction, one that is meant to calm our hearts and open our spirits.

Second, **you-are-loved.** Not because of what you've done, earned, or achieved, but because you are God's beloved child. You are fearfully and wonderfully made in God's image.

God is with you. In your vulnerabilities, in the mundane, in the relationships, in the difficulties, in the rejoicing, in the waiting, in the hope, in the peace, in the fear, in the uncertainty, in love. **God. Is. With. You.**

May we respond to God's loving and faithful presence from a posture of prayer and a heart of compassion – for ourselves, for others, and for the world.

Peace be with you. You are loved.

-Vicar Kathryn

SPOTLIGHT ON ANTIRACISM

Before and continuing after the congregation voted unanimously to adopt our Racial Justice Statement, members expressed concern that we do not stop with words alone. Instead, the statement should now serve as a guide for congregational action. To that end, as a continual reminder of the congregation's commitment to racial justice, the statement is now posted in the church entryway and library. The statement is framed along with two other congregational commitments, Reconciling in Christ (RIC) and Accompanying Migrant Minors with Protection, Advocacy, Representation and Opportunities (AMMPARO). Thanks to the Communications Subcommittee for making this happen.

Visitors have also commented favorably to Pr. Amy about the information in the bulletin related to the church's racial justice commitment. Learning more about Antiracism is another on-going kind of action. Our conversation about a budget line item to support the Fisk Jubilee Singers is another meaningful as well as symbolic step. Did you notice that the proposal includes not only financial support but also ongoing learning for the congregation? Thanks to the Worship and Music Committee for their study, discernment, and leadership.

The Antiracism Team spends time at each meeting learning about white supremacy, how we inadvertently harm others, and better ways to work together. We invited other groups to include learning time at their meetings. So far, the Worship and Music Committee, the Education Committee, and the Stewardship Committee have committed to learning time at their meetings.

Living into our Racial Justice commitment is an on-going personal and collective congregational task. How are we being changed by this work...as individuals? ...as a congregation?

-Jane Jakoubek for the Antiracism Team

AN UPDATE ON THE 2022-23 GOOD SHEPHERD MISSION ENDOWMENT FUND SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

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This academic year the Good Shepherd Mission. Endowment Fund awarded a scholarship or grant to four members of the congregation: Hallie Johnson, Ava Holland, Mara Holland and Nate Larson. All four are doing very well at the college or university of their choice.

- **Hallie** is studying at the University of Agder in Kristiansand, Norway. She is a senior at Luther College with majors in Nordic Studies and English and a minor in International Studies. In Norway she is concentrating on music, focusing on auditions in Norwegian, French, German and English. She is also studying the Norwegian language. After graduation she hopes to return to Norway to teach.
- **Ava** is a junior at Luther College majoring in Health Promotions with an emphasis on Sports. She is a member of the Luther volleyball team and has repeated as a member of the American Rivers Academic All-Conference Team. Ava has recently been appointed to the campus Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Committee. She plans to utilize her Luther education in the Twin Cities after graduation.
- **Mara** is a freshman at Gustavus Adolphus College in St. Peter, Minnesota and has had quite the experience in her first year. As a member of the Gustavus volleyball team she was one of three freshman to participate at the varsity level. The team won the Minnesota Intercollegiate Athletic Conference Championship by beating St. Olaf College and was awarded a place in the NCAA Division III regional tournament. They eliminated the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire in the first round and were eventually eliminated from the tournament by the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater. Mara has not yet decided on a major but in addition to her studies she is coaching a high school volleyball team in St. Peter.
- As a freshman at Wartburg College **Nate** is concentrating on his studies. He has indicated he feels very comfortable with his decision to go to Wartburg and knows that he is in the right place. His long-term goal is to enter the ministry as a graduate of Wartburg Seminary in Dubuque.

The Mission Endowment Committee is proud to represent the congregation in financially assisting these young students with their higher education.

