



### HAPPENING NOW

- Yarn Angels, Noon, July 3
- High School Mission Trip to Washington, D.C., July 2-10
- OFFICE CLOSED, July 4
- All Day Staff Training, July 5
- Janice Swinford Vacation, July 6-9
- Men in Mission, 7 p.m., July 6
- Needlework Friends, 11 a.m., July 9
- Deadline for Input Form on Sunday Services, July 10
- Faith Formation Committee Meeting, 7 p.m., July 11
- Church Council Meeting, 7 p.m., July 12
- All-Day Staff Training, July 13
- VBS Meeting, 6 p.m., July 13
- Men in Mission, 7 p.m., July 13
- All-Day Staff Training, July 14

# News You Can “Ewes”

VOLUME 5, ISSUE 5

JULY 1, 2016

## Member Input Sought by July 10

*The following letter was mailed to our congregation members on Friday, June 24. Please note the deadline for responding is SUNDAY, JULY 10. A form can be emailed upon request.*

In the last several months, we have been studying and praying about our current realities, and seeking to discern some next steps for Good Shepherd congregation. Pastor Justin's departure in May created a time of transition and challenge for us, but it also created an opportunity to look objectively at who we are and how we do things.

As we have informed you previously, we are not taking steps to call another Associate Pastor at this time. Our staffing with 2 fulltime pastors began 18 years ago when attendance, participation, and finances were all trending upward. Eventually our membership grew to over 1200 members, our annual income to about \$700k, and our average combined Sunday morning worship attendance to over 400. Currently our membership is 900 members, our expected income this year is less than \$600k, and our average combined Sunday morning worship attendance about 250. Clearly we are not the same congregation we were 18 years ago. We are, however, still a healthy congregation with statistics way above the average for ELCA congregations. We also believe that our members are faithfully and generously contributing as they are able. In fact, our pledged giving is above 100% so far this year. That being said, we are also running more than \$30,000 behind budgeted income. Removing the Associate Pastor position from the budget essentially balances expected income and actual expenses.

The matter of worship attendance has commanded our attention also. Our seating capacity in the sanctuary is about 275 and our *total* attendance for all three services is typically less than that [average for 8am: 45; 9:30am: 105; 11am: 101]. Subsequently, we have three excellent worship services in a mostly empty sanctuary. We think this has a negative impact on visitors and may also, in fact, harm the morale of our members. We are also experiencing shortened lists of Sunday servants, and lacking some vital member interaction. For these three primary reasons: attendance, volunteer rotation, and community building; we believe it is best for Good Shepherd congregation to change our schedule from 3 morning services to 2 morning services (one Traditional and one Praise). Recently, to inform our conversation, our Council has been asking random members what they think our Sunday morning should look like. In fact, we would like for each of you to have input in our conversation and decision.

*Please turn to next page*

*Continued from Previous Page*

A primary question we have not resolved is whether we would be best served by continuing a Sunday School running concurrently with a service as we presently do, or by having a separate hour set apart for Sunday School, Fellowship, and Small Groups. Once we have reached a consensus concerning that, we can assign specific times to our Sunday morning activities.

With the start of another Sunday School year quickly approaching, we need to resolve this matter with some urgency. First, we implore you to pray about this matter. We all have strong personal preferences about times and styles for worship, but the answer we must discern is what will best serve our *whole* congregation. After your prayerful consideration, please fill out the response form and put it in the gold mail slot by Kathy Gunn's door. **The deadline for returning your input is Sunday, July 10.** We are happy for you to have a conversation with any of us, but we can only guarantee that the whole Council will receive your input if you fill out the form and return it by July 10. Thank you for your attention to this important matter. We believe we are wisest when everyone is given an opportunity to contribute input.

Finally, a word about The Bridge, our Sunday evening service, which, at this time, is not part of our conversation. When Pastor Justin left, the attendants of The Bridge wanted to continue meeting under their own leadership. In many ways it functions like a Bible Study, devotional, small group. Pastor Paul participates once a month to celebrate Holy Communion. There is no other staff involvement other than a paid musician. The musician, however, is paid from a grant that the Synod awarded us for this experimental project to see if it met a need in our community. Although the musician's salary appears as a line item in the budget, it is being completely offset by the grant, so there is no expense for us associated with The Bridge. The Bridge might become a conversation when the grant expires at the end of this year.

We are deeply appreciative of your commitment to our congregation and for the many ways you have stepped up to make our time of transition as seamless as possible. God has called us together to be a congregation at this time and in this place for God's service. We continue to seek God's guidance in all that we say and do, and we continue to give thanks for each of you.

*The Congregation Council shall have general oversight of the life and activities of this congregation, and in particular its worship life, to the end that everything be done in accordance with the Word of God and the faith and practice of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. [GSLC Constitution C12.04.]*

## Sunday School Help Needed

We are still in need of an assistant for the 4 year old/ Kindergarten class. Volunteering with children and youth requires our Children and Youth Protection class, so please see Janice Swinford, Sunday School Superintendent if you would like to help either fill this vacancy, or be a substitute.

