



The Shepherd's Voice

Serving Rockland County, NY, & Northern Bergen County, NJ

Dec. '19, Jan '20

Reaching and Risking to Welcome the World in the Word that has come
among us in Jesus Christ.

ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS AT GOOD SHEPHERD

- December 1** 1st Sunday in Advent, worship at 8:00, 9:15 & 10:30 a.m.
- December 4** Wednesday Night Advent Service—Holden Evening Prayer
7:15 p.m. in the Sanctuary
- December 7** St. Lucia Celebration & Christmas Party sponsored
by Stenland Lodge No. 727 in Fellowship Hall & Sanctuary, 2 p.m.
- December 8** 2nd Sunday in Advent, worship at 8:00, 9:15 and 10:30 a.m.
10:30 a.m.—White Gifts Presentation by Sunday Church School
Following worship we will have our St. Nick Festival in Fellowship Hall
- December 11** Wednesday Night Advent Service—Holden Evening Prayer
7:15 p.m. in the Sanctuary
- December 15** 3rd Sunday in Advent, worship at 8:00, 9:15 and 10:30 a.m.
- December 18** Advent Cantata, "*Winter's Grace*," by Sanctuary Choir, 7:15 p.m.
- December 22** 4th Sunday in Advent, worship 8:00 & 10:30 a.m.
Sunday Church School Christmas Pageant – 10:30 service
Caroling – open to all ages – 12:30-3:30 p.m.
Longest Night Service, 7:00 p.m. in Church Parlor
- December 24** Christmas Eve Services: 4:30, 8:00, and 10:00 p.m.
- December 25** Christmas Day Service: 10:30 a.m. (come as you are)
- December 29** Christmas 1 — Service of Lessons & Carols, 10:30 a.m.



**The Evangelical Lutheran
Church of the Good Shepherd**

112 North Main Street
Pearl River, New York 10965

OUR MISSION

**“Welcoming the World in the
Word that has come among us
in Jesus Christ”**

WORSHIP

Sundays: 8:00, 9:15, 10:30 a.m.

CONTACT US

Church Office: (845)735-2243

9am—1pm Mon.-Fri.

Fax: (845)735-0819

E-mail: office@gspr.org

Web site: www.gspr.org

Creative Play Pre-School: (845)735-2737

AT YOUR SERVICE

The Reverend J. Lena Warren - Pastor
Anthony Armenio - President
Robert Bergman - Treasurer
Brian Burns - Director of Music
Elaina Burns - Organist
Maureen Connolly - Creative Play Director
Dale Damon - Church Secretary
Lisa Filatov - Bookkeeper
Lisa Holliday - Coordinator of Faith Formation
Laura Metallo-Bidon - Volunteer Coordinator
Katy Wong - Communications Director

Voice Publication Deadline

Items to be included in *The Shepherd's Voice* must be submitted by January 10th for the February issue.

Electronic submission (e-mail) is preferred. Articles submitted after the deadline may not be published, due to space and time restrictions. Please e-mail articles to: Katy@gspr.org.

LIFE STATIONS

Flower Fund

In memory of Jane Woodward, given by Sigrid & Steve Reedy

Memorial Fund

In memory of Fred Spiegelberg, given by the Koehler & Carey Families

In memory of Fred Spiegelberg, given by Susan Roberts

In memory of Fred Spiegelberg, given by Paul & Kathleen Seeger

In memory of Fred Spiegelberg, given by Rosemary & Fred Matalovich

In memory of Fred Spiegelberg, given by Barbara Eccleston

In memory of Fred Spiegelberg, given by Dolores Matalovich

In memory of Fred Spiegelberg, given by Jane & Alfred Matalovich

In memory of Fred Spiegelberg, given by Gerard & Marlene Seybold,
and Dottie Hadelar

Kitchen Renovation Fund

In memory of Fred Spiegelberg, given by Don & Penni Widmayer



2020 CHURCH COUNCIL

J. Lena Warren, Pastor
Anthony Armenio
Kim Arcidiacono
Robert Bergman, Treasurer *
Jeff Bergman
Werner Boecker *
George Boothby
James Cleary
Jake Daniels
Wendy Gates
Kristin Hanifin
Linda Hecker
Deanna Lauer
Carole Meehan
Mark Olson
Lucy Pinedo
Christopher Ryan
Debra Thaler
Donald Widmayer

(*non-voting)



THANK YOU FROM THE EVANGELISM COMMITTEE

The Evangelism Committee would like to take this opportunity to thank all those members of our Good Shepherd Church for taking the time to participate in our card ministry. There was no lack of volunteers and we were happy to see our congregation come together in our outreach program. We have had several responses and hopefully, some returning members. At the very least, we have made many people aware that we are a caring and welcoming congregation.

We would also like to update you on our Missionary for a Day program. We have reached our goal for 2019 but continue to accept donations. The calendar is located in the coat room. A donation may be made in honor of or in memory of a loved one—or just because you care. Please enter your name or names, and the occasion you are honoring. There are envelopes next to the calendar, as well as in your church envelope box. If there are any questions, please contact me at 845-548-5108.

