

Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd

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Pastor: Rev. John Lentz revjohn.goodshep@telus.net

Parish Administrators: Bernie LeBlanc & Darlene Kneller goodshep@telusplanet.net

Music and Worship Director: Nadine Harshenin gsmusic@telus.net

Office Hours: Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday 9am-noon; Thursday 1-3pm

A Caring Community Anchored in Christ, Reaching Out to All People

January 2021

NEWSLETTER

Vol. 37 No. 01

Just a reminder to everyone that if you or a loved one is hospitalized or wish a visit from Pastor John, please contact the Church office. Under Covid restrictions our pastor cannot visit the hospital or someone's home without an invitation. If you would like special prayer or to be included in the intercessory prayers, ask to speak to Pastor John.

Territorial Land Acknowledgement: We acknowledge we gather on Treaty Six territory to the North of the Red Deer River and Treaty Seven territory to the South of the Red Deer River. We acknowledge the many First Nations, Metis, and Inuit footsteps that have marked these lands for centuries and whose respectful stewardship have enabled us all to enjoy the riches of the Creator's blessings.

From Our Pastor's Desk

Greetings to all of you in the name of Christ, God's love and word made flesh.

"And the word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth. ...From his fullness we have received grace upon grace."
John 1:14,16

I hope you have all had as good a Christmas as was possible under the circumstances! "It's hard to believe"... Now, there's the phrase of the year! It's hard to believe... we've had the kind of past 9 months that we've had. It's hard to believe...the whole world is under the grip of such a virus. It's hard to believe...we're already into 2021, and we're still isolating from one another. It's hard to believe...that I've been the pastor of Good Shepherd for 5 months and I still haven't met so many of you face to face yet. And for you, what's your "hard to believe"? Use the phrase "It's hard to believe..." and finish the sentence with your own thoughts and what would you insert?

In January we will continue to put our worship services on line, wear masks, distance ourselves from each other, and hope the vaccine takes over soon and very soon. We hope for that something new that will take us back to "normal", to the way things had been before. The trouble is, when something like this pandemic happens, those who are old enough to have a more complete awareness of life, what is going on now will always be an important influence on how we look at life around us. Though things may return to days of close personal interaction, we will always remember. For those families that have lost someone close because of COVID, this time will always have stark memories.

But, hope is there, and as Christians, as followers of Christ we will always move forward in life with a hope that goes well and beyond anything that confronts us in this life. John the gospel writer doesn't start John's gospel with a story of Jesus' birth, but does begin by telling us the "who" and the "why" of this amazing next step that God takes in revealing the way in which God gives us all new life. Word becomes flesh, lives among us as one of us, brings grace upon grace, is John's entry into a gospel of that tells of God's great love poured out on all humanity. This Jesus, born in humbleness and humility of stable and manger is God's entry into our world so that our hope and transformed into a heavenly and eternal hopefulness not just for an eternal life after the grave, but an eternal hopefulness that changes our lives in the present world.

The year 2021 will bring its changes, perhaps its returns to normalcy, but that hopefulness that comes to us from Christ will always be there because the Word made flesh of long ago, is a Word made to live now in our flesh. Look with hopefulness to this new year, not because of a vaccine (though for the sake of the health of all people, have hope that these vaccines will work), but because of the love of God that was poured out on all people, is being poured out here and now through the work of Holy Spirit and us together, and will be poured out in all times and places in the future.

Happy New Year to all of you, and I hope to meet you all face to face one day soon.

Pastor John

From Bishop Larry

Dear Beloved of God –

I've been thinking lately about the conclusion of the liturgical year and the coming New Year in which this article will be read.

The Reign of Christ includes the gospel reading from Matthew 25:31 the sheep and the goats. Both⁴⁶. The familiar passage of those identified as sheep and those named goats are ... surprised: "When was it that we saw you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison?"

Surprised by their failure to recognize the Son of Man. Surprised that the Son of Man is present in the face of the poor, the imprisoned, and all who are in need. Neither sheep nor goats expected the Son of Man to be present and available in the face of "the least of these." Each imagined that the Son of Man would come in strength, power, might, and reveals that he comes in weakness, vulnerability, and brokenness.

Surprise! glory. Yet Jesus God didn't come to us in Athens or Rome or Washington or Beijing or Moscow, or any other seat of power.

Surprise!

God came to us in lowly Bethlehem as a vulnerable infant. And God didn't conquer the world through military strength, but through the scandal, shame, and pain of the cross. And even more, the God we know in Jesus welcomed the child, the woman, the orphaned, the sick, the lame, the outsider. To these he showed compassion, grace, mercy, love.



