

LUTHERAN CHURCH OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD

& The Vineyard Preschool

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ADVENT HOPE IN THE MIDST OF SUFFERING

I love Advent. My favorite season of the Church year is Advent because it is so full of hope and positive anticipation. What's coming is Christmas-- certainly not a day to dread, but a day to relish and savor as God's promises are kept in the birth of the Promised one, the Messiah. But let's not move ahead too quickly; let's linger for a while on hope and positive anticipation. Can it be true that God will restore us? Who can answer, who can give us hope, who can clearly state the message that will lift us up? I find the answer in the Psalms for Advent. God's people sing of their desire for God to come again and renew and restore them in very difficult times. This is a good fit for our times. We remember other times that have been better, and we certainly find our hope in God as Christians, whatever our circumstances of suffering.

In Psalm 80 for the 1st Sunday in Advent, the people sing, "restore us O God; let your face shine upon us and we shall be saved," not just once, but three times! They are in a bad way for they have been fed with the bread of tears and have had bowls of tears to drink. In this Psalm, the people pledge renewed allegiance to God for the deliverance that is coming. "And so will we never turn away from you; give us life, that we may call upon your name."

Psalm 85 for Advent 2 continues the theme of restoration. "You have restored the good fortune of Jacob. You have forgiven the iniquity of your people and blotted out all their sins." The expected salvation is described in a beautiful metaphor. "Steadfast love and faithfulness have met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other. Faithfulness shall spring up from the earth, and righteousness shall look down from heaven." The meeting of faithfulness and righteousness is an earth-encompassing event that brings more than compensation for the losses people suffer. This sweet kiss of peace brings the prosperity of God's abundance to the whole earth. Righteousness is busy building a glorious path for God.

Advent 3 is the Sunday of joy, and Psalm 126 is certainly joy full. "When the Lord restored the fortunes of Zion, then were we like those who dream. Then was our mouth filled with laughter and our tongue with shouts of joy." And later, "Those who sowed with tears will reap with songs of joy. Those who go out weeping, carrying the seed, will come again with joy, shouldering their sheaves."

Advent 4 is filled with Mary's story. The angel announces the news, and Mary journeys to visit cousin Elizabeth, also pregnant with John the Baptist. The two women savor the moment. God's plan for the salvation (healing) of the world is coming to pass in their time and in their very lives! "My soul magnifies the Lord," sings Mary (the psalm alternate). Our spirits rejoice in God, our savior as well. We hear words of hope and share the meal of anticipation when all God's people will be gathered in the embrace of God's righteousness, faithfulness and peace.

Yours for a blessed Advent that enriches our lives, *Pastor Roch*

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Christmas Eve Eucharist is at 4 pm & 9 pm Saturday. Christmas Day Eucharist is at 9:30 am on Sunday						
December, 2011				1 N.A. 8 pm	2 N.A. 8 pm	3 N.A. 9:30 am Flowers:Needed N.A. 8 pm
4 9:30 am Worship Forum 11:15 N. A. 4 pm	5 N.A. 6 & 8 pm	6 N.A. 6 pm Board Of Directors 7:30	7 Handbell Choir 7:00 N.A. 7 & 8:30 p	8 N.A. 8 pm	9 Girl Scouts 3:15 – 6:15 N.A. 8 pm	10 N. A. 9:30 am Flowers:Needed N.A. 8 pm
11 9:30 am Worship Congregational Meeting 10:45 Forum 11:15 N. A. 4 pm	12 N.A. 6 & 8 pm	13 N.A. 6 pm	14 N.A. 7 & 8:30 p	15 Handbell Choir 7:00 pm N.A. 8 pm	16 N.A. 8 pm	17 N.A. 9:30 am Flowers:Needed N.A. 8 pm
18 9:30 Worship 3rd S. BRUNCH TEAM 3 NA 4 pm	19 N.A. 6 & 8 pm	20 N. A. 6 pm	21 N.A. 7 & 8:30 p	22 Handbell Choir 7:00 pm N. A. 8 pm	23 N.A. 8 pm	24 N.A. 9:30 am Christmas Eve Eucharist, 4 pm and 9 pm N.A. 8 pm
25 9:30 Christmas Day Worship NA 4 pm	26 N.A. 6 & 8 pm	27 N.A. 6 pm	28 N.A. 7 & 8:30 p	29	30	31

