



The Shepherd's News

132 East Valley Forge Road · King of Prussia · Pennsylvania · 19406
December 2015 · January 2016 · February 2016



Dear Brothers and Sisters,

*If I say, "Surely the darkness shall cover me, and the light around me become night,"
even the darkness is not dark to you; the night is as bright as the day, for darkness is as light to you. Psalm 130: 11-12*

These days of Advent are dark indeed. With each passing day we lose more and more daylight. And the world around us seems dark as well ... both on a national and global scale. And of course, there is darkness in many of our personal lives as well.

The saints teach us that darkness does not mean that God is absent. One of my favorite saints is Saint John of the Cross who lived during the 1500's. He experienced much darkness in his life and had much to say about it. For him, darkness was an invitation to enter a struggle to understand life and to come to a clearer understanding of who we are and who God is. He believed that the beginning of our transformation into the people God intends for us to be begins in the darkness ... in the loneliness and in the struggle and confusion.

And so we begin this season of Advent by acknowledging the darkness all around us (whether that be global, national or personal) and yet believing that God is present in all of it. We know that many people experience profound depression during this season. It shouldn't surprise us. We are bombarded by advertising showing us scenes of perfect people, with perfect families, having perfect holidays which leave many of us feeling as if we have come up short.

But it is in the church, through the liturgy, that we tell the truth. We acknowledge that there is bitter sadness for many, unspeakable loss for others and that few, if any of us, will have the kind of Christmas depicted on our television screens. But it is also in the church that we see the increasing glow of the Advent wreath, reminding us that there is one who is coming (and has come and will come again!) that brings lasting joy.

During these dark days of Advent, cling to the promise of God, to that promise that you will hear from the altar on Christmas Eve while you are bathed in candlelight. It is that promise that while darkness may surround you on every side, "The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not (and will not) overcome it." (John 1)

Pastor Luei

Christmas Eve
Thursday—December 24th

5:00 P.M. — Family Worship with Holy Communion and Candlelight

This abbreviated service will include a children's message and the singing of favorite Christmas Carols.

7:30 P.M. — Holy Communion Candlelight Service

(7:15 P.M. Special Prelude music offered by Good Shepherd Choir, Orchestra and Bells)

10:00 P.M. — Holy Communion Candlelight Service

(9:45 P.M. Special Prelude music offered by Good Shepherd Choir and Bells)

First Sunday of Christmas

Sunday—December 27th

9:30 A.M. — Lessons and Carols with Holy Communion

Sunday School will not meet on December 27th and January 3rd

Classes resume Sunday, January 10th





Audubon Symphony Orchestra Concert *December 13, 1:30 P.M.

The Audubon Symphony Orchestra will present their Winter Concert in the Sanctuary at Good Shepherd on Sunday, December 13th at 1:30PM. The concert will include pop, classical, and Christmas favorites. Admission is free with a goodwill offering taken.



GOOD SHEPHERD CHRISTMAS PAGEANT

Sunday, December 20th

**8:30 and 11:00 A.M. — Advent Worship with Holy Communion
(11:00 A.M. Christmas Pageant in place of the sermon)**

The Sunday School Christmas Pageant will be held on Sunday, December 20th during the 11:00 A.M. Service. All children are invited to participate. They are asked to report to Sunday School at 9:45 A.M. so that they can rehearse one final time.

CHRISTMAS POINSETTIAS

Is there someone you would like to remember or honor this holiday season? You can do so by ordering a **poinsettia plant** as a memorial or in honor of someone special. Envelopes for the poinsettia plants are posted on the kiosk in the Narthex. Please include the name(s) of the people you would like to remember or honor. The cost of each plant is \$10. Envelopes may be placed in the offering plate.



ALTAR FLOWERS and CHURCH BULLETINS

The new flower and bulletin charts have been posted in the Narthex for placing flowers on the altar for 2016. The cost for each is \$10. Each week, the flowers are available for you to bring home or deliver to a friend following the 11:00 worship service.



YOUTH CHRISTMAS CELEBRATION (5th-12th GRADE)

The gathering will be held Sunday, December 20 after the 11:00 AM worship service. This year, we will be helping set up the church for the Christmas services. We will be having a white elephant exchange again this year, so bring a fun \$10.00 gift. We also ask that you please bring a snack or dessert to share, pizza will be provided. Following the party, at 2:30 your whole family is invited to go caroling to some of the Good Shepherd church members.

