



# Good Shepherd Lutheran Church

## S H E P H E R D ' S V O I C E

### Good Shepherd Lutheran Church WORSHIP TIMES

**Saturday**

**5:00 pm** ~ Holden Evening Prayer

**Sunday**

**8:30 am** ~ Traditional Service

**11:00 am** ~ Contemporary Service

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## *Looking Forward to an Exciting Year*

*by Debbie Kempf*

The beginning of the year is traditionally a time to reflect on the past year as well a time to look forward to the new year. Based on the work that was started by Good Shepherd in 2011, I am truly excited about where we are as a congregation and the opportunities we have in front of us this year.

2011 was certainly a year of change as we bid farewell to Pastor Prochaska and welcomed Pastor Bengson as our Interim Pastor. With the Bible Study on the book of Acts in January and February, we began the process of discerning the direction in which the Holy Spirit is leading Good Shepherd in the future. Next, using input from the congregational survey, the Vision Team completed our Ministry Site Profile. Then, the Call Committee was appointed and began the search process in September. Throughout the year, prayer was emphasized. Prayer opportunities include a monthly prayer vigil, guided prayer weekly during the summer months, and praying on the 9s — at 9:00 am and 9:00 pm daily — for our church, our community, and our world.

*Constantly remind ourselves that we are saved by grace... rooted in scripture... prayer is an important part of our community...*

*(continued on page 4)*

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**Parish Life & Response**  
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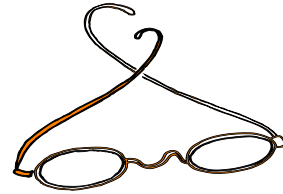
**Witness & Outreach**  
Roger Bauser

**Resource Development**  
Jim Kempf

To contact any of the staff, council or commissioners, visit our website for contact information. You may also call the office or send an email to the Office Manager and she will be glad to assist you.

## Editor's Corner

by Linda Newcomer



We have just finished one of the most blessed - and harried - seasons of the year. With Christmas, and all its blessings and wonder and family free-for-all now behind us, we have a long stretch of quiet winter ahead of us. I always like to think of winter as a time of rest and reflection - and rejuvenation of body, mind and spirit for what lies ahead. Many of the articles in this issue of our *Shepherd's Voice* have that reflective tone as well. We continue the important work of listening to God's direction for us in the coming year. Our lead article provides a synopsis of our progress in the search for a new pastor, and congregational discussions so far. We have also included a book review that is very timely as we ponder the future of our church. You will find some hints from our interim pastor about small, simple ways we can make GSLC more inviting to visitors.

Two seminars of special interest are the Financial Peace University seminar and the GriefShare Sessions that will continue over several weeks to minister to two very distinct, yet very important needs to our congregation and to our friends and neighbors around us. These are positive events that can reach out in practical ways to let our community know we have something to offer.

Our Youth article focuses on the many upcoming activities and the ongoing fundraisers we continue to work on. The Witness & Outreach article reminds us once again of all the programs we support and encourages us to continue our efforts by sharing some heartfelt thanks from these organizations.

Two articles in this issue are about practical needs to update our Prayer and Care roster and our way of communicating prayer needs, as well as some information about an annual census coming up soon. There's also a summary of ongoing bible studies, prayer groups, and upcoming events at GSLC in the coming months. ☸

This newsletter is a publication of Good Shepherd Lutheran Church  
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The information contained in the *Shepherd's Voice* has been compiled using information and articles submitted by our members for publication. We regret any errors or omissions published in this newsletter, and inconvenience this may have caused. It is our intention to ensure that the contents of this publication are always as accurate as possible.

## Message from Pastor Bengson

Dear Friends of Good Shepherd,



Thank you for the opportunity to serve with you these last six months. Transitions are always times of uncertainty, questions, and evaluations, as well as openings to the new things God will be doing with us in the future. I

have appreciated your very gracious welcome and continuing devotion to God's mission through Good Shepherd Lutheran Church. While there is yet much to accomplish in identifying new pastoral leadership, congregational leadership has remained committed to faithfully following the leading of God's Spirit and serving in Christ's name. I feel privileged to continue to be a part of that journey. In the coming year, I encourage each member to recommit to regular worship and participation in the ministry of the congregation. The Christmas season celebrates God's coming right to us where we are in our Savior and Lord. I pray that each of you are looking forward to a new year filled with God's blessing.

*Yours in Christ,  
Pastor Glen Bengson*

P.S. The following note on this page has been in the "Weekly Staff" recently, but bears repeating and encourages us to extend ourselves in hospitality in Jesus' name. The peace of the Lord be with you, always!

