



# Good News From Good Shepherd

*"I am the Good Shepherd. The Good Shepherd gives His life for the sheep."*  
John 10:11

December, 2021

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## Our Gifts from God

It is time to begin Christmas gift shopping for our families. I, for one, struggle with finding special gifts for my friends and family that they will appreciate. One Christmas, my aunt gave my son a hand-made wooden car. As soon as he opened it, he threw it on the ground and cried, "I don't want that!" He clearly did not appreciate and downright despised the gift. I was ashamed, not only for him, because it made me think of how often I have felt the same way about gifts I have received. I may not throw them on the floor, but I cast them down in my heart. Sadly, the Bible tells us how we treat the gifts of God in the same manner:

- **Psalm 106:24** <sup>24</sup> Then they despised the pleasant land; they did not believe his promise.
- **Ezekiel 22:8** <sup>8</sup> You have despised my holy things and desecrated my Sabbaths.
- **Psalm 107:11** <sup>11</sup> for they had rebelled against the words of God and despised the counsel of the Most High.
- **2 Chronicles 36:16** <sup>16</sup> But they mocked God's messengers, despised his words and scoffed at his prophets until the wrath of the LORD was aroused against his people and there was no remedy.
- **Ezekiel 16:59** <sup>59</sup> "This is what the Sovereign LORD says: I will deal with you as you deserve, because you have despised my oath by breaking the covenant.
- **Psalm 22:6** <sup>6</sup> But I am a worm and not a man, scorned by men and despised by the people.

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The Bible shows how many ways we can find ourselves despising not only the gifts of God's daily provision, holiness, counsel and promises, but God himself. As I read this list this Christmas, I am cut to the heart knowing that I have been guilty of each type at some point in my life. But something perplexes me about all of this. God knew mankind would despise his gifts, yet he sent Jesus, the perfect gift, to us for our salvation anyway. "He chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things - and the things that are not - to nullify the things that are, so that no one may boast before him." (1 Corinthians 1:28).

God gave the gift of his son whom he knew we would despise, a gift that resulted in righteousness, holiness and redemption for us all. He gave his son, despite our despising him and "throwing him down onto the floor," to save us and turn our hearts back toward him. Once we were alienated from God and were enemies in our minds because of our evil behavior. But now we have been reconciled by Christ's physical body through death so he can present us holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation (Colossians 1:21-22). This act of reconciliation shows how truly gracious God is. While we were yet enemies of God, Christ died for us and turned us back to him in a renewed relationship.

As I reflect on what God has done, it brings to mind how special Christ's birth really is, and I want to worship God more. God loves me no matter how much I have despised him. Please, join with me this season with grateful hearts celebrating the gifts God has given us and thanking Him for how wonderful and blessed God the Father and the gift of our Lord Jesus really are.

David Smith, Head Elder (210.218.3685, [Destax1962@gmail.com](mailto:Destax1962@gmail.com))

## A Message from Your President



And he will go on before the Lord, in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the parents to their children and the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous—to make ready a people prepared for the Lord. Luke 1:17

This verse from Luke is a customary part of our Advent scripture readings, we've heard it read, and probably read it ourselves, many times over about the assignment given John, the Baptist son of doubting and muted Zechariah. But as often happens, we hear things new in the common. What struck me and would not leave my head is the phrase highlighted in blue - **to make ready a people prepared for the Lord**. Perhaps my sensitivity was heightened as I led the Whiz Kids through the church. I asked them whether they noticed any difference from the last time they were in there, of course hoping they would see the obvious, all the decorations heralding the season. This led to my contemplating later, with some dismay and reminiscing, that which I have yet to do!

For instance, placing precious old or sparkling new Christmas decorations on OLD dust is not acceptable! We must clean EVERYTHING before decorating. And even before hanging Christmas balls on the fresh, new tree, they must all be dusted. Then I was led to further contemplate what all the preparation/decoration accomplishes and, finally, how does one truly become **a people prepared for the Lord**?

