

# The Shepherd's *staff*

THE NEWSLETTER OF HOLY SHEPHERD LUTHERAN CHURCH — DECEMBER 2023  
433 MORAGA WAY, ORINDA, CALIFORNIA — [www.holyshepherd.org](http://www.holyshepherd.org) — (925)254-3422

## GETTING IN THE ADVENT SPIRIT

It's the season of Advent. A time to get ready. Four weeks to prepare for the coming of the One who changes everything. Perhaps no one articulated the significance of Advent as succinctly as the German Lutheran pastor Dietrich Bonhoeffer. As he awaited his martyrdom in a Nazi prison camp in the waning days of World War Two, Bonhoeffer wrote:



*Our whole life is an Advent, really. A time of waiting for the ultimate, for the time when there will be a new heaven and a new earth, when all people will be brothers and sisters.*

*It's actually quite remarkable that we face the thought that God is coming so calmly. We have become so accustomed to the idea of divine love and of God's coming at Christmas that we no longer feel the shiver of fear that God's coming should arouse in us. We are indifferent to the message, taking only the pleasant and agreeable out of it and forgetting the serious aspect, that the God of the world draws near to the people of our little earth and lays claim to us.*

*The coming of God is truly not only glad tidings, but first of all frightening news for everyone who has a conscience. For it is only when we have felt the terror of the matter that we can then recognize the incomparable kindness. God comes into the very midst of evil and of death, and judges the evil in us and in the world. And by judging us, God cleanses and sanctifies us, comes to us with grace and love. God makes us happy as only children can be happy.*

*God wants to always be with us, wherever we may be — in our sin, in our suffering and death. We are no longer alone; God is with us. We are no longer homeless; a bit of the eternal home itself has moved unto us. Therefore we adults can rejoice deeply within our hearts under the Christmas tree, perhaps much more than the children are able. We know that God's goodness will once again draw near. For — yes — Jesus comes in judgment, but Jesus also comes in grace.*

May these days of Advent waiting be filled with the angelic promise: "On earth peace to those on whom God's favor rests."

## 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 January 14 and January 28!)

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

**Sundays at noon** — Our weekly 'Worship Video' is up at [www.holyshepherd.org](http://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

(Note that there will be no Adult Ed. On December 26 or January 2.)



# Ministry Partner Update: Holy Shepherd Community Preschool

*'Holy Shepherd Community Preschool' began operation in June of 2023 — melding the communities of Holy Shepherd Christian Preschool and St. Mark's Preschool into a single new program. Even though the construction of our new preschool facilities is still pending (see the box to the right), we'd be remiss not to celebrate some of the GREAT things that are happening already!*

Preschool Liaison (and congregation vice-president) Joan Kiekhaefer is happy to report that November witnessed the launching of our new preschool Chapel program — “Songs and Stories with Pastor John”! That weekly program — which takes place in the sanctuary on Wednesday mornings — invites our kids to discover what it means for them to be children of God. “Songs and Stories with Pastor John” is one way in which we envision utilizing our preschool program to live into our mission of “Building Up Households of Faith!”

Because November is a season of thankfulness in our community, Pastor John invited the kids to sing a couple of ‘thankful’ songs and to hear of Jesus’ familiar interaction with the ten healed lepers, only one of which came back to say ‘Thank you’. The most memorable part of that first chapel session occurred when Pastor John was introducing the Bible story and talking about who Jesus was, when one particularly energetic preschooler shot up his hand and excitedly blurted out “I know Jesus!”



## Preschool Construction Update!

Tom Gilberston reports that Chris Gilman — our project architect — submitted a revised set of construction plans to the County Building Dept. during the first week of December! The Building Dept. had flagged our first set of submitted plans as being out of compliance with emergency egress rules, but the revised plans address the County's concerns. We can anticipate a flurry of construction activity in Gregersen Hall as the new year approaches!



## Congratulations

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



### **BIRTHDAYS**

Howard R. — 12/1 (his 98th!)  
Henry Ch. — 12/4  
Karen H. — 12/5  
Gretchen S. — 12/12  
Paul H. — 12/13  
Deepak K. — 12/14  
Solveig Tsch. — 12/14

Terry H. — 12/15  
William O. — 12/15  
Dorelle K. — 12/19  
Abigail G. — 12/22  
Lisa M. — 12/22  
Bill H. — 12/24  
Marla Schr. — 12/24  
Jesus of Nazareth — 12/25  
Ted G. — 12/25  
Michael St. — 12/25  
Russ Bl. — 12/29 (his 98th!)  
Mary H. — 12/30

### **ANNIVERSARIES**

Schaefer Dawsons — 12/13



### **For Healing**

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

### **For Those Serving**

Meghan P.  
Brian P.

### **For Peace**

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

Please uphold Bishop Jeff Johnson in prayer as he begins his tenure as the 6th Bishop of the Sierra Pacific Synod.



# Important Upcoming Events!

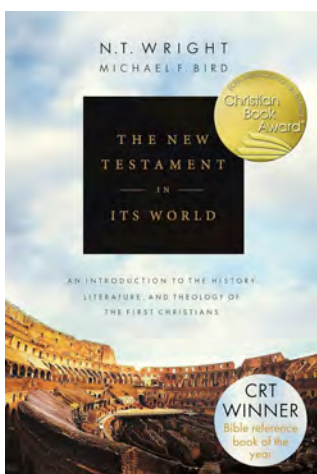


On Monday evening, December 18th, you're invited to join in a Caroling party! We'll meet at Holy Shepherd at 6pm and break into Caroling teams, visiting a number of our homebound members and friends. The last stop of our journeys will be the home of Steve and Nina Berchtold, where we'll enjoy cookies and nibbles and a bit of Christmas cheer, (Nina and Steve's home is located at 3339 Moraga Blvd. in Lafayette).