## Hints on Hospitality

At special seasons of the year, as well as at every worship service, we have a good opportunity to emphasize our sense of hospitality to guests, as well as to ourselves.



Worship will be enhanced as we gather in the sanctuary more towards the front. (No, you don't have to sit in the front pew, but somewhere from the middle forward will make for a more hospitable feeling.) I think guests will feel more welcome as they observe the congregation worshipping near each other.

We all appreciate being welcomed when in the presence of people new to us. If you see someone you don't recognize, take the opportunity to introduce yourself. A simple, "Hi, I'm ... I don't think we've met," will easily begin conversation with either a visitor or a member you don't know yet, plus being true - (rather than, "You must be a visitor," because they might not be!). If they turn out to be a guest, make sure they sign a guest card, and introduce them to another person or two that you know. Mention all this to the Pastor.



I note we have a good and healthy manner of sharing the "Peace of the Lord," and encourage this for many reasons, as a sign of our "holy communion" as Christ's body together in faith. We are all guests of our Lord at his table, in

the presence of our brothers and sisters in Christ's church. ☸

## Looking Forward to an Exciting Year (continued from page 1)

Completion of the Ministry Site Profile required us to define our top three mission and ministry priorities and goals for the congregation. Our top priorities and goals are:

- 1. Focus on the core Lutheran fundamentals of the Word, the Sacraments and grace.** Focus on growth as Christians and discipleship through greater participation in worship, Bible study, Christian education and prayer. Be true to the Word of God in all we do with a strong emphasis on worship, preaching, teaching, and learning what it means to be a Christian in today's world.
- 2. Revitalize Good Shepherd into a growing congregation** by:
  - ◆ Building a stronger youth and family ministry.
  - ◆ Building a stronger Christian education program for children, youth and adults so that we learn God's Word and how to apply it.
  - ◆ Reaching out to the Kettering community to attract younger families to Good Shepherd and providing regular activities that draw people.
  - ◆ Encouraging all members to become more actively involved in the life of the church.
  - ◆ Showing concern for members who have fallen away.
  - ◆ Making visitors feel welcome and encouraging them to return.
- 3. Build a stronger commitment to serve and care for our community and the world.** Build a sense of community and teamwork within the congregation, emphasizing unity of faith and purpose. In addition to ministering to members of Good Shepherd through pastoral care and visitation, reach out in service to people living near Good Shepherd. Build relationships where we can share the love of Christ with those with whom we come into contact. Continue to support both local ministries such as We Care Arts and worldwide ministries.

As a congregation, we can begin planning and working toward these mission and ministry priorities and goals in parallel with the call process. To that end, two congregational discussions were held to brainstorm and gather ideas about these priorities and goals. The first discussion in October focused on the first priority while the discussion in November focused on the second priority. A third discussion is planned on **Sunday January 22** to brainstorm about the third priority. These discussions generated many excellent ideas.

*Three areas to focus on...  
Contact people who have not  
been to worship recently ...  
Implement the "W+2"  
challenge ...  
Establish a publicity team...*

The Council and Commissioners have reviewed the ideas generated so far and have identified three areas to focus on early in 2012 that require some planning:

1. Contact people who have not been in worship recently to say that we care, to make sure they are doing well, or if there is anything we can do for them.
2. Implement the "W+2" challenge. The "W" stands for worship, a basic expectation for everyone. In worship, we are fed from the Word and encouraged to walk with Christ. The "2" means participation in at least two ministries, one inward-facing ministry in the congregation and one outward-facing ministry.



3. Establish a publicity team to get the word out about the great things happening at Good Shepherd.



In addition, the Council and Commissioners identified several ideas that we should "just do" such as:

- ◆ Providing the prayer requests by telephone as well as email. (see article on this page)
- ◆ Allowing the assisting minister to write the prayers of intercession at our church services.
- ◆ Encouraging people to sit near the front during worship.
- ◆ Getting the youth involved in the breakfast at First Lutheran.
- ◆ If anyone in the congregation has an idea for mission, giving them permission to do it.
- ◆ Publishing events at least a month in advance.
- ◆ Giving visitors the brochure about the church plus the quarterly newsletter.

