

# LUTHERAN CHURCH OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD

& The Vineyard Christian Preschool  
November, 2012, Volume 61, Number 11  
Website address: [goodshepherdgilroy.org](http://goodshepherdgilroy.org)

## THE E-MAIL FUNERAL

Rev. Paul Hoffman, Pastor of Phinney Ridge Lutheran in Seattle, WA, tells the story of what he came to realize was his first virtual funeral. A beloved, long-term member of his congregation died, but her children all lived far away from Seattle. They did not know what kind of funeral she might have wanted. She had left no wishes for her final service on earth: no favorite hymns, no carefully selected Scripture readings, no idea of how her body would be laid to rest. As Pastor Hoffman met with her children, he asked if any of them had any recollections of conversations with Mom about her wishes. Finally, after no one spoke, one daughter sort of remembered that her mother had said she wanted nothing at all when she died. They all decided that's what they would do – nothing. Mom's wishes would be granted, and they would all go back to their homes and lives. No fuss, no muss. Just arrange for the cremation and go.

Some time later, maybe a week or so, Pastor Hoffman felt the need to remember their Mother to her children because they had no idea who she was in relationship to Phinney Ridge Lutheran. He sent them all an email describing Mom's involvement with the women's group and their community outreach; he told of her activity on the Altar Guild preparing the Eucharist for each weekly worship; he remembered to them her work with the Sunday School children preparing for the Christmas pageant. He said to them that her life meant something to her congregation, and he just wanted them to know how much she would be missed, and how much she was loved in her home church.

Within a few days, Pastor Hoffman began receiving several emails, then many more, and finally a mailbox full, all thanking him for his remembrance of this wonderful woman. Her children had received from him what amounted to her eulogy, and they had forwarded this along to all the relatives and friends they knew who knew their mother. The responses of thanks Pastor Hoffman received led him to conclude that he had just conducted his first virtual funeral, assisted by the electronic age email network.

Have you ever been unable to say good-bye to a loved one because there was no funeral, or you could not get there yourself? Have you ever been to a funeral that somehow was just "not right" for the friend or loved one who died, and you went away feeling only emptiness? Have you ever wondered how you could say good-bye to a friend or loved one when you had some unfinished grief work to do?

We have All Saints Sunday to remember the faithful departed in our lives. We remember them as well as all those who have died in the Lord, known and unknown to us. We name them. We hold them up in prayer to God with thanks in our hearts for their lives and their importance and meaning in our lives. All Saints Sunday begins the last month of the Church Year when we look at what God says to us about the end of life and the end of time as we know it. The Psalms in November's lectionary clue us in. "Put not your trust in rulers, in mortals in whom there is no help. When they breathe their last, they return to earth, and in that day their thoughts perish." "My heart, therefore, is glad, and my spirit rejoices; my body also shall rest in hope. For you will not abandon me to the grave, nor let your holy one see the pit. You will show me the path of life." As we consider these issues, we reflect on our own mortality and on how we are doing in our relationship with God. We not only remember the faithful departed, but we consider how we want to be remembered, how our own funeral might play out, and how we too, one day will be named.

Your Pastor & Friend, *Ronald E. Koch*

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<h1>November, 2012</h1>						
<b>Remem clocks on Nov.</b>	<b>ber: to stan 3<sup>rd</sup>.</b>	<b>reset dard</b>	<b>your time</b>	<b>1</b>  N.A. 8 pm	<b>2</b>  N.A. 8 pm	<b>3</b> N.A. 9:30 am N.A. 8 pm Flowers: Patti Johansen
<b>4</b> All Saints Sunday, 9:30 am Worship  N. A. 4 pm	<b>5</b>  N.A. 6 & 8 pm	<b>6</b> VOTING All day in Social Hall. N.A. 6 pm in sanctuary	<b>7</b> Handbells 7 pm N.A. 7 & 8:30p	<b>8</b>  N.A. 8 pm	<b>9</b>  N.A. 8 pm	<b>10</b> N.A. 9:30 am  Flowers:Needed N.A. 8 pm
<b>11</b> Pentecost24 9:30 am Worship N. A. 4 pm	<b>12</b>  N.A. 6 & 8 pm	<b>13</b> N.A. 6 pm Congregation Council Meeting 7:30p	<b>14</b> Handbells 7 pm N.A. 7 & 8:30p	<b>15</b>  N.A. 8 pm	<b>16</b>  N.A. 8 pm	<b>17</b> N.A. 9:30 am Flowers:Needed N.A. 8 pm
<b>18</b> Pentecost25 9:30 am Worship NA 4 pm	<b>19</b>  N.A. 6 & 8 pm	<b>20</b>  N. A. 6 pm	<b>21</b> N.A. 7 & 8:30p	<b>22</b> <u>N.A.</u> <u>All-Day</u> Marathon of Meetings and Meals in Social Hall	<b>23</b>  N.A. 8 pm	<b>24</b> N.A. 9:30 am Flowers:Needed N.A. 8 pm
<b>25</b> Christ the King Sunday 9:30 am Worship NA 4 pm	<b>26</b>  N.A. 6 & 8 pm	<b>27</b>  N. A. 6 pm	<b>28</b> Handbells 7 pm N.A. 7 & 8:30p	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>	

