THE SHEPHERD'S VOICE

Good Shepherd Lutheran Church

APRIL 2025

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A WORD FROM OUR PASTOR

Beloved in Christ,

Midweek Lenten Services:

It is easy to be in a constant state of thankfulness to God while serving at Good Shepherd. In these midweek Lenten services I feel my cup overflowing with gratitude as I listen to our midweek preachers, Brooke Joyce's playing of the *Mourning Into Dancing* liturgy, your singing and the cantors' singing.

Our preachers, Wanda Deifelt, David Scott, and Melissa Bills have so thoughtfully, deeply, and prayerfully prepared their sermons. How blessed we are. You can listen to their sermons again online. We would also like to make their manuscripts available. We look forward to Martin Klammer and Rolf Svanoe in the coming midweek services and your singing of Mourning Into Dancing.

Special thanks to Brooke for his leadership of this new liturgy, bringing such richness to every worship service. Thank you to Karin Martin-Hiner and Judd Larson as cantors. You and our wonderful singing congregation fill the sanctuary with the beauty of your voices and instruments praising God through this worship setting.

Looking ahead:

God has called our new pastor, Pastor Kristen Larsen-Schmidt, to lead this congregation. She has so many gifts, but I am thankful she also has strong vision and gifts for youth and family ministry. She will lead a fabulous staff and with the coming of our new Youth Director and Communications Coordinator Gabby Bizal (starting May 1st), Good Shepherd has an opportunity to mightily grow this ministry in new ways that work in these 2025+ times at Good Shepherd and in our Decorah churches.

Please write "Gabby Day", Wednesday April 23rd, in your calendar and meet Gabby Bizal, our new Youth Director and Communication Coordinator, for a taco supper at 5:30. Food is being organized by our "Sunday Eat, Play, Love" group. Watch for more details coming on this meal and special time with Gabby Bizal.

As of April 1st, I have nine more worship services with you as your interim pastor. Two of them will be preached by Martin Klammer and Rolf Svanoe. My last Sunday is April 27th. My exit interview is April 29 with the Council and my last day is April 30th. There will also be one final newsletter article from me.

We are so blessed that Pastor Susan Friedrich has agreed to serve as your Pastor for May and June until Pastor Kristen begins June 16th. Thank you Pastor Susan! As you know, Pastor Susan and her husband Norman are members of Good Shepherd. She preached a fabulous sermon here on this past Transfiguration Sunday, March 2nd. I know you are looking forward

A WORD FROM OUR PASTOR

to her preaching, worship leadership, pastoral leadership and pastoral care for May and June until Pastor Kristen begins.

Pastor Susan has twenty-five years as a minister in the ELCA and recently has been serving as an interim pastor for the Northeastern Iowa Synod. She also is the Secretary of the Northeastern Iowa Synod! We are very proud of her at Good Shepherd and extremely thankful she has agreed to run the last leg of this Interim relay. This person is called the anchor in relay races. Thank you Pastor Susan for being our anchor in the final leg of this interim!

Next month will be my final newsletter article and thanks for the time together. Hopefully the lead article in the May newsletter will be from Pastor Susan with more detail on herself and her ministry and family.

Holy Week Worship and Easter Sunday:

Our Lenten worship disciplines come into their final sprint. We see in the Scriptures how the disciples fail Jesus as he goes to his final journey to the cross. Judas betrays him, Peter denies him, and they all fall asleep in Gethsemane when Jesus pleads with them to stay awake. As Jesus goes on trial and to the cross, his disciples run away. Only a few women stay with Jesus all the way to the cross. These men who fail, lose their courage, are still hiding out for fear of the authorities after Jesus is raised. Later these same fearful disciples are transformed by the power of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. They were transformed by the Holy Spirit into fearless witnesses and followers of Jesus. They courageously preached the Good News of Christ, repentance, forgiveness of sins, the cross and the Resurrection for all people. We are also those post-resurrection Christians who have been given the Holy Spirit and by the Spirit's power follow Jesus into these final days of Holy Week.

