

PARISH PULSE

“...But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently.”

—Romans 8:25



You Can Wait...

BY PASTOR KOEPEL

Greetings people of the Good Shepherd! I hope and pray this little newsletter finds you and yours very well. Thank you for taking the time to read it and see what's going on at your beloved church.

Like you, I have a few pet peeves. Things that just annoy and aggravate me, but, like you, I've learned to live with them. Crunchy bags in a quiet room, waiting at a stoplight at 3 am for no reason, loud belches with no “excuse me.” That's just a very few. But here's one that also grates on me...when people say, “I can't wait!”

I know that it's an expression of excitement, of anticipation, of jubilation of upcoming events, but seriously, you can wait.

Sorry to bring this curse upon you, but now any time you hear someone say it, you'll say inside your sober, well-taught mind, “You can wait.”

I hear it all the time. “I can't wait for Thanksgiving,” “Can't wait for Christmas,” “Can't wait for 2021,” “Can't wait for snow,” “Can't wait for spring,” and especially now... “I can't wait for the Rona to be over!” Can't wait for this and that...

Guess what, you can wait.

I think my disdain for the “can't wait” rhetoric comes from the fact of me getting older and the realization that the weeks go by SO FAST! Monday-Friday, Monday-Friday...in the blink of an eye. Also, I've learned that the anticipation is sometimes more glorious than the event...You can wait.

I don't like that people “can't wait” their weeks or their days away. “It's just words,” they say. But is it just words? What are we doing in this time, right now (the “waiting” time), that isn't important or exciting? Well, maybe not exciting, but meaningful. That's why I'm a one day at a time guy (which drives my wife, Kim and our office manager, Krista, crazy sometimes.)

You can wait.

Enjoy every moment. Savor every flavor of these days the coming months, socially distanced or not. Rejoice like a big old kid, “hoping for what you do not yet have, but waiting for it patiently.” Apparently that's what God wants us to do. Please don't “can't wait” your life away when there is so much to live for right now!

(Continued. pg 2)

IN THIS ISSUE

Who Are We?

Strategic Planning

Two Copper Coins

Family of Faith

Change of Scenery

You Can Wait...

(Continued)

Advent is a season of anticipation, the arrival of the big gift. It's a good time to reflect (every day) about the gift that was given...and to search ourselves about our readiness for the second gift (when He comes again in glory). We're all excited about that second coming, but we can wait...we have work to do.

So, maybe replace, "I can't wait" with "I'm looking forward to...?" Just to appease your pastor in his presence. ... Because you can wait.

I am "looking forward" to spending Christmas and the beginning of the New Year with you, and all the exciting things that come with it. I'm so thankful we get to do it together. Hoping for what we do not yet have, but waiting for it patiently.

Stay awesome, people of the Good Shepherd. Find God's goodness in every day, and see you at Church!

-Pastor G

Christmas Worship

Thank you to everyone who filled out the Christmas Worship Survey. Providing a safe worship environment during this time of COVID is of the utmost importance to the Elders and Pastor at Good Shepherd. Therefore, it has been determined that we need to offer three worship services on Christmas Eve. The services will be at 10:30 am, 4:30 pm and 6:30 pm. We will be creating and sending out a link for you to sign up for your preferred service online, the way we used to sign up for Communion. If you know of anyone that does not have a computer but will want to attend service, please help them out or tell them to call the church office and Krista will assist them.

There will be no sign up necessary for Christmas Day service. It will start at 9:00 am.

The 4:30 pm Christmas Eve worship service will be live streamed.

Thank you for helping keep each other safe during this joyous season.

