

TOGETHER



**Small Groups
Come to Life
at Good
Shepherd**

CELEBRATING 100 YEARS OF FAITH THAT WORKS

**GOOD SHEPHERD'S
VISUAL ARTS TEAM**

**REAL CONTINUES TO
CHANGE GIRLS' LIVES**

**FEED MY STARVING CHILDREN
SOUTH METRO PACK**

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DECEMBER 2022



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CHURCH
OF THE
**GOOD
SHEPHERD**

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WORSHIP

Worship with Communion onsite at
10 a.m. every Sunday and online at
goodshepherdmpls.org.

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ON THE COVER: Third Friday book discussion group. Photo by Mara Halvorson.

TOGETHER



**THIS IS WHO
WE ARE
HERE, AND
WHAT WE
ARE ABOUT:**

**LUTHERAN
CHURCH OF THE
GOOD
SHEPHERD:
FAITH THAT
WORKS**

Winter. Barren. Cold. Dark.

Christ. Life. Warmth. Light.

As we enter the seasons of winter and Advent, I am reminded of the contrasts we encounter at this time of year. Temperatures drop. Days darken. We prepare for Christ with Advent wreaths, prayers, and song. Christmas arrives. We celebrate Christ's birth with candles, carols, and joy. Epiphany appears. Our days become less dark while the light of Christ moves into the world.

I generally do not like darkness. I prefer lots of light. But fortunately, most of the time we are not in full darkness. Most often, there is some source of light that creates shadows and outlines in the dark times.

The contrast between light and dark gives us a new perspective on the world around us. For me, there is nothing more beautiful than the moon rising or the stars twinkling across an inky, darkened winter sky.

2022 has been challenging for Good Shepherd. There has been much uncertainty and unforeseen changes. All this is contrasted by many joys to highlight in this season.

As your Bridge Pastor in the past eight months, I have seen the resilience and faith active in you in many ways as you have faced challenging times.

I see prayerful concern and love for Pastor Karl as he heals and restores his energy in these uncertain days of cancer management.

I see great happiness as many of you meet together in person, enjoying hugs and seeing smiles, after nearly three years of limited contact.

I see great appreciation in Pastor Elise's capable leadership, in the skill and dedication of existing staff, in the fresh ideas brought by new staff – Mara Halvorson and Andrew Stoebig.

I see confidence in congregational leadership by President Andrea Brandt and a wise Church Council.

I see a community that cares about one another and seeks to be generous to those who are in need in the world.

I see a church that wants to make a difference in the world by sharing your unique gifts and resources.

Bernadette Farrell writes these words that I believe speak to us at this time:

Longing for light, we wait in darkness.
Longing for truth, we turn to you.
Make us your own, your holy people,
light for the world to see.

Christ be our light! Shine in our hearts. Shine through the darkness.
Christ, be our light! Shine in your church gathered today.

Longing for peace, our world is troubled.
Longing for hope, many despair.
Your word alone has power to save us.
Make us your living voice.

As we experience the chilly, dark, stark winter, may you receive the warmth, light, and life of Christ. May your days be enlivened by rich worship and prayer. May your world be brightened by sharing and caring for those who need you. May your heart be filled with the joy that new life in Christ is brought to us over and over again. May you rejoice in the contrasts each day in this season of darkness and light.

Pastor Deb Bergstrand

**FAITH THAT WORKS IS FAITH THAT CAN TRANSFORM
THE WORLD – "MINE," "YOURS," "OURS," "THE."**

P.E.P. TALK

DURABLE FAITH FOR A GRITTY WORLD



BY PASTOR ELISE POKEL

BORN FOR THIS

Our Advent theme this year is “Born for This.” We have an amazing and unique array of texts that we will encounter in this season.

We will start with the prophet, Habbakuk, waiting on a vision of hope from God in a hopeless time. Habakkuk was born to be a listener in the midst of the chaos for God’s word.

We’ll be inspired by Queen Esther, who acts to rescue her people from destruction in a foreign land. Esther was born to be an advocate and a defender of her people.

We’ll listen to the promises of God told through the prophet Isaiah that God takes us by the hand and leads us into peace, light and service. Isaiah was born to proclaim God’s mercy and closeness in a time of fear and change.

Then, we’ll take a big leap into the New Testament to Matthew’s Gospel. We will overhear an angel of the Lord speak comfort to Joseph, nervous about his pregnant fiancé, Mary, with whom he had had no relations! The angel says that this child was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit. The angel quotes a prophetic passage from our old friend, Isaiah, and says that this child will be called Emmanuel – “God with us.”

But this little boy will actually be named Jesus. He will be born to save his people from their sins. Jesus comes from the name *Yeshua*. *Yeshua* means “to deliver,” “to rescue.” This baby, so fragile as all babies are, is born to be the world’s deliverer. God underwent the same precarious process of conception, development, and birth as we all do. The One God, the Great I AM, the Alpha and the Omega was breastfed, burped, snuggled, and bathed by his young mom. Before he was a mighty teacher and prophet, he toddled, he teethed, he cried out of frustration, lack of language, and tiredness. He was born to be a human. He was born to set all humans free from what binds them. What a God we serve! A God who entered into our midst so fully and deliberately in order to understand the brutality and the beauty of life.



Ethiopian icon of Jesus’ birth

On days when I echo Habakkuk and wonder how long violence will continue, I think of God as a young man, vulnerable to death and destruction. I remember that God has destroyed the power of death. God brought such confusion to death by being born as a tiny infant to a powerless family under the thumb of a brutal empire. Part of the holy Trinity is a young man who was crucified and buried, a young man who rose again and caused death itself to despair.

