



THE MESSENGER

Christ the Good Shepherd Lutheran Church
December 2021



Pastor's Message

THE REV. JOSHUA SULLIVAN

Grace and peace to you from God our beginning and our savior Jesus Christ,

As December marches on, as the four, blue Sundays of Advent turn to the celebration of the Christmas season, there is a character in the story of God's love whose role is very often overlooked. That person is Mary, the Mother of God.

In the last several centuries we Lutherans have been trying quite hard it seems to distance ourselves from Mary. We rightly feel that we don't need anyone to mediate our relationship with God in Christ. Yes, it's true, our faith does affirm that we need only pray to God. But our discomfort with Mary is not so theological maybe. Maybe it just feels a little unknown.

When we turn to the Lutheran tradition about St. Mary and all the other saints, we read that: "...the saints are to be remembered so that we may strengthen our faith when we see how they experienced grace and how they were helped by faith" (Article XXI of the Augsburg Confession). And further, saints like Mary are to be honored by giving thanks to God for examples of God's mercy, venerated for how God strengthens our faith through them, and imitated for their faith and all their faithful actions (Article XXI of the Apology of the Augsburg Confession). Mary's story is full of humility and strength, faith and faithful actions. The Word took flesh through her not because she was amazing, but because she was small. This is just like how the Word takes flesh in us as we believe, and as the Holy Spirit brings Christ mercy

to life in our own small lives.

Regarding Mary herself, the Apostles and the Nicene creeds confirm that through Mary and the Holy Spirit Christ was indeed made flesh. Our Lutheran tradition also teaches, "...Mary did not conceive and give birth to a child who was merely, purely, simply human, but she gave birth to the true Son of God. Therefore, she is rightly called and truly is the Mother of God" (Epitome, Article VIII of the Formula of Concord).

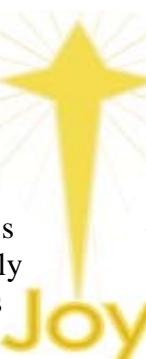
So, this Advent season we are going to focus a little bit on Mary and the story of the Annunciation in Luke's gospel (Luke 1:26-50). We are not going to

pray to Mary, we are going to pray with Mary.

In Luke's story we see a beautiful pattern of praying—of trusting in God, and allowing ourselves to be present with God, warts and all. It begins with being perplexed, being troubled

and simply waiting in this place of unknowing with God. From there, Mary's story moves to speaking and listening, giving all our thoughts to God in prayer. Next, trusting in God's mercy, we remain still and surrender to God's will.

Finally, filled with God's presence we are overcome with joy and adoration, just as Mary sang her song in Luke, traditionally called "The Magnificat."



On the first 4 Thursday nights of December at 7PM all are invited to gather in the sanctuary. We will tell again Mary's part in God's story, read from the Psalms, have some time for discussion, and come before God in prayer. This Advent and Christmas season, let us venerate, imitate and give thanks to God for Mary and all saints. We give thanks to God for all the ways that the Holy Spirit strengthens our faith and reminds us of God's mighty and merciful act of becoming flesh in Christ.

With joy,

Pastor Josh Sullivan

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CHURCH**
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Council Members
1/1/21—12/31/21

President: Ken Watson
Vice-President: Krista O'Brien
Secretary: Brenda Samal
Treasurer: Leonard Lye
Financial Secretary: Lisa Ball-Goodrich
Worship: John Downs
Fellowship: Linda Kapitan
Shepherding: Ursula Hunter
Invite/Welcoming: Sharon Napolitano
Property: Durbin Hunter
Learning: Dawn Tiedemann
Stewardship: Rob Landino



Ruth	Cyndi	Oakes Family
Elfriede	Phil	Family of Stephen
Dawn	Carole	Family of Victoria
Joni	Bobby	Tschopp Family
Shirley	John	Rev. Sanderson &
Shawna	Wallace	Family

Memorial Poinsettia Plants

A Sign-up sheet has been posted on the bulletin board for poinsettia plants. Please indicate how many plants you wish to donate, your name/names, and who it is "in loving memory of."

The price of each plant is \$11.00. Plant payment checks may be included in ones weekly offering envelope, indicating a separate line item of "Christmas plant."

The total order needs to be placed with Hamden Florist no later than December 5th- (the early order date is in anticipation of delays in shipping time).

If so desired, plants may be taken home following the Christmas Eve service.



Interested in hosting a coffee hour?

There is a sign-up sheet in the Hallway. Along with providing the and, hosting would involve setting up and cleaning up. Please consider signing up for a Sunday. This is a great way to celebrate an event in your life or show off your culinary skills.

WORK DAY

In September the Facility Team reviewed the church building and came up with a long list of improvements that would make our church more appealing and functional. Some items can be done without a lot of investment of time or money. Others are longer term. You may have noticed some of the changes – old tables and other items discarded from storage room, furniture from Good Shepherd in Pastor's office, converting the old meeting room to include a work area for Brenda, new plants in the Narthex. We have a short list of items (see below) that seemed best done on a work day. If you can organize and lead the work day, let Durbin or me know. We would like to see these things done by some time in January.

