

WEDNESDAY, November 29, 2023
WORSHIP, NEWS, and EVENTS
Season of Advent
GOOD SHEPHERD LUTHERAN CHURCH

FROM PASTOR AMY: A number of Good Shepherd members have tested positive for COVID recently and there has been an uptick in the community. **At this time, masks in worship are encouraged to protect yourself and others.** If needed, masks are available at the Sanctuary entrance.

Please Note: This week's email arrived in your inbox today after 9:00 a.m., a bit later than normal.

WORSHIP

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 3, 9:30 a.m. - FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

- The **Season of Advent** begins today! ***Dancing, Dreaming, and Singing in the Darkness*** is our overall theme for worship on Sundays and Wednesdays, with an emphasis on **Dreaming** on Sundays. (See the Advent section below for more information.)
 - From **Pastor Amy:** *God's dreamers do not fall asleep to the realities of the world. God prompts us to pay attention to where God's dreams for change and new life are emerging. In Advent, we remember that God's ultimate dream is to be intimately connected to us—to come down and dwell among us. As we keep awake, we join Isaiah and the psalmist in pleading for restoration and for God to draw near.* (from A Sanctified Art, *Those Who Dream 2021*)
 - The first candle on the Advent Wreath will be lit by a family.
- **Pastor Amy** will **preside** and **preach**. **Assisting Minister** is **Rev. Rolf Svanoë**; **Reader** is **James Barth**; **Ushers** and **Greeter** are the **Cote family (Dustin, Heather, Mason, and Weston)**. All are members of the **Purple Flock**, led by Shepherds **Tom and Connie Buresh**. **Cantor** is **Jonathon Struve**.
- **Blessing for Caretakers:** The Worship and Music Committee is offering blessings for our vocations each month. Today we offer a blessing for all caretakers: those who are employed to care for others as well as parents, family caregivers, and those who volunteer to provide care.
- We are using **Evangelical Lutheran Worship Setting 1** as our liturgy during Advent.
- Scriptures for worship today: **Isaiah 64:1-9; Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19; 1 Corinthians 1:3-9; Mark 13:24-37.** [Link to Scriptures for 1st Sunday in Advent](#)
- The **Good Shepherd Choir** and **Sunday School students** will offer additional music during the service.
- **Communion is served every Sunday** at the altar rail using gluten-free, dairy-free bread, wine and grape juice. Prepackaged egg-free communion elements are also available.
- Today's service will be live streamed at youtu.be/U4o103Th7eA. This direct link allows you to **set a reminder ahead of time**, and YouTube will let you know when Sunday's service will begin.
 - **Please note:** We apologize that there was no audio on last Sunday's livestream, and are working to fix the problem.

10:45 a.m., Fellowship Hall - FELLOWSHIP HOUR

- Fellowship Ministry provided by **Purple Flock** members **Jerry** and **JoAnn Aulwes, Kim** and **Mike Huinker, James Barth, Heather Cote,** and **Kate Narveson.**

10:45 a.m. - SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASSES RESUME

- Christmas Program rehearsals begin today!
- **Erin Anderson** and **Leah Holland** are Sunday School Assistants this Sunday.
 - **Two Sunday School Assistants are needed each Sunday** when Sunday School is in session. You can volunteer at www.signupgenius.com/go/4090C48ABAF2EA2F49-sunday#/ or sign up using the poster in the Gathering Space.

11:30 a.m. - DECORATE THE CHRISTMAS TREE

- All are invited to help the Sunday School kids and Good Shepherd youth decorate the Christmas tree in the Sanctuary!

EVENTS

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 30, 11:00 a.m., Church Library - BIBLE STUDY WITH PASTOR AMY

- All are welcome to explore with **Pastor Amy** the Scripture texts for this coming Sunday.