The congregational discussions also included dialog about the culture of the congregation and attitudes that we want to continue to nurture:

- ◆ Constantly remind ourselves that we are saved by grace and that we need to practice grace with each other. Focusing on unity in Christ first; an attitude of acceptance and forgiveness is the norm.
- ◆ We are rooted in Scripture and our connection with one another is in the Word. Bible study and Christian education are an integral part of who we are; we look at the Word together and we talk about it. For God's Word to be real, we need to be immersed in it.
- ◆ Prayer is an important part of our community and, as such, opportunities for prayer need to be very visible and welcoming. Prayer can come naturally because God has inspired us to pray.

In closing, 2012 promises to also be a year of change and new opportunities. While we anticipate calling a new full-time pastor, there will be new opportunities for involvement as we work together toward our top mission and ministry priorities and goals. Please continue to pray for Good Shepherd and prayerfully consider where God may be calling you personally to serve. 🌸

## Prayer and Care Communications

by Linda Newcomer

We currently have over sixty people on our Prayer & Care Team. About a month ago we announced that we now have the ability to send prayer requests via phone as well as by email.



Only about twenty people responded that they want to continue to be on the Prayer & Care Team, and all but one indicated they would like to receive the prayers via email, not by phone.

Even if you have never been on the Prayer and Care Team you are invited to sign up. Even if you do not use email regularly or don't have a computer at all, you may want to consider joining the Prayer & Care Team and receive prayer requests on your phone.

Thank you to everyone on the team who have already responded with their updates. If you would like to join, contact the church office, and let us know if you wish to receive prayer requests via email, or by phone, or both. 🌸

## Witness & Outreach

by Roger Bauser

*God blesses us so that we might  
be a blessing to others.*

### What's Going On in the ELCA?

Just “google” [www.elca.org](http://www.elca.org) and find a fascinating website with all sorts of information about the vision, mission, and ministry of our church. See how we Lutherans are gathered together doing God's work in our communities, in our nation, and around the world. Or you can go to [LivingLutheran.com](http://LivingLutheran.com).

Fellowship dinners begin again on **Wednesday January 4**. Just a thought: Do you know a senior citizen who would enjoy this activity, but maybe doesn't want to drive at night? Why not invite them to come along with you, or maybe take them some food from our leftovers? A short visit and a hot meal can make a big difference in the life of someone living alone. Do you know a neighbor or someone in your neighborhood who is having financial difficulty? Why not invite them to Wednesday dinner. The meal could help ease budget strains, and the fellowship could change lives.

### Thank-You's Received from Our Benevolence Partners

Thank you for your recent congregational gift to ELCA Missionary Sponsorships. Your gift, combined with the gifts of others, helps 250 missionaries in 48 countries partner with local people to provide safe drinking water, make available community health development, and train pastors to proclaim the Gospel even more effectively. Your ongoing prayers and financial gifts make a world of difference! Together we can do so much more than we could ever do alone. Our missionaries are preaching, teaching, healing, building, and seeking peace alongside our global partners. Thank you for your continued support.

*Pastor Twila Shock, Director  
Missionary Sponsorship and Global Appeals*

Thank you for your financial gift to Lutheran Outdoor Ministries of Ohio – Lutheran Memorial Camp. We are grateful and humbled by your faithful stewardship. Because of your gifts, hundreds of campers were able to enjoy diverse programs and Christian fellowship – in addition to making new friends and feeling better about themselves. We are blessed in so many ways and deeply appreciate your prayers and partnership. Visit our website [www.lomocamps.org](http://www.lomocamps.org) to learn more about our year-round programming for youth and adults.

*Penny Christensen  
LOMO Executive Director*

Thank you for your generous gifts to ELCA World Hunger and Disaster Relief programs. From better farming in Uganda, to hot meals and warm friendship in South Carolina, to water well maintenance in Uganda, your gifts are bringing help and hope to those living in hunger, fear, and



poverty. Each gift brings us a step closer to ending hunger in our world. Visit [www.elca.org/hunger/stories](http://www.elca.org/hunger/stories) to find more stories of how your gifts are at work around the world.

*Reverend Daniel Rift  
Director, ELCA World Hunger*

Thank you for your donations of volunteer hours and money and continuing support of Jeremiah's Letter. Because of you JLI is able to share God's love with people who need it most.

*Terry O. Bruns  
Executive Director, JLI*



Hardly a day passes at Global Health Ministries without some news of overseas testimony that inspires wonder about our God who has found yet another way to bring blessing and life in abundance to his people. A recent example is that of a high school first-aid trainee who had brought eight of her peers and her teacher to get further training for the “first-aid” club they had formed. These workers are splinting broken limbs, cleaning and bandaging cuts and wounds, stabilizing disaster victims and being Christ's healing agents – eagerly sought after by the neighbors in times of emergency or special need. Your gifts continue to help us plant seeds of healing and hope. Visit [www.ghm.org](http://www.ghm.org) for more information.