- * Remove pile of stones near back of fellowship hall
- * Discard furniture (except small chairs) in Nursery room
- * Discard rug in Nursery room
- * Set up furniture from GS in Nursery room
- * Clean couch and chairs in Lounge
- * Remove cubby hole unit
- * Investigate mildew on walls

Ken Watson
Council President



Salvation Army “Angel Tree” Gift Deadline December 5

This Christmas, smiles will abound as children across the Greater New Haven area open presents made possible through the Salvation Army’s “Angel Tree” program. Our congregation’s continued support of this program, which provides new clothing and toys for families in need, will be responsible for 10 of those Christmas-morning smiles.

Last year, the Salvation Army served 169 families through this program, providing Christmas presents to 338 area children; our merging congregation supported 10 of those children with gifts. Like last Christmas, we are planning to provide all of the children on our list this year with a gift of clothing plus three additional gift requests. Each gift request—40 in all—was represented by one “Angel Tag” on our “Angel Tree.”

If you didn’t get a chance to sign up for an Angel Tag, it’s not too late to participate in a congregational group gift. Monetary donations are still welcome and will help equip our volunteers with funds for last-minute shopping. If you wish to donate, please speak with Sharon Napolitano, project chair, or contact her at snapolitano1@yahoo.com.

As a reminder, all unwrapped gifts of toys and clothing are due at Christ the Good Shepherd on Sunday, December 5; please attach the corresponding Angel Tag to the gift purchased for a specific child. The gifts will be delivered to the Salvation Army in New Haven by Friday, December 10, for distribution to our Angel families.

Thanks to all for your support!

The Salvation Army “Angel Tree” sits in the church Narthex with a few remaining tags as of November 28. Each Angel Tag represents one gift and countless Christmas smiles.

Christ Good Shepherd Photo Gallery



November 14, the Brown's hosted a coffee hour in celebration of their 40th anniversary and Gerta's 91st birthday!

Advent Crafting Event-

On November 21, about 30 people gathered for food, fellowship, and crafting. A huge thank you to Brianne, Brittany, Kathy, Liane, Linda I., and Lisa B-G for providing us with the craft activities. There was a wide range of choices that engaged all the participants. Looking forward to more fellowship events as the new year unfolds.





John Downs and Sharon Napolitano delivered food donations from Christ the Good Shepherd Lutheran to support the Thanksgiving Day Meal Baskets prepared by the Hamden Food Bank in November.

Turkeys and Trimmings Help Fill Local Thanksgiving Day Meal Baskets

Nearly 200 pounds of frozen turkeys—13 in all—along with hundreds of pounds of trimmings and other non-perishable food items were transported from Christ the Good Shepherd Lutheran Church to the Hamden Food Bank in November to help fill Thanksgiving Day Food Baskets for local families in need.

Among the items donated from Christ the Good Shepherd were eight bags of potatoes and four boxes of instant potatoes; 16 jars and packets of gravy; 15 boxes and packages of stuffing; 15 boxes of cornbread; seven cans of tomato sauce; and 49 cans of vegetables. An acorn squash, butternut squash, canned yams, cranberry sauce, pasta, rice and assorted cans of fruit were also donated, along with a “side” of personal care items.

According to AnneMarie Karavas, Community Services Program Specialist, the Hamden Food Bank, located at the Keefe Center at 11 Pine Street, provides Thanksgiving meal assistance to more than 500 Hamden families each year with the help of generous donors. She anticipated that as many as 600 families would receive assistance this year.

HELP FOR IMPORTANT TEAMS

There are opportunities for members to get involved with several ministries to help leaders with the work that needs to be done.

Durbin could use a few helping hands on the Property Team to keep our building in good shape. You do not have to be a mechanic to help.

The Fellowship Team is busy with coffee hours and special events. Linda and Ursula would love to have helping hands to plan and prepare.

And then Sharon has her hands full as chair of the Outreach Team. This involves mission projects, the website and other communications that go outside our congregation.

These members need your help. We are a small congregation with some big plans. It is important that people chip in so that team leaders are not overburdened. Think about what you might like to do and join a team.

Ken Watson
Council President



AnneMarie Karavas with some of the Thanksgiving Meal Baskets being prepared at the Hamden Food Bank.

Distribution of the Thanksgiving Meal Baskets began in the Hamden community on Monday, November 22.

Thanks to all for supporting this important ministry!

SCHEDULED TO SERVE

Date	Worship Assistant	Lector	Ushers	Altar Guild
12/5	Sharon Napolitano	David Brown	Phil & Kathryn Napolitano	Sharon Napolitano
12/12	Rob Hansen	Lisa Ball-Goodrich	Starr O'Connor John Downs	Starr O'Connor
12/19	Lisa Ball-Goodrich	Rob Hansen	Durbin & Ursula Hunter	Ursula Hunter
Christmas Eve 12/24 5:30pm	Sharon Napolitano	Lisa Ball-Goodrich	Phil & John Napolitano	Sharon Napolitano
12/26	John Downs	Linda Kapitan	David & Loraine Brown	Lorraine Brown
1/2/2022	Lisa Ball-Goodrich	Ken Watson	Ken Watson Paul Snyder	Ursula Hunter

If you cannot serve on your appointed day, please find a substitute, and make the change on the master schedule. Thank you for serving!