## Summertime Events

**Yarn Angels** will meet **July 3** after the 11 a.m. service in Room 116.

**Needlework Friends** meets **Saturday, July 9**, from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the home of Jennifer Taylor (223 Orchards Circle, Woodstock) for needlework and fellowship. Bring your projects, learn something new, teach or help another friend. Knit, Crochet, Cross-stitch, Embroider, Sew, etc. Refreshments provided. Contact Jennifer at [jennifer3094@windstream.net](mailto:jennifer3094@windstream.net) or 678-880-2842.

**Ladies Night Out** meets **Tuesday, July 19** at 7 p.m. at Keegan's in Towne Lake. Sign up at Sign-Up Central. If you sign up to attend and need to cancel, please remember to call! Thank you!



## Two-Can Sunday

**Don't forget to bring your two cans of food for our hunger initiatives on Sunday, July 3!**

# Caring for Community

During July, GSLC will collect items for the Cherokee County Humane Society. Watch the bulletins and look in the entryway for more details on how you can help!



## Cow Fun Sunday!

Good Shepherd's Sunday School classes were able to celebrate the second year in a row of raising more than \$500 in offerings to ELCA Good Gifts, God's Global Barnyard. We had many fun animals come out for a petting zoo, including a cow, sheep and noisy rooster, and had great weather to enjoy them. Sunday School resumes in August. Until then, we look forward to seeing all the children in Vacation Bible School and worship over the summer.

## New Church Software

This summer staff will be working to convert church records to the new ACS software purchased earlier this year. While the office is open and staff available, all-day training sessions are scheduled for July 5, 13 and 14. Watch for more information on how you, as a GSLC member, will benefit from this great change!

## Council Notes June 2016

### Accolades

- All the members who assisted in the coordination of the memorial service for Tera Bristow.
- Janice Swinford for her dedication and going above and beyond during Pastor Paul and Kathy's absence due to their respective vacations to ensure everything kept running smooth.
- Mary McCoy, Marci Heintz, Hailey Hovda, Pastor Paul & Jaime Escamilla for representing GSLC at the 2016 ELCA Southeastern Synod Assembly in Birmingham, Alabama.
- Scarlett Hovda and Abbi Heintz for their volunteer work during the 2016 ELCA Southeastern Synod Assembly in Birmingham, Alabama.
- Adrian Escamilla, Pete McCoy and Peyton Brenneman for their tremendous help on Youth Day at the Lutheran Coalition Habitat for Humanity home on June 4.
- Trina Hutchison for arranging for the GSLC embroidered blankets that were gifted to High School graduates.
- Jenne Rindernecht and Lori Peters for creating the wonderful Graduation Board that was displayed in the Narthex
- Many thanks to all the volunteers who put together the 2,500 MUST lunches the week of June 13 - 17

## Wine for a Good Cause!

Enjoy an evening of Wine Tasting from 4:30—6:30 p.m., on **Saturday, July 23** at *Vino 100* with the Lutheran Coalition for Habitat!

Sample five wines while socializing with friends and supporters of Habitat for Humanity and listening to live music. Fifty percent of the ticket price will be contributed to the Coalition to support its 2017 Build. Cost is just \$10!! *Vino 100* is located at 131 South Main Street, Suite G in Alpharetta. For details, contact Max Epling.

**HAPPENING  
LATER**

- Youth Led Service and Lunch, July 17
- Vacation Bible School, July 18-22
- Ladies Night Out, 7 p.m., July 19
- Men in Mission, 7 p.m., July 20
- Men in Mission, 7 p.m., July 27
- Sunday School Training, 9 a.m., July 30

**GOOD SHEPHERD LUTHERAN CHURCH**

1208 ROSE CREEK DRIVE  
WOODSTOCK, GA 30189  
770-924-7286  
GSLUTHERAN.ORG



AN EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA (ELCA) CONGREGATION SERVING  
NORTH COBB AND CHEROKEE COUNTY COMMUNITIES. JOIN US!

8 A.M. TRADITIONAL  
9:30 A.M. PRAISE  
11 A.M. TRADITIONAL  
6 P.M. "THE BRIDGE" - CONTEMPORARY, LAID-BACK  
SUNDAY SCHOOL AT 9:30 A.M.

"WELCOME ONE ANOTHER, THEREFORE,  
AS CHRIST HAS WELCOMED YOU."

ROMANS 15:7

GOOD SHEPHERD LUTHERAN CHURCH WARMLY WELCOMES PEOPLE OF ANY AGE, RACE,  
NATIONALITY, SEXUAL ORIENTATION, LIFE CIRCUMSTANCE,  
AND PHYSICAL OR MENTAL CAPABILITY.



**Catch the Wave of God's  
Amazing Love  
Vacation Bible School 2016**

**July 18-22  
9 a.m. – Noon**

Register online at  
<http://2016.cokesburyvbs.com/gslutheran2016>

