



The Shepherd's *staff*

THE NEWSLETTER OF HOLY SHEPHERD LUTHERAN CHURCH — NOVEMBER / LATE FALL 2023

433 MORAGA WAY, ORINDA, CALIFORNIA — www.holyshepherd.org — (925)254-3422

Thanksgiving — Just Do It!

The Feast of "Thanksgiving" — the Fourth Thursday in November — is our annual reminder to practice ONE day a year something that we're created to practice EVERY day!

Once upon a time, there were three great holidays that defined the rhythm of the last three months of the year. October was all about Halloween, November was all about Thanksgiving, and December was all about Christmas. But no more!

Nowadays, the 'Season' of Halloween begins right after Labor Day, when Halloween candy inundates the aisles of every local retailer and folks begin to turn their yards in miniaturized versions of Disneyland's Haunted Mansion. But when the Halloween decorations come down, the aisles of HomeGoods and CVS and Costco and the like jump directly to Christmas with no mention of Thanksgiving at all! It's as if Thanksgiving has been left in the dust in our eagerness to celebrate the gift-giving season that is Christmas.

Now it could be that the reason retailers forget about Thanksgiving is because they haven't figured out a way to make money off of it, but that ought not be an excuse for us to follow their lead. And it could be that the reason some would prefer we not celebrate Thanksgiving is that our traditional celebrations of that event have been used to demean and defame the First Peoples who settled those lands on which we now live. But of all the holidays on our calendars, Thanksgiving is perhaps the one holiday wherein the governmental calendar-makers come closest to actually getting things right! Long ago they set aside the Fourth Thursday in November as a day to practice one day a year something that we're created to practice EVERY day of EVERY year — taking time to thank the One who created us and sustains us for the abundance of blessings that define our very existence.

However you celebrate Thanksgiving this year, may you see the Fourth Thursday in November as an invitation to practice thankfulness every day. After all, didn't Jesus once tell a story about ten lepers who were healed, only one of whom remembered to come back and say 'Thanks'?

WEEKLY EVENTS SCHEDULE

We encourage you to join in!

Sundays at 9:30 am — In-person worship with Holy Communion happens in our Sanctuary

Sundays at 9:30 am — Our in-person worship services are "Live-Streamed" via our Facebook page @HSLCOrinda.

Sundays at 10am — Sunday School for Kids happens twice-monthly following KidTalk. (Next class dates are November 19 and December 3!)

Sundays at 10:30 am — Coffee Fellowship takes place following our worship service.

Sundays at noon — Our 'Worship Video' is up at www.holyshepherd.org.

Tuesdays at 7 pm — Our weekly 'Adult Ed' class meets online via Zoom.

Zoom Meeting ID: 861 5874 8710

Zoom Passcode: 94563

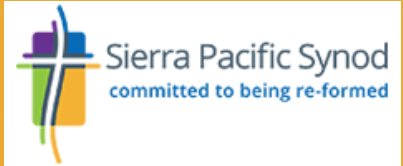
Mission Partner Update: Sierra Pacific Synod

On the weekend of September 15-17, the Sierra Pacific Synod met in Assembly at the Hyatt Regency in Burlingame. Primary on the agenda was the election of a Bishop.

The 35th Assembly of the Sierra Pacific Synod was a curiously-anxious event for our congregation. While all assemblies involving the election of a new regional bishop are significant, this year's was particularly angst-producing because our own Pastor John Valentine was raised up as a potential candidate for that open position. To the dismay of some within our congregation and synod — and to the great relief of some others (*including both Pastor John and his beloved Beth-any!*) — the Assembly elected Pastor Jeff Johnson of University Lutheran Chapel in Berkeley to serve a six-year-term as our next bishop.

In the hours leading up to Pastor Johnson's election, interim Bishop Claire (Burkat) took time to remind the Assembly that the duties and responsibilities of bishops in the ELCA are heavy ones — and that nobody knows how to be a bishop before being elected. "We don't elect a bishop. We elect a pastor into this role and then teach that person how to become our Bishop."

Bishop Johnson's installation service will be held at 2pm on the afternoon of Saturday, December 9th at St. Matthew Lutheran Church in Walnut Creek. Interested in attending? Please speak with Pastor Pam or Pastor John.



The Sierra Pacific Synod (of which Holy Shepherd is a part) is the regional expression of the ELCA Northern California and Northern Nevada. (The word 'synod' comes from a Greek word meaning "to travel a common road – to walk together.") It is comprised of some 180 congregations and worshipping communities throughout that territory.

Our congregation supports the work of our synod through gifts of both financial resources and time. Pastor John Valentine serves both as Dean of the Mount Diablo Conference and Chair of the synod's Resolutions Committee, and Fred Schroeder and Joan Kiekhaefer both serve in the synod's Investment Team.

Congratulations

We celebrate with those of you who have had (or will yet have) a 'Big Day' in October or November!