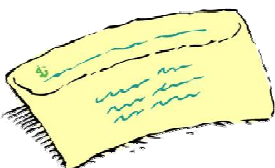


FINAL GIFT REQUEST FROM THE UPPER MERION SCHOOL DISTRICT FOR 2015

We have joined forces with the Upper Merion School District in order to meet some needs that had come to their attention. This fall you provided snacks for the elementary students, followed by hats, gloves, and mittens. Last month food was collected to complete Thanksgiving baskets for families in the District. The final request this year is for \$10 gift cards for the upper level students who might otherwise have a very sparse Christmas. We will be providing \$10 gift certificates to Amazon, Target, Walmart, Dunkin' Donuts and the local movie theater just to name a few. If you are able, please remove an envelope from the Christmas tree located in the Narthex and include your cash or check (payable to Good Shepherd) and place it in the offering plate so that we can purchase gift cards this season. We will be collecting until December 13 and the gift cards will be distributed on December 14. Thank you for your continued generosity!

OFFERING ENVELOPES

The 2016 offering envelopes will be available for pick-up in the Narthex by the middle of December. If you do not see a set of envelopes with your name, please contact the church office.





Did you know that you can help end homelessness? Bridge of Hope BuxMont is an organization that does just that - one family at a time. We were fortunate to have hosted Director, Jennifer Yothers here back in October. She explained how their model is a 3 way partnership between the single mother, a social worker and a church-based mentoring group. Bridge of Hope does the screening, gives the rental assistance and teaches the mother budgeting and life skills. The single mother attains financial stability through employment and budgeting and works toward achieving personal goals. The church-based mentoring group offers friendship and practical support. We here at Good Shepherd have seen that this model works. We mentored 2 single mothers and their children several years ago. It was a rewarding experience in so many ways. You can become a mentor on your own or involve your whole family. For more information call Janice Rackovan at 610-935-7247 or speak with Marilyn Loos. Look for further information to come in January.

We are grateful for deposits totaling \$1,410 through November to Good Shepherd's operating fund by Thrivent Financial for Lutherans through their Thrivent Choice program. If you would like more information about how to be a part of Thrivent For Lutherans, please call the church office. **We thank the Montgomery County Chapter of Thrivent Financial for the \$900 in matching funds which help support our Casserole Day outreach and \$250 toward Operation Shining Star.**



TIMELY REMINDERS...



As we move through the busy seasons of Advent and Christmas, please revisit your 2015 pledge and prayerfully consider "catching up" or perhaps giving an additional gift if you are able. With the holiday season upon us, the Finance Committee would like to remind all of our members to please try to keep your weekly offering envelopes current, especially if you are planning to be out of town during the holidays. As you know, we are closely watching our expenses and, at this time of year, would like to avoid any untimely drop in current receipts at the end of the year. **If you will be traveling during the holidays and would like to insure recognition for your contributions in the calendar year 2015, please have your gift in the church office by Tuesday, December 29th.**

FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTION STATEMENTS: We now have the capability to email Quarterly/Year End contribution statements. If you are interested in receiving your statement via email, please let us know your email address. Please either send your email address to gskopstaff@verizon.net or give a call to the office 610-265-4545 and they will be happy to add you to the email list. Thank you. Linda Quam, Financial Secretary.

Consecration Sunday Results!

On November 15 we celebrated Consecration Sunday at Good Shepherd. Pastor Jennifer Ollikainen was our preacher at both our 8:30 and 11am worship services. After the second service over 130 people attended a catered lunch in Founders Hall. **Because of YOUR generosity we saw a 15.7% increase in our pledges!** Thank you for your support of our ministry up here on the hill. Special thanks to our Consecration Sunday Team: Fred Brown, Lisa Hand, Bill Hunter, Bill Loane, Jennifer Lyons, and Hele Vondra.

Dedication of Recent Memorials and Gifts Sunday, January 10, 2016 at 8:30 and 11am

In recent years Good Shepherd has been blessed by a number of gifts made possible because of monetary donations made in memory of loved ones. On January 10, during our worship services, we will dedicate these gifts.



