

December 2016

The Staff

The Newsletter of Shepherd of the Glen Lutheran Church

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Sunday Worship & Sunday School 9:30 AM



*A community of
Christians, called
Together by the Holy
Spirit, where all people
Can come to know
God's grace and grow in
Faith, give and receive
The love of Jesus Christ
And of one another, and
Serve one another and
The community in which*

As we at SOTG are getting ready for Advent, I realized that this marks my one year anniversary here! I want to take this opportunity again to thank you for the privilege of being your pastor during this time, and as both you and I look forward to what God has in store next.

The year has gone very quickly—and this month of December is sure to fly by too. Advent is a time of preparation, of anticipation—but most often a time that's overlooked getting ready for Christmas. Several years ago, a group of churches worldwide began a movement to replace the consumerism associated with the weeks leading up to Christmas with a focus on relationship, first and foremost with God and with each other as well. We've all seen the catch phrase, "Jesus is the reason for the season," but what if we really bought into the idea? What if we decided that we were going to make that a reality in our lives?

This movement to take back Advent is fittingly called "The Advent Conspiracy," because it truly is counter-cultural. In a culture that defines us by what we own and how much we earn, we have a savior who came to earth as a baby born in a barn to young parents who didn't

even have a proper place to stay. He grew into a man who time after time got in trouble with the people who thought they knew what God's will was, who defied the power that evil and brokenness have over us, who ate and drank with anybody willing to receive him, who healed impossible hurts, who died condemned as a subversive criminal, and stared down death itself by living again. It's a story that smacks of conspiracy!

It's a story we all know very well, especially the part we focus on this time of year about the manger, the star, the angels, the shepherds and the wise men. It may seem like a story about something that happened long ago and far away that's sentimental and sweet

and has little to do with our lives now. But this story changed everything, and the story goes on in our everyday lives.

My family knows well the story of my first holiday season as a married woman with her own kitchen, when I wanted to impress everyone by making a pumpkin pie really “from scratch.” I figured that meant going to the pumpkin patch, picking out the biggest pumpkin I could find and starting there. Little did I know that these big pumpkins for jack-o-lanterns and little sugar pumpkins for cooking and trying to cook a big one ends up as a big, stringy, orange mess on the ceiling and walls of the kitchen. I learned that I’d be loved just as much if I bought my pies rather than make them, and through the eyes of faith I have come to see that story as a way for God to tell me that Jesus came for me as I am, and I don’t have to prove anything to him to be loved.

They also know the story of the Christmas my beloved grandfather died. My grief was made even more devastating each time I heard the message the world was shouting at me, “Be merry!!!” But, driving in the car one day, I heard the line “Christ was born for this,” in the Christmas carol “Good Christian Friends Rejoice,” and a light bulb went on in my head. I got it. Jesus came for just this moment, to give me *real* hope, not the transitory “merriment” of the holidays, and while it wasn’t a “happy” Christmas, it was one of the best I’ve experienced.

I think about the stories I’ve heard here at SOTG, of how you worked together to establish a church “from scratch” 40 years ago, of how you’ve supported each other, of lives touched through programs like the Rt 1 day Center meals. We may not hear them but there will be stories that this church will be a part of when a needy child receives a Toys for Tots gift under the tree or patients at Springfield receive warm gloves this Christmas.

In a world that shouts at us to *buy* more, *do* more, *be* more, God sends us quiet experiences that we hold in our hearts—stories that we repeat until our families, our communities, or our congregations know them by heart. God is there in all our stories, teaching us the lessons that Jesus showed us by being born among us—conspiring to counter all the messages that tell us we’re not enough by affirming once and for all that God does indeed love us.

So join the Advent Conspiracy! Dare to believe that you have a story worth telling because God is writing the story in your life. Keep your eyes open to how God is in your life working and join in the ancient, blessed, sacred story by seeing how it is still being written.

If you want to get an idea of what the conspiracy is all about, search “Advent Conspiracy Promo Video” on Youtube, or watch for it to be posted on the church Facebook page. The video ends with an invitation: “Enter into the story...”

Go ahead, I *dare* you to watch it and begin to consider the possibilities.

Warm and bright blessings of the season to you,
Pastor Susan+

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Falalalala!!! Join us December 8 at 4:00-5:00 for a caroling party at the home of our member Carolyn Myers, 9209 Creekbed Ct, Columbia, 21045. Carolyn lives at the residence with two other women and their caretakers, and they love to sing—so come usher in your Christmas with some joyful singing! Please let Pastor Susan know that you'll be attending.

Lectionary Alive Bible study: We will continue our study of the “other” Sunday lectionary texts through December 11 (Congregational meeting after worship December 18). The first and second readings of the day often sound obscure or just plain weird and may seem irrelevant—but they are treasure troves of insight for our times. We discuss the context of the writing and how it pertains to our world, the church and this congregation in this transitional time in particular. Please join us for this study right after worship.

Healing Prayer during Advent. Our world, our nation, our communities and each of us are in need of healing, and as the days grow shorter, we are even more aware of that need. Sundays in Advent (beginning November 27) we will offer individual prayer for healing at the time of the “prayers of the congregation” during worship.