Joy is Not Cancelled

by Tom Dunham, Head of Elders

What a challenging time we are in! We have been given the task to try and overcome the challenges of COVID in regards to holding worship services. We have been prayerfully we have been working together to win and offer different worship options! Covid has changed our way of worshiping but we have created new ways to make things happen –

- Parking lot services – Easter and Reformation – Many favorable comments.
- Being able to provide a safe environment to worship in church.
- Live streaming services on Sunday mornings.
- We were able to offer Thanksgiving mid-week service at both 10:30 am & 6:30 pm.
- Two weekly Advent services on December 2nd, 9th and 16th at 10:30 am & 6:30 pm.
- Christmas Eve services times will be 10:30 AM, 4:30 PM, and 6:30 PM. The Chime Choir will be playing in the 4:30 PM service and Adult Choir will sing at the 6:30 PM service.

Your Elders are here to help and listen – We wish all of you well and safe.

Remember Joy is Not Cancelled and may PEACE Abound.

Tom Dunham, Head Elder



Who Are We?

by Keith Casey, Church President

Greetings and the Lord be with you!

I would like to take a quick minute and provide an update to our congregations strategic planning. Currently, we have completed what is known as the “environmental scan which looks at Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats. This is commonly known as SWOT analysis. This is by no means a complete and comprehensive list. I encourage you to reach out to myself or Pastor if you have ideas and thoughts on this topic.



The internal to our congregation strengths have been identified as:

1. Fellowship. Despite COVID we continue to excel at fellowship within our congregation.
2. Doctrinally strong and sound sermons with a strong presence of retired Pastors.
3. Worship music.
4. Willingness to help those in need.
5. Location and current facilities.
6. Finances (previously identified as a weakness).
7. Our members are generous with their time, talents and treasures.
8. Remaining active and Flexible during COVID.
9. History in the community: 50 years strong and still going!

The internal to our congregation weaknesses have been identified as:

1. Resistance to change.
2. Technology.
3. UWO outreach.
4. Member care; identifying member needs (high risk families, meals, support to parents, and visitations to our elderly).
5. Mentoring our youth, new members and young adults.
6. Diversity in Bible Study.
7. Board membership.
8. Collaboration with our sister congregations
9. Lines of communication (individual vs. group).
10. Self-awareness.

The external opportunities have been identified as:

1. UWO outreach.
2. Young family needs.
3. Future staff.
4. Community involvement (ecumenical).
5. Member care.
6. Assisting our sister congregation.
7. Engaging our neighborhood, “on our block”.
8. Future development of our property.



I would like to thank everyone for all their help in making our church grow and prosper. Again, is it truly amazing to see how the Holy Spirit works in each and every one of you in your own special way. I would like to close this newsletter article with words of wisdom from Dr. Michael Uden, Vice Provost, Concordia University Wisconsin, about the season of Advent:

“I assume most of us have a greater collection of face masks now than we have had at any point previously. Wearing a mask has become a ubiquitous part of our everyday lives. Yet even before COVID, was that not also true? How often have we covered who we really are or hidden what we think or believe in fear others won’t accept us-or laugh and walk away? Long before COVID-19, “unmasking” meant to reveal one’s true identity. As we approach the season of Advent, perhaps that is more needed than ever.

Each of us has hidden hurts, needs, sins, and struggles that we may disguise even from ourselves. In this sacred season of Advent, may we instead open God’s Word each day and through the Holy Spirit’s power, open our hearts and minds anew to his love and care? Just savor our first full breath when we remove a COVID mask, may God’s Word and grace drop as the rain...distill as the dew, like gentle rain upon the tender grass, and lie showers upon the herb (Deuteronomy 32:2). Look at Advent in the face, and face this season with hopeful anticipation for your loving Savior’s arrival.” Dr. Michael Uden, 2020.

In His service and yours, Keith Casey.

Family of Faith

by Cam Bedroske, Music Director

Celebrations are full of joy, memories, and future plans.

What do they look and sound like? Chatter, laughter, smiles, hugs, good food, photos passed around, watching the kids grow up... and choices about the next celebration... where to meet, when to arrive, who to invite, what to bring? (Sort of reminds me of our Worship Sundays and Fellowship Hour of the past)

Well it is now time to prepare for Advent/Christmas!

