

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 2006

WWW.GOODSHEPHERDLUTHERANCT.ORG

"Simply Giving"

"For the grace of God has appeared for the salvation of all people, training us to renounce irreligion and worldly passions, and to live sober, upright, and godly lives in this world, awaiting our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all iniquity and to purify for himself a people of his own who are zealous for good deeds." (Titus 2: 11-14, the New Testament reading appointed for Christmas Eve)

Christmas is the time of year when we celebrate the incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ: the long awaited Messiah: God's greatest gift to the human race: the gift of the divine entering human flesh and mortality, so he could save us from eternal death and condemnation. What an awesome, inexpressible gift! A gift of steadfast love and fidelity, even in the midst of our unfaithfulness and endless sinning, the gift and the promises of Jesus Christ are always valid, and nothing can ever take this gift away from us. So, the Christmas season gives us the opportunity to express in word and deed our great thanks as best we can, for this gift of God's love which has no end and no boundaries.

So how shall we respond? The answer lies in the scripture above. Jesus Christ by his incarnation has redeemed the human race and made a people who are "zealous for good deeds."

This past week, the Sony Play Station III went on sale across America. It is THE toy of the Christmas season. People camped out over night in front of various department stores to be sure they could get a hold of that super present. Some stores were quickly sold out. Remember, this is long before the Christmas shopping season officially begins on the Friday after Thanksgiving! Fighting other shoppers over who gets this one particular gift for their child, is a long way from the spirit of the season as expressed in the scripture above. But there are other ways to give in response to what God has given to us.

Good Shepherd's church family has always responded with great

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ON THE WEB:

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

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generosity to Covenant to Care's holiday collections as well as the Salvation Army's angel tree. Already this holiday season, almost all of the angels are gone, even though we don't even have the tree up! What a terrific response! Covenant to Care's Christmas Tree which is up is now practically bare due to people already taking tags for Christmas gifts for needy teens. There are other ways of responding as well. Some of you have already purchased olive oil made through a cooperative in Palestine funded through Lutheran World Relief. All proceeds will be donated to Augusta Victoria Hospital in Palestine which ministers to all people regardless of their religion or ethnicity. You can also donate to ELCA World Hunger: an alternative gift catalog is available in the narthex. The Council of Churches of Greater Bridgeport ministry includes programs for caring for youth in crisis (Janus House), creating second chances for ex-offenders (Co-op Center), challenging children to learn (Project Learn), and connecting diverse people and communities (Bridge Building and Hunger Outreach). You will find gift giving guides in your bulletin and in the narthex. The Council receives 46% of its budget from government grants; the remaining 54% comes from congregations and individuals. So if you're stumped with what to get the person who has everything, maybe one of those gifts would be appropriate. But whatever you buy as a gift try to make it a gift that expresses your love for that person, and the love of Christ for that person. May God bless us all, with a peaceful, meaningful, blessed Christmas where our giving is a reflection of the endless giving of our most generous, merciful and steadfast savior, the Messiah, Jesus Christ, born as a babe in a cattle feeding trough to save and love us all forever.

A Blessed and Merry Christmas to you all!

Pastor Bryan and Kay Leone



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

Members: Veronica Serrano, Sue Hough, Helga Furnes, Kay Leone, Peg Wesche, Bob Wesche, Linda Pleva, Arlene Juliano and Sarah Mora.

Family & Friends of Members: Marilyn Marquis, Jerry Otten, Karen Watts, Pastor Andy Ballantine, Faith Holmes, Ingeborg Reine, Margaret, Lorna Walter, Andy, Nochele Revere, John Bily, Mary Curtis, Kenneth Volek, Evelyn Sogaro, Christine Lawrence, Ty Bordenet, Frank, John Hannan, Joy Kotrch, JoAnn Slinn, Raymond J. Plouffe, Ron & Carlene, Pedro Coutino, Dylan Cyr, Harlan Fagan, Victor Poklemba, Ellie Garnett Ferguson, Jean and Alex McKinnon, Nancy Evola, Bill Giarla, Trudy Molnar, Edward Szulga, Gertrude Heim, Lynn Bernardini, Larry Belotti, Matt Coy, 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, Aaron Jackson Bob Morschauer and Karl Ekeberg.

Our deepest sympathy and prayers to:

The family and friends of + Lynn Smith +, cousin of Audrey and Ken Heim.

The family and friends of + John Kovacs +, husband of Mary Kovacs, father of Ruth Kovacs Bosco and John Kovacs.

*He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds.
Psalm 147 vs. 3*

PLEASE MAKE NOTE OF OUR UPCOMING
WORSHIP SCHEDULE:



December 3, 2006

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

December 10, 2006

The Second Sunday in Advent
8:00 A.M. Worship Service
10:30 A.M. Worship Service &
Choir Christmas Cantata

December 17, 2006

The Third Sunday in Advent
8:00 A.M. Worship Service and Choir
Christmas Cantata
10:30 A.M. Sunday School Worship
Program "The Star of Love"

December 24, 2006

The Fourth Sunday in Advent
10:30 A.M. Worship Service

December 24, 2006

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

December 31, 2006

First Sunday of Christmas
Worship Services
8:00 A.M. & 10:30 A.M.