The God we know in Jesus is revealed not in power but in vulnerability, not in might but in brokenness, not in judgement but in mercy.

And God continues to come where we least expect God to the poor, the needy, the refugee, the imprisoned.

And, in those who work with great courage and confidence for justice for all. In those who seek reconciliation with First Nations peoples. In those who yearn and work for a place and a space of welcome for all. In those who seek to be bearers of God's grace, mercy, and love.

And to us, and to all who are weak and vulnerable, worn and wounded, broken and hopeless. To all of us affected in one way or another by the rollercoaster ride of the pandemic.

In the midst of this time of crisis, this gospel reading draws our attention this New Year to what might be a surprise: that God regularly, even relentlessly, shows up where we least expect God to be. To surprise us, disarm us, overturn our expectations and judgements. God invites us to see and to welcome with open hands and lives God's surprising and unimaginable grace, mercy, and love.

Perhaps this text isn't as much about us God is and where sheep and goats as it is about God, and about who God is present. God is not only at the end of time waiting on a royal throne in glory, but right here, right now, in the face of those around us, with us middle of this pandemic.

It may not be where we expect God to show up, but it each of us in the is just where we need God to be.

Surprise! Blessed New Year!

In Christ Jesus –
Shalom,

+Bishop Larry Kochendorfer

"The God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit." (Romans 15:13)

Notes from Shelly

Happy New Year!

"Christ, be our light!
Shine in our hearts.
Shine through the darkness.
Christ be our light!
Shine in your church gathered today."
(Text and music by Bernadette Farrell)



"Christ , Be Our Light" is one of my favourite hymns. I love the words and the melody. How we long for the day when we are able to gather as one in our sanctuary. What a joy it will be to worship and greet each other face to face. Perhaps even safely hug! It is a new year and there is hope that the world will be a healthier and safer place.

Please continue to pray for Nadine as she cares for her parents in Austria. Pray for strength, good health and guidance as she navigates what is best for her family in the days ahead. We do keep in touch and she is able to worship with us online.

Thank you to our wonderful volunteers who so willingly give of their time and talents for our weekly recordings. Heartfelt thanks also to Pastor John and Darlene who are a joy to work with as I stepped in rather spur of the moment so Nadine was able to leave without worrying about her commitments to Good Shepherd. Thank you to all who have helped make this transition run smoothly.

Best wishes and blessing as we begin 2021!
Shelly Pfeiffer

Witness

"I am bringing you good news of great joy for all people." The angel said, "to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord" *Luke 2:10-11*

Greetings of hope as we celebrate the real meeting of Christmas, a Savior is born. As people of centuries ago welcomed the birth of Christ, we rejoice in the season of Christmas. For some of us it will be a different celebration because of recent Covid19 restrictions set upon us. Again, hope is in the air for better days.

The" Feed um Committee" is looking forward to hosting events when we can gather and enjoy each others fellowship. When we are able we will be busy planning.

To everyone, Merry Christmas! All the best in 2021!

Barbaranne Stickelmier Chairperson

Service (Social) Committee

Christmas Hampers

Thank you very much to those who were able to donate to our Christmas Hampers. We provided seven families with hampers of a meat choice and gift cards. They were delivered on December 20. Thank you for the referrals and contributions, and thank you to the families who gratefully and graciously accepted the hampers.

THANK YOU Good Shepherd Prayer Chain members for your faithful and dedicated prayers throughout 2020. We get many referrals for special prayers and as we begin 2021 the opportunity to hold up others to our Lord continues to grow. We know that God hears us with compassionate ears and a loving heart.

The Lord is my strength and my shield; my heart trusts in him, and I am helped. My heart leaps for joy and I will give thanks to him in song. PSALM 28:7 (NIV)

Please remember to save your stamps.

The Good Shepherd family has continued to show strong support for the projects undertaken by the Service-Social Ministry committee even during the pandemic. Thank you, everyone, for your prayers, generosity and moral support. Karen Thomson, Donna Rodatz and I are very appreciative of your help and together we pray that God will bless you at Christmas and the coming year.

May the light of Christ shine through us to show love and care for others.

Submitted by Jeanette Page

Ladies Wednesday Evening Bible Study

Given the current COVID restrictions, the Bible study date has moved to Wednesday, January 13th at 7 p.m. in the church basement.