On days when I wonder what my purpose is, like Esther, living in a dangerous, foreign place, I remember to open my ears and listen to the wise family given to me by God here at Good Shepherd. I remember that God doesn’t ever call us to work out our purpose or solve problems alone.

On days when I wonder with Isaiah what I say or do that will make any difference, I remember that I follow a God who understands my floundering and is constantly sending the Holy Spirit to be with me and give me the words or the next steps to take.

On days when I feel confused and hurt, I remember the angel speaking tenderly to Joseph to tell him not to be afraid. One is coming into the world who promises always to be with me. One is coming into the world to lift me out of my sin and despair and forgive me fully. One is coming into the world who will scatter the darkness and set the captive free.

Jesus was born to bring justice to the nations.

Jesus was born to protect and sustain even the dimmest light in us.

Jesus was born to teach us a new way. A better way of peace and mercy in a violent and chaotic season.

Jesus was born to redeem all creation.

Jesus was born to give breath and Spirit to all who inhabit our precious and fragile world.

Jesus was born to make all things new.

Jesus was born for you. For me. For all of us. Born for all of this.

DEAR *Deacon Andrew*

BY ANDREW STOEBIG, LDA, DIRECTOR OF WORSHIP AND MUSIC

Editor's note: In the spirit of advice columnist Dear Abby, you're invited to submit a worship-related question to Deacon Andrew. Your inquiry and his answer will be published in a future issue of Together. Send an email to A.Stoebig@goodshepherdmpls.org.

Dear Deacon Andrew,

What's the point of the passing of the peace? It feels like an intermission or a space holder. Can't we just get on with the service?

Sincerely,
Peaceably Perplexed



Dear Peaceably Perplexed,

Your question is a good one and speaks as much to the rhythms of our worship as to the theology behind it. It's true, the Sharing of Peace comes at what feels like a natural break in our liturgy. We've gathered together, heard the Word of God proclaimed in readings and in a sermon, and have responded to that Word with our singing, our confession of faith, and our prayers. The Peace marks a transition point as we turn to the Meal of Holy Communion.

But the Sharing of Peace is something different than a social greeting between friends and acquaintances. First, it's a punctuation and down payment on our prayers: Christ bestows on us the peace that the world cannot give (cf. John 14:27) in answer to all our prayers. Gifted with such peace in answer to our prayers, we then immediately become Christ to one another, offering the same peace to our neighbors.

Second, the Sharing of Peace offers us a chance to fulfill one of Jesus's commands, namely, that we be reconciled to our sisters and brothers before approaching God's altar (cf. Matthew 5:23-26). Paul echoes this when he gives the Corinthians admonition and instruction on the Lord's Supper (cf. 1 Corinthians 11:17-34). Paul's words remind us of just what's at stake at this table: Eating the body of Christ, we become the body of Christ. And so, in Sharing the Peace, we embody our unity in the peace of Christ, the peace that passes all understanding (Philippians 4:6). As Christ's body, we pray for reconciliation between ourselves so we can be the gift of Christ's reconciliation to the world.

Deacon Andrew



FROM THE COUNCIL

Updates

BY ANDREA BRANDT, PRESIDENT

On behalf of the Council, I have a few updates.

MISSION AND VISION

The Strategic Planning Task Force (SPTF) has been working with Kairos as tasked by Council. The group is comprised of Walt Polley, Trent Chaffee, Pastor Deb Bergstrand, Dave Shay, David Quello, Dave Senness, Beth Helgen, and me. Our original goal was to clarify the Good Shepherd vision so that we could more clearly align our gifts (time, financial resources, facilities, etc). However, in working with Kairos, it became clear that it was more beneficial to articulate our mission and values. This work is expected to complete in time to present at the Annual meeting on Feb. 5. The next phase, in early 2023, will focus on a strategic plan, such that we can use our gifts in alignment with our mission and values.

FINANCES

Many of you have contributed to the 100th Anniversary Gift. Thank you! The final amount will be shared later in the year. It's a wonderful honor of our past, present, and future to know that we'll pay down part of our mortgage and also have funds to make mortgage payments through 2023 such that we can start the strategic work as outlined above. Also, to be more transparent, Council has asked the Finance Committee to hold a budget review meeting two weeks prior to the Annual Meeting. This budgetary meeting, on Jan. 22, will give members a chance to ask questions about the budget for 2023.

STAFFING

The question that is on everybody's mind is when Pastor Jacobson will return. Pastor Deb Bergstrand has agreed to extend her contract into February 2023. Effective in February, we are targeting to have a staggered return for Pastor Jacobson. Health permitting, he will slowly start to return to work, increasing his hours each week. There will be a transition time over several months between him and Pastor Pokel. Council is working on a plan to formalize this transition. We must all be flexible on timing and expectations. Ultimately, it's Pastor Jacobson's health that is of utmost importance. We continue to pray for him and his family.



FACILITIES

The Girasol Montessori Preschool that leases space from us is expanding their program in 2023. You may have noticed they've already increased the size of their playground on the east side of the building, and they will be adding additional classrooms to support their increased enrollment starting in January 2023. Giroso is the Spanish word for sunflower. The school is bilingual English/Spanish Montessori education for kids ages 33 months to six years. They are wonderful tenants, and we are thrilled to support their expansion. To quote the founder of the Montessori program, Maria Montessori, "The child is capable of developing and giving us tangible proof of the possibility of a better humanity. He has shown us the true process of construction of the human being. We have seen children totally change as they acquire a love for things and as their sense of order, discipline, and self-control develops within them. . . . The child is both a hope and a promise for mankind." I can't imagine a better use of our facility.

CLOSING THOUGHTS

I personally want to thank the staff and Pastor Pokel for the amazing work they all do behind the scenes. As Council President, I can say I have a new appreciation for their gifts, work ethic, and passion for our church.

