



## Beginning with Blessing

Blessed Epiphany to you, Friends in Christ!

The beginning of January caps off the Christmas season with the Feast of Epiphany. Epiphany means “revealing” and is celebrated on January 6<sup>th</sup>; on Epiphany, we celebrate the arrival of the Magi to honor the Christ child and the revealing of the incarnation to the larger world. Personally, I find the celebration of Epiphany to be a deeper and more meaningful way to mark the start of a new year than the typical New Year’s activities of making resolutions (which most of us break almost immediately) and staying up late.

For centuries, the faithful have celebrated the Feast of Epiphany by “chalking the door[s]” of their homes and places of worship. This tradition is rooted in the Old Testament traditions of marking the doorposts of their dwelling places with biblical texts (Deuteronomy 6:9), and in the tradition of hospitality that shows up throughout scripture. Chalking a blessing on the door reminds us of God’s presence in our lives and reminds us of the importance of welcoming others and extending hospitality. Personally, I find that this tradition also helps to form my intentions for the year. I find that beginning the year with blessing and prayer orients me toward Christ, reminding me of the source of all blessing and creating space in me for whatever God may reveal during the coming months.

For 2026, I invite you begin the new year by chalking your doors; Chalk and a short blessing will be available in the commons area for you to take home and use for a house blessing. As you chalk your doors, I invite you to pray for openness to what God may reveal over the next year, and how you may be a revelation of God’s love to others this year.

I look forward to growing in faith and life with all of you in 2026!

Yours in Christ,

Pastor Jess



## SNACKS AND SERVICE

Thank you for your hard work!

Projects worked on:

- Eric and Julie worked on straightening the seats in the sanctuary.
- Mike worked on the humidifier, checked on sand for the parking lot, and office tasks.
- Brian removed ice from the entryway, cleaned the interior windows, and helped sanitize toys.
- Jess and Branden sanitized toys and furniture in the nursery and vacuumed the classroom, office, nursery, conference room, and maintenance room.



## KID'S WISH LIST



Kid's Wish List items were delivered to Samaritas the first week of December. Thank you to everyone who donated towards this project.

## GRAND RAVINE CHRISTMAS PARTY

The Grand Ravine Christmas Party was a lovely success. Activities included, bingo with prizes, carol singing, lunch and gingerbread house creations.

I-r, Caroline, Kylie & Tom Lindsley, Jacob Bacon.  
Singing Carols.

Jessica Bacon.



## GRAND RAVINE CHRISTMAS PARTY – CONT.



Jacob Bacon, far left, and Tom Lindsley, far right with Grand Ravine residents creating miniature gingerbread houses.

## CHRISTMAS EVE

Special Music provided by Eric Mueller and Tammy Walters.



Pastor Jess Reading Christmas Stories.

l-r, James Walker, Tenley & Tessa Letourneau, Becca Dixon, and Edwin Eisaman.

# ALL CONGREGATION CHRISTMAS PROGRAM



I-r back, Malahaks daughter & grandson, Tessa Letourneau, Mahalak grandson, Makenzie Adams, Caroline Lindsley, Tessa Letourneau, Becca Dixon, Pastor Jess. Front, Dylana Eisaman with Quinton on her lap, Jackson Kleinjans.



Chime Choir

I-r, Tom Ludwig, Melinda Mueller, Branden Bacon, Dennis & Carolyn Willaman, Eric Mueller, Eve Andrus directing.

# SUNDAY SCHOOL

## Sunday School Programing



After the Children's Message during the worship service, children will be directed to meet their teachers in the Commons for Sunday School.



Each class will include a lesson, singing songs, and doing a craft.

Come join us this Sunday!

# AMERICAN RED CROSS BLOOD DRIVE

## December 31, 2025 Blood Drive

We held our third Red Cross Blood Drive at GSLC on October 30, 2025. We set a new record with 26 units of blood collected! Between our drives in June, August, and October, we have been able to collect 66 units of blood. We have also started getting repeat donors from our community who hope to come every couple months to enjoy a pulled pork sandwich and sweet treats. You all make this possible! Thank you for your support!

