

GOOD SHEPHERD LUTHERAN CHURCH

THE SHEPHERD'S VOICE



Through the Holy Spirit, we are called by God to live Christ's love as we touch all those in our lives, our church, and our communities.

DECEMBER 2005

WWW.GOODSHEPHERDLUTHERANCT.ORG

"And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us....."

December 21st is the shortest day of the year. There is less daylight than any other day. In the Northern Hemisphere it is the beginning of a long winter. The earth is dead, maybe even covered with snow and ice. Except for an occasional evergreen, the trees are bare. Most smart birds, and some smart humans, have gone to warmer climates.

In the midst of bitter and cold days we come together to celebrate new life, new hope, and to worship the God of light and life who would not let his world dwell forever in the wintry enslavement of its sin.

Emmanuel! God with us! God invaded the human race with the birth of his only-begotten Son, and since that "incarnation" nothing for the human race has been the same. Weird things occurred in nature: a bright star piercing the darkness announcing the birth of the King; angels proclaiming gospel (good news) to lonely shepherds; a virgin becoming a mother; gentile kings from the East paying homage to a Jew born in poverty.

Since that unique invasion God has stayed with us: sacramentally through water, bread and wine and verbally through his holy Words of scripture. Jesus continues to be our "Emmanuel," God dwelling among us.

It's time to celebrate! Wrap up the presents, put out the best food on your best china, visit friends, enjoy the relatives. Sing the carols, hear the story.....

Light the candles, eat the bread, drink the wine....."Emmanuel, God with us!"

"And we have seen his glory, the glory of an only Son coming from the Father, filled with enduring love."

From all the Leones to all of you----- a very Merry and Blessed Christmas!

Pastor Bryan A. Leone

ON THE WEB:

- *The newsletter, lay ministry schedule and calendar are on the web as soon as they are printed.*

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Prayer List

Prayer concerns come in a variety of ways and have a variety of needs. There are current **present** needs as well as **long term** needs. Our newsletter prayer list contains both needs.

Members: Kay Leone, Arlene Juliano, Helen Behm, Alma Anderson, Sarah Mora, Peggy Knopf.

Family & Friends of Members: Carl Carbotti, Edward Szulga, Dawn Baxter, Shirley Brooks, Carl Dreher, Faith Fox, Wilbur and Gertrude Heim, Rev. Fred Schramm, Dennis Krize, Lynn Bernardini, Ceil Edquest, Pastor Julie Hospel-Schoenfeld, Reverend H. George Anderson, Richard Ruesch, Jack Gula, Larry Belotti, Joy Dubail, Paul Kennedy, Matt Coy, Nancy Evola, Toni De Carlo, Astrid Fagan, Kate Dreher, Tom & Collette Ramsberger, Florence Petrozzano, and Alex Szulga.

Special Prayers for Armed Forces Personnel - Glenn Carlson, Glenn Riccio, George Carris, Damon Dykes, Eric McFadden, James Brake-wood, Jason Macionus, and Aaron Jackson.

Our deepest sympathy and prayers to:

The family and friends of † Mary Damberg †, mother of Bob Damberg.

The family and friends of † Kathy Wolf †, aunt of Cindy Carlson.

*He heals the brokenhearted
and binds up their wounds.*

Psalm 147 vs. 3

WORLD HUNGER DONATION

The Stewardship and Christian Education Committees would like to thank everyone who came to the Congregational Breakfast on October 16, 2005 and donated \$ 183.00 to World Hunger.

PATIENT NEWS

If you or a family member is admitted to the hospital, please remember to call Pastor Leone or the church office. The new HIPPA privacy rules prevent hospitals from notifying the pastor and do not allow the information desks to give the information out when called.

Social Ministry



Good Shepherd is involved in many different social outreach projects, and a new Social Ministry committee was recently formed to help coordinate these activities. Check out the new poster (located on the bulletin board next to Pastor Leone's office), which highlights the groups we support and their missions.