Winter Warmth Tree Returns

As the cold weather quickly approaches, we will be resuming a tradition of collecting warm winter-weather wear for those in need.

With the beginning of Advent on November 28, our “Winter Warmth Tree” will be located in the Narthex at Christ the Good Shepherd Lutheran Church. We invite you to help decorate the branches with new cold-weather outerwear, such as hats, gloves, mittens and scarves, as well as with socks, slippers, throws and other items to benefit those served by New Reach Life Haven Shelter, an emergency shelter for single women with children and single pregnant women in their last trimester.

In 2019, our two merging congregations collected 140 warm-winter items for this organization. This year, donations to our Winter Warmth Tree will be delivered to Life Haven in early January.

If you have any questions about this project, please speak with Sharon Napolitano.



Our Winter Warmth Tree



Thursday	12/2	7:00pm	Advent Devotion and Evening Prayer
Sunday	12/5	9:00am 10:00am 11:00am	Cross Generation Faith Formation Holy Communion Congregational Meeting
Wednesday	12/8	6:30pm	Book Club- <u>Grandma Gatewood's Walk</u>
Thursday	12/9	7:00pm	Advent Devotion and Evening Prayer
Sunday	12/12	9:00am 10:00am	Cross Generation Faith Formation Holy Communion
Tuesday	12/14	7:00pm	Council Meeting
Thursday	12/16	7:00pm	Advent Devotion and Evening Prayer
Sunday	12/19	9:00am 10:00am	Cross Generation Faith Formation Holy Communion
Thursday	12/23	7:00pm	Advent Devotion and Evening Prayer
Friday	12/24	5:30pm	Christmas Eve Eucharist
Sunday	12/26	10:00am	Holy Communion



SUBMISSION DEADLINE: Please note that newsletter articles for the January 2022 issue are due December 29, 2021.



Church Council Council met on November 17. Pastor continued his discussion of discernment-about listening and acting. He posed some questions to consider- *What comes easily to us as a community, what is very difficult?, Who is showing up at our doors?, What are our collective strengths? and What brings us joy-when does God feel most near?*

Worship- Advent Devotion and Prayer to begin Thursday, 12/2 at 7:00pm. Christmas Eve Service, 12/24 at 5:30pm.

Financial- Lisa reported the comparisons of 2021 to 2020 are encouraging.

Property- Council approved a motion to allow an AA group use of our building on Saturday mornings. The facility team prepared a work list (see page 3 for their report.)

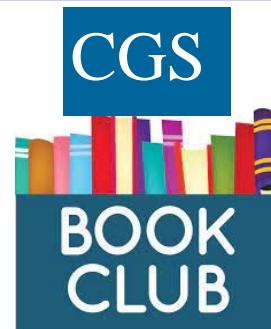
Servant Ministries- Sharon reported on the Turkey & Food Drive, The Salvation Army Angel Tree and the Winter Warmth Tree. (Related articles are in the newsletter.)

Fellowship- Advent craft activity planned for 11/21. A light lunch will be served at the congregational meeting on 12/5.

Other concerns- The proposed 2022 budget was reviewed and approved. Nominating committee presented the proposed slate of council for 2022. Two position titles were changed- Invite/Welcoming to Outreach; Shepherding to Inreach. Discussion followed about a request from Columbus House to use the church as a warming center. After hearing the particulars, council decided more time and discussion was needed before a decision could be made.

Congregational Meeting: 12/5

Next Council Meeting: 12/14



The CGS book club will be meeting in person on December 8th at 6:30 to discuss Grandma Gatewood's Walk . If would like to participate, please feel free to pick up a copy of the book and join us.

I got my copy from Hoopla (a library on-line app)—they have both the print and audio available. Please call Linda at 203-314-2687 if you have any questions.

PROPOSED SLATE OF COUNCIL 2022

President:	Ken Watson
Vice President:	Leo Goodrich
Secretary:	Brenda Samal
Treasurer:	~vacant~
Financial Secretary:	Lisa Ball-Goodrich
Worship:	John Downs
Outreach:	Sharon Napolitano
Inreach:	Ursula Hunter
Learning:	Krista O'Brien
Fellowship:	Linda Kapitan
Property:	Durbin Hunter
Stewardship:	Rob Landino

The proposed slate, presented to Council at their November meeting, was approved and recommended to present at the Congregational meeting, December 5.

Christ the Good Shepherd Lutheran Church Mission Statement

Christ the Good Shepherd Lutheran Church is called and committed to building a vibrant, welcoming community to proclaim Christ, nurture the faith, serve others and bear bold witness to God's love throughout the greater Hamden region and beyond.