Christmas Eve Service: candlelight service will begin at 7:30pm.

Since Christmas Day is on Sunday, there will be no worship service.

Cookie Fellowship will be held on December 4th. The signup sheet is on the bulletin board next to the kitchen.

Christmas Project – Toys for Tots

We will be accepting toys (unwrapped) from the congregation and the community every day for two weeks from Sunday 27 November through Sunday 11 December from 9 am to 5:30 pm. This schedule is already posted on the Marine Toys for Tots Foundation website. In addition, we are asking for volunteers to spend a couple of hours at church sometime during those hours to accept the donated toys during the first week of donations. A sign-up sheet will be posted in the narthex. We appreciate you helping with this worthwhile project. Thank you for your donations.

Mitten Tree: On December 11 there will be an ingathering of adult mittens and gloves which will be donated to the patients at the Springfield Hospital in Sykesville. Thank you for all donations.

Call Committee: with the installation of the new Bishop and his staff now complete, they are delving headlong into the work of the synod. Pastor Judy Cobb has replaced our former synod representative, Linda Chinnia. The Call Committee had a very informative meeting with Pastor Cobb. She has reviewed and suggested some changes to our Ministry Site Profile, which we did take to Council and had approved. The call process is once again moving forward. We continue to pray for God's guidance as we proceed with this process. Please keep us in your prayers. Thank you.



Poinsettias: Price per plant is \$8.00. Last day to order poinsettias to beautify the sanctuary is December 4. Order envelopes are on the table in the narthex.



Annual Meeting Part 1 will be held on December 18th after worship.

Shepherd of the Glen Lutheran Church
Church Council Meeting
November 15, 2016

The meeting was called together with a reading "Litany of Gratitude"

Minutes from the October 11, 2016 meeting were read and approved.

Financial Reports:

The Financial Secretary's report was distributed.

For the week ending October 31, 2016

Pledged Envelope Offerings:	\$52,556.31
Actual Envelope Offerings:	\$50,542.00 (96.2%)
Loose Offerings	\$551.00 (year to date)
Building Fund	\$1375.00 (year to date)
Gifts and Memorials	\$4,515.00
Miscellaneous Donations	\$1,134.54 (Boy Scouts)/\$141.00 (Rt.1)/ \$600.00 (LWR Sheep)/ \$165.00 (St. Dysmas)/\$86.50 (Shepherd's table)/ \$100.00 (Wedding)

The Treasurer's report was distributed.

October Envelope income:	\$6,803.00
Year to date total income:	\$61,486.54
Year to date expenses:	\$52,444.08

Note: Giving has increased even though attendance has not.

Note: Photocopier line: our copier contract was adjusted to run from November, 2016 to November 9, 2017 thus a slight increase in that line item for this year only.

Financial reports were accepted as given.

Board of Christian Education:

A Coffee Fellowship was held in November. There will be a fellowship on December 4 and January 1.

On December 4th we will decorate the church and everyone is encouraged to bring cookies for the coffee fellowship.

Sunday School continues to be held each Sunday.

Board of Trustees Report:

The field has been mowed. There will be one more grass cutting this year.

A new candle/taper lighter was purchased. All batteries in the smoke detectors have been replaced.

Board of Deacons Report:

Motion was made and passed on the Deacons recommendation that we return to using individual cups for communion wine.

There will be no additional Advent services. Instead during Advent Sundays a healing session will be offered during the prayers.

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service will be held on December 24 at 7:30. There will be no Christmas Day Service. The service on January 1st will be a service of Carols and Readings with Communion.

We have been approved to be a Toys For Tots donation center. This project will start on November 27 and run through December 11. We will be open for donations from 9 am to 5:30 pm and will be asking for volunteers to be present at Church to receive toys. Advertisements and notices will be posted on Facebook and with the Media.

On Thursday, December 8 we will go caroling at Creek Bed Court in Columbia. All interested singers should see Pastor Susan.

On December 11 we will hold a one day adult mitten tree drive to benefit patients at Springfield Hospital Center.

Upcoming Dates to Remember:

December 13—Council Meeting

December 18—Annual Congregational Meeting Part I

January 22—Annual Reports from boards are due to Linda Krause

January 29—Annual Congregational Meeting Part II

Pastors Report:

Pastor Susan continues to meet with members and make Pastoral Care visits; prepare for services; prepare “Lectionary Alive” Bible study and meet with Boards and Synod clergy. She conducts worship services for St. Dysmas on Wednesday mornings. Pastor Susan attended several interfaith gatherings. Pastor Susan continues to hold Friday morning “office hours” at the Dunkin Donuts on Route 97.

Call Committee:

The Call Committee has met with Pastor Judy Cobb, Interim Assistant to the Bishop. Motion was made and passed to update the Ministry Site Profile according to recommendations from Pastor Cobb: update salary range and to include Medical benefits

We discussed the proposed 2017 budget. Several changes were made to the proposal including a line for Pastoral Call; updated MSP salary range; adjustment to Building and Evangelism lines.

The next Council meeting will be held on December 13, 2016 at 7:00 pm.



Merry Christmas