

THE MESSENGER

Christ the Good Shepherd Lutheran Church
December 2024

Vol. 4 Issue 12



Pastor's Message

THE REV. JOSHUA N. SULLIVAN

Grace to you and peace from God our Beginning and our Ending,

Many of you might have heard me tell this story before, but in case you haven't—we have a special Advent wreath here at Christ the Good Shepherd.

Our tradition has a lot of beautiful things to say about Advent wreaths... *“The wreath and winter candle-lighting amid growing darkness strengthen some of the Advent images found in the Bible. The unbroken circle of greens is an image of everlasting life, a victory wreath, the crown of Christ, or the wheel of time itself. Christians use the wreath as a sign that Christ reaches into our time to lead us to the light of everlasting life. The four candles mark the progress of the four weeks of Advent and the growth of light. Sometimes the wreath is embellished with natural dried flowers or fruit. Its evergreen branches lead the household and the congregation to the evergreen Christmas tree.”*

Our predecessor congregations each had one; Christ had one, Good Shepherd had one. But when I got here in 2021, both these wreaths were not in great shape. There were big blue candles and there were also little purple and pink candles, the plastic evergreens on both were a bit threadbare and the stands were rickety and mismatched. And, after all, maybe this is

appropriate because if you dig deeply into the history of the significance of the Advent wreath... it also is pretty darned mismatched and jumbled up, too.

So, in November of 2021, knowing that not very much was at stake and needing a functioning wreath (because I had waited long enough that ordering a new one wasn't an option), I combined them. One afternoon, I ripped them each apart, then screwed and nailed and stitched them back together. I jammed the candles in, cut some holly and some evergreen boughs from outside, and bing-bang-boom—church-merger made flesh in an Advent wreath!

But this season, after I asked our Worship Team chair, Starr O'Connor, to order some more candles, she reported that the only blue set she could find that fit our wreath was the kind that had the rose-colored candle included, what has been called the “Gaudate” candle, the “rejoice” candle (the candle that signals the penitent waiting of the first Sundays of Advent is shifting, and joy is coming).

But when I put these new candles into our DIY wreath November 2024, well, they leaned a bit—heavy candles, tired wreath.

And once again, I see a metaphor for our community in this latest chapter of our wreath-story. We are growing; our joy-candle is back. And having grown, we are *out-growing* certain things. We are gaining the courage to take risks: to tell the truth to each other in love by being vocally welcoming of our

(continued on page 2)

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.

**CHRIST THE GOOD
SHEPHERD LUTHERAN
CHURCH**

600 Shepard Avenue
Hamden CT 06514

for sensitive mailings use:

PO Box 185531
Hamden CT 06518

The Rev. Joshua N. Sullivan
Office– 203-288-3196
Cell– 860-748-3837

pastor@christgoodshepherdlutheran.org

Organist: Caroline Henry

www.christgoodshepherdlutheran.org
office@christgoodshepherdlutheran.org

**Council Members
1/1/24—12/31/24**

- President: Cyndi Hansard
- Vice-President: Rob Hansen
- Secretary: Brenda Samal
- Treasurer: Ruth Lye
- Financial Secretary: Lisa Ball-Goodrich
- Worship: Starr O’Connor
- Congregational Care: Linda Ibsen
- Property: Leo Goodrich
- Outreach: Denise Lundgren

PRAYER CONCERNS



- | | | |
|------------|---------------|-----------------|
| Ruth P. | Christel | Elfriede |
| Sue | Carl | Kathy & Jessika |
| Ruth L. | Sharon | Dustin |
| Rebecca | Bob | Mary Lou |
| Joshua P. | Nicole | Robin |
| Ed & Carol | Randy & Karen | Pat |
| Gerry | Anita V. | Paul |
| Elinor | Mike | Gerta |
| Lois | Dean | Jillian |
| Alyssa | | |

PASTOR’S MESSAGE

continued from page 1

queer and trans siblings in Christ; to update our facility and grounds; to try out some new worship music; and certainly to welcome a great diversity of new members! We are gaining the courage to be joyful and generous, to celebrate in the face of uncertainty, to embrace differences of all kinds.

So, this Advent, as we commemorate God’s Word-made-flesh in Christ, and as we invite God’s love to take flesh in us... part of that “incarnation”—despite the climate of our nation or where you land on the political spectrum—means acknowledging that nothing and no one can take our joy, and it means confessing that lasting joy and everlasting salvation come only from God.

Joyfully yours,

Pastor Josh





Council met on 11/18.

Denise led opening devotions.