*Reverend Tim Iverson  
Global Health Ministries Executive Director*

On behalf of all of us here at We Care, we want to thank you for your continuing support through your prayers and gifts.

Your contribution will help us continue to serve over 700 clients in the coming year. As an example, one client came to WCA averaging four hospitalizations for mental illness each year. Since participating at

WCA for the past six years, she has learned to use her art skills to help her cope and more positively express her emotions, and has been hospitalized only twice (for medicine adjustments) during that time. Thank you for helping us bring healing art experiences and a deep sense of caring into the lives of the clients we serve. Please stop by and visit our clients, volunteer, or shop in the gift shop – or visit us on the web at [www.wecarearts.org](http://www.wecarearts.org).



*Terry Schalnat,  
Executive Director, WCA*

## Graceworks Lutheran Services Highlights

Graceworks inspired and supported a sense of home for more than 15,000 individuals who were experiencing challenging or changing circumstances during the past year. Through a wide variety of community-based and residential care facilities people were able



to receive assistance in the face of aging, financial crises, disabilities, and health concerns – experiencing stability, security, belonging, and community (a real sense of home). Graceworks provides millions of dollars of charity care each year and provides programs in the following areas:

- ◆ Bethany Village – Housing Community for older adults
- ◆ Bethany Rehabilitation Center – skilled nursing and individual rehabilitation
- ◆ Consumer Credit Counseling Service
- ◆ Friends at Home – visitation for the elderly
- ◆ Graceworks at Home – home health care for the elderly
- ◆ Graceworks Enhanced Living – safe, caring environments for the disabled
- ◆ Graceworks Housing Services – affordable housing for elderly or disabled
- ◆ Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Rehousing Program
- ◆ Interfaith Care Team Ministry – life skills education and financial and material assistance
- ◆ Once-Around Shop and Emergency Assistance Program
- ◆ Senior Companion Program

Go to [www.graceworks.org](http://www.graceworks.org) for more complete information on available services and opportunities to donate or volunteer. ☸

## 2012 Annual Census

by Linda Newcomer

It's time to ask everyone to complete an annual census of all the folks who worship here at Good Shepherd. In the coming weeks you will receive a copy of the personal record forms generated from our database for each member of your household.

Since this information is already in our database, you simply need to verify it and indicate any changes as necessary, or fill in missing information.

The information we will need you to verify is:

- ◆ Full name (maiden name and preferred name if applicable)
- ◆ Address - both primary and secondary (if you spend part of the year away from your primary address)
- ◆ Phone number - home, cell, work (if desired)
- ◆ Email - personal, work (if desired)
- ◆ Preferred contact method
- ◆ Birthdate & place of birth
- ◆ Father's & mother's name
- ◆ Date that you became member of GSLC (approximately if known)
- ◆ Baptism, first communion, confirmation dates (approximately if known)
- ◆ Marital status
- ◆ Wedding date or widowed date (if applicable)
- ◆ Church background

*NOTE:* We are not gathering employer or education information at this time. Nor are we collecting information about skills, talents or interests just yet. We will do that later in the spring.

When you receive your forms in the mail, take time to review them carefully and then return your forms in the space provided in the narthex. Or you may drop them in the office or mail them if you prefer. If you have any questions contact Linda Newcomer in the church office at 298-0136. 🌸



## GriefShare Sessions

### Starting Soon

by Kathy Seim

Good Shepherd will be starting another “GriefShare” Christian support group ministry on **Sundays February 12 through May 13** from 12:30 to 2:30 pm. GriefShare is a Christ-centered program with direction and purpose. It is a hybrid program with three components: video seminar, support group, and workbook. The video seminar portion provides important teaching on topics related to death and grief. The support group segment allows participants to talk through issues and feelings related to their own

grief experiences.

The workbook provides a tool to guide participants in sorting through their thoughts and emotions and in learning what the Bible says about grief-related topics.

With GriefShare, you will learn how to walk the journey of grief and be supported along the way. It is a place where hurting people find healing and hope.

If you would like to join us, contact Sue Williamson at 439-4727 or Kathy Seim at 294-1145 or call the church office. We need to know in advance how many plan to attend so we can order the workbooks for everyone. 🌸



## What is Epiphany?

by Inez Torres Davis, Director for Justice,  
Women of the ELCA

Epiphany is a church festival celebrated every January 6 that commemorates the coming of the Magi as the first manifestation of Christ to the Gentiles or, in the Eastern Church, the commemoration of the baptism of Christ.

