Good Shepherd Lutheran Church

Rooted in grace. Living out Christ's love.

ANNUAL REPORT

2026

Good Shepherd Lutheran Church
Annual Report of the Congregation

















"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.

"We are called, gathered and blessed to be a community and instrument of grace for all sheep of the Good Shepherd."

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Congregational Meeting Agenda
Congregational Semi-Annual Meeting
of Good Shepherd Lutheran Church
November 8, 2026

I. Call to order- Janice Swinford

Reading of the Mission Statement-- All

"We are called, gathered, and blessed to be a community and instrument of grace for all sheep of the Good Shepherd."

II. Opening prayer - Vicar Sam Maier

III. Approval of Agenda - ALL

IV. Approval of Minutes of Specially Called Congregation Meeting Sunday, September 13, 2026 - All

V. Presentation of Council Candidates for 2027-2028 and Vote - Janice Swinford

VI. Q&A - Janice Swinford

VII. Thanksgiving and accolades - All

VIII. Results of the Council election - Janice Swinford

IX. Closing prayer - Pastor Karen Boda

X. Adjournment

Janice Swinford, Council President

“No, in all these things we are more than victorious through him who loved us. Romans 8:37”

Greetings, Good Shepherd Congregation! I am so honored to have the chance to serve as Congregation Council President this year. After twenty-seven years of membership at Good Shepherd, I can definitely say this church has made a positive impact on both me and my family. The verse above, one of my favorites, encapsulates just a portion of the abundance that I have witnessed here over the years. The original version that I knew said “more than conquerors”. Looking it up in NRSVUE at first surprised me to see the word changed to victorious, but the meaning is still clear. When you are victorious, we are past the tribulations, past the challenges, perhaps even past the pain. This text, however says we are “more than victorious”. More than victorious? How is that a concept? Victory is the goal. Our God is so abundant in his love for us that we are actually gifted the status of more than victorious. And let’s not forget, this isn’t a victory that we have won, but that our God who loves us has bestowed on us.

Well, great, but what does that have to do with Good Shepherd? Everything. God has been the mover in our church. When we allow God to take us through our troubles, accompany us through the trying times, be a real part in how we conduct life at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, we receive those blessings and gifts to enable us to further our ministries here and beyond our doors. Earlier in the Romans text we hear about the Holy Spirit interceding for us when we can’t even form the words to pray. (Please read the whole chapter – it’s a good one!) Don’t we all have those moments? I have certainly seen Good Shepherd members not only have those moments, but most importantly, reaching out and lifting up others in the congregation and the community to carry them through those hard times in their lives. Thank you for letting God work through you and with you!

Our church has such a joy and energy that I see each time I am here. That joy, my friends, grows and strengthens as we dive deeply into God’s word and celebrate that amazing love which permeates the entire story that God has shared with us through the Bible. We struggle with the hard texts together through Bible studies and church services and even through discerning in our groups and committees where we feel God’s pull. So, so many amazing ministries have begun from stirrings that are felt by members and then fulfilled in church community. Our calendar is packed with things each week caring for our community, caring for those within our church, and opportunities to grow our faith.

Thank you for coming to church. Thank you for the needs that you allow us to meet for you when you need help. Thank you for opening up and giving us the time and resources you have to share. Thank you for calling out the challenges you see and being part of the resolution. Thank you for bringing your own unique skills and personality to blend with others here in God’s house. Thank you for being open to change and understanding when things don’t always go right. Thank you for helping us dream and pray and brainstorm and welcome God into our lives. Thank you, Good Shepherd Lutheran congregation. May God grace us with another good year.

Janice Swinford

Rev. Karen Boda, Pastor's Report

"Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ." (Rom 1:7b) "We always give thanks to God for all of you and mention you in our prayers, constantly remembering before our God and Father your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ…" (First Thessalonians 1:2)

St. Paul begins each of his letters with thanksgiving – thanksgiving for the faith of the believers, considered a gift from God; for the love shown by the church members towards one another and the broader community; for hope the partnership of the gospel and the collaboration in spreading the message of Christ. What a beautiful way to begin a letter!

