

The Shepherd's *staff*

THE NEWSLETTER OF HOLY SHEPHERD LUTHERAN CHURCH — LENT / MARCH 2025
433 MORAGA WAY, ORINDA, CALIFORNIA — WWW.HOLYSHEPHERD.ORG — (925)254-3422

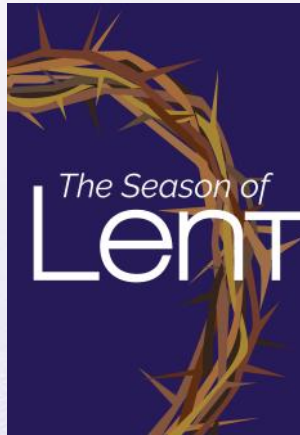
WALKING TOGETHER THIS LENT

The season of Lent has long been a time for Christians to be 'stretched by the Spirit'. This year, it will also be a time for our congregation to practice being 'stretched by the Spirit', as we explore share a series on midweek worship opportunities with our faithful siblings at Our Savior's Lutheran Church in Lafayette!

Since the earliest days of the Church, Christians have recognized that the days we know as Holy Week and Easter are at the heart of our faith in the One True God. While Christmas may seem the big to-do in our society, it is in the days of Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Easter that we discover the depths of God's love for us and all the world. And — because those days are at the center of our faith — the days leading up to Holy Week and Easter been identified as a time of preparation, and have been called the Season of Lent.

The Season of Lent is a time for us to "slow down". (In fact, the word 'Lent' literally means 'going slowly'.) Lent is a time to align our values with Jesus' values. Lent is a time to stretch ourselves a bit and better conform our lives to his. Lent is a time to practice forgiveness, to embody community and to push ourselves to explore new ways of walking the journey of faith. This year, in addition to encouraging individual expressions of that Lenten spirit, we're taking on a Lenten discipline as a community. The year A.D. 2025 will see us sharing our midweek worship experiences (Ash Wednesday, Maundy Thursday and Good Friday) with the community that is Our Savior's Lutheran Church in Lafayette. *(See the back page for further details)*

In years now past (and under pastoral leaders now past), Holy Shepherd and Our Savior's have seen themselves as competitors. Perhaps this season of sharing may allow us to discover ways in which we might better live into the spirit of that high priestly prayer of Jesus recorded in John 17, "May they be one, even as we are one."



WEEKLY EVENTS SCHEDULE

We encourage you to join us at worship however you are able!

Sundays at 9:30 am — Our weekly in-person worship opportunity with Holy Communion 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 March 16 and March 30)

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

Sundays at noon — Our 'Worship Video' is up at www.holyshepherd.org or on Facebook at @HSLCOrinda.

Community Ministry Update:

Lutheran Social Services of Northern California



On February 2, 2025, Elon Musk and Michael Flynn slandered Lutherans nationwide with a lie so outrageous that it barely deserves a response — except that in today’s world, where disinformation spreads like wildfire, the truth must be spoken, clearly and forcefully. The accusation? That Lutheran social service organizations (including our own mission partner LSS of Northern California) are engaged in “money laundering.” Their accusation is not just false, it is an attack on people of faith who have dedicate their best energies to serving others — including foster children, refugees and homeless families.

Let us be crystal clear. Musk and Flynn’s lies eroded trust, fueled suspicion, and endangered the very organizations that provide critical support to people in need. There is no money laundering. Lutheran social service organizations operate legally, transparently, and under strict government oversight. There is no profit motive. There is no slush fund. There is no scheme. There is just the work of caring for people in need — as LSS has done for more than 150 years. Through the work of LSS, we will continue to love our neighbors, even when it is difficult, even when it is unpopular, even when it comes at a cost. Because, as Dietrich Bonhoeffer once noted, the church is not the church unless it exists for others. *(Excerpted of a letter by Bp. Jeff Johnson)*

Our sympathies go out to those beloved of Bob Valentine, who died at home on February 21st (just a few days shy of his 99th birthday.) Bob (and his beloved wife Jewelie) came to Holy Shepherd in 2004, not too very long after his son (Pastor John) accepted our call to serve as Pastor of our congregation. But Bob was more than just “Pastor John’s dad and Bethany’s father-in-law”. He cherished the relationships he developed in our congregation and was even known to study the church directory on Saturday evenings so as to make sure that he got folks’ names right at coffee on Sunday mornings.



A memorial service honoring the life of Bob Valentine will be held at Holy Shepherd on **Saturday, March 22nd at 10am** and will be followed by a brunch reception. Please join the Valentine family that day as you are able!

Vicar Meagan noted recently that — since coming to Holy Shepherd — she’d heard from a number of you that you would like to better connect to the needs of our community. With that in mind, we are forming a Prayer Team!



The Prayer Team will be a group dedicated to lifting others in prayer and offering support in meaningful ways. We will pray, write cards, and come together to care for those in need. If you want to deepen your spiritual life by bringing comfort to others, we would love for you to join us! All are welcome, and confidentiality will be respected.

Our first meeting will be on Tuesday, March 11th at 1:00pm. We will meet in the CFM Chapel. (A Zoom option is also for those who would like to participate remotely. Meeting ID: 913 585 1159, Passcode: 671528)



- 1st Christine P.
- 3rd Sophia P.
- 5th Lisa V.
- 6th Marisa Ch.
- 13th MaryHelene W.
- 15th Juanita G.
- 20th Kim W.
- 26th Susan Pat.
- 27th Won K. Y.