**What is an epiphany?** According to the dictionary, the definition of an epiphany is: *A usually sudden manifestation or perception of the essential nature or meaning of something (2) an intuitive grasp of reality through something (as an event) usually simple and striking (3) an illuminating discovery, realization, or disclosure; a revealing scene or moment.* (Merriam-Webster)

Just like friends, epiphanies come in many shapes and sizes. Like friends, you never know when or where you might experience an epiphany, perhaps one that will even change your life! Like friendships, some epiphanies unfurl over time while others immediately appear. Being open to both possibilities invites illumination into our lives and enrichment of our experiences with each other.

### Unfolding Illumination

We will first look at epiphany as an unfolding or illuminating discovery by considering Martin Luther's teaching about baptism. For Martin Luther and for Lutherans, baptism means that our sinful self, with all its evil deeds and desires, can be drowned through daily repentance; and that day after day a new self can arise to live with God in righteousness and purity forever. Baptism sends us into the world to participate in the healing of our church, our society, and the world. We respond to grace by surrendering ourselves to God to be made whole and by the many ways we support others becoming whole. In the *Small Catechism*, Martin Luther cites Paul in Romans 6:4: “Therefore we have been buried with him by baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the

glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.” That walk in newness of life is the great adventure! The idea of renewing our baptism daily can rightly be called an epiphany since our baptism not only unfolds but also continues to be discovered as we live our lives



of faith. Who among us has not realized at several tender points in our lives how truly sinful we are in our thoughts, our words, and our deeds? Who among us has not wept in gratitude for the cleansing and healing forgiveness of God that was brought to us through the Word of God or by the breaking of bread and sharing of the Eucharist? Who among us has not had our hearts weighted down and hardened

by sin only to find ourselves loved open and soft and new—just from hearing that by God's grace toward us in Jesus Christ, we *are* new, forgiven, and whole? Who among us has not stood at the baptism of a sweet, fresh baby, made our own commitment to receive that baby into the community of faith, and felt the unmistakable catch of love in our throats? Being washed anew with such blessed realization is an unfolding revelation. Such renewing of our faith and spirit is an epiphany. Consider how your own faith and love for God has been an epiphany—a growing understanding of God's love that has led you through the trying times in your life.

### Sudden Revelation or Manifestation

An epiphany can also be a sudden revelation. Consider the epiphany Peter was given when he confessed Jesus as the Messiah and the Holy Son of God (Matthew 16:16). In this example, Peter suddenly saw—perhaps with incomplete understanding of the meaning of it—that Jesus was the Son of God! In our own lives, we may—all of a sudden—*get* something; we clearly see what we have never seen before. How we view the world is as much the result of the culture we live in as it is the language we speak. Our worldviews are given to us as we are nurtured, educated, and enculturated—first by our family, then by our church and schools, and then by the many other institutions with which we interact throughout our lives. The culture and community around us give us a framework for much of what we know to be true or normal to us.

## Financial Peace Seminar in February

by Martin Pierce

Martin Pierce will be presenting a seminar entitled “Financial Peace” beginning on **Monday February 13**. The classes run for thirteen weeks and will be held in the Fellowship Hall from 7:00 to 9:00 pm. There will be two previews of the class on **Sunday January 29** at 9:45 between services and also on **Monday January 30** at 7:00 pm to learn more about the seminar.

### What is Financial Peace University?

Financial Peace University (FPU) is the most important step to changing your financial future. It is your Total Money Makeover Program. It takes the knowledge from God and turns it into real action in our lives through a step-by-step process taught by best-selling author and financial counselor Dave Ramsey.

FPU is a thirteen-week life-changing program that empowers and teaches you how to make the right money decisions to achieve your financial goals and God’s plan for your life. The course is highly entertaining for everyone, with a unique combination of humor and informative financial advice, and includes practical lessons on eliminating debt, building wealth, giving like never before, and much, much more!

### Who is Financial Peace University For?

It’s for EVERYONE! ... from the financially secure to the financially distressed. Over one million families and individuals have already had their lives changed by attending FPU. Applying God’s Word radically changes your life. On average, FUP graduates have paid off over \$5,300 in debt and saved \$2,700 during the 91-day program.