I can think of no better way to greet you in this Annual Report than with thanksgiving for the faith, love, and hope found in this community of Good Shepherd.

Faith is nurtured and developed at Good Shepherd through good worship, study, and conversation. I am thankful for the worship each Sunday that fills our souls and strengthens us for the week ahead. The music – glorious! The community who worships together – the best! We are blessed by the dedication of so many who lead or attend studies and classes. Your questions, discussions, and wrestling direct all of us to a deeper relationship with God and each other, as well as a better understanding of God's call on our lives today.

Love is faith in action. It's wearing the garment of Christ and living a life of compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, generosity and patience. I can't possibly provide an exhaustive list of the ways that Good Shepherd loves, but know that each time you greet a visitor, give a hug, make a prayer shawl, put a can into the MUST barrel, build a bed, care for a caregiver, tell a child about Jesus, create a card, sing a crazy VBS song, support our youth on mission trips or during worship, or fight the kudzu at Homeless Veterans know that you are sharing your faith and living out Christ's call on our lives. Each small act of love makes a difference. Truly.

Paul says that hope is intertwined with faith and love. It's fundamental to our faith and deeply rooted in the promises and resurrection of Jesus, a future together with Jesus. I give thanks we had the funding this past year to take on the major projects impacting our facility. These included installing a security system, fixing the drainage system, replacing the sanctuary HVAC, upgrading the sound and video, and others. With that behind us, my hope is during this coming year, we will be able to use our time, talents, and resources to move even more into the community. There are so many who need to hear the welcoming call of Jesus and the promises of a new life in Christ. I am excited about our future together.

I also give thanks for the new members among us; those who have found Good Shepherd and now bring a bright and vital light into our congregation. I pray that we keep welcoming others into the ministry that we share.

I give thanks for each of the staff and interns who work together with me to ensure that communication is clear, worship is transformative, our facilities are well maintained, bills are paid and the office is running smoothly. I am thankful for their dedication to this community and the ministry we share.

Finally, please know how thankful I am for each of you. Thank you for trusting me to walk with you in your holy spaces of joy and sorrow; for allowing me to share the gospel through sermons and teaching; for giving me the honor of presiding over the sacraments of holy communion and baptism, at your weddings and funerals. Thank you for the ministry we share. It is a joy and an honor for both Alan and me to be with you.

Many blessings,
Pastor Karen

Sam Maier, Vicar's Report

What a gift it has been to be invited to Good Shepherd Lutheran Church to serve as your vicar this year! When Laura and I first set off on this adventure, we didn't expect to feel at home so soon. This community has been gracious, kind, and welcoming since the day we arrived in back in August, and I truly believe God has blessed you all to be a blessing to us this year. I certainly hope we can be a blessing to you all as well.

Being a vicar is a rather unique role to hold in a congregation, as I am both an employee and a student – both a leader and a learner. I strive to lean into both of those roles this year as I continue to prepare for ordained ministry, while actively ministering to you all at GSLC, in service to the God who calls us all.

As a learner:
I have a weekly supervisor/intern meeting with Pastor Karen where we talk extensively about what it means to live into the call of being a vicar/pastor. We reflect on the past week and look ahead to the weeks to come; discussing subjects as small as where to find good funeral planning books, and subjects as large as how churches navigate times of crisis. I also meet monthly with the internship committee, who act as a sounding board for ideas, provide feedback on my preaching and public ministry, and help me to better understand the needs of the congregation. I am also currently taking my final seminary class online on Tuesday nights.

As a leader:
Leadership begins with listening. As I began here, much of my time was spent listening to church members, attending committee meetings and other church events, and learning the structure, rhythm, passions, and habits of this particular Christian community. In recent weeks, you've seen me take on a more active role in Sunday worship, helping to lead the liturgy and preach. During the week, I have accompanied Pastor Karen on pastoral care visits, and I have now begun visiting folks on my own. I also have helped prepare for and facilitate the Thursday Bible study twice so far, and the Civic Life Social Statement class between worship. I am continuing to help plan and prepare for events for later in the year as well.