It was the strange tradition after Jesus' death and resurrection to worship each day of the Three Day Festival. For us it begins at 7 PM Maundy Thursday with personal absolution, Holy Communion and the stripping of the altar. Good Friday is the special Jazz Service at 7 PM. The Saturday evening Easter Vigil with the story of faith and the bonfire is at 7 PM. Sunday morning we celebrate the Resurrection of Jesus, the most important festival of the church year at the 9:30 AM Easter Sunday Festival service. It is followed a 11:30 AM by an Easter brunch graciously co-hosted by the EPIC Scholarship Committee and WELCA, as a fundraiser for the Mission Assistance Fund and Mission Endowment Fund. How blessed we are here at Good Shepherd.

We hear God's call to "stay awake and watch and pray" with Jesus in Holy Week Thursday, April 17 through Sunday, April 20. Please mark your calendars and join in worship every night Thursday through Saturday at 7 PM culminating in the Joyous Easter Sunday Festival Worship at 9:30 AM! May the Holy Spirit be poured out on you and Good Shepherd as we enter these final days with Jesus and his journey to the cross for you, for me, for all people.

Yours in gratitude, Pastor April

PRAYER FOR THE MONTH

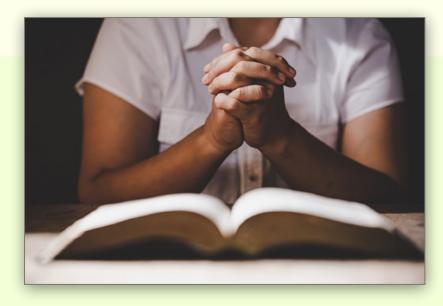
Offered by Jane Jakoubek

Eternal God, your love is unchanging; your forgiveness is greater than anything we can imagine. Help us hold on to your love and your way when everything in our world changes. Help us turn to you to guide us forward. Help us remember what Jesus told those who came to him: love your neighbor as yourself; do not judge so that you will not be judge; forgive seventy times seven. O God, your word challenge us in so many ways, but you are with us, teaching us, guiding us, calming our fearful hearts, encouraging our weary spirits, reminding us that we are not alone. Thank you for being our refuge and strength in this time, and always.

God of grace, thank you for sending Pastor Kristen. Thank you for our Call Committee, Pastor April, and all whose prayer, work and love have brought Good Shepherd through this time. We pray for Pastor Kristen and her family as they prepare to come to Decorah. Encourage her; guide her; hold her in her walk with you in this time of transition. We pray for the Good Shepherd congregation. Encourage us; guide us; hold us in our walk with you in this time of transition. Open our hearts and minds to all you are calling us to for this time.

God of new life, thank you for the cycle of creation that brings Spring and the cycle of the church year that reminds us that it is a Cross that leads to Resurrection. Help us be Easter people, alive with hope and filled with joy. Help us take that hope and joy out into a weary world, to those who live in fear or hunger or want of any kind. Help us be your hands and feet, your voice and prayer for the world.

Amen.



SCRIPTURE FOR THE MONTH

April 6th Fifth Sunday in Lent

Isaiah 43:16-21

The Lord gives water in the wilderness to the chosen people

Psalm 126

Those who sowed with tears will reap with songs of joy. (Ps. 126:5)

Philippians 3:4b-14

To know Christ and his resurrection, to share in his sufferings

Mark 14:3-9

The anointing at Bethany

April 20th Resurrection of our Lord

Acts 10:34-43

God raised Jesus on the third day

Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24

This is the day that the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it. (Ps. 118:24)

1 Corinthians 15:19-26

Christ raised from the dead, the first fruits

John 20:1-18

Seeing the risen Christ

April 13th Passion Sunday

Isaiah 50:4-9a

The servant of the Lord submits to suffering

Psalm 31:9-16

Into your hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit. (Ps. 31:5)

Philippians 2:5-11

Humbled to the point of death on a cross

Luke 22:14-23:56

The passion of the Lord

April 27th Second Sunday of Easter

Acts 5:27-32

The God of our ancestors raised up Jesus

Psalm 150

Let everything that has breath praise the Lord. (Ps. 150:6)

Revelation 1:4-8

Jesus Christ, the firstborn of the dead, is coming

John 20:19-31

Beholding the wounds of the risen Christ

2025 YOUTH LENTEN PROJECT

YOUTH LENTEN PROJECT SUPPORTS LUTHERAN SERVICES IN IOWA

The Good Shepherd Education Committee is excited to announce that this year's Lenten Project, sponsored by Good Shepherd Sunday School children and youth, will raise funds for <u>Lutheran Services in Iowa</u> (LSI), one of the largest nonprofit human services agencies in Iowa.



