

THE MESSENGER

Christ the Good Shepherd Lutheran Church
March 2026



Vol. 6 Issue 3



PASTOR'S MESSAGE

The Rev. Joshua N. Sullivan

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

What a wonderful, meaningful time we had
this past Wednesday, February 25th at 7 PM
as a small group of folks from our church and
Grace & St. John's Episcopal Church
gathered in our sanctuary for Evening Prayer
and Lectio Divina.

Curious what "Lectio Divina" is? Well, it's
just Latin for "sacred reading." In their book
The Rule of Saint Benedict, John Thornton
and Susan Varenne tell us it is: "a meditative
approach, [to reading the Bible] by which the
reader seeks to taste and savor the beauty and
truth of every phrase and passage. This
process of contemplative reading has the
effect of enkindling in the reader
compunction for past behavior that has been
less than beautiful or true. At the same time,
it increases the desire to seek a realm where
all that is lovely and unspoiled may be
found."

It's become a tradition, these mid-week
services during Lent and Advent, and this
year they only continue to deepen. We
confess our sins, pray for the world, sit
quietly in contemplation, sing a song.

But mostly we "dwell in the Word," reading
a Psalm responsively and then listening
closely to a long passage from Scripture.

For Lent 2026 our theme is "Vision." I
noticed that both sight and blindness come up
quite a bit in the Gospel lessons appointed to
the Sundays in Lent. The devil "shows" Jesus
the kingdoms of the world in order to tempt
him but Christ "sees through" this lie.
Nicodemus hopes to escape "sight" as he
comes to Jesus at night. The woman at the
well does not "perceive" who Jesus is, while
he knows all about her. And quite obviously
the man "born blind" is given "sight" by the
Son of God.

So in our Evening Prayer all the Wednesday
of Lent at 7 PM, as on our Sunday
celebration of Holy Communion at 10 AM,
as we move steadily toward the beautiful,
redemptive Paschal Mystery on Easter, let us
all "dwell in the Word" as a Lenten practice.
Our theme is "Vision," so, let us consider:

Who do we see (and not see) in our
congregation, in the world?
Where are our blind-spots?
How or when has God given you (a) vision?

Come and see!

I remain yours in Christ,

Pastor Josh

**CHRIST THE GOOD
SHEPHERD LUTHERAN
CHURCH**

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**Council Members
1/1/26—12/31/26**

- President: Cathy Cahn
- Vice-President: Jake Solomons
- Secretary: Steven Swanson (interim)
- Treasurer: Ruth Lye
- Financial Secretary: Lisa Ball-Goodrich
- At-large representatives: Rob Landino
John Downs
Ken Watson
Krista O'Brien

PRAYER CONCERNS

Those grieving

Family of Sharon
Family of Fran
Dom

Those sick or in need of prayer

Ellen
Rebecca
Joey
Kathy, Mary & Jessika
Paul
Richard & Family
Bob
Carlos
Andrew
Hannah
Danny
Katharine
Tom & Mai
Cyeria & Jake
Jillian
Karen
Ray & Cathy
Dot
Donna

Those homebound

Carl
Elfriede
Christel
Ruth K
Charlene
Sue L



Easter Flowers



A sign-up sheet for Easter flowers has been posted on the bulletin board in the hallway by the narthex. Parishioners may choose lilies, tulips, daffodils, or hyacinths. You may also add “IN MEMORY OF” notation which will be announced in the bulletin on Easter Sunday.

Floral orders are \$12.00 each. Money can be put in regular collection envelope with a notation on the front stating that the contribution is for Easter flowers.

March Celebrations

Birthdays

5 – Olivia Cruz 10 – Sarah DeLong
 10 – Lee Olson-Palmieri 15 - Anne Knoob
 18 – Charlene Tirro 20 - Trish Rowold
 22 – Cyndi Hansard 27 – Shubi Rweyemamu
 30 - Elfriede Fleischmann



View From the Office



Hello Everyone!
 Miguel here. I am told that most of you enjoy the Messenger each month, which is wonderful. However, something that is often lacking are pictures from the events and celebrations that bring you all together. If you would be good enough to share those pictures (with a brief description) then everyone in your community can all experience those wonderful moments too. It can really help to strengthen bonds and build community as we share each other’s joy. If you are willing, feel free to email your photos to the office email address below

As a reminder: I provide office support on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays from 9:15 -2:15. I can be reached at the office number 203-288-3196 or by email at:

christgoodshepherdlutheran@gmail.com

I look forward to servicing you all at CGSL.

