

THE MESSENGER

Christ the Good Shepherd Lutheran Church
March 2025

Vol. 5 Issue 3



Pastor's Message

THE REV. JOSHUA N. SULLIVAN

Grace to you and peace from God our Beginning and the Lord Jesus Christ,

March is already here, hard to believe. And this year, March also begins our 40 day Lenten journey to ready ourselves for the commemoration of Jesus' life-giving passion, death and resurrection.

A reminder that, along with Pastor Milton Brasher-Cunningham of Mount Carmel UCC, I will be offering Ashes-to-Go on Ash Wednesday, the start of Lent, in our parking lot from 7:30AM - 9:30AM and 11:30AM - 1:30PM. We will also gather with all our full-communion partners in the town of Hamden for a Ash Wednesday service at 7 PM at Mount Carmel UCC on Whitney Ave. And for all the rest of the Wednesdays of Lent we will gather in our sanctuary for quiet devotions and prayer at 7 PM.

In addition, I also commend to you the thoughtful 40-40-40 practices of "Devotion, Donation, Declutter, and/or Discipline" that our new Outreach Team leader, Christi Sharon, has shared in her article in this month's newsletter. (see page 5, Lent begins March 5th with Ash Wednesday)

Another important practice that comes in the Lenten season is Confession. Indeed, most Sundays, moved by the Holy Spirit, we collectively confess our sinfulness, and the forgiveness made available to us

by God in Jesus Christ is announced. In the spirit of the Lenten practice of Confession, let me make a personal one to you all. I confess that I am bewildered.

"The nation I thought I knew seems to have gone mad," one voice in me says. "How could such cruelty become commonplace so quickly? How could public services, mercy, protection of God's creation and the most basic understanding of government (a tool by which to help our neighbors) be trodden under foot?"

"But wait," another voice says, "is it possible that maybe these changes are good, or might lead to good? Maybe the Lutheran Social Services *were* filled with 'corruption, waste and fraud' as the proxies of the government now so vehemently accuse. Is this an opportunity to rethink how we do things?"

"No, no—this is how it's been all along!" shouts another, angrier voice. "The country is owned by corporate billionaires and has been a place of cruelty since day-one. Don't forget the unimaginably cruel experience of enslaved Africans since even before the revolution, and women couldn't even VOTE until 1920, that's barely 100 years!"

"Granted," the first voice says in reply, "but is this the solution?"

"Well, at our congregation, when something isn't functioning, we stop and assess it, we change it. We just changed our Congregational Council structure for just such a reason. But is it really our calling as Christians to be the judge of what form of government is fit and proper, should we not simply

(continued on page 3)

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**

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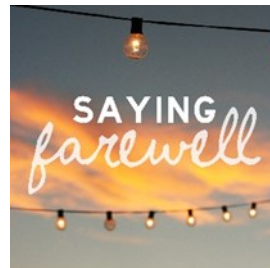
**Council Members
1/1/25—12/31/25**

- President: Cyndi Hansard
- Vice-President: Cathy Cahn
- Secretary: Steven Swanson
- Treasurer: Ruth Lye
- Financial Secretary: Lisa Ball-Goodrich
- At-large representatives: Jake Solomons
John Downs
Leo Goodrich
Christi Sharon

PRAYER CONCERNS



Ruth P.	Christel	Elfriede
Sue	Carl	Kathy & Jessika
Mary Lou	Ruth L.	Dustin
Rebecca	Bob	Katharine
Joshua P.	Gerta	Alyssa
Carol	Karen	Dean
Gerry	Jillian	Paul
Elinor	Jackie	Marsha
Norm & Mary Lou T.	Alice	Patty
Family of Lois & Palmer	Pat	Chloe & Ori



From Larry & Denise Lundgren:

Larry and I will say our final farewell to all of you on March 16th. It has been my pleasure and honor to lead the Outreach team and be part of this amazing, lovely, and devoted congregation. Thank you for your support and encouragement over the past 18 months. We will miss all of you.

Christi Sharon will be the new lead for Community Outreach

Rob Hansen will be the lead for the Lord's Bounty Community Garden

Cathy Cahn will support outreach where needed and be the point person for the Pollination Garden and landscaping plans, in collaboration with the council and the outreach team of volunteers.

Thank you to each of you who have stepped up to continue the outreach work of CGS!

PASTOR'S MESSAGE*continued from page 1*

be following Jesus?"

