



Shepherd's Staff



The Monthly Newsletter of Good Shepherd Lutheran Church

December 2023



Josh Brecht
Lead Pastor

Christmas at Good Shepherd

The season of Advent is always a special time. We prepare for the coming of the Christ child in our hearts, our homes, our worship, and our community. The Christmas season is also a busy season in the life of the church with so many opportunities for celebration, worship, and fellowship! Advent begins on Sunday, December 3, and we hope you will be able to join us for the incredible opportunities to celebrate Christmas at Good Shepherd this year.

Art In Advent

We light our Advent candles each week, representing Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love. This year we will use original art to represent these words and you are invited to participate in this beautiful project. Visit the display in the narthex and add your prayers to the artwork.

Music In Advent

Christmas Cantata

Every Advent we prepare our hearts for the coming of Christ with a musical celebration that includes choir, orchestra, and narration in our annual Christmas Cantata.

- **Saturday, December 9, 5:00 pm**
- **Sunday, December 10, 11:00 am**

Children Sing in Worship

Join us for a joyful celebration as our children sing Christmas music in worship!

- **Sunday, December 17, 11:00 am**

Giving in Advent

Caring for our neighbors locally and globally is the heart of Good Shepherd. There will

be several opportunities to provide for families in need this season. These opportunities will be available in the Narthex.

- **LifeWise Giving Tree** – Thank you for donating holiday gifts for the LifeWise Market. You can also volunteer to serve at the [Holiday Market December 1-8.](#))
- **ELCA Good Gifts** – Provide agricultural animals to families around the world through [ELCA World Hunger.](#)
- **Mitten Tree** - Donate mittens and gloves for [Butterfly Haven.](#)
- **Lutheran Campus Ministry** – On Christmas Eve we will collect special gifts toward Lutheran Campus Ministry.
- **Good Shepherd Lutheran Church** – Many people also make a [special year-end gift](#) to the ministry of Good Shepherd, enabling us to continue to fulfill the mission God has given us.

Christmas Eve Worship

Christmas Eve falls on a Sunday this year, so our worship schedule that weekend will be a bit different. We will *not* have worship on Saturday, 12/23, and just *one* Advent 4 worship service on Sunday 12/24, and *three* Christmas Eve services in the afternoon/evening.

All Christmas Eve worship services will include **communion & candlelight.**

We will have an **outdoor live nativity from 3:00-6:00pm** on Christmas Eve, as well! (Animals will be outside, rather than a part of worship.)

Sunday, December 24

- 10:00am Advent 4 worship service
- 3:00-6:00pm Outdoor Live Nativity with animals
- 4:00pm Christmas Eve worship (Contemporary)
- 7:00pm Christmas Eve worship (Traditional)
- 9:00pm Christmas Eve worship (Traditional)

New Year's Weekend Worship

New Year's Eve also falls on Sunday this year. Therefore, we will *not* have worship on Saturday 12/30, but just *one* worship service on Sunday 12/31.

Sunday, December 31

- 10:00 am Christmas Carol Sing worship service

Daily Devotions for Advent & Christmas Seasons

All our ELCA congregations in the Eastern Missouri Conference have collaborated to create an Advent & Christmas daily devotional resource. This was created by pastors and members of our congregations, drawing on the gifts of our people in word, art, and photography. Christina Kling-Garrett and Brianna Dehn of Good Shepherd have written on behalf GSLC. Printed copies will be available in the Narthex, or you can download the digital version for e-readers or pdf on our Grow Spiritually resource hub below.

Grow Spiritually Resource Hub

Advent Calendars are also available outside Emily Horning's office.

Thank You Notes to Good Shepherd

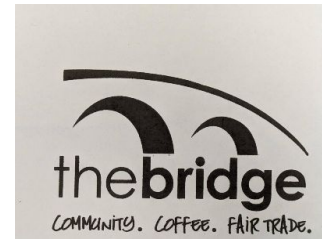
Nearly every month Good Shepherd receives thank you notes for various missions and ministries we support. Some are from grants given through our Endowment

Committee, some from funds given through our Service Team, and others from collections directly from you! It is amazing to see how God is working through GSLC, so we will be sharing these small stories of gratitude each month in our newsletter. Thank you for your faithfulness to God's call, enabling Good Shepherd to live our mission of Following Christ, Growing in Faith, and Sharing God's Love.

The Bridge - Fair Trade Store

Dear Friends in Christ,

It was a blessing to share the ministry of Fair Trade with you on Reformation Sunday. Your purchases of \$3,726.73 provide consistent income for fair-trade, artisans and their families around the world. Thank you to Andrew, Amy, Gail, Jim, and their crew who assisted in set-up and tear down. It was a huge gift of labor and much appreciated. The winner of the \$25 gift card drawing was Ariana Karst! I hope you will join her in visiting The Bridge. As a partner church, Good Shepherd is welcome to use the Micah Room for meetings, Bible study, retreat, etc. Come see how God is at work in The Bridge's ministries of Fair Trade, Hospitality (Coffee House) and Worship.



Do justice, love mercy, walk humbly.

Johanna Erdman Fair Trade Coordinator,
The Bridge Market & Faith Community

Endowment Grant Thank You

Dear Steve (Endowment Committee Chair),

I wanted to thank you and the Endowment Committee at Good Shepherd Lutheran for your gift toward the dental ministry in Kenya. I believe that God will multiply it to reach many in that part of the world with both physical care and the Good News of Jesus Christ.