From the Intern

The Season of Advent and the Jesse Tree

Advent is both a time of *waiting* and *preparation* – another one of those strange paradoxes of the Christian faith. It is a time when we wait and prepare for the coming of Jesus – the coming of Jesus in his birth which occurred about 2,000 years ago – and when we wait and prepare for Jesus' second coming...which will occur at a future time we do not know.

For the celebration of Jesus' previous coming and the anticipation of Jesus' future arrival, we wait and prepare. Isaiah and John the Baptist called us to reflect, repent, and prepare. These are some of the objectives we have when we use advent devotions.

This year Good Shepherd will be using the Jesse Tree as part of its Advent preparations. The Jesse Tree is named from Isaiah 11:1: "A shoot will spring forth from the stump of Jesse, and a branch out of his roots." It is a vehicle to tell the story of God in the Old Testament, and to connect the Advent season with the faithfulness of God throughout the ages of scripture.

The Jesse Tree is a leafless tree or branch decorated with symbols that tells Jesus' ancestry. It represents the 4000 years of salvation history when God prepared His people, the Jews, for the coming of the Savior. This is the theme of the four weeks of Advent.

The Jesse Tree also tells about our faith family and how we are related to God. As Christians, we are part of the extended family of Jesus Christ. His family tree is the story of salvation history, the story of us, God's people, loved, chosen, shaped, and saved by God.

Intern Joshua Rinas

Resources used for this article:

<http://www.criovoice.org/jesse.html>

<http://www.cbna.info/nmtp/jesse/jessebackground.html>

The Angel Tree



This year, GSL is once again supporting the Salvation Army in their effort to provide a happy holiday to needy area families. We have tags for 40 children...and can get more. The remaining tags will be on the tree after Thanksgiving. **Please sign for the tags you take.** All gifts are due back, tagged but not wrapped by **12/18**, but earlier is better so we can get them delivered in time.

We have also been asked to help a family who recently lost everything they owned in a fire. They have specific requests for Christmas and their info and tags will be there too. They also need new or gently used household goods. They need linens and blankets for three single beds, everything to stock a kitchen, larger linens for the parents, lamps.....The father continues to work long hours and they are living at a hotel because he gets home too late to be admitted to transition housing (a big problem). They would greatly appreciate gift cards such as Walmart and Stop and Shop. They are incredibly grateful for all help received.....the social worker knew Good Shepherd would come through.

INFANT HATS

All hats received by **12/11** will be sent to Save the Children to be forwarded to President Bush on Jan. 1, 2007 as part of the campaign to request increased funding for the millions of babies worldwide who die from lack of basic warmth, medical care and food. Hats received after this date will go to area preemie units or other worthy causes. Keep those needles going on those cold winter days.....make children's sweaters, hats or healing shawls for our worthy causes!

THANK YOU

Special thanks to Kathy, Bob, Eric & Emily Johnson for their recent donations to the book cart in the narthex:

"Was that a balloon or did your head just pop?"
"Bible Humor: Top Seven Lists"

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 for Children families. A special thanks to the Sunday School for the great job they did decorating the bags, and to Trudi Black and Diane Hensel for their help with the coolers.

Your Christmas gifts are due by noon on **December 10th**. All "wishes" are suggestions only—feel free to substitute. Be sure to keep these wrapped gifts separate from the Angel Tree (Salvation Army) gifts—these are separate outreach programs. Thanks, and happy holidays, everyone!

Jane Fieberts



Southbury Lutheran Home Christmas Shopping Spree Volunteers— Bob Wesche, Peg Wesche and Dottie Kaiser.



SHEPHERD'S PANTRY - The Social Ministry and Community Outreach Committee invites you to contribute items to the Shepherd's Pantry located in the narthex. Needed at the Monroe Food Pantry in December: hot chocolate mix, mustard, canned mushrooms, canned olives; in January: Personal Care items: soap, deodorant, shampoo, diapers and wipes.

**Church Council Highlights
November 8, 2006**

A motion was made and seconded that the Council accept the 2007 budget which had been explained by Tim Carlson. This budget will be voted on at the Annual Meeting on December 10, 2006.

It was also recommended that Jeff Jackson, Tim Carlson, Rachel Smith, Ken Schiess, and Lisa Lilly be accepted to serve on Council for a three year term. Maury Heim, Bob McFarland and Donna Duessel were thanked for their work on Council as their terms have expired.

Newsletter Deadline

Please submit any articles for the next newsletter to the church office by Friday, **December 15, 2006**. You may E-mail your articles (goodshepherdlutheran@snet.net) or put them in the box in the church office.