You'll also find in the narthex next to the Welcome Center new bookshelves that were recently installed. We want to create *The Shepherd's Pantry* and stock non-perishable food items for use by local food banks. Shelves will be devoted to canned goods, cereals, paper products, and other staples. Consider making it a regular practice to add to the pantry.

Are you interested in supporting a new outreach activity? The poster is just a work in progress and new programs are easily added. Through our works, we're all part of the committee. But if you need more information, you can talk with: Kayla Boland, Jane Fieberts, Lisa Lengel, Susan Carey, Trudi Black or Pastor Leone.

Newsletter Deadline

Please submit any articles for the next newsletter to the church office by Thursday, December 15, 2005. You may email your articles or put them in the box in the church office. The email address for the church is goodshepherd@lutheran@snet.net. Thank you for your cooperation.

PLEASE MAKE NOTE OF OUR UPCOMING
WORSHIP SCHEDULE:



November 27, 2005

The First Sunday in Advent
Worship Services
8:00 A.M. & 10:30 A.M.

December 4, 2005

The Second Sunday in Advent
Worship Services
8:00 A.M. & 10:30 A.M.

December 11, 2005

The Third Sunday in Advent
8:00 A.M. Worship Service and Choir
program "Hark the Angels Sing"
10:30 A.M. Sunday School Worship
Program "The Wonder"

December 18, 2005

The Fourth Sunday in Advent
8:00 A.M. Worship service
10:30 A.M. Worship Service and Choir
program "Hark the Angels Sing"

December 24, 2005

Christmas Eve Candlelight Worship
Service
7:00 P.M. & 11:00 P.M.

December 25, 2005

Christmas Day Worship Service
One Service Only at 10:00 A.M.

January 1, 2006

New Year's Day Worship Service
One Service Only at 10:00 A.M.

January 8, 2006

The Baptism of Our Lord
Worship Services
8:00 A.M. & 10:30 A.M.



Poinsettia Plants for Christmas Eve

If you would like to order a plant to adorn the altar on Christmas Eve, please take an envelope from the display on the bulletin board in the hallway. The cost is \$16.00 per plant and orders must be placed by December 12th. Please leave your completed order including your name, bulletin dedication, and check in the decorated box on the desk in the church office. Please take your plant home after the Christmas Eve worship service.

ANNUAL

CONGREGATIONAL

MEETING

December 4, 2005 immediately following the 10:30 worship service. Please plan to attend. A light catered lunch will be served during the meeting.

2005 Year end Financial Report

Since the Annual Congregational meeting is being held on December 4, 2005, the final 2005 Operating Expense Report will not be ready for the meeting. The Council voted at their last meeting that the final 2005 financial report would be presented at the Council meeting on January 11, 2006 and available to the congregation. Every member of the congregation is invited to attend council meetings. If anyone has any questions involving the 2005 year end financial report please speak with Treasurer Tim Carlson or Council President Bruce Peterson.

Council Meeting Highlights for
November 9, 2005

A lengthy discussion was led by Bruce Peterson about the 8 quality characteristics outlined in the first chapter of Natural Church Development by Christian Schwarz. Council members will be reading Chapters 2 & 3 before the next meeting in order to discuss the next part of the book.

The Annual Congregational Meeting will be held December 4, 2005 after the 10:30 service. A light catered lunch will be available during the meeting. At the meeting the 2006 budget will be voted on. \$10,000 was added to the budget for Church Development Programs determined by the Council. From our discussions about the 8 quality characteristics it is hoped that we will be able to develop some new programs that enhance a quality church.

Worship & Music

Dear Friends in Christ,

The Worship & Music Committee has a favor to ask. We all enjoy the warm friendly and social atmosphere at Good Shepherd especially prior to our Sunday services. However, many also enjoy a quiet and/or musical moment in the sanctuary before the service itself starts. We are referring to the time during the "prelude". The prelude may be organ music, the Bell Choir, a voice solo, or an instrumentalist. All of these presentations require hours of preparation. We, therefore, ask that during this time you make an effort to minimize your socialization and give the prelude (whatever it may be) its rightful appreciation.