"Follow Jesus!?" mocks still yet another voice. "That's what *everyone* says they're doing, from the Far-Left all the way to the Far-Right. Don't make me laugh!"

And on and on all the voices go, until I force them to be quiet.

Have you ever wondered what the phrase: "We are in bondage to sin and cannot free ourselves" means when we confess it in worship Sunday after Sunday? To use my own dramatized cacophony of voices above as an example, it means that our minds, even our hearts, are utterly bewildered. We cannot, as human beings, guide ourselves to righteousness.

"There is no one who is righteous, not even one; there is no one who has understanding; there is no one who seeks God," St. Paul writes in Romans 3:10-12, and is himself paraphrasing Ecclesiastes 7:10: "Surely there is no one on earth so righteous as to do good without ever sinning," and Psalm 14:2-3: "They have all gone astray; they are all alike perverse; there is no one who does good, no, not one."

Our tradition follows St. Paul closely and our most fundamental confession of faith states: "...without grace, help, and operation of the Holy Spirit a human being cannot become pleasing to God, fear or believe in God with the whole heart, or expel innate evil lusts from the heart," (Article 18 of the Augsburg Confession).

"If we say that we have no sin," it says in 1 John 1:9-10, "we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, [God] who is faithful and just will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make [God] a liar, and his word is not in us."

Without Christ, as a human being, I am bewildered—collectively, we all are. If we say we are not bewildered as we wander in the (be) wilderness we are liars, and we ourselves are shunning God's grace, help and operation in place

of our own half-baked common sense. It is no coincidence that God's people wandered in the (be) wilderness for 40 years, Jesus himself tested and tried there for 40 days.

So, will you confess with me bewilderment this Lenten season, seeking instead only God's forgiveness and guidance made flesh in Jesus Christ?

I leave you with just one more (be-wilding) selection from our historical Lutheran faith, the Augsburg Confession, to digest, which is itself based on Acts 5:

"Concerning public order and secular government it is taught that all political authority, orderly government, laws, and good order in the world are created and instituted by God and that Christians may without sin exercise political authority; be princes and judges; pass sentence and administer justice according to imperial and other existing laws; punish evildoers by the sword; wage just wars; serve as soldiers; buy and sell; take required oaths; possess property; be married; etc.

"...Condemned are those who teach that Christian perfection means physically leaving house and home, spouse and child, and refraining from the above-mentioned activities. In fact, the only true perfection is true fear of God and true faith in God. For the gospel teaches an internal, eternal reality and righteousness of the heart, not an external, temporal one. The gospel does not overthrow the secular government, public order, and marriage but instead intends that a person keep all this as a true order of God and demonstrate in these walks of life Christian love and true good works according to each person's calling. Christians, therefore, are obliged to be subject to political authority and obey its commands and laws in all that may be done without sin. But if a command of the political authority cannot be followed without sin, one must obey God rather than any human beings."

Yours in bewilderment,

Pastor Josh

COUNCIL UPDATE

The 2025 CGSLC Church Council was installed during service on January 19th and held their first meeting on Thursday January 23rd. During the meeting, Financial reports were received that showed a positive net income for 2024 inclusive of rental and investment income. Council discussed dreams and challenges for the upcoming year and highlighted two initial areas to focus on. The first is developing a job description for an Administrative Assistant approved as part of the 2025 budget. The second is revitalizing the music ministry program. The full list of dreams and challenges were part of Pastor Josh's message in the February Messenger.

The Congregational meeting scheduled for February 9th was postponed twice due to weather and is now scheduled to be held on February 23rd.

Council met on February 20th and here are a few highlights:

- Total financial contributions for January are about \$1,800 higher than prior year and total net income is slightly higher.
- Pastor highlighted the upcoming Ash Wednesday service at Mt Carmel United Church of Christ, Ashes to Go, and mid-week Lenten services. CGSLC has also been invited to attend Grace and St Johns annual picnic scheduled for September 14th. There was discussion about CGSLC having their own picnic sometime this year.
- CGSLC has officially been designated as a Reconciling in Christ (RIC) congregation. The RIC team will meet to discuss next steps.
- Property committee submitted bid proposals for phase II of the parking lot repair. The work would focus on the area in front of the Church building.
- Property committee submitted bid proposals to replace the lighting in the men's and women's bathrooms, main hallway between the narthex and fellowship hall and the meeting room. After discussion, Council approved moving forward with replacing the lighting in the two bathrooms.
- Council approved the Administrative Assistant job description developed by the Executive Committee.