Our committee will be starting up again in January. We look forward to expanding this joyous committee that is so committed to our church. One of our first projects will be the 28th (or 29th - since it's leap year) days of kindness that was lovingly planned by Sharon Martini and so beautifully embraced this year. We will also be busy organizing and updating our name tags, as well as working on our very important Greeters program and welcoming new members.

We will notify you as to when our January meeting will take place, and look forward to working together in spreading the word through our Evangelism Committee.

Penni Widmayer

*Thank
You*



MANY THANKS FOR YOUR GENEROSITY

I would like to extend my sincere thanks to all of you for your generosity at this year's turkey run. Your time, money and food donations benefited so many.

Through your generosity and with the help of 25+ volunteers, we were able to sort groceries, pack bags, load cars and deliver 96 turkeys, 2 hams and 60+ bags of thanksgiving groceries to our sister churches in the Bronx; Pastor Larry McFarland at Epiphany Lutheran Church and Fordham Lutheran Church.

Due to the abundance of turkeys collected this year, the churches were able to freeze 35+ turkeys to be given to families for Christmas.

A huge thank you to the Men's Group for their donation of 4 turkeys and sides; the Pearl River Elks for their donation of 20 turkeys; Meals on Wheels for an additional 25 turkeys, WELCA for their generous donation of cash that was used to purchase extra groceries and our Good Shepherd families for their donation of 47 turkeys and 2 hams.

This is a multigenerational effort, with Good Shepherd volunteers as young as 3, teenagers and entire families taking part.

As you sit down to share a meal with your family and friends, please know that your generosity has allowed others to do the same. Blessings to you and yours.

Dagmar Klein, for Social Ministry



Stenland Lodge No. 727
Vasa Order of America
 an Educational, Cultural and Fraternal Organization

Invites you to their

Annual Lucia Celebration and Christmas Party
At Good Shepherd Lutheran Church--Fellowship Hall

Saturday December 7, 2019, at 2:00 p.m.

Doors open at 1:30, refreshments will be served

Requested Donation \$10.00 Children under 16 are free.

For information, contact Ingrid Allison at ingridallison@optonline.net or 845-425-1574



The Christmas Pageant is coming!
ALL children are invited to participate on
December 22nd, during 10:30 worship

Our Christmas Pageant will be a time of lessons and carols held during the 10:30am worship service. Elaina will be practicing the music with the children during music time after weekly worship, and we will have "official" practices on November 24th, December 1st and 15th, and before worship on the 22nd. On December 1st, the children will decide their roles and try on costumes! Again, ALL children are invited to participate! For more information, contact Lisa Holliday at lisa@gsp.org or Elaina Burns at elainaburnsmusic@gmail.com.

ANNUAL BOY SCOUT WREATH SALE



Boy Scout Troop 36, sponsored by Good Shepherd Church, will be selling Christmas Wreaths and Grave Blankets.

We want to thank the entire congregation for their continued support for this annual fundraiser.

The wreaths and blankets are beautifully hand-decorated by the Scouts, with natural evergreens, pine cones, a festive bow and seasonal decorations.

You can pre-order wreaths and blankets, by signing the order sheets found at the entrance to the church (narthex window sill) and Education Bldg. bulletin board.

Pre-ordered wreaths can be picked up on December 1st. If you need your wreath earlier, please contact Cindy Sealander (845-735-6701).

Pricing: Wreaths are \$20 and Grave Blankets \$30



Hope everyone had a wonderful Thanksgiving.

Hard to believe, but our next WELCA meeting will be on Tuesday, December 3rd, which is our Christmas meeting/party.

We will meet at 12 noon so we can have a short business meeting and then enjoy our Christmas luncheon. Also, Elaina will entertain us with Christmas music and a carol sing-a-long. Ladies, please join us for a very enjoyable afternoon.

If you have any questions or need a ride, please call Barbara Bow at 845-215-5866 or Mary Iseman at 623-7638.

God's peace and blessings to all.



Annual White Gift Collection

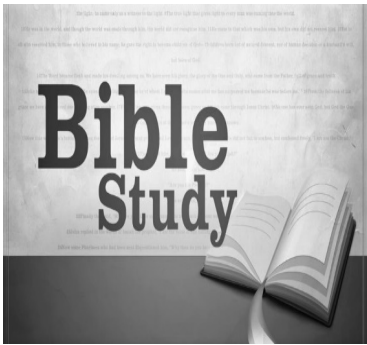
We are once again collecting new toys/crafts/books for White Gift Sunday to help our sister churches in the Bronx.

Please wrap gifts in white wrapping paper, note in the corner if it is for a boy or girl, and the recommended age group. We are also looking for gifts and/or gift cards for teenagers.

You can drop your gift off in the white boxes, located in the coat room and in the entrance to the Education Building.

We started collecting gifts on Sunday, **November 17th**.

Gifts will be presented by the Sunday School children at the 10:30 service on **Sunday, Dec 8th**. We especially thank the staff and parents of Creative Play for participating in this annual event.