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

For Those Serving
 Meghan & Brian P.
 Peter K.

For Healing

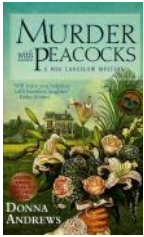
- Bob F.
- Louise H.
- Judy B.
- Bill K.

For Peace & Strength

- Marian McG.
- DeLane R.
- Marilyn N.
- Diana N.
- Howard R.
- Gail B.
- Mark Z.
- Mary Helene W.



We recently received news that Pastor Donald Wolkenhauer passed away on January 30th at the age of 93 in Placerville, CA. Pastor Wolkenhauer was fondly remembered as the Pastor of Holy Cross Lutheran Church in Moraga, one of our predecessor congregations.



Women's Book Club gathers monthly (at 10am on the first Saturday of each month in our Center for Ministry) to reflect on works of both contemporary and classic authors. Next up is Murder with Peacocks by Donna Andrews — which they'll tackle on Saturday, April 5th. Talk to Juanita Gilbertson or Bethany Valentine if you'd like to know more.



DON'T FORGET TO SET YOUR CLOCKS AHEAD ON SUNDAY, MARCH 9th!

You wouldn't want to arrive as worship is ending and Coffee Fellowship is starting up! (Heehee!)



On March 30th, we anticipate welcome a group of younger members to the Lord's table as they receive their First Holy Communion! Join us in celebrating this special milestone and praying for these young members of our faith family.



**Saturday April 26th
7:00pm**

Peace Lutheran Church
3201 Camino Tassajara, Danville

**Sunday April 27th
4:00pm**

Holy Shepherd Lutheran Church
433 Moraga Way, Orinda

Tickets (\$30 adults / \$10 students) available:

- Online at www.chromaticchorale.org
- Pre-purchased from Bethany Valentine
- Day-of-event at the Ticket Counter

A Word from Our Newly-Elected Congregational President — Joan Kiekhaefer

Dear Members and Friends of the Holy Shepherd Community,

"Change" has certainly been our watchword over these past few months! Some of that change has been exciting and long-awaited. Some of it has been challenging. And some of it has been down-right heartbreaking. But we trust that God is the One who is watching over our community, guiding our sometimes difficult decisions and providing that which we need. We grieve the loss of some beloved congregation members and leaders. While we know that we can't fill the holes left by their passings, we give thanks for those who have stepped up in service to continue the work that is underway.

The most anticipated update is that our Gregersen Hall construction project should finally be completed by the end of March, and our Holy Shepherd Community Preschool will be able to move into their shiny new classrooms. This will allow us to reclaim the CFM for "normal" church use during the week and for Sunday morning fellowship. An added benefit of that project is that our LARC program will have access to both a LARC staff-workroom and some expanded communal space for larger group activities. (Stay tuned for a formal celebration and dedication of those spaces once everyone has had a chance to move in.)

The completion of this project has brought with it a final accounting of the costs involved. We face the realization that the project took much longer than anticipated and cost significantly more than we initially forecasted. Changes to the State fire code required us to re-work architectural plans and install an active fire sprinkler system throughout the building, all of which caused delays and increased costs. We did also make some mistakes managing the project along the way. The result is that we have been forced to use a substantial portion of our financial reserves to cover cost overruns, and thus we will need to carefully focus on managing and reducing expenses in the short run.

The good news in all this is that we are confident that – with our robust Preschool and LARC programs – our long-term financial picture is strong. The difficult news is that, in the short term, we're going to have to do some significant belt-tightening. While we don't quite yet know what that means, our Finance Team is working to shape a financial plan that addresses our short-term challenges and provide us with a solid footing to begin rebuilding our reserves.

Please do not hesitate to reach out to me or one of the Church Council members with your questions. And may God's blessings be with us as we weather these days of change!

In Faith, Hope and Love, Joan Kiekhaefer

(Editors note: At its January meeting, the members of our Church Council elected Joan Kiekhaefer to serve out the remainder of Fred Schroeder's term as Congregational President following Fred's untimely passing — and also elected Nina Berchtold to fill Joan's previously-held position of Congregational Vice-President! We're blessed to have you both on board!)

Lent / Holy Week Key Moments 2025



Ash Wednesday (March 5)

Worship at HSLC at Noon

Worship at OSLC at 7p

Ash Wednesday inaugurates the season of Lent. As we receive the sign of the ashes on our brows, we are reminded of our humanity and are invited to following Jesus into service to our neighbors.



Good Friday (April 18)

Worship at OSLC at Noon

Worship at HSLC at 7p

Good Friday is a day for us to discover the boundless depth of God's love. Jesus' cries from the cross bear witness to the pain of the world in which we live, and that pain which he endured that we might know life.



Maundy Thursday (April 17)

Worship at HSLC at 7p

Maundy Thursday invites us to hear Jesus' call that we love one another even as he loves us. In the washing of feet, in the breaking of bread, in the stripping of the altar, we discover anew the depth of his love.



Easter Sunday (April 20)

Worship at HSLC at 9:30a

Join us in celebration and song as we remember that the stone was rolled away and that Christ is risen indeed! (As in recent years, we will offer a hearty Easter Brunch following our Easter Sunday worship celebration!)

Join Us as We Walk Together with Jesus on the Journey that Leads to Life!

Holy Shepherd Lutheran Church

433 Moraga Way

Orinda, CA 94563