

NEWSLETTER, Volume 62, Number 1
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Website address: goodshepherdgilroy.org



THE NEW YEAR, SO FAR

THE NEW CHURCH YEAR BEGAN THE FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT, DECEMBER 2ND. THE CHURCH YEAR IS DIFFERENT FROM THE CALENDAR YEAR BECAUSE IT DEPENDS NOT ON THE CALENDAR, BUT ON THE LIVELY ORDERING OF HOLY DAYS AND SACRED READINGS AND ASSEMBLY CELEBRATIONS THAT HAVE BEEN ESTABLISHED OVER CENTURIES OF CHURCH LIFE. IN THESE MODERN TIMES, WE STILL SET EASTER ACCORDING TO THE ANCIENT FORMULA OF THE 1ST SUNDAY AFTER THE 1ST FULL MOON AFTER THE VERNAL EQUINOX.

So far this new year we have celebrated Advent and Christmas and the 1st Sunday of Christmas. We have had beautiful worship of anticipation and celebration. We have enjoyed fellowship and food. We have prayed and sung and listened and wept and hoped as congregations do. The center of our life together is in the One who has come among us, born in our midst as a special Child of God, sent to bring us salvation. It is fitting that we begin the new church year at the beginning of this Child's life.

The church year is set up to move us through the life of Jesus, from birth to youth to manhood and calling. From the beginning of his ministry to the travels of an itinerant preacher, we will move along with him in the months ahead. We will visit many towns and homes on our way with him to Jerusalem. There we will witness his death and resurrection. We do this every year with the expectation that we will gain new insights into our lives and God's purpose for them. We do this every year because we know that we need to be formed by the life of Jesus into God's people.

In this issue of the Newsletter, we feature two things that indicate our formation is ongoing and under construction. First is our congregational meeting on January 13 to adopt a statement of welcome that includes people of all gender identities and sexual orientations. That is not something we have just brought up, but has been part of our formation as an inclusive congregation for many years. It has been a journey for most of us to come to this point. We hope to be able to live into our welcome and make it be part of what we continue to do as God's people. We have been formed and shaped by Jesus who welcomed the outcast and the in-group, the wealthy and the poor, the well-fed and the hungry, the Pharisee and the publican. Stories in Luke's Gospel underscore the wide reach of God's welcome: The Good Samaritan, the Prodigal Son, the Pharisee and the Publican, the Rich Man and Lazarus. These stories affirm that we are on the right track when we also welcome all who come.

The second thing that we call to your attention is the article from The Lutheran. The Lutheran is the monthly magazine of the ELCA, and features news and articles on the life of the church as well as inspirational pieces to help us focus on various aspects of life in the Church. The article I am including is by Peter Marty, one in a series on Elements of the Lord's Day. It is about giving. Offerings. This is an area where we need to grow. Rev. Marty offers wonderful insights into the giving up of our offerings. This is a must read. We are on the way with Jesus in this new year. May we learn from him how to offer ourselves in loving service to others as we journey into the year. For fuller, richer, and more meaningful living as God's people at Good Shepherd in Gilroy,

Your Pastor & Friend, *Ronald E. Koch*

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<h1>January, 2013</h1>						
		1 N.A. 6 pm & 7:30 pm	2 N.A. 7 & 8:30p	3 N.A. 8 pm	4 N.A. 8 pm	5 N.A. 9:30 am Flowers: Needed N.A. 8 pm
6 Epiphany of Our Lord 9:30 am Worship N. A. 4 pm	7 N.A. 6 & 8 pm	8 N.A. 6 pm Council 7:30	9 Handbells 7:30 N.A. 7 & 8:30p	10 N.A. 8 pm	11 N.A. 8 pm	12 N.A. 9:30 am Flowers:Needed N.A. 8 pm
13 Baptism of Our Lord, 9:30 a.m. Worship & <u>Cong. Meeting</u> N. A. 4 pm	14 N.A. 6 & 8 pm	15 N.A. 6 pm	16 Handbells 7:30 N.A. 7 & 8:30p	17 N.A. 8 pm	18 N.A. 8 pm	19 N.A. 9:30 am Flowers: Patti Johansen N.A. 8 pm
20 Epiphany 2 9:30 am Worship 3rd S. Brunch NA 4 pm	21 N.A. 6 & 8	22 N. A. 6 pm	23 Handbells 7:30 N.A. 7 & 8:30p	24 N.A. 8 pm	25 N.A. 8 pm	26 N.A. 9:30 am Flowers:Needed N.A. 8 pm
27 Epiphany 3 9:30 am Worship NA 4 pm	28 N.A. 6 & 8 pm	29 N. A. 6 pm	30 Handbells 7:30 N.A. 7 & 8:30p	31 N.A. 8 pm		

January Birthdays

January Anniversaries

January Assisting Ministers

Date	Coffee Time:		Acolytes	Lectors	Ushers
	<u>Set up</u>	<u>Clean up</u>			
6	Karen Spence	Mariah Garcia	Will Anderson	Carolyn Carver	Mariah Garcia and James Guerra
13	Kirsten Finucane	Michelle Anderson	Ben Anderson	Rozanne Koch	Karen & Nicci Spence
20	3 rd Sunday Brunch: Team 4		Elena Finucane	Patti Johansen	NEEDED
	Team 4 is Ruth Compton, Patti Johansen, Norma Rymers, and Duane Brown				
27	Sally Hammelev	Mariah Garcia	Abigail Finucane	Jo Brooks	Mariah Garcia & Kyra Guerra

FLOWERS: January 6 Needed January 13 Needed
 Janaury 20 Patti Johansen January 27 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.



