

Welcome



Advent

THE SHEPHERD'S STAFF
The Memorial Church of the Good Shepherd
December 4, 2024

MISSION STATEMENT: Good Shepherd is growing in: Faith and knowledge of God, ministry in our neighborhood, love for one another and support for those seeking Christ.

*Please check out the **church calendar** available on our website.*

www.goodshepherdwv.org

A Reflection from the Rev. Katie Beth Miksa

This time of year always seems a bit dreary. There are many overcast days, filled with cold and little light. When I was younger, my family would pass the days with a daily Advent calendar. Ours was not the kind with chocolate or little gifts. Ours was a cloth one with a cloth toy soldier that moved each day toward Christmas. In my adult life, I have missed out on purchasing one of these coffee or tea calendars I keep hearing about. I never seem to remember to order them in time, yet I haven't missed out on the joy. Sitting in my living room is an Advent wreath made of hewn walnut and filled with beeswax candles. Each week, I will turn out the lights, say the seasonal prayers and blessings, then light the appropriate number of candles.



There's something about the warmth of the fire and the light from the candle that just sparks joy. The room is the same, yet it appears different in the flickering light. The smell of the hot beeswax wafts in the air. It reminds me of leather oil I used to clean saddles when I was younger. And each week there is more light, and more smells, and more memories. With each week, my expectation of the coming of Christmas grows. Christmas is, after all, a celebration of the moment the light of Christ becomes incarnate — entering into the world such that the darkness could not overcome it.

So if you are like me and find yourself growing bothered by all these gray days, I invite you to find your own Advent candles to light. May lighting them help you see the ordinary just a little bit differently. May you find joy in the memories they evoke. And may you be reminded of the hope we have in the coming of Christ. Amen.

Katie Beth+

Christmas Greetings



Each year we publish a special edition of the church newsletter that contains last-minute information on Christmas and end-of-year events. However, it is mostly filled with greetings our members near and far (and former members) share with their Good Shepherd family. Please email your Christmas greeting to Linda (LLBC100@msn.com) no later than Monday, Dec. 16. There will also be greeting sheets in the Welcome Center Dec. 8 and 15 if you wish to provide your message that way.

GS Youth and Young Adult Fundraiser – Sunday Dec. 8

The Good Shepherd Youth and Young Adult group will be having a Christmas Craft and Bake Sale on Sunday morning, December 8th. Craft items and baked goods will be sold between the 8:00 and 10:15 services and after the 10:15 service.



Some craft items that will be available for purchase are: various sized Christmas gift bags, seasonal wind spinners, Christmas clay ornaments and Christmas ball ornaments.

Some of the baked good items are Ginger's pecan tartlets, corn bread, Toll House cookies, Bob's brownies, banana bread, Christmas cookie bars, pepperoni rolls and more.

We will accept cash and checks (made out to Good Shepherd with Youth in the memo line). At last year's bake sale, the congregation was so generous and we were greatly appreciative. We thought we'd expand our bake sale and add crafts this year. We hope to see you there and thank you for supporting our kids and young people.

Carolynne Cooper

The Christmas Pageant is Coming!



It has been five years since the last Christmas pageant. The Good Shepherd Drama Group, with your help, will put on the traditional pageant on Sunday, December 22nd after the 10:15 service. There will be no sermon that day. The pageant will take the place of the sermon and it will happen immediately following the service.

We have the main characters covered, but we need shepherds, kings, people of Bethlehem and an additional angel or two. There are no lines, just wearing a costume, walking in when it's your time and walking out. (There may be some kneeling involved, if possible.)

If you would like to participate, please let me know. You can tell me in person or call or text me at 304-991-5540. Carolynne Cooper

Christmas Offering

Our food ministry to the homeless is the focus of this year's Christmas offering. Most of us fill our homes with the sights, sounds and smells of Christmas to evoke the spirit of Christmas for ourselves, our families and friends. Your vestry asks you to join them in remembering those who do not have a place to call home. Just as there are many reasons for homelessness, there are also a variety of ways to lovingly address the issues the homeless face daily. We offer food to ease hunger in the hope that being fed will enable people to find and accept help from other sources to deal with their additional needs.