- Jerry Bruce, Jim Buzza, John Jefferson, Brian Solberg, Dick Wuest

RECENT GIFTS TO THE MISSION ENDOWMENT FUND:

Every MEF gift helps solidify our ministry of financially assisting Good Shepherd members to reach their college dreams. **Towards this goal, MEF has recently received donations totaling \$4,100!**

Thank you to these recent donors for their generosity:

Matt and Melissa Bills - Donna Bahr - Stephanie Hoff - Reg and Jeri Laursen - Dave and Jan Siefken

FACILITIES & GROUNDS COMMITTEE HVAC POLICY

The Facilities and Grounds Committee has adopted a new HVAC Control Access policy. This is to insure that the entire facility is adequately heated and cooled. This is in response to the fact that the entire facility will be exclusively conditioned by heat pumps and we are aiming for Carbon Neutral/Net Zero energy usage.

Rationale:

- The new HVAC systems in the 1958 and 1988 buildings are as much computers as anything.
- There are multiple thermostats on each heat pump. If thermostats on same pumps are set differently it sometimes scrambles the computer in that heat pump, causing problems with settings. (according to the LG Rep)
- Thermostats now allow complete control and password protection for each space.
- The geothermal system in the 1958 building should be left at one temp at all times. The 1988 building may allow setbacks but that is yet to be determined.
- If projections are accurate and solar is sufficient, the need to "setback" becomes mute as the facility should become Net Zero energy use.

New HVAC Control Access Policy:

- Thermostats should be "set it and forget it". Only seasonal changes will be needed and should be done by Facilities and Grounds committee members.
- Password access should be limited (Pastor Amy, Erica Yaneff, Brooke Joyce, Erik Berg, and the Facilities and Grounds Committee).
- Any request for temperature adjustments should be directed to Erica or the Facilities and Grounds committee members only.
- The password will remain confidential.
- Once the solar installation is complete, a thorough review of usage/production will steer any future changes.

Any questions or concerns, please contact Jim Fritz, Chairman of Facilities and Grounds Committee.

WELCA - NEWSLETTER

January 28, 2023 will be our WELCA annual meeting and mid-winter brunch. **Frank Johnson, the Executive Director of EWALU Camp and Retreat Center, will be our guest speaker.** He will update us on EWALU activities and also tell us about Cedar at 60, a program to renovate Cedar Lodge. We will also be dispersing funds from 2022, contact Bev Sheridan if you have any funding requests. We are looking for a few people to provide refreshments and maybe someone (or two) to provide some musical entertainment. All are welcome. **Please come and hear about the exciting happenings at EWALU.**



Gather Bible Study:

Winter/Spring 2023 Bible study, "The Ten Commandments" by The Rev. Christa von Zychlin

Join *Gather* magazine and revive your soul in 2023 with a four-session study of the 10 commandments. ELCA pastor and Bible study author Christa von Zychlin will help us see how these commandments are more than they may appear at first glance. For example, Martin Luther taught that the commandment, "Do not kill," means not only refraining from murder, but actively promoting the health and life of others. Get ready to explore old and new interpretations of God's laws, using Luther's Small and Large Catechism and more!

January 2023 Session one: Dancing the Decalogue (Commandments 1 & 2)

Psalm 19 claims, "The law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul." Joy and romance may not be the first images that come to mind when we think of the Ten Commandments. However, a close reading of the first several commandments opens us to a fresh encounter with the God of fierce, freeing love. (from Gather website)

Upcoming events:

January 24: Gather Bible study, Good Shepherd Fellowship Hall, 7 pm, Bev Sheridan Bible study, Lindy Moeller refreshments

January 28: Mid-winter brunch, Good Shepherd Fellowship Hall, 9:00 am

SUPPORT FOR OUR MINISTRY SUPPORT COORDINATOR

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Dear Good Shepherd, I hope you realize what a gift we have in our Ministry Support Coordinator, Erica Yaneff. Erica holds a Bachelor of Arts in Sociology /Anthropology and Religion from St. Olaf College, a Certificate of Environmental Education, and a Masters of Education in Natural Science and Environmental Education. She has led programs and managed staff at Eagle Bluff Environmental Learning Center, Kinderhaus Preschool, and Decorah Parks and Recreation.

Erica works in the office and at home. This job provides her with flexibility for the life she and her spouse, Nick Yaneff, have created with their one and a half year old son, Aemon, at their small country homestead. They are excited to announce they will be welcoming a baby to the family come July!