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 5, 7:00 p.m., Good Shepherd Sanctuary - MARTHA MONSON LOWE AND GEORGE LOWE TO SHARE THEIR RECENT EXPERIENCES IN THE MIDDLE EAST

- Good Shepherd Lutheran Church members **George Lowe** and **Martha Monson Lowe** were in Bethlehem on October 7, the day the Israel-Hamas War began. They will give a presentation about their experiences in Palestine and Israel.
- Some background will be provided on what led up to October 7, and they will share recent personal stories of friends from Bethlehem.
- George and Martha have spent over a year since 2014 in Bethlehem and East Jerusalem. They will offer for sale a selection of Palestinian handwork before and after the presentation. All proceeds will go directly back to the Palestinian artisans.
- Decorah congregations have been contacted. The presentation is open to the public. All are welcome!

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 7, 5:00 - 6:15 p.m., Decorah Lutheran Church - DECORAH COMMUNITY MEAL

- Join your friends and neighbors for a **free** meal in the Fellowship Hall at Decorah Lutheran Church, 309 Winnebago Street. All are welcome!
- This month the Community Meal is hosted by members of Decorah's Prairie Lakes Church, who will provide volunteers, salads, and desserts. The main course is provided by Sodexo of Luther College. Decorah Lutheran members provide guidance, rolls and butter, beverages, and set up and clean up each month.
- As always, gluten-free and vegetarian options, as well as carry-outs, are available,

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 9, 7:00 p.m., Decorah Lutheran Church - ANNUAL "HOME FOR CHRISTMAS" DECORAH CHORALE CONCERT

- The 23rd Annual Decorah Chorale “Home for Christmas” benefit concert supports the work of Winneshiek County Habitat for Humanity and Decorah Area Food Pantry through the concert’s free-will offering.
- The Decorah Chorale is directed by Good Shepherd member **Jason Rausch**, and a number of Good Shepherd members sing in the Chorale.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 10, 2:00 p.m., Trinity Lutheran Church, Spring Grove, Minnesota - LUREN SINGERS CHRISTMAS CONCERT

- “Hope for Resolution and Peace” is the theme of this year’s Luren Singers Christmas Concert, which will be held at Trinity Lutheran Church, 205 East Main Street (MN Highway 44), Spring Grove, Minnesota.
- The 60 member male chorus is directed by Good Shepherd member **Dr. David Judisch**, with Rachel Storlie as guest soprano soloist. A number of Good Shepherd members sing with the Luren Singers.
- A free-will offering at intermission will be divided between the Houston County Food Shelf and the Houston County Ring and Run.

ADVENT BEGINS THIS SUNDAY, DECEMBER 3

- The **Season of Advent** begins on Sunday, and this year’s theme for Sundays and Wednesdays during Advent is ***Dancing, Dreaming, and Singing in the Darkness***.
 - **Sundays in Advent**, our theme is ***Dreaming in the Darkness***.
 - *The prophets, the psalmists, John the Baptist, Mary, Elizabeth, Joseph, Simeon, Anna, the shepherds, and the Magi—they were all dreamers. They received, discovered, and responded to God’s dreams for the world. In Advent, we step into the mystery and awe of God’s dreams and pray they shape our reality. This theme is for the dreamers in all of us—those who dream of a deeper connection with God and those who dream of a better world. It’s for those who dream of comfort and for those who have given up on their dreams. It’s for those whose dreams have been crushed and for those who show us that dreams take time. Together, we seek and sow God’s dreams for our world. (from A Sanctified Art’s, Those Who Dream, 2021)*
 - **Wednesday Advent services** will be held **December 6, 13, and 20** at 5:30 p.m., featuring reflections on the book *Dancing in the Darkness: Spiritual Lessons for Thriving in Turbulent Times* by Reverend Dr. Otis Moss III, and the singing of Negro Spirituals.
 - Confirmation students will be Readers and Ushers for the Wednesday services.
 - Reverend Dr. Moss’ book can be ordered through Dragonfly Books.
- **Advent Wreath Lighting Invitation:** Each Sunday and Wednesday at the beginning of worship, families are invited to light candles on the Advent Wreath. There are currently 7 openings, December 3,6,10,13,17,20, and 24. Sign up on Good Shepherd’s website under the **SIGN-UPS Tab** www.signupgenius.com/go/4090C48ABAF2EA2F49-46295316-advent#/ or on the poster in the Gathering Space.
- This year’s Advent Special Offering, collected on Wednesday evenings, will go to **Lutheran Disaster Response - Middle East Crisis**. LDR is working with partners in the Middle East to get humanitarian supplies to people affected by the Israel-Hamas War.

