

THE MESSENGER

Christ the Good Shepherd Lutheran Church
April 2026



Vol. 6 Issue 4



The Rev. Joshua N. Sullivan

PASTOR'S MESSAGE

Saints of CGS,

This Lenten season we have been exploring the image of *vision* both in our Sunday gatherings and on Wednesday evenings in prayer, bible reading, and group discussions. What rich images in scripture we have been fed with!

We take away from these discussions, these Sundays and this season, that even though we see with our eyes or hear with our ears, we do not always “see” or, in other words, have understanding.

God, instead, provides this understanding, we cannot achieve it alone. Just as Jesus said to the religious leaders of his time in John’s gospel: “If you were blind, you would not have sin. But now that you say, ‘We see,’ your sin remains.”

It is my sincerest prayer that we all can see as God alone shows us to see. I am convinced more than ever that what we perceive as division or difference in our country between “Left” and “Right,” is in fact all shockingly the same. Left, after all, is only the mirror image of Right, they make a whole.

What one side cannot stomach they foist onto the another, what one side despises about the other, they also hold and are complicit with, deep inside. We, all, are angry, wanting revenge instead of justice, we all prefer control over surrender. We want *our* values, not *their* values. We, all, are afraid. We all are dead in sin, yet we all have been made alive by Christ. When we cannot see the connection we remain as children, dangerously incomplete. History bears out that this type of blindness—as nations, as one humanity—leads only to death.

That is why perhaps it feels so hard to fill the air with our Alleluias and songs of joy this Easter, but may God give us *true* sight, eyes to see what must take place, what must fall apart, and what is growing up from the ruins. In this new season of Easter, as an “Easter people,” we confess death leads to life.

In this new season of Easter, I also commend to you the Easter message from our Presiding Bishop Yehiel Curry. It is a video message available here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Cpw7B04qrgY>

But a transcript is also available in our newsletter this month as well, please enjoy it.

I am yours in the Risen Christ,

Pastor Josh



Presiding Bishop of the ELCA Yehiel Curry

We remember the whispers of Advent as we anticipated the birth of Jesus. Now, as we journey through Holy Week, we anticipate the joyful noise of alleluias on Easter Sunday. But before we reach the Easter celebration, we make our way through Lent, through an in-between time where we don't know what tomorrow will bring. We often describe ourselves as an Easter church, but in this holy, solemn time that begins with Ash Wednesday and moves on to Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Holy Saturday, we are also a Lenten church. Living in uncertainty, waiting and hoping for renewal. Longing for the moments when God's presence feels closer and more sure.

During Lent, we learn what it means to live on unsettled ground.

In Matthew's retelling of the resurrection, he describes a "violent earthquake" as the angel came down from heaven and rolled the stone away from the entrance to the tomb where Jesus lay.

I imagine the earthquake, the rumble deep below the earth, as the ground shifted far under the surface. Perhaps those who were nearby felt the tremble. Maybe the women who were on their way to the tomb with prepared spices felt the earth shift. They were unsettled, but they knew something powerful was happening.

We can understand that human experience of feeling out of control, of not being able to make sense of what's happening around us. Many of us can relate to this as we witness the current unrest in our world and in our communities. Like the women at the tomb, we feel isolated, disconnected. We're unsettled, unsure, living the Lenten reality of waiting and hoping.

And then, in the midst of that shaking, comes the promise.

The angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. He is not here; he has risen."

God's promise offers reassurance and hope. The resurrection does not deny disruption — it meets us within disorder and disturbance. The stone is rolled away. Death does not have the final word.

Yes, we are Easter people. Even when the ground below us is shaking, we will not grow weary. We know that Jesus is our foundation. Christ is risen, and that truth strengthens us. It gives us courage to live, to hope and to proclaim joy.

Christ is risen. Christ is risen indeed. Alleluia!

The Rev. Yehiel Curry, Presiding Bishop
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

The angel said to the women, "***Do not be afraid***, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. He is not here; ***he has risen.***"



**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

Families of Sharon, Ody, Robin, Steve & Paul

Those sick or in need of prayer

- Rebecca
- Cap
- Kathy, Mary & Jessika
- Ellen
- Richard & Family
- Joey & Paul
- Bob
- Dom
- Carlos
- Danny
- Katharine
- Tom & Mai
- Cyria & Jake
- Karen
- Ray & Cathy
- Dot
- Donna
- For all peoples suffering, fleeing and grieving because of war in the Middle East.