Our Wednesday Bible Study groups are currently exploring the book of Acts. During the season of Advent (specifically on Dec. 4th, 11th and 18th) our meeting times will be 10am and 6:30pm. The evening time has temporarily changed so we don't "compete" with Wednesday evening worship. In January, the evening Bible Study will return to 7:00pm.



UPCOMING DATES TO REMEMBER

December 2nd 6:45pm – 6th & 7th grade classes

December 9th 6:45pm – 8th grade class

December 16th 7pm – FAMILY NIGHT, ALL GRADES!

January 6th 6:45pm – 6th & 7th grade class

January 13th 6:45pm – 8th grade class

January 27th – FAMILY NIGHT, ALL GRADES!



During Advent, we will be taking a break from our weekly Adult Forums. This doesn't mean there aren't many opportunities to live out and learn about our faith during December! We will have Advent calendars and devotionals available for everyone to take home and use daily, as well as weekly Wednesday evening worship (evening prayer), a St. Nicholas Festival, an Advent Cantata, Christmas pageant, White Gifts and Project Joy! Everyone is invited and encouraged to participate in all these wonderful events in the life of our congregation. We will resume our weekly Adult Forum on January 5th!

SOUPERBOWL SUNDAY February 2nd



LET'S FILL THE SHELVES OF *PEOPLE TO PEOPLE* WITH CANS OF SOUP, AND BRING WARMTH AND SMILES INTO HOMES IN ROCKLAND COUNTY
We are collecting cans of soup for *People to People*.

As we snack and feast while watching the Super Bowl, let's remember those who are hungry for the very basics.





Good Shepherd Lutheran
Welcomes All to
Celebrate
St. Nicholas
Sunday
December 8, 2019
11:30am-12:30pm

The true story of Santa Claus begins with Nicholas, who used his whole inheritance to assist the needy, the sick, and the suffering. He dedicated his life to serving God and was made [Bishop](#) of [Myra](#). Bishop Nicholas became known throughout the land for his generosity to those in need, and his love for children.

Crafts
Games
Storytelling
Christmas Cookies

ALL ARE WELCOME

Don't forget to bring your white gifts to the church service on December 8th!



ShopRite Gift Cards

BUY A GIFT CARD and Good Shepherd receives 5% from each gift card purchase. The cards can be purchased in the church office. Cards can be used at any ShopRite location. We have \$25, \$50, or \$100 cards. cash and checks will be accepted.

The profit from the sale of the cards will help support our youth, who will be attending the 2021 Youth Gathering in Minneapolis. The youth will be selling cards in the coat room on 9/22, after all services.

Any questions, please contact the church office at 845-735-2243 or Cindy Sealander for the Youth: csealander@optonline.net



CREATIVE PLAY IS IN THE CHRISTMAS SPIRIT...

The children are all excited for the holiday season. They are busy creating unique gifts for their families. There is nothing more precious than seeing the children's excited faces when they wrap their presents for their parents. Our Creative Play 4-year-olds will be performing a short skit called Santa's Workshop for their families. The children will be dressed as elves, dancing dolls, spinning tops, soldiers and trains. There will be some beautiful singing and colorful costumes to show off.

In the spirit of the holiday season, our families are invited to participate in two sharing opportunities. Together with the Church, our families are asked to bring a Christmas gift, wrapped in white paper, to school, which will be donated to churches in the Bronx. Our families will also be invited to decorate our school Christmas tree with hats, gloves and scarves, which will be donated to needy families. These are two wonderful ways to show the children the true meaning of the Christmas season.

The children will end the month with a rollicking musical performance by Beth and Scott Bierko.

School will reopen on January 2, 2020, and our registration for the 2020-21 school year will begin. Our school open house will be Saturday, January 25, 2020. Pop in for a visit between 12:30 – 2:00, and find out about our wonderful pre-school.



An Invitation to...Longest Night Service... Sunday, December 22nd, 7:00pm, in the Church Parlor

The holiday season can be a painful time for many of us. The constant refrain on radio and television, in shopping malls and churches, about the happiness of the season, about getting together with family and friends, reminds many people of what they have lost or have never had.

The anguish of broken relationships, the insecurity of unemployment, the weariness of ill health, the pain of isolation—all these can make us feel very alone in the midst of the celebrating and spending. We need the space and time to acknowledge our sadness and concern; we need to know we are not alone.

Our spirits often sink, as the days grow shorter. We feel the darkness growing deeper around us. We need encouragement to live the days ahead of us.

Good Shepherd Lutheran Church is offering a special “Longest Night” service on Sunday, December 22, at 7:00 pm, in the Church Parlor.

Come out, and join with us in sharing and hearing prayers, scripture, and music that acknowledge that God’s presence is for those who mourn, for those who struggle—and that God’s Word comes to shine light into our darkness. Everyone, regardless of church background (or lack of it), is welcome.