- You can also donate on the Good Shepherd website via **Tithe.ly** at the **GIVING Tab**. Just **select Lutheran Disaster Response** from the drop down menu: www.goodshepherddecorah.org/tithe-ly-giving/#
- Our devotional, *Come, Emmanuel: Devotions for Advent and Christmas 2023-2024*, will help us to **Sing in the Darkness**. They are available in the Gathering Space. A donation of \$3.50 is encouraged to cover the cost of the order; donations can be added to the offering plate or dropped off in the Church Office.

NEWS

CALL PROCESS UPDATE

- On November 14, the Congregation Council, Pastor Amy, and Good Shepherd staff met with Pastor Liz Bell of the Northeastern Iowa Synod. Pastor Bell will work with Good Shepherd on the call process going forward. Also, the Synod shared with the Executive Committee the name of a potential Intentional Interim Pastor.
- This week, the Executive Committee of the Congregation Council, along with Brooke Joyce, Music Director, is scheduled to meet with a pastor candidate to serve as Good Shepherd's Intentional Interim Pastor. The interim pastor would begin service after January 7, 2024.
- The Council is following the procedure outlined by our Good Shepherd constitution: the Executive Committee will make a recommendation to the Council of an interim candidate; when the Council votes to consent, the bishop of the synod appoints the recommended interim.
- The Work ahead: the Council will work to establish a Call Committee composed of 6 voting members of the congregation. According to Section C13.04. of our Constitution, the Call Committee is composed of 6 voting members of the congregation elected by the Congregation Council.
- The work of the Call Committee is outlined in detail by our Synod; these procedures have been shared with Council and digitized by Tristan for the use of the Call Committee. Pastor Liz Bell of the NEIA Synod will accompany the Call Committee in its work.

POINSETTIAS FOR THE SANCTUARY AT CHRISTMASTIME

- As is our tradition, Altar Guild has arranged with The Country Garden for members and friends to provide poinsettias for the Christmas season at \$15.00 per plant.
- Red poinsettias wrapped in gold foil will be placed on the altar rail for services beginning on Christmas Eve, December 24. You are welcome to remove yours after Christmas Eve, but no later than Saturday, January 6.
- Plants may be given in honor, as memorials, or as a gift by including names with the order. Names will be included in bulletins. Please email, or print clearly, the names of those for whom you are dedicating the poinsettia.
- **Orders with payment must be submitted to the Church Office no later than 12:00 p.m. on Friday, December 15.** Contact the church office via phone, email, note, or put your check in the offering plate. Checks accompanying each order should be made payable to Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, with Poinsettia in the memo line.

LAST NOVEMBER SESSION OFFERED BY ELCA'S TRUTH & HEALING MOVEMENT

- On **Thursday, November 30, 7:00-9:00 p.m.**, Vance Blackfox, Director of ELCA's Indigenous Ministries & Tribal Relations, will present the session *Indigenous Thought and Theology*.
- **Additional information and the link for viewing this session at home** are here: tinyurl.com/elca-racial-justice-sessions
- See also **Cheri Lane's** *Now What? Suggestions* on pages 6 and 7 of the November newsletter.

YOUTH CHRISTMAS WRAPPING SERVICE FUNDRAISER

- Good Shepherd youth will provide the wrapping paper and joyous elf-wrapping spirit on **Sunday, December 10**, to help you get your holiday presents wrapped and ready for Christmas!
- The freewill donation wrapping service will be during Fellowship Hour, and wrapped gifts can be picked up afterwards in the Annex. The fundraiser is for Good Shepherd youth traveling to New Orleans next July for the ELCA National Youth Gathering.
- Please RSVP in the Gathering Space on December 3 with any special needs, e.g. bubble wrap, etc., or by emailing **Kelli Gapinski**, Director of Children, Youth, and Family Ministry, at kelli@goodshepherddecorah.org

ONE ADDITIONAL WEEK OF WINTER CLOTHING COLLECTION FOR CHILDREN IN POSTVILLE

- Donations of warm winter clothing will be accepted for **one more week** for newly-arrived children in Postville, including outdoor gear (coats, gloves, hats, snow pants, and boots). Clothing closets are at the Postville Public Schools and the Postville Public Library.
- All sizes are needed, especially outdoor gear in youth sizes.
- A container is outside the Sanctuary for donation drop offs.