Thank you,

Andrea Brandt
Council President

October Ministry Fair Shows Variety of Ministry Options at Good Shepherd

PHOTOS BY MARA HALVORSON



Christian Service Circle



Lutheran Social Service



Luther Seminary



The Quilters



Prayer Shawl Ministry



Property Committee



Foundation Approves Two Grant Requests

BY NANCY RYSTROM, GOOD SHEPHERD FOUNDATION BOARD PRESIDENT

The Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd Foundation Board unanimously approved two grant requests at its September meeting.

NORTHSIDE ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY NETWORK (NEON)

NEON’s mission is to “build wealth for low to moderate income entrepreneurs in North Minneapolis and surrounding communities.” It serves more than 1,350 clients – 400 of whom are food entrepreneurs. Good Shepherd’s September Rally Day celebration included food trucks run by entrepreneurs secured through NEON. NEON was also represented at Good Shepherd’s October Mission Fair.



The Board approved \$4,000 to support NEON’s food entrepreneurship incubator and to launch a new 24-unit kitchen. Much of North Minneapolis is considered a food desert, as residents have limited access to affordable and healthy food. NEON’s initiative will help alleviate this issue in addition to creating economic development opportunities for area residents.

CHURCH ANEW

Church Anew is an ecumenical ministry of St. Andrew Lutheran Church in Eden Prairie and is dedicated to equipping church leaders to face the adaptive changes needed for ministry today and tomorrow. Over 300,000 congregational leaders and people of faith come to Church Anew for resources.



Church Anew is producing a Bible study curriculum entitled “Old & New: Season Two.” Pastors and lay leaders look for Bible study content that is relevant to daily living, produced with excellence, and gathers the community around sacred story. This curriculum fills an availability gap of these Bible study resources.

The Board approved \$3,000 to support this Bible study curriculum initiative that will enable Biblical literacy and will help clergy and church staff equip lay leaders to facilitate learning and conversation.

YOUR GIFTS MAKE A DIFFERENCE

The Foundation welcomes all gifts including celebration, legacy, and memorial gifts. These gifts enable the Foundation to continue its ongoing support for the congregation and its outreach. Thank you to all who have made contributions to the Foundation this year!

A RETURN TO THE ANNUAL HOLIDAY MUSICAL:

Rudolph!

BY TOR JOHNSON, DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES AND PERFORMING ARTS

This would have been our 13th Annual Holiday Musical, but the pandemic took away one of our shows. It feels like a luxury to be able to do two live productions in a row in 2021 and 2022!

Last year, we put on the dramatically and musically challenging "Oliver Junior" and this year – for something completely different – we performed "Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer Jr." I was thrilled to see that Rudolph (yes, the same Rudolph we've been watching on TV for the past 60 years) was included in the Broadway Junior Collection, which is the main source I go to for our holiday musicals.

As always, we had a good mix of kids from Good Shepherd working together with lots of kids from the surrounding communities of Edina, St. Louis Park, and South Minneapolis. My first goal is to put on a good and entertaining show. But the real joy comes from witnessing the friendships that are formed between the kids from different schools and communities.

We always have adults in the musicals too, of course. Our show-stealing adult for this production was our own custodian extraordinaire, Roger Krafve, who gave a sizzling performance as Yukon Cornelius! Our Annual Holiday Musical, with its four performances, has a tradition of bringing hundreds of guests into our church to witness the joy and hospitality of Good Shepherd. Indeed, Rudolph's nose, and all of the other characters in the show, shone very brightly to create another memorable Holiday Musical!



[IN OUR COMMUNITY OF FAITH] LIFE PASSAGES

BAPTISMS

PENELOPE "POPPY" ROSE DEBOW
SEPT. 11, 2022

BENJAMIN CRAIG BINDERT
OCT. 2, 2022

DEATHS

FRANK WELLMAN
SEPT. 21

HAROLD COVLIN
OCT. 10

KATHERINE SCHILTZ
OCT. 20

TOM TALLAKSON
NOV. 11

VIRGINIA MORGENTHALER
NOV. 23

In Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith. As many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.

GALATIANS 3: 26-27

Good Shepherd Bell Choir Enhances Monthly Worship Services

BY CONNIE FUKUDA-CLARK

What is a Bell Choir?

According to Wikipedia:

A handbell choir (bell choir) is a group that rings recognizable music with melodies and harmony. The bells generally include all notes of the chromatic scale within the range of the set. The bells are typically arranged chromatically on a foam-covered table. These tables protect the bronze surface of the bell. A handbell ensemble acts as one instrument, with each musician responsible for particular notes, sounding his or her assigned bells whenever those notes appear in the music.

Every month during worship, the Good Shepherd congregation is treated to a performance of the Good Shepherd Bell Choir. The tinkling, melodic tones of the handbells add a sparkling musical touch to the worship service.

The Bell Choir rehearses every Monday from 6 to 7 p.m. The immediate focus is on the piece to be performed at the upcoming service as well as other music to be played at future services and special recitals (Dec. 11, 2022 and May 14, 2023).

Currently comprised of eight bell ringers, Tor Johnson has been the Bell Choir's director for the past 12 years.

Donna Perbachs has been a veteran bell ringer since 1994 when the group was called the Shepherd Ringers. She has also shown

flexibility and adaptability as the Bell Choir size has increased from four musicians to almost a dozen players. Donna is thankful for the current number of bell ringers, and comments, "I enjoy practicing and getting really familiar with the music. The practices bring a new appreciation of the music's beauty."