The GS Sunday School youth selected LSI because they wanted to support Lutheran aid organizations that have been targeted nationally and within Iowa. Additionally, the students felt that it was important to remind the congregation of the critical work done each day across Iowa by LSI. The GS Sunday School children and youth's goal is to raise \$5,000 for LSI.

Throughout the Lenten season, GS children and youth will work together during Sunday School to write offering prayers. They will then share these prayers, along with a LSI fact, during services each Wednesday and Sunday, beginning on Ash Wednesday and continuing through Palm Sunday.

Donations for LSI can be dropped in a special donation box created by the younger Sunday School children that was inspired by the ELCA mantra "God's Work. Our Hands." The donation box will be at the altar during the Offertory on Wednesdays and Sundays throughout Lent. If you'd like to write a check, please make it out to Good

ADULT FORUM: LUTHERAN DISASTER RELIEF

Sunday, April 13, 11:00 AM, Gathering Space: Ukraine. Gaza and the West Bank. Sudan. Myanmar. Hurricanes. Wildfires. Drought. Tornadoes. Floods. Over the past year, a new disaster occurred somewhere in the world every two to three days on average. Disasters and crises keep happening with increasing frequency and intensity due to the impacts of climate change. And in the midst of the chaos and suffering, Lutheran Disaster Response is present. Come hear from Maryn Olson, Director of Lutheran Disaster Response, about how our church is accompanying disaster-and crisis-impacted communities around the world, and learn how you can support this life-saving ministry.



A REPORT FROM JIM FRITZ

On Saturday, March 29th, Jim Fritz (representing Mission Green and Good Shepherd) was part of a panel presentation at the "Called to Climate Action Conference" sponsored by the Iowa Faith & Climate Network (formerly the Iowa Interfaith Power and Light) held at Grinnell College.

Jim was a co-presenter with two engineers from Ideal Energy, an Iowa based company that helps create others' plans and install solar and battery storage. Their presentation was highlighting the solar that had been installed at Christ Episcopal Church in Cedar Rapids. Christ Episcopal installed 45 kW of solar on ground mounts to help reduce their carbon footprint. Retired Iowa Senator Rob Hogg, a member of that church, served as convener for this session.

Jim presented Good Shepherd's Carbon Neutral/Net Zero initiative. Jim said it was a good opportunity to share what's possible in a small church compared to the much larger church at Christ Episcopal. The best quote of the day was from Rob Hogg who said, "The project at Christ Church was more of a "Webelo project" while Good Shepherd's Initiative was more like an "Eagle Scout Project"!

The Good Shepherd Carbon Neutral/Net Zero Initiative is receiving high marks around the state for our efforts to "move the needle" on Climate Change!



ELCA NEWS

Interfaith Solidarity Statement on Refugees and Immigrants – March 7

We stand united as people of faith in our commitments to welcome the stranger and to care for the most vulnerable – commitments rooted in our common understanding of our Creator's love for all and call to serve our neighbors.

In these overlapping holy days of Purim, Lent, and Ramadan, we join our voices together to express our grave concern for the individuals and families seeking refuge in this country. We are particularly devastated and concerned for the welfare of the thousands of refugees who were approved and even ready for travel, only to have their plane tickets taken away.

For more than four decades, our faith-rooted organizations have partnered with the US government to ensure that people forced to flee their country because of conflict, violence, or persecution are vetted and arrive legally, to be welcomed in this country with services to meet their basic needs.

The recent US State Department termination of cooperative agreements with the 10 national resettlement agencies in the US has made already-at-risk people even more vulnerable. We urge all people of faith and goodwill to join us in advocating with our elected leaders for our partnerships with the government to be restored so that we can fully work with those we are called to serve.

We invite you to join us in prayer for all people who are forced to flee home. May they know our deep and abiding commitment to their lives and well-being.

