



Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd

December 2024



I come in the name of the Lord.
What an amazingly blessed thing to hear but
consider how much more blessed it is to say.
For when we come as followers of Christ,
when we come bearing the good news, when
we come in the image of Almighty God,
then we can surely proclaim this. And not
only is our proclamation in word, but in
thought, word, and deed.
Over two millennia ago, the world awaited
in great anticipation the coming of the one
who was promised long before, they awaited
the anointed of the Lord. And yet, this was
not their expectation, but one that was given
from God.

Likewise, there would be Magi journeying
from distant lands. They had heard of these
promises, and they had searched the heavens

Greetings!



The children and adult choir as well as our resi-
dent pianist extraordinaire, Becky have all been
busy rehearsing advent and Christmas music. We
would love to share our solos, duets, and anthems
with you in a 30 minute pre-service mini concert
on Christmas Eve. We will begin at 6:30 and can't
wait to usher in the birth of our Savior with beau-
tiful music. See you there!

Dr. Parthun

We are Christ's hands and voice in the world

THE SHEPHERD'S HORN



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GOOD SHEPHERD Lutheran Church [ELCA]

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9 am - 3:00 p.m.

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for signs that He might come. And they understood that the coming king would appear in the form of a helpless infant. Again, this was not their expectation but one that was given from God.

Finally, there were shepherds who lived among their flocks. They were considered lowly in the grand scheme of things. For as cities and villages developed, they lived apart from these places by necessity. For their focus was not upon themselves, but upon the flock with which they were entrusted. Does this sound familiar? It should. And again, the expectation they came to hold for the one born in a manger was not their own but one that was given by God.

Are you seeing a pattern develop? Yes, it is intentional. For in this season of anticipation of the one to come, it is a wonderful opportunity to consider our expectations. Expectations are considered as common as humanity itself. But have you ever considered what expectations truly are and what they are about? Or maybe I should say who they are about?

Lutherans have long been people who supported education and valued knowledge. After all, Martin Luther was actually Dr. Martin Luther. Humans seek understanding of the world in which we live and part of that desire is to focus upon the questions of where we come from, how did we come to be, who our creator is.

As we search for meaning to our lives and existence, we turn to the one who was sent to this world so many years ago and to his teachings.

Our Lord's teachings are all incredibly valuable to us as it leads us in the way of righteousness. And when walking in this way our lives experience a peace that passes all understanding. In other words, the peace that we experience in spite of the situations and challenges that may come doesn't make sense to this world.

Jesus wanted us to have that peace now. For that peace is only possible by completely trusting and following him. As the original Greek states in the gospel according to John, we believe into Him, believe into Christ. We become like Christ. One of the principal teachings of Jesus is not to judge. Yeah, right! We might think. But there is a really good reason that Jesus tells us this. First of all, we never have all of the knowledge about any situation that occurs in life. And to judge something properly we would need that information to be accurate in our understanding. This is why the book of James tells us that there is one lawgiver and one judge. James continues by saying, "Who then are we, that we should judge?" In other words, God is the only judge for it is God and God alone who knows everything. We simply do not.

But what does this have to do with expectations you may ask? Simply this. Expectations that we hold are often, if not always, focused upon our own points of view or how we think things should be.

So, hopefully, the question that you now are considering is why would we think that things would be the way we want them to be? If you are thinking in this way, you are certainly correct. For we are not God. We are subjects of Christ our King and creations of God the Father. And this is why Jesus

taught us to pray the way that He did, when speaking to God we say, thy kingdom come, thy will be done. You notice that it is not my will, but God's will. Our prayer is not that the world fulfills our expectations, but God's expectations. And when it comes to knowing the way of God, we are still learning and hopefully, constantly learning about our creator.

So, what does it look like to walk through our days without expectations? Imagine it, if you will. Facing each day seeing things as they are rather than how we want them to be. Accepting others and ourselves as we are and recognizing that we all are on a journey of learning about God, about life, about ourselves.

And like the disciples following Jesus, none of us get all things right. And even though this is true, God doesn't give up on us. One of the beautiful things of following Christ in this way is that we no longer give up on each other.

What does it look like? It looks peaceful. It looks kind. It looks like understanding. This truly is a gift from God from the greatest gift from the Father that any of us have ever received. This looks like Jesus.

Blessings,
Pastor Faron

In just a few weeks, we will celebrate Christmas. As 2024 draws to a close, we continue to give thanks for the faithful and generous gifts that support the ministry of Good Shepherd! Because of you, we not only continue to serve our Lord in this community, but touch lives in other places across our country and even the world! Most recently, we have again enjoyed tremendous support for providing Thanksgiving Baskets to 20 families in Virginia Beach, as well as for our Food Pantry which is seeing ever greater usage. None of these things, to say nothing of the day-to-day work and weekly worship and activities that are the core of our life together, would be possible without your support.