Another long-time Bell Choir musician is Debbie Holmstrom. She's been playing with the ensemble since 1986, and she explains that bell ringing is one of her preferred post-retirement activities. Debbie likes knowing the key signature of a piece so she can plan on what bells she will be ringing. She's played a maximum of three bells on a single musical piece, and she's assigned the highest bell in the chromatic scale: the high C. Although sometimes the rhythms can be challenging, Debbie enthusiastically says, "The Bell Choir is one of my favorite things to do."

Mary Meester joined the Bell Choir when Tor restarted the group in 2010. Prior to that year, the Bell Choir had been inactive for a few years. She explains performing with the Bell Choir was the main reason why she returned to be a member of Good Shepherd. Mary observes, "Now that we've become more experienced bell ringers, I think trying to have dynamics and matching style is more of a challenge than just playing the notes."

Regardless of the changing size of the group, Tor says: "I appreciate all of the Bell Choir members, and I'm honored to be the leader."

RING-A-DING-DING!

The Good Shepherd Bell Choir is looking for some bell ringers.

- No prior experience required.
- Prerequisite: Ability to read music and count based on time signatures.
- Commitment to attend weekly rehearsals and monthly worship performances.
- Possess a friendly and patient disposition, cooperative with other bell ringers.
- Willingness to laugh at Tor Johnson's funny stories. (Just kidding!).

If interested, contact director Tor Johnson at tor.johnson@goodshepherdmpls.org.



Sunday School: Always Changing, Ever Faithful

BY TOR JOHNSON, DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES AND PERFORMING ARTS

As we have been celebrating our 100th year as a community of faith this year, I couldn't help but notice the history of Sunday School at Good Shepherd. Year in and year out, a staff of 10 or more teachers/leaders, the pastor participating every Sunday, hordes of children of all ages, intense Catechism study.

Well, as we all know, "times have changed." Some of the changes are awesome, and some of the changes are discouraging. One of the awesome changes in the history of Sunday School is the fact that many parents stay the whole hour and participate, along with their children, in the music, crafts, drama and games we do. That parental participation lends itself well to a strong, fun family feeling during Sunday School.

Of course, the biggest change, and most discouraging, is the fact that Good Shepherd is a lot smaller than it used to be and, consequently, there are fewer families with children. Add to that the fact that children's extracurricular activities happen heavily on Sunday mornings, and you've got the recipe for smaller Sunday School membership. But, hey, the bottom line is we have some awesome families who try to come as regularly as possible!



We have lots of fun singing songs with Andrew, hearing the great stories of the Bible, playing fun games, making meaningful crafts and doing challenging, dramatic readings. Special thanks to all the families and, specifically, Sasha Jensen and Amy Caron, who've been helpers for several years.



Unpacking the Creative Process: Good Shepherd

BY MARA HALVORSON, MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS INTERN

“It’s a lot of brainstorming, and sort of like ‘hold onto your chair’ because we don’t know where some of our ideas are going to go or take us” is how Good Shepherd Visual Art Team member, Mary Zeleny Arimond, describes part of the creative process that goes into each piece of art the group makes for our church and congregation.

The creative process that went into the Pinwheel Art Piece, installed in our sanctuary for All Saints’ Sunday, didn’t just happen magically overnight like it may have seemed for those who entered into a beautiful and colorful pinwheel-filled sanctuary that Sunday morning. This piece had actually been a work-in-progress since the planning of the 100th Anniversary. It is based on Pastor Karl Jacobson’s rendition of Psalm 16. Linda Kerker stated, “It was all about celebration and the people of the church; the current people and those who came before us. And what is more celebratory than a pinwheel?”



This wonderful team is remarkable because they create an amount of depth that goes into each aspect of the pieces. Each piece’s creation begins with the scripture, themes, and readings. During occasional meetings, the team brings questions to the pastors. Then, it’s all about brainstorming, experimenting with different materials, and a whole lot of trial and error. “A lot of



the time, people see the finished work, but they don’t know the conversations and the undercurrent that is happening when we’re doing this,” explained Mary.

The Art Team strives for a faith formation whenever they create a new piece – acting and creating in the verses and scriptures. Moreover, understanding the text in a visual language is such a powerful and prominent part of their creative process. “For those of us who are more visual learners rather than auditory, exploring faith without words is really important because we get to explore it with actions and relationships. That’s what this process lets us do,” said Britta Taracks.

Bringing other congregation members into this process is also a large aspect for the Art Team. It’s a very analogous process to faith – from helping little ones like Riley Severson learn how to make a pinwheel for the first time to Grant Johnson pitching in.

d's Visual Art Team



The Visual Arts Team:
Linda Kerker,
Bill Kerker,
Mary Zeleny
Arimond,
Brita Tarraks



“Sometimes we’re the child, sometimes we’re the adult. There are so many ways to explore faith that have nothing to do with studying scripture in the same way. So, this process allows us to live it,” comments Britta.

It’s not just about creating art that stays forever, though. In fact, it’s quite the opposite. Bill Kerker stated, “It’s not art for the ages, it’s art for the moment, and it’s disposable.” Many think art is something that is polished and then never changed. Each piece the team creates has a purpose that relates to what is happening in our sanctuary, whether on Sundays during worship or any other day of the week.

The Art Team would like to remind everyone that all are invited to join in any part of the creative process. Britta notes, “Whether people think they have skill or ideas or not, we are open to involving others in this process.”

Mary sums it up beautifully stating, “Each of those pinwheels represents each of us. Whether we’re actively spinning in the community or we’re not blowing our pinwheel right now, we’re all a part of this community.”