You may donate using your Christmas offering envelope, an envelope in the Welcome Center or by check to Good Shepherd with Christmas in the memo line.

Shepherd's Closet Rummage



There is one more sale this year - this weekend, Friday and Saturday, Dec. 6 and 7. Next week the room will be open for our Adopted Families so they can choose some gently used clothing and a Christmas decoration to supplement the new gifts they receive for their children. Thank you for your donations which have filled the Shepherd's Closet with an abundance of clothing, household items and decorations.

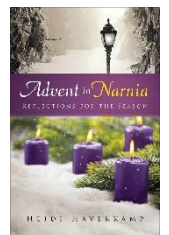
Please hold any more donations until after the first of the year. The next sale will be the first weekend of March.

Advent Series

Rev. Katie Beth will lead a formation series Dec. 8, 15 and 22 at 9:15 in the Junior High Room.

This will be loosely based off Rev. Heidi Haverkamp's book *Advent in Narnia*.

You do not need to have read the book or *The Chronicles of Narnia* by CS Lewis to participate and enjoy the discussion. *Advent in Narnia* is available on Amazon if you wish to purchase it.



Altar Flowers:



The only remaining date in 2024 is Dec. 29. You can have a small vase of flowers placed in the Columbarium on any Sunday. Please contact the office to choose your date and to indicate if the flowers are in memory of someone or to honor a special person or event.

Stewardship Update

If you have not turned in a pledge card yet, please do so now. The church treasurer is working on a preliminary budget for 2025. Our budget is heavily dependent on your financial support. Thank you to the 40 families or individuals who have already so generously provided their pledge.



Adopted Families



The team is busy filling gift bags for each child and family. We appreciate your understanding as we 'take over' spaces usually available for other uses. The distribution days are Monday and Tuesday Dec. 9/10. After we inventory the leftovers, things should return to normal. We are grateful for all the donations!!!

Celebrating Patsy

Patsy Mace, our long-time nursery attendant, retired last February after 39 ½ years of service caring for generations of Good Shepherd children. Many of us have loving memories of Patsy caring for our children or grandchildren.

We are honoring Patsy with a **SURPRISE** reception in the Welcome Center after the 10:15 service on Dec. 15. Cake and punch will be provided. We will have a basket for your cards and any monetary donations you may wish to give as a retirement gift (any checks need to be made out to Patsy). If you will not be in church on the 15th, you can bring or send cards to the office no later than next Thursday, Dec. 12th, to be added to the basket. Please remember not to say anything about this to Patsy if you see her this Sunday!



Carols for the Homebound



Members of the Youth and Young Adult Group and the choir plan to go caroling to our homebound members on Sunday Dec. 22. Anyone else is welcome to join us. This is always a joyous, festive time for the singers and those we visit. Plan to be at the church at 5:45. We will form carpools. Maps to our destinations and carol booklets will be provided. We hope to return to church no later than 9 to enjoy some hot chocolate and cookies before heading home.

If you or someone you know would enjoy a visit by our carolers, call organizer Bob Crocker (304-893-2591) to be placed on the schedule.

Home for the Holidays?

As you make plans for Christmas and New Year's, please consider helping out at church as we continue to feed the hungry. Some of our 'regulars' will be out of town and children are out of school for 2 full weeks which may drive up demand on the pantry. We will be open a combination of normal and limited hours, partly depending on the help we can line up. We will be closed Christmas Day and New Year's Day. Call the office to let us know how/when you can help.

- Mountaineer Food Bank Delivery: Thursday Dec. 26
 - help unload the truck and store the food: 11 AM – 1 PM
- Last Sunday Supper – Sunday Dec. 29
 - set-up and cooking beginning at 1 PM; servers arrive by 5:15 PM
- Food Pantry and Homeless Bag Ministry – Dec. 23, Dec. 24 (early close), Dec. 26; Dec. 30, Dec. 31 (early close), Jan. 2
 - Homeless bags – morning or afternoon shifts
 - Food Pantry – you choose the time you can work



Advent:

An **updated** copy of our Good Shepherd Advent calendar is attached as the last page to this issue of the Staff.