December Birthdays

4 Philip Taves 11 Fred Prah 16 Will Anderson
28 William Taves

December Anniversaries

17 Philip & Nancy Taves

December Assisting Ministers

Date	Coffee Time		Acolytes	Lectors	Ushers
	<u>Set up</u>	<u>Clean up</u>			
4	Amy Low Critzer	Weylands	Kyra Guerra	Carolyn Carver	Karen & Nicci Spence
11	Karen Spence	Debbie Andrade	Ben Anderson	Rozanne Koch	Mariah Garcia & James Guerra
18	BRUNCH - Team 3		Nicole Critzer	Patti Johansen	Steve & Debbie Andrade
	Team 3: Vic Lase, Steve Andrade, Herm Weyland, and Earnest Brooks				
24	4 pm Family Service		Kyra Guerra	Michelle Anderson	John Hopkins
24	9 pm Candlelight Service			Rozanne Koch	Karen & Sabrina Spence
25			Nicole Critzer	Carolyn Carver	Mariah Garcia & James Guerra
FLOWERS: December 4 NEEDED December 11 NEEDED December 18 Patti Johansen December 25 Patti Johansen					

Good Shepherd “Sisterhood” News

(Formerly Good Shepherd Lutheran Women)

The Sisterhood hosted a coffee and cookie time for the Vineyard parents in our Social Hall on Wednesday and Thursday, November 9 and 10. Many parents dropped in for some social time and refreshments. This is a wonderful ministry of hospitality to our Vineyard families. Several of the Vineyard Staff also stopped by and shared their brief lunch break with the Vineyard families. Thanks to the Sisterhood for this outreach. **For December**, the Sisterhood will hold a **bake sale on December 11** during coffee time. If you want a goody with your coffee, bring some money. **The proceeds will assist a needy Vineyard Preschool family.**

Don’t be a turkey, buy a turkey...

Has been an amazing success in its first year. Pastor Koch’s “Turkey Farm” was crowded with about 20 little turkey decorations, each with a tag around its neck indicating the need for a \$10.00 donation to benefit St. Joseph’s Family Center in its efforts to provide about 1,500 turkeys to needy families in South County. We hoped for 20 willing contributors who would take home the decoration and leave \$10 in the envelope provided. With the Vineyard families joining in, the congregation has contributed \$410.00 for turkeys. We doubled our goal, thanks to you. Certainly you heeded the slogan, “Don’t be a turkey, buy a turkey.” This is another ministry of outreach from Good Shepherd to the needy in our community through St. Josephs Family.

For our **December ingathering** on the 3rd Sunday (Brunch Sunday), we will again join with the Vineyard Families who are bringing packages of disposable diapers for the needy in Gilroy. The Vineyard Christmas Programs are on December 14th and 15th, and we hope to fill a baby playpen with disposables as the parents come to hear their children sing. **The congregation will bring baby-need items on Sunday, the 18th.** A Baby is coming who joins us to the birth of all children born on the edges of society. Those babies need our help; we need to fill the playpen with diapers, food, etc.

STEWARDSHIP UPDATES

Weekly Offering Needs Determined
 Our adopted budget for 2011 is \$121,310
 Total Passive Income Stream: \$-36,910
 Offerings needed: 84,400
 Offering expectation \$104,000
 (based on the last 3 years)
 Divided by 52 weeks: \$2,000.00 / week.

Stewardship Update through October, 2011

Average attendance for **48** Weeks: 31
 Offering expected weekly at \$2000/week: \$96,000
 Actual Offering: \$76,422
 Shortfall: \$19,578
 Average shortfall per week: \$408

We count on your regular offerings for our church’s fiscal health.

If you are not in worship, please remember that your regular offering is still needed. Use *Simply Giving* to insure that your gifts are here even if you are not. Contact Herm Weyland for info.

2011		2010	
This Year		Last Year	
1st 6 months,	Jan. to June	1st 6 months	
Ave. attendance:	33	Ave. Att.:	44
Ave. Offering/wk:	\$1,638	Offering:	\$1,875
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July ave. attendance:	31	July ave. Att.:	40
July Offering:	\$8,068	Offering:	\$9,623
Aug. ave. attendance:	31	Aug. ave. Att.:	40
Aug. Offering:	\$5,793	Offering:	\$7,205
Sept. ave. attendance:	30	Sept. ave att.:	39
Sept. Offering:	\$6,289	Offering:	\$7,892
Oct. ave. attendance:	31	Oct. ave. att.:	40
Oct. Offering:	\$7,182	Offering:	\$9,725
Nov. ave. Attendance:	31	Nov. ave. att.:	38
Nov. Offering:	\$6,492	Offering:	\$9,498

Attendance is the cumulative average for the year.

Change of Synod Affiliation Update

Chuck Flagg, recently interviewed Pastor Koch for his local newspaper column on religious issues. Chuck is interested in following our change in synod affiliation. He has written a very good description of what we have been doing and why. The column will appear in the local South County newspapers on December 2.