### What Will I Learn?

In this life-changing program you will learn:

#### 1. Step-by-Step Cash Flow Planning

*Luke 14:28: “For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not sit down first and count the cost, whether he has enough to finish it.”*

#### 2. Debt Snowball Plan Technique to Eliminating Debt

*Proverbs 22:7: “The borrower is slave to the lender.”*

#### 3. How to Invest Wisely

*Ecclesiastes 11:2: “Give portions to seven, yes to eight, for you do not know what disaster may come upon the land.”*

### Testimonials

Here’s what people just like you are saying about FPU:

- ♦ “We’ve actually relieved ourselves of over \$50,000 worth of debt in two years just from using these principles.” ~ Russ and Mary Lee
- ♦ “It made us sit down as a couple and communicate ... and it gave us an instant pay raise!” ~ Paul and Lynesa Benson
- ♦ “This program made things so clear that have been confusing to me. My husband and I are excited to start the “baby steps” and get back on our feet financially. This program is truly life-changing. I look forward to teaching my boys to manage money so they can start being smart about money from the start.” ~ Anonymous
- ♦ “I am so thankful the course was offered at my church ... I can truly say that was one of the best investments I ever made with my time and money. This past year, I became debt-free except for my house, and I had my first big-time financial emergency ... I cannot tell you how good it felt not to worry about how to pay for it.” ~ Anita Clark

More information will be available in the “Weekly Staff” in coming weeks. Visit the Good Shepherd website at [goodshepherdkettering.com](http://goodshepherdkettering.com) or go to the Financial Peace University website at [www.daveramsey.com/fpu/home](http://www.daveramsey.com/fpu/home) to register for the class, or contact Martin Pierce at 287-4021 if you have additional questions. ☺

# IMAGINE YOURSELF DEBT FREE

Dave Ramsey's  
**Financial Peace**  
UNIVERSITY

*Financial Peace University is a 13-week, video-based small group study that teaches families how to beat debt, build wealth, and give like never before.*

[daveramsey.com](http://daveramsey.com)

**Free Preview**

**January 29 9:45am and  
January 30 7:00pm**

**Class Begins**

**February 13 7:00pm**

**Call For More Information**

**Martin Pierce (937) 287-4021**

# Book Review

by Debbie Kempf

## *The In-Between Church: Navigating Size Transitions in Congregations*

*The In-Between Church* by Alice Mann

is an insightful book that explores the challenges, behavior, and emotions experienced in churches that are undergoing changes in size, whether the congregation is scaling up or scaling down in size. This book review highlights some of the points that struck me as very relevant to Good Shepherd. If you wish to learn more, several copies of the book are available within Good Shepherd. Please see a member of Council or a Commissioner to borrow a copy.

The Foreword to this book was written by Richard F. Holloway, a Scottish bishop within the Scottish Episcopal Church. Historically, his church relied on a “magnetic model” of evangelism where, in theory, the liturgy and Christian living would simply draw people into the church because of the beauty of what they see. However, in 1988, the church recognized that it could no longer rely only on the magnetic model of evangelism. If it was to survive, a more active model of evangelism was needed. This, of course, presents a new set of challenges, including getting stuck in behavior that makes it difficult for a congregation to develop its mission.

Alice Mann first presents a framework developed by Arlin Routhage to characterize congregations based on average weekly worship attendance:



◆ **Family size:** 0 - 50 worshippers weekly. The pastor acts as a chaplain, but the leadership comes from the matriarchs and patriarchs within the congregation.



◆ **Pastoral size:** 50 – 150 worshippers weekly. The pastor plays a central role in unifying overlapping family/friendship networks. The church typically has a personal feel and has two or three strong ministries. The membership is relatively homogeneous. (Good Shepherd is currently pastoral size.)

◆ **Program size:** 150 – 350 worshippers weekly. The program church is known for the quality and variety of its programs and the variety of demographic groups within the congregation. The church is more group-centered and the pastor must focus on developing, guiding, and nurturing the leaders of the congregation, leaving less time for personal, one-on-one ministry. Lay teams and/or other staff members take on more responsibility for caring for members.



◆ **Corporate size:** 350 – 500+ worshippers weekly. The corporate size congregation can provide something for everybody.

Transitions between sizes are confusing and stressful because old behavior patterns no longer work.

Alice Mann offers the following insight into congregations that have declined in size: “Potentially vital congregations are often defeated by a sea of empty seats, by nostalgia for the days of the beloved pastor, or by the ghost of programs past. Here, size transition means starting with reality and structuring for attainable growth – not for the fantasy that the glory days will magically return” (p. 6). Decisions made in these congregations can unintentionally reinforce the cycle of decline unless the congregation updates its self-concept and ministry patterns.