The Rev. Elizabeth A. Eaton, Presiding Bishop, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Alesia Frerichs, President & CEO, Lutheran Services in America

Myal Greene, President & CEO, World Relief

Mark Hetfield, President, HIAS

Rabbi Rick Jacobs, President, Union for Reform Judaism

The Rev. Walter Kim, President, National Association of Evangelicals

Rabbi Hara Person, Chief Executive, Central Conference of American Rabbis

Kerry Alys Robinson, President & CEO, Catholic Charities USA

Basharat Saleem, Executive Director, Islamic Society of North America

Richard L. Santos, President & CEO, Church World Service

Ahmed Shehata, Chief Executive Officer, Islamic Relief USA

The Rev. Sarah Shipman, Director, Episcopal Migration Ministries

Krish O'Mara Vignarajah, President & CEO, Global Refuge

ELCA NEWS

Bishop Eaton Issues Video Message for Transgender Day of Visibility – March 31

ELCA Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton has issued a video message for Transgender Day of Visibility. In the video, Eaton speaks out against the inhumane actions by legislatures and executive orders while also speaking directly to the transgender and nonbinary community.

"God created you in God's image and loves and cares for you exactly as you are. ... You deserve to be safe in our communities. Bullying and discrimination have no place in the body of Christ," Eaton said.

Watch the video by going to youtu.be/ba526uFrc7Q or by clicking the link.

The ELCA's commitment to civil and human rights can be found in our resources for the LGBTQIA+ community at <u>ELCA.org/lgbtq</u>.

Another way to learn more about the church's commitment can be found at <u>reconcilingworks.org</u>, an independent Lutheran organization.



WELCA NEWSLETTER

WELCA Newsletter

The Spring meeting of the Upper Iowa River Cluster D will be held on April 5, 2025 at Highland Lutheran, rural Decorah. Coffee time at 8:30 am & Gathering at 9 am. Our speaker will be Christopher Miculinich with the Spectrum Network in Decorah. We are still looking for a host for the Fall Gathering, October 2025. All are welcome to attend.

LWR Kits

Supplies for LWR Personal Care Kits and Baby Care Kits will continue to be collected until Easter. Donations can be dropped off in the containers in the Gathering Space and in the Fellowship hall. Items still needed are: new, dark-colored bath towels (between 20" x 40" and 52" x 27"); 4-5 ounce wrapped bars of soap, any brand; new metal nail clippers; sleepers without feet; cloth diapers, flat fold; dark-colored hand towels. The youth will be assembling the personal care kits on Sunday, April 6 during fellowship hour. Volunteers are needed on Saturday for kit assembly preparation (contact Bev Sheridan). Baby care kit assembly will be Tuesday April 22 at 6 pm, before the Gather bible study. Volunteers are needed before hand to get the supplies from the annex. Contact Gail Judisch if you can help.

The NEIA Synod Women Organization has scholarships available for women continuing their education. Please contact Bev Sheridan, 563-608-3272 for more information.

May Friendship Day will be held Friday, May 2 at First United Methodist. This year's theme is "Life is Better with Friends" based on Colossians 3:12. All are welcome.

Winter/Spring 2025: "Faithfulness" by Denise Rector

Session Four: Jairus and the Woman Who is Bleeding (Mark 5:21-43)

When both Jairus and the woman who is bleeding reach out in their pain and disappointment, Jesus meets them with compassion. Jesus is present in our actions as well, when our listening and grace make us stand out from the world around us. (from Gather website)

WELCA NEWSLETTER

Upcoming events:

April 5: Cluster D Spring Gathering, Highland Lutheran, coffee at 8:30. Gathering at 9.

April 6: Assemble LWR personal care kits, during fellowship hour

April 22: Gather Bible study, Fellowship hall, 7 pm, Lindy Moeller, Bible Study; Connie

Buresh, refreshments; assemble LWR baby care kits at 6 pm

May 2: May Friendship day, First United Methodist

May 3: LWR pickup, Olson Explosives June 14: NEIA SWO Annual Gathering,

EPIC SCHOLARSHIP AND MISSION ENDOWMENT FUND UPDATE

Easter Potluck Dinner to be Hosted by EPIC Scholarship Ministry and WELCA

Good Shepherd WELCA and the Good Shepherd EPIC Scholarship Ministry Committee will host an Easter Potluck Dinner at 11:30 on Easter Sunday in the Fellowship Hall. The dinner will be an all-congregation potluck meal and will serve as a fundraiser for both the Mission Assistance Fund and the Mission Endowment Fund. Freewill offerings will be divided equally between the two ministries. Meat will be provided and members of the congregation are asked to bring a side dish, bread, or dessert. Guests are welcome.