Thank you all for your willingness to take on a vicar this year. I look forward to the continued opportunity to grow, learn, and praise God with you all. May the peace of Christ be with you today and always.

Vicar Sam Maier

Anna Kate Peed, Organist/Choir Director

It's been a wonderful full year with Good Shepherd! Preparing the music (hymns, preludes, postludes, offertory and special pieces) to create a meaningful atmosphere for worship is a great way to commune with others. I enjoy playing the organ and piano each Sunday to bring glory to our living God!

The Chancel Choir has welcomed three new members since the spring of 2026, and we are all so glad they joined! They sing with all their hearts and really provide a full and joyful sound every service. Their sight singing and reading has improved greatly, and they are kind and willing to sing and learn new things. We look forward to continue adding to our repertoire and possibly doing a concert next year!

Bells of Good Shepherd, y'all are so much fun to work with! I've enjoyed playing different pieces and incorporating different instruments to play alongside the Bell Choir. We have many good arrangements to play for Christmas and Thanksgiving, and I would like to create a concert alongside Chancel Choir for 2027!

Looking forward, I aspire to not only organize an arts concert in the early summer, but encourage more youth to participate in musical happenings, and all around give praise and worship to Christ!

Thank you for a great and welcoming first year!!
Anna Kate Peed

Pam Weinelt, Praise Team Coordinator

Vision and Mission

- To provide an inviting worship service that retains the theological and liturgical elements of the traditional Lutheran Church, delivered in a contemporary musical style and instrumentation.
- To make our worship service understandable and comfortable for people of un-churched and non-Lutheran backgrounds.
- To lead the assembly worship through music
- To provide an opportunity for musicians of various levels of proficiency to use their talents to participate in the ministry of planning and leading worship.

Accomplishments

We continued to expand the congregation's repertoire in 2026. We have focused on introducing songs that are current and more likely to be played on the FM radio stations or online streaming platforms (Spotify, Pandora, etc.)

In May of 2026, we held a forum with both past and current members of the Praise Team to gather information on what were doing right and what we could do to improve. We have begun implementation of these ideas and continue to look for more ways to enhance the program.

We are in the beginning stages of developing detailed documentation and training materials for the sound system.

2026 Goals

- Complete documentation of process and procedures for the Sound System
- Continue to explore all options to enhance the worship experience
- Recruit both instrumentalists and singers to lead services
- Work to expand musical styles and deliveries
- Explore and understand the use of technology in worship for Good Shepherd

I look forward to working with the Good Shepherd Staff and congregation in the upcoming year. It is a blessing to work with so many talented and committed people of faith.

Respectfully Submitted,
Pam Weinelt

Donna Garges, Media Coordinator

This past year has been filled with opportunities to support the mission and ministry of Good Shepherd through creative communications, technology, and countless behind-the-scenes details that help our church thrive.

A significant part of my work continues to involve keeping our congregation informed and connected. From preparing Sunday bulletins, the weekly Sheep Buzz newsletter and creating graphics for church events to managing social media posts, website content, and digital communications, my goal is to make sure members have engaging information they can use to participate in the life of the church. From seasonal worship and special events to stewardship campaigns and congregation-wide activities, I enjoy finding creative ways to encourage participation in all that we do.

Livestream technology remains an important part of helping people connect with worship, whether they are in the sanctuary or joining us online. This includes coordinating livestreams, supporting our audio and video systems, troubleshooting equipment, and working behind the scenes to help our services run smoothly. These efforts allow us to extend our worship beyond the church walls and reach members who cannot always be with us in person.

Much of my work happens outside the spotlight. Throughout the year, I have provided technology support for staff, helped maintain computers and digital systems, assisted with employee onboarding, and worked to improve the tools and processes we use every day. I have also supported improvements to our website, document-sharing systems, new building access and security system processes, and other operational needs. Whether resolving a technical problem or finding a more efficient way to accomplish a task, the goal is to help our staff and ministries work more effectively.