Bible Study



Wednesday Bible Study groups led by David Cooper meets most Wednesdays. The groups meet in the late afternoon/early evening. There are two sessions. The group meeting from 4:15 – 5:15 PM is studying the Letter to the Romans. The group meeting from 5:15 - 6:15 PM has finished Ruth and is now studying 1st Samuel. Both groups welcome new attendees. Let David know you will be there so he can let you into the building (304-494-8790).

Staying Connected, Continuing to Serve

Intercessory Prayers

During your prayer time please use the lists below to remember those who have asked for our prayers:



Parish Prayer List

The People of Israel and Gaza
The People of Ukraine
Peggy Roberts - healing
Mary Gevas – healing
Diane Cottrill – healing
Jone Johnson – healing/strength
Deb Hepburn-McKinney – healing

Marcia Doyle – healing
Amanda Morris – healing
Peter Gevas – healing
Heyward Roberts – healing
Ann Stevens– healing
John Stevens – healing
David Cottrill - healing

Eric Dailey – healing
Jay Lathrop – healing
Dee Milhoan – healing/strength
Shauna Hyde – healing
Vickie Dilley –healing/strength
Chris Heckman – healing



Safety for all those serving in the Armed Forces
Sterling Slusher, Joe Slusher, Lauren Fielder, Peter Keiser

Those needing healing from cancer

Glen Kirk
Judy McCoy
Doris Lowe
Hal Foss

Marlene Cox
David White
Ellis Corra
Charles Sterchak

David Nevins
Alana Dailey
Gary Greer

Julia Lee
Chris Angotti
Wendy Meredith



Outreach Programs

♥ **Donuts** - We make day-old donuts available to our neighbors and the homeless. Thank you to McHappy's and to those who make sure the donuts are picked up each week.



♥ **Little Free Library** – Filling the church neighborhood with books to read. Your donations are always welcome or help yourself to a book if you spot a good one – they are there for anyone and everyone.



♥ **Last Sunday Supper** – The next meal will be Sunday, December 29. Since Come help set-up and cook beginning at 1 PM or come help serve and clean-up at 5:15 PM. We begin serving at 5:30 and continue until 6/6:15 or earlier if we run out of food. We are usually out of the building by 7 or 7:15.

♥ **Food Pantry** – If you would like to help handing out the bags, the current need is someone on Tuesday morning. We also need substitute helpers when someone is out of town or ill. Contact Linda if you can serve a few hours weekly or just as needed.





Inreach Opportunities

We show our care for other members as we listen to each other, spend time together, support each other in our church ministries, share a hug during the peace, help in times of need and celebrate special moments. Those who can't be here in person are also valued members of our congregation. If you or a loved one would like a card, a visit, a meal, or a home communion, please call the office and we will connect you with someone who would love to be asked to help.



♥ Pastoral Care

Someone is in the office Monday through Thursday, 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. If you need pastoral care outside office hours, contact Larry James or Linda Crocker (see below for our contact information). Katie Beth is still arranging a dedicated phone number for pastoral care emergencies. Additionally, the Eucharistic Visitors can offer a visit and/or home communion to those who can't come to church – just ask!

♥ Prayer Chain

We have a group of people who pray for those having emergency situations – surgery, accidents, or other crises. Linda Crocker makes the calls using the One Call system when she is notified by a church member of an immediate need. If you want to be added to the prayer chain let Linda know (304-210-5591). **God hears all our prayers** – you don't need a special gift to pray for healing and comfort for those in distress. All prayer chain calls remain confidential.



Contact Information:

The Rev. Katie Beth Miksa	304-428-1525, ext. 4	rector.goodshepherdwva@gmail.com
Ginger Smith, Parish Administrator	304-428-1525, ext. 1	gingersmith.goodshepherdwva@gmail.com
Linda Crocker, Parish Ministries	304-428-1525, ext. 5	LLBC100@msn.com
Larry James, Senior Warden	304-482-9661	blesense@suddenlink.net

One Call system 1-877-698-3261 This is the number to call if you need a message from the church repeated.

