

THE SHEPHERD'S VOICE

*A Caring Community Anchored in Christ,
Reaching Out To All People*



From Pastor John's Desk

revjohn.goodshep@telus.net

Greetings to all of you in the name of Christ.

Since we're sending out a newsletter for the months of December and January together, you and I know that we'll be covering a LOT of ground in the message of the gospel and the story of Christ. Advent to Christmas to Epiphany, is a lot and it's like we're taking a bullet train into Jesus life. In fact, the story begins with the Hebrews and their story long before the Bethlehem arrival of Jesus. The whole of the season of Advent focuses on the wait for the promised Messiah that comes not just from the strange words of God to the Old Testament prophet, Isaiah, who wrote:

"Therefore, the Lord himself will give you a sign. Look, the young woman (virgin) is with child and shall bear a son, and shall name him Immanuel."

el." (Isaiah 7:14)

The story goes much further back, to the time of Abraham and Sarah, to a promise they would have a son, a land, and through their promise the whole of the world would be blessed. As Christians, we see that promise fulfilled in the coming of Jesus the Christ, the Messiah.

Advent leads us through this whole history of waiting. In fact, it leads us in to our present time and the yearning of our hearts for the presence of Christ in our lives right now... even though he promised he would be here with us! Advent leads us through our history and helps us to look forward to a time when Jesus will return in a new way. We've been doing so for two thousand years now.

Then the story of Christ's arrival in the stable of Bethlehem will be told after the sun goes down on Christmas Eve. Christ arrives. But what is this? A stable and a threat to his life as soon as he's born? Christmas is not a story

(Continued on page 2)



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Red Deer, AB T4N 6L6
Office: (403)340-1022

Pastor: John Lentz
Diaconal Intern: Joy Berg
Music Director: Gail Berg
Parish Administrators:
Darlene Kneller & Teri Craven

General Emails:
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Church Office Hours:
Mon-Wed & Fri 9-Noon
Thurs 1-3



Land Acknowledgement

We acknowledge that the land on which we gather here is Treaty Six Territory, and Region Three of the Metis Nation of Alberta. This is the homeland of many Indigenous peoples who have been living in respectful inter-relationship with the land, water, sky, and all creation for eons. They helped our settler ancestors survive on this land. We recognize the truth of grave injustices caused by colonization and we honour Indigenous peoples' resiliency and resurgence. We call on our Creator to inspire and guide us as we listen, learn, act, and grow in right relationship with each other.



of peace, at least not the kind that comes from humanity. Herod the Great wants Jesus dead. So, this peace must come from heaven. Joseph, Mary and Jesus become a refugee family for a time.

Then, Epiphany begins on January 6 and we look to celebrate Christ's baptism in the Jordan River and thus beginning the mission, the work Jesus must do. Who is this Jesus? That's the question the season of Epiphany is put in place to answer.

So, as we speed through all this, take some time to sit with the whole of the story. Meditate and pray about what this story of salvation does for you. In the middle of our troubled world, we remember Jesus as one born a human being into a troubled world. This troubled world and his insistence on proclamation of God's good news do of

course, collide head on and there will be yet a cross, suffering, death and resurrection yet to come, but remember now the coming of Christ into your life and the communal life of this congregation. The Good News Jesus brings, he brings to us here too. We hear the Good News. We do the work of the Good News.

Have a blessed Advent, Christmas and Epiphany.

Pastor John



THE YEAR THE PASTOR WENT A LITTLE OVERBOARD FOR ADVENT

Pastoral Acts—Mid Oct.-Mid Nov.

Pastor John's schedule was busy as ever, but he did manage to take some time away for family events. He led 2 regular Sunday morning worship services, attended numerous meetings, led 2 confirmation classes, 3 Bible study sessions, and one new members class. Pastor John participated in the Trunk or Treat and Family & Friends Games night events, and the youth didn't lose him at the escape room. He also conducted several visits (in homes, hospital, and in the office) and conducted a counseling session.

Lectionary Readings— December 2025

December 7 Advent 2	Isaiah 11:1-10	Psalm 72:1-7, 18-19	Romans 15:4-13	Matthew 3:1-12
December 14 Advent 3	Isaiah 35:1-10	Luke 1:46b-55	James 5:7-10	Matthew 11:2-11
December 21 Advent 4	Isaiah 7: 10-16	Psalm 80:1-7, 18-19	Romans 1:1-7	Matthew 1:18-25
December 24 Christmas Eve	Isaiah 9:2-7	Psalm 96	Titus 2:11-14 [15-20]	Luke 2:1-14 [15-20]
December 28 Christmas 1	Isaiah 63:7-9	Psalm 148	Hebrews 2:10-18	Matthew 2:13-23

A Word From Bishop Trish

Dear siblings in Christ,
You know Advent is a season of waiting — but it's not a passive or idle kind of waiting! We are preparing for something world-changing! As candles are lit and prayers rise, we remember that Christ's coming is not only a story from long ago but a promise that continues to unfold right here and now — in our communities, our homes, and our hearts.

In these Advent days, I find myself thinking about all those for whom waiting is not a choice but a reality — those who wait for justice, for safety, for shelter, for dignity, for healing. The poor, the oppressed, the displaced, and the forgotten are close to God's heart. The winter's dark is challenging at times for mental health. The cold bites those without shelter. Weather can isolate us and intensify loneliness. Jesus' birth among the poor was not an accident of history, but the deliberate sign of a God who demonstrated how important it is to be present in our care for one another.



Here in our Synod, we know something about the challenges of waiting through the long nights of cold winter. Right here in our Synod many congregations are anxiously waiting for a minister! We also know the deep warmth that comes when people care for one another — when neighbours share, when communities open their doors, when

time we act with justice, mercy, and generosity.

This Advent, I invite you to take hope and turn it into movement. Let your prayers become courage. Let your worship become witness. Let your faith become the kind of love that makes a difference — for all people in need and for all creation.

No more waiting idly by, rise up, Advent calls!