Much of my work is done in partnership with our pastor, staff, committees, and volunteers. Behind every newsletter, event announcement, livestream, publication, and smoothly functioning system are many details that require planning, coordination, and follow-through.

I am grateful for the opportunity to use my skills in service to Good Shepherd and for the staff and volunteers who work alongside me. Thank you to our congregation for your support, patience, and willingness to use the tools and ideas that help us communicate, worship, serve, and grow together. It is a privilege to contribute to the ministry of Good Shepherd as we continue to be called, gathered, and blessed to be a community and an instrument of grace for all sheep of the Good Shepherd.
Donna Garges

Michelle Provost, Office Coordinator

As the Good Shepherd Office Coordinator, my favorite part of this job continues to be getting to know the people who make our church community better. Throughout the week I get to encounter so many of you: those who serve, those who come in for Bible studies and other gatherings, and those who call the main number with a question or a need. Being able to pray for specific needs in our church and among our members is a true gift. It reminds me that behind every phone call, form, and schedule is a person God has placed in our church family.

This year brought new responsibilities and plenty of growth. I ran point on our new security system, coordinating the implementation and installation of both the new camera software and the building access software. I've also been learning our bulletin software and the more in-depth newsletter functions so I can serve as a backup for our office staff when needed. On the facilities side, I helped with maintenance needs around the building, including the new sanctuary HVAC unit, and continued keeping up with insurance documentation, building rentals, and the many other details that come with caring for our church home.

One of the biggest changes for me this year has been having a better understanding of the church seasons from an office standpoint: what needs to happen, and when. Having a clearer picture of the calendar and how things run has helped me better serve our ministries and staff. I've also continued to put thought into scheduling our Sunday servants so our services run smoothly. The better I get to know the people who serve and what they have going on in their lives, the better I can build a schedule that works for them and for our congregation.

Alongside the everyday work of answering phones, ordering supplies, and keeping records, these changes have helped me grow in how I serve. I'm grateful to work alongside our Pastor, staff, and so many faithful volunteers. No two days look the same, but it's a joy to help connect the people, programs, and details that keep our church family running with grace.
Michelle Provost

Carrie Escamilla, Bookkeeper

I am so thankful to be a part of this incredible community of brothers and sisters in Christ. It has been my honor to serve as staff in this joyous place. I began as a member at Good Shepherd with my husband, Jaime, and our boys, Adrian and Sebastian, back in 2012. We were immediately welcomed and began serving wherever we saw a need.

I have accumulated so many experiences, friendships, knowledge, and sometimes challenges along the way. I can honestly say, I would not have changed anything. Our experiences bring us to where we are now. I believe nothing is by accident and have tried to take every part of my journey and use it to enhance my current role within our church.

I have served as your bookkeeper since January 2023. In my role, I process incoming bills, record financial contributions, and process staff payroll. I also support our Church Council, Treasurer and Financial Secretary, church committees and staff with reporting needs and special requests.

One of my favorite parts of my job though is fostering and building the relationships with our amazing congregation members. Talking about money is not always easy and doesn't always come naturally to all. It is my hope that I make that a little more comfortable.

I am excited for this upcoming year and look forward to serving my church and serving alongside each one of you.

Many Blessings!
Carrie Escamilla, Bookkeeper

Aaron Frink, Custodian

Aaron works behind the scenes to keep our worship, administration, fellowship, and education areas clean. Aaron begins his work week on Sunday after worship, by vacuuming, taking out the trash, and cleaning eight bathrooms. During the week, Aaron dusts, vacuums, cleans the glass and mirrors, mops the floors, blows off the porch, sanitizes keyboards and telephones, cleans the bathrooms, and sets up furniture for weekly Bible Studies and Sunday School Classes. For special events and celebrations, such as the Blood Drive, Ministry Fair, Easter Brunch, Harvest Luncheon, Thanksgiving Feast, and Funeral Receptions, Aaron sets up the furniture in the Fellowship Hall before the decorating team arrives. After the event, he cleans the fellowship hall and resets the furniture for the week ahead. Aaron has been blessed with the opportunity to serve at Good Shepherd to support the congregation and the many missions we share.
Aaron Frink