Financial Secretary– Tithely charges are now a separate line item from the donations. An extra \$50 was received for the Wakefield memorial so \$1025 was designated for the pollinator garden and \$1025 to the Good Samaritan fund. Year-to-date giving thus far is higher compared to 2023.

Treasurer– Ruth reported the October balance sheet reflects a net income loss of \$1,454.42 which is significantly lower than the net income loss in 2023 of \$5,536.30. Increased facility improvements, more activity at the church and higher utilities contribute to the loss.

Ruth reviewed each line item of the 2025 proposed budget. Pastor asked council to consider moving forward with hiring a part-time administrative assistant. Council approved the proposed budget– to be presented to the congregation on 12/8.

Pastor– Pastor reviewed the second meeting for the Reimagining Church program where a presentation as given by the Rev. Michael Martin emphasizing stewardship. Advent devotions will be on 12/4, 11 & 18 at 7:00pm. Christmas Eve service is Tuesday, 12/24 at 5:30pm. Tanja Helmert will preach at CGS January 12, 2025.

Congregational Care–Report showed the women who attended Camp Calumet had a wonderful time. Coffee Klatsch continues to meet the first and third Thursday of the month at 10:30am.

Outreach– Team met 11/12. Plan to order an A-frame sign for Christmas. They are busy reviewing potential grants, delivering food and getting ready for the Christmas gifting to New Reach. Outreach has also created a new gmail account for their use.

Property– The waterline to the garden is complete, the church mailbox replaced and a building use sub-team was formed consisting of Leo, Ken Watson and Kris O’Brien.

Investment Committee– Portfolio is now 5.78% cash, 32.96% fixed income and preferred and 61.25% equities.

Nominating Committee– (Proposed 2025 slate of council posted on page 7)

Worship– Average attendance: 47. Committee organizing music programs for Advent and Christmas.

New business– Council motioned to accept Jake Solomons as a member of CGS. Bylaws and Continuing Resolutions will be completed soon.

Congregational meeting: 12/8 following worship.

Council meeting: 12/9 at 6pm.

LORD’S BOUNTY GARDEN

The gate has finally closed on the second year of the Lord’s Bounty community garden! There were many additions this year, including three new garden beds, a water line, and a new name!

Over four months of harvest, we picked, bagged, and delivered almost 174 pounds of produce to the Hamden Food Bank! The harvest included tomatoes, peppers, squash, carrots, peas, green beans, collard greens, lettuce, cantaloupes, basil, dill, and parsley.

I want to thank everyone who supported the garden and participated in planting, harvesting, tending, and delivering. Because of your help, the Lord’s Bounty community garden has lived up to its name!

In January, we will start planning for next year’s garden. All suggestions, input, and offers of help



Garden cleaned up and put to rest for the winter.



POINSETTIAS FOR CHRISTMAS

It is time to sign up for poinsettia plants which have traditionally decorated our altar for Christmas services. A sign up sheet has been posted on the hallway bulletin board. Please indicate the number of plants that you would like to order, your name, and, (if you choose), who you would like to name as memorial.

The price is \$14.00 per plant. Payments can be put into regular church or separate envelope, labeled "Christmas Plant" on the front. Ordered plants may be taken home after services.



Advent Devotions

Wednesday evenings
7:00pm

12/4
12/11
12/18

**CONGREGATIONAL MEETING
Sunday December 8, 2024**

Agenda items to vote upon:

- * 2025 Council Slate
- * 2025 Budget
- * RIC Welcome Statement

Council chairpersons will give brief updates as well.



Candlelight Service
December 24, 2024
5:30pm

CGSL BOOK CLUB

Please note the change in time for the book club- The CGS book club will be meeting December 4, at **6:00pm** at Christ the Good Shepherd to discuss *The Graves are Walking*.

We will also be having a holiday celebration potluck. Please bring some goodies and join us for wonderful conversation.



*** Jake Solomons**

CGS Lutheran Outreach is a three-legged stool

- ◇ Service to others
- ◇ Stewards of the Earth
- ◇ Social Awareness

As we are near the end of year 2024 we reflect upon the tremendous generosity, support, and enthusiasm you have provided to our Outreach projects during the year.