Small Groups Come to Life at Good Shepherd

BY KAREN WALHOF, DIRECTOR OF OUTREACH MINISTRIES

This fall, Pastor Deb Bergstrand teamed with Andrea Norman to begin a new book discussion group, *Gift of Years*, named after the book they chose to study. Andrea says, “The small group began with a conversation I had with Pastor Deb about questions regarding my own experience of aging. By the end of our conversation it was clear that others as well as myself would benefit from having conversation together. Pastor Deb suggested *The Gift of Years* by Joan Chittister as a resource for discussion. The group began meeting in September, once a week, for thoughtful, engaging, and fun conversation related to both the unique opportunities and challenges we experience in our personal lives and those we share in common. Some of the topics included were relationships, regret, faith, time, productivity, memories, mystery, and appreciation.”

Having completed *The Gift of Years*, the group decided to continue meeting on Thursdays, with a new book titled *Women Rowing North: Navigating Life’s Currents and Flourishing As We Age* by Mary Pipher. Contact Pastor Deb to purchase a book.



The Gift of Years small group.

Why do members choose to be involved with these small groups? What is attractive to them about a small group that calls them back week after week? Let’s take a look at a handful of them.

At least one other book study group meets at Good Shepherd. The **Third Friday Book Group** meets, as their name indicates, on the third Friday of every month at 9:30 a.m. in the Conference Room. They read and then discuss a wide variety of fiction and non-fiction books.

Louise Campbell is a member of this group. She says, “Good Shepherd is a very educated congregation, and it’s always interesting to see where the discussion goes.”

Another member, Jill Ries, says, “As a rather reserved person, I like connecting with women in the smaller group and discovering what adventuresome, intelligent, and versatile people we all are.” She adds, “The wide range of subjects brought to share by the members expands the scope of my reading curiosity. We make selections in all genres of literature and try to choose selections two months ahead to allow ample reading access.” Contact Jill Ries (gcries912@gmail.com) for more information.

In addition, there are two Bible study groups meeting at Good Shepherd. The **Women of Good Shepherd Bible Study** meets the second Friday of each month at 10 a.m. at 7500 York. All women are welcome to join in person or online via Zoom. Pastor Pokel (e.pokel@goodshepherdmpls.org) leads the Bible study.

The men’s Bible study group is **Psalms and Pscotch**. Pastor Karl Jacobson was instrumental in getting this group organized. They have been meeting for several years now, coming together monthly around one great Psalm and one good Scotch for fellowship, faithful study, and conversation. Ron Hovland says, “We still meet monthly, usually the second Tuesday of the month, and we always end every meeting with each man sharing what’s been happening in his life since the previous meeting. For me, that sharing has been the best part of our gathering. As another pastor once said to me, ‘Never underestimate the power of the Holy Spirit when two or more people gather in Christian fellowship.’” During Pastor Jacobson’s illness, his brother, Dr. Rolf Jacobson, has been providing leadership. Contact Tim Matyi (tgmtyi50@gmail.com) or Ron Hovland (rhovland@usinternet.com) for more information.

Another small group for men is **Coffee and Conversation for Men**, a relaxed group with no agenda, just sharing of thoughts, treats, experiences, and ideas. They meet each Monday at 10 a.m. It’s a perfect time for fellowship and friendship for these guys. Contact Lee Tallakson (952-922-6155) to learn more.

Perhaps the longest meeting small group here at Good Shepherd is **Midrash on France**. A mixed age and gender community of faith, they are dedicated to helping each other sharpen faith

Good Shepherd

and living it out in their daily lives. They welcome new voices at all times and invite all to consider joining them on Wednesday mornings at 7 a.m. in the Conference Room or via Zoom. Rob Albright has been a member for years and now provides leadership for the group. He says, “The opposite of faith is not doubt; it’s certainty.” Rob goes on to say, “Life is most real and vibrant when examined. That means a lot of questions! Questioning in an open, honest, challenging, but always mutually respectful way is what Midrash and the texts we read are all about. Those questions help me to exercise my faith muscles and hopefully better recognize, “That’s what the text says, now what does it mean for living my faith in a Christ-centered way.” Contact Rob Albright(ralbrigh4@gmail.com) for more information on Midrash on France.

Another small group at Good Shepherd is the **Altar Guild**. It meets regularly on the third Sunday of the month, right after worship. Primarily, its members focus on the task of setting the altar for communion each Sunday. But their gathering has greater dimensions. Shelley Horstman, a longtime member, says, “From my own experience, I’ve found that being part of the Altar Guild has been a wonderful opportunity for fellowship. This is a welcoming, supportive, and close group that enjoys serving together.” And, there is a learning component. Shelley notes, “I have also learned so much about the traditions that are associated with preparing the church for each service, which has made worship more meaningful for me. I feel blessed to be able to care for the things which symbolize God’s love and presence.” Contact Shelley Horstman (shelleyhorstman@outlook.com) if you’re interested in joining.

There are many other small groups at Good Shepherd focused on work and care within the congregation – Sunday Service Teams, Christian Service Circle, Courtyard Gardening Team, Heritage Committee, Property Committee, Sacred Grounds baristas, Prayer Chain – as well as those serving in outreach ministries – Camden Promise, Loaves & Fishes, Urban Homeworks, Meals on Wheels, Families Moving Forward, Quilters, and many more. We celebrate your ministries!

The church certainly need the gathering of the entire community at worship each week! But how lovely for the fellowship that small groups provide as we come to know each other a bit better and serve and learn together as God’s people.



Third Friday Book Group



Midrash on France



Psalms and Pscotch



Altar Guild

Nuestro Salvador Celebrates Their 70th Anniversary

BY ROB ALBRIGHT

To celebrate their 70th anniversary as a congregation, we highlight our partnership with our sister congregation in Montevideo, Uruguay – Nuestro Salvador Iglesia Luterana (Our Savior Lutheran Church). Founded in 1952, the congregation resulted from the Iglesia Evangelica Luterana Unida Argentina Y Uruguay (IELU's) missionary vocation. IELU is the synod for Argentina and Uruguay.