Caring for Creation

Submitted by: Joella Molway

Members: Kathy Brill, Susan Epling, Clint Gruwell, Barbara Kidder, Melinda Mundis, Sharron Ryan, Monica Smith, Reba Sumner, Gordon Swordsma, Keith Jones - Council Liaison: Ruth Clark

Purpose: Good Shepherd Lutheran Church affirms the gift of God's Creation in all its glory and beauty. We accept responsibility by using our God given gifts to care for all the earth. This group is for the physical stewardship of our earth. We focus on recycling and reusing daily items to keep them out of the landfill and tend to the church garden

Garden of Grace
We harvested and sent to Forever Fed: radishes, snap beans, tomatoes, okra, squash, zucchini, peppers, apples, pole, beans, and corn for a total of 107 pounds.

Metal Recycling
We made four trips to the metal recycler and brought in about $1000. We also completed an enclosure for the metal recycling. The enclosure holds the collection of aluminum cans, glass recycling, metal recycling and the Hefty Orange Bags.

Battery Collection
We donated over 300 lb. of batteries.

Hefty Bag ReNew Program
This program recycles hard-to-recycle plastics (codes 3 and above) and Styrofoam. Cherokee County Waste Management Company does not participate in this program. Good Shepherd is keeping the program going by taking the orange Hefty bags to the Cob County Public Recycling Drop-Off Center (Located off of County Services Pkwy, Marietta). Members of Good Shepherd bring their Hefty organge bags to church on the first Sunday of the month. Cobb County Recycling then processes these special bags through its recycling stream system and sends them to the Hefty Bag Company. We took 240 Hefty bags to the recycler this past year.

Drake House Donations
We donate slightly used women's clothing, shoes, and accessories to help women and children experiencing homelessness to achieve economic independence and long-term stability. Our total this year will exceed over 1000 items. We continue to deliver items monthly. The list includes slacks, skirts, jewelry, suits, blouses, dresses, sweaters, shoes, purses and jackets.

Eyeglass Donations
GSLC has taken 15 of our taupe colored Good Shepherd recycling bags filled with eyeglasses to the Lions club which helps seniors in need.

Oral Waste Collection
We have shipped six boxes of oral care waste to be recycled into plastic pellets that can then be used to make outdoor playground equipment and furniture. Since we started collecting in 2017, we have mailed a shipment to TerraCycle every two months.

Prescription Bottle Collection
We recycle used clean prescription bottles, and ship approximately three boxes to Matthew 25 Ministries each month. The bottles are then sent to third world countries for local doctors to use to distribute medication.

Congregational Care Committee

Submitted by: Craig Stichtenoth, Council Liaison

Purpose: In partnership with the church leadership and the congregation, to be responsible for supporting ministries that provide care and opportunities for involvement for the members of GSLC, always with the goal of facilitating the spiritual growth of the individual and their connectedness to the body of Christ.

We find guidance in the illustration offered by Martin Luther, inspired by the words of the Apostle Paul: "If anyone's foot hurts him, yes, even the little toe, the eye at once looks at it, the fingers grasp it, the face puckers, the whole body bends over to it, and all are concerned with the small member. Again, once it is taken care of, all the other members are benefited."

We give thanks for all the members of Good Shepherd who give of their time and talent to serve their other members in need. We tend not to fully appreciate how much it can mean to person or family. It can truly be in that moment an immeasurable gift of love. Some of the specific activities that we capture under the heading of Congregational Care are mentioned below.