We have lots of choices to make and they require flexibility and sacrifice during this Covid season. This family of faith is looking out for each other and it is inspiring. Here is how we are trying:

- Providing for another parking lot service- Reformation Sunday. There was smiling faces, honking horns, and that feeling of community we so miss!
- Introducing more worship times for Thanksgiving, Advent Midweek and Christmas Eve.
- Starting a Chime Choir for people to celebrate a common safe goal.
- Adult Vocal/Choir still meeting with masks and distance.

I am so thankful to serve as Music Director and share in the planning and organizing of people and music.

With that being said, as I write to you, I may not be aware of any new conversations about adding more services for Christmas Eve; BUT I do know that I would like to again organize an opportunity for people to offer special music before each service starts. (Instrumental, vocal, piano etc)

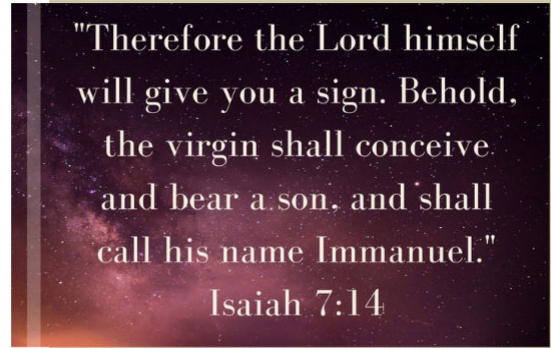
Traditions may change just a bit. Due to exposure and extra services, the music will start 20 minutes prior each Christmas Eve service, no matter what time they start.

Christmas Day does not normally have the member music option, but let me know if that is what fits best for you, and I can help with that.

As Christians, I know we have responsibilities for the here and now, but also the joy of looking to the future, planning, scheming good things, uplifting, inspiring and encouraging each other.

"Our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ" - Philippians 3:20

Grace Abounds.



Two Copper Coins

by Daniel Weiss, Stewardship Chair

Dear friends,

I'd like to write a little longer letter as the year comes to a close. I hope you will take the time to read it.

2020 marks the twenty-fifth straight year that I have served in ministry. In fact, every professional position I have held since college has been in the non-profit world. This includes serving as an overseas missionary with the LCMS, an entertainment analyst, staff writer, social issues manager, director of research and national outreach, and now as president of the Brushfires Foundation.

One common denominator among all of these positions is that each of them depended on the generosity of other people. In most cases, the "product" being offered by my non-profit employers was a service. I have written articles, research briefs, op-eds, offered analysis, conducted interviews, and shared my expertise with others—nearly always free of charge.

(Continued pg 5)

Two Copper Coins (Continued)

Our shared ministry at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church is no different. Our staff, buildings, programs, utilities, insurance costs, and all the expenses we accrue as a congregation are investments in the promotion of the Good News of Jesus. We offer this to the community at large for free in recognition of the free gift of grace given by our lord and savior Jesus Christ. We spend this money because we believe so strongly in the life-giving message of God delivered through His only-begotten Son. Every day, members of this church are working to bring this Good News to the community through our three in-person worship services, our online service, our music ministry, youth outreach, evangelism into the community, and the work we do to take care of our own member families, among many other areas of service. *This is really exciting work!*

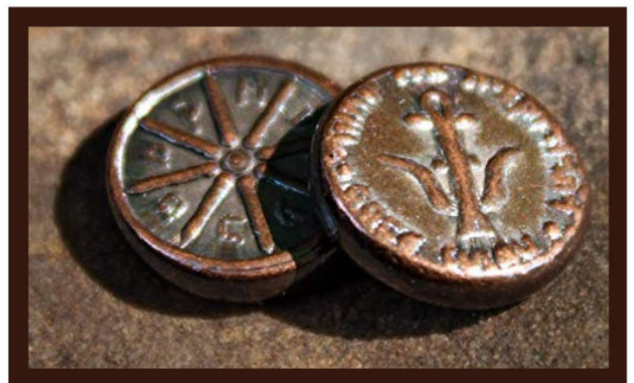
As with my work in other non-profit ministries, the daily work at Good Shepherd is not just accomplished by the staff, or even through the many volunteers that serve this church. Our Gospel work can only continue through the partnership between individual donors and the larger community of our church. Each of us plays a part in the ministry that happens here at Good Shepherd. This is not just a responsibility we have to one another and to our Lord, but an opportunity to truly participate in the wonderful work being done at the corner of Westhaven and 9th Ave.