Here are the next blood drives we have scheduled:

Wednesday, December 31, 2025, 9:00am - 3:00pm

Thursday, February 26, 2026, 11:00am - 5:00pm

Thursday, April 23, 2026 11:00am - 5:00pm

Thursday, June 25, 2026 11:00am - 5:00pm

The Red Cross doesn't hold blood drives on public holidays like New Year's, so we have an early drive New Year's Eve and then the schedule resets.

Church Council has also approved new A-frame signs to help us alert the community to events like blood drives. These signs can be weighted with ballast to withstand winds and are easy to change out with new posters to advertise other events. We have had several walk-in blood donors stop because they saw our message board sign. These A-frames are additional outreach tools.

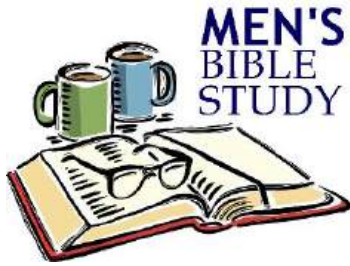
This partnership with the Red Cross helps us connect with community members and save lives. Thank you to everyone who contributed their time and delicious snacks to make these drives a success!

The MET (Membership and Events Team)

## MENS BIBLE STUDY

### Calling All Men

#### Who *Meant* to Read the Bible More This Past Year.



We're launching a new Men's Bible Study—where faith gets real, questions are welcome, coffee is strong, and no one will make you read out loud unless you *really* want to.

Whether you're a lifelong Bible scholar or still trying to find Habakkuk, you're invited. Come for the Scripture, stay for the discussion, and leave with encouragement (and possibly snacks). Join us as we grow in faith, sharpen one another, and discuss important topics in today's world and how they relate to scripture.

We'll start on **Saturday, January 10 at the church at 10:00** am. Bring a bible if you wish, but we'll have some on hand too. Let's get together and strengthen our faith as we delve into scripture.

Saturday, January 10, 2026 - 10:00 am

## WHAT DOES MY OFFERING DO?

### ***What does my offering do?***

Here we are in the season of gratitude and our church wants to say thank you! Every offering shared in worship, every act of generosity, and every commitment to your congregation's mission makes a real, tangible difference across our community, our synod and throughout the wider ELCA.

Our ELCA Mission Support is a living expression of our faith. Through your congregation's gifts, we join in God's work within our community and far beyond what any of us could do alone.

Every single dollar of Mission Support reflects the shared ministry of people offering what they have in faith. When you give, you are part of a church that feeds, teaches, trains, comforts, and proclaims the Gospel in places at home or places you may never visit. Either way, that impact is deeply felt.

**Thank you** for every gift, every prayer, and every act of generosity and for believing that we can do more together than we can alone. And thank you for living out Christ's love!

Pastor Jess, Your Church Council, & Stewardship Committee

# SHARED PURPOSE, SHARED MISSION

## SAMARITAS JOINS IN CELEBRATING BISHOP JULIE SCHNEIDER THOMAS



It was a true privilege for Samaritas leaders to gather and celebrate the installation of Bishop Julie Schneider Thomas at Trinity Lutheran Church in Grand Rapids this September. On Saturday evening, Bishop Julie was officially installed as the North/West Lower Michigan Synod Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) – marking an inspiring new chapter of leadership and faith.

The reception that followed was filled with warmth, shared purpose, and meaningful conversations about community service and collaboration. Samaritas Chief Financial Officer, Bridgette Zappacosta, and other leaders reflected on the deep connections between faith-based organizations and the communities they serve.

Throughout the evening, Samaritas Chief Executive Officer, Dave Morin, engaged with clergy and lay members alike, celebrating a spirit of unity and shared mission. The gathering served as a powerful reminder that faith partnerships remain a driving force for good—uniting congregations and community organizations in service to others.