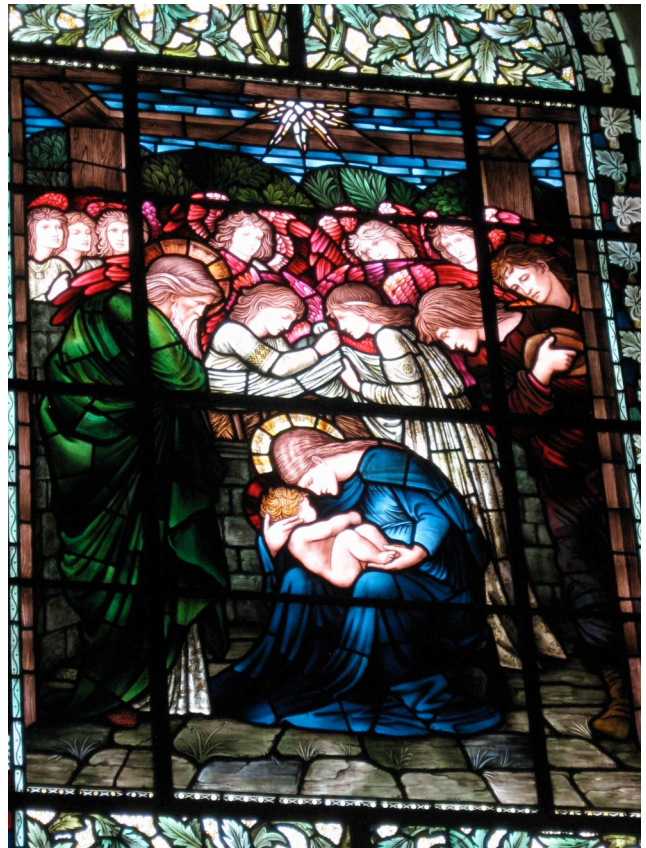
At an open meeting on November 19th several of us took the ELCA model constitution and "made it our own." We filled in our congregation's name and made several choices among many options about our polity, how we will run our congregation. We have sent Good Shepherd's version along to the ELCA Secretary for the Sierra Pacific Synod, and hope to hear back that we have done our job.

Pastor Koch recently went through the required background check and psychological evaluation for inclusion as a pastor on the ELCA roster. This is an extensive process with several True/False tests as well as interviews and spiritual discernment examinations. The results of the psychological evaluation have been sent to the Synod office and a date for the Candidacy Committee interview has been set for January 6-7 at Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary in Berkeley. The evaluator stated to Pastor Koch, "I doubt whether anyone questions your stability or safety." The Candidacy Committee will interview Pastor Koch based on the evaluation and Pastor's application documents.

A Look Ahead at Christmas Worship at Good Shepherd

We will celebrate for four Sundays the season of Advent beginning on Sunday, November 27th. This is for us a time of rededication for the coming year. We remember our baptismal covenant during Advent. We commit our congregation and ourselves to be instruments of God's work in the world. The ELCA's "God's Work, Our Hands," is an apt way for us to enter the new Church Year.

As we look ahead to Christmas Worship, we see that this year **Christmas Day falls on a Sunday**. We will celebrate Christmas Eve with worship at 4 and 9 pm on Saturday. We will also worship at 9:30 am on Sunday, Christmas Day, to gather and celebrate God's presence in Word, Water, Bread & Wine, and the incarnate Christ Jesus, whose birth we hold so dear.



The Nativity, Stained Glass window in the Winchester Cathedral, Winchester, England.

News Years Day Too

Since Christmas falls on a Sunday, that means that **New Year's Day is also a Sunday**. For us who follow the Church Year calendar, that day is the Second Sunday of Christmas. We'll gather on Sunday morning, January 1, at 9:30 am and sing the Christmas carols we love as we continue to celebrate the birth of Jesus. We will pray for Christ to be born in our hearts, as we begin a new year in God's house and in God's name.

Advent Offers Renewal in Worship

Advent at Good Shepherd has become a time of renewal as we affirm our baptismal covenant. We begin the new Church Year where we began our life in Christ: at the water of Holy Baptism. We take seriously our need to give ourselves an alternate focus during this season of urgent consumer pressure. Our Advent observation is a refuge from all the hype as we renew our commitment to the Word, the Meal, our Witness and Service, and our Striving for justice and peace in all the earth. May God's Spirit fill us richly and restore us as we speak the words.