Erica has many responsibilities and mighty gifts! She has twenty hours per week to do all of her work, see her position description below. As Erica and I did her staff review this year, we got to wondering how congregational members could take up some of the simpler parts of the things she does: stuffing envelopes, shredding paper, buying stamps, refilling the hospitality pads in the pews, straightening up in the sanctuary and office, etc. These are simple ways you could be involved in the work of the congregation and free up Erica for the central Ministry Support work. Please email her at office@goodshepherddecorah.org if you have a few hours, once in a while, once a week, or once a month to help out!

Peace, Pr. Amy

Position Summary: The Ministry Support Coordinator oversees and manages the church office and collaborates with the staff and members of the congregation to support the ministries of Good Shepherd Lutheran Church. The Coordinator will often be the primary contact person among congregational members, community members, business affiliates, and others and plays an important role in welcoming them. The Coordinator serves as an information hub for the congregation and has a key role in facilitating formal communications among its members and the community.

Scope of Responsibilities

- **Information Management:** Maintains the church member database, mailing lists and church calendar. Serves as the information hub for congregation and community. Responds to phone, email, and in-person inquiries and requests during church office hours.
- **Communication Support:** Serves as webmaster for the congregation; produces bulletins, monthly newsletters, annual reports, and other regular congregational publications and mailings. Serves as graphic designer for materials, publicity, and postings to church social media platforms and general display.

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position description continued...

- **Office Management:** Oversees office systems and equipment. Orders supplies (office, kitchen, cleaning, worship). Works with the Church Treasurer to record items for the budget and manage bills. Manages licensing and compliance paperwork. Schedules rooms and meetings. Coordinates office volunteers.
- **Ministry Support:** Works collaboratively with staff and GS committees; facilitates staff communication; provides needed staff and member support for programming and events; prepares worship guides and materials in collaboration with staff; manages weekly bank deposit and congregational pledges; assists with worship volunteer coordination, serves as coordinator of the Welcome Friends and Neighbors Picnic.
- **Hospitality:** Serves as the outward face of the congregation and its front-line contact. Welcomes visitors, congregants, and members of the community. Serves as the communication liaison to Kinderhaus and other groups using the church building and grounds.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

POINSETTIAS: Thank you to everyone who provided the beautiful poinsettias gracing our Sanctuary during the Season of Christmas! Please take your poinsettias no later than January 7. Contact Elizabeth Kaschins with questions or concerns.

ANNUAL REPORTS & ANNUAL MEETING: Standing committees please submit your annual reports to the church office in preparation for the Annual Report and Congregational Annual Meeting on February 5th.

BINGO AT WELLINGTON PLACE - JANUARY 10th: 3-4 Volunteers needed to help host bingo. Contact the church office or sign up online if you are able. Arrive around 12:30, COVID screening will take place, and wearing a mask is required. Bingo ends around 1:30.

PRAYER SHAWL MINISTRY: All are welcome on the third Wednesday of each month to come together to knit or crochet, share skills and conversation! Yarn and patterns are available. The January meeting will be Wednesday, January 18, 1:00-3:00 in the Gathering Space.

January 8th Adult Forum: "Lord, Keep Us Steadfast in Your Word" Martin Luther and his Seminal Translation of the New Testament into German and Imprint on the Modern German Language COMMEMORATING the 500th ANNIVERSARY of the SEPTEMBER TESTAMENT (A lecture presentation featuring a rich visual component from Luther sites in Germany)

JANUARY-FEBRUARY MINISTRY SUPPORT: The January-February Ministry Support sign-up is posted on the board outside the Fellowship Hall and online under "Sign-Ups".

2023 GIVING ENVELOPES: Giving envelopes for 2023 are available for pick up on the counter outside of the offices.

BIBLE STUDY RESUMES: All are welcome for an hour-long Bible Study with Pastor Amy Thursday, January 5th at 11:00 am.

DECORAH COMMUNITY MEAL supported by GOOD SHEPHERD: Please join us for a free meal on Thursday, January 5th, at 5:00 PM, at Decorah Lutheran Church, 309 Winnebago Street. All are welcome -- this is a free meal -- serving until 6:15 PM. This month we are hosted by members of Good Shepherd Lutheran Church who will provide volunteers, salads, and desserts. The main course is provided by Sodexo of Luther College.

- A few salads and desserts are still needed – sign up online or on the bulletin board.
- **Food items** can be dropped off any time before 4:30 PM on Jan. 5th. If dropped off early, please leave in one of the refrigerators in the Decorah Lutheran Fellowship Hall/Kitchen with a label "for the community meal, [your name]".
- **Volunteers** help set up or tear down (depending on the shift), refill the serving table, and bus tables.