God Bless

Miguel



Council Update

Highlights from the Congregational annual meeting and the February Council meeting.

Pastor Josh and others highlighted several moments where the Holy Spirit has formed and transformed our congregation. Among these are:

- Helping to form 3 young leaders in the Church. Tim Bergeland facilitated our Reimagining Church program that led to a \$10,000 grant to support our pollinator garden. Tanya Helmert continues on her path to becoming an ordained minister of word and sacrament. Tessa Holk, a Quinnipiac student, joined our congregation and is discerning her calling to the ministry of word and sacrament.
- We welcomed 10 new members to the congregation in 2025.
- Our twice monthly Coffee Klatch continues to be a space where members and guests come together to share reflections, listen to each other and show compassion and courage in an open and safe environment.
- We held our first Church picnic with an outdoor worship in June.
- We continue to transform our property with the planting of native shrubs and trees that should survive this cold and snowy winter.
- Our Lord's Bounty Community Garden continues to provide fresh herbs and produce to the Hamden food bank.
- We continue to reach out to our neighbors by supporting the Dinner for \$1 at Grace and St

John's, weekly food collection for the Keefe Center, and we held a chili cook-off that raised over \$900 to support New Reach.

- The financial generosity of the congregation continues to meet our financial obligations even through difficult times.

Financial highlights include:

- Year-over-year comparisons will be difficult due to loss of parsonage rental income and higher expenses with the hiring of an administrative assistant and we are now being billed for snow removal. Operating contributions in January 2026 were comparable to 2025 excluding the parsonage rental income.
- The year-end 2025 balance sheet is comparable to 2024. We ended 2025 with an operating loss of \$37,197 compared to a budgeted loss of \$57,615. Operating contributions in 2025 ended \$15,000 ahead of budget. Our total net income for 2025 was a loss of \$9,964 compared to a positive net income in 2024 of \$1,928. The \$12,000 difference was primarily due to the hiring of our administrative assistant, loss of parsonage rental income, lower building use income, and higher insurance costs.
- Our investment activity remains strong generating interest and dividend income that is reinvested. We continue to work with our advisor to adjust holdings as needed.



Our observance of the beginning of our 40 day journey of Lent on **Ash Wednesday** this year was again *robust*.

Beginning at 7 AM with Pastor Josh, Tessa Holk, Sue Hartley, Christi Sharon, and Linda Ibsen we began welcoming cars into our parking lot for **Ashes-to-Go**. And by the time our afternoon shift ended at 12:30 PM with Sarah DeLong, Linda Ibsen and Cathy Cahn, we had given out the 250 postcards Steve Swanson had printed up for us, imposed ashes on well over 300 people, and received just north of \$200 in spontaneously given donations (which later were put into the offer plate at Dunbar UCC and will be given to help Columbus House in their mission of helping the unhoused in the greater New Haven area).

"It was a cold damp morning when Pastor Josh, Christi, Tessa, and I prepared for the drive-through Ashes on Ash Wednesday," remembers Sue Hartley. "We arrived at 7:15 AM. I was at the exit station. Everyone who came though for ashes was so grateful. One lady said she comes every year. Many were concerned that we needed to get warm on this chilly day. I noted that from 7 to 8:30 AM we had predominantly women, then around 8:45 there were more men, mostly in trucks. People were so thankful and smiling as they left. One woman wished me a Happy Easter! I'm grateful for the experience."



Pictured Mike Lye (Ruth Lye's son) and Pastor Josh

After Ashes-to-Go Pastor Josh headed over the **Quinnipiac University** campus in Hamden upon invitation of Catherine Gillespie, their new Director of Spiritual and Religious Life and The Center for Religion, imposing ashes and giving flyers about our congregation to 150 faithful folks. Our own Rob Hansen also imposed ashes on campus as well! He covered the morning shift, interacting with well over 200 QU students, staff and faculty.