The Good Shepherd Mission Assistance Fund provides financial assistance for those in the community in need, regardless of church affiliation. The fund is administered by the Pastor in consultation with two advisory members of the congregation.

The Mission Endowment Fund is the congregation's vehicle for funding the EPIC Scholarship Ministry. Each year the EPIC Scholarship/Mission Endowment Fund Committee is authorized by the congregation to utilize 4% of the MEF to award a \$1000 EPIC scholarship to each member of the congregation attending an ELCA college.

Service for the Easter Potluck Dinner will be provided by WELCA, the EPIC Scholarship Ministry Committee, and current scholarship recipient families. Plan now to celebrate the joy of Easter with your Good Shepherd family.

MARCH COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

GOOD SHEPHERD LUTHERAN CHURCH CONGREGATION COUNCIL COUNCIL MEETING March 18, 2025 AGENDA

Attending: Chris Johnson, Kris Peterson, Laura Barlament, Anne Clausen, Pr April Ulring Larson, Brian Caton, Sara Hopkins, Marilyn Rue, Lise Kildegaard, Karin Martin-Hiner

Preparing Our Hearts and Minds to Serve

- In one word or one sentence, share what you most need from God now and/or gratitude
- Opening Prayer Pastor April
- As we deliberate, let us affirm our congregation's commitment to pursue racial justice, advocate for migrant families, and support the LGBTQIA community.
- Is there anything on the consent agenda that should be moved to the discussion agenda? If not, is there a motion to approve the whole agenda?

Add new discussion from Stewardship committee.

Sara makes motion to approve the agenda, Laura 2nd and it passed unanimously.

Consent Agenda

- 1. Approval of February 2025 Council Minutes
- 2. Reception of Committee Reports (see summary below)

Discussion Agenda

1. Pastor's Report

Need to walk alongside Gabbie as she starts before the new pastor arrives. A group of people to support her. Laura and Kris will start to coordinate this. Also needs more funding for activities and programming. Pr Susan Friedman is starting May 1st and will continue until the new pastor is on board.

- 2. Follow-up on the congregational meeting, and next steps. (Chris)
- 3. New land acknowledgement statement from the Racial Justice Team. (Laura) Goal to have some kind of statement with the whole Congregation and how we take action with it to be guided by our Pastor.

MARCH COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

- 4. Cost estimates related to the Solar Courtyard chairs. (Chris) Lise makes a motion to use last year's surplus from last year to pay for the chairs, Karin seconded it and it passed.
- 5. Sara discussed the Stewardship committee. The shepherds and flocks program comes under the umbrella of the Stewardship committee. The Stewardship committee is suggesting there would be conveners that would be a subcommittee of the Stewardship committee. Suggesting a flock shake up every two to three years. Shepherds meeting on the 23 of March.
- 6. Reception of March Treasurer's Report

Announcements

- 1. Newsletter Deadline is Tuesday March 25th
- 2. Committee reports/summaries due to office on the Monday before the second Tuesday of the month, 4/7
- 3. Agenda with committee links emailed to Council the day before the Third Tuesday, 4/14. Please read prior to the Council meeting.
- 4. Next Council meeting is April 29th.
- 5. Thank-you's and appreciation time

Closing Prayer

Sara motion to adjourn Brian seconded. Passed.

CONGREGATIONAL MEETING MINUTES

March 16, 2025

Special Congregational Meeting for the purpose of calling a Pastor

Congregational President Chris Johnson called the meeting to order following worship service.

Prayers were lead by Bishop Kevin Jones

Bishop Kevin Jones read the letter of call to the congregation.

Chris talked briefly about the process and then asked Megan Buckingham, the convener of the call committee, to come forward and give an overview of the call process and recommendation.

Megan described the process from gathering input for the Ministry Site Profile and getting names recommended to the Zoom interviews and live interviews with candidates.

She went over the rubric we had come up with for who would fit our congregation.