SUNDAY, JANUARY 8 - DEADLINE TO SIGN UP FOR CPR TRAINING OR

RECERTIFICATION Make a New Year's resolution to learn or recertify CPR training, as a way to be prepared to serve others in our church, families, and community!

- The Facilities and Grounds Committee would like all Good Shepherd members who are trained in CPR, or are interested in CPR training or recertification, to contact Erica by January 8 at the Church Office at 563-382-3963 or office@goodshepherddecorah.org
- The Committee will create a team that can respond with CPR and the AED defibrillator when necessary, and hopes to offer a CPR training/recertification class at Good Shepherd.

REQUEST FOR ASSISTANCE: Stephanie Hoff, a member of Good Shepherd who has been worshiping online through Covid until just recently, has polycystic kidney disease (PKD). This has caused her kidney function to diminish over time. She is now in Stage 5, the last stage of chronic kidney disease, and needs a kidney transplant. She is seeking a living donor and is reaching out for your help. That help can take many forms: your prayers and positive support; your willingness to share her story with family and friends who might know someone who is willing to become a living donor; and your serious consideration of becoming a living donor. For the complete story and more information about living kidney donation: www.goodshepherddecorah.org/mystory/

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

DECORAH COMMUNITY BLOOD DRIVE: Thursday, Jan. 26th 12:30-5:30 pm at Stone Ridge Community Church. Appointments are encouraged: call 800-287-4903 or visit lifeservebloodcenter.org

Community Winter Book Read - *My Grandmother's Hands* by Resmaa Menakem. Members of Decorah UU will facilitate a book read starting this January. A community book read of *My Grandmother's Hands* will begin in late January. We will meet 4 - 5 times from January - March. To join a discussion group, contact decorahuu.contact@gmail.com.

- "*My Grandmother's Hands* is an intimate guidebook toward racial healing, one that achieves that rare combination for its readers; it is deeply intellectually stimulating while also providing practical ways to engage in the process of repair, even as we read. I believe this book will change the direction of the movement for racial justice."—Robin DiAngelo, Racial Justice Educator and author of *White Fragility*

The local Northeast Iowa team for the **National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)** is adding a support group for individuals who experience mental health conditions. This group is called *Connection Recovery Support Group* and will be held every Tuesday beginning Jan 10, 2023 in Decorah. This is in addition to the *Family Support Group* which recently started in November. The *Family Support Group* is held on the 4th Monday of the month. The Family support group is for adult family members or loved ones of those experiencing mental health conditions.

- See the posters on the bulletin board by the GS Fellowship Hall for more detailed information

YOUNG ADULT BORDER IMMERSION TRIP IS OPEN FOR APPLICATIONS - Information from the Northeastern Iowa Synod. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America Churchwide Office, Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service (LIRS), and Border Servant Corps are partnering to invite young adults ages 18-35 to participate in a border immersion in Las Cruces, New Mexico, on Wednesday, April 26 through Sunday, April 30, 2023. This is an opportunity for young adults to travel to the US-Mexico border to experience an accompaniment-style immersion program, where relationships and first-hand educational experiences about border issues are prioritized.

- 15 participants will be selected from all applicants, and travel with staff from the ELCA and LIRS.
- For information regarding eligibility, costs, trip schedule, and application timeline, go to yabordertrip.my.canva.site/
- Applications open January 1 and close February 1.