OUTREACH IN DECEMBER

Forty years ago Neighborhood Meals on Wheels was organized in Upper Merion Township to fill a need—that is, getting meals to the homebound and convalescing in the township. Many of the organizational meetings were held at Good Shepherd as several of the organizers were Good Shepherd members. Fast forward forty years and the need is still one that must be addressed daily. Neighborhood Meals on Wheels accepts no government funding and as a result is able to bring new clients on board with much less paperwork than is required by the county and state. However, because it has no government funding it must rely on the generosity of friends, neighbors, community groups and faith based organizations to sustain it.

If you know of anyone in Bridgeport, King of Prussia or West Conshohocken in need of this service (two meals a day are delivered, fifty-two weeks a year at a cost of \$25 per week) **OR if you are able to assist in delivering meals on a regular, substitute, or emergency only basis (time needed for meal delivery is approximately 90 minutes)** please contact the Meals on Wheels office (610.265.7051).

Checks may be made payable to Good Shepherd and designated for "Outreach".

OUTREACH IN JANUARY

In 1902, Lutheran Settlement House (LSH) was founded as part of the "Lutheran Social Mission Society of Philadelphia," an urban ministry of the Lutheran Church in southeastern Pennsylvania. Lutheran Settlement House has, since its inception, served vulnerable children, adults, and families living in inner city Philadelphia, regardless of race or creed. As part of the evolution of the settlement movement in the United States in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, Lutheran Settlement House has remained in its lower Kensington neighborhood since the turn of the century. Over

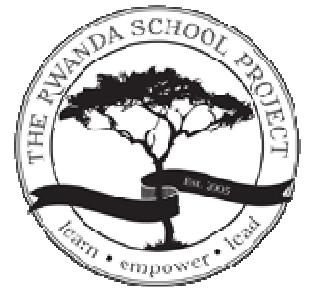


the past century, the programs and services offered by LSH have changed in response to the evolving needs of the community. However, the core mission of Lutheran Settlement House, to empower individuals, families, and communities to achieve and maintain self-sufficiency through an integrated program of social, educational, and advocacy services, has remained constant. **A representative will be with us on January 17th to give Minutes for Mission at both worship services and make a presentation during Sunday school in the adult class.**

Checks may be made payable to Good Shepherd and designated for "Outreach."

OUTREACH IN FEBRUARY

During the month of February Good Shepherd's monthly outreach will go to the Rwanda School Project. Founded by Robin Strickler, an American educator married to a Rwandan Lutheran minister, the Rwanda School project provides high-quality secondary education in Rwanda by offering a secure and nurturing school environment that transforms vulnerable youth into future leaders and problem solvers who champion environmental sustainability and social change. Robin partnered with the Lutheran Church of Rwanda to build the Rwamagana School, a secondary school, that our group from Good Shepherd visited during their time in Rwanda. Currently the school has 129 students and has graduated their first class of 16 students. The school has a girls' dorm and they are in the process of building a boys' dorm. We look forward to maintaining a relationship with Robin and the Rwanda School Project and hope to spend time with them again on our next trip to Rwanda



Checks may be made payable to Good Shepherd and designated for "Outreach."

GOOD SHEPHERD PRESCHOOL



Welcome to
Preschool

Registration for the 2016-2017 school year will begin for church members on January 15. Morning classes are available for children ages 2-5. For more information please contact Diane Smith at 610-265-0733.

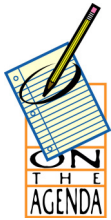


MEN'S PRAYER BREAKFAST AND FELLOWSHIP —Saturdays**December 12th * January 9th * February 13th**

Join us for the Men's Fellowship Breakfast in Founders Hall for some food and a time of fellowship with your Christian brothers beginning at 9:00 A.M.

**MANOR CARE WORSHIP SERVICE**

Good Shepherd will host a brief worship service for the residents at Manor Care, located at 600 W. Valley Forge Road on **Sunday, January 31st**. Children, youth and adults—all are welcome (and needed!) to assist in this outreach ministry. We hope that you will open your heart and consider this ministry opportunity. We meet in the lobby of Manor Care at 2:20 P.M. And the service concludes at 3:00 P.M.