Pastor Octavio (left) and congregation leaders with now-EILU President, Pastora Wilma (second from right), at their 70th anniversary Sunday service.

NUESTRO SALVADOR IGLESIA LUTERANA HISTORY

The Lutheran Church in Montevideo is small yet quite sophisticated. It doesn't need U.S. missionaries, but finds that American partnerships are healthy in spurring ideas, energy, and resources within its congregations. Nuestro Salvador has 30 to 50 members, with Sunday service attendance averaging five to 20 parishioners.

Its history is somewhat colored with initial development and support from foreign partners, then abandonment during the difficult period of the 1970s and 1980s. They are a small but mighty force for good in their community, and we have been glad to call them friends and partners (*Companeros*) in Christ since 2006.

VISITOR EXCHANGE BETWEEN GOOD SHEPHERD AND NUESTRO SALVADOR

Good Shepherd parishioners initially traveled to Uruguay in 2007 to meet the Nuestro Salvador congregation and its then-relatively new pastor, Pastora Wilma Rommel. This trip was followed by a similar trip of our parishioners in 2008. In 2009, our friends in Uruguay visited us here in Minnesota. A small group from Good Shepherd last visited Uruguay in 2016 after both young adults Dave Matyi and Rachel Stein spent much time working in and with the congregation at Nuestro Salvador.

Last year, representatives from Nuestro Salvador and Good Shepherd began meeting via Zoom to discuss key issues and ministries our congregations share. First, we discussed outreach



Members of Nuestro Salvador gathered at a celebratory dinner to mark their 70th anniversary.



The congregation of Nuestro Salvador, gathered to celebrate their 70th anniversary.

ministries, especially as they were affected by the Covid epidemic and how our congregations continued their ministries. Next, we will talk about our youth ministries. This ongoing conversation allows us to share ideas, rejoice in each other's ministries, and support each other.

In addition to regular electronic communications between our congregations, other more informal contacts have since been made by members of Good Shepherd traveling in Uruguay.

NUESTRO SALVADOR TODAY

Nuestro Salvador is currently led by Pastor Octavio Burgoa, a true gentle man and tireless servant of Jesus and the community. The congregation seeks to spread the Gospel through its outreach work in the surrounding poor neighborhoods. These efforts have included ongoing work and support for groups like Mision San Juan, La Obra, and El Sembrado as well as work with AIDS patients and provision of food and shelter to those in need during the pandemic.

Nuestro Salvador also serves the Jaureguierry senior community with a monthly Bible study. The community is located approximately 70 kilometers from Montevideo.

CELEBRATING A SPECIAL 70TH ANNIVERSARY

Pastor Octavio wrote of their recent 70th celebration:

Today, we thanked God for the 70th anniversary of the congregation. We shared the Word, with the preaching of Pastor Wilma, and the Holy Sacrament. We also had memories of those people who with their lives and gifts built our congregation. Thank you, Pastor Jaime Dubon, for joining us. Thank you, Joanna and Raquel, for the music, and thanks to all

the people who joined us in worship as well as through their prayers.

Before the service on Sunday, the anniversary weekend started with a meeting of the EILU Third Eastern District Assembly. Pastor Octavio explained:

After a devotional moment, each one of the communities (Congregation La Resurrección, Congregation Nuestro Salvador, and El Sembrador – Espacio Comunitario) shared their work. After the snack break, Pastor Jaime Dubón gave us an excellent presentation on the ELCA and the mission of the church. We closed the day with dinner in which we shared a lentil stew, just as it was served in the “Solidary Food” project.

Thank you, Pastora Wilma and Pastor Jaime, for joining us! Thank you to everyone who volunteered their time and gifts to make the Assembly go as smoothly as it did!

Good Shepherd has been blessed to have Nuestro Salvador as a sister congregation these past 15-plus years. We celebrate with them and honor their 70 years of ministry within, around, and far beyond Montevideo!



The people of Nuestro Salvador on a more typical Sunday, gathered around the meal.

Resources Enriching African Lives (REAL) Continue to Change the Lives of Ethiopian Girls with Scholarships

BY RICH SYKORA

REAL (Resources Enriching African Lives) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit that has been linked with our congregation's ministry since we created Momentum for Mission back in 2005. REAL has been a tangible way to make a difference in the lives of poor girls in Ethiopia. This is accomplished by sponsoring a girl's scholarship for \$360 per year. (Additional sponsorships of mentors or locations are available, too.) The sponsorship helps cover the cost of school plus provides a small stipend to the family. Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd was an early participant.

BACKGROUND

Traditionally the education of women was not a high priority in Ethiopia. Girls received education up through our grade 5 and then were either married or must start working to help the family. Only 16% of girls attend secondary school. Boys are expected to stay in school.

REAL saw an opportunity to make a difference by helping fund continued education for girls in grades 6-12 (college/university is free in Ethiopia if you can pass rigorous entrance exams). In

addition, REAL provides a small amount of money to the girls' home. REAL's motto is "Educate a girl, transform a life."

RESULTS

- 95% of girls enrolled complete the program
- 82% of girls go on to college/university

These results are fantastic! Not only will these girls have a greater chance of being lifted from poverty but their future families benefit as well. The people of Good Shepherd thought this program

SOME FACTS

Founded in 2004

First year 15 girls in one location

472 girls have been through the program so far

Currently 165 girls enrolled in 9 locations (mostly western and central Ethiopia)

One adult mentor for every 20 girls

One in-country coordinator working with the mentors, teachers and communities plus reporting back to REAL staff/board in the U.S.