- The caring and connecting that is embraced within the family of faith that is Good Shepherd begins with prayer. We are a community of faith that believes in the power of prayer, trusting that God hears and responds to each prayer. Good Shepherd's Prayer Circle is the means by which members connect in prayer, both as active participants in that sharing of prayer and petition, and as recipients and beneficiaries of prayer when in need.
- An exceptional team of volunteers provides meaningful support to families, friends, and members in the preparing and serving of meals following funeral and celebration of life services at GSLC.
- We seek to grow and nurture a team of lay members who are equipped to do home visitations, bringing good food and good conversation to those who may be shut in…even communion.
- We especially acknowledge those individual members who provide direct, practical help to other members in need, performing important tasks while that member or his or her spouse may be under hospital care or perhaps during rehab and recovery after surgery. Such giving of oneself in these moments is so greatly appreciated. We have a need to further grow and expand this type of ministry, seeking to ensure that none of our members in need of a caring personal touch and practical support are not in any way overlooked or forgotten.
- Small groups that connect members around a shared purpose can have an enduring impact on the individual while also benefiting the greater church family. Groups such as 'Empty Nesters', 'Theology on Tap'. 'Social Justice', 'Men in Mission' and others help to create caring relationships among those who participate while also providing focus for ways that the group may serve and enrich the greater congregation through service, education, and encouragement. The leaders of these small groups deserve our thanks and support.

There is a need to reestablish an active Congregational Care Committee, as described in Good Shepherd's Constitution. While we have many generous and caring members who give of themselves in a variety of ways, their focus tends to be centered on the specific ministry or activity that defines their expression of care and connection to other members. Beyond these specific good works, members of a Congregational Care Committee would be challenged with thinking strategically about how Good Shepherd, as a family of faith, can better look out for our members.

As Martin Luther suggests, when we truly and effectively care for one another, "all the other members are benefited."

Facilities & Maintenance Committee

Submitted by Council Liaison – Jason Launders, Arnie Ludvigsen – Chairperson

Purpose: In cooperation with the pastor of the congregation, to supervise and provide proper maintenance and repair to church property and the general protection of the congregation against loss or damage of whatever nature. Arnie Ludvigsen has taken over the leadership of the Facilities and Maintenance committee and we thank Steve Frink for his many years of service.

We have a large team of willing volunteers who frequently step in to effect repairs (e.g., replacing faucets). Currently serving on the committee are: Clint Gurwell, Damon Garges, Karl Westerville, Ken Eggers, Mark Yerkes, Matt Provost, Mike Dooley, Scott Panhorst, Steve Frink, Tom Hebeisen, and Travis Bryan. However, many repairs require contractors.

As with any facility, repairs will be required. A key goal of the committee is, where possible, to pre-emptively detect issues before more expensive repairs are necessary. Therefore, we have started the process to review and update the Reserve Study, which was originally prepared in 2016. The goal of the study is to continually finance the Reserve Fund so funds are available when major equipment requires replacement. 2026 has been an example of why such forward thinking and planning can make a significant difference as can be seen in making possible the list of accomplishments below:

- Replaced and updated the security system.
- Replaced the HVAC system in the sanctuary
- Investigated and contracted the repair of a significant drainage issue that caused erosion (the ditch). Failure to repair the root cause would jeopardize the foundations of the facility, which would, if not rectified, lead to extensive and very expensive repairs. Repairs are scheduled November 2026. Note, cleaning of gutters will need to be scheduled every 18 months.

In addition to these major projects, the committee is working to:

- Declutter closets that were cited by the fire marshal.
- Organize the fall clean-up day in November
- Replace water heaters and related plumbing, which are at end of expected life.
- Update the fire alarm systems. The current system is currently causing false alarms.
- Look for options to remove an identified trip hazard in the entrance hall and replace the carpet in the fellowship hall.

Technology Sub-Committee

Mission: The Technology Committee evaluates the current and future use of technology and maintains the inventory of technology for both the staff and the church.

The Technology Committee is a subcommittee of the Facilities and Maintenance Committee. If interested, the points of contact are Donna Garges and Rob Homer. The Committee conducts as-needed meetings to address the needs of both the church and staff.