Those homebound

- Carl
- Elfriede
- Christel
- Ruth K
- Sue

Council Update

Highlights from the March Council meeting.

Financial highlights:

Total operating contributions in 2026 compare are ahead of 2025, accounting for the loss of the parsonage rental income. Total of all contributions is also ahead of 2025 giving.

Through February, there is a net loss of \$357 compared to a net loss of \$403 in 2025. Total net income through February including rental and investment activity is a loss of \$909 compared to a positive net income of \$12,020 in 2025. The main drivers for the difference is the loss of rental income, gains for a stock sale in 2025, and higher office expenses in 2026. Our total net income is ahead of budget.

Parsonage update:

-The City of Hamden approved the subdivision plan for the parsonage property.

-Cathy Cahn is interviewing potential real estate agents to list the property for sale.

-Other work is being done to determine if we need to have a new address assigned to parsonage property and updating the property deed to reflect the name change to Christ the Good Shepherd Lutheran Church.

Congregational survey update:

-Council reviewed the 6 main take-aways from the congregational meeting.

-Work has started on one of the take-aways - build a list of loved hymns and songs - both traditional and newer.

Next Council meeting will be on Wednesday April 22 at 6:30 pm.

Executive team will meet on Monday April 20 at 7:00 pm.

Musical Notes From Caroline Henry, Director of Music



Happy spring at long last, everyone! If you are reading this before Easter (spoiler alert!), we are looking forward to the return of the violinist/violist couple that played for us last Easter. A little birdie tells me they may even bring two little bonus musicians with them, to form a family quartet!

Choral music will also be making an appearance for Easter in the form of a pop-up choir! So don your Easter bonnets (or not) and join us for Easter service April 5!

Grace & St. John's Episcopal Church's "Dinner for a Dollar" in the news

Connecticut woman's passion for community helps provide people with hot meals and dignity

By Melodie Woerman

Posted Mar 31, 2026



[Episcopal News Service] For almost 15 years, [Dinner for a Dollar](#) has been feeding hungry people in Hamden, Connecticut, with a focus on home cooking, dining with dignity and building community.

Allison Batson, a member of [Grace and St. John's Episcopal Church](#) in Hamden, a town of about 61,000 people six miles north of New Haven, started the program in June 2011 because she knew there were people in need in a town that "has a reputation for being prosperous, but there is economic disparity," she told Episcopal News Service.

She took inspiration from another Connecticut Episcopal church that offered a soup-and-sandwich community meal. "If they're doing it, I felt like we should be able to do it, too," she said, and she was given the go-ahead by church leaders. The first week drew only three people, but the weekly Friday night meal began to grow in numbers.

Batson said it is important to her to provide a hot, home-cooked meal that is served on dinner plates with real flatware. "We create a community around the meal," she said, and volunteers sit with diners as they would with guests in their own home. People are asked to contribute one dollar toward their meal. Some give more, she said, and even those who can't give a dollar usually donate some loose change. Many diners are weekly regulars. The insistence on community is part of what makes Dinner for a Dollar unique, the Rev. Robert Bergner, the church's rector, told ENS, and is as important as the meals they serve. Dinner guests "are as much a part of our community as those who worship with us on Sunday morning," he said. "We know their names and their life's joys and concerns. We visit them in the hospital and attend funerals of their family members."

Dinner for a Dollar expanded in 2020 to United Plains Methodist Church, which provides space for a Saturday evening meal, and Christian Tabernacle Baptist Church hosts meals on the first and third Thursday of every month. In 2022 the program was able to buy a food truck that provides hot, to-go meals every Sunday afternoon at a location across town. Support for the purchase came from the [Episcopal Church in Connecticut](#), the town of [Hamden](#) and the [United Way of Greater New Haven](#).

They now provide between 400 and 500 meals every week, Batson said, an increase from this time last year that she attributes to the rising cost of groceries as well as cuts in Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or SNAP, benefits for people with low incomes. She can't say exactly how many people that number of meals includes, since diners are free to take as many as they need. Batson said the program runs on volunteers, most of whom are not members at Grace and St. John's.