Our observance of the start of Lent continued at **7 PM in lively, evening worship** with many of the Hamden congregations with which the ELCA is in full communion. This year, along with Grace & St. John's Episcopal, Hamden Plains United Methodist, Mt. Carmel UCC, and Spring Glen UCC, we worshipped at Dunbar United Church of Christ. In the "Hamden Clergy Band" Deb Mason held down the rhythm section on bass guitar and stunned us all with her soulful delivery of the gospel tune "Break Every Chain," while Tyler Knoob offered up his budding saxophone skills.

Just consider how many talented, faithful, and dedicated people of all ages from our congregation exhibited the gifts given to them by the Holy Spirit on this one day... **Tessa Holk, Sue Hartley, Christi Sharon, Sarah DeLong, Linda Ibsen, Cathy Cahn, Steve Swanson, Deb Mason & Tyler Knoob...**

Wow. It was a long and wonderful day, thanks be to God!

Thank you, Rev. Tim Hodapp!!



On Sunday, February 15 after worship many from our community spent over 2 hours with our consultant Tim Hodapp, a retired Episcopal priest who worked formerly for the offices of the Episcopal Church in CT, now a private consultant.

Tim made a compelling presentation that compiled and analyzed all your wonderful responses to our **September 2025 Congregational Survey**.

Afterward, based on his main areas of recommendation fueled by the survey data, we broke into rotating groups led by our council leaders. These groups brainstormed and took notes. These notes were then condensed via the large group into topics, themes and/or actionable projects. We then voted with green stickers to discern where the most interest lay. {These votes are indicated in brackets below. Top votes are underlined.}

On behalf of the Congregational Council I, Pastor Josh, thank you all for your participation. And I give thanks to the Holy Spirit that calls and fills both Tim and us as Jesus' body, the Church.

Below are the main Areas and Take-Aways:

1) A strength: Personal Reflection and Spiritual Growth

- Start a contemplative daytime meditation service {3 votes}
- A group to evaluate or analyze current events in the news {6 votes}
- A spirituality movie night w/ reflection {7 votes}
- Craft / Food / Art (Icon) events {6 votes}

2) A desire: Address Broader Community Needs

- Do more in our community vs “collecting more” {2 votes}
- Strengthen commitment to our current engagements/organizations {22 votes}

3) A gift: Support new member engagement

- Organize a “Welcome Wagon” team to invite, welcome, connect

4) A desire: Build community and fellowship

- Potlucks {9 votes}
- Events [In-house - exterior events]. Monthly? Affinity groups? {7 votes}
- Small group events - Arts / Family {6 votes}
- Let's Tally our Talents

(Continued on pg. 7)

Thank you, Rev. Tim Hodapp!!

(Continued from pg 6)

5) A gift: Strengthen music and worship experience

- Build a list of loved hymns and songs, both traditional and contemporary {9 votes}
- More guest musicians / performers {2 votes}
- Sing-along, Hymn-sing {2 votes}
- Pick-up choir for specific Sundays / Feasts (i.e. Christmas and Easter) {2 votes}
- More member testimonials/preaching on Sunday {10 votes}

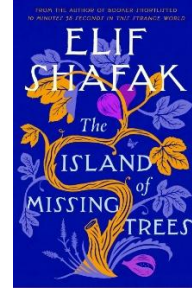
6) A desire: Enhance Outreach, a.k.a “Faith in Action”

- Focus our efforts {13 votes}
- Align our efforts to other community efforts {2 votes}
- Congregation to help in the prioritization these efforts {8 votes}



CGS Book Club

Our next meeting is on April 22nd. We will be discussing *The Island of Missing Trees* by Elif Shafak.



As posted on Goodreads--- Two teenagers, a Greek Cypriot and a Turkish Cypriot, meet at a taverna on the island they both call home. In the taverna, hidden beneath garlands of garlic, chili peppers and creeping honeysuckle, Kostas and Defne grow in their forbidden love for each other. A fig tree stretches through a cavity in the roof, and this tree bears witness to their hushed, happy meetings and eventually, to their silent, surreptitious departures.

Years later a *Ficus carica* grows in the back garden of a house in London where Ada Kazantzakis lives. This tree is her only connection to an island she has never visited - her only connection to her family's troubled history and her complex identity as she seeks to untangle years of secrets to find her place in the world.