Bob Carlson
Chairman, Worship & Music Committee

The Angel Tree



It's that time of year again....we have received tags from the Salvation Army which list the needs and wishes of some special children in need of the kind of blessings Good Shepherd members are known to bestow.

IT'S EASY TO BE AN ANGEL!

1. Select a tag from the tree.
2. Record your name and date taken next to that number on the sign-out sheet.
3. Select an angel ornament from the basket and hang it on the tree.
4. Spending maximum is \$50 on toys and \$50 on clothes. (Please do not feel you need to spend this much!)
5. Return you unwrapped gifts for your child by December 11th. Sign it in when returned.

Please call Trudi Black or the church office with any questions/problems.

Coat, hat and mitten collection

The Salvation Army is in need of warm clothing for the upcoming cold winter months. Please take a look through your closets and see if you would like to donate any warm coats, hats, mittens, etc. that are in good condition. The Social Outreach Ministry Committee has set up an area in the narthex for the collection.



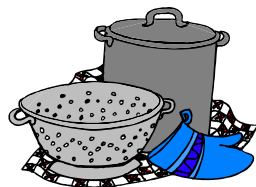
WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Joy and Jason Baxter



Vickye Bell, Ingrid and Ethan Dikmen

More new member photos to follow in next month's newsletter.

COMMUNITY SUPPER

The next community supper will be on Wednesday, December 7, 2005. Cooks begin at 3:15 P.M. and servers at 5:00 P.M. There is a sign up sheet on the bulletin board in the narthex. Should you have any questions, please contact our coordinator, Janet Szulga.

COVENANT TO CARE THANKS YOU!

Many thanks to everyone who so generously filled grocery bags with items for Thanksgiving dinner for our Covenant to Care families. A special thanks to the Sunday School for the great job they did decorating the bags.

Your Christmas gifts are due by noon on December 4th. All "wishes" are suggestions only—feel free to substitute. Be sure to keep these gifts separate from the Angel Tree (Salvation Army) gifts—these are separate outreach programs. Thanks, and happy holidays, everyone!

A STORY FOR REFLECTION**The House We Live In**

An elderly carpenter was ready to retire. He told his employer of his plans to live a more leisurely life with his wife enjoying his extended family. He would miss the paycheck, but he wanted to retire.

The contractor was sorry to see his good worker and friend of so many years go, and asked if he could build just one more house as a personal favor. The carpenter said yes, but his heart was not in it. He resorted to shoddy workmanship and used inferior materials. It was an unfortunate way to end his career.

When the carpenter finished his work and the builder came to inspect the house, the contractor handed the front-door key to the carpenter. "This is your house," he said. "It is my gift to you for your years of hard work".

If he had only known!

So it is with us if we build our lives giving our least instead of our best. With a shock we awake one day to look at the situation we have created and find that we are living in the house we built.



The Council would like to thank everyone who took time to complete a survey. Approximately 60 surveys were completed by members of the congregation and 30 of those surveys were randomly selected and mailed in for processing. The results of the surveys are listed above in the graph. The Natural Church Development is normed for churches in the USA so that **50 is the median score or "average"**. Seventy percent of churches taking the survey will score in the range between 35 and 65. The balance of churches taking the survey show fifteen percent scoring above 65 and fifteen percent scoring below 35.

So what do the results tell us?

The eight listed qualities in the graph are considered eight essential qualities of a healthy, growing church based upon the results of a research project conducted by Germany's Institute for Natural Church Development from 1994 through 1996. 1000 churches in 32 countries and 6 continents participated in the project. 4.2 million responses were analyzed. The results identify Good Shepherd's minimum and maximum factors as well as our "minimum factor", the lowest score. Every church has a "minimum factor".