(Continued on pg. 6)

Connecticut woman's passion for community helps provide people with hot meals and dignity

(cont. from pg. 5)

Many are retired and come from across the area, including members of St. John's. Many are retired and come from across the area, including members of Hamden's [Christ the Good Shepherd Lutheran Church](#), the [Pi Kappa Phi](#) fraternity at nearby [Quinnipiac University](#) and the graduate school at the [Yale School of Public Health](#) in New Haven.

For meals served at one of the churches, volunteers plan the menu – which consists of a hot main dish, dessert and a beverage – shop for ingredients and do the cooking. They are welcome to request reimbursement for the ingredients they buy, but Batson said many don't and consider it their contribution to the program. Twice-weekly donations of high-quality food from a local Trader Joe's store provide even more food.

One of the rules for Dinner for a Dollar volunteers is "we have to have a good time, because why else would you come back?" Batson said. They also are empowered to do whatever needs to be done to take care of dinner guests. "We do have standards, we do have rules, we do have things we have to adhere to, but we have an atmosphere of joy, and it's fulfilling."

Batson has long been an early childhood educator and currently teaches at [Augusta Lewis Troup School](#) in New Haven. She also is active in leadership roles for the [Connecticut Association for the Education of Young Children](#), the board of [Columbus House](#), which addresses issues of homelessness, and the board of the United Way of Greater New Haven.

In early March Batson was recognized as New Haven's "[Remarkable Woman](#)" by [WTNH-TV](#). The television station is part of [Nexstar Media Group](#), which operates stations across the U.S. and sponsors an

annual recognition of women who are making a difference in their communities. She received \$1,000 for a non-profit of her choice – which she directed to Dinner for a Dollar – and was part of a March 6-8 gathering in Nashville, Tennessee, of 125 women selected by 116 stations.

After being told of her selection, Batson said, "I would love to see Dinner for a Dollar be expanded as far as it can possibly go, and being able to get that word out on a national stage is amazing, incredible."

While Batson was not recognized as Nexstar Media Group's overall "[Remarkable Woman of 2026](#)," that honor did go to another Episcopalian — the Rev. Becca Stephens, founder of [Thistle Farms](#), a Nashville nonprofit social enterprise dedicated to helping women survivors recover and heal from prostitution, trafficking and addiction.

— *Melodie Woerman is an Episcopal News Service freelance reporter based in Kansas.*

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.

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!!!

APRIL Celebrations

Birthdays

- 4 – Jake Solomons
- 6 - Tanja Helmert
- 9 - Tyler Knoob
- 9 – Robert Landino
- Durbin Hunter



Anniversaries

- 9 - Rev. Dr. Leppin and Chantel Volker
- 16 – Rashid Richard and Subi Kibwassali
- 28 - Frank and Penny Podgwaite

A And God blessed the seventh day & made it holy because on it he rested from all the work of creating he had done. - Gen 2:3

P Praise the Lord with the harp; make music to him on the ten string lyre. - Psalm 33:2

R Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn. - Romans 12:15

I In the beginning God created the heavens and the Earth. - Gen 1:1

L Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. - 1 Cor 13:4

Announcements

Pastor Josh will be on vacation from Monday April 6 - Sunday April 12

Rev. Dr. Volker Leppin will be preaching and presiding on Sunday April 12. And if there are urgent pastoral care needs Rev. Bob Bergner of Grace & St. John's will be available. Contact Miguel in the church office to obtain Bob's email and cell phone number.

WORSHIP TEAM MEETING: April 19th, right after 10:00 Service

Any and all interested parishioners are invited.. This is your chance to meet with our wonderful Music/Worship Team to catch up on the many dynamic changes that have been enhancing our church services. This is also an opportunity to collaborate on a path forward as we continue to change and grow. Looking forward to seeing you there.

ASSISTANT MINISTERS NEEDED!