Thanks to you, we -

- Provided warm winter hats, gloves and scarves to New Reach families.
- Gave a sizeable donation during Lent to support ELCA World Hunger.
- Provided diapers and period products to both the Keefe Center and to the CT Diaper Bank.
- On average, donated 3 bags of food items every month to the Keefe Center Food Bank.
- Adopted seeds and grew plants for our Lord's Bounty community garden.
- Worked together to double the footprint of the community garden.
- Installed a new waterline for the garden through the hard labor of our members.
- Provided freshly grown vegetables and herbs from our Lord's Bounty Garden to the Keefe Center Food Bank.
- Gave Mother's Day gift cards to mothers who are being helped by New Reach.
- Donated the items necessary to complete United Way Welcome Home kits for people coming out of homelessness into their own apartment.
- Donated easy to prepare food for young children to take home in a 'backpack' for the weekend.
- Gave 13 turkeys and 11 bags of Thanksgiving food items for families assisted by the Keefe Center Food Bank
- Are collecting Christmas Gifts for New Reach families.
- Provided 6 large plastic bags of coats, shoes and underwear for the Salvation Bloom Initiative to help women and men on the streets trying to get out of trafficking and drug abuse.
- We have learned about the importance of Pollinators and their role in maintaining our ecosystem.
- We have listened to two speakers in our church that educated us on tragic situation of Sex Trafficking in our state.
- Used eye glasses for the Lions Recycle for Sight Program
- Pop-tops for the Ronald McDonald House - New Haven



This year, we are providing gifts to New Reach families for Christmas, and the opportunity to buy Good Gifts for the ELCA World Hunger project.

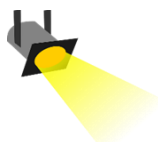
The Good Gift options and the New Reach gift angels are hung on the Christmas tree located in the Narthex. Please take an angel from the Christmas tree in the Narthex.

- **Please return purchased gifts to the church by December 13th.** If you can't get the gift to the church before then, email me at CGSLutheranOutreach@gmail.com to make drop off arrangements for the morning of Saturday, December 14th.

We will be delivering the gifts to New Reach in New Haven in the early afternoon of December 14th.

- Check donations for the ELCA Good Gifts can be put in the offering plate (add a memo specifying the good gift you are purchasing.) There is also a dropbox in the narthex where you can place your check.

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Spotlight on the New Reach organization in New Haven

“It is the mission of New Reach to inspire independence for all people affected by homelessness and poverty.”

Started in 1990, New Reach now helps over 3,900 individuals at risk per year.

- Since 2009, their Stable Families Program has prevented the evictions of 98% of the families who completed the program. The program relies on intensive case management and partnerships with other organizations that provide legal services and other resources that help to stabilize households based on their specific situation. Although some financial help may be provided, the focus is on long-term solutions.

- Crisis Services – caseworkers address families’ acute needs via home-visiting.
- Supportive, affordable living spaces for those who need short or long-term assistance.

FISH - Food In Service to Homebound has been serving the community since 1968. It continues to be the only food pantry in New Haven dedicated to delivering groceries to homebound residents.

In 2023, New Reach officially merged with FISH. Together, FISH and New Reach are even stronger in the fight against food insecurity and homelessness in Connecticut.

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On-going outreach donations we accept at the church

- * **Usable clothing, shoes, sheets, and blankets** > Drop in St Pauly’s Textile Shed.

We (St. Pauly Textile, Inc.) purchase the clothing from the local community organization. The community organization uses the money that it receives from us in order to support its mission or complete important community projects. We sell and distribute the clothing that we purchase all over the US and world to organizations such as foreign governments, relief organizations, the U.N., private companies and the U.S. government .
<https://www.stpaulytextile.com/about-us>

- * **Low salt, Low fat, Lower Sugar food items** > Place in wooden crate in the Narthex.

Food items are taken by the outreach team to the Keefe Community Center Food Bank.

- * **Easy to prepare, or ready-made single serving food, shelf-stable milk, and juices for young children** > Place in the wooden crate in the narthex to be used for the Backpack Food Program at the Keefe Community Center. <https://www.hamden.com/827/Backpack-Program>

(continued on page 7)

ONGOING OUTREACH DONATIONS

continued from page 6

- * **Used women’s coats, hats, sneakers, and new underwear & bras, and Socks** > Place in the wicker basket in the coat room for the Bloom Initiative. Coats can be hung up and tagged for Bloom initiative. Tags are available in the coat room, near the door. [Bloom Initiative](#).
- * **Financial Donations to the Columbus House or the Soup Kitchen in New Haven** can be placed in the offering plate on Sundays.

If you find yourself in need of durable medical goods such as walkers, wheel chairs, bed rails, shower chairs, etc., or have these items to donate, please call **Mae’s Closet at (475) 414-8333**.