With Advent hope and peace,

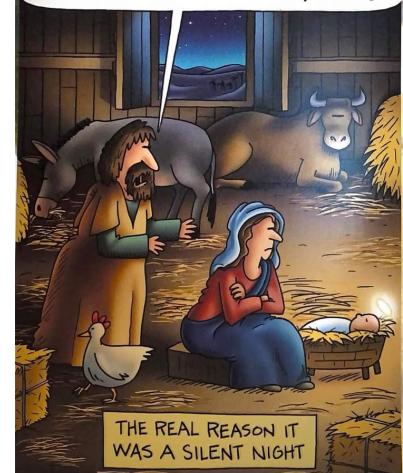
*Let your faith
become the kind of
love that makes a
difference — for all
people in need and
for all creation*

churches reach out in support and the walls that divide us crumble. This is Advent hope in action.

Advent reminds us of the essential nature of our active response. Every turning year, we are reminded that following Jesus means not only believing but living as he calls us: to lift the lowly, to speak for the voiceless, to serve with compassion, and to love our neighbour as ourselves. We prepare the way of the God each

Bishop Trish Schmermund
Synod of Alberta & the Territories

HOW MANY TIMES DO I HAVE TO SAY I'M SORRY?! I FORGOT TO MAKE RESERVATIONS AT THE INN, OKAY?



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Lectionary Readings— January 2026

January 4 <i>Christmas 2</i>	Jeremiah 31:7-14	Psalm 147:12-20	Ephesians 1:3-14	John 1: [1-9] 10-18
January 11 <i>Baptism of our Lord</i>	Isaiah 42:1-9	Psalm 29	Acts 10:34-43	Matthew 3:13-17
January 18 <i>Epiphany 2</i>	Isaiah 49:1-7	Psalm 40:1-11	1 Corinthians 1:1-9	John 1:29-42
January 25 <i>Epiphany 3</i>	Isaiah 9:1-4	Psalm 15	1 Corinthians 1:10-18	Matthew 4:12-23

Worship Committee Report

Life is filled with ends and beginnings. I've felt it sort of strange that our church year would both end and begin on the onset of winter. It just doesn't seem right; spring would be better, wouldn't it? But here we are, well into Advent, which is like the dress rehearsal for the great finale at Christmas, which itself seems like the big windup for the calendar year, before we start it all again in 2026.

The ingredients for the glue that binds our endings and beginnings are our traditions. They help to keep the story of our lives from unravelling; they help to place us in a timeline of events that are always moving forward, yet at the same time happening in a cycle. There's the old, then the new, then the new again, but because we mark time with traditions and ceremony, it helps us know where we are in it all.

We have changed how we celebrate Advent and Christmas at Good Shepherd over the years, but the central traditions remain intact. We have our Wednesday Holden Evening Prayer services, shared this year at St. Leonard's and at Good Shepherd. Our Sunday Ad-

vent services this year include the opening of a gift each week, to help us remember that the traditional themes of Love, Hope, Peace and Light really are gifts for our lives. We've had three Christmas Eve services for a while now, each one different in its own way; one quietly celebrating communion with family, one much less formal one retelling the wonderful story of Christ coming to the world, and one great old-fashioned Christmas service filled with song (and candles).

These traditions hold us close to the past, but they also keep us moving forward. And that's good, because before we know it, there's a whole New Year started, with a new beginning for all of us to share the Love, Hope, Peace and Light that we recalled for ourselves through Advent and celebrated at Christmas.

We know where we are in all these endings and beginnings. We're in the Kingdom God and we have work to do. It's worship together that makes us able to do that work, and it's the blessing that helps us keep our traditions, though perhaps changing as we go.

Greg Neiman—Worship Committee Chair

Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd—Worship & Music

Music Practice

(All Are Welcome!)

Friday, December 5th

2:45pm (Following Bible Study)

Anyone interested in learning some new music we plan to incorporate into worship:

- All Creation Sings, Setting 11
- Songs from the recent Worship By Heart retreat
 - Excerpt from the Liturgy of the Beloved—“Hope Everlasting”
 - 1 or 2 Advent/Christmas hymns from ACS

This session will be hosted by Gail, Joy, and Greg.



Music Notes

I have greatly appreciated the opportunity to work alongside the Worship

Planning Team, which has included Joy since she arrived in October. The team offers a wealth of valuable resources, as well as a steady flow of thoughtful ideas. I am particularly grateful for Joy's insight into worship theme development and overall cohesion. Planning for Advent was fun & inspiring.

I look forward to sharing new music—together with Joy and Greg—at our upcoming Music Practice on Friday, December 5 at 2:45 p.m. in the sanctuary. This session will include Setting 11 from *All Creation Sings* hymnal, along with several newer Advent and Christmas

hymns.

It is so good to be able to share the Holden Evening Prayer services with the Anglican community at St. Leonard's this year. This collaboration helps distribute the planning efforts and may encourage increased participation.

I recognize that Christmas is an especially busy season for all our area churches, and I give thanks for the dedication of those who work to make it a meaningful and celebratory time. I extend particular gratitude to everyone at Good Shepherd who will be contributing to the Christmas Eve services.

On a personal note, Phil and I will be traveling to Saskatchewan from Dec. 21 onward to be with our daughter Tova and her husband Derek as we await the arrival of our newest grandchild (number 7!).

who will be joining two eager siblings. Their household is sure to be filled with excitement this Christmas.

I am grateful for the opportunity to work with all of our musicians who are willing to play for our Sunday morning worship and other services. It has also been a joy to get to know many of you who contribute to Good Shepherd's ministry in other ways, especially the ladies in the office! I often feel as though I belong to two congregations—Grace and Good Shepherd—and I sincerely appreciate your support and encouragement.

May God's great love, peace and joy flood your hearts and homes this season and throughout the new year.

Gail Berg—Music Director

A Word From



Dear congregation,

I am starting to hear the wonderful Christmas music entering into our shopping places! And one of the pieces I really enjoy is "Do You Hear What I Hear." This carol is about the coming of Christ, of course; but I also think of you as I hear this song this year! "Do you hear what I hear" about you as a congregation? "Do you hear" that you are compassionate, that you understand what the 'work' is in being a child of God, that you are willing to give for the sake of community, that you are involved into the community of Red Deer and beyond, that you love to learn and study about God? This is what I hear!