JUST IN CASE YOU MISSED IT: NEW ONLINE CHURCH DIRECTORY LAUNCHED

- Last week, Good Shepherd launched a new online directory through the Church Management System "Breeze". Members, associate members, and friends received an email invitation to create an account and access the directory.
- Step by step instructions for setting up an account are available on the church website under the **CONNECT Tab**, as well as in the Gathering Space.
- For additional assistance in setting up an account, **Erica** and **Tristan** can help! Just stop by the church office. Check the weekly bulletin or online church **CALENDAR Tab** for their hours.

UPDATED PRINT DIRECTORY

- Good Shepherd will provide a print directory for those interested. Please contact the Church Office if you would like an updated print directory now that our new online directory system, Breeze, is up and running.
- Print directories will be available in early to mid December, in color or black and white. There is no charge for a black and white copy; the color version is \$5.

NEW PHOTOS ON FLICKR

- Check out the new photos on Good Shepherd's Flickr site, including photos of Landscape subcommittee members decorating evergreen trees with carved red birds and stars created by **Harley** and **Norma Refsal**, at www.flickr.com/photos/goodshepherddecorah/with/53250598321/

REMINDERS

FROM THE STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE

- **Please submit Stewardship Intent Statements:** Our Stewardship Campaign is going really well, thanks to God. If you have not yet returned your **Statement of Intent**, consider this a gentle reminder. Please prayerfully consider your giving to God through Good Shepherd in 2024.
- We are hoping for 100% participation, in part to honor Pastor Amy's ministry to our congregation, and in part to sincerely reflect our congregation's spirit in our upcoming call for a new Pastor.
- The easiest way to respond might just be to use the online form on the church website: www.goodshepherddecorah.org/online-statement-of-intent/
- Or, you may pick up an Intent form at the church and drop it off there or in the collection plate. If you received a Statement of Intent form in the mail, you may return it to the church office at 701 Iowa Avenue, Decorah, IA 52101. Blessings with you and with our congregation.

MISSION ASSISTANCE FUNDS NEEDED

- Good Shepherd's Mission Assistance Fund, set up to help people who need short-term emergency assistance, is almost depleted. Funds are distributed at the discretion of the Pastor and two congregation members on the Mission Assistance Committee.
- To donate to the fund, drop your donation in the basket on the Fellowship Hour serving table, in the offering plate, or Church Office, designating "Mission Assistance Fund" on your check or envelope.

ELCA RESOURCES FOR THE CRISIS IN THE HOLY LAND

- Lists of ELCA and Global and Ecumenical Resources are available here: elca.org/crisis-holy-land
- Lutheran Disaster Response is working with partners in the Middle East to get humanitarian supplies to people affected by the Israel-Hamas War. Donations can be made through the Good Shepherd website via **Tithe.ly** at the **GIVING Tab**: www.goodshepherddecorah.org/tithe-ly-giving/# **Select Lutheran Disaster Response** from the drop down menu. 100% of donations will be devoted to the Crisis in the Middle East.

UPDATE - STEPHANIE HOFF'S REQUEST FOR ASSISTANCE

- Our member **Stephanie Hoff** has Stage 5 chronic kidney disease, is now on dialysis, and is still hoping for a kidney transplant.
- Information about Stephanie and living kidney donation is available here: www.goodshepherddecorah.org/mystory/

SUNDAY WORSHIP AVAILABLE VIA LIVE STREAM AND PUBLIC ACCESS CHANNELS

- In-person Sunday worship services are **live streamed** on Good Shepherd's **YouTube channel** each week at youtube.com/@GoodShepherdDecorah. (See information above under **Worship**). Services are also available at the link for later viewing.
- The **video** of Sunday's Worship Service is available the following **Friday at 6:30 p.m.** on **Mediacom's Public Access Channels 15 and 79-2**.
- The texts of past sermons are here www.goodshepherddecorah.org/sermons/