Below is the support for our ministries for the month of November and the Year to Date. We have the month of December to **close any gap** we may have. In order for any donation to be counted for 2024, it must be in by **December 31**.

	Month	YTD
Support	\$28,402	\$ 311,260
Expense	\$26,622	\$ 287,972
Over/[short]	\$ 1,70	\$ [23,288]

Mark Your Calendar



Good Shepherd will be hosting a blood drive **January 16, 2025**. The tentative time is 1:00 pm to 6:00 pm. We are asking for volunteers to help check people in, hand out snacks, and don't forget to give blood. More information to come in January.

- 5 Ethan Wilson-Leavell
- 13 Ulaine Pelton
- 17 Jody Bryant
- 21 Rachel Jerlin
- 25 Cheryl Tennant
- 26 Dennis Blough
- 27 Kevin Jones
- 30 Buddy Anderson, Jr.

If your birthday isn't listed please contact Pat Morgan in the Office at 319-4847 or email her at patm@goodshepherdvb.org

NOTICE!

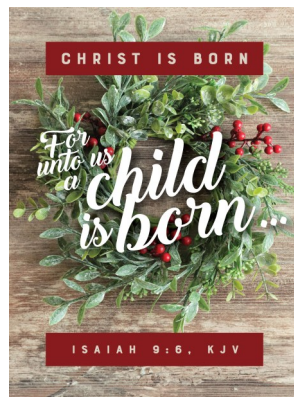
All reports for the Annual Report must be submitted to Pat Morgan, no later than **JANUARY 26**. This is the absolute deadline!!



Advent to Christmas

The Advent liturgy is often comparable to Lent: contemplative, repentant, confessional and prayerful as a preparation time to await and anticipate the coming of Messiah. While carols are on radio and in the malls, the church waits for the celebration of Christmas to make ready for the arrival of Jesus. We liturgical churches always need to explain this to our folks. We wait, we anticipate, we hope and then God delivers! Happy Advent to you and very soon Merry Christmas!

**Christmas Eve
Worship: 7:00 pm**
Traditional worship with carols, candlelight and communion. Please join us and invite your friends and families. All Are Welcome here at Good Shepherd.



The Church has been a place where the beloved of God have come for millennia to worship and encounter the presence of our Lord. And with this tradition it has always been rich in symbolism with icons, stained glass windows, paraments, and in this season, Christmas that orient us towards that unseen God and the son who is the very image of the Father.

While reflecting upon this I consider the many other symbols that we have through our lives that also convey messages and meanings. As you decorate your homes for this Christmas season I am sure that you will do as I have in the past, opening boxes that have been stored that not only contain ornaments and decorations, but so many memories. Some were gifts from special people in our lives, some were made by our children or grandchildren when they were small. We don't only see the objects, but we see the persons and hear their voices and laughter with the eyes of our hearts.

This Advent and Christmas season you will notice two small additions to the church's decorations, two small Christmas trees that come from my past serving God. The first one is very small, but comes from a very powerful time in my life. While in seminary, as you may know, I was presented with some very difficult times and decisions. Through this time I surrendered my home, my land, my savings, and ultimately, my family. These things were not my idea of what following Jesus would ever look like, but for me, this is what happened. Yet, through the difficulty the Lord showed me a greater understanding of His teaching and when I hear the words of St. Peter, "Lord, we have left everything for you," it brings a richer meaning to my heart.

The things that were happening in my life were shared with my sisters and



The Office will be closed beginning the end of the work day December 23 through January 1, 2023. The office will reopen on Monday, January 6. For **EMERGEN-
CIES ONLY from Dec. 23 - Jan. 6,** please contact Pat Morgan on her mobile phone (757) 286-5184.

brothers in Christ who were also preparing for the ministry and give them cause to ask questions of themselves. How dedicated are we all to following? How far would we go? Can we walk in the path of the widow who gave two small coins?

One of my brothers who had given up his profession as a medical doctor was also searching his soul as he followed. While I was away helping my brother's in their studies he left something in the doorway of my dorm room, a small tree with an angel of silver on it. With it he had written a note. No one should face Christmas without a Christmas tree. I was overwhelmed when I found it and understood that Christ was already giving me what He desired for my life rather than what my desires were.



In my first congregation as pastor there was a lovely 90 year old lady who was always very considerate and kind. One day she called her pastor saying, "Pastor, I'm not bothering you am I?" This gave me the opportunity to use one of my favorite phrases. "Jesus sent me here for you." She had questions about scripture that she had been reading about. I encouraged her to keep a piece of paper beside her Bible so she could write down her questions. Through our faith journey together I learned about front porch ministry. I would go over to her house on occasion and we would sit on her front porch in a glider. We would talk about Jesus, the Bible, we would pray and watch the birds come to her feeders.