Food, Faith & Friends’ Christmas Party

Monday, December 16, 2019 from 6:30 to 9:30 pm

You’re invited to join Food Faith & Friends’ Annual Christmas Party at the home of Rich Bowman in Nanuet. Share in the holiday joy, sing some Christmas carols around the piano, and enjoy some great food and beverages. You’re invited! Feel free to bring a friend! Want to help make our less advantaged neighbors’ spirits bright too? Feel free to bring a non-perishable food item, like pasta or canned food, we will share with *People to People*. For more details or directions, please contact Rich Bowman at rpbp@yahoo.com or contact the church office at (845) 735-2243.



SAVE THE DATE...

Potluck Luncheon, Sunday, January 26th,
after 10:30am service.

More info to follow from the Fellowship
Committee.



MEN’S BREAKFAST GROUP

Good Shepherd’s Men’s Group meets the third Saturday of every month, at 9:00 am in Fellowship Hall. Please note, this month, we will meet on the second Saturday, December 14th @ 9:00 a.m.

All men of Good Shepherd are invited to join in for fellowship and a great breakfast! Mark your calendars for January 18th.



Dear Good Shepherd Families,

We had a wonderful time making music with our youngest voices and our bell choir on November 3rd. Thank you to all the children who sang with us and the adults who rang with us! Thank you to our Jam Band, which led us in worship on November 17th! We enjoyed your leadership and musical offerings!

We thrive as a community when we spend time together making music in worship. Please join us as we continue the tradition for all ages! We gather together in providing many styles of music, and all are welcome. Please email elaina@gspr.org to learn more about how you can participate.

Our bells will ring again on Sunday, December 8th, and we rehearse on Thursday evenings from 6:45pm-7:30pm. We are happy to teach you how to ring, so please join us for some beautiful music!

Our children will sing again during our Christmas Pageant on Sunday, December 22nd. Please join us in the choir room, from 11:45am-12:15pm each Sunday, for rehearsal!

Save the Dates for these Musical Offerings during our upcoming services!

Sunday, December 8th – Bells play postlude at 8am service and prelude at 10:30am

Wednesday, December 18th – Advent Cantata – 7:15pm (more information below)

Sunday, December 22nd – Christmas Pageant – 10:30am

If you would like to play a prelude, postlude, or other special music during a service, please let us know. We would love to have you share your love of music with the church! We are so grateful for all the singers and instrumentalists who have contributed to our worship services in this way – thank you!

Music at Good Shepherd Concert Series

Please save the dates for our remaining concerts!

- 1-) Past concert: *BridgeMusik* – thank you to all who attended!
- 2-) Winter's Grace, Adult Choir Cantata, Wednesday, December 18th at 7:15pm
- 3-) New York Classical Players, Sunday, February 2nd at 3pm
- 4-) Pearl River School of Irish Music, Sunday, March 1st at 3pm
- 5-) Ramapo College Choirs, Sunday, April 26th at 3pm

Hope to see you soon!

Elaina



“More light than we can learn, more wealth than we can treasure, more love than we can earn, more peace than we can measure, because one Child is born.”

—Author unknown



OPPORTUNITIES FOR CHRISTMAS GIFTING

During the holidays, our hearts are opened to those in need. At Good Shepherd, we offer these suggestions as possibilities for you to choose from:

1. **White Gifts** – We are collecting gifts for children, wrapped in white paper and noted with age/boy/girl, and dedicate them at the 10:30 service on December 8th. For children in the Bronx – *sponsored by Youth and Sunday School*
2. **Project Joy** – Collection of gifts for needy families (determined by *People to People*) Nov. 17th and 24th bring in by Dec. 8th - *sponsored by Social Ministries*
3. **Mitten Tree** – Mittens, scarves, hats for children in Appalachia – *sponsored by Creative Play*
4. **Gifts for teens in Psychiatric Hospital** – PJ's, T-shirts, sweatshirts and pants, games, (other items will be provided on list in the coat room) – *Pat Hoffman*
5. **Food Pantry** – *People to People* food pantry – food and non-food items – *sponsored by Social Ministries*
6. **ELCA Disaster Relief** – With all the hurricanes and fires, this ministry is needed. See elca.org/disaster relief or mail: Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, P.O. Box 1809, Merrifield, VA 22116-8009
7. **Lutheran World Relief** – Lutheran World Relief works with local partners to provide lasting solutions to poverty, injustice, disasters, and human suffering.. www.lwr.org; call: 800-597-5972 or mail to Lutheran World Relief, P.O. Box 17061, Baltimore, MD 21297
8. **God's Global Barnyard** – ELCA Good Gifts - Buy an animal ornament that provides goats, pigs, honey bees and chicks for a needy family, and make a difference in their lives. Available December 8th in the coat room.
9. **Gifts from SERRV International** – This organization works with artisans across the globe, by marketing in a just and direct manner – www.serrv.org

Welcome Our Youth Greeters!

--from the Evangelism Committee

Have you noticed our Volunteer Youth Greeters brightening your entrance to worship at Good Shepherd?

As part of their Confirmation Service Hours, members of the 8th grade confirmation class are “greeting” outside of church weekly, at our 10:30am service. Their goal is to provide a warm welcome to members and guests, and to provide any assistance that might be needed. On Reformation Sunday, as the rain poured down, some of our greeters provided “umbrella escorts” to help worshippers stay dry as they made their way to church!