Good Shepherd travelers to Ethiopia in 2018 spent time with girls supported by REAL scholarships in Burayu Kata and in Aira Gulis

ues to ships



worthy of support, too. We have 28 current sponsorships from families or groups within the congregation. The groups include Altar Guild, Christian Circle, Sunday School kids, and our Youth. In addition, John Chrisney and Carla Sykora were past board members.

REAL is looking to expand their reach, growing the number of girls enrolled. I know my family will continue our sponsorship and hope others will join.

For more information about supporting a girl through REAL, speak with Karen Walhof, with me, go online to www.real-africa.org, or email getreal@real-africa.org.



Carla Sykora served on the REAL board, here with board chair Olga Tolle-Rodrigues and founder Tsehai Wodajo.



so, talking about education and vocation.

In Aira, They Continue to Serve in Spite of War

BY KAREN WALHOF, DIRECTOR OF OUTREACH MINISTRIES

President Melkamu from the BirbirDilla Synod in Aira, Ethiopia, has written to us:

There is a war everywhere, and we are always living unsecured. We are only praying for the life of our people and our service. But the ministry in the church is not closed. We are gathering for worship and office work.

Then, more recently this fall he wrote:

We had an on-job training both with pastors and evangelists. It was a nice teaching and learning time at synod and parish level. Many of the pastors and evangelists were encouraged through the training and felt enabled to be kept in their spiritual unity and fellowship.

Many times, the internet connection is not available from Aira. President Melkamu also is always cautious in what he writes about the violence in the west. However, the church is relentless in learning and sharing the Gospel. He sent photos of their “on-job training” event (below) where, he says, they were encouraged and supported each other.” Please pray for our brothers and sisters in Aira as they live a difficult and uneasy life, but “the ministry of the church is not closed.” They continue to work hard to serve the Lord and share the Good News.



Pastors and evangelists gather to learn and to support each other.



BY TARA HALVORSON

1 YOU RECENTLY GRADUATED FROM BEMIDJI STATE UNIVERSITY. WHAT DID YOU STUDY?

I earned my Bachelor of Science degree in Design with emphases in both Graphic and Exhibit design and Minors in Studio Art and Mass Communication.

I also got to be a resident advisor (RA) in a freshman building for two years (would have been three if it wasn't for COVID). It was one of my favorite parts of college! Making door decorations, talking with my freshmen residents, and planning and hosting events was such a blast. I was heavily involved in Residential Life and was also on their marketing team.

2 WHAT DID YOU FIND INTERESTING ABOUT THE COMMUNICATIONS AND MARKETING INTERNSHIP OPPORTUNITY?

After working here throughout high school helping Tor Johnson with Sunday School design projects and during COVID-19, I was so excited to have the opportunity to continue working with this amazing staff and congregation on a more day-to-day basis.

3 HOW IS THIS INTERNSHIP DIFFERENT FROM WHAT YOU DID HERE DURING COVID-19?

During Covid, I was responsible for filming and editing all of the online worship services.

Now, as the Marketing and Communications intern, my responsibilities have grown. I design and send the weekly email, update the website weekly, create and print the worship bulletins with Andrew Stoebig, run the video aspects of the livestream, take photos, run the social media accounts, update the new whiteboard in the Narthex, and other duties.

4 YOU GREW UP IN THIS CHURCH, SO MANY PEOPLE KNOW WHO YOU ARE. WHAT IS SOMETHING THAT PEOPLE DON'T KNOW ABOUT YOU - THAT YOU'D LIKE THEM TO KNOW?

I know more about the 90's TV show, "Friends," than Amanda Sykora. Yes, this is a trivia challenge, Amanda!

5 WHEN YOU'RE NOT WORKING AT CHURCH, WHAT DO YOU LIKE TO DO IN YOUR FREE TIME?

In my free time, I love to hang out with my cats, cheer my little sister Lilly on at her track meets, play Minecraft (yes, you read



Mara and sister Lilly at one of Lilly's track meets.

that right!). I also do fun volunteer design projects. Right now, I'm helping out with the designs for Feed My Starving Children's South Metro MobilePack.

6 WE KNOW PARABLE PATTY IS ONE OF YOUR GOOD FRIENDS. WILL SHE BE VISITING US ANYTIME SOON?

I'm hoping Patty can make a visit sometime very soon – maybe after Christmas in the new year. I'll get in touch with her agent and get back to you on that!

7 WE HEARD YOU'RE ADDICTED TO COFFEE, LIKE YOUR DAD. WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE DRINK?

My favorite coffee drink is a brown sugar, oat milk, shaken espresso from Starbucks. My Dad will tell you it's more sugar than it is coffee.



Mara graduating from Bemidji State University.

8 WHAT DOES JCM PRODUCTIONS STAND FOR AT THE END OF ALL OF THE WORSHIP LIVESTREAMS AND IN THE BACK OF THE BULLETIN?

JCM stands for Jason, Colton, and Mara. Most Sundays, it's the three of us who run the video and audio for in-person and online worship. Be sure to stick around to the very end of the livestream credits to see our logo and different creative outro each week!

9 WHEN YOU THINK ABOUT MARKETING AND COMMUNICATING WHAT GOOD SHEPHERD IS, WHAT EXCITES YOU?

This is a place with deep, rich, Lutheran history. A place that worships well, cares for people and is always serving others. What's exciting is working to bring the stories that have happened, and those that continue to happen, to people beyond these walls.

10 YOU'RE A PART OF A UNIQUE GROUP AT GOOD SHEPHERD, BEING A YOUNG ADULT. WHAT IS SOMETHING YOU'D LIKE OTHER YOUNG ADULTS TO KNOW ABOUT BEING A PART OF THIS FAITH COMMUNITY?

