



The Shepherd's Pipe



Volume 51, Issue 5

May 2020

Vicar's Note

I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me.

John 10:14 (NRSV)

Dear Friends in Christ,

It is May and this year the first Sunday in May is Good Shepherd Sunday. This identification of Jesus as the good shepherd holds a dear place in the hearts of those that are connected to Good Shepherd Lutheran Church. This congregation in New Castle, PA finds its name in this "I AM" statement of Jesus found in the Gospel according to John. The good shepherd is the one who takes risks for the sake of the sheep, the one who "lays down his life for the sheep."

The good shepherd in one manner of thought takes risks on behalf of the sheep. The good shepherd is not just one that takes risks on behalf of the sheep, but also the one that leads the sheep in faith. What a fitting image for this congregation, Good Shepherd Lutheran Church. A congregation with a rich history of taking risk, but moving forward in faith, trusting in God.

Good Shepherd was formed as a congregation in October 1970. As a congregation, Good Shepherd represents the combining of multiple congregations, tracing their origins back more than 170 years. In 1970, the congregations of Redeemer Lutheran Church and Trinity Lutheran Church came together to form Good Shepherd. It is important to recognize that the congregations of St. Paul's (1848) and Bethany (1904) had only recently merged in 1962 and that Trinity, renamed in the 1960's, traces its history back to 1900 as the New Castle Finnish Lutheran Church and in 1941 incorporated members from Bessemer Lutheran Church (1904). The members of these congregations that came together in 1970 embarked on a building project. The result of that project is the building in use today, dedicated in May 1973.

There are many more details to the history of Good Shepherd Lutheran Church. They are fascinating details and well worth knowing, but the reason I share with you some of this history today is not so that you "know" the history of GSLC. Rather, it is a reminder that as a congregation Good Shepherd has taken risks and moved forward in faith throughout its history.

As we enter the month of May in the year 2020, it is unlike any May that we have experienced. We approach Good Shepherd Sunday and recognize that it will be the seventh Sunday where we have not been able to worship in-person in the building and we don't know how long that will continue. Just like those members who moved forward in faith in 1970, we don't know exactly what the future may look like. We do know that God is at work in the world and we know that Jesus is our Good Shepherd. I pray that you find comfort in this image of Jesus as the Good Shepherd as we enter the month of May and I pray that you find hope knowing that part of the heritage of GSLC is one of moving forward in faith. What a powerful and appropriate name for a congregation with such a rich heritage.

Peace,
Vicar Chris

Best Wishes on Your Special Day to our Members and Friends of GSLC:

Happy Birthday!

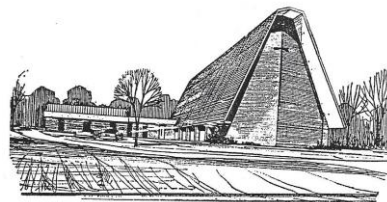
- 1 – Jody Vanassa
- 4 – David Michael
Mark McCullough
- 8 – Kevin Braun
Heather Ratvasky
- 9 – Christian Maxwell
- 10 – Jack Warneck
- 12 – Patti Michael
- 16 – Alfred Andrews
Dennis Eagan
- 17 – Diane Vanassa
- 19 – Laverne Ratkovich
- 20 – Sherry Badger
Julie DeDominicis
- 22 – Ansen Westrick
- 23 – Jace Leonard
- 24 – Irene Fracul
- 29 – Delores LeComte
- 30 – Ashley Augustine Rhoades
Christine Bruno
Ridge Tervo
- 31 – Bertha Metzger
Micah Worek

Happy Anniversary!

- 5 – Henry and Linda Marttala
- 17 – Raymond and Diana Braun
- 21 – Scott and Sky Suorsa
- 22 – Donald and Beth Surosa
- 24 – Brian and Stefanie Leonard
- 27 – Timothy and Brenda Johnson

Our Mission

We, the congregation of Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, New Castle, Pennsylvania, are called by God, baptized into Christ Jesus, and empowered by the Holy Spirit. Because of God's great love shown us in the gift of his Son, we are bound together in love. Therefore, we make disciples of Jesus Christ through teaching, worshipping, witnessing, and serving.