I am so intrigued by, and grateful for, the collaborative experiment that you have entered into with the three smaller congregations; it is an amazing thing to bear witness to! You, as Good Shepherd, are sitting beside these three church communities, offering support, listening, seeing how to be connected - and all

within a unique framework. What I am so impressed by is how you are watching and waiting for God to do the work, to create this vision. Each meeting of the collaborative ministry group is one of sharing, of dialogue, of 'how can we support this.' And each of these collaborative congregations is different in their ministry context, but is part of the team. Thank you for your involvement in this 'experiment' in this way that you are creating (and thank you to Pastor John for his wonderful leadership in this experiment!), as you see how God is moving and shaking within the larger church and this larger collaboration!

These three smaller congregations offer back some wonderful things into the ministry of Good Shepherd. Did you know that Peace Lutheran has a strong ecumenical presence, and is part of the Carol Festival planning in Innisfail for Dec. 7 afternoon? Did you know that Saron at Clive has a wonderful choir that will be part of the community through this Christmas

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Holden Evening Prayer Wednesday Evenings @ 7pm

Nov 26th—St. Leonard's
Dec 10th—St. Leonard's

Dec 3rd—Good Shepherd
Dec 17th—Good Shepherd
(Blue Christmas)

Volunteers are needed to help make these beautiful services happen.
Accompanists, Worship Assistants, and powerpoint operators are needed
for December 3rd and 17th. Sign up on the whiteboard.



Thanks to John Michael Sullivan (See Luke 2:1-16) 12-23-2005
AT LEAST WE CAN SAY THAT HE WAS BROUGHT UP IN A STABLE HOME



(Continued from page 5)

season (and will be singing at the church's Christmas community Potluck on Dec. 6 at their Hall?). Did you know that Grace Lutheran has a strong worship planning group (which includes Gail Berg who serves on the national worship planning committee!), and is planning a community potluck for Dec. 4? There are strong musical leaders in all three churches, strong worship leaders in all of these small congregations, and passionate people about their church, about their community, and about our God! These are not

'dwindling' congregations - they are small but mighty, doing the work of God in their contexts and communities. And I am so proud to be witness to all of this!

As we wait to "hear what I hear" from God into our collaborative ministry, and into our life at Good Shepherd, may you have an Advent season that is both reflective and fulfilling. And may we enter Christmas with a renewed realization of God's coming yet again to be with us, and a renewed vision of God's work in our midst!

With much gratitude,
Deacon Intern Joy

Advent Holden Evening Prayer & Blue Christmas

December 17, at 7:00 pm.

For those who grieve, Christmas can be an especially difficult time. At the Advent Holden Evening Prayer and Blue Christmas, we take some time during the worship and prayers to remember in prayer those we love who have passed from this life. We light a candle and write the loved one's name on a small Christmas tree decoration and hang the decoration on the tree. It's one way to join our grief to the life affirming promise of Christ's coming to us. Do come out.

Collaborative Ministry – Red Deer, Bentley, Innisfail, and Clive

December 2025

Saron Lutheran, Clive:

- Ethnic Supper at Westling Hall on Saturday December 6th, at 5pm. Potluck dinner to start at 5:30pm.
- Dec 7th @ 10am Worship led by Rev. Daryl Roste/ Marion Furlan
- Dec 21st @ 10am Worship led by Joy Berg
- Dec 24th @ 7pm Candlelight Service led by Joy Berg

Grace Lutheran, Bentley:

- Dec 4th @ 5pm Good Neighbour Potluck Supper
- Dec 7th @ 10:30am Worship led by Joy Berg
- Dec 14th @ 2pm—Local ladies Christmas Crafting & Fun. Please bring snacks to share
- Dec 2st @ 10:30am Worship led by Glen Kneller followed by a Christmas Dinner.
- Dec 24th @ 4:30pm Candlelight Christmas Eve led by Joy Berg

Peace Lutheran, Innisfail:

- Dec 7th @ 2pm Christmas Carolfest @ Innisfail United Church
- Dec 14th @ 10:30 Worship led by Glen Kneller
- Dec 28th @ 10:30 Worship led by Glen Kneller

Update on the Collaborative Ministry Group:

(*Our collaborative Ministry Group is an ongoing experiment in ministry among the congregations of Good Shepherd, Peace Lutheran in Innisfail, Saron Lutheran at Clive, and Grace Lutheran at Bentley)

The Collaborative Ministry Planning Group met at Peace Lutheran in Innisfail on Wednesday, November 19 in order to talk about the collaborative work we've been doing for over a year now. Recently we've seen the benefits of having Intern Deacon Joy Berg as a part of the ministry of all four congregations! Joy is learning a lot; we're learning a lot too. We're also looking forward to some future educational possibilities. Plans for worship coordination were done for December and into January. This includes the Christmas season. See the worship notes in the newsletter for the Christmas worship schedule for all four congregations. You can also see a full set of minutes of the meeting on the Current Events bulletin board in the foyer.

Next meeting of the Collaborative Ministry Planning group will be Wednesday, January 21st @ 7pm at Saron, Clive.



CHRISTMAS CAROLFEST

December 7 at 2 pm

Innisfail United Church

*Refreshments immediately following

*Join us at 1 pm to be part of a choir!

*Donations of a non perishable food item will be accepted

*Presented by local churches of Innisfail



A Message From Our Council Chair

As Council chairperson and on behalf of the Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd Council, we wish you and your families many blessings over this Christmas Season. We are truly thankful for all your support over the past year, both through volunteering and financially. Without you, we as a church congregation, would not be able to continue on with God's work and reaching out to our community.

MERRY CHRISTMAS AND HAPPY 2026 NEW YEAR!

Wendy Hehn—Council Chairperson



Property Committee

Our snowblower has been on its last legs for some time, and the time has come to actively look at replacing it. Shane has done a great job patching it together for the past three winters, but it will soon be beyond repair.