## CRAB FEED 2024

Save the date for our annual Drive-Thru Crab Feed in support of Holy Shepherd Community Preschool on the weekend of January 27/28. A number of member-households have discovered that hosting a Crab Feed dinner in their homes is a great way to connect with other members and friends of our congregation! If you'd like to join this year's "Crabby Crew" and help make this event a reality, contact Cristi Chow in the church office.



Pastor John's "New Testament 101" course resumes on January 3rd at 7p in the Center for Ministry (or via Zoom). Participants are reminded that we're now entering the final leg of our three year journey, as we walk through the Catholic Letters that comprise the final portion of the New Testament. Upcoming class dates include:

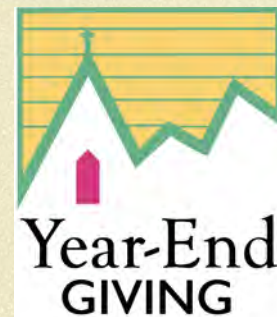
*January 3 — Ch. 30 (Hebrews)*

*January 17 — Ch. 31 (James & Jude)*

Property Chair Marla Schroeder reports that we made great progress on clearing out / cleaning up our back hillside on the work-party day in late November, but that there's still work to be done! Come to Holy Shepherd at 9:00am on Saturday, January 13th and join our hillside clean-up crew for "Part II" of our Property Work Party. If you'd like more information, please contact Marla Schroeder.



# FROM THE FINANCE DESK



*In last month's edition of the Shepherd's Staff, Pastor John wrote an article about the 'whys' of giving — reminding us that your gifts matter to the church, your gifts matter to God and your gifts matter to you. This month, the folks from the Finance Team would like to help you better understand some of the 'hows' of giving in our community.*

Giving to support the work of the Church and the efforts of our particular congregation is a good thing. We're blessed by your gifts — and we strive as a community of faith to use those gifts in ways that best reflect our missional priorities. But 'how' we give is as individual as we are. The following 'glossary of giving' is intended to help you determine how you might best become a 'cheerful giver'.

'**Current/Benevolent Giving**' are those gifts received to support our congregation's budget and missional priorities. This year, a full 10% of our 'Current/Benevolent Giving' is shared with our ministry partners, including:

- *the Sierra Pacific Synod and the ELCA (2.8%)*
- *Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary (.5%)*
- *Lutheran Social Service of Northern California (.5%)*
- *International Health Partners / Tanzania (1.0%)*
- *Rancho Santa Marta / Mexico (1.0%)*
- *New Life Band / Tanzania (1.0%)*
- *Loaves & Fishes / Admin. Support (1.0%)*
- *Loaves & Fishes / Meal Augmentation (.4%)*
- *Winter Nights Homeless Family Shelter (.4%)*
- *Holy Shepherd Community Preschool Startup (1.0%)*
- *Our "Urgent Outreach" Fund (.4%)*

'**Non-ELCA Giving**' involves offerings and gifts received from those who wish not to support denominational ministry efforts. These funds are NOT counted when determining our "Giving Beyond Ourselves" allocations. (If you wish to give in this way, you must reach out to Lisa Verley, our contributions secretary.)

'**Directed Giving**' is the term we use to describe gifts given to support individual budget items, as well as funds giving to support the work of our community ministries — the Lamorinda Adult Respite Center and Holy Shepherd Community Preschool.

'**Designated Giving**' is our label for gifts given to our mission partners (see the list above) which augment our budgeted support of their work. If you wish to gift one or more of those programs with a year-end gift, please include clear written instructions (via note or email) as to how you wish your gifts to be allocated.

Be aware that the IRS requires that all gifts recorded as 2023 charitable gifts must be received no later than December 31, 2023. And THANK YOU for your support of our congregation and its amazing work on behalf of the Gospel and the community in which we live and serve.

# Advent / Christmas Worship Opportunities Await!

## Advent MusicFest!

We annually look forward to the day when our music teams combine together to lead us in a joyous celebration of the Good News that Christmas brings — and this year that celebration happens in conjunction with our worship gathering on December 17th. Join with members of the Shepherd's Bells, SpiritBorne and our Canticle Choir and be filled with the joy of the Advent / Christmas season!

**Sunday Morning  
December 17th  
at 9:30 am**

## Christmas Eve Worship

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're celebrating 'Christmas Eve Worship' on both Sunday morning and Sunday evening with worship at 9:30am and 5pm. Both our morning and evening services will have a Christmas Eve format — and will include candle-lighting.

**Sunday Morning December 24th  
at 9:30 am  
Sunday Evening December 24th  
at 5:00 pm**

## New Year's Eve Day Worship!

Christmas — according to the church calendar — isn't just a day! It's an entire twelve-day-long celebration of the Good News! (That's why there's that crazy song about maids a'milking and lords a'leaping!) We won't have swimming swans that morning, but we WILL have a meaningful message, uplifting music and an up-sized coffee fellowship event to help ring out the year 2023!

**Sunday Morning  
December 31st  
at 9:30 am**

Holy Shepherd Lutheran Church  
433 Moraga Way  
Orinda, CA 94563