Good Shepherd Lutheran Church
of New Castle

**** During this time, we will continue to have virtual services until May 18th dependent on changing guidelines for social gatherings. We will communicate changes as they occur. Feel free to reach out to Vicar Chris or church council members with any questions that you may have.**

Bible Study

We will be having virtual Bible study using Zoom every Tuesday at 2:00 pm now through the end of May. This will also be in partnership with Trinity Lutheran – Ellwood City. The study typically focuses on the Gospel lesson for the upcoming Sunday. This is a great opportunity to take a deeper look at some of those texts and to connect with each other. Here are the details for the Zoom meeting – note, these will remain the same for each Tuesday session through May.

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/96900399665?pwd=bXplOTJnWUh3UjZjdmQyaDBHSzh0dz09>

Meeting ID: 969 0039 9665

Password: 028973

You can either join using your computer, tablet or smartphone by the link above or you can call into the meeting at 929-205-6099. You will be prompted to enter the meeting ID and password.

Worship Services

During this time, we are working to stream Sunday worship service on Facebook Live as a joint effort with Trinity – Ellwood City. Please check out Good Shepherd and Trinity's Facebook pages for updates as we navigate through the next few weeks. Worship is still scheduled for Sunday morning at 10:30 am just like normal. Please note that both of the church's pages are public, so you do not need to be a Facebook member in order to view and/or watch the live streams.

- Good Shepherd:
<https://www.facebook.com/GSLCNewCastle/>
- Trinity:
<https://www.facebook.com/TrinityEllwood/>

Additions to Newsletter

Do you have something to publish in The Shepherd's Pipe? Please have any submissions into the church office by Monday, May 25.

Mission Project

Our mission support project for May and June is Lutherlyn. Please know that like so many organizations, they are impacted by the current situation with COVID-19. At this point, they still intend to offer a summer program, but the opening will be delayed at least until July 5th.

We recognize too, that some of you may have wanted to contribute to the mission support project for March and April but didn't have the opportunity. ELCA Good Gifts was the organization designated for support in those months.

If you would like to support any either of these projects or the ELCA COVID-19 Response Fund, which is discussed at significant length in this edition of the Shepherd's Pipe, you can continue to do that. As you send in your offerings, we just ask that you designate that support, by indicating either, "Lutherlyn," "ELCA Good Gifts," or "ELCA COVID-19." As always, thank you for all of your support!

"Zooming" with Danielle

Anyone who is looking for some fun from home can join our exercise group on Mondays and Wednesdays during May at 9AM. You do not have to join with video if you are not comfortable showing off your dance moves or your early morning right-out-of-bed look. If you just want to watch, that's fine too; although, I promise you at least once you'll be dancing in your chair! It requires you to download Zoom and join on your computer, iPad or phone. Just text or call Danielle Johns to give her your email address so she can send you a link for our get-togethers. Her telephone number is 330-646-7792.

Pop Can Collection

A reminder that we are continuing to collect pop cans which are taken for recycling with the proceeds being returned to the church.

Thank You!

We want to say thank you to Diana Braun for her efforts on the making the baskets for Easter. Thank you to everyone who has volunteered over the years to bring some Easter joy to those in need. This year 100 baskets were donated to the City Rescue Mission and another 60 baskets were donated to People in Need! We hope you all had a blessed Easter!



Council Highlights – Meeting held April 14, 2020

This meeting was held virtually utilizing ZOOM. All Council Members along with Pastor Peggy and Vicar Chris were able to attend the meeting.

- ❖ A large portion of the discussion were related in some way to the impact of COVID-19.
- ❖ Good Shepherd applied for (and has since received) funds from the Payroll Protection Program. Discussion of how to best direct and utilize the time of the staff received significant attention.
- ❖ The Youth Group has been meeting virtually on Sunday evenings and additional activities (virtual) are being looked into for other groups within the congregation.
- ❖ Pastor Peggy and Vicar Chris will continue to coordinate virtual worship services between Trinity and Good Shepherd.