The conclusion I came to is pretty simple in thought, tougher to achieve, but one I shall strive for inspired by John. His purpose was singular (to prepare the people), his attitude unpretentious, humble, (**He (Christ) must increase, but I must decrease.** [John 3:30]), his decoration simple (a coat of camel's hair). So here's my plan and I hope it can be ours collectively. The best way for me to prepare-by-decrease is to set aside my ornately decorated robe of self-righteousness and put on Jesus' offered robe of His righteousness - laced with humility, sparkling with the joy of thanksgiving and hemmed all around in the strength of faith and forgiveness. Then so decorated, let me/us be found in the same place and state of mind as our sister Mary - [Luke 10:42] at his feet, in rapt attention, ready to receive the one thing needful - **HIM! Blessings to us all for a well-prepared CHRISTmas.**



**Council Actions:** The primary focus of the November council meeting was the final preparation of the recommended 2022 budget and firming up the ideas around managing our funds for presentation to the voters. Consensus was also reached to not meet in December and to support the Federation budget as presented.

Your council is still in need of a volunteer for appointment to **the position of Secretary**. The Secretary is a voting member of council and a trustee, responsible for recording the minutes of both council and voter meetings.

While the council will not meet in December, the **Finance Committee** will meet to oversee financials and continue its work on an Employee Policy.

**Voter Actions:** While the main focus of the November 14 meeting was the 2022 budget, which was approved as presented, the voters also took action on: 1) moving dollars to the Building Fund; 2) moving dollars to the Operating Reserve Fund; 3) establishing a '13th Month' debt reduction fund with the goal of reducing the mortgage principal by \$100k in the next 5 years; 4) accepting new members into the congregation; and 5) approving the Federation budget.

**Marlis Norton, Council Pres.**

*Embraced by His Grace, Engaged in His Word, Empowered by His Spirit*



## Advent Services

We will soon be thinking about Christmas and how we plan to get everything ready to celebrate. The Church is getting ready as well. We prepare as a people of God with our Advent devotions and services on Wednesdays beginning on December 1. Each service will begin at 7 PM.

**The focus this year:**

**December 1: Zechariah's Silence**

**December 8: Elizabeth's Expectation**

**December 15: Mary's Faith**

Advent specifically focuses on Christ's "coming," but Christ's coming manifests itself among us in three ways — past, present, and future.

As the coming season focuses on Christ's coming, we will celebrate together on Christmas Eve at 5 PM and 7:30 PM, with special music at 7 PM prior to the service.

There will be a Potluck dinner preceding the service at 6 pm. You are invited to join us.



## Musical Notes:

Calling all singers. We are beginning choir rehearsals on Wednesday, December 1, after the Advent services and will plan to sing on Christmas Eve at the 7:30 service.

Musicians interested in playing pre-service music prior to the 7:30 Christmas Eve service should contact Kim or Glen Leavens.

## Favorite Christmas Hymn Sing

Join us at the Wednesday Advent services (December 1 and 8 at 7 PM) and vote on your top three Christmas hymns from the hymnal and we will sing selections at the Advent service on December 15<sup>th</sup>. A handout will be available only at the Wednesday services and your top selections will be sung on the night of December 15<sup>th</sup>.

## Women's Auxiliary of the Federation - Mission Opportunities

### Cookie Pack

The annual **Cookie Pack for Care Centers** will be in person on **Monday, December 6** at Christ Lutheran beginning at 9 a.m. This year we will only be seeking 'regular' cookies - NO diabetic versions needed, and please NO nuts and NO bar cookies. Make it a family affair! Get the kids involved! Deliver cookies by the dozens to church **by Sunday, Dec. 5** and they will get delivered to the event if you cannot attend to help assemble the boxes.



## Fidget Blankets

Ladies, this is a multi-skilled project for Alzheimer patients. The Auxiliary is encouraging us to come together to make Fidget Blankets. They are small lap units with sensory stimulating adornments. Instructions are available. Complete your blanket anytime this fall - maybe target Christmas! See Marlis for information.