Any help toward funding a replacement would be greatly appreciated.

Chris Knelson—Property Chair

Christmas Eve Service Volunteers

The sign up sheet for Christmas Eve service volunteers will go up on the whiteboard in early December. If you are able to assist as an usher, powerpoint operator, acolyte, lector, etc. it would be greatly appreciated!



Cold & Flu Season

is upon us once again!

Help keep our Good Shepherd family healthy by following common sense when you are ill. Wash and sanitize your hands frequently, wear a mask, and stay home if you are ill.

The church will be restocking our supply of hand sanitizer and masks.

Your Council Members

Executive:

Chair: Wendy Hehn

Vice Chair: Annette

Suominen

Treasurer: Paul Erlandson

Secretary: Renate Scheelar

Committees:

Worship

Greg Neiman

Learning

Dallas Craven

Witness (Evangelism)

Heather Strong

Stewardship & Finance

Annette Suominen

Service (Social Ministry)

Glenn Elverum

Youth & Family

(Vacant)

Mutual Ministry

Ron Bjorge

Property Management

Chris Knelson

Financial Recording

Secretary

Glen Kneller

Auditors:

Dave Smith &

Dallas Craven

Please contact Wendy Hehn or the church office to learn how you can help serve the ministries of Good Shepherd.

Good Shepherd Lutheran Women



Good Shepherd Lutheran Women
Ladies' Christmas Brunch
Saturday, December 13th @ 10:30am
Please bring a breakfast item to share.
(Coffee, tea & juice will be provided)
Come for some festive fun and fellowship!
All ladies of Good Shepherd are invited!



Prayer Sister Exchange—Ladies, would you like to pray for and be prayed for by a church sister for the coming year? If you wish to take part in the prayer sister exchange, there will be forms placed outside the church office (in mid-December) on the ledge with a box to put your name, birthdate/anniversary or any other significant fact and prayer requests. The names will be drawn and matched to a new prayer sister. A form will be placed in your church mailbox with the name of the person you are to pray for. The only requirement is your commitment to pray for this individual without them knowing who you are until the end of the year. Should you wish to remind them that they are being prayed for, an occasional card in their mailbox would be welcome. Thank you for your diligence in praying for all of the ladies of this church.



Postage Stamps—Please save your stamps and put them in the box marked STAMPS also on the top shelf near the nursery. Cut the stamp (with the postmark if possible) off the envelope, leaving a border around it. Collect stamps on white or light colored envelopes, not brown industrial envelopes. Put your stamps in a Ziploc bag and deposit in the box. When we have about 4 kg they will be sent to the Canadian Bible Society. Thanks!

Service Committee — The Service committee oversees a wide variety of ministries here at Good Shepherd.. Your Service Committee consists of Donna Rodatz, Glenn Elverum, Surekha Jarugumalli, Lori Stuber, and Karen Thomson. Please feel free to contact any one of them. We strive to meet human needs, alleviate suffering and promote justice and understanding at the local, national and international levels. We could not do any of this work without your support and we are most appreciative.

Glasses donations—Thank you to everyone who has donated used eyeglasses. Glasses were collected twice in the last six months for a total of 33 regular eyeglasses and 11 sunglasses, taken to Iris Optical in Red Deer. The collection box is on the top of the shelves across from the nursery in the narthex. The optometrists no longer accept glasses cases so please do not put them in the box.

Red Deer Christmas Bureau accepts donations of new toys, books, and clothes for children year round. There is a box (wrapped in Christmas paper) in the narthex to collect any unwrapped items you wish to donate prior to the Christmas season. *Suggested gift items:* winter pj sets, slippers, books for all ages, toys for all ages, Lego, craft supplies & kits, science kits, personal grooming products (especially for teens), stocking stuffers, puzzles and board games, small tech items (charger cables, headphones, etc). Pretty much anything you can think of. They are regularly in need of gifts for teens. Our Giving Tree will be set up in time for Advent.

Cultural Awareness & Learning

Consider a drive on a sunny day during the winter months to Lacombe to observe a beautiful new mural. In summer of 2025 the Lacombe Art Collection Committee commissioned Gordon Wesley, distinguished Stoney Nakoda artist residing on the Big Horn First Nation in Treaty Six, to create a mural depiction of the area prior to the arrival of the settlers. He titled the mural "EYES OF THE WISDOM". It

was installed in September on the outside walls near the entrance to Lacombe City Hall, 5432 56 Ave. Informational plaques border the mural.

This area was a hub, known as the Strawberry Plains, along many former First Nations and Metis travelling and trade routes. Strawberries, saskatoons, and blueberries were plentiful, often dried and added to pemmican as a long-lasting food source. Bison roamed the prairie, another food source until they were hunted to near extinction.

Through Gordon Wesley's imagery, you can see the sacred Medicine Hills just west of Bentley. The Hills were used as ceremonial grounds and Indigenous burial sites. In the mural an Elder traditional dancer and a bison watch over the hills, representing the knowledge keepers who gathered medicine from the land before the arrival of the settlers. Gordon Wesley continues to inspire and educate audiences while preserving the spirit of nature, the wild, and his cultural heritage.

Help give a brighter Christmas to the children of Red Deer



Red Deer Christmas Bureau Giving Tree

*The Christmas Bureau is in particular
need of gifts for girls, ages 0-3 years and
for tweens & teens.*

Gift ideas are listed in the December newsletter and on the tags
on the Giving Tree. Deadline to bring unwrapped gifts to the
church is December 15th.

The Red Deer Christmas Bureau always needs gifts for teens (particularly girls), pajamas & slippers for all ages, Christmas giftwrap, and Christmas decorations. Again, this year there is a need for gifts for girls, ages 0-3 years.

Please bring unwrapped gifts to the church and leave under the tree in the sanctuary or in

the box in
the narthex
by Decem-
ber 15th.