From *Our Hands*, Fall/Winter 2025, Issue No. 19

## END-OF-2025 GIVING STATEMENTS

### End of 2025 Giving Statements

End of the 2025 year giving statements will be emailed mid January. The decision to email them was made by council to save time and money. If you would like one printed please sign the list on the counter in the commons. Those on that list will be printed February 1. They will be available at church for pickup during the month of February. If not picked up they will be mailed at the end of February.

Another way you can see your giving **anytime** is in Breeze. Go to your MY PROFILE page which is listed in the top menu bar. Click on GIVING on the left side of your screen. You can select individuals in your family or the entire family. Be sure to set the date range you want to see. Other choices you have are: add other columns, download, as Excel, or print your statement.

If you have questions contact Vicki Russell or Elliott Eisaman.



## COMMUNITY ACTION HOUSE MEAL KITS

### Community Action House Meal Kits.

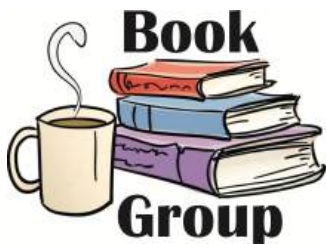
Supplies at food pantries are stretched thin including at the Community Action House so we are collecting meal kits.

- Take a food list in the Commons,
- Pick a meal and purchase the items.
- Pack the items in a paper bag with the food list attached and
- Drop the bag off at church.

The bags are then donated to CAH. Thank you for your generosity.



## BOOK GROUP NEWS



Join us in January for

### ***Sold on a Monday*** by Kristina McMorris

***Sold On a Monday*** is based on an actual photograph taken during the Great Depression of the 1930s of a pregnant mother and children next to a “Children for Sale” sign. This story follows reporter Ellis Reed and secretary Lillian Palmer swept up in the repercussions of Ellis’ decision to recreate the photograph for a news story after the original was destroyed and the children in it gone. “This is a story of love, redemption and the unexpected paths that bring us home.”  
goodreads.com

Next meeting: Wednesday, January 21, 2026, 4:00 pm.

## CHRISTIANS UNITING IN SONG & PRAYER (CUSP)



### Community-Wide Song and Prayer

Celebrating together the  
International Week of Prayer  
for Christian Unity

Sunday, January 25, 2026 at 5:00 pm

Maranatha Church  
918 Central Ave.  
Holland, MI 49423

## FROM THE CHURCH COUNCIL PRESIDENT

Friends in Christ,  
I'd like to take this opportunity to wish you all a Happy New Year.

I'd also like to let you know that your Church Council needs to replace two members going into 2026. Ideally we would have two volunteers in place by the Congregational Meeting on the last Sunday of February.

Please consider this important service this holiday season. Church Council meets once per month on the third Thursday of the month at 6:30 pm. Meetings average about 2 hours. If you are interested, or you have questions please talk to me or another current Church Council member.

Thank you! Brian Underhill - Church Council President

## NOISY OFFERING



### **January/February Noisy Offering: Community Action House**

Our Noisy Offering for January/February is Community Action House. We will continue to provide CAH with Meal Kits.

### **Community Action House Meal Kits**

Take one of the food lists in the Commons, pick a meal and purchase the items. Pack the items in a paper bag with the food list attached and drop the bag off at church. The bags are then donated to CAH. Thank you for your generosity.



## CRAFTS AND CONVERSATION



### **Crafts and Conversation:**

A time for fellowship while working on any craft of your choosing.

Next meeting:

Wednesday, January 14, 2026, 6:30 pm.

## BREEZE

### See Your Giving Anytime



You can see your giving **anytime** is in Breeze. Go to your MY PROFILE page which is listed in the top menu bar. Click on GIVING on the left side of your screen. You can select individuals in your family or the entire family. Be sure to set the date range you want to see. Other choices you have are: add other columns, download, as Excel, or print your statement.