# Christian Education



## Women's Bible Breakfast • Saturday • December 11

Our study will be a selection from the LWML Quarterly. We will be on-site for those who wish to attend in person. You are encouraged to bring your own favorite breakfast and are not required to share. If you wish to share a dish, awesome. If you wish to participate remotely, let the office know by Wednesday, December 8 and a Zoom session will be set up and the study emailed to you.

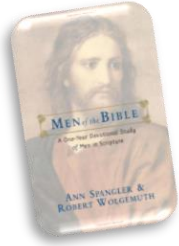
## Women's Sunday Bible Study • *Forgiveness* • 8:45 a.m.

Our small group meets in the Duchow Room. Our study is *Forgiveness* by Donna Pyle(now Snow). The book is available from CPH for \$14.99. Please feel free to join in. It's not too late!



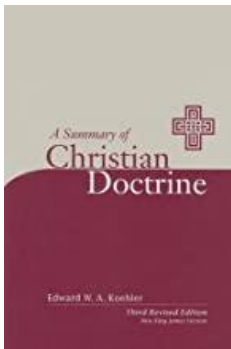
## Women's Tuesday Bible Study • *Men of the Bible* • 9:30 am

We are meeting in person; providing zoom for those who prefer. All are welcome. Join in any time. We study one person each session, no book required. If you wish to be included, let Lynn know and we'll get the meeting invite to you.



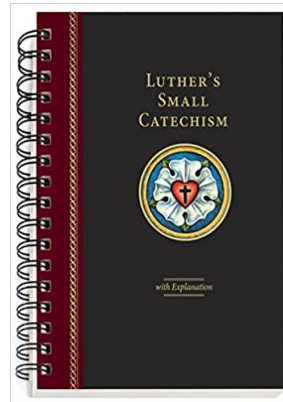
## Women's Bible Study at Sherri Smith's Tuesdays 3-5 pm and 6-8 pm

All women are welcome to join WBS, including friends outside of GSLC. Contact Sherri who lives in Union at 210-854-2598 if interested.



## Men's Bible Study Mondays 10:00 am

*A Summary of Christian Doctrine*



## Luther's Small Catechism Pastor's Bible Study

Sunday 8:45 am Wednesday 7:00 pm



## The Children's Christmas Play

Please join on Sunday, Dec 19 for the children's Christmas play, *The Birth of Jesus*. It will be presented during the worship hour at 10:00.



## Adopt A Family Christmas Angel Tree

The Human Care Committee of Good Shepherd is again sponsoring the Adopt-A-Family Christmas Giving Program. As in the past we will adopt children in need from our community. We will provide Christmas gifts to brighten their holiday so they will know that they are remembered and loved on this most special holiday.

Please open your heart and consider sharing with these family by choosing a name from the Angel Tree located in the Gathering Area. Write your name on the Angel Tree list next to the tree. Purchase the items listed on the tag, attach it securely to the gift, and return the gift to the Gathering Area. All gifts must be wrapped and returned by December 12. If you have any questions, please contact Mary Givhan or Lynn Mitchell. May God bless your giving.

## Thank You from Human Care

### ← Operation Child

There were 21 boxes collected. What a blessing you are to the kids who will receive these gifts.

### Thanksgiving Baskets →

12 families received the baskets you filled with Thanksgiving fixing.



### December

- Vincent Woolley
- Taylor Mason
- Shirley Duane
- Calvin Herr
- Ashlyn Brann
- Josh Molina

- December 1
- December 5
- December 18
- December 18
- December 21
- December 28

### January

- Isaiah Warren
- Kim Leavens
- Zach Molina
- Marian Brockhoff
- Austin Duane
- Randall Gage
- Robert Brown
- Mary Givhan

- January 8
- January 10
- January 15
- January 17
- January 20
- January 21
- January 29
- January 31