Yet a significant portion of our congregation is missing out on some of the joy. According to the most recent giving report, fully one-third of our 267 offering envelopes haven't contributed to the work of Good Shepherd this year. It may be that some of these envelope owners have moved away; others may be giving online. I do not have access to anyone's contributions. I only see report numbers and never any names. This still leaves a significant number of confirmed members that are not receiving the blessings of joyful giving to the Lord at this church.

Right now, fifty percent of the members of Good Shepherd are providing 99.3% of our operating funds. This number might seem a bit shocking, but I suspect our congregation isn't too different from others. It is important for us all to remember that God doesn't require our financial offerings as a condition of salvation. Nor does he provide the same financial resources to each person or family. Yet, as St. Paul writes to the Corinthian church, "The point is this: whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver" (2 Cor. 9:6-7).

In my own ministry, my board of directors has adopted a 100% giving policy. That means that every board member commits to donating to the work of the ministry every year. The amount isn't as important as the fact that we are all personally investing in the work we are called to steward. (Remember the blessing of the poor widow who gave two copper coins?) God has given us so much and is calling us to so much more. Shouldn't we encourage one another to participate in this ministry as much as each one of us is able?

I want to encourage Good Shepherd Church to move toward 100% giving among baptized and confirmed members by the end of 2020 (including high school students that have been confirmed). Every one of us has a role to play in the shared mission and ministry of Good Shepherd Lutheran Church. If you haven't yet invested this year, this Advent and Christmas season is a perfect time to start. If you have questions about anything I wrote or about your situation, please contact me.



The Lord Jesus Christ be with and bless you all this Holy Season.

Treasurer's Report

by Diane Flouro, Treasurer

Hello Everyone,

We continue to hold steady on our income and expenses during this very odd time. We continue to pay down our debt and are able to fund those unusual expenses that weren't expected (elevator, furnace). We received a bit of good news last month and that is Lutheran Church Extension Fund reduced our mortgage Interest rate from 4.375% to 4.000% as of the beginning of November.

As a summary of the last couple of months.

All of the boards will be working on the 2021 budget in the next couple of months, so stay tuned for an upcoming voters meeting to approve the budget.

If any of you have ANY questions whatsoever, feel free to reach out to me on my cell phone (920) 420-5841 or email at flourodi@yahoo.com.

Yours in Christ.

Diane Flouro

	Sept 2020	Oct 2020
Regular Giving	20,023.16	29,513.60
Debt Giving	1,440.00	1,125.00
Mission	65.00	160.00
Scrip	4,290.00	3,805.00
Other	72.68	1,100.00
Total Monthly Expenses	30,022.27	23,081.56
Monthly Amt Under Budget	1,967.26	8,907.97
YTD Expenses Under Budget	58,745.95	65,368.29
Mortgage Balance as of End of Month	252,355.92	248,287.08
Additional Pay Down of Debt		
West Point Bank Checking	37,709.59	36,152.21
West Point Bank Savings	4,130.96	4,130.96
LCEF Savings	44,297.79	54,283.16

Brushfires Update

Greetings, friends at Good Shepherd,

I've previously shared how at our August planning meetings, we were able to clarify and begin to focus on our audience new way. We agreed that God is calling is to equip, support, and collaborate with Christian leaders that are passionate helping church understand and embrace God's plan for sexuality.