Gift Ideas for Tweens & Teens

*Terrariums *Hover Toys *Drones *Lego * Pickle Ball Set *Skateboards *Nerf Items *Salt Rock & Lava Lamps *Headphones *Remote Control Vehicles * Karaoke Machine * Make up * Perfume *Arts & Crafts Sets * Sports Equipment * Jewelry Making Kits * Building Kits * Puzzles (up to 500pc) *Electronic Toys *Curling/Straightening Iron *Hair Dryers *Make up brushes *Shampoo & Conditioner *Hairstyling Products (gel, mousse) *3D Pens *Phone Charging Cords *Blue Tooth Speakers *Telescope/Microscope *Electronics *Tool Sets *Gym Bags *Balls (football, soccer, basketball) *Hair trimmers/Shavers *LED Lights *Ring Light *Guitar

Other Ideas



*Age Appropriate Toys *Craft Kits *Science Kits *Dolls *Pajamas & Slippers (all sizes) *Christmas giftwrap *Christmas Cards *Ribbon *Gift Tags *Tree Ornaments *Tree Lights *Stuffed animals *Books (novels, non-fiction, puzzles) *Gift cards for gaming and streaming (Xbox, Minecraft, Roblox, Netflix, Disney+, Amazon, etc.) *Journals

Christmas Hampers

Help provide a brighter Christmas for families within Good Shepherd and beyond!

Please consider signing up, as you are able, to provide frozen meat items (turkey, chicken, ham), cash, and/or \$25 grocery store gift cards.

Donations will be gratefully accepted until Tuesday, December 16th.

Contact Glenn E. to nominate families in need.



From All the Staff at Good Shepherd—We wish you and yours a very blessed Advent & Christmas seasons, and a blessed New Year!

~ Pastor John, Gail, Joy, Darlene, Teri, & Shane

Good Shepherd Celebrates



Have you noticed this new addition to our narthex?

In the spring of 2022, the cross had to be removed from the roof of the church after it was discovered that some of the cladding had come loose and blown off and the wood had begun to rot.

Shane Cornelius, our maintenance man/custodian, salvaged the top portion of the cross. He has now made it into a commemorative display for the congregation. The shovel attached to the pillar is the one used for the ground-breaking for the expansion to the church building in 2004. We will add a plaque to the display soon.

Our congregation and area collaborative ministry partners represent a large and diverse group of people. We all have big and small things in our lives that deserve to be celebrated... maybe a milestone birthday or anniversary, retirement, academic or professional achievement, volunteer or community activism accomplishments, or maybe you've managed to keep your sourdough starter alive for a whole year. **Whatever it is, we want to celebrate you!**

PRAY

Prayer Chain

In December let us pray for...

Those who find the holiday season difficult... those who are grieving the loss of a loved one or strained relationships, those who are isolated due to health or age, and those who find the burden of the added expenses of the season challenging and overwhelming.

All around the world who live with HIV/AIDS, medical professionals who care for those folks, and for researchers who continue to look for new and better treatments.

Those who work for the assurance of human rights for all people everywhere. May they be energized by their work, may they find the support they need from governments, non-governmental agencies, and citizens, and may they be successful in their efforts. May the day swiftly come that all people are afforded the same rights and freedoms.

All of the Church, as we move through this season of waiting and yearning to the joy of Christmas, may we seek unity and peace with one another.

If you wish to add a name to our prayer chain, please contact Darlene or Teri (at the church office or on their personal phones/emails after hours).

And in all things, let us pray the prayer that never fails... God's will be done!

Bits & Pieces From The Church Office

Important dates: The office will be closed **December 25-26th**, and **December 31-January 2nd**. Pastor John will be away from **December 25th-January 2nd**. Deadline for the February Newsletter will be **January 26th**.

Weekly Emails & Announcements: If you have an item to be included in the weekly emails & announcements please have the information to the office by noon on Thursdays.

Contact Information....Have you moved? Cancelled your landline? Got a new cell phone number or changed your email address? Let us know so we can update our records. Thank you!

Offerings:

- **For giving in-person:** Please ensure that your personal offering number and name are printed clearly on your offering envelope. **If you wish a supply of envelopes please contact the church office.**
- **For giving via e-transfer:** please format your password with your last name and offering number [Jones001]. If you don't have an offering number, please email the church office separately from the e-transfer to let us know what you have used as a password.
- **For giving via Direct Deposit:** You may obtain Direct Deposit forms from the office as well. Direct deposit offerings are processed on the 17th of each month.

Where to find Good Shepherd online:

Website: <https://www.goodshepherdlutheranrd.ca/>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/277991775631450/>

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCJBg3reFTupyzn5oS-kCgow>

Alberta Synod Website: <https://albertasynod.ca/>

Attention: Travelers!

Do you attend worship with different congregations when you are away? When you travel this year, please consider bringing home worship bulletins, newsletters, or other documentation as souvenirs from the congregations you visit. Your office staff would be grateful for a peek at what other congregations are doing (and ideas we can shamelessly steal).



Reducing Our Waste—

Good Shepherd is working toward cutting back on the amount of waste we produce. One of the first steps toward that goal is to cut back on the amount of single use dishware we use. (**Please do not "donate" your excess plastic cutlery.**)

Recycling—Please remember that we do not have municipal garbage or recycling pick up here at the church. The large, wheeled blue recycling bin in the photocopy room is **ONLY for paper that needs to be shredded**. It costs us about \$100 for every time we have to call to have the bin emptied. Use the smaller blue bins around the building for regular paper recycling. For cardboard recycling, please break down your boxes and put them in or behind the large garbage can in the photocopy room. And when you can, please take your recyclables home with you.

Christmas

At Good Shepherd

Christmas Eve Services

10:30am Carols & Communion

3pm Children's Christmas Eve

7pm Candlelight Worship

Church Office Hours

Closed Dec 25 & 26th

Closed Dec 31-Jan 2nd



Good Shepherd Quilting Group

Friday, January 30th &

Saturday, January 31st

9:30am-3pm (both days)

There are various jobs for people that do not require sewing skills. Bring a bag lunch if you plan to stay the whole day. Drop in for an hour or the whole day!

All are welcome!!!



UNPOPULAR NATIVITY SCENE FIGURINES

Shepherd looking at what he stepped in

Mary re-gifting

Spitting camel

Wise Man with travel fatigue

Wise Man with travel fatigue

Wise Man with travel fatigue

A letter from Alberta Bishops to Premier Danielle Smith...