Stewardship Updates

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

Stewardship Update through December, 2012

Average attendance for 53 Weeks: 29

Expected to date at \$1,620 for 53 weeks: \$85,860

Actual Offering: \$79,671

Shortfall: \$6,189

Average shortfall per week: \$ 117

Total offering for December was \$9,833, an average of \$1,967 per week, an upward trend. Thank you!

Congregational Council Sets January Meeting for Vote

The Congregational Council has set Sunday, January 13th after worship for a special meeting to adopt our statement of welcome. It is expected that this will be a brief meeting to adopt our statement of welcome as part of becoming a Reconciling In Christ congregation. Once the statement is adopted, we will submit it to Reconciling Works for acceptance and be given the recognition of being a Reconciling in Christ Congregation. We will be able to include our statement of welcome and note our RIC

status on all our congregational materials and advertisements. The welcoming statement recommended by the Council is:

Good Shepherd Lutheran Church of Gilroy is an inclusive Christian community. St. Paul, in Galatians 3, reminds us that baptism makes us children of God, and therefore, "there is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus." Therefore, we welcome people of all sexual orientations and gender identities fully into the life of our congregation.

As in the case of becoming a congregation of the ELCA, this is more or less a formal action to indicate who we are and how we have been in ministry for many years. Not a lot changed when we joined the ELCA in terms of our congregational life because we have been open and inclusive historically. The same is true with the statement of welcome. Plan to attend worship and the congregational meeting on January 13.

Please read the article by Rev. Peter Marty on the next pages on "The Offering Experience," from The Lutheran magazine, December, 2012 issue.

Elements of the Lord's day:

STORY BY **PETER W. MARTY**

The offering experience

Offerings glorify God - you get to view your life as a blessing and gift

The offering moment in Christian worship is undergoing a rapid sea change. The advent of online giving, cash and credit card giving kiosks in some churches, less frequent worship attendance than a generation ago, and widespread ignorance about stewardship among newer Christians means some stark new realities. One can be sitting in the 10th row of a full church and see a nearly empty offering plate go by. "I guess they don't give very much in this church," a surprised guest notes. "It looks like a few people leave small tips." Paltry offerings in dinky offering plates are a far cry from the fresh eggs, live chickens, bead jewelry and sundry personal items that Christians in other parts of the world delight in bringing forward. I remember the 15-minute offering "moments" when I lived in Africa. Shocking to many Western believers, there still are Christians who take the offering admonitions in the book of Exodus seriously: "No one shall appear before me empty-handed" (23:15).

For an offering to be an offering, it deserves to represent our best foot forward. We are returning to the Lord what we believe we first received as remarkable blessing. This blessing is why choirs diligently rehearse their offertory anthem. It's why organists and band leaders practice during the week. It's even why a mother will whisper to her 12-year-old just before he or she steps into an acolyte robe, "You need to tie your sneakers." Some

congregations and pastors are oddly squeamish about money. They don't want to talk about it. The very sound of the word money must grate against their holy sensibilities. Never mind that money does so many wonderful things, or that giving it away is one of the most vivid expressions of faith we know. For reasons that aren't entirely clear to me, the mere sight of cash and giving envelopes creates embarrassment for some church communities.

Otherwise faith-filled people can treat money as if it's dirty, or too personal, to have a rightful place in the sanctuary. Why else do they go to such great lengths to keep it out of view? A velvet bag gets passed along rows of worshipers. A sealed offering box is mounted near the exit door. A timid note in the bulletin reads, "For those who want to make an offering upon leaving today" The less we celebrate the offering experience, the more passive we become as it unfolds. We spectate like fans watching a football game on TV. The offering moment almost feels like halftime — a break in the action. Disengaged or restless worshipers take it as the perfect opportunity to go to the restroom, listen to "filler" music, or catch the announcements that get shared in what is viewed as the lighter time of worship. It's intermission in the minds of many. All that is missing is a popcorn machine in the lobby. To speak of the offering as "the collection" does little to alter this halftime spirit bouncing around peoples' psyches. We are giving gifts with generous hearts attached, not taking up a collection as a dutiful obligation. Charities collect donations. Shoppers collect coupons. Churches receive offerings. That's what all of us do whenever someone places a carefully selected gift of any kind in our hands. We receive the gift. We don't grab it. We don't take it. We certainly don't collect it as our gathered loot. Ideally, the worship servants who receive the peoples' offerings have a radiance to their faces. They're well capable of smiling. It might be worth some behind-the-scenes attention in

your congregation if dourness is more the standard. Handling precious gifts that people are turning over to the Lord's work is not exactly grim duty. It's not morgue work. It's lovely joy. Some would label it a privilege. In the end, the offering moment comes down to you, the worshiper. Regardless of whether the "plates" are large or small, whether the music is stirring or not, and whether the second usher on the left is having a bad hair day or a perfectly coiffured one, your offering is what glorifies God. You get to view your life as a blessing and a gift. Your offering becomes a witness to this extraordinary truth.