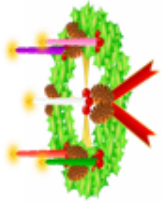
Calendar Dates

- Dec. 8, 15, 22 – Advent study between services
- Dec. 8 – Youth and Young Adult Bake and Craft Sale
- Dec. 9, 10 – Adopted Families Christmas Distribution Days
- Dec. 22 – Christmas Pageant
- Dec. 22 – Decorating the church for Christmas after the 10:15 service
- Dec. 22 – Christmas caroling to the homebound beginning at
- Dec. 24 – Christmas Eve Service at 7 PM (music beginning at 6:30 PM)
- Dec. 29 - Last Sunday Supper

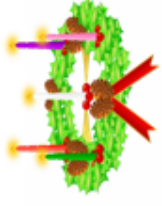









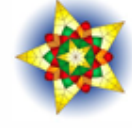






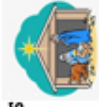





Katie Beth reveals her pink stole during her first sermon at Good Shepherd





Good Shepherd Advent/Christmas Calendar 2024



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<p><i>Dec. 1</i></p> <p>Make or find your Advent Wreath and light the 1st candle tonight</p>	<p>2</p> <p>Choose a new dinnertime grace to use during Advent</p>	<p>3</p> <p>Make ornaments from old Christmas cards. (just google it)</p>	<p>4</p>  <p>Send Christmas cards to faraway friends</p>	<p>5</p> <p>Write a Christmas greeting and send it to LLbc100@msn.com</p>	<p>6</p> <p>St Nicholas Day Read a Christmas story</p>	<p>7</p> <p>Count your blessings while listening to Christmas carols</p>
<p>8</p> <p>Light 2 candles on your Advent Wreath Advent Study @ 9:15 AM Youth/Young Adult Bake & Craft Sale</p>	<p>9</p> <p>Give thanks for our Adopted Families volunteers</p> 	<p>10</p> <p>Say a prayer for our Adopted Families</p> 	<p>11</p> <p>Invite someone to go on a winter walk</p> 	<p>12</p>  <p>Make cookies today for a neighbor</p>	<p>13</p> <p>Practice singing Christmas carols</p> 	<p>14</p> <p>Pray for family and friends as you wrap gifts</p> 
<p>15</p> <p>Light 3 candles on your Advent Wreath</p> 	<p>16</p> <p>Make some hot chocolate and share it with someone special</p> 	<p>17</p> <p>Spend 17 minutes just relaxing in front of your tree</p> 	<p>18</p> <p>Call the office and offer to help hand out food sometime during the next 2 weeks</p>	<p>19</p> <p>Donate individual size food items to our Food Pantry for the homeless</p> 	<p>20</p> <p>Watch a Christmas movie</p> 	<p>21</p> <p>Plan time to relax with friends</p> 
<p>22</p> <p>Christmas Pageant at 10:15, decorating the church, and Caroling at 5:45 to the homebound</p> 	<p>23</p> <p>Read Luke 2: 1-20 and set up your Christmas crèche</p> 	<p>24</p> <p>Christmas Eve Service at 7 PM (music begins at 6:30)</p> 	<p>25</p> <p>.Merry Christmas <i>Pray for those alone at Christmas</i></p>	<p>26</p> <p>Thank God for everyone who sent you a Christmas card or gift</p>	<p>27</p> <p>Enjoy the wonder of a starry night</p> 	<p>28</p> <p>Put peanut butter on pine cones and hang them for the birds</p> 
<p>29</p> <p>Come help prepare or serve the Last Sunday Supper</p> 	<p>30</p> <p>Write "I love you" notes for your family and put them under their pillows</p>	<p>31</p> <p>Pray for all those who have lost loved ones in 2024</p>	<p><i>Jan 1 2025</i></p> <p>Happy New Year! Praise God for blessing you with another year</p>	<p>Jan 2</p> <p>Cut out some lacy snowflakes for your windows</p> 	<p>Jan 3</p> <p>Sing The 12 Days of Christmas one more time</p>	<p>Jan 4 Epiphany is Monday</p> 