November 20, 2025

Premier Danielle Smith

premier@gov.ab.ca

Legislature Building

Unit 307 – 10800 97th Avenue NW

Edmonton AB T5K 2B6

Dear Premier Smith,

We write to you today as the Bishops of the Anglican Diocese of Edmonton and the Lutheran Synod of Alberta and the Territories and as the Moderator of the United Church of Canada. We are spiritual leaders entrusted with the care of congregations, communities, and—most importantly—people. Many of those in our care are transgender Albertans, their families, and those who love and support them.

We write this letter on the **Trans Day of Remembrance**, a day when we remember the lives of transgender people who have been lost to violence, hatred, and neglect. It is a day when communities recommit to the sacred work of protecting those most vulnerable among us. We are compelled by faith, conscience, and pastoral responsibility to speak against your government's decision to invoke the notwithstanding clause to restrict the rights and freedoms of transgender people in Alberta.

Christians believe every person is created in the image of God. This belief is lived out through justice, compassion, and the unwavering affirmation of human dignity. Policies that diminish the lives or limit the rights of transgender people stand in direct opposition to this calling.

As bishops, we also hold a particular responsibility to stand with those who are vulnerable. Transgender people—especially youth—already face disproportionate levels of discrimination, exclusion, and violence. They need allies, not additional barriers. They need care, not political maneuvers that place their safety and identity up for debate. Invoking the notwithstanding clause in this context disregards the very protections that allow marginalized people to live freely and without fear. It undermines the integrity of our social fabric and the moral commitments we share as Alber-

tans.

Jesus consistently called his followers to protect and uplift those at risk. The Gospel compels us to ask not what is politically expedient, but what is compassionate and just. The decision to override Charter rights fails this test. It communicates to transgender youth in our province that their lives are less valued, their voices less heard, and their rights less secure.

On this Trans Day of Remembrance, as we grieve lives lost to the forces of marginalization that such policies can intensify, we urge you—and your government—to reconsider this course of action. We ask you to engage in meaningful dialogue with transgender Albertans, their families, and the organizations who support them. We ask you to lead in a way that reflects the best of our province's values: respect for human dignity, commitment to justice, and the conviction that every person deserves to live in safety and hope.

We remain committed to walking alongside transgender people and advocating for policies that protect their rights, affirm their dignity, and support their flourishing. We pray that your government will choose a path that upholds these same principles.

Respectfully,



Bishop Trish Schmermund

The Rev. Bishop Trish Schmermund
Synod of Alberta and the Territories
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada



+ Stephen London

The Right Reverend Stephen London
Bishop of the Diocese of Edmonton
Anglican Church of Canada



K. Heath

The Right Rev. Dr. Kimberly Heath,
Moderator of the United Church of Canada

Rev. Leigh Sinclair, Chair
Northern Spirit Regional Council
The United Church of Canada

Learning Opportunities @ Good Shepherd

Learning Committee

Hello from the learning committee!

We would appreciate another volunteer (or 2!) to teach Sunday school in December and January. The curriculums are already prepared, all you have to do is pick a week that you want to teach, review the material and pick out one of the crafts beforehand. Spending 45 minutes to an hour on a Sunday morning before service with our Sunday school kids is fun as well! The volunteer sign up sheet is posted on the Learning bulletin board just beside the main entrance.

Dallas Craven - Learning Committee Chair



LAMP Advent Devotions

A seasonal favourite, the Lutheran Association of Missionary Pilots family devotional readings are available for free online at: lampministryadvent.wordpress.com. You can have the devotions sent to your email by signing up (on the right hand side of their website, about halfway down). Written by LAMP pilots, clergy, and volunteers, these devotions can add meaning and moments of reflection on the busy Advent season.

Vulnerable People Checks

As a faith community, and as a part of the larger community around us, we have an obligation to protect the most vulnerable. To that end, any person who volunteers in a position at Good Shepherd that puts them in contact with our children, our senior citizens, and other vulnerable persons is asked to please have a current police check on file with the office. Police checks are valid for three years. This will be especially important for those adult volunteers for Vacation Bible School. Please contact the office for further direction on how to get this paperwork submitted.



SUNDAY SCHOOL SUNDAY MORNINGS @ 9:30 Sept-May

All children, aged 4—through 5th grade, are invited to join in Bible stories, activities, and crafts downstairs in the Sunday School Room. Themes for December include: Prepare the Way, Joy & Service, and A King Is Born. Themes for January include: Young Jesus at the Temple, Baptism of our Lord, and Miracle at the Wedding.

Youth Class, open to all those grade 6 and up, meets in the youth room. We hang out, talk about how the weekly scripture lessons (from the lectionary) and our faith applies to our daily lives, and EAT SNACKS! ***There will be no Sunday School/Youth Class on December 28th and January 4th.***



Ladies' Wednesday Evening Bible Study

Ladies' Bible Study on 1 & 2 Corinthians continues
Wednesday, January 7th @ 6:30pm
at the church.

**All ladies of Good Shepherd are welcome!
Please join us!**



Table Talks

With Pastor John

Fridays @ 1pm
December 5th & 12th
January 9th, 16th, 23rd, & 30th

*Come for an informal time of
coffee, discussion and laughs!*

All Are Welcome!



Indigenous Authors Book Group



The Indigenous Authors Book Group is next planning to read and discuss **"Prairie Edge: A Novel"** (2024) by Conor Kerr on **Saturday, January 17th @ 2pm** at Mary-Louise Merrick's home.

The book was the Red Deer Reads 2025 selection. An in-person presentation by the author courtesy of the Red Deer Library is being re-scheduled, possibly in February.

Conor Kerr has also published several award winning short stories, collected as a novel, **"Avenue of Champions"** (2021), and two poetry collections, **"An Explosion of Feathers"** (2021) and **"Old Gods"** (2023).

For more information, speak to Tina M.



Youth Ministry NEWS



Our escape room adventure!