- Council discussed changes to how it is structured due to resignations and how others feel they can best serve the congregation. Currently there are 9 members which include 4 officer positions (President, Vice President, Treasurer and Secretary), a Financial Secretary and 4 chairs of the standing committees (Congregational Care, Outreach, Property and Worship). After discussion, Council approved recommending this change to having the 4 officer positions, financial secretary and 5-6 at-large positions. The at-large position would have voting authority but would not need to lead a committee. The Committee's would have a team leader responsible for organizing the respective team and submitting reports to Council. Team leaders could also serve on Council but it would not be a requirement. Team leaders would be encouraged to attend Council meetings if they have action items that need to be voted on by Council. After discussion, Council approved submitting the restructure to the Congregation along with a new slate of at-large members.



The congregational meeting was held on February 23—after a two Sunday delay because of inclement weather. A brief overview of the 2024 Annual Reports was given by council members. A motion was made and accepted to approve the new structure of council. (See council update on this page.) The fellowship hall was rededicated as the Rev. Owen J. Sanderson Hall.



Pastor reading the inscription on the new plaque. (Photo and inscription on page 5)

The Rev. Owen J. Sanderson Fellowship Hall

In 1958 the Rev. Owen Sanderson was called to be the pastor of a mission congregation in the town of Hamden, which in 1959 became Christ Evangelical Lutheran Church, one of our congregation's predecessor churches. Pastor Sanderson served continuously as pastor until his retirement in 2018. The people of Christ the Good Shepherd Lutheran Church give great thanks to God for all that the Holy Spirit has accomplished in the 60 years of Pastor Sanderson's ministry, and in token of our thanks on February 9, 2025 this hall has been rededicated for the glory of God in his name.

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CGSL OUTREACH IS A THREE-LEGGED STOOL

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



LENT BEGINS MARCH 5TH WITH ASH WEDNESDAY

This year during Lent the Outreach team, led by Christi Sharon is encouraging you to participate in **40-40-40 Lenten practices**. The idea was taken from a Lenten practice challenge between ELCA Synods a few years ago. The Lenten practices below encourage us to focus our faith, to support the needs in our World, and to care for ourselves.

What are the 40-40-40 Lenten practices? To participate you'll pledge to do 3 of the 4 (or all 4) practices for Lent.

Daily Devotion- ELCA Lenten devotional booklets will be available in the Narthex.

Daily Donation- Pledge to give \$1 a day (or more) to ELCA World Hunger and/or Lutheran Disaster Response for the 40 days of Lent. (Write one check and drop in the collection plate, *memo can request ELCA World Hunger, or Lutheran Disaster Response (for wildfires)*)

Daily Declutter- Once a day find a way to daily de-clutter, de-stress, and re-tune. It could be cleaning out the garage, cleaning your calendar, or finding some time to de-clutter a desk or drawer and donating gently used items.

Daily Discipline - Do one wellness activity every day. Maybe it's your daily workout, maybe it is a 1-mile walk a day. Maybe it's taking an extra flight of stairs or an extra glass of water.



LORD'S BOUNTY COMMUNITY GARDEN

This year, as we did last year, there will be an opportunity to **'Adopt-a-plant'**. Rather than ask you to adopt seeds to grow, we will be asking for you to 'adopt' a plant with your donation to cover the cost of a particular flat of plants.

There will also be a wish list of materials needed for the garden.

Stay tuned for more on this in the coming weeks from Cathy Cahn and Rob Hansen.



WE SERVE KEEFE CENTER / FOOD BANK IN HAMDEN BY GROWING FRESH VEGETABLES AND HERBS.

We are looking for volunteers to help care for the Lord’s Bounty Community Garden. This year we are creating small teams to work together in one-week rotations, to weed, water, and harvest. We also need volunteers who can deliver the produce during the week in the late mornings, or early afternoon. A sign-up sheet will be posted on the bulletin board. If you want more information, contact Rob Hansen, or come to our meeting on Wednesday, March 12 at 6:00 to learn more!

Christ in Our Home
Daily scripture readings for
April, May, June
2025
Copies are available in the narthex.