Prayer Chain

Life can be tough sometimes; illness, injury, death.... other times life can bring such joy we experience overwhelming gratitude. The Good Shepherd Prayer Chain is there to pray with/for you and those you care for where ever you are in life. If you have a prayer request, please phone the church and Darlene will pass it on. Prayer Chain members and their phone numbers are also listed on the back of every congregational small phone book. Whenever there is a need for prayer in your life, know that the prayer chain is there for you.

Canadian Lutheran World Relief

The Canadian Lutheran World Relief's *Gifts from the Heart* catalogue provides meaningful and tangible gifts that will share God's love with the world. No matter which gift you choose, the gifts you give will save and change lives. Visit www.clwr.org/GFTH to learn more. Paper copies of the *Gifts from the Heart* are located outside the church office and in the magazine rack by the cry room. These gifts are not just for Christmas but all year round. Your support is greatly appreciated.

Camp Kuriakos

2021 presents us with an opportunity to follow Jesus' profound impact on the world. We are energized and motivated to teach love as a response to hate, show forgiveness as a response to judgment and live out joy in the midst of fear, sorrow and regret. Join us in following the example of Christ as we share His Kingdom with the world. Camp Kuriakos would ask that you remember our camp through prayer and donations.

<https://kuriakos.ab.ca/>

Scriptures for January 2021

Jan 3, '21	2 Christmas	Jer 31:7-14 or Sir 24:1-12	Ps 147:12-20 or Wis 10:15-21	Eph 1:3-14	John 1:[1-9] 10-18
Jan 6	Epiphany of Our Lord	Isa 60:1-6	Ps 72:1-7, 10-14	Eph 3:1-12	Matt 2:1-12
Jan 10	Baptism of Our Lord	Gen 1:1-5	Ps 29	Acts 19:1-7	Mark 1:4-11
Jan 17	2 Epiphany	1 Sam 3:1-10 [11-20]	Ps 139:1-6, 13-18	1 Cor 6:12-20	John 1:43-51
Jan 24	3 Epiphany	Jonah 3:1-5, 10	Ps 62:5-12	1 Cor 7:29-31	Mark 1:14-20
Jan 31	4 Epiphany	Deut 18:15-20	Ps 111	1 Cor 8:1-13	Mark 1:21-28
Feb 7	5 Epiphany	Isa 40:21-31	Ps 147:1-11, 20c	1 Cor 9:16-23	Mark 1:29-39



Bits & Pieces from the office.....

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!

Advertisement for Parish Administrator Job Shared Position

As many of you know, when Darlene started as Parish Administrator she job-shared with Bernie LeBlanc. Darlene wishes to go back to job sharing this position again. Therefore, as of January 2021 the church is formally seeking applications for a person to job share the Parish Administrator position. The total hours for the Parish Administrator position is about 20 hours per week. Flexibility is required to determine working schedules. Applicants are welcome to contact the church office for a copy of the job description. All applicants must submit a resume to the church office by January 21, 2021. Interviews will be arranged by the Mutual Ministry committee.

Shane Cornelius does our weekly maintenance and upkeep of the church inside and out. Since the return of some of our outside users he is maintaining sanitation stations and observing COVID-19 extra requirements. He has set up boot racks by the front door in hopes of cutting down the tracking in of mud and other particles and especially salt when used.



Our Church Council

Executive:

Chair	Annette Suominen
Vice-Chair	Bill Hehn
Treasurer	Paul Erlandson
Secretary	Renate Scheelar

Committees:

Worship	Bill Hehn
Learning	Ron Kunz
Witness (Evangelism)	Barbaranne Stickelmier
Service (Social Ministry)	Jeanette Page
Stewardship & Finance	Greg Krauss
Youth	Vacant
Mutual Ministry	Dallas Craven
Property Management	vacant

Financial Recording Secretary: Dallas Craven

Financial Update to November 31, 2020

As at November 30th our bank balance is \$42,980.84. We also hold \$24,003.50 in money market. November giving showed a marked improvement over October. Thank you for your continued support in prayer, time, talent and finances.

Income

Facility Rental	2,732	
Designated Offerings	8,033	
Envelope	167,997	
Loose & miscellaneous	226	
Fed Gov Subsidy	2,199	
TOTAL		\$ 182,347

Expenses

Learning	746	
Mutual Ministry	107,597	
Service	1,275	
Witness and Evangelism	291	
Property	29,807	
Stewardship and Finance		
Benevolence	17,600	
Designated	7,783	
Office	5,195	
Insurance	6,683	
Worship	6,517	
TOTAL		\$ 185,181
Income less Expense		\$ - 2,834