BIRTHDAYS

Alexandra H. — 10/3
Bob Schm. — 10/7
Zach H. — 10/10
Carys Ch. — 10/19
Julia V. — 10/20
Herb W. — 10/20
Marian McG. — 10/21
George K. — 10/23
Dr. Joe Z. — 10/25
Marilyn N. — 10/26
June H. — 10/27

Catherine D. — 11/4
Josh Ch. — 11/6
Judy B. — 11/7
Susie K. — 11/10
Tom G. — 11/11
Nils K. — 11/11
Caety K. — 11/11
Bob F. — 11/12
Donna B. — 11/14
Joey W. — 11/14
Alta S. — 11/16
Paul M. — 11/22
Mau O. — 11/23

ANNIVERSARIES

Bauers — 10/6
Gardners — 10/12
Schroeders 11/18



For Healing

Yvonne G.
Louise H.
Henry K.
Donna Z.
DoLoris T.
MaryHelene W.
Judy B.
Judy H.
Bill K.

For Those Serving

Meghan and Brian P.

For Peace

Kristi L.
Marian McG.
DeLane R.
Marilyn N.
Diana N.
Mark Z.

Please lift up the Riveness/Young family at the passing of Diana's mother Bev and the McManamon family at the passing of Doug's mother, Doris.

We Remember

Choral Reflections on Love, Peace and the Hope to Come

Sunday, November 12th at 3:00pm
Holy Shepherd Lutheran Church
433 Moraga Way, Orinda

Save These December Dates!

Sunday — December 3rd

Our annual Advent / Christmas Decorating Party takes place at 3 pm. Come and help us get our worship space and campus ready to celebrate the great gift that is Christmas!

Sunday — December 17

Join all of our worship teams and musicians in our annual Advent/Christmas Music Fest at worship at 9:30a.

Sunday — December 24 (Christmas Eve)

It's not often that Christmas Eve falls on a Sunday, but when it does, we need to change things up! To best accommodate those with evening activity plans and those unable to drive at night, we'll be celebrating 'Christmas Eve Worship' on Sunday morning and Sunday evening with worship at 9:30am and 5pm. Both morning and evening services will have a Christmas Eve format — and will include candle-lighting.



Want to avoid those awful Black Friday Sales and Black Friday parking lots? Come to Holy Shepherd instead and join our hillside clean-up crew for a Property Work Party, starting at **9am on Friday, November 24th!** Contact Marla Schroeder for more information.

ON THE SUBJECT OF STEWARDSHIP

"It is more blessed to give than to receive."



I ran across the quotation "It is better to give than to receive" while prepping for a Bible study class recently. At first glimpse, it seems so familiar — just the sort of thing that the Gospel writers would recall as coming from the mouth of Jesus. But it isn't found in any of the Gospels! Rather, it is a quote from Acts 20:35, and is one of the few biblical quotations of Jesus contained in a book other than one of the four Gospels! And the way in which Luke (the author of Acts) refers to that saying hints that it was a familiar one to even the earliest Christians. It's a beautifully simple reminder that stewardship is at the heart of Jesus' teaching. For stewardship means that:

Your Gifts Matter to Us. Our congregation's ministry continues, the hungry are fed, schools and hospitals are built, because you give to support the work of our church. Without your generous support, our small-in-numbers congregation couldn't continue to make such a substantive impact in the world. But it's not just that your gifts matter to us

Your Gifts Matter to God. Your gifts matter to God not because God somehow 'needs' them. Rather, your gifts matter to God because our hearts follow where our money goes. Jesus knew this full well when he said "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." When you give in faith to support the work of the Church, you're expressing your love for God, your internal priorities are being brought into closer alignment with the priorities of God's Kingdom AND your heart is drawn closer to God. But it's not just that your gifts matter to God either

Your Gifts Matter to You!

Have you ever experienced that warm fuzzy rush one may get when someone just adores the gift which you've given them? We often give in order to see joy from the receiver. In fact, a study by Harvard Business School found that spending money on someone else made people happier than spending it on themselves! Research scientists now believe altruistic behavior and giving to others releases endorphins in the brain — something called a 'helper's high.'

Giving in Faith, Hope and Love is a Good Thing!

By sharing your gifts with God and God's world through the work of our congregation, you're making a difference. You're making a difference to us, you're making a difference to God and you're making a difference to yourself!

Thanks for investing yourself in this ministry which we share! Pastor John

2023 PRESCHOOL HALLOWEEN PARADE!



Wow! We knew that our newly-expanded Preschool program was going to welcome lots of young families onto our campus. But none of us was quite prepared for the influx of folks who came to participate in and/or watch this year's Halloween Parade. Ms. Claire, Ms. Amy, the whole Preschool staff, Joan Kiekhaefer and Pastor John ALL had their hands full helping out! The parking lot was filled to overflowing, the spectators' seating-gallery was 'standing room only', and there were oodles of parents and grandparents and siblings who turned out to see the grand event. Fun, fun, fun!



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