



In Your Darkness

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and from Christ Jesus.

As you read this we are in the season of Advent; that season before Christmas when we prepare ourselves for the coming of Christ. One of my favorite descriptions of the mood of Advent is that it is an “expectant longing for hope”. In the season of Advent we read the words of the prophets, filled with lament and hope, and we read the words of Jesus reminding us that the old must be moved away to make room for God to dwell in the world and in us. Advent is about acknowledging where we are, it is about offering our whole selves as a dwelling place for God. It is about the kind of hope that knows the reality of our broken world and promises that God can and will bring healing and life into that brokenness.

Hope.

It appears we are short on that these days. Some of you have talked with me about the weariness and hopelessness you feel. The political climate is harsh and uncertain, it feels as though every news report is bad and people seem to have forgotten what kindness is. Many of you are weary because so many people in your life are hurting, including you. In so many ways life feels heavy and dark.

A few years ago, I shared this quite from an essay by Cassie Lynch:

As I sat, I found myself talking to Jesus. “I’m ruining your party,” I told him. It was his response in that moment that changed Christmas for me forever. He told me, Cassie, I came to that manger as a baby not for those in celebration, but for those in mourning.

I came for you. In this moment. Right here...If this year broke you down. Isolated you. Left you grieving or fearful or hurt. I want you to know that you don't have to muster up cheer. You don't have to feel like a downer during celebration. You can sit at the feet of a savior who came for you where you're at right now. That's how Immanuel works. It's God with us in the dirt giving us hope in the face of despair.

The season of Advent reminds us that it is because of the heavy and dark that Jesus came. So...Welcome to Advent. Welcome to the empty spaces, the open places, the shadow places where we wait with expectation, longings and hope.

God give us Peace that makes us aware of your presence. Faith that finds us when we are lost to ourselves. Joy that perseveres through sorrow and, Hope that guides us forward. Trusting, that You—through your Word made flesh, Jesus—will have the final Word and it will be Life. Amen.

Yours in Christ,

Pastor Jess

SAMARITAS CHRISTMAS WISH PROGRAM



Christmas Wish Program

Irmalinda Lehman, from Samaritas, picked up the Christmas Wish donations Friday, December 1, 2023. She was pleased to see all the gifts and excited to see the gift cards.

Thank you to everyone who participated. Thank you to the Mission and Outreach Committee for their planning and set-up.

WOMEN'S CHRISTMAS PARTY

Women's Christmas Party

Thursday, December 7, 2023
6:00 - 8:00 pm.

Come for food, fellowship and more!

Sign-up sheet in the Commons.

Merry Christmas



ADVENT SEASON EVENTS

Advent Study

Join us as we study the Magnificat in image and song; how Mary's song has been portrayed through time and what it means for us today.

December 3 & 10, 2023, after worship,
11:15 am.



Advent Midweek Meditations Online

Every Wednesday, Pastor Jess will post a short meditation online on the theme of the Magnificat.

All Family Christmas Program

Sunday, December 17, join us as we participate together in the telling of the Christmas Story. This fun and interactive service will be followed by intergenerational activities in the Commons.



Longest Night Service

The holidays can be an emotionally difficult time. In the midst of the joy and light, we often experience sorrow, grief, loneliness and many other conflicting feelings. This service gives us a safe and sacred space for those feelings and laments, with time for silence and contemplation in the midst of a loving community. Wednesday, December 20, at 7:00 pm.

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

Sunday, December 24, 7:00 pm
All are welcome.



MOVIE NIGHT, PUMPKIN PAINTING, AND S'MORES

October Movie Night, Pumpkin Painting and S'mores

The feature film, "A Man Called Otto", was a hit. It has a heartfelt message for mature audiences. Pumpkin painting was a fun option for our younger participants. We wrapped up the night with sticky and delicious S'mores! It was good practice in good fire etiquette for our youngest participant. There were a few close calls, but no one was stabbed with red hot poker. A good time all around!



BOOK GROUP NEWS



Book Group

No December Meeting.

Enjoy your holidays

and watch for the coming January selection!

MEN'S BREAKFAST

November Men's Breakfast

We had another productive and delicious Men's Breakfast on Saturday, November 18, 2023! Breakfast offerings included oatmeal bake, sweet breads, eggs, sausage, fruits, and cheese. After filling up and chatting, we transitioned to cleaning the church, updating and cleaning the message board, and rebuilding the picnic table.

With all of the activity of the holiday season, we will not be holding a December Men's Breakfast, but we will resume in January!

This experiment of a new church activity has been a huge success in 2023. We have both learned a lot about fellow members of our church and done a fantastic job maintaining the facility and grounds. **A huge thank you to all the participants in these events!** The output of these gatherings is evident for the whole community.

Thank You!