JANUARY

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<div> <div>No School - Kinderhaus</div> <div>New Year's Day</div> <div>No Sunday School Programming</div> <div>9:30am - In-person Worship & Live</div> <div>10:30am - Sunday School & Youth Group</div> <div>10:45am - Fellowship Hour</div> <div>11am - Adult Forum: "Lord, Keep Us</div> </div>	<div> <div>New Year's Day (Substitute)</div> <div>Office closed for New Years</div> <div>4:30pm - Kelli's Office Hours</div> <div>6:30pm - ALANON @ GS Fellowship Hall</div> </div>	<div> <div>10am - Office Hours</div> <div>5pm - Erik Sessions Lessons @</div> <div>7pm - Social Justice subcommittee</div> </div>	<div> <div>1:30pm - ESL</div> <div>7pm - Choir Rehearsal @ Sanctuary</div> <div>7pm - Confirmation Class @ Fellowship</div> <div>8pm - Band Rehearsal @ Sanctuary</div> </div>	<div> <div>11am - Bible Study @ Library</div> <div>2pm - Erik Sessions Lessons @</div> <div>5pm - Decatur Community Meal GS</div> </div>	<div> <div>Pastor Amy day off</div> <div>8am - Office Hours</div> </div>	<div> <div>Pastor Amy day off</div> <div>8am - Office Hours</div> </div>
<div> <div>8</div> <div>9:30am - In-person Worship & Live</div> <div>10:30am - Sunday School & Youth Group</div> <div>10:45am - Fellowship Hour</div> <div>11am - Adult Forum: "Lord, Keep Us</div> </div>	<div> <div>9</div> <div>8am - Office Hours</div> <div>9am - Worship and Music Committee</div> <div>4:30pm - Kelli's Office Hours</div> <div>6:30pm - ALANON @ GS Fellowship Hall</div> </div>	<div> <div>10</div> <div>12:30pm - Wellington Place Bingo</div> <div>5pm - Erik Sessions Lessons @</div> </div>	<div> <div>11</div> <div>10am - Office Hours</div> <div>11am - Eastern Star/Arin Falk</div> <div>1:30pm - ESL</div> <div>2:30pm - Aase Haugen Communion</div> <div>7pm - Choir Rehearsal @ Sanctuary</div> <div>7pm - Confirmation Class @ Fellowship</div> <div>8pm - Band Rehearsal @ Sanctuary</div> </div>	<div> <div>12</div> <div>Recycle</div> <div>10am - Office Hours</div> <div>11am - Bible Study @ Library</div> <div>2pm - Erik Sessions Lessons @</div> <div>5pm - Education Committee @ Library</div> </div>	<div> <div>13</div> <div>Pastor Amy day off</div> <div>8am - Office Hours</div> </div>	<div> <div>14</div> </div>
<div> <div>15</div> <div>No Sunday School Programming</div> <div>9:30am - In-person Worship & Live</div> <div>10:45am - Fellowship Hour</div> <div>3pm - Kinderhaus Event @ Fellowship</div> </div>	<div> <div>16</div> <div>Martin Luther King Jr. Day</div> <div>No School - Kinderhaus</div> <div>10am - Office Hours</div> <div>4:30pm - Kelli's Office Hours</div> <div>6:30pm - ALANON @ GS Fellowship Hall</div> </div>	<div> <div>17</div> <div>10am - Office Hours</div> <div>1:30pm - Depot Annual Meeting</div> <div>5pm - Erik Sessions Lessons @</div> <div>5:30pm - CARE @ Gathering Space</div> <div>6:30pm - Sons of Norway @ Fellowship</div> <div>7pm - Congregation Council meeting @</div> </div>	<div> <div>18</div> <div>10:45am - NEF Committee Meeting @</div> <div>1pm - Prayer Shawl Ministry @ Gathering</div> <div>1:30pm - ESL</div> <div>7pm - Choir Rehearsal @ Sanctuary</div> <div>7pm - Confirmation Class @ Fellowship</div> <div>8pm - Band Rehearsal @ Sanctuary</div> </div>	<div> <div>19</div> <div>11am - Bible Study @ Library</div> <div>2pm - Erik Sessions Lessons @</div> <div>4:30pm - Stewardship Committee</div> </div>	<div> <div>20</div> <div>Pastor Amy day off</div> <div>8am - Office Hours</div> <div>7pm - Middle School & HS Game Night @</div> </div>	<div> <div>21</div> </div>
<div> <div>22</div> <div>9:30am - In-person Worship & Live</div> <div>10:30am - Sunday School & Youth Group</div> <div>10:45am - Fellowship Hour</div> <div>2pm - Family Tie Dye @ Fellowship Hall</div> </div>	<div> <div>23</div> <div>8am - Office Hours</div> <div>4:30pm - Kelli's Office Hours</div> <div>6:30pm - ALANON @ GS Fellowship Hall</div> </div>	<div> <div>24</div> <div>5pm - Erik Sessions Lessons @</div> <div>7pm - WELCA Circle Mtg. Gather Study @</div> </div>	<div> <div>25</div> <div>Newsletter Deadline</div> <div>10am - Office Hours</div> <div>1:30pm - ESL</div> <div>7pm - Choir Rehearsal @ Sanctuary</div> <div>7pm - Confirmation Class @ Fellowship</div> <div>8pm - Band Rehearsal @ Sanctuary</div> </div>	<div> <div>26</div> <div>Recycle</div> <div>10am - Office Hours</div> <div>11am - Bible Study @ Library</div> <div>2pm - Erik Sessions Lessons @</div> </div>	<div> <div>27</div> <div>Pastor Amy day off</div> <div>8am - Office Hours</div> <div>3:30pm - WELCA Brunch Prep</div> </div>	<div> <div>28</div> <div>8am - WELCA Brunch Prep</div> <div>9am - WELCA Brunch</div> </div>
<div> <div>29</div> <div>Reconciling at Christ Sunday</div> <div>9:30am - In-person Worship & Live</div> <div>10:30am - Sunday School & Youth Group</div> <div>10:45am - Fellowship Hour</div> </div>	<div> <div>30</div> <div>10am - Office Hours</div> <div>4:30pm - Kelli's Office Hours</div> <div>6:30pm - ALANON @ GS Fellowship Hall</div> </div>	<div> <div>31</div> <div>10am - Office Hours</div> <div>5pm - Erik Sessions Lessons @</div> </div>	<div> <div>1</div> <div>First Day of Black History Month</div> <div>1:30pm - ESL</div> <div>7pm - Choir Rehearsal @ Sanctuary</div> <div>7pm - Confirmation Class @ Fellowship</div> <div>8pm - Band Rehearsal @ Sanctuary</div> </div>	<div> <div>2</div> <div>11am - Bible Study @ Library</div> <div>2pm - Erik Sessions Lessons @</div> <div>5pm - Education Committee @ Library</div> </div>	<div> <div>3</div> <div>Kate Stay at Hyatt Regency Orange County @ Hyatt Regency Orange County, Garden</div> <div>Pastor Amy day off</div> <div>8am - Office Hours</div> </div>	<div> <div>4</div> </div>