Greeters are usually stationed at the main church entrance at the top of the ramp, but may also be at the door to the Education Building, depending on the number of volunteers available. So far, seven members of the 8th grade Confirmation Class have volunteered to greet, but we're always looking for more, especially as we enter the busy Christmas season. The more, the merrier!

We can't think of a finer way for the congregation to get to meet the 2020 Confirmation Class and for our youth to be a warm and welcoming presence as they serve their church.

Thanks to our Youth Greeters:

Jayme Metz
Mark Padilla
Olivia Pineda
Christina Reineke
Rylie Sneath
Colin Stemmerman
Logan Stemmerman



P.S. Adults can be greeters, too! Interested youth or adults, please contact Irene Ryan of the Evangelism Committee at brinnanuet@aol.com, or our Volunteer Coordinator, Laura Metallo-Bidon, at laura@gspr.org.

ANNUAL 2019 REPORT FROM THE PASTOR

The other day, I was at the Bishop's Convocation, which is a gathering of the pastors in the synod for the purpose of continuing education, spiritual renewal, and collegial development. It's a good event. It's held in Connecticut at the Holy Family Passionist Retreat Center. During one of the meals, I noticed this mission statement for the retreat center on the wall: "We want our walk through life to become an announcement of hope for all." I thought that was such a beautiful and clear statement of mission and vision: one that extended beyond the institution to the lives of all those who are part of the community that makes up the retreat center. I also thought that I might just want to bring it home here as a new mission statement for Good Shepherd, but realize that that is a really bad way to do mission and vision statements. Besides, I understand, it's too long.

As we wind our way to the end of 2019, I realize that we are in a place of needing to do some vision work. The last major visioning that took place was meant to get Good Shepherd to 2020, and that time has come. During the time intervening the visioning process (which began, it seems, in 2007) and today, most of the staff has changed, the world has shifted, and Good Shepherd isn't quite the same place. Don't get me wrong, in some ways, Good Shepherd remains the same. Its' heart for generous care for the community, its warm welcoming nature, it's central concern of sharing the Good News with others, its commitment to ministry with and for young people, and its love of celebrating together through social events. Not to mention, Good Shepherd continues to be a community of strong, faithful leaders and volunteers who love this church and makes things happen.

But things have changed. And honestly, things in the world are changing too quickly for ten-year strategic plans. The general advice now is to not have more than a five-year plan. It seems that we are moving into a season of *sol-vitur amulando*, a time of challenges that are best "solved by walking." Not to say that we don't need a vision, a guiding statement of hope, a clear mission so that we know if we're walking in the right direction. So, count on this being a focus in the near future.

This year, we've done a lot of walking as we've tried new things and encountered new challenges along the way. First of all, there have been some changes in staffing. In December, Dagmar Klein let me know she was taking on a full time position and would need to leave her job here. Dagmar has been a critical part of the fabric of Good Shepherd in her role as Office Administrator, consistently picking up every dropped ball, helping out in any capacity needed, and providing a solid anchor in the office. It is impossible to consider replacing her and how does one write a job description for "everything and anything?" So, several things occurred: first, we assembled a new Personnel Committee (Ken Merring stepped down after years of capable service in this capacity as he moved away), and then as a committee, we divided the roles in the office and formed two new 15hr/week positions: a Volunteer Coordinator and a Communications Coordinator. Other pieces of Dagmar's position were divided between Dale, Lisa H., and Lisa F. We're also expecting volunteers to do a little more, with support from the staff.

Laura Metallo-Bidon was hired to be our Volunteer Coordinator. Her job is really to function as a liaison between committees and the office; she's also supposed to help with recruitment and training of new volunteers, and helping to feel out where passions in the congregation are so we can develop ministries where the Spirit is leading us. (A reminder: God speaks to us through dreams and visions and passions, and we get to go along for the ride. If we're doing things that no one is passionate about and no one is growing from, then they aren't where God is at work and there is no point in continuing them.) Laura is also spending time with me to clarify the missions of each of the committees.

Katy Wong has just been hired to be our Communications Coordinator. Her role is management of all communications. This includes the weekly email newsletter (*By The Way*), the website, Facebook and Instagram, the Voice, our digital bulletin board (the screen), the *Cross Connections*, and other publicity that needs to go out for special events. Katy just began the beginning of November and will take some time to get up and running, but she'll gradually take on all these things, enabling Dale and Lisa H. (who've been sharing much of this) to focus on other areas.

Lastly, in an effort to come closer to balancing the budget, we've again added a sexton. Gisele Saldana, a member of Good Shepherd, had been our cleaning service "The Glad Lady" for a number of years and has agreed to take on a

(continued p. 11)

number of pieces of the job the sexton used to do for living in the apartment as remuneration. This was a good move for Good Shepherd's budget and for Gisele at this time in her life.

Thank you so much to the Personnel Committee for all their work on getting job descriptions together, working on critical policies and procedures, interviewing, and making this all go relatively smoothly.