The community at Good Shepherd really is something special. It's truly amazing the amount of ways to be plugged into this place, no matter who you are or what stage of life you're in. The high school and college years have come and gone, but the feeling of home in this congregation hasn't faded one bit.



Mara amid the Rudolph backdrop.

Feed My Starving Children South Metro Pack: The Legacy Continues

BY MARK HALVORSON, DIRECTOR OF YOUTH AND FAMILY MINISTRIES

What started out in 2014 was just an idea: Maybe we could gather together a handful of churches and community groups and pack a few million meals for those in need? Since then, this “south of the river” event has evolved beyond any geographical boundaries, exceeded expectations, and grown in size and impact. Over the years, Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd has played a pivotal role in the success of this large Feed My Starving Children (FMSC) mobile pack experience through our volunteers and donations.

This coming January will be no different. We have an opportunity to be engaged in our world and in a very real and tangible way by helping spread hope and being active in our faith through our donations and coming together to pack meals for those that need. Prince of Peace Lutheran Church in Burnsville has again opened up its doors – in a newly remodeled building, by the way – so that we have a space to put our faith into action.

This congregation has always done a remarkable job of serving the neighbors in our own backyard as well as those who we will never meet, in distant places to which we may never travel. Our response to the Gospel is to step up, to provide, to engage, and to be a part of the healing that needs to take place in every corner of the world.

For this week in January, you are all invited to be a part of something very special. The planning team is in conversation with over a dozen local congregations, elementary and middle

and high schools, home school networks, and every athletic/music/community group and team you can imagine.

This event that started in 2014 (and only missed one year because of pandemic safety concerns) is up and running at full speed. We are looking at our week in January as an opportunity to pack two million meals for people who do not have food.

The demand for meals continues to grow. Hurricanes and war and famine are powerful forces that our volunteer efforts push back against, and those efforts make a difference. You are invited to be a part of that.

There will be day shifts and evening shifts, chances to pack food, be warehouse volunteers, label bags, and more. Be on the lookout for sign-up times and start talking to your service teams, small groups, and family and friends about being a part of this great experience.

As with any event like this, there is a cost, and as we shoot for two million meals, we will rack up a pretty significant grocery bill. Each person who comes to volunteer packs approximately \$50 worth of food. If each participant were able to donate that amount, we wouldn't need any more contributions. We understand that's not the case, though, and any amount helps.

If you are interested in making a financial contribution, there is a donate link as well as more information on the web at www.southmetromobilepack.org, or on the Good Shepherd website.

If you are a business owner or have a business contact who might be interested in helping sponsor this event, it is a pretty powerful and creative way to get your logo and business in front of upwards of 12,000 engaged people over the course of a week.

Whether you serve through prayer, through sealing bags, through scooping rice or running ingredients, this is a wonderful, all-age, all-denomination, all-community group opportunity and approach. Be a part of something that really does change and save lives.

Please reach out to Mark Halvorson (m.halvorson@goodshepherdmpls.org) with any questions and be on the lookout for sign-ups.



The Good Shepherd team last time we packed at Prince of Peace in 2018.

SCRIPTURE STORY

Called by Name

BY PASTOR ELISE POKEL

But now thus says the LORD,
he who created you, O Jacob,
he who formed you, O Israel:
Do not fear,
for I have redeemed you;
I have called you by name;
you are mine.
When you pass through the
waters, I will be with you,
and through the rivers,
they shall not overwhelm you;
when you walk through fire
you shall not be burned, and
the flame shall not consume you.
For I am the LORD your God,
the Holy One of Israel, your Savior (Isaiah 43:1-3).

Names are important.

They often carry the hopes of the parents. They honor saints and family members who have graduated into glory. I was named Elise, and my parents have very different explanations about how they chose that name. My dad is a musician and claims I was named Elise because that was Beethoven's sister's name. He famously wrote *Für Elise* . . . for Elise. Elise was also a spirited great-great-great-aunt in the Tweten family tree. My mom says that when she was pregnant with me, she loved the mom character on *Family Ties*. A quick google search tells me that my name means "pledged to God." Appropriate for my calling!

My little brother faces the same issue. My dad says that the reason he is named Vincent is to honor one of the Tweten family founders. My mom is a huge country music fan and loves Vince Gill. Vincent means "conqueror," and my brother certainly slays on his drums in his heavy metal band! He's an extremely talented musician.

My older brother, Alexander, was given that name because my dad hoped that he would be a strong leader someday. My mom (always watching *Family Ties*) liked the sitcom son, Alex. Alex serves in the military and is a wonderful dad to his five kids.



The Dream of Saint Joseph by Stefano Maria Legnani, 1661-1713

By some miracle, the three of us have names that fit us.

We are in the season of Advent. In one of our stories for the season, an angel visits a very nervous soon-to-be dad and tells him that Mary will have a baby boy and his name will be Emmanuel, God with us. We know that the baby will be named Jesus; one who saves. Both names highlight who Jesus is to us. He is always with us, has rescued us, and continues to save us from what holds us captive.

Our names purposefully or accidentally reveal aspects of who we are. Whether we grow to love them, grow into them, grow out of them, put on new names in time more fitting with our gender identity, God knows our names and uses them. Most importantly, in our baptisms, God clothes us in a name that fits in all seasons of our lives: Beloved. No matter how high the water gets, God swims beside us. No matter how hot the fire grows, God shields us and purifies us.

What does your name mean to you? What hopes, placed into your name by your parents, are you fulfilling? What prayers are you answering through the power of God's Spirit? You are called Beloved by a God that gave his life for your thriving. You belong to the God who knows all the names of the countless stars and creatures of the universe. God calls you by your name and delights in you!

Have a blessed and holy Advent, echoing the joy and surprise of the prophet Isaiah, by being numbered among God's beloved.



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