A moving, beautifully written and delicately constructed story of love, division, transcendence, history and eco-consciousness, *The Island of Missing Trees* is Elif Shafak's best work yet.

The CGS book club will be meeting on April 22nd at 6:30. We will be meeting in person. Please join us. If there is a book that you would like to read and discuss, we welcome recommendations and enjoy exploring different genres.

Hope to see you there!!!

Council Update

Continued from pg.4

- . Our year-end investment account balances at Morgan Stanley and Fidelity are comparable to 2024.
- Cathy provided an update on the parsonage subdivision. Property deeds are being updated with the correct entity name and the subdivision plan is being submitted to the City of Hamden. We have received notice of the assessed value of both the Church building and property as well as the parsonage building. The date for the appeal of the parsonage property tax assessment is in early March.
- Council discussed the need for a team to lead the property efforts including taking care of the garbage and recycling bins.
- Next Council meeting will be on Wednesday March 18 at 6:00 pm.
- Executive team will meet on Monday March 16 at 7:00 pm.

Our congregational “business card” is available on the white shelving in the narthex. Take a few and keep them in a convenient place. When you meet someone looking for a church, or if you have a meaningful conversation with someone, give that person a card with our worship time and contact information. It’s a way to say “You’re invited and welcome here.” You might write your first name on the back of the cards. If someone does visit our church, he/she will have someone to look for!



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.



SCHEDULED TO SERVE

DATE	ASSISTANT MINISTER	LECTOR	USHERS	SACRISTAN
03/01/26	Durbin Hunter	Tessa Holk	Deb Mason Steven Swanson	Ellen Frost
03/08/26	Rob Hansen	Ken Watson	Phil Napolitano John Downs	Jonathan Goodrich
03/15/26	Lisa Ball-Goodrich	Catherine Wode	Starr O'Connor Ken Watson	Ursula Hunter
03/22/26	Tessa Holk	Lisa Ball-Goodrich	John Downs Deb Mason	John Downs
03/29/26	Linda Kapitan	Ken Watson	Durbin and Ursula Hunter	Ellen Frost
04/02/26 Maundy Thursday	Tessa Holk	Linda Kapitan	Phil Napolitano Starr O'Connor	Deb Mason
04/03/26 Good Friday	Rob Hansen	Durbin Hunter	John Down Ken Watson	X
4:30 AM Easter Vigil 04/05/26	X	Tessa Holk	X	X
04/05/26	Lisa Ball Goodrich	Catherine Wode	Steven Swanson Phil Napolitano	Sarah DeLong Jackie MeneFee

03/01/26	Rob Hansen
03/08/26	Ken and Chuddy Watson
03/15/26	Sarah DeLong
03/22/26	Jackie Menefee
03/29/26	Palm Sunday
04/05/26	Easter Sunday

03/01/26	Cathy Cahn
03/08/26	Cathy Cahn
03/15/26	Rob Hansen
03/22/26	Jonathan Goodrich
03/29/26	Rob Hansen
04/02/26	Jonathan Goodrich
04/03/26	Cathy Cahn
04/05/26	Jonathan Goodrich

**COFFEE
HOUR
HOSTS**



SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
1 2nd Sunday of Lent	2	3	4 Lenten Evening Prayer 7:00pm	5 Coffee Klatch 10:30am	6	7
8 3rd Sunday of Lent 9- 9:45am Cross Generational Bible Class 10 am Worship Service	9	10	11 Lenten Evening Prayer 7:00pm	12	13	14
15 4th Sunday of Lent 9-9:45 am Cross Generational Bible Study 10 am Worship Service	16 Executive Committee 7 pm on Zoom	17	18 Council Meeting 6:00pm Lenten Evening Prayer 7:00pm	19 Coffee Klatch 10:30am	20	21
22 5th Sunday of Lent 9-9:45 am Cross Generational Bible Study 10 am Worship Service	23	24	25 Lenten Evening Prayer 7:00pm	26	27	28
29 Palm Sunday	30	31				



Coffee Klatch is scheduled for Thursday March 5th & 19th at 10:30 AM
Cross-Generation Bible Class every Sunday from 9-9:45 AM
Executive Committee meets on Monday March 16th at 7 PM
Council Meeting Wednesday March 18th at 6pm