One way we are working this out is through the planning of our upcoming national summit to be held next April in San Antonio, Texas. We are designing some content options that follow Dr. Juli Slattery's model of sexual discipleship. Specifically, that 1) know what we believe (i.e. what the Bible teaches), 2) live out what we believe, and 3) share with others what we believe about sexuality. Although this sounds simple, think about how much of a struggle this is with non-sexual issues. Do any of you feel totally confident that we understand and embrace everything the Bible teaches, or that we live it out perfectly, or that we can comfortably and confidently share the Gospel with others?

That is why we focus on discipleship. This is a process we all are in and our next National Summit will help Christian leaders learn more about sexual discipleship and how to serve and support churches in this important work. We have many plenary sessions and breakout presentations identified and are working on finishing the rest of the details. If you are interested in joining me in Texas next April, please let me know. We would love to have you!

As this year comes to a close, I want to thank you with my deepest gratitude and most heartfelt prayers of thanksgiving for the spiritual, financial, and relational support Good Shepherd has provided to me and Brushfires. Your partnership has been incredible. Thank you and may you have a very blessed Advent and Christmas seasons.

Yours in Christ, Daniel Weiss

Birthdays

December

Nicole Schroeder	12/1	Doreen Dittberner	12/14
Benjamin Heideman	12/3	Richard Tritt	12/14
Tami Klauer	12/5	Rebecca Dittberner	12/15
Dana Rasmussen	12/5	Deidra Flouro	12/16
Doris Wojahn	12/5	Catherine Lute	12/19
Brittany Bandelow	12/6	Brian Spaeth	12/19
Linda Nienass	12/6	Justin Mielke	12/20
Andrew Makurat	12/7	Ken Szweda	12/20
Kyle Makurat	12/7	Sherri Groskreutz	12/21
Jennifer Wiley	12/7	Judy Mielke	12/21
Sandra Casey	12/8	Kat Skadahl	12/21
Diane Flouro	12/8	Ryan Bandelow	12/22
Lydia Phillips	12/10	Dylan McDonald	12/24
Patricia Warning	12/10	Ryan Beck	12/26
Ella Beck	12/11	Bette Lienhard	12/30
Renate Piotter	12/11	Heather Beck	12/31
Benjamin Wiley	12/13		

January

Willie Lewis III	1/1	Shawn Kirchoff	1/15
Kari Steinbeck	1/1	Stacy Martin	1/15
Susan Schaefer	1/3	Keith Reetz	1/15
Danielle Flouro	1/4	Cody Skadahl	1/15
Diana Trinoskey	1/4	Zoe Skadahl	1/15
Kurt Brunner	1/6	Marsha Clarkson	1/19
Zoe Brunner	1/6	Tom Dunham	1/19
Lynn Kramer	1/7	Lea Potratz	1/19
Pamela Laatsch	1/8	Bill Fenlon	1/20
Gavin McMillan	1/8	Bill Koltz	1/21
Elisha Charles	1/9	Rick Rasmussen	1/22
Bryan Koch	1/9	Paul Mittelstaedt	1/23
Alfred Piotter	1/10	Kathy Groskreutz	1/24
Brad Wiley	1/10	Camala Bedroske	1/26
Valorie Gebel	1/11	Mike Zellner	1/26
Rori Hinrichs	1/11	Marlee Potratz	1/29
Bill Wagner	1/11	Katherine Purath	1/30
Ashlyn Casey	1/12	Chad Berry	1/31
Jenny Mehn	1/14	Sandra Dordel	1/31
Jimmy Smith	1/14	Brenda Hawig	1/31
Darci Doan	1/15		

Wedding Anniversaries

December

Matthew & Catherine Lute	12/1
Seth & Jessie McDonald	12/13
Pete & Judy Mehn	12/24
Rev. Mark & Edna Hayman	12/26
Chad & Elyssa Berry	12/29

*"“Though one may be
overpowered, two can
defend themselves. A
cord of three strands
is not quickly broken.”
- Ecclesiastes 4:12*

January

Mike & Genie Kuble	1/3
Eric & Linda Nienass	1/14

Evangelism

by Vivian Mittelstaedt, Head of Evangelism

With COVID still being on the rise in our area, our regular times of fellowship and different forms of outreach have been temporarily halted. However, that hasn't stopped members from expressing their interest in serving on the Thank you to Janet Dunham, Chris Fuetz, Cindy Meier, Jon & Judy Mielke for your willing to help out with Evangelism.