If you have questions contact Vicki Russell or Elliott Eisaman.

## PRAISE AND THANKSGIVING

From CAH

Thank you for all the ways Good Shepherd Lutheran has partnered to build a stronger community! Hope to have you join us in another season of giving!

Molly Latchaw  
Community Action House

rec'd Dec. 18, 2025

To GSLC,

Thank you for my bonus. It is helping towards Beth's surgery!

Eve

rec'd Dec. 28, 2025

Dear Council and Congregation,

Thank you for your generous Christmas gift. It is greatly appreciated. Thank you also for your kind words of support. They are more precious than gold.

Deb P-G

rec'd Dec. 29, 2025



### ***The Measure of Our Love***

Computers connected via internet = Families

Total Sunday Attendance: 163

Families: 9

Average Sunday Attendance: 54

Christmas Eve Attendance: 74

## SUNDAY SERVANTS

### Sunday Servants Needed for January

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](mailto:gslc.office@icloud.com)

Date	Worship Leader/ Communion Assistant	Reader(s)	Usher	Communion Set-Up/ Clean-Up
January 4	WL- CA- Sally Ponstein	Sally Ponstein		Deb Ludwig
January 11	WL - CA-	Eric Mueller		Terry Grossman
January 18	WL - CA -			Terry Grossman
January 25	WL - CA -			Vicki Russell

## FELLOWSHIP SIGN-UP — JANUARY

*Fellowship Sign-up.*



Treats and Set Up & Clean Up	
January 4, 2026	Sally Ponstein
January 11, 2026	
January 18, 2026	
January 25, 2026	

# JANUARY

## Birthdays

Laurie Schuldt 2  
Kathy Shoup 2  
Dennis Willaman 2  
Jessica Bacon 5  
Lois Robinson 10  
Annika Pearson 22  
Brian Hurt 23  
Lisa Pearson 27  
James Walker 30



## Anniversaries

Dennis & Carolyn  
Willaman 13

## 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.  
Quilter's Meet, Tuesdays, 11:00 am on site. No Quilting in December.  
Women's Bible Study, Wednesdays, 10:30 am, September - May.  
Pray Without Ceasing weekly prayer service, Wednesdays, 6:00 pm.  
Book Group, 3rd Wednesday of the month, 4:30 pm. September - May.

## PASTOR JESS' SCHEDULE



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

Phone: (616) 403-4660

Email: [pj.gslc@gmail.com](mailto:pj.gslc@gmail.com)

To view Pastor's weekly in-office hours, look on the Breeze  
calendar on our website at [goodshepherdhollandmi.com](http://goodshepherdhollandmi.com)

## COUNCIL MEMBERS

### Church Council Members:

Branden Bacon (VP)	(920) 889-8707, <a href="mailto:branden.bacon@gmail.com">branden.bacon@gmail.com</a>
Dylana Eisaman	(616) 953-0603, <a href="mailto:dylana.pinter@gmail.com">dylana.pinter@gmail.com</a>
Michael Russell	(616) 283-6723 <a href="mailto:miker163@yahoo.com">miker163@yahoo.com</a>
Brian Underhill (Pres)	(616) 292-7194, <a href="mailto:underhillbrian@yahoo.com">underhillbrian@yahoo.com</a>
Pastor Jess	(616) 403-4660, <a href="mailto:pj.gslc@gmail.com">pj.gslc@gmail.com</a>