Trunk or Treat



Good Shepherd Youth—5th Annual

Bottles For Birthdays

Once again, we will be collecting bottles & cans to help fund our Birthday Bag project for the Red Deer Food Bank. Please hang on to all your holiday bottles and cans. Collection will begin in January!

Youth Parents—

Due to schedule conflicts our planning meeting has been moved to



Sunday, December 14th at the Free Babysitting Event.

Plan to meet a little after 2pm. Bring your calendars and your ideas!

Thank you to everyone who came out for our 2nd Annual Trunk or Treat event! We had 6 trunk hosts and we were visited by between 50-60 trick or treaters!

Annual Free Babysitting Event

Sunday, December 14th, 2-5pm

As a gift from the Good Shepherd Youth to all of you, we are offering up an afternoon of free babysitting!

We'll keep your kiddos entertained (crafts, games, holiday movies) while you finish up your shopping, your wrapping, or just take a nap!



**Watch for information about January Youth events
later in December!**

Bring your
favourite cozy
blankets,
pillows, etc



Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd—Youth Ministry

Youth Christmas Movie Party

Saturday, December 20th @ 5:30pm

*Pizza

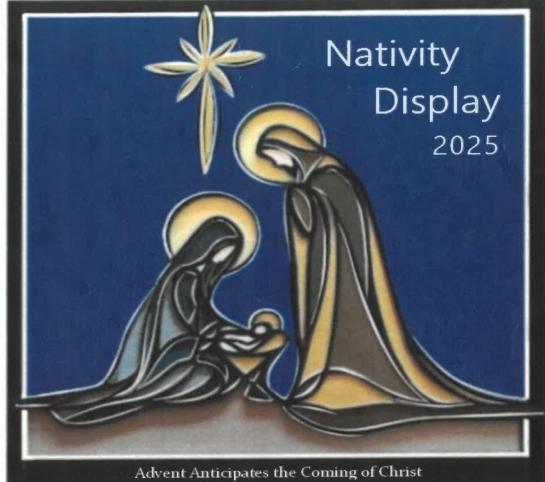
*Christmas Movie Trivia & Games

*Prizes

*Christmas Movie & Popcorn

Sign up on the whiteboard please!

St. Leonard's Anglican Church



THE CHURCH IS OPEN for a quiet time of reflection, with more than 20 Nativity Scenes from around the world. A wonderful way to add peace to your soul, at this busy time of year. Please drop by.

HOURS

Dec. 2 to Dec. 5 from 1 to 6 pm
and Saturday, Dec. 6 from 1 to 4 pm

We're in Grandview and wheelchair friendly! 4241 - 44 Street, RED DEER

An advertisement for the 2025 Christmas Catalogue from Friends of Creation. It features a woman in a blue headscarf and a tan vest standing outdoors. To her left is a circular logo with the text "Gifts from the Heart" and "2025 Christmas Catalogue". Below the logo, a green banner reads "Now Available!". At the bottom left is the logo for "Friends of Creation Special Edition". The background is a green field with white stars.

Share God's love with the world and make a meaningful difference in the lives of others with Gifts from the Heart!

clwr.org/GFTH

Canadian Lutheran
World Relief

Witness Committee Report

Thank you to everyone who came out for our fall Friends & Family Game Night!



2025 Central Alberta Pregnancy Care Centre GIVING GUIDE

Bringing Compassion to Every Journey for over 35 Years

Don't want to brave the malls and stores? Have someone on your list who really doesn't need another sweater? Check out gift giving options that have a real impact. Organizations like CLWR, Central Alberta Pregnancy Care Centre, and the Mustard Seed are always in need of financial support. Giving the gift of farm supplies, a scholarship for a pregnancy options program, or a hot meal in the name of that hard-to-shop-for person can be so meaningful.



HELP

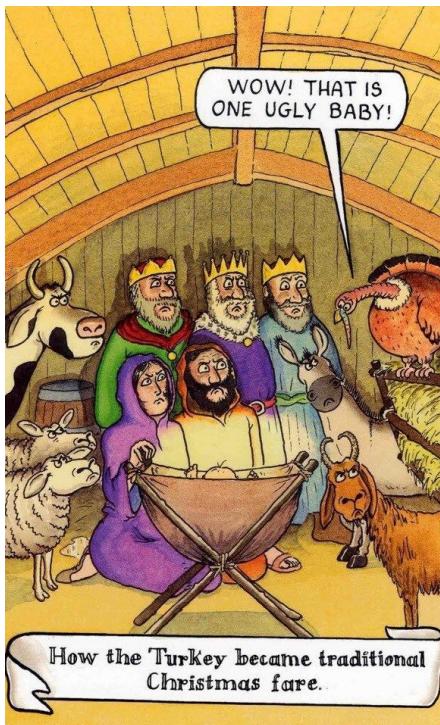
WANTED

Sharing Your Time & Talents—

Good Shepherd simply wouldn't function without all our volunteers! Thank you so much to everyone who has stepped up this fall to offer their time and their talents to the ministries of Good Shepherd! We will continue to keep our "help wanted" ads on the whiteboard. **Areas that need a few extra hands are our Stream Team (camera & sound), Coffee Time Host/Hostesses and our Sunday School.** If you are able to assist, please contact the office and we will connect you with the appropriate committee. Thank you so much for sharing your gifts!

Ways to Support the Ministries of Good Shepherd:

- Pray for our Pastor, Staff, Council, and all who contribute their time & talents to make ministry here possible.
- Volunteer as the Spirit guides you. There are many opportunities!
- Placing your offering envelope in the plates at the back of the sanctuary during worship
- Send your offering thru regular mail, via Canada Post (please don't mail cash)
- Send an e-transfer to gsacctg@telus.net (using your last name and envelope number as the password)
- Drop your offering off in the church mailbox or at the office.
- Set up automated deposit between your financial institution and the church. Contact the office for more information.



Zoom Meeting for Lay Leaders

Monthly- The First Tuesday
@ 7:00 pm

Bishop Trish invites members of congregational councils, committees, and leadership teams, to meet with her monthly for conversation and support.