Because of unpredictable changes in availability; we are down to only THREE volunteers on the team of assistant ministers. Responsibilities include recording names of people in need of prayer as announced during the opening "joys and sorrows" portion of our service. You will read Prayers of Intercession, including those names, during the service. Also you will help Pastor with preparation and distribution of communion. Other short prayers will be read by you during the service. PLUS you get to wear one of those cool white ropes! (training is, of course, provided) If you are interested; please contact Pastor Josh, Starr O'Connor, or Linda Kapitan.



**TO ACCESS OUR
LIVESTREAM ON
SUNDAYS**

•Head to our website:

<https://christgoodshepherdlutheran.org/>

•Scroll down just a bit and find this button:

CLICK TO WATCH WORSHIP →

•This will take you to our Facebook page

<https://www.facebook.com/christgoodshepherdlutheran>

•There will be a screen asking you to log in in Facebook, but you DO NOT need to have a Facebook account. You can ignore this prompt by clicking on the "X" in the top right corner.



•If it's around the start time of the service, a small red tab will appear on the Facebook page indicating that we are "LIVE." Click this tab.

LIVE

•Otherwise, remain on the page and scroll down to our "feed" and wait for the "Live" tab to show up.

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
			1	2 Maundy Thursday	3 Good Friday	4
5 <i>Easter Sunday</i> 4:30 am Easter Vigil 10 am Worship Service	6 Pastor Josh on Vacation	7 Pastor Josh on Vacation	8 Pastor Josh on Vacation	9 Pastor Josh on Vacation	10 Pastor Josh on Vacation	11 Pastor Josh on Vacation
12 <i>2nd Sun of Easter</i> Pastor Josh on Vacation 10 am Worship Service	13	14	15	16 10:30am- Coffee Klatsch	17	18
19 <i>3rd Sun of Easter</i> 10 am Worship Service Worship Service Team Meeting after service	20 Executive Committee 7pm	21	22 Council Meeting 6:30pm	23 CGS Book Club 6:30pm	24	25
26 <i>4th Sun of Easter</i> 10 am Worship Service	27	28	29	30		



The New England Synod's E-News and Updates Email:

<https://list.robly.com/subscribe?a=76e59318b279425c2786c3a4164ddc44>

The blog of the Bishop of New England Synod, Nathan Pipho:

<https://nathanpipho.com/>

Confirmation is scheduled for Tuesday, April 21st, April 28th
Coffee Klatch is scheduled for Thursday April 16th & 10:30am
Worship Team Meeting: April 19th, right after 10:00 Service
Cross-Generation Bible Class every Sunday from 9-9:45 AM
Executive Committee meets on Monday April 20th on Zoom at 7 PM
Council Meeting Wednesday April 22nd at 6:30pm
Book Club Thursday April 23rd

SCHEDULED TO SERVE

DATE	ASSISTANT MINISTER	LECTOR	USHERS	SACRISTAN
04/02/26 Maundy Thursday	Tessa Holk	Ken Watson	Phil Napolitano Starr O'Connor	Deb Mason
04/03/26 Good Friday	Rob Hansen	Linda Kapitan	John Down Ken Watson	X
4:30 AM Easter Vigil	X	Tessa Holk	X	X
04/05/26 Easter Sunday	Lisa Ball Goodrich	Catherine Wode	Steven Swanson Phil Napolitano	Sarah DeLong Jackie Menefee
04/12/26	Rob Hansen	Durbin Hunter	Durbin and Ursula Hunter	John Goodrich
04/19/26	Linda Kapitan	Tessa Holk	Phil Napolitano John Downs	Sarah DeLong Jackie Menefee
04/26/26	Tessa Holk	Rob Hansen	Steven Swanson Starr O'Connor	John Goodrich
05/03/26	Lisa Ball Goodrich	Cyndi Hansard	Ken Watson Phil Napolitano	Ellen Frost

**COFFEE
HOUR
HOSTS**



04/05/26	Easter Sunday No Coffee Hour
04/12/26	Sarah DeLong
04/19/26	Linda Kapitan
04/26/26	The O'Briens
05/03/26	Cyndi Hansard



04/02/26	Jonathan Goodrich
04/03/26	Cathy Cahn
04/05/26	Jonathan Goodrich
04/12/26	Cathy Cahn
04/19/26	Rob Hansen
04/26/26	Jonathan Goodrich
05/03/26	Cathy Cahn