#### November Birthdays

14 Ben Anderson

#### November Anniversaries

22 Wayne and Norma Wiedeman

#### November Assisting Ministers

Date	Coffee Time: <u>Set up</u>	<u>Clean up</u>	Acolytes	Lectors	Ushers
4	Michelle Anderson	Sharon Hammelev	Will Anderson	Carolyn Carver	Karen & Sabrina Spence
11	Weylands	Mariah Garcia	Ben Anderson	Rozanne Koch	Mariah Garcia & James Guerra
18	3 <sup>rd</sup> Sunday Brunch: <b>Team 2</b> <b>Team 2</b> is Sally Hammelev, Mariah Garcia, Sharon Hammelev-Paula, and Karen Spence		Elena Finucane	Patti Johansen	Karen & Nicci Spence
25	Kirsten Finucane	Carolyn Carver	Abigail Finucane	Jo Brooks	<b>Needed</b>

FLOWERS: November 4 Patti Johansen  
November 18 NEEDED

November 11 NEEDED  
November 25 NEEDED

If you have a birthday or anniversary that you would like included in the monthly list, please let us know, and we'll add it. Thanks.

## Thanksgiving Eve Worship Survey

Thanksgiving is a national holiday observed on the 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday of November. Historically it had roots in religious and cultural tradition. Today, Thanksgiving is primarily celebrated as a secular holiday. Families gather for feasting and football. At Good Shepherd, until last year, we had Thanksgiving worship either on Thanksgiving itself, or, more recently, on Thanksgiving Eve. The move to Thanksgiving Eve was a concession to the secular forces at work. People wanted the entire day for their feasts, so we moved worship to Thanksgiving Eve because for Christians, giving thanks is thanking God, and we do that best in corporate worship. We found that evening worship has a special quality of serenity, beauty, and contemplation, an added bonus for a time of giving thanks. Last year, with Pastor Koch traveling to St. Louis for a family reunion, we did not have Thanksgiving worship at Good Shepherd. This year, the Congregational Council wants to know if you want to have Thanksgiving worship at Good Shepherd again, on Thanksgiving Eve at 7 pm as in the past. Please let us know:

1. If you think it's a good idea to offer Thanksgiving worship. YES or NO.
2. If we have a service would you attend? YES or NO.

Please respond by email or call the church office at 1(408)842-2713, by Sunday, November 11<sup>th</sup>. That will give us time, if needed, to prepare worship and notify the community. We want to be responsive to the needs and desires of the membership.



## Stewardship Updates

**Expected Offerings based on last year: \$85,860.  
That is \$1620/week for 53 Sundays.**

### **Stewardship Update through October, 2012**

Average attendance for 44 Weeks: 28

Expected to date at \$1,620 for 44 weeks: \$71,280

Actual Offering: \$62,430

Shortfall: \$8,850

Average shortfall per week: \$ 201

Total offering for October was \$6,887 for an average of \$1,722 per week, an upward trend. Thank you!

## **Congregational Council takes steps for Good Shepherd to Become a Reconciling in Christ Congregation.**

At the October Congregational Council meeting we began to look at sample statements of welcome from the Reconciling Works website. We learned that we need to make our own statement of welcome that specifically includes the LGBT community. The Council will work to craft such a statement at our next meeting on November 13<sup>th</sup>. Once we have a statement we can live with and affirm as our own, we will recommend its adoption to the entire congregation. As a congregation, we will vote on the issue and then notify Reconciling Works of our statement. Upon acceptance of our statement, we will be listed as a Reconciling in Christ (RIC) congregation on their website.

For more background on this topic, in case you missed it, please read the following article from the October Newsletter.

A very large part of Jesus' ministry was reaching out to the poor and marginalized people in the communities where he served and ministered to others. Because of the power to interpret the Law, the Scribes and Elders of the people mandated that God's people must follow certain customs. One had to do with the proper preparation of food and body for eating. Certain bowls and utensils had to be properly washed for ritual purity. Hand washing was absolutely necessary. (Read Mark 7: 1 – 14)

So when the disciples ate with unwashed hands, the religious leaders asked Jesus what was going on that they flouted the rules and traditions. Jesus said that it's not what or how you eat, but what comes out of your mouth that makes you ritually impure. In saying this, Jesus changed the perception of God from "Be holy, for God is holy," to "Be compassionate, for God is compassionate."

Our New Testament understanding of the Old Testament law and customs is also changed. We understand that God's laws are created for the protection of the poor, not for the separation of the poor from mainstream society. Something had gone terribly wrong.

In his sermon on Sunday, September 2, Pastor Koch applied our calling to be compassionate as God is compassionate to how Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender people have been treated in our society. Much of our history is of excluding and even harming people in the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) communities. Many churches have a "holiness" understanding about God and would exclude the LGBT people based on that understanding. We have a "compassionate" view and desire to express that. Our tradition at Good Shepherd is open and inclusive table fellowship at the altar and in the Social Hall. We can express this in a very intentional and specific way by declaring ourselves to be a Reconciling in Christ congregation. That means that we extend our invitation openly and lovingly to all people, including the LGBT people in the South County. No other church in

the South County has declared itself openly as welcoming LGBT people.