**CONGREGATIONAL MEETING * SUNDAY, JANUARY 31st****Following the 11:00 A.M. church service**

All are invited to attend. The meeting is held in Founders Hall and a light lunch will be served.. Details regarding the luncheon and meeting will be included in a January mailing.

SOUPER BOWL SUNDAY—February 7, 2016

While many of our families will be celebrating “Super Bowl” on Sunday, February 7th, countless families will not. They will be wondering and worrying about where their next meal will be coming from. Please help us to help them. Please bring a can of soup and/or make a donation to Good Shepherd's Souper Bowl fund, which enables us to not only help alleviate hunger, but also provides a gift card to families who are in need of groceries. Donations will be collected at church and Sunday School. We need your help!

Boy Scout Sunday, February 7, 2016

We will be recognizing the Boy Scouts on Sunday, February 7th at both services. Leaders and Scouts are asked to wear their uniforms to church and to come forward for a special prayer during the Prayers of Intercession

Library News

Recently placed on the library shelves are these DVD'S:

My Hope America from Billy Graham Ministries

From our Everest Vacation Bible School: *Base Camp Sing and Play Music* plus *Kidvid Stories*.

Recently placed on the book shelves:

Bonhoeffer: Pastor, Martyr, Prophet, and Spy by Eric Metaxes

A series by Therese Winter: *Woman Word*—New Testament

Woman Witness & Woman Wisdom—Hebrew Scriptures (264)

Lutheran Church Basement Women: Lutefish, lefse, lunch, and Jello (recipes include how to make Jello Lutheran) (641)

The 2016 Confirmation Classes

An important part of the confirmation program at Good Shepherd involves meeting with the pastor for a number of Sunday afternoons during their 9th grade year. We will be touching on the different parts of Martin Luther's Small Catechism.

The Sundays we will be meeting are ... January 10 and 24, February 28 and March 6. Classes will be held from 12:00 - 2:30 pm. We ask that the confirmands attend worship on the days that the class is meeting. There will be times that we discuss what happened during the service.



Faith Community Nurse

A Faith Community Nurse is a Registered Nurse who encourages physical and spiritual health and wholeness by developing and leading programs within faith communities. Formerly known as a Parish Nurse, this program was started by Lutheran Chaplain, Granger Westberg in 1983. I held that position at Good Shepherd from 1997-2003 as a paid staff member. As a retired hospice nurse and volunteer coordinator, I feel drawn back to serving our church family in a similar way, although this time as a volunteer. I will work with Pastor Julie to coordinate visits to the sick, hospitalized, recently bereaved and homebound members as needed. I will continue to train and supervise the Lydia's Visitors as they minister to our homebound members. I will also coordinate meals and practical home health equipment (as available from other members of the congregation) for members in need of that support on a temporary basis. I would like to work with a team of other nurses who are currently members of Good Shepherd, to offer educational programs which support spiritual and physical wellness. I thank you and the members of Church Council for your support of this ministry. I am looking for other nurses in the congregation to help share ideas and resources. If interested, please call me at 610-715-2601. I would be happy to try to answer any questions, as best I am able from members of the congregation as well. Janice Rackovan



Mark Your Calendars!

WOMEN'S RETREAT

For the Women of Good Shepherd and their Friends

January 22 - 23, 2016

The retreat will begin on Friday evening at 7:00pm and end Saturday afternoon at 2:30pm. It will be held at the Franciscan Spirituality Center, 609 S. Covent Road, Aston, PA - about 25 miles from Good Shepherd. The cost is \$80 which includes lodging and breakfast and lunch on Saturday. Some people will be carpooling from church.

Space is limited, so please contact the church office to make your reservation!

Our retreat leader will be The Rev. Patricia Davenport, Director for Evangelical Mission. Pastor Pat Davenport works with new mission congregations as the deployed Director for Evangelical Mission for our synod, working with new church plants as well as redevelopment and congregational revitalization, evangelism, and transformational ministry. Many of us know Pastor Davenport as she preached at Good Shepherd a few years ago during our Lenten midweek worship services.

Our theme this year is "Their Stories, Our Stories: Women of the Bible."