Devotional Resources

Good Shepherd has pocket size copies of *Portals of Prayer* available on the information rack by the steps leading to the balcony. *Portals of Prayer* is also available electronically on Kindle and iBooks. Apps are also available for Apple and Android. Note that all these options require a subscription.

Some other resources that you might be interested in:

- *Our Daily Bread* - Apps are available or you can sign up on-line for a daily e-mail at <https://odb.org/> — This is a free resource.
- A daily Bible verse can be sent to you from DailyVerses.net — You can sign-up for this to be e-mailed to you or you can find them on Facebook and Twitter. This is a free resource.
- <https://www.biblegateway.com/> — Bible Gateway is another free resource where you can look-up bible verses from a variety of translations. If you create an account, you can also sign-up for delivery of a verse of the Day or for a number of devotionals, including a 40 day Journey with Dietrich Bonhoeffer, a daily passage from the writings of C.S. Lewis, as well as a number of other devotionals geared toward men, women, or families and many others. You can see a listing at <https://www.biblegateway.com/devotionals/>



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

Dear partner in ministry,

Weeks may have passed since you last walked in the doors of your congregation and worshiped, face-to-face, with your community of faith. To be sure, being the body of Christ looks and feels differently than it ever has before.

Despite all of this, we are called to be church — together. The ministry of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) looks different now, but it has not stopped. Nor have the needs of our communities and the world. Our church and its leaders continue to minister to its members, to those who are hurting and searching for peace, and to those in need.

The congregations and ministries of this church rely on your weekly offerings and gifts. Without in-person worship services for many weeks or even months, the financial impact could be devastating.

Please continue to give to your congregation and give regularly. Your congregation and its leaders continue to minister to your community of faith. This ministry relies on your weekly offerings. Find out how you can continue your pledge or regular offering through online giving, automatic monthly giving or mail.

I know that, for many of us, this is a time of uncertainty and financial hardship. However, for those of you who are in a position to do more, the needs are great.

In the United States, unemployment has soared. We are already seeing rising demands on our food pantries, homeless shelters and social services. Around the world, millions of people living in poverty are facing this pandemic without reliable access to sanitation and health care.

With congregations and ministries across the country, and a network of companion churches and partners in over 70 countries around the world, we anticipate this crisis will affect us all. Your gifts to the ELCA's [COVID-19 Response Fund](#) will provide funds to the ministries of the ELCA most in need and best positioned to help. This includes our congregations as well as local and churchwide ministries capable of reaching and assisting those in need. **If you are able, please help with a gift today.**

I have been reflecting on the words of Peter: "Like good stewards of the manifold grace of God, serve one another with whatever gift each of you has received" (1 Peter 4:10). Now is a time when we need one another. Now is a time to live and act as faithful people of God.

Be of good courage, dear church, and remember that Christ is with us now and always.

In Christ,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Elizabeth A. Eaton".

The Rev. Elizabeth A. Eaton
Presiding Bishop, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Continued ...

In response to this plea from the Bishop, council voted to participate in the ELCA'S COVID-19 Relief Outreach. We have received a PPP loan (which should not have to be repaid) from the bank for \$6,700 to help with our costs for staff and utilities for the next two months. Knowing that there are needs that are extreme outside of our church, council pledged from our church \$670 for the ELCA Relief Fund.

We also want to inform those of you who want to help others during this time how you can donate to COVID-19 Relief as an individual. You may include with your regular offering a donation, by stating on the message line of your check to the church "COVID-19" with the amount you want to go toward the fund or write it on your envelope. If you are donating through ZELLE, include a note on the message line of your offering with the amount to go toward the fund. Separate checks are not necessary. Simply write a note how you would like your check that is written to "Good Shepherd Lutheran Church" to be divided. Checks should not be written to anyone other than "Good Shepherd Lutheran Church." One check to the ELCA COVID-19 Relief Fund will be sent from the church.