Operating under the auspices of Interfaith Volunteer Care Givers, Mae's Closet is a durable medical equipment lending bank serving the Greater New Haven area. We lend and accept donations of gently used medical equipment. All of our inventory is sanitized and inspected for safety. <https://www.carenewhaven.org/maes-closet>



The Outreach Team wishes all of you a hope-filled Advent season and a joyful and blessed Christmas.



Thanksgiving food donations for the Keefe Community Center

2025 PROPOSED SLATE OF COUNCIL

President	Cyndi Hansard
Vice-President	~
Secretary	~
Treasurer	Ruth Lye
Financial Secretary	Lisa Ball-Goodrich
Worship Team Chair	~
Congregational Care Team Chair	Jake Solomons
Property Team Chair	Leo Goodrich
Outreach Team Chair	Denise Lundgren

(The council roles with ~ means that a definitive confirmation was not received by the date of the council meeting.)

SCHEDULED TO SERVE

DATE	WORSHIP ASSISTANT	LECTOR	USHERS	ALTAR SETUP
12/1	Rob Hansen	Denise Lundgren	John Downs Steven Swanson	Starr O'Connor
12/8	Lisa Ball-Goodrich	John Napolitano	Paul Snyder Ken Watson	Starr O'Connor
12/15	Durbin Hunter	Dan Smolnik	Starr O'Connor Steven Swanson	Starr O'Connor
12/22	Michael Lye	Ken Watson	Phil & John Napolitano	Ursula Hunter
Christmas Eve 12/24	Casey Fish	Michael Lye	Durbin & Ursula Hunter	Ursula Hunter
12/29	Michael Lye	Paul Snyder	Paul Snyder Ken Watson	Sarah DeLong Jackie Menefee
1/5/2025	Lisa Ball-Goodrich	Michael Lye	John Downs Steven Swanson	Ursula Hunter

*If you cannot serve on your appointed day, please find a substitute, and let Linda K., Pastor and Brenda know. **Thank you for serving!***

COFFEE HOUR HOSTS




12/1	O'Brien family
12/8	Jackie Menefee Rob Hansen
12/15	O'Brien family
12/22	Sarah DeLong Linda Ibsen
12/29	Leo & Lisa Goodrich
1/5	Ken & Chuddy Watson

All-creating God, we thank you for the gift of traditions and festivities that help us remember the deeper meanings of the holy season of Advent. We pray that you replace our anxieties with the calm and the strength of your Holy Spirit. Fill us with energy, O Spirit, to do those things which you would have us do, and teach us to watch well, O God, for the One whose second come we await, Jesus Christ our Lord, in whose name we pray. Amen.

(Advent prayer from Women of the ELCA)

SUBMISSION DEADLINE: Please note that newsletter articles for the January Messenger are due **12/29**.

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
1 <i>First Sunday of Advent</i> 9:00am Cross-Generation 10:00am Holy Communion	2	3	4 6:00pm– Book Club 7:00pm– Advent Devotions	5 10:30am- Coffee Klatsch	6	7
8 <i>2nd Sunday of Advent</i> 9:00am Cross-Generation 10:00am Holy Communion ~Congregational Meeting~	9 6:30pm- Council	10	11 7:00pm– Advent Devotions	12	13	14
15 <i>3rd Sunday of Advent</i> 9:00am Cross-Generation 10:00am Holy Communion	16	17	18 7:00pm– Advent Devotions	19 10:30am- Coffee Klatsch	20	21 <i>First DAY OF Winter</i>
22 <i>4th Sunday of Advent</i> 9:00am Cross-Generation 10:00am Holy Communion	23	24 <i>Christmas Eve—Holy Communion</i> 5:30pm	25 <i>Christmas Day</i> 	26	27	28
29 <i>First Sunday of Christmas</i> 9:00am Cross-Generation 10:00am Holy Communion	30 Articles for January Messenger due.	31 <i>New Year's Eve</i>	1 <i>Name of Jesus</i>	Eternal Father, you gave your incarnate Son the holy name of Jesus to be a sign of our salvation. Plant in every heart the love of the Savior of the world, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.		

Masks are optional-

If you or a loved one is immune-compromised, or you just want to be safe, feel free to wear a mask.

Facebook Live-

Facebook Live worship will *always* continue to be available.

In-person worship-

Please do not come to in-person worship or other church events if you are feeling sick or you yourself have tested positive. Please follow the updated CDC guidelines for isolation/quarantine.

Holy Communion-

Holy Communion continues as before, with wine in individual cups and wafers. Please wait at the first pew in the center aisle, and allow the person in front of you time to receive both bread and wine before you come forward. If you are not comfortable removing your mask to receive, come forward with arms crossed for a blessing.