I look forward to updating you on all that God does in the coming months and years. I am hoping to be ready to launch early next year. May the Lord bless you and use you to reach our community here in St. Louis.

Blessings,
Caren Abraham



Josh Brecht
Lead Pastor

Holiday Traditions

One of our favorite family holiday traditions is the lighting of our Advent wreath. We place it in the center of our kitchen table, so that each night when we sit down to eat dinner, we are reminded of Jesus' presence with us. In these cold December weeks, we light candles that radiate warmth like the love of God as we read bible verses from our Advent calendar. There is something profoundly human about a

spiritual season that honors the longing, the struggle of waiting that we all experience.

Advent is a season of waiting. It is a season of hoping and longing. As we recount the ancient story of the Israelites awaiting a messiah, we find ourselves enmeshed in the story because we, too, wait for God to enter into our lives and our world.

Maybe you are waiting for healing for yourself or the one you love.

Maybe you are waiting for good news after a season of disappointment.

Maybe you are waiting for a door to open after struggles and failed dreams.

Maybe you are waiting to experience God, wondering if you have been forgotten or overlooked.



My prayer is that you would experience Jesus in a new, profound way this season.

I want to encourage us all to take full advantage of the Advent season this year. Waiting is always hard, but it is not always passive. Advent waiting is *hopeful* waiting. Advent waiting is *active* waiting. While God will certainly show up on God's own timetable (which is never aligned with mine), we can still be preparing our hearts. We can still notice where the Holy Spirit is working. Even as we wait, we can catch glimpses of God's kingdom around us each day. Perhaps it is in the warm glow of that Advent candle, or the laughter of a child. Perhaps it is in the kindness shared with a stranger or a coworker. When we practice generosity, providing gifts for local families through **LifeWise STL**, or creating life-changing opportunities for families around the world through **ELCA Good Gifts**, we are actively sharing God's love even while we await the fullness of God's kingdom.

So, rather than flying through Advent this year (like Santa on Dec. 24) and filling our time with just things like Grinches or Hallmark holiday romance flicks (although I hope you watch some of these joyous movies, too), let us slow down. Let us dwell deeply in the present moment. Embrace the waiting and the longing.

Isaiah 64:1 says, "*O that you would tear open the heavens and come down.*"
The God we have been waiting for *is* coming.

In this season that can get so busy, so rushed, so dazzlingly overwhelming, remember to slow down and rest. Rest in the waiting. Pray through the longing.

May you encounter Jesus in the stillness of Advent,
Pastor Josh



New Trivia Night & Silent Auction **by: Andrew Leach**

We have some exciting changes to announce! After 20+ years of FLY hosting our Trivia Night & Silent Auction, we are transitioning to a new Good Shepherd Trivia Night & Silent Auction. A few changes for our March 2024 Trivia Night are below.

We will have a professional Master of Ceremonies, Mark Amino, owner of Questionable Pursuits. It will be exciting to have a Trivia Guru with years of experience be with us! This will allow FLY parents to focus their time and energy on other crucial areas of FLY's ministry.

Alcohol will be allowed at the event. Council discussed and approved alcohol on a "Bring your Own" basis (We will not be serving it.) Many Trivia Nights, including ministries and churches, allow participants to bring their own alcohol and participants enjoy this option during adult events. By shifting leadership away from our youth, we can offer this for the first time. We believe this change will increase the number of participants and thus increase donations to our ministry from the wider community.

We will have our Silent Auction online through 32Auctions.com. The Auction will begin February 25 and end the evening of the Trivia Night. This will allow you to support our event and win awesome items if you are unable to be present for the event!

The change in leadership came after careful consideration. FLY will still participate in some of the familiar ways, including childcare, but there will be a greater church wide involvement than in the past. FLY will continue to receive some of the proceeds, however some will also be utilized for special projects at Good Shepherd.

Trivia Night is one of our largest fellowship events of the year. Everyone comes to have fun, hang out with friends, meet new friends, and enjoy friendly competition. We hope you will join us! Sign up for a table and try out the new style of Trivia Night here at Good Shepherd!

[Sign Up for Trivia Night](#)

Trivia Night: **March 9, 2024, at 6:30pm** (Doors open at 6:00pm).

Early Registration: December 1 - February 18: **\$25** per person (**\$200/table**)

Late Registration: February 19 - March 9: **\$30** per person (**\$240/table**)

For any questions or if you wish to donate an item or service (perhaps from your local business!) please contact me at aleach@gslcelca.org.

Thanks,
Andrew Leach



Welcome Team "Wink" Elliott Haugen

Welcome to December and the season of Advent during which we prepare to celebrate the birth of Jesus. At this and other times, we often focus more on preparing and waiting than on enjoying the actual event or experience. It could be a shame to wait for and receive a gift and then not open or use it. We would miss the chance to share the joy and benefits of the gift. So, during Advent and the celebration of Jesus' birth, let's continue to share that gift of unequalled love, kindness, concern, and support with each other.

The Welcome Team thanks you for sharing yourself so others can also experience the wonderful gift of Jesus. We wish you a blessed and merry Christmas and a joy-filled New Year!

"And the angel said unto them, 'Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.'"

Luke 2:10

**To access your Good Shepherd Connect "member profile",
click the button below:**

[Good Shepherd Connect Profile](#)

**Weekly Services Saturday 5pm (casual) and
Sunday 9am (traditional) and 11am (contemporary)**
goodshepherdlutheran.com | 636-391-6685 | [Calendar](#)