Worship is another place we've been doing some walking lately. We've lately scaled back on hymns that are less familiar, particularly at the 8am service, so that people feel more comfortable singing hymns they know. However, it's so important to learn new hymns and, in fact, a number of new hymns have clearly become favorites lately, so we are still finding the balance. It is surprising to me some of the music the congregation does not seem to know, and some of these hymns, like *Abide With Me* and *What Wondrous Love* are old classics that can be incredibly formative and comforting around times of personal struggle and times of death. Pastorally, I feel it is really important to give you the spiritual gift of learning these hymns, as well as the newer music that gives voice to so many different aspects of our lives of faith.

We've also stopped the Wednesday evening services. At least when it's not Lent or Advent or the Summer. This is due to the fact that attendance was insufficient to justify four regular services a week, with only one pastor (and the added work of the musicians). This was not an easy decision. There were lots of beautiful moments during our Wednesday evening services and I know people enjoyed them when they came. The sermons had become a time of learning the stories of the Bible and the small group that gathered was a place of welcome. Fortunately, Wednesday services during Advent, Lent and the Summer will continue. We will continue using Holden Evening Prayer on Wednesdays during Advent and will add prayer around the cross again during Lent (though, with a little tweaking to make improvements). And, during the summer we will again gather outside for worship, stories, and Holy Communion. This year, we've seen a bit more of an emphasis on outreach (at least compared to recent years). Thanks to the work of Wesley Pinedo, we've seen the launch of a beautiful new website, which continues to be improved as time goes on. Our solar panel project led to a surprise flurry of being in the news. I can't say they teach you how to get interviewed by reporters in seminary, so that was a new growth opportunity on my part, and it was nice to have Good Shepherd in the news for an excellent reason. I'm hoping we can expand on our care for creation in other ways and maybe make this a point of outreach to the whole community, as well. Care for the earth is certainly a way in which we live and share the good news of God's care for the world.

At the beginning of January, I started keeping regular office hours at Dean's Coffee Shop in town. This has been a great chance for me to meet members of the community and I've had lots of chances to connect with people, not just with members of the church who stop by for coffee and conversation, but others around town. It's also lowered the anxiety barrier for some people to be able to approach a pastor and ask questions. I look forward to seeing where the growing relationships from this will go.

The 28 days of Kindness challenge proved to be a wonderful outreach to the community as well, especially when the youth took a field trip to Central Ave and taped quarters and a Good Shepherd card to every parking meter. The buzz on the Pearl River community page was heartwarming. We made a difference to people's days and that is truly an act of grace.

I'm thrilled about our concert series that has just started this year. Thank you to Dick and Lynn Curtin who have worked closely with Brian and Elaina Burns to put this together. Besides giving our members a chance to hear more beautiful music in this space, the concert series is really about inviting people who might not otherwise set foot in a church sanctuary through the doors of our church. This will give us the opportunity to do the slow, good work of building bridges and relationships, and who knows what will transpire. If God has anything to do with it (and I believe God does), it will be good. I hope you will help spread the word about what concerts are coming up!

We continue to find ways to expand our offerings of adult and youth faith formation opportunities. This is such an important thing for all members of the congregation to participate in because it's how we grow in faith. Luther was adamant about continued faith formation for everyone, and wrote in his Large Catechism:

Therefore I again implore all Christians ... not to be doctors too soon, and imagine that they know everything ... but that they daily exercise themselves well in these studies and constantly treat them; moreover, that they guard with all care and diligence against the poisonous infection of such security and vain imagination, but steadily keep on reading, teaching, learning, pondering, and meditating, and do not cease until they have made a test and are sure that they have taught the devil to death, and have become more learned than God Himself and all His saints.

And so, Lisa Holliday has added a second Bible Study on Wednesday evenings, there are a couple of book groups happening, Food, Faith and Friends continues, and we've begun scheduling Adult Forums not only for the summer but on Sundays during the year. I'm continuing to consider other opportunities so you might have the opportunity to attend and learn something new about faith.

Confirmation continues to evolve. Part of the balancing act we're trying to manage is a way to reach time-bound youth, giving them sufficient time to actually own their own faith and learn something. We've changed the way youth participate in church by giving them the freedom to choose how they want to serve for a minimum of ten hours a year. This enables them to try out different ways to serve in the life of the congregation and, perhaps, find a place that they really enjoy and would continue serving after they are confirmed. So far, this seems to be working pretty well, though we have dropped the regular role of acolyte. If you are interested in serving as an acolyte (it's not just for youth), let Laura know. I would like to build a small, core group that can help out, especially on Festival Sundays.

A piece of my call you might not be fully aware of is that as your pastor, I'm also encouraged to serve, as able, the wider church community. And so, this summer, I finally said yes to teaching at Pinecrest Leadership Camp, a camp that we have sent youth for generations, to learn about faith, to grow in leadership skills, and to just have an awesome time. I taught two week-long classes on Eco-theology grounded in the Scriptures. It was a wonderful experience and I really encourage our high school youth to find a way to attend Pinecrest. It's a life changing experience. If cost is an issue, we do provide scholarships.