The Lord teaches us to ask, and you shall receive. Seek, and you will find. Knock, and it will be opened unto you. Betty had learned the value of taking that initiative to seek to be closer to Jesus. She had learned the treasure of intentional faith. We remained friends through the years and her faith began to fail. I would visit her in the home that she had to move to and watched as she continually encountered

others while learning more about Jesus.

As she neared the end of her time here I would visit. Her eyes were already fixed and her breathing was labored. Her daughter stood in front of her face while I came up behind her calling her name. Her daughter cried and I looked up at her and she said, "Momma smiled!" The night came when I received a call around 1 a.m. from her son saying momma has passed. When I arrived at the nursing home. She was in her bed and covered. Beside her was her angel tree. A Christmas tree filled with angels. It was beside her casket during her funeral and her children said they felt it should remain with me.

I have carried both these trees through my time as a pastor and thought I would share them with the congregation by adding them to the decorations. But I also wanted you to not just see the trees, but know the stories of Jason and Betty, who followed the Lord.



Shalom,

Pastor

Making a difference

2024 has been a busy year for us. Our food pantry is thriving and serving those in need. As of November, we have served a total of **3,354 individuals** and **820 families**. We would not be able to do this without your assistance in donations and money and the donations from Target and Food Lion. I am pleased to announce that Friends School contributes their excess of individual cartons of milk, fruit and lunches every Wednesday.



Holiday Food Pantry Hours

The Food Pantry will be open on **Wednesdays** from 10:30 – Noon through December 18, and on **Saturday** December 14 from 10:30 – Noon. The Food Pantry will be closed for Christmas break, December 21—reopening on Wednesday, Jan. 3.

December 2024

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 9:30 Worship 10:45 Children's Choir 11 Adult Forum	2	3 7 pm Council	4 10:30 Food Pantry 11 Men's Bible Study 7 Pastor's Bible	5	6 10 SWEA Bazaar Setup	7 9 am - 3 pm SWEA Bazaar
8 9:30 Worship 10:45 Children's Choir 11 Adult Forum	9	10	11 10:30 Food Pantry 11 Men's Bible Study 7 Pastor's Bible Study	12	13	14 10:00 Food Pantry
15 9:30 Worship 10:45 Children's Choir 11 Adult Forum	16	17	18 10:30 Food Pantry 11 Men's Bible Study 7 Pastor's Bible Study	19	20	21
22 9:30 Worship 10:45 Children's Choir 11 Adult Forum	23	24 6:30 Pre-Service Mini Concert 7 Christmas Eve Candlelight Service	25 No Food Pantry	26	27	28 No Food Pantry
29 9:30 Lessons and Carols	30	31				



The Office will be closed for Christmas Break beginning December 24 through January 6.

Please join us on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/GoodShepherdLutheranChurchVB>. Find live streamed services, bulletins, and other news about events.

Serving This Month

December 3—First Sunday of Advent

Assisting Minister	Lesli White
Communion Assistant	Sunny Hollenbach
Reader	Trish Farley
Ushers	Kevin Jones, Karin Lundgren
Advent Lighting	The Chandler Family
Altar Guild	
Coffee Hosts	Altar Guild in honor of Fran Sunderland
Children's Message	Alexander Shaw
Food Pantry	Bobbi Skinner-White, Robin Patrick, Marilyn Berge 12/6 Ruth Shaw, Eilene Roth, Jim Owens 12/9

December 10—Second Sunday of Advent

Assisting Minister	Jacqueline Rosendahl
Communion Assistant	
Reader	
Usher	Sunny Hollenbach, Mark Rosendahl
Advent Lighting	The Lake Family
Altar Guild	
Coffee Hosts	Parish Life Ministry in celebration of December birthdays
Food Pantry	Gwyne Van Slyke, Mary Ann Beard, Robin Patrick 12/13

December 17—Third Sunday of Advent

Assisting Minister	Bobbi Skinner-White
Communion Assistant	
Reader	Michael Solhaug
Usher	
Altar Guild	
Farewell Brunch	In honor of Steve Sunderland
Food Pantry	Denise Haag, Linda Radix, Marilyn Berge 12/20

December 24 - Fourth Sunday of Advent

	<u>9:30am</u>
Assisting Minister	Steve Jackson
Communion Assistant	Sunny Hollenbach
Reader	Michael Solhaug
Usher	
Altar Guild	

Christmas Eve

<u>7:00 pm</u>
Skip Banner
Donna White

December 31

Assisting Minister	Jackie Rosendahl
Communion Assistant	
Reader	
Usher	Mark Rosendahl
Altar Guild	



*Good Shepherd
Lutheran Church [ELCA]
1489 Laskin Road
Virginia Beach, VA
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Address Service Requested



Wishing you the blessings
of peace, love, and joy at
Christmas.

Pastor Faron

Karen Parthun

Pat Morgan

*First Sunday
Of Advent*

*Lighting of the
First Advent Candle*



The Jerlin/White Families