FYI: One check from you may be designated to many causes. There is no need to write multiple checks. If you need to for your bookkeeping, it is totally fine, but not necessary on our end for bookkeeping. Also, some of you have been sending in weekly checks. If it would be easier for you to write one check for a longer period of time, that is fine too. If you think of another way we could help you, please don't hesitate to call. Your offering checks may be mailed to the church **2323 Old Butler Rd., New Castle, PA. 16101** or Ruth Johns **2824 Glenda Dr., New Castle, PA. 16101**.

JUST A REMINDER -- Zelle is a way to transfer money between bank accounts. When prompted, the church's "First Name" is **Good Shepherd Lutheran Church** and the "Last Name" is **New Castle**. The phone number connected to the church account belongs to our treasurer, Ruth Johns – **724-657-4733**. This is a safe and secure way to skip sending checks. If you use this service with your bank, we are now able to receive your transfers. You will be given credit to your offering record the Sunday following your transfer. *NEED HELP? CALL RUTH JOHNS---724-657-4733.*

THANK YOU FOR ALL OF THE MONEY THAT HAS BEEN SENT TO DATE!

Circles of Prayer for Mission

Please pray for the members of Good Shepherd:

Daily Prayer

- ❖ For Vicar Chris, in his ministry to our congregation.
- ❖ For the entire Good Shepherd family, that we may worship the Lord in Spirit and truth and grow in our relationship with him and one another.

Sunday Prayer

- ❖ For Evy Amerson, pianist/organist; in her ministry of music for our worship.
- ❖ Gracious God, all people are united in your mercy. Help us to see and understand our kinship in you and to celebrate together in worship.

Monday Prayer

- ❖ For our local, state and federal government officials, especially for President Donald Trump, his staff and members of Congress, that they may lead our nation in justice and peace.
- ❖ For courage and strength for Synodical leaders, especially Bishop Kurt Kusserow and our presiding bishop of the ELCA, Bishop Elizabeth Eaton.
- ❖ For an increase in ministry workers, both rostered leaders and lay, allowing God's church to grow, sharing the faith, and encouragement to those who are new to faith.

Tuesday Prayer

- ❖ For our Church Council members in their decision making for our congregation: Fred DeDominicis, Curt Johns, Ruth Johns, Terri Lombardo, Linda Marttala, Shirley Mazzocca, Hailey Tamaro, Terri Tankersley, Diana Tervo, Barbara Turk, Michonda Weber, and Grover Welsh.
- ❖ Give thanks to God for ELCA members who share joyfully God-given blessings through stewardship of their resources of time, skills and money.

Wednesday Prayer

- ❖ For Kevin Green, Director, his staff and ministries of the City Rescue Mission.
- ❖ God of many blessings, we give thanks for giving us life. We praise you for the call to mission with which you continue to draw us out of ourselves and into relationship with others.

Thursday Prayer

- ❖ For the Pastor/Pilots of LAMP ministry of Canada.
- ❖ For the elderly and homebound and the Meals On Wheels staff and volunteers.
- ❖ Almighty God, we give thanks for the earth you have created and all its living things. Help us appreciate the love you give and remember continued thankfulness for your goodness.

Friday Prayer

- ❖ For Grover Welsh, Sexton, Ruth Johns, Treasurer, Terri Tankersley, Financial Secretary, Hailey Tamaro, Youth Group Leader, and K'rin Fortuna, Secretary.
- ❖ For individuals who have physical, emotional, or spiritual needs and their families and friends who care for them. For our homebound members: Alba Kessler, Delores LeComte, Fran Nelson, Don Suorsa, Kim Cook, Bertha Metzger, and Alfred Andrews.

Saturday Prayer

- ❖ For the people of the Passavant Retirement and Health Center in Zeligople.
- ❖ Give thanks for the time, talents, prayers, and funds that are donated to the ELCA Disaster Response which enable the ELCA to feed the hungry, clothe the naked and bring the Good News to those who are suffering.

