

The Shepherd's *staff*

THE NEWSLETTER OF HOLY SHEPHERD LUTHERAN CHURCH — ADVENT/ CHRISTMAS 2024
433 MORAGA WAY, ORINDA, CALIFORNIA 94563 — WWW.HOLYSHEPHERD.ORG — (925)254-3422

SPREADING SOME HOLIDAY CHEER!

In Acts 20:35, the Apostle Paul quotes Jesus in saying "It is more blessed to give than to receive." Those words are — for us — a reminder that giving to others brings a sense of blessing and joy far beyond being on the receiving end of those same gifts. And we hope that this year's Christmas Sunday School project brings that sense of blessing and joy to our kids this year!

At the encouragement of our Sunday School team leaders — Elizabeth Humphrey and Vicar Meagan Kim — our Sunday School kids have once again taken on a Christmas gifting project!



This year, our Sunday School kids (and their families) are working with "Families First" (a local nonprofit focused on keeping families together — and kids in school — amid economic hardship) to support a local family of four in Pittsburg. Earlier this year, the family found themselves homeless after both parents lost their jobs. Thankfully, the family (a mom and dad, a 15-year-old girl and a 14-year-old boy) was first transitioned into a homeless shelter, and more recently to an apartment that they can call home. The dad has a job opportunity as a mechanic lined up that begins right after the New Year, and the mom is enrolled in a job training program to expand her employment horizon.

While our Sunday School kids and their families alone were able to provide Christmas gifts to this needy family, we can all further support their efforts by extending their holiday blessings into the new year! Any contributions will be used to purchase Amazon and Safeway cards, to purchase groceries and other necessities. Contact Elizabeth Humphrey or Vicar Meagan if you'd like to help out, and thank you for your generosity and support this holiday season!

WEEKLY EVENTS SCHEDULE

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 on 'Facebook Live' @HSLCOrinda.

Sundays at 10am — Sunday School for Kids happens twice-monthly following KidTalk. (Upcoming dates include December 8 and 22.)

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

Sundays at noon — Our weekly 'Worship Video' can be found at www.holyshepherd.org.

Tuesdays at 7 pm — Our 'Adult Ed' Zoom class happen online!

Zoom Meeting ID: 861 5874 8710
Zoom Passcode: 94563

Note that there is no Adult Ed on Dec. 24th or Dec. 31st.

Ministry Partner Update:

Loaves and Fishes of Contra Costa



A Word of Thanks from Our Friends at Loaves and Fishes!

As we enter the holiday season, a time of gratitude and reflection, we want to share with you the growing needs of our community. Here in Contra Costa County, one in four people are struggling with food insecurity — unsure of where their next meal will come from. With the end of pandemic relief programs and the rising cost of living, many families are facing financial hardships that make access to nutritious food more difficult than ever.

At Loaves and Fishes of Contra Costa (LFCC), we continue working tirelessly to meet the growing need in our community. Every day, we serve 3,000-4,000 hot meals across our five dining rooms and mobile unit, ensuring that our neighbors receive warm, nutritious meals. However, rising utility and labor costs, along with limited kitchen capacity and storage, are putting immense pressure on our operations.

This holiday season, we thank you for your generous support to help us sustain our mission. Your gift always makes a difference, and now, more than ever, we rely on the compassion of our community. On behalf of everyone at LFCC, we extend our heartfelt thanks. For together, we can continue to provide comfort and sustenance to those who need it most. Wishing you and your loved ones a joyful and peaceful holiday season!

Janette Kennedy and Jolene Lafayette (The LFCC Executive Team)

Since 1983, Loaves and Fishes has served over 5 million meals to many thousands of hungry people throughout Contra Costa County. We have recruited thousands of volunteers and built an organization that has grown to serving over 251,000 meals, and distributing over 200 tons of groceries each fiscal year.

We are proud to note Loaves and Fishes of Contra Costa has been one of our congregation's major mission partners for the past two decades — during which time Holy Shepherd has gifted upwards of \$100,000 feeding those hungry in our community!



We celebrate with those enjoying a 'Big Day' this December!