# November Events

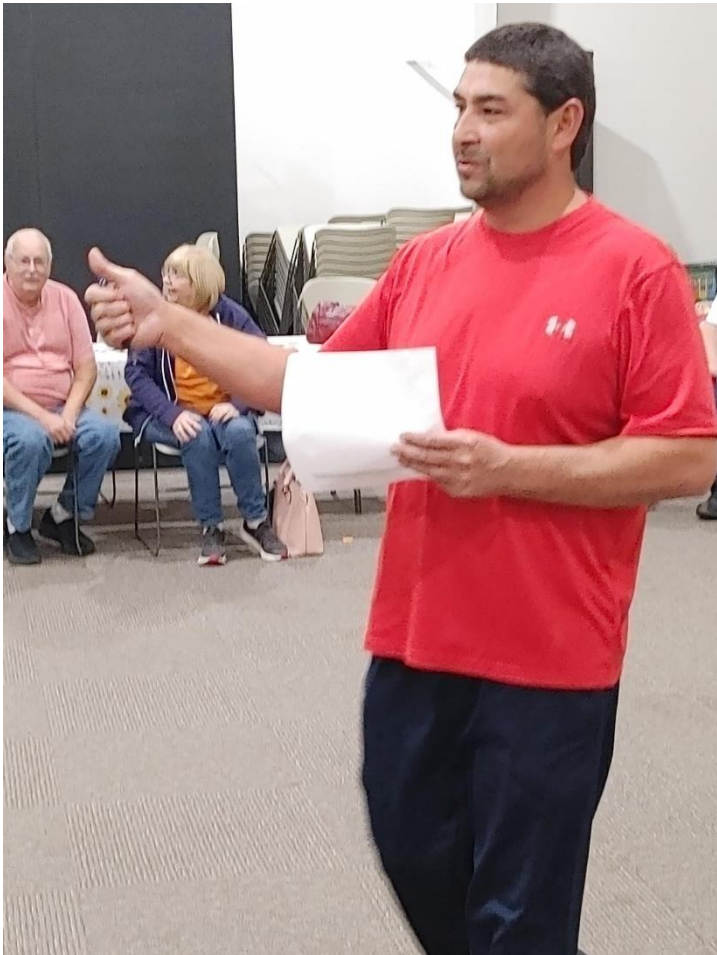
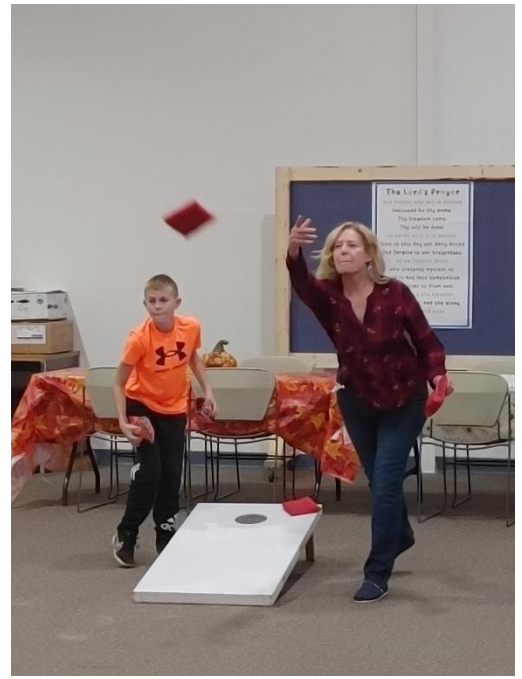
## Thanksgiving Dinner and Corn Hole Tournament



Becky had it under control. Great leader.