In addition, I've been trying to work with the newly formed Orangetown Interfaith Group (that seems to have not survived the summer, we'll have to work on that) and work consistently with our sisters and brothers here in Pearl River. I've especially felt, given the growing antisemitism in this community and country; that we need to be working more closely with Beth Am Temple and Rabbi Pernick in order to build bridges and counter misunderstandings and biases. Hate has no place and given our heritage as Lutherans with anything but a consistently positive relationship with Jews, I think we need to be heading up more positive work.

I think this year has been a good year. It has been hard, especially as we've said Godspeed to a number of dear members: Ken and Lynn Merring, Rick and Jeanne Struck, and Janet Maleski and Frank Getchell, as they have moved away. We've also said goodbye to a number of precious people as they have joined the church triumphant. And we've transitioned staff, too. These kinds of changes are hard losses and often lead to real change in the life of the community. Of course, we've also gotten to say hello to a number of new people, as well, and there is so much joy in that. I look forward to taking the goodness that we have found ourselves growing in new ways and do some visioning for this next year so we might continue to be a community of faith that reaches out, invites, and welcomes all in faith, hope, and love.

Respectfully submitted,

J. Lena Warren, Pastor

Deutscher Weihnachtsgottesdienst

**German Christmas Service
Sunday, December 8th at 2:00pm
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DECEMBER 2019

Sun Mon Tue Wed Thu Fri Sat

<p>I ADVENT I 8:00 Worship Service 9:00 Boy Scout Wreath Sales 9:15 Contemporary Worship 10:30 Holy Communion Service/SCS/Upper Room 11:30 Coffee Hour—Parlor 11:45 Youth Music Rehearsal 6:00 AAF Fellowship Hall</p>	<p>2 9:00/1:00 Creative Play/UPK 6:45 Confirmation 6th & 7th gr. 7:00 Prayer Shawl Ministry</p>	<p>3 9:00/1:00 Creative Play/UPK 12:00 WELCA—Fellowship Hall 7:00 Book Group—Parlor 7:00 Boy Scouts—FH</p>	<p>4 9:00/1:00 Creative Play/UPK 10:00 Bible Study—Parlor 6:30 Bible Study—Parlor 7:15 Advent Service—Sanctuary</p>	<p>5 9:00/1:00 Creative Play/UPK 7:30 Sanctuary Choir Rehearsal</p>	<p>6 9:00/1:00 Creative Play/UPK 7:45 AAF Fellowship Hall</p>	<p>7 1:30 St. Lucia Event</p>
<p>8 ADVENT II 8:00 Holy Communion 9:00 Boy Scout Wreath Sales 9:15 Contemporary Worship 10:30 Worship Service/SCS/Upper Room/White Gift Presentation 11:30 St. Nick Festival—FH 6:00 AAF Fellowship Hall</p>	<p>9 9:00/1:00 Creative Play/UPK 6:45 Confirmation 8th gr.—FH</p>	<p>10 9:00/1:00 UPK/Creative Play 7:00 Book Group 7:00 Boy Scouts—FH</p>	<p>11 9:00/1:00 UPK/Creative Play 10:00 Bible Study—Parlor 11:15 Staff Mtg. 6:15 Bible Study—Parlor 7:00 Executive Committee Mtg. 7:15 Advent Service—Sanctuary</p>	<p>12 9:00/1:00 UPK /Creative Play 8:00 Sanctuary Choir Rehearsal</p>	<p>13 9:00/1:00 UPK/Creative Play VOICE ARTICLE DEADLINE FEBRUARY: ISSUE 7:45 AA—Fellowship Hall</p>	<p>14 9:00 Men's Breakfast—FH</p>
<p>15 ADVENT III 8:00 Worship Service 9:15 Contemporary Worship 9:30 Sunday Church School Teacher's Mtg. 9:30-10:15 Sanctuary Choir Rehearsal 10:30 Holy Communion Service/SCS/Upper Rm. 11:45 Youth Music Rehearsal 12:30 Carolling—everyone welcome 6:00 AAF Fellowship Hall</p>	<p>16 9:00/1:00 UPK /Creative Play 11:15 Creative Play Story Time 6:30 Food, Faith & Friends (off-site) 7:00 Confirmation Family Night</p>	<p>17 9:00/1:00 UPK/Creative Play 7:00 Church Council—Parlor 7:00 Boy Scouts Holiday Party-FH</p>	<p>18 9:00/1:00 UPK/Creative Play 10:00 Bible Study—Parlor 6:15 Bible Study—Parlor 7:15 Sanctuary Choir Advent Cantata—"Winter's Grace"</p>	<p>19 9:00/1:00 UPK /Creative Play 7:30 Sanctuary Choir Rehearsal</p>	<p>20 9:00/1:00 UPK/Creative Play 7:45 AA/Fellowship Hall</p>	<p>21</p>
<p>22 ADVENT IV 8:00 Holy Communion 9:30-10:15 Sanctuary Choir Rehearsal 10:30 Worship/SCS Christmas Pageant/Upper Rm. 11:45 Youth Music Rehearsal 12:30 Carolling 6:00 AAF Fellowship Hall 7:00 Longest Night Service—Church Parlor</p>	<p>23 NO CREATIVE PLAY WINTER RECESS 12/23-1/1 9:00 ALTAR GUILD SET-UP FOR CHRISTMAS EVE</p>	<p>24 Christmas Eve 4:30 Candlelight Service with Holy Communion 8:00 Candlelight Service with Holy Communion 10:00 Candlelight Service with Holy Communion</p>	<p>25 Christmas Day 10:30 Service of Lessons & Carols with Holy Communion</p>	<p>26</p>	<p>27 7:45 AAF Fellowship Hall</p>	<p>28</p>
<p>29 CHRISTMAS I 10:30 Service of Lessons & Carols 6:00 AAF Fellowship Hall</p>	<p>30</p>	<p>31 New Year's Eve</p>				