What can we do to experience growth in the area of our "minimum factor"?

The Church Council has begun reading and discussing the book written by Christian A. Schwarz, "Natural Church Development the Eight Essential Qualities of Healthy Churches". Christian Schwarz is the head of the Institute for Natural Church Development located in Germany. The survey, the book reading and book discussion begins the council's long range planning process.

The process contains the following five phases:

Phase 1- **Prepare**, with the key question, "**What can we expect?**"

Phase 2 - **Diagnose**, with the key question, "**Where are we?**"

Phase 3- **Plan**, with the key question, "**Where do we want to go?**"

Phase 4 – **Implement**, with the key question, "**What do we need to get there?**"

Phase 5 – **Evaluate**, with the key question, "**How did we do?**"

Council has made a commitment to develop a 3 to 5 year long range plan for the health and growth of Good Shepherd. The process is not going to be a one day retreat where programs are suggested and if a program worked for another Lutheran church, then it will work at Good Shepherd. Rather the process will be a study of how God wants his church to grow and we will learn how to release the growth potential within Good Shepherd. Every member of Good Shepherd is invited to participate by attending the book study sessions and the future long range planning meetings. Council is currently in Phase 1. If you have any questions, please speak with a member of the Church Council.

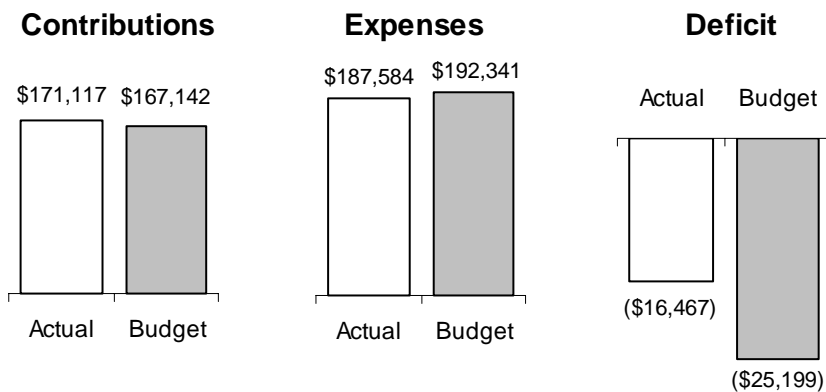
Happy Birthday

Lauren Fothe	4 January	Danielle Skane	21 January
Sharon Duda	9 January	Janet Szulga	21 January
Martha Hoffman	9 January	Dyani Gendron	21 January
Jimmy Boivie	9 January	Kenneth Schiess	24 January
Matthew Wheeler	9 January	George Olsovsky	25 January
Raymond Schmidt	12 January	Alma Anderson	25 January
Donna Qubick	13 January	Audrey Heim	26 January
Katherine Leone	13 January	Eric Forte	26 January
Mary Ruesch	14 January	Ryan Morrison	27 January
Eileen Remlin	14 January	Amber Serrano	27 January
Zachary Forte	16 January	Annette Kreitler	27 January
Derek Bobowick	16 January	Christine Wesche	28 January
Lisa Lilly	17 January	Rachel Smith	28 January
Kathy Boivie	18 January	James Hough	29 January
Christopher Peterson	20 January	Robert Wesche	30 January

The current month's birthday listing is now posted on the bulletin board outside of Pastor Leone's office. If your birthday is not listed, please contact the church office and the files will be updated. We do not want to miss anyone's birthday.

October YTD Financial Summary

For the ten months ended October 2005, Contributions were \$3,975 favorable to budget and Expenses were \$4,757 favorable to budget. We have incurred a deficit of \$16,467. As a result of our expenses being higher than our contributions, we have had to use \$10,000 from General Reserves to fund our ongoing expenses.