A NEW MEMBER CLASS — will be held on **January 24th and 31st** during the education hour. Pastor Julie will be holding the classes for people interested in exploring membership at Good Shepherd. While new members will be received into membership at the 11:00 am service on **January 31st** *attending these classes does not commit you to joining*. Please contact the church office at 610-265-4545 or email gskopstaff@verizon.net, if you are interested in attending.



Lent at Good Shepherd

**Our Lenten season at Good Shepherd begins on
Ash Wednesday, February 10th, 2016 at 7:00 pm**

Pastor Julie DeWerth is presiding and there will be
Holy Communion and the Imposition of Ashes.

Soup supper begins at 6:00 P.M.

Each week during Lent a different Good Shepherd Committee will prepare soup and
bread for all. The meal is held in Founders Hall.

All are invited!

**February 10th - Hearts & Hands * February 17th - Church Council
February 24th - Worship & Music * March 2nd - Sunday School and Youth
March 9th - Open Sign up * March 16th - Open Sign up**

Following the meal, a worship service will take place
in the Sanctuary featuring "Holden Evening Prayer"
and special music each week.

Our theme this year is: "The Parables of Jesus"

February 17th — The Rev. Christine Stoxen, Grace Lutheran Church, Rock Hill, South Carolina

February 24th — The Rev. Jack Saarela, Retired Pastor serving now as the Interim Consultant of
Emmaus Road Lutheran Church, Levittown, Pa.

March 2nd — The Rev. David Lutcher, Grace Lutheran Church, Hatfield, Pa.

March 9th — The Rev. Kevin Shively, Saint Matthew Lutheran Church, York, Pa.

March 16th — The Rev. Beth Martini, Christ Lutheran Church, Duncannon, Pa.



FASNACHTS AND FUN SHROVE TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 9th 7:00—8:00 PM IN THE SANCTUARY

Traditionally, on the Tuesday before Ash Wednesday, Christians eat Fasnachts (donut like pastries). They do this to use up whatever sugar, fat and eggs are left in the kitchen before Lent ... a season associated with simplicity and dietary restrictions. In addition, it is a time to enjoy oneself before entering into this penitential season. Come out and observe this tradition with your brothers and sisters at Good Shepherd. In addition to eating Fasnachts, our members will be featured in a variety show. People from ages 2 - 102 are invited to share their talent. Share a poem (original or someone else's), magic tricks, songs, dance, instrumental solo or ensemble ... we are open to anything (ok ... almost anything!). Those who perform will be presented with Mardi Gras beads! The evening will conclude with the burning of the palms in preparation for the following evening's Ash Wednesday service. We know our members have lots of talent - hidden and otherwise. There is no need to sign up - just come prepared to perform. And for those of you who are shy - we look forward to seeing you in the audience.

PEACE OF PEACE OF PEACE

The Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd

132 East Valley Forge Road
King of Prussia, Pennsylvania 19406-2031
(610)265-4545 (PHONE) (610)265-4771 (FAX)
Email: gskopstaff@verizon.net
Web: www.gskop.org

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

The Shepherd's News Winter 2015-2016

MARCH • APRIL • MAY NEWSLETTER DEADLINE...Wednesday, February 10th

Please submit your articles to the Church Office using pink form in "forms" slot in front of mail cart. Place forms in "Office" slot or email your print ready article to gskopstaff@verizon.net.

OFFICE HOURS

Monday – Friday: 9:00 A.M. – Noon

SUNDAY SCHEDULE

8:30 and 11:00 A.M. Worship Services
Education Hour—9:45 A.M.



THE SHEPHERD'S STAFF

Pastor—Julie DeWerth	610-308-2675
Organist/Choir Director—Ross Boerner	610-279-0410
Parish Administrator—Kay Shinnars	610-265-4545
Office Support—Phyllis Kelly	610-265-4545
Preschool Director—Diane Smith	610-265-0733
Sexton—Ray Erwin	610-265-4545
Nursery Attendant—Christina Torrente	

EMAIL ADDRESSES

Pastor's Mail	juliedewerth@comcast.net
Office Mail	gskopstaff@verizon.net
Music Mail	goodshepmusic@yahoo.com
Preschool	gskoppreschool@verizon.net