THANKSGIVING FOR BAPTISM AND THE RENEWAL OF OUR BAPTISMAL COVENANT

P: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

C: AND ALSO WITH YOU

P: Let us pray. Ever living God, author of creation, we give you thanks for your gift of water that brings life and refreshes the earth. We bless and praise you, for by water and the Word we are cleansed from sin and receive everlasting life. Join us again this day to the saving death of Christ; renew in us the living fountain of your grace; and raise us with Christ Jesus to live in newness of life; for you are merciful, and you love your whole creation, and with all your creatures we give you glory, through your Son Jesus Christ, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, now and forever.

C: AMEN

P: God, who gives us a new birth by water and the Holy Spirit and forgives us all our sins, strengthen us in all goodness and keep us unto eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

C: AMEN

P: Let us renew our baptismal covenant with God and each other.

C: I PROMISE TO LIVE AMONG GOD'S FAITHFUL PEOPLE; TO HEAR THE WORD OF GOD AND SHARE IN THE LORD'S SUPPER; TO PROCLAIM THE GOOD NEWS OF GOD IN CHRIST THROUGH WORD AND DEED; TO SERVE ALL PEOPLE FOLLOWING THE EXAMPLE OF JESUS; AND TO STRIVE FOR JUSTICE AND PEACE IN ALL THE EARTH. AMEN.

P: May God help and guide our lives and affirmation. Amen

ELCA Model Constitution Page

The ELCA Model Constitution is a wonderful document for us to review. In the next several months, we will publish a page or two from the Model Constitution for you to read and consider as part of our Newsletter. The first installment is Chapter 4, Statement of Purpose. This says who we are as a Church, and what our mission is. It also gives us direction as to how this is carried out. It is particularly interesting to note that this section encourages us to work for justice and peace in the world, and to participate in ecumenical work with other denominations. In Advent at Good Shepherd, we renew our baptismal covenant by promising to do these very things. It is refreshing to have before us the affiliation with a parent body that encourages what we desire to do. We pray that God gives us the strength to carry out our Baptismal covenant as well as abide by the Constitution of our new parent organization, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Read on.

Chapter 4.

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

- *C4.01.** The Church is a people created by God in Christ, empowered by the Holy Spirit, called and sent to bear witness to God's creative, redeeming, and sanctifying activity in the world.
- *C4.02.** To participate in God's mission, this congregation as a part of the Church shall:
- a. Worship God in proclamation of the Word and administration of the sacraments and through lives of prayer, praise, thanksgiving, witness, and service.
 - b. Proclaim God's saving Gospel of justification by grace for Christ's sake through faith alone, according to the apostolic witness in the Holy Scripture, preserving and transmitting the Gospel faithfully to future generations.
 - c. Carry out Christ's Great Commission by reaching out to all people to bring them to faith in Christ and by doing all ministry with a global awareness consistent with the understanding of God as Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier of all.
 - d. Serve in response to God's love to meet human needs, caring for the sick and the aged, advocating dignity and justice for all people, working for peace and reconciliation among the nations, and standing with the poor and powerless, and committing itself to their needs.
 - e. Nurture its members in the Word of God so as to grow in faith and hope and love, to see daily life as the primary setting for the exercise of their Christian calling, and to use the gifts of the Spirit for their life together and for their calling in the world.
 - f. Manifest the unity given to the people of God by living together in the love of Christ and by joining with other Christians in prayer and action to express and preserve the unity which the Spirit gives.
- *C4.03.** To fulfill these purposes, this congregation shall:
- a. Provide services of worship at which the Word of God is preached and the sacraments are administered.
 - b. Provide pastoral care and assist all members to participate in this ministry.
 - c. Challenge, equip, and support all members in carrying out their calling in their daily lives and in their congregation.
 - d. Teach the Word of God.
 - e. Witness to the reconciling Word of God in Christ, reaching out to all people.
 - f. Respond to human need, work for justice and peace, care for the sick and the suffering, and participate responsibly in society.
- g. Motivate its members to provide financial support for the congregation's ministry and the ministry of other parts of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
 - h. Foster and participate in interdependent relationships with other congregations, the synod, and the churchwide organization of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
 - i. Foster and participate in ecumenical relationships consistent with churchwide policy.
- *C4.04.** This congregation shall develop an organizational structure to be described in the bylaws. The Congregation Council shall prepare descriptions of the responsibilities of each committee, task force, or other organizational group and shall review their actions. [Such descriptions shall be contained in continuing resolutions in the section on the Congregation Council.]
- *C4.05.** This congregation shall, from time to time, adopt a mission statement which will provide specific direction for its programs.
- *C4.06.** References herein to the nature of the relationship between the three expressions of this church—congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization—as being interdependent or as being in a partnership relationship describe the mutual responsibility of these expressions in God's mission and the fulfillment of the purposes of this church as described in this chapter, and do not imply or describe the creation of partnerships, co-ventures, agencies, or other legal relationships recognized in civil law.