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
JANUARY 2020			1 NEW YEAR'S DAY	2 7:30 Sanctuary Choir Rehearsal	3 9:00/1:00 Creative Play/UPK 7:45 AA—Fellowship Hall	4
5 CHRISTMAS I 8:00 Worship Service 9:15 Contemporary Worship 10:30 Holy Communion Service 11:30 Coffee Hour—Parlor 11:45 Youth Music Rehearsal 12:00 Adult Forum 6:00 AA/Fellowship Hall	6 9:00/1:00 Creative Play/UPK 6:45 Confirmation 6th & 7th gr. 6:30 Creative Play Teacher's Mtg 7:00 Prayer Shawl Ministry 7:00 Fellowship Comm.—Parlor	7 9:00/1:00 Creative Play/UPK 9:00 Creative Play Parent Confer. 1:30 WELCA—Fellowship Hall 7:00 Boy Scouts—FH	8 9:00/1:00 Creative Play/UPK 9:00 Creative Play Parent Confer. 10:00 Bible Study—Parlor 7:00 Bible Study—Parlor 7:00 Executive Committee Mtg.	9 9:00/1:00 Creative Play/UPK 7:30 Sanctuary Choir Rehearsal	10 9:00/1:00 Creative Play/UPK VOICE ARTICLE DEADLINE February Issue 7:45 AA—Fellowship Hall	11
12 Baptism of Our Lord 8:00 Holy Communion 9:15 Contemporary Worship 10:30 Worship Service/SCS/Upper Room 11:45 Youth Music Rehearsal 12:00 Adult Forum 6:00 AA/Fellowship Hall	13 9:00/1:00 Creative Play/UPK 11:15 Creative Play Story-time 1:30 Creative Play Story-time 6:45 Confirmation 8th gr. 7:00 Food, Faith & Friends	14 9:00/1:00 UPK/Creative Play 9:30 Creative Play Parent Confer. 10:00 Creative Play performer—FH 7:00 Boy Scouts—FH	15 9:00/1:00 UPK/Creative Play 10:00 Bible Study—Parlor 11:15 Staff Mtg. 12:30 Creative Play Parent Confer. 1:30 Creative Play Performer—FH 7:00 Bible Study—Parlor	16 9:00/1:00 UPK /Creative Play 8:00 Sanctuary Choir Rehearsal	17 9:00/1:00 UPK/Creative Play 7:45 AA—Fellowship Hall	18 9:00 Men's Breakfast/FH
19 Epiphany 2 8:00 Worship Service 9:15 Contemporary Worship 9:30-10:15 Sanctuary Choir Rehearsal 10:30 Holy Communion Service/SCS/Upper Rm. 11:45 Youth Music Rehearsal 12:00 Adult Forum 6:00 AA/Fellowship Hall	20 Martin Luther King Day No Creative Play Church Office Closed	21 9:00/1:00 UPK/Creative Play 7:00 Church Council—Parlor 7:00 Boy Scouts—Youth Room	22 9:00/1:00 UPK/Creative Play 10:00 Bible Study—Parlor 7:00 Bible Study—Parlor	23 9:00/1:00 UPK /Creative Play 7:30 Sanctuary Choir Rehearsal	24 9:00/1:00 UPK/Creative Play 7:45 AA—Fellowship Hall	25 9:00 Creative Play Winter Clean-up 12:30 Creative Play Open House
26 Epiphany 3 8:00 Holy Communion 9:15 Contemporary Worship 9:30-10:15 Sanctuary Choir Rehearsal 10:30 Worship/SCS/Upper Room 11:30 International Pot Luck Luncheon—FH 11:45 Youth Music Rehearsal 12:00 Adult Forum—Footnotes 6:00 AA/Fellowship Hall	27 7:00 Confirmation Family Night	28 9:00/1:00 UPK/Creative Play 7:00 Boy Scout Troop 36—FH	29 9:00/1:00 UPK/Creative Play 10:00 Bible Study—Parlor 11:15 Staff Mtg.	30 9:00/1:00 UPK /Creative Play 7:30 Sanctuary Choir Rehearsal	31 9:00/1:00 UPK/Creative Play 7:45 AA—Fellowship Hall	



The Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd

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