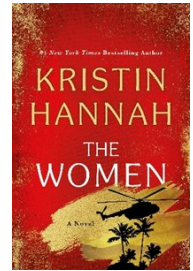
MUSIC MINISTRY TEAM SUGGESTION BOX

The music ministry team has provided another opportunity for you to participate in the music at CGS. If you have a favorite hymn or style of music you would like to suggest, drop a note in the box which is located either on the organ or piano in the rear of the sanctuary.



CGS BOOK CLUB

Our next read is *The Women* by Kristin Hannah.



As posted on Goodreads---

From the celebrated author of *The Nightingale* and *The Four Winds* comes Kristin Hannah's *The Women*—at once an intimate portrait of coming of age in a dangerous time and an epic tale of a nation divided. A novel about deep friendships and bold patriotism, *The Women* is a richly drawn story with a memorable heroine whose idealism and courage under fire will come to define an era.

The CGS book club will be meeting on **March 20** at 6:30pm. (Please note the rescheduled date.)

Please join us for wonderful conversation.



Dan and son, Daniel, shared their culinary talents serving homemade chili with the fixings at the congregational meeting on 2/23/25. Thank you!

SCHEDULED TO SERVE

DATE	WORSHIP ASSISTANT	LECTOR	USHERS	ALTAR SETUP
3/2	Durbin Hunter	Denise Lundgren	Phil Napolitano	Ursula Hunter
3/5	7pm- Ash Wednesday-Imposition of Ashes Joint Worship at Mount Carmel UCC, 3284 Whitney Avenue, Hamden			
3/9	Linda Kapitan	Rob Hansen	Starr O'Connor Ken Watson	Sarah DeLong Jackie Menefee
3/16	Lisa Ball-Goodrich	Dan Smolnik	John Downs Steven Swanson	John Downs
3/23	Linda Kapitan	Lisa Ball-Goodrich	Durbin & Ursula Hunter	Starr O'Connor
3/30	Rob Hansen	Rob Hansen	Starr O'Connor John Downs	Ursula Hunter
4/6	Durbin Hunter	Ken Watson	John Downs Steven Swanson	John Downs

*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**




3/2	Jackie Menefee Rob Hansen
3/9	Linda Kapitan
3/16	Cyndi Hansard
3/23	Linda Kapitan
3/30	Ken & Chuddy Watson
4/6	O'Brien family

MARCH CELEBRATIONS



Birthdays-

- 1 Anna Hansard
- 5 Olivia Cruz
- 10 Sarah DeLong
- 10 Lee Palmieri
- 15 Anne Knoob
- 15 Alicia Samal
- 16 Ruth Podgwaite
- 18 Charlene Tirro
- 20 Trish Rowold
- 22 Cyndi Hansard
- 27 Shubi Rweyemamu
- 30 Elfriede Fleischmann

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
<p>LENT Pray + Fast + Give</p>						1
<p>2 <i>Transfiguration of Our Lord</i></p> <p>9:00am Cross-Generation 10:00am Holy Communion</p>	3	4	<p>5 <i>Ash Wednesday</i> Ashes-to-Go 7:30-9:30a 11:30-1:30p</p> <p>7pm– Joint worship service at Mt. Carmel UCC</p>	<p>6 10:30am-Coffee Klatsch</p>	7	8
<p>9 <i>1st Sunday in Lent</i></p> <p>9:00am Cross-Generation 10:00am Holy Communion</p>  <p>Daylight Savings Time Begins</p>	10	11	<p>12 6pm-Outreach Team Mtg</p> <p>7pm-Evening Prayer Svc with Lectio Divina</p>	13	14	15
<p>16 <i>2nd Sunday in Lent</i></p> <p>9:00am Cross-Generation 10:00am Holy Communion</p>	<p>17 <i>St. Patrick's Day</i></p> <p>7pm-Executive Committee mtg via Zoom</p>	18	<p>19 7pm-Prayer Svc with Lectio Divina</p>	<p>20 10:30am-Coffee Klatsch</p> <p>6pm-Council mtg</p> <p>6:30pm– Book Club</p>	21	22
<p>23 <i>3rd Sunday in Lent</i></p> <p>9:00am Cross-Generation 10:00am Holy Communion</p> <p>Articles for April Messenger due 3/23.</p>	24	<p>25 <i>Annunciation of Our Lord</i></p>	<p>26 7pm-Prayer Svc with Lectio Divina</p>	27	28	29
<p>30 <i>4th Sunday in Lent</i></p> <p>9:00am Cross-Generation 10:00am Holy Communion</p>	31					

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.