22 pledges behind
12 on pledge
26 pledges ahead

SUNDAY SCHOOL

Please join us on Sunday, December 11th for the Sunday School Christmas Program, "The Wonder", during the 10:30 worship service.

Children should attend Sunday School at 9:15 so that we can practice the program one more time. The program will also be performed at the Lutheran Home in Southbury at 2:15 p.m.

We will also have a practice on Saturday, December 10th from 9:30 until 11:00.

No Sunday School on December 25th or January 1st. Join us on January 8th as we begin the second half of the Sunday School year.

Have a blessed holiday season.

Donna Duessel & Rachel Smith
Sunday School Superintendents

It's A Girl!



Congratulations to Tricia and Derek Bobowick on the birth of their daughter, Jillian O'Hally Bobowick, on October 21, 2005. D.J. is her proud big brother. Eileen and Howie Holleran are her delighted grandparents.

May God's light shine on Jillian, and fill her years with health, happiness, and walking always with her Lord.



VALENTINES

In February, the ELCW will meet and be making cookies for the Valentine boxes, which are sent to the college students of Good Shepherd. In order to make this project a success, and not leave out any students, we need all college students updated addresses. If this information is not already in the church office, please call 268-7596 or e-mail it to goodshepherdlutheran@snet.net.

Recollections of the history of Good Shepherd Lutheran Church of Monroe, Connecticut as related to the church council at their retreat held in Clinton, CT on October 1, 2005 by Bob Wesche

In 1960, Frank and Anna Gibiser contacted Lutherans in Monroe, Shelton, Easton and Newtown. (Frank was a mailman and also delivered the Bridgeport Post newspaper to many of the homes in Monroe.) Approximately 40 Lutherans met at the Gibiser home on Lover's Lane, Monroe on a snowy evening in February, 1961 with Pastor Benson of Salem Lutheran Church in Bridgeport, acting as the convener.

Six of us were appointed as a "steering committee" to plan for a Lutheran Church in Monroe. We were told there would be some resistance from other churches as the population of Monroe was only 4,500. The East Village Methodist Church offered the Steering Committee the use of their church, now known as East Village Meeting House, for worship and changed the time of their service to accommodate us. We accepted the offer and our first worship service was held on April 9, 1961.

In July, 1961, The Rev Orville Lind (ordained in June) was installed as our first pastor. The name "Good Shepherd Lutheran Church" was proposed by Anna Gibiser and adopted by the congregation.

After a few months, the Steering Committee realized we were too comfortable at the East Village Methodist Church. On a suggestion from Jean Loveland, the local newspaper reporter, the Steering Committee requested the Monroe Board of Education for permission to use the Monroe Elementary School for worship services on Sundays. Permission was granted and on September 17, 1961 we held our first service at the school. On November 12, 1961 we were officially organized as a "mission" church of the

(Continued on page 9)

(Continued from page 8)

Augustana Lutheran Synod with 83 adults and 62 children.

Our first major undertaking was the purchase of a house on Jockey Hollow Road that was dedicated as our parsonage on June 17, 1962. On October 14, 1962 we purchased 3.85 acres on the corner of Elm Street and Lover's Lane, the site of our church. In March 1963 a building committee was formed and had its first meeting on March 21st. Ground breaking for our church took place on June 21, 1964. The cornerstone laying, dedication and first service took place on May 9, 1965.

In 1969, Pastor Lind left Good Shepherd to take a call in Massachusetts. The Rev. Peter Drever from Trinity Lutheran in Shelton became Good Shepherd's second pastor. Pastor Drever left in 1970. On two occasions Rev. Paul Erickson served as vacancy pastor while the call process was taking place.

The Rev. Charles R. Schwarz answered our call and was installed as our pastor on December 7, 1970. Pastor Schwarz came to Good Shepherd with his wife, Doris and three sons, Karl, Paul and Mark.