When pondering God’s call for our congregation, we need to consider our individual desires, our corporate desires, and God’s desire. God is active at all three levels of desires. Our individual desires are rooted in our God-given humanness. Individually we may be ambivalent about growth, finding it exciting at one level, but being apprehensive at the same time about the changes that will be required to welcome others into the congregation.

As a group, we also have a corporate personality, a communal relationship with God, and common desires as we join together. Then, beyond and separate from our individual and corporate desires, the living God always has something new to say to us, so we must also work to discern God’s desire for us now. We can pray for transformation so that we come to desire what God desires for us.

Another important insight is that “Spiritual growth and numerical growth are close cousins that tend to show up in the same congregations. Paying attention to others outside ourselves – reaching out in ministries of both service and of invitation – tends to enlarge the heart and soul of a congregation” (pp. 41–42). Outreach-oriented congregations have the fullest internal life, fewer financial problems, and are less likely to have a “poor me” self-concept.

Changing is adaptive work that requires learning. This learning requires recognizing that we are in uncharted territory, a willingness to explore the issues, and allowing congregational norms to be examined and challenged. To change, congregations must also learn to work toward faithfulness rather than happiness, managing differences along the way rather than trying to “fix” every complaint. A sense of urgency is also crucial. To launch a concerted effort to change, three-quarters of the formal and informal leadership must be convinced that business as usual is totally unacceptable.

*When pondering God’s call for our congregation, we need to consider our individual desires, our corporate desires, and God’s desire.*

A clear sense of God’s call can move us beyond our anxieties about change and toward a compelling purpose. Growing churches are spiritually-oriented and visibly express their faith through heavy involvement in community ministry. Their ministries are rooted in a deep, meaningful worship experience and the conviction that God is present in the lives of everyone who is open to His spirit. “Muteness about the urgency of invitational ministry often arises from

a malnourished congregational spirituality...” (p. 66).

### *Ongoing Bible Studies & Prayer Groups*

◆ **Monthly Prayer Vigil** - On the second Friday of each month from 3:00 to 9:00 pm join many of us as we keep vigil in the sanctuary, praying for our church, our community, our nation and our world.

◆ **Men’s Prayer Breakfast** - Join the men of the church each week on **Thursdays at 6:30 am** at Bob Evans Restaurant on Dorothy Lane. This is a great way to fellowship and study the lectionary readings for the coming Sunday.

◆ **Women’s Bible Study** - The ladies of the church meet monthly for good conversation and enlightening study. There are two times available, covering the same topic each month: **Tuesday at 7:00 pm** and **Thursday at 12:30 pm**. Watch for dates in coming “Weekly Staff” and online calendar.

◆ **Saturday Bible Study** - Every **Saturday morning at 8:00 am** this group gets together for a full breakfast and then Bob Sauer leads a Max Lucado study of Philippians.

◆ **Pastor Bengson’s Sunday School Class** - Join Pastor on **Sunday during Lifelong Learning hour at 9:45 am**. Check the “Weekly Staff” for specific topics and occasional Sundays when the class is not meeting.

◆ **Lifelong Learning - Lectionary Study** - Roger Bauser leads a study at **9:45 am each Sunday** of the lectionary readings for the coming week. 🌸

# Youth Happenings

by Don Bennett

The start of a new year is always a busy one for the youth of Good Shepherd with multiple activities raring to go. In January, we have two big retreats. For our H2H students we have our Youth Quake, and for our high schoolers we have our Southern Ohio Synod Lutheran Youth Organization (SOSLYO) Retreat.

The **H2H Youth Quake** retreat will once again be held in Cincinnati at the Eastgate Holiday Inn, once deemed the world's friendliest. I'm sure it's still in the running, considering how well we are treated by them. Our youth will be joined there by more than 400 other youth and adults as we worship, sing songs, learn, and just act crazy. We'll be there on January 13 - 15, and we ask that your prayers might be with us while we're away.

The very next weekend, January 21 - 22, is the **SOSLYO Retreat** at Camp Kern, near Lebanon. This is going to be a special one for us because our own David Bauser is going to be the keynote speaker for the event. This is always a great event, and with David teaching us it should be even better!

The LYC are also considering attending the **30-Hour Famine**, which is an overnight retreat where the youth fast for thirty hours and ask for monetary pledges for each hour of the fast. During the fast, they will learn how to combat starvation and hunger in the world. All the money raised is sent to World Vision, a Christian humanitarian organization dedicated to working with children, families, and their communities worldwide to reach their full potential by tackling the causes of poverty and injustice.