The members of the call committee were invited forward and asked to share a little bit about Pastor Kristen or the call process. Anne Clausen, Karin Martin-Hiner, Bob Larson, Leah Holland, and Steve Holland all shared a bit about what their part was in the call process. The topics included talking to references, interviews, conversations and what a call means to the Pastor.

Tallies were counted by Cindy Ernst and Reg Laursen. Ushers handed our ballot paper and the compensation worksheet.

Melanie Folkerts made a motion to vote. Bev Sheridan seconded. The vote was by ballot and needed a ¾ majority.

There were 93 voting members present and the call passed unanimously.



APRIL CALENDAR

27 • 9:30am In-person Worshir • 10:45am Fellowship Time • 10:45am Sunday School • 3:30pm Linda Martin Pianc	20 • Easter Sunday • 9:30am In-person Worshir • 10:45am Fellowship Time • 10:45am Sunday School • 11:30am Easter Potluck Dir	13 Name Tag Sunday 9:30am In-person Worshir 10:45am Fellowship Time 10:45am Sunday School	6 9:30am In-person Worshir 10:45am Fellowship Time 10:45am Sunday School	30 9:30am In-person Worshi; 10:45am Fellowship Time 10:45am Sunday School 5pm Decorah Farmers Mai	Sun
28 • 9am Church Office Hours • 10am Staff Mtg • 2pm Violin lessons • 6:30pm AL/ANON	No Kinderhaus Office closed 2pm Violin lessons 6:30pm AL/ANON	14 9am Church Office Hours 10am Staff Mtg 2pm Violin lessons 6:30pm AL/ANON	7 • Office closed • 2pm Violin lessons • 6:30pm AL/ANON	31 9am Church Office Hours 10am Staff Mtg 2pm Violin lessons 6:30pm AL/ANON	Mon
29 • 9am Church Office Hours • 9:15am Bible Study w Pr. # • 3:30pm Piano lessons	22 • 9am Church Office Hours • 9:15am Bible Study w Pr. # • 3:30pm Piano lessons • 7pm WELCA Circle Mtg. Gi	15 9am Church Office Hours 9:15am Bible Study w Pr. A 3:30pm Piano lessons 6pm Sons of Norway 7pm Congregation Council	8 9am Church Office Hours 9:15am Bible Study w Pr. 4 3:30pm Piano lessons	 9am Church Office Hours 9:15am Bible Study w Pr. A 3:30pm Piano lessons 4pm Stewardship Committ 	Tue
30 9am Church Office Hours 7pm Choir rehearsal 7:45pm Band rehearsal	23 • 9am Church Office Hours • 7pm Choir rehearsal • 7:45pm Band rehearsal	16 No Lenten Midweek Worsh 9am Church Office Hours 1pm Prayer Shawl Ministry 7pm Choir rehearsal 7:45pm Band rehearsal	9 9 9am Church Office Hours 10am Eastern Star/Arlin Fa 1pm Wellington Place Com 2:30pm Aase Haugen Con 5:30pm Lenten midweek v 6:30pm Simple Soup Supp 7pm Choir rehearsal 7:45pm Band rehearsal	2 Office closed S:30pm Lenten midweek v G:30pm Simple Soup Supp 7pm Choir rehearsal 7:45pm Band rehearsal	Wed
Recycle Pam Church Office Hours 12:15pm Violin lessons 5pm Decorah Community 5:30pm Racial Justice Tea	24 • 9am Church Office Hours • 12:15pm Violin lessons	17 Recycle 9am Church Office Hours 12:15pm Violin lessons 12:45pm MEF Committee I 7pm Maundy Thursday Se	10 9am Church Office Hours 12:15pm Violin lessons 1pm Travel Club 5pm PEO Dinner	3 Office closed Recycle 12:15pm Violin lessons 5pm Decorah Community 5:30pm Racial Justice Tea	Thu
2 • 9am Church Office Hours	25 Newsletter Deadline Pam Church Office Hours	No Kinderhaus • No Kinderhaus • Sam Church Office Hours • 7pm Good Friday Service	11 • 9am Church Office Hours	• Office closed	Fri
ω	26	19 • 7pm Easter Vigil Service	12	О	Sat