# Corn Hole Practice



**Mark had this one under control!**



## And the Winners Are



**1<sup>st</sup> Place – Mark and Ty**



**2<sup>nd</sup> Place Katelyn and Adam**



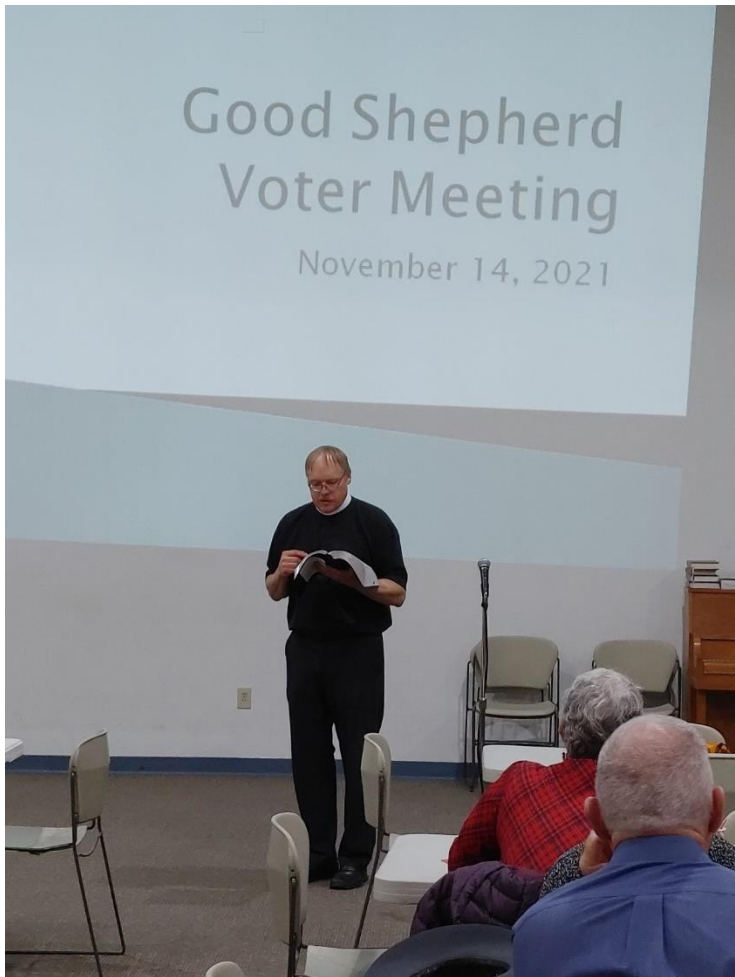
**3<sup>rd</sup> Place Mike and Eric**



**Actually, we were all winners. The meal was delicious. Thanks to all who came for food, fun and fellowship. We raised over \$600 which will be used to help the youth attend the Higher Things Conference in 2022.**

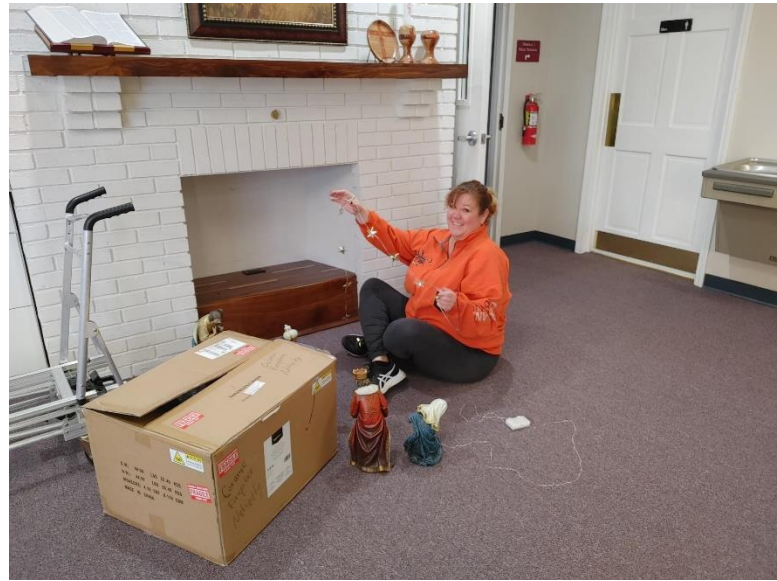


# Voters Meeting





# Holiday Church Decorating



**Thanks, ladies for your hard work.**





**Baptism of Meekah Joana Siren  
Parents: Zachary & Mariah Siren  
Granddaughter of Tim and Mary Siren**



**Sunday, December 19**  
**We will be signing to our shut ins and others in the community.**  
**Please join us!**  
**More information to come.**

*When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly. . . (Matthew 2:10)*



*For unto you is born this day in the city of David  
a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. (Luke 2:11)*

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