On Super Bowl Sunday February 5, we'll be celebrating **Souper Bowl Sunday!** Note the change in the spelling there? That's because we will be accepting cans of soup or other canned food and monetary donations

to benefit the Neighbor-to-Neighbor Food Pantry at Greenmont Community Church in Kettering. The Sunday school youth are again challenging the adults to see who can bring in the most food for that Sunday.



## Fundraisers

Coming up in January or February, we'll start another **Flower and Plant Sale.** This went over so well last year, even though we got a late start on it, that it was decided to try it again. We'll be working with Furst Florist again, so as you gardeners begin to think about what you'll want your gardens to look like, don't forget to keep this fundraiser in mind.



Our **Gift Cards** continue their slow but steady sales, bringing in free money for the youth program. A special thank-you to those families that are regular buyers of gas cards and restaurant cards. A thank-you also goes out to all of you who helped us have our largest single week order ever in December with \$3200 in sales, giving us \$179 in profit! Very nice!

The LYC wants to thank everyone for their continuing support in our fundraising for next summer's trip. The sale of **Gift Jars** went well, although we don't have a final figure yet.

The **LaRosa's Fundraiser** on the first Sunday of each month are doing well. I don't have figures for the last LaRosa's Sunday, but our first two brought in a combined \$178! Please keep supporting us. 🌸

## What is Epiphany?

(continued from page 9)

### Exercise: Exploring Perspective



*On a sheet of paper, draw a cube. This simple illustration will be a key tool to examining the concept of worldview. Without altering the basic illustration (do not erase any lines or color in any sides), envision the cube with the opening at the front. After you can see that in your minds' eye, try to make a shift and re-imagine the cube's opening at the top.*

If we lived in a culture where the cube is only seen opening at the top, we would have difficulty imagining that the cube could open at the front. Likewise, if we lived in a culture where the cube is only seen opening at the front, we would have difficulty understanding how the cube could open at the top. Where we see the cube opening informs our understanding of the cube and its possible uses or role in our society and the world. For example, if we see the cube opening at the front, we could not imagine how the cube could hold water, confetti, or sand. If we see the cube opening at the top, we would be hard pressed to understand how a tiny mouse could run out of the box, but we would easily see how such a box could be a dwelling for such a frisky little creature. This simple exercise reveals how one group of people look at this cube and wonder what is wrong with the people who can't see how it could hold water or sand, while the another group cannot imagine anyone thinking a small mouse could be kept as a pet in such a box!

## The Magi

The Magi who traveled far to see the Christ child surely talked long into the nights as they shared their journey. Did they speculate as to what the coming of the King of Kings could mean to the earth? Did their hearts and minds receive a gradual unfolding and illumination of the blessed Incarnation? And after they found him, after they knelt before him and looked into his sweet face, did they experience a sudden revelation, a life-altering epiphany?



What about the lives you and I lead? Are we not much like those Magi? Consider how we walk this life of faith with the love of God continuing to unfold before us and within us. Have you shared your epiphanies or how they are unfolding in your life? Consider how we have discussed in church and over our own kitchen tables the ways in which God has revealed God's self to us. Ponder in your hearts how we continue to live by faith, going forward until that day when we will each finally see Jesus face to face. What a revelation it will be to see him! May we each day open the window of our worlds, inviting the fresh Light of Epiphany to flood us with hope, to bring us fresh insight, and to fill us with grateful joy. May we see the world around us with new creation eyes, filled with potential and brimming with promise. May our lives be a continuous unfolding into God's grace, revealing new vistas that expand our faith horizons. In Jesus' name, we pray, and by his name we are saved. Amen.

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## *Upcoming Events at GSLC*

### *January ~ February ~ March*

Check out the online calendar on our website or watch the  
“Weekly Staff” for more details about these upcoming events:

**Every Wednesday** - Faith, Fellowship Dinner

**January 22** - Soup Supper & Third Congregational Discussion of  
Ministry Priorities

**January 29 or 30** - Preview of Financial Peace  
University Seminar

**February 5 & March 4** - La Rosa Fundraisers for LYC

**February 12 through May 13** - GriefShare Sessions

**February 13 through May 7** - Financial Peace University Seminar

**February 26 - Ash Wednesday** - Begin Lenten Wednesday services

**January 17 - February 28 - March 20** - Church Council Meetings ☀