I would also like to thank the members of Good Shepherd for your continued support of Missions. Despite not having Super Sundaes Sundays, you have remained faithful in donating food for Oshkosh families in need plus money to go to missionary organization including Wycliffe Bible Translators, Brushfires Foundation and Orphan Grain Train. Thank you for your generosity. If you are interested in helping out with our Missions, please contact Vivian Mittelstaedt at: maxandpaul@sbcglobal.net

Good Shepherd Council and Board Members

OFFICE	NAME	TELEPHONE
PRESIDENT	KEITH CASEY	(785) 226-3147
VICE-PRESIDENT	CHAD SMITH	(262)-442-0061
RECORDING SECRETARY	DONNA TRITT	(920)420-2803
FINANCIAL SECRETARY	DEB BOCHINSKI	(920) 312-0417
TREASURER	DIANE FLOURO	(920) 420-5841
BOARD OF EDUCATION	JENNIFER CHARLES	(414) 517-9322
ELDERS	TOM DUNHAM	(920) 233-0263
EVANGELISM	VIVIAN MITTELSTAEDT	(920) 479-0775
FELLOWSHIP	LORI PURATH	(920) 379-9202
STEWARDSHIP	DANIEL WEISS	(920) 642-3990
TRUSTEE	CRAIG DREGER	(920) 420-8751
YOUTH	MATTHEW & JULIE TOLL	(920) 379-9938

Change of Scenery

by Matt & Julie Toll, Youth Leaders

Over the last few months, the Youth Group at Good Shepherd has been meeting regularly on Wednesday nights to reflect on God’s Word and have some time to play games and let some energy out. Along with that, we have been in the process of changing rooms in the church basement. While there are still plenty of things to do to finish the transition, we have settled into our cozy new space in the room right at the bottom of the stairs. Stop down to take a look at the progress so far and keep watch for more finishing touches over the next few months.

Just In Time...

Yep, just in time for a snugly holiday season at home, the much anticipated return of the Youth Group Pizza Fundraiser is here!! With the cold, snowy days of winter approaching and maybe some extra quiet time at home over the Christmas season, it’s time to make sure you have some room in the freezer for some delicious pizzas made especially for you by our youth group. The deadline for ordering is December 13. The funds raised from the sales will be put towards our trip to Houston in 2022 for the LCMS National Youth Gathering. If you’d like to place an order, stop by the church office for an order form or submit your order online using the following link: <https://form.jotform.com/203243773691155>

Contact Information

Staff

Rev. Gregory A. Koepsell, Pastor
pastor@oshkoshgoodshepherd.org
 Cell (763) 913-8445

Call or text Pastor Anytime

Krista Weiss, Office Manager
krista@oshkoshgoodshepherd.org

Office Hours

M-TH 8:00 am - 1:00 pm

Office (920) 231-0530

Pastor’s Hours Tues - Thu

11:30 - 3:00 PM

Web Site:

goodshepherdinoshkosh.com

E-Mail Address:

church@oshkoshgoodshepherd.org

Facebook:

facebook.com/oshkoshgoodshepherd

Worship Services

Thursday - 6:30 pm

Sunday-8:00 am & 10:30 am

Bible Study

Adult—Wednesday at 10:30 am

Adult—Sunday TBD

Sunday School

TBD

Prayer Chain

Kathy Reehl—(920) 688-2312

Hospitalized?? Or you desire a call?? If you are going into the hospital, please call to let the Church Office know. We do not always receive the information in a timely manner so that the appropriate visitation can be made. Also, hospitals can no longer release information to us about your admittance and room number if you have not signed a waiver. If you want a home visit from Pastor Koepsell, a call or other service, please contact the church office with your request.