The addition of Gibiser Hall was completed and dedicated on June 6, 1976. In October, 1978 we sold the parsonage to Pastor and Doris Schwarz and assumed a 30 year mortgage.

In earlier years our music directors were Joyce Wolfer, Rachel Austin, Emily Knudsen, Larry Schultz and Linda Wesche Bspuda. Emily served as organist/choir director for approximately 17 years. Linda served as organist/choir director and bell choir director for 22 years. For a short time Lou Negri was Director of Music in 2004 before our present Music Director, Vic Johnson, was hired in early fall of 2004.

From 1982 to 1990 we had 8 part-time interns from various denominations who were divinity students of Yale Divinity School. From 1994 to 2003 we had 6 full-time interns from Gettysburg Lutheran Seminary. 2004/2005, Amanda Kucik was a part-time intern from Yale Divinity School.

In 1985 Diane Hensel petitioned Good Shepherd

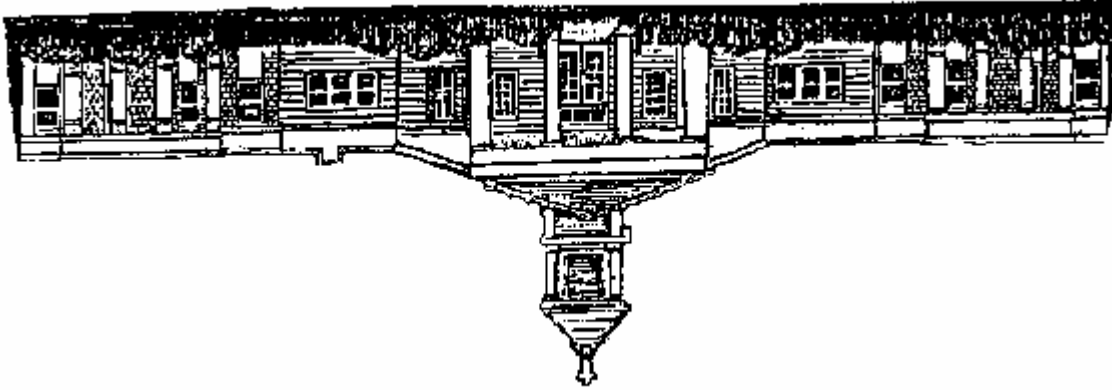
requesting the use of Gibiser Hall as a location for a preschool. Diane was given approval. The preschool became "Children's Way" and is still occupying Gibiser Hall to this day.

In 1986 Good Shepherd celebrated 25 years since its organization. An anniversary celebration was held at the First United Church of Christ in Bridgeport. Pastor Orville Lind and his wife Donna attended along with many members of Good Shepherd.

Several changes were made to the church building throughout the years. Besides Gibiser Hall, an enclosure was made for the pastor's office which now serves as the Altar Guild room. The kitchen was renovated and pews were installed in the sanctuary to replace folding chairs. In 1994, major renovations took place including extending the sanctuary approximately 17 feet and remodeling the sanctuary to its present appearance. A steeple, which was Frank Gibiser's long time dream, was constructed. The addition to the front of the building increased the area of the narthex along with a new pastor's office and the choir room. The old furnace room was converted to a meeting room/storage area and a new furnace room was located between the sanctuary and Gibiser Hall.

Following an accident that occurred in January, 1999 and a long period of hospitalization, Pastor Schwarz, who had faithfully served Good Shepherd for 28 years, passed away in April. Pastor Julie Haspel-Schoenfeld served as interim pastor for two years followed by supply pastors.

After a long search/call process, the Reverend Bryan A Leone answered our call and was installed as the new pastor of Good Shepherd on September 16, 2001. Pastor came to us with his wife Kay, son Timothy and daughter Emily.



CHRISTIAN EDUCATION AT 9:45
A.M.

WORSHIP SERVICES:
SUNDAY AT 8:00 A.M.
& 10:30 A.M.

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