BIRTHDAYS

Howard R. — 12/1 (99!)
Henry Ch. — 12/4
Karen H. — 12/5
Gretchen S. — 12/12
Paul H. — 12/13
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 (99!)
Mary H. — 12/30

ANNIVERSARIES

Schaefer Dawsons — 12/13

TRANSITIONS

It is with a very heavy heart that we received the news that our beloved friend and long-tenured church secretary **Doloris (Yates) Timmons** passed away in mid-November. Her beloved sons Mark and Alan report that Doloris will be interred at the family cemetery back in Minnesota. Thanks be to God for the life and the love of Doloris, who was so instrumental in the life of our congregation for so very many years.

Happy Birthday, Howard!



Howard Rodean joined the 'Working on 100' Club on December 1st! Though Howard is homebound and unable to join us for in-person worship, he does stay active in the life of our community as he can. A belated happy 99th birthday from us all, Howard!



To have a name included on our congregation's printed Prayer List or emailed Prayer Chain, please contact **Cristi Chow** at hslccristi@gmail.com

For Healing

Bob F.
Louise H.
Judy B.
Bill K.

For Those Serving

Meghan & Brian P.
Peter K.

For Peace & Strength

Marian McG.
DeLane R.
Marilyn N.
Diana N.
Howard R.
Gail B.
MaryHelene W.
Mark Z.

Our Annual Advent Music Fest

Advent brings with it a spirit of hope and joy and excitement, and our annual Advent Music Fest strives to make those feelings come alive! Join our gifted musicians and music teams, as we celebrate the great Good News of the Christmas season on **Sunday morning, December 15 at 9:30a.** This is also a wonderful opportunity to invite family members, neighbors and friends to join in the celebration of Christmas in a meaningful and energetic way.

A Unique Caroling Opportunity

Last year, amid some particularly challenging weather, we discovered a fun way to carol our neighbors and friends both near and far via the wonders of modern technology! Join us at the home of Steve and Nina Berchtold (3339 Moraga Blvd. in Lafayette) on the evening of **Monday, December 16 beginning at 6:30p,** for carols and cookies and Christmas joy! Note that this is a family-friendly event for all ages.. Join us!

A Christmas Open House

Chris and Lisa Merlin cordially invite you to their annual "wine and heavy appetizers" open house on **Saturday, December 21th from 5 pm to 7 pm.** Please join them (and a number of other congregation members!) in celebrating Christmas together at their home at 1124 Larch Ave. in Moraga! Email your RSVP to merlinfmly@aol.com, call (510)506-2061 or chat with Lisa or Chris at worship.



A Christmas Cookie Exchange

Our resident community-weaver Cristi Chow is at it again! She is hosting an all-comers Cookie Exchange on **Saturday December 14 from 1 pm to 2 pm** in the Center for Ministry building.



Bring 2-3 Dozen cookies to share and (if you'd like) an optional holiday-themed white elephant gift (like one of those decorations from days past that you can't bring yourself to display anymore??) to exchange for something new to you! Come for the cocoa, stay for the fun! Any questions? Contact Cristi at (925) 876-0352.

A Word from Pastor Pam



I went to see the movie, "The Best Christmas Pageant Ever" in the movie theater the other day. It's based on a book of the same name. Starring Judy Greer and a good supporting cast, it also showcases some pretty amazing young (child) actors. No spoilers here. (If you are able to see it, I do recommend it, as it is delightful.) But I mention it because it had an unexpected effect on me: I became ready to be ready for Advent and Christmas.

These first couple of holiday seasons after the deaths of two very important people in my life have been difficult, emotionally and spiritually. The family is changing, struggling to adjust to the new reality. Family dynamics are changing. The locations and details of family gatherings are changing. It is hard to feel ready in my heart for Christmas.

Yet, as so much is changing – in my life, in yours, in the world – one thing is not changing: God's love for us, incarnate in a tiny baby. God comes to all of us, ready or not.

In the midst of whatever griefs, or joys, or worries, or hopes we may be feeling, the baby Jesus comes. May we, through the help of the Holy Spirit (who sometimes works through a Christmas-themed movie) prepare him room. I'm ready to be ready. How about you?

*Joy to the world, the Lord is come!
Let earth receive her king;
let ev'ry heart prepare him room
and heav'n and nature sing,
and heav'n and nature sing,
and heav'n, and heav'n and nature sing.*
A carol by Isaac Watts

Christmas Eve 2024

We celebrate the birth of the One who changed everything – with carols and candlelight and Holy Communion at both Noon and 5pm! Join us on December 24th as you are able!



Holy Shepherd Lutheran Church
433 Moraga Way
Orinda, CA 94563