CONGREGATION COUNCIL MEETING NOTES

21

Tuesday, December 13, 2022 - 7:00pm

Preparing Our Hearts and Minds to Serve

Present: Cynthia Ernst, Ann Naslund, Bob Naslund, John Moeller, Tom Buresh, Tim Lecander, Pr. Amy, and Hayley Jackson were present. Chris Johnson was present via Zoom. Ingrid Callaghan was absent.

Devotions and Initial Actions: Tim Lecander led devotions.

Consent Agenda:

Items in the Consent Agenda are designed to be approved by consent of the council without discussion or formal vote. The items in the consent agenda are considered approved when the meeting agenda is approved. Before approving the meeting agenda, the chair asks if any member wishes to move an item from the consent agenda to the discussion agenda if the member feels a discussion is warranted.

- 1. Approval of Council Meeting Minutes_*
- 2. Reception of Committee Reports (see below)*

The Consent Agenda was approved by the consent of the Council.

Discussion Agenda:

Royalties and Reparations Proposal: Council discussed the Royalties and Reparations proposal as presented by the Worship and Music committee at the Nov. 6 congregational meeting. Tom Buresh shared that the committee has discussed it extensively and are in favor of it. Overall Council was supportive of the proposal as a tangible way to act on the racial justice statement. Pr. Amy did confirm that the congregation has not yet reached out to the Fisk Jubilee Singers to begin building the relationship, but intend to soon. Tom moved to endorse the Royalties and Reparations proposal. Bob Naslund seconded. Motion carried.

Budget Discussion: John Moeller walked Council through the proposed budget for 2023. The proposed budget includes increases for personnel salaries, budget adjustments to accommodate costs from Mission Green and Alliant (as we will be relying on Alliant for electricity while we work on getting the solar up and running), some new lines (youth director continuing education, worship licensing, worship committee/reparations), and some renamed lines (altar guild renamed communion and candles). Discussion and questions included if Pr. Amy's pay was based on ELCA recommendations (yes), reviewing Mission Green/Alliant payments, and a robust discussion on allocating benevolence funds for the year, including the benefits of supporting local or non-local ministries. John shared his recommendations for continued payment on the renovation loan (he recommends a payment of \$42,000 per year), installation of a humidity control system to protect the organ (using organ funds), using Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) surplus to pay for the French drain, putting \$5,000 of this year's surplus towards the renovation loan and placing the rest in reserve, and reviewing the costs of a potential curtain for the adult forum space (we currently have \$14,000 in a fund from a donor, but cheapest ones appear to be at least \$20,000). After allocating benevolences, Tim Lecander moved to endorse the proposed budget. Tom seconded, motion carried.