See the link below for access to the ZOOM meeting.



ABT Synod is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.
Join Zoom Meeting : <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89674419219>
Meeting ID: 896 7441 9219
Or see the synod website for more information.

Important Facility Reminders!!

Good Shepherd is blessed to have a beautiful facility from which to minister to our community and the larger Church. With that blessing come some very important responsibilities. Shane, our maintenance person/custodian, has limited hours and cannot be here to clean up after every meeting and event.

We ask the following of all who make use of our facility:

Please remove any wet or soiled shoes before heading downstairs. De-icer and salt are hard on the flooring, and the damage caused is costly and time-consuming to repair! Please use the mats/racks provided in the entryway.

When your meeting or event is finished, please make sure that the furniture is arranged in its original positions. **Leave the space ready for the next group.** **Please DO NOT stack the chairs with tennis balls on the legs (downstairs).** Please DO NOT remove the tennis balls, they protect the flooring.

When leaving the building, please ensure that **all lights are off** (including bathrooms), and all windows and doors (narthex, downstairs fire door) are closed.

If you notice something amiss in the building, please contact a member of staff as soon as possible.

The **front door** is to be kept closed and locked at all times other than Sunday mornings. This is an important security measure. **Please do not prop the door open.**

Please remember that we do rent out our facility to several different groups (weekly, monthly, quarterly). The rental fees charged help supplement our budget. While these renters are in the building we will respect their privacy, particularly those community support groups who rely on anonymity to do their work. If making a trip to the church, check your calendar to ensure that you do not walk into an occupied space. When our congregation has additional functions, such as special services and funerals, those take precedence. Effected groups are notified out of courtesy to see if we can make alternate arrangements for them.

Please follow all posted signage about not blocking fire extinguishers or fire exits. This means to not stack chairs or leave garbage cans in front of fire exits or below the wall-mounted extinguishers. This is to adhere to the fire code, and to prevent costly fines.

If you are borrowing items from the church, please ensure that you inform the office. Things go missing far too easily and can be expensive to replace.

Please **do not adjust the thermostats** without consulting Shane or the office. We have them set to run as efficiently as possible.

Thank you for helping us to keep our building welcoming, tidy, and functional!



Financial Update Oct 31, 2025

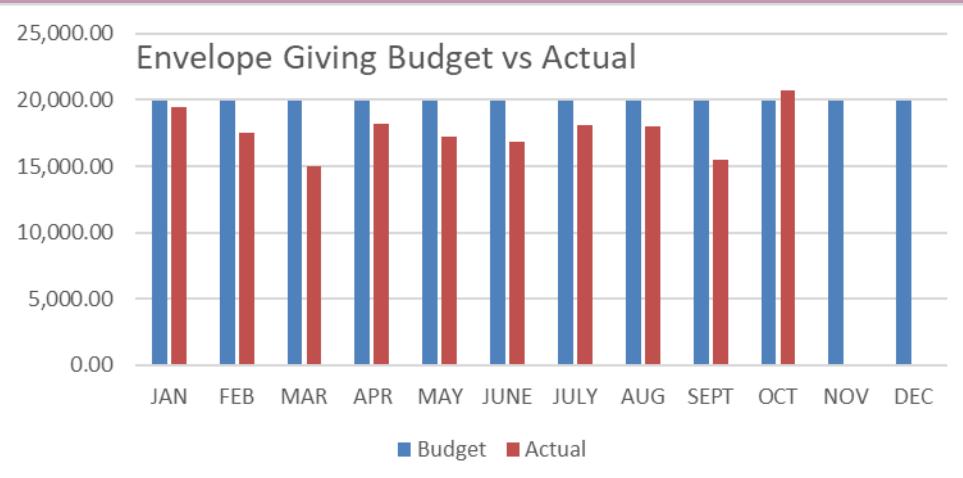
In October we were able to meet our monthly goal (20,735 vs 19,992) with a little help from our "Funraiser". We still have a deficit of \$7,000 that we'd like to make up as well as fund \$2,500.00 toward building reserve. Our last couple of months of giving will be critical. Our current bank balance is \$24,043.17 plus another \$10,946.36 in our money market account. Thankyou for your continuing faithful and prayerful support.

Income

Facility Rental	12,365
Designated Offerings	14,558
Envelope	176,819
Loose & miscellaneous	6,635
TOTAL	\$ 212,280

Expenses

Learning	1,259
Mutual Ministry	124,619
Service	832
Witness and Evangelism	417
Property	38,557
Stewardship and Finance	
Benevolence	16,469
Designated	13,424
Office	4,484
Insurance	11,139
Worship	1,315
Youth	5,202
TOTAL	\$ 219,336
Income less Expense	\$ - 7,056



CLWR

Calendar of Kindness

Friends of Creation Special Edition!

30 Pray for those who are hungry and struggling with food insecurity		1 Commit to meatless Mondays this month		2 Learn more about CLWR's Lake Chad project		3 Enter the Friends of Creation Colouring contest
4  Organize a carpool to church	5  Donate food to a local food bank	6  Shorten your showers this week (or even month!)		7 Pray for an end to conflict and peace & safety for all		
8  Buy a Christmas gift from a locally owned Indigenous store	9  Pick up litter in your neighbourhood or at a local park	10  Donate old blankets/towels to an animal shelter		11 Follow CLWR on social media and share with a friend		12 Take public transit, bike or walk today
13 Choose a \$30 or under gift for a loved one from CLWR's Gifts from the Heart catalogue*	14  Pray for those around the world who have been displaced or had to flee their homes		15  Unplug appliances you're not using		16 Donate socks, mittens, gloves, hats or scarves to a local shelter	
17  Purchase a gift from a thrift store	18  Wrap your Christmas gifts in reusable products	19  Offer to teach a new skill to someone		20 Visit a Little Free Library in your neighbourhood		21 Pray for those new to Canada and for those who welcomed them
22  Text/email 3 people to tell them about Friends of Creation	23  Cut up old sheets to use as rags or tissues	 Pray for those struggling with the impacts of the climate crisis		25 <i>Merry Christmas!</i>		