In the story from Mark 7, it becomes clear that in order to be ritually pure, you had to have money. The poor likely had no running water or servants to bear it from the community well. They had been excluded from the holy people by virtue of their status in that culture. How could Jesus, a holy man, allow his followers to violate the customs and traditions of the respected and holy people? Jesus' answer makes it clear that a compassionate heart trumps a "holy" and clean home. Jesus' answer includes all the poor and marginalized people. They are important to God!

Whatever the reasons for excluding anyone from the family of God's people, Jesus overturns by proclaiming the Good News of God's love for all people. There are no distinctions in God's sight, for all are equally in need of God's compassion, for we all are broken and need to be healed. We are healed in our communities of the baptized. Baptism is our common ground. We cannot tell someone who was baptized that they are not of God's people.

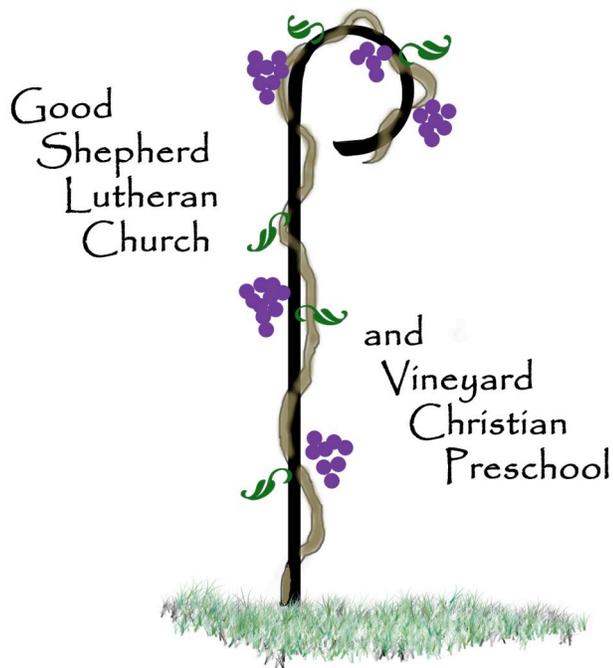
There is a long study recommended by Reconciling Works, the organization of Lutheran Christians for full inclusion of LGBT people, which would lead us on the path to becoming a Reconciling in Christ congregation. We have already done much of that work by being who we are: a welcoming community of God's people. We may want to consider more directly a statement that we would adopt as a congregation and submit to Reconciling Works so that we would be listed as an RIC (Reconciling in Christ) congregation. Once we have studied that statement, we can move to adopt it as our own. We would be stating what is already true about us: We are a congregation of compassionate people, trusting that we can be reconciled with all others through Christ.

At the September Congregational Council meeting we took up the topic and decided to go ahead with studying the issues and listening to one another. We can all grow from this study, and we certainly will benefit from listening to each other. Please keep Good Shepherd in your prayers as we seek to become more compassionate people of God.

## We have a new Church/Preschool logo!

The new logo was designed by Anastasia (Hammelev-Paula) Hamlin, daughter of Jake and Sharon Hammelev-Paula. Anastasia has taken classes in graphic design, and we are very pleased that she is using those skills for Good Shepherd and the Vineyard Christian Preschool. We wanted a design that showed our church and preschool are together in ministry to Gilroy.

Anastasia's design expresses our unified ministry as the shepherd's staff and vine intertwine in support and vitality. We think it is very attractive and gives us a new and appealing look. Check it out for yourself, and come to worship and see it in the worship folder and elsewhere.



## Hurricane Disaster Response

**Information on the Lutheran World Relief effort to help those affected by Hurricane Sandy on the East coast follows on the next column.**

### **The Situation:**

From the Caribbean to the North Atlantic Coast, millions of people have evacuated their homes and communities due to Hurricane Sandy. Strong winds and torrential rains have led to loss of power, flooding and mass destruction. The storm sent trees crashing down and left neighborhood streets looking like rivers.

### **ELCA Response:**

Through ELCA Disaster Response, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) is responding in areas affected by Hurricane Sandy. In the Caribbean, through our global church partnerships, we are providing basic needs such as food, water and shelter. In Haiti, outbreaks of cholera have been reported. The ELCA has been working with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Haiti to build capacity in preserving health and wellness related to cholera. Throughout the United States we are working hand-in-hand with synods and ministry organizations who are experts at outreach in their communities. We are working with church bodies in Cuba and Haiti and are in close contact with synods, congregations and disaster response partners within the United States to meet the immediate needs of those affected by this storm. And we will continue to help for as long as we are needed.

### **What you can do:**

#### **Pray:**

As the communities work to recover, please keep them and those who work on their behalf in prayer.

#### **Give:**

Your donations to [ELCA Disaster Response](#), designated for Hurricane Sandy will be used entirely (100 percent) to help families whose lives and livelihoods have been impacted by this disaster. Donations from people like you allow this church to respond to those in need. Give **through your local congregation** or directly.