## IN OUR DECEMBER PRAYERS

### *In Our December Prayers...*

- **Our Sympathies:** to Lois Robinson's granddaughter & grandson-in-law on the death of his mother, Sharon Redding.
- **Congratulations:** to the Norvells and their granddaughter on the birth of twins Quinn & Remi, November 26th.
- **Praise and Thanksgiving.** Tim Wahl, (Naomi's brother) is doing well and recovering nicely from back surgery after a fall. Kindi (Kris Norvell's niece) was declared cancer free on Nov. 20 after tumor surgery and is now eating soft foods. In Kris' words, "I am literally weeping for joy... Thank the Lord!"
- **Ministries of the Month, December:** Samaritas and Council.
- **Healing/Peace:** Ali Andrus (Eve's daughter) bed rest for flu and possible pneumonia, Beth Andrus (Eve's daughter) surgery on Dec. 30, Barton Family (friends of Julie Bolton, Corinne Becker, surgery went well, promising prognosis, Corinne Becker, breast cancer, Zach Bergland (Beckers' nephew), Jake Bird, cancer treatment (Corinne's son-in-law), Bryan Blank, former member, needs a kidney transplant, Greg Bolton, (brother-in-law of Julie Bolton), Patricia Bradfield, Mary & Wayne Cagle (friends of Sally Ponstein) Wayne diagnosed with lung cancer, Mark DeGraaf, stage 4 cancer, Diane (close friend of Kris Norvell) cancer diagnosis, Nan Ehram, (Julie Bolton's sister-in-law), cancer diagnosis, Shawn Felgenhaur (Kerry Johnson's sister) prayers for continued healing, Jayce Genzinger (Tammy Walter's step-niece's son) born preemie in July, Jessie George (Deb P-G's daughter), Tessa Hurt (out-of-town member) diagnosed with Myelofibrosis, Jan (Cathy Sytsma's sister), Holly Johnson, (Steve & Kerry's daughter), Connie Lentz (friend of Kathy Shoup), Tiffany Letourneau, being treated for breast cancer, Linda (Lois Robinson's daughter) has pneumonia, Marilyn (Branden Bacon's gr.mother) is in hospice, John & Judy Madison, (Lois' neighbors) both undergoing cancer treatment, Iris Mears, (PJ's godmother), Ron Meyer, Pat Ponstein (Sally's sister-in-law) is in the hospital, Kris Norvell, neck surgery Nov. 7, Sharon Redding (Lois R's granddaughter m-i-l) has stage 4 cancer and is on hospice care. Rick, (Brian Dixon's dad) undergoing treatment for sepsis, Elizabeth and Janice Russell (Mike & Vicki's niece and sister-in-law respectively) prayers for continued improvement, Elizabeth Russell (Mike & Vicki's niece), recovery from brain surgery, Janice Russell (Mike & Vicki's sister-in-law) healing prayers, Greg & Janice Russell (Mike's brother & sister in law) injured in a car accident, Katherine Slee (friend of Beckers), Claire Smith (Norvell's grandniece) recovery from transplant surgery, Stella, 7 yrs old, (Sally Ponstein's friend's granddaughter) prayers for non-rejection of transplant, Russ Taylor, (Julie Bolton's father) surgery recovery, Sara Thompson (Corinne's friend) cancer diagnosis, Chuck Thor, Steve Unruh (Corinne's bro.) colon cancer treatments, Tim Wahl, (Naomi's brother) recovering from back surgery on 10/30, seriously injured in a fall, Julia Wentz, chemotherapy treatments, Dennis Willaman.
- **Healthy Pregnancy:** Haley Norvell, (Floyd & Kris's granddaughter) is expecting twins.
- **Assisted Living/Nursing Home/Homebound:** Christopher St. John (Son of Bonita Zielke), Susan Straith, 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), Mitchell Johnson (Parrott's nephew), Koa Rosally (Grossman's grandson), Zachery Wiesner (Gigi Howard's son-in-law).
- **Prayer Partners:** All Saints Lutheran Church, Rev. Gerald Ferguson, Mason; Christ Lutheran Church, Rev. Robert Martin, Michigan Center; Trinity Lutheran Church, Rev. Jeffrey Gramza, Midland; Trinity Lutheran Church, Rev. Mary Hughes, Millersburg.