The MET (Jessica B., Pastor Jessica, Julie, Branden)



Far table, l-r, Tom Ludwig, Gary Bowman, Dennis Willaman. Near table, l-r, Jacob Bacon, Mike Russell, Floyd Norvell, Steve Johnson.



l-r, Jacob Bacon, Floyd Norvell, Tom Ludwig, Mike Russell, Steve Johnson.

END OF YEAR GIVING STATEMENTS

End of the Year Giving Statements



Per council direction, end of the year giving statements will be emailed after January 12, 2024. If you would like a printed copy please notify Vicki Russell (616 796-8606 or vicki0528@gmail.com) prior to that date.

Reminder: if you changed your giving amount on your EOG and have recurring giving you must also change the amount within Breeze. As always, if you need assistance with Breeze see Vicki Russell or Elliott Eisaman.

CHURCH CLEAN-UP DAY



To everyone that participated in the Church Clean-up Day,

Thank you!

Weeding was accomplished and the front gardens were pruned and put to bed for the winter.

Sam Rogers

TRUNK OR TREAT



Just a few of the 100 + kids that came to the Trunk or Treat.

A Huge Success!

Our community Trunk or Treat, held on October 25, was very well attended.

Thank you to everyone who spread the word, donated their time, their candy, or helped with games and snacks.

Thank You!

NOISY OFFERING

November/December Noisy Offering: **Samaritas and Grand Ravine Senior Living**



We are excited to partner with Samaritas for their Christmas Wish gift collection and a Grand Ravine Christmas celebration for our November and December noisy offerings!

Christmas Wish

Thank you for the wonderful contributions to these families in need! We were able to support five children from two families to have a Merry Christmas. Your generosity is making a huge difference in the community!



Grand Ravine Christmas Celebration

For the second year, we are spreading Christmas cheer with the Grand Ravine senior living community in Allegan. We are holding a Christmas Brunch on Saturday December 9 at 11:00 am to 1:30 pm. We will serve items like quiche and fruit. We will have a game featuring Christmas songs and then a group sing-a-long! A sign up sheet will be available in the commons in the weeks leading up to the event.

We look forward to celebrating the coming of our savior with you through these outreach activities!

Mission and Outreach Committee

Carolyn W., Vicki R., Julie W., Branden B., and Pastor Jessica

FROM WINGS OF MERCY

From Wings of Mercy:

Dear Friends at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church,

Thank you for your continued support.

Perhaps it comes with age, but I am more aware of the goodness of people today than I have ever been. In uncertain times, with a whole lot of crazy things going on in the world, there is an abundance of good and great people stepping up and making a huge difference....

Thank you for all you do and your continued support! Together we are "Giving Wings to Those in Need"! You are a blessing!

Fred Honore II

President, Board of Directors

rec'd Oct. 27, 2023

PRAISE AND THANKSGIVING

The Measure of Our Love

Computers connected via internet = Families

October 29 - November 26

Total Sunday Attendance: 226

Families: 9

Average Sunday Attendance: 45



SUNDAY SERVANTS — DECEMBER

Sunday Servants Needed for December

Please help us fill the spaces. Volunteer to be a Sunday Servant

Use the form in the Commons or contact Deb in the office.

616.772.4075 or gslc.office@icloud.com

Date	Worship Leader/ Communion Assistant	Reader(s)	Usher	Communion Set- Up/Clean-Up	Counters
Dec. 3 1st Sunday of Advent	WL- CA-	Branden Bacon		Terry Grossman	1. 2.
Dec. 10 2nd Sunday of Advent	WL - CA- Carolyn W.	Tom Ludwig		Deb Ludwig	1. 2.
Dec. 17 3rd Sunday of Advent	WL - CA-	students and families			1. 2.
Dec. 24 4th Sunday of Advent	WL - CA -	Carolyn Willaman	Mike Russell	Vicki Russell	1. 2.
Dec. 31 1st Sunday of Christmas	WL - CA -				

FELLOWSHIP – DECEMBER

Fellowship Sign-up.



Treats and Set Up & Clean Up	
December 3, 2023	
December 10, 2023	
December 17, 2023	The MET
December 24, 2023	
December 31, 2023	

CHURCH CLEANING SCHEDULE

November 26, 2023 – February 3, 2024 Cleaning Schedule.

Sign-up: 2-week period preferred, however, 1-week period is acceptable. Cleaning includes cleaning all areas of the church building: sanctuary, sacristy, entrance, hallway, bathrooms, kitchen, conference room, nursery and Commons.