Because we all live such busy lives, we have a reminder call for lay ministry participants. If you are an acolyte, assisting minister, communion assistant, counter, lector, usher or greeter, you will receive a call a few days before you are scheduled to serve. If you are unable to serve on the day you are assigned, please switch with someone and notify the church office.

Thanks to all for their participation in the program and special thanks to Arlene Juliano for her assistance. Please let Arlene know when she calls, if you would prefer not to have a reminder call.

**ANNUAL
CONGREGATIONAL
MEETING**

December 10, 2006 immediately following the 10:30 worship service. Please plan to attend. A light lunch will be provided.



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 \$14.00 per plant and orders must be placed by **December 10th**. Please put your completed order including your name, bulletin dedication, and check in the offering plate. You may take your plant home after the Christmas Eve worship service.

YOUTH GROUP NEWS



The Youth Group will be collecting hats, gloves, and mittens for the Salvation Army to distribute. Any donations will be greatly appreciated. Please leave your winter apparel out in the box in the narthex.

Also, the cell phone collection for the battered women's shelter runs through the end of December. A box is in the narthex for your donations.



Thank you for your support!

Tuesday Evening Adult Forum

Beginning November 21st, the Tuesday evening adult forum will start with a new curriculum. Tuesday evenings, 7:00 – 8:30 p.m. in the lounge, from now through Christmas, we will discuss our worship practices in the ELCA – why and how we worship the way we do. We will use film and the ELCA statement “The Use and Means of Grace” to delve into discussion of our core worship practices. This series promises to be both enlightening and thought provoking. Join us!

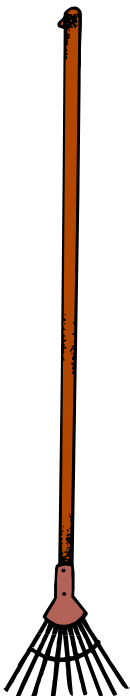
ELCW Christmas Party



All women of Good Shepherd Lutheran Church are invited to attend the annual ELCW Christmas Party to be held on Monday, **December 18th** starting at 6:15 p.m. We will have a guided potluck dinner and make a beautiful angel craft. Please sign up on the bulletin board in the narthex. If you have any questions, please contact Ellie Noll. Attend and enjoy the friendships.

Property Clean Up Day
Saturday
December 2, 2006

Join the Property Committee for fun and fellowship as we rake leaves and clean the church. Start time is 9:00 A.M. Come for an hour or as long as you like! Bring your rake and see how quickly the leaves disappear...



COMMUNITY SUPPER



The next community supper will be on Wednesday, **December 6, 2006**. 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.

Directory Update

Updated church directories will be issued in January. Please notify the church office of any changes in address, telephone number, or e-mail address. You may call the church office at 203-268-7596 or e-mail the update to goodshepherdlutheran@snet.net.

Thanks for your cooperation.

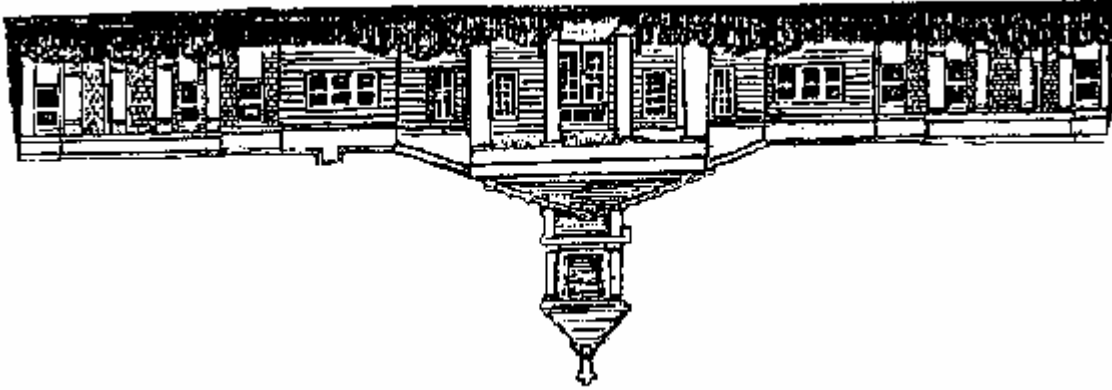


VALENTINES

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 goodshepherd Lutheran@snet.net.

Volunteer at The Connecticut Hospice, Inc.

Our patients and families are in need of your care and support. As a CT Hospice Volunteer, you can fill your hours (weekdays/evenings or weekends) by assisting in an administrative capacity or offering direct care as a friendly visitor, provide pastoral or bereavement care, help in the arts or meet transportation needs. For more information please call Pat Corradino, Director of Volunteer Services at 203-315-7510.



CHRISTIAN EDUCATION AT
9:15 A.M.
WORSHIP SERVICES:
SUNDAY AT 8:00 A.M.
& 10:30 A.M.

Phone: 203-268-7596
Email: goodshepherdlutheran@snet.net
Website: www.GoodShepherdLutheranCT.org

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GOOD SHEPHERD LUTHERAN
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