Shepherds and Flocks: Chris Johnson reviewed the Shepherds and Flocks proposal brought forward by the Stewardship committee. This proposal would divide the congregation into seven flocks, which would serve as points of connection and care as well as assisting with worship and fellowship on a rotating monthly basis. Flocks would be approximately 15-25 households apiece, lead by shepherds who would periodically reach out to flock members to check in and offer care as needed. As the congregation is growing, this flock structure would allow us to help provide care to our members if Pr. Amy is overstretched. Questions about the proposal included if these would be the exact flocks from the pandemic (no), have shepherds already been appointed (no), and if flocks would be responsible for the same months of worship/fellowship service each year (no, these will rotate so one flock is not always responsible, for example, for 4th of July fellowship). Hayley Jackson moved to endorse the Shepherds and Flocks proposal. Tom seconded, motion carried.

Covid Policy Update Proposal: Pr. Amy shared her observations that fewer people are taking the individual servings of communion at services and that changing the door signs to match the county Covid levels is a fair amount of work for staff. In response to this, there is a proposed change that we keep just one sign that says "Masks are optional and respected" regardless of level, and that we maintain communion with bread and single serving cups at all levels with an option for the individual packages. Bob moved to accept these proposed changes. Tim seconded, motion carried.

ELCA Churchwide Assembly Updates: Pr. Amy shared that Jane Kemp, Elizabeth Kaschins, and the Governing Documents committee are working on updating our governing documents to bring them into alignment with some updates from the ELCA Churchwide Assembly. Ann moved to approve these updates. Tom seconded, motion carried.

Treasurer's Report: John Moeller reviewed his report. Hayley Jackson moved to accept the Treasurer's report. Tim seconded, motion carried.

Recurring Work of the Body – Committee, Pastor, and Officer Reports

The Committee Reports were received and accepted as submitted.

Education: Ann Naslund

Christmas program rehearsals will be on 12/4, 12/11, and 12/18. The program will be held at 5pm on 12/18. A private YouTube link will be available for members who cannot attend. The budget was reviewed and submitted to John for next year's budget. Harriet Hayes will join the committee in 2023. Melissa Bills has offered to teach adult education classes following worship in 4-6 week sessions. These sessions may draw more people than one-off forums. Kelli has been approved to attend the ELCA Youth Ministry Extravaganza in February 2023.

Facilities and Grounds: Bob Naslund

Facilities and Grounds developed a new policy for the HVAC system and temperature controls, as having thermostats at different levels can scramble the system. The new policy would be to "set and forget" the temperatures, with only seasonal changes. The thermostats would be password protected and only a few people will have password access (F&G committee, Pr. Amy, Erica, Erik Berg, Brooke Joyce).

Worship and Music: Tom Buresh

The committee reviewed the budget to submit to John Moeller. Advent services this year will be held on Wednesdays at 5:30 from December 3 to December 21. The theme of Advent this year is Holy Disruption. Brooke Joyce will acquire the tree on December 4, lights will be added December 11, and the kids will decorate that day after Sunday School. Available committee members will fill the luminaries on December 23. Christmas services include Christmas Eve (Dec. 24, 5pm), Christmas Day (Dec. 25, 9:30 am), and Lessons and Carols (Jan. 1, 9:30am).

Treasurer's Report: John Moeller

Total income for this year as of November 30, 2022 is \$311,432.44 and expenses were \$297,348.72, leaving us with a surplus of \$14,083.72. \$5,000 of this surplus will go on the renovation loan while the rest will be put in reserves for now while statements of intent and expected income for 2023 are calculated.

Announcements:

Newsletter Deadline: December 25 , 2022

Next Council Meeting: The next meeting will be January 10 , 2022 7:00 PM in person

Adjournment and Closing Prayer: The meeting was adjourned 8:24 PM. Pr. Amy led the council in the Lord's Prayer to close the meeting.

---Submitted by Hayley Jackson, Congregation Secretary