To sign-up:

Use the Cleaning Schedule form in the Commons
or Contact Deb in the office:

gslc.office@icloud.com

616.772.4075



Dates	Name(s)
Weeks of Nov. 26 - Dec. 2 December 3 - 9	Dennis Willaman & Gary Bowman Dennis Willaman & Gary Bowman
Weeks of December 10 - 16 December 17 - 23	
Weeks of December 24 - 30 Dec. 31 - Jan. 6	
Weeks of January 7 - 13 January 14 - 20	
Weeks of January 21 - 27 Jan. 28 - Feb. 3	

NOVEMBER

Birthdays

Adam Preston 7
David Wendt 13
Mike Russell 23
Branden Bacon 25
Ron Meyer 31



Anniversaries

Som & Chan
Vixayphone 24

SERVICES AND ACTIVITIES

Sunday Services are also on-line.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87525508195?pwd=MmtjVENGaUg3ODFuaXhhUHR1TVR3Zz09>

Meeting ID: 875 2550 8195

Passcode: 022399

Sunday Services, 10:00 -11:00 am, also available via Zoom
Choir Rehearsals, Mondays at 6:30 pm, September - May, begins Sept. 13, 2023
Quilter's Meet, Tuesdays, 10:30 am on site. No Quilting in December.
Women's Bible Study, Wednesdays, 10:30 am, September - May
Book Group, 3rd Wednesday of the month, 4:30 pm. September - May

PASTOR JESS' SCHEDULE



Pastor Jessica is available Monday - Friday
via phone, text, email and Facebook messenger.

Phone: (616) 403-4660

Email: pj.gslc@gmail.com

To view Pastor's weekly in-office hours, look on the Breeze
calendar on our website at goodshepherdhollandmi.com

COUNCIL MEMBERS

Church Council Members:

Jessica Bacon,	(920) 889-8706, jessica.lois.bacon@gmail.com
Larry Heckel	(616) 399-8238 (H), (616) 403-1476 (C), laurenceheckel@icloud.com
Steve Johnson	(616) 212-6833, sgjcfp@gamil.com
Brian Underhill (Pres)	(616) 292-7194, underhillbrian@yahoo.com
Julie Wolff (VP)	(616) 566-6251, wolffwife@gmail.com
Pastor Jess (Sec)	(616) 403-4660, pj.gslc@gmail.com

IN OUR NOVEMBER PRAYERS

In Our November Prayers...

- **Our Sympathies:** to the Preston and Aikens families on the death of Kassidy Aikens, Wednesday, Nov. 15, 2023, due to a car accident.
- **Healing/Peace:** Lucas Barton, diagnosed with Dushanes Muscular Dystrophy (son of friends of Julie Wolff), Karson Becker (Russell's grandson) healing prayers, Zach Bergland (Beckers' nephew), Greg Bolton, (friend of Julie Wolff), Tom & Elizabeth Brookover, (friends of the Wentz') Tom has a rare form of ocular cancer, Dylan Brophy, age 26, (nephew of Kris Norvell's friend), stage 4 melanoma, Kory Casey, (mother of Kris Norvell's friend), stage 4 breast cancer, Bret D'Agostino, Mark DeGraaf, stage 4 cancer, Kody De Haan, Diane (close friend of Kris Norvell) at Mayo clinic for treatment for inoperable cancer, Jessie George (Deb P-G's daughter), Carol Grossman, (Steve's mom), cancer has returned on top of Parkinsons, Rose Heckel, Tessa Hurt (out-of-town member) diagnosed with Myelofibrosis, Johanna (friend of Pastor Jess) diagnosed with lung cancer, Karen Heidenreiter (Branden's mother) heart issues, Cathy Kelly, Tiffany Letourneau, being treated for breast cancer, Kory Mace (friend of Kris Norvell), Iris Mears, (PJ's godmother), Molly (friend of Deb P-G) diagnosed with uterine cancer, Diane Oberlin (former attendee) has cancer, Lori Ponstein diagnosed with stage 4 breast cancer, Roland Rivera, Casey Rostos (friend of Norvells), Richard Russell's cancer has returned, Kathy Shoup, (friend of Larry Heckel) recovering from hip surgery, Katherine Slee (friend of Beckers), Stella, 6 yrs old, (Sally Ponstein's friends grdaughter) needs a kidney transplant. Russ & Rita Taylor (Julie Wolff's parents), Justin Walker (Pastor's husband), Jon Wiening.
- **Healthy Pregnancy:** , Sarah Hitchcock, (Naomi Wahl's daughter), Madison Visser (Norvells grdaughter-in-law).
- **Assisted Living/Nursing Home/Homebound:** Christopher St. John (Son of Bonita Zielke), Bonita Zielke,
- **Serving Our Country:** John Bounthapanya (Som's nephew), Ryan Felgenhauer, William Felgenhauer, and Evan Felgenhauer (great-nephews of Kerry Johnson), Cortney and Konstantin Ivanov (Gigi Howard's daughter and son-in-law), Andrew Wagner (Patricia Bradford's grandson), Zachery Wiesner (Gigi Howard's son-in-law).
- **Prayer Partners:** St. Luke's Lutheran Church, Rev. Galen Knutson, Grand Rapids; Faith Lutheran Church, Rev. Kevin Sullivan, Grand Rapids; Bread of Life Lutheran Church, Hudsonville; Immanuel Lutheran Church, Rev. Kate Schroeder, Jackson.