The projects the Technology Committee was involved with this past year include:

- Organized and held two electronic recycling drives in conjunction with Men in Mission in April 2026, raising $900 in total dollars, with upcoming events planned for November 2026 and April 2027. This money is primarily used to upgrade technology/software/hardware for our staff and building.
- Occasional publication of technology tidbits to help prevent identity theft or increase awareness of potential computer scams.
- New security tablet was installed for ease of use to zoom in on security cameras and to lock down doors during Sunday morning worship if threats arise.
- Programming and facilitating the live stream of Good Shepherd's worship services each Sunday

and mid-week services.

- A new Media Coordinator computer was purchased, and software installations were configured for Donna Garges, Vicar Sam Maier and Katie Reome.
- An internal group of members comprised of Alan Boda, Chuck Storla and Pastor Karen has been formed as a web development group, tasked with upgrading the Good Shepherd website.
- Donna Garges remains the main point of contact for Carmichael Consulting Solutions, our outsourced Technology management company for computer security, hardware, software and troubleshooting.
- A new Kyrocera copy machine was contracted under lease for five years and installed. This copier should reduce our printing costs significantly using a tiered ink pricing structure.

Fellowship Committee

Submitted by: Tracy Launders, Chair and Mary Wilson, Council Liaison

Committee Purpose Statement: To provide ways to strengthen the fellowship between congregation members spiritually and socially; to integrate new members into the life of the congregation, and the general upbuilding of mutual cooperation, trust, and enjoyment among members of the congregation.

Planning Meetings

- Two combined ministries meetings were held (January and September) to ensure all events had support where needed - examples include help with Cookie Walk, pizza lunch before Hunger Walk, and lunch before God's Work, Our Hands.
- Attended the "Revival" synod day and learned how we can take hospitality and fellowship to the next level!

Events Held

- The Annual Thanksgiving meal was served after the Congregational Meeting on November 9, 2025
- New member welcome receptions held in February
- Themed fellowship hours - Scouting America, Sunday, Girl Scout Sunday, Mothers Day, Fathers Day
- Easter Brunch
- Confirmation receptions - each Confirmand received a personalized cake and a Pentecost themed cake was enjoyed by the congregation
- Ministry Fair participation, highlighting the many ways to serve
- Memorials
- Reception to welcome Vicar Sam and Laura

We have embraced the many opportunities to build and strengthen our community: introduction of variety in the baked goods during Sunday morning fellowship times - a special thank you to all who share their baking gift through the year; embraced a new location for fellowship when needed; increased communication and support for the different events offered. It's been a busy year - thank you to all who serve on the committee, serve during Sunday fellowship, help with events, and see a need and jump in.

"Do not forget to show hospitality to strangers, for by so doing some people have shown hospital to angels without knowing it." Hebrews 13:2

Finance Committee

Submitted by: Gail Setzer - Committee Chairperson

Members: Rob Homer, Treasurer; Carrie Escamilla, Bookkeeper; Peter Dumpis; Ken Eggers; John Murray; Raelene Swordsma, Pastor Karen Boda

Purpose: In cooperation with the Treasurer and pastor of the congregation, to support the ministry of the church through financial planning and oversight.

Thank you for your generous giving. For the 2025–26 church year, which ended June 30, 2026, GSLC received $581,930 in total income. That was $67,019, or 13%, more than we had planned. We are grateful for the congregation's support and the ministry it makes possible.

Total expenses were $523,190, leaving $58,740 after expenses were paid. Giving above our budget was the main reason we ended the year with money left over.

The committee voted to put the full $58,740 into the Major Maintenance Reserve Fund, our savings for major repairs and replacements. This raises the fund from $69,084 on June 30 to $127,823, helping us prepare for security system costs, drainage repairs and other major maintenance needs.

With giving higher than expected, GSLC also increased its support for the Synod. We gave $52,000 in 2025–26: $23,784 from that year's offerings and $28,216 from money saved in 2024–25 for this purpose. Apart from our support for the Synod, expenses were $14,067, or 3%, below budget.

The 2026–27 budget will be more challenging. We expect income of $580,224 and expenses of $667,017, a gap of $86,793. If income again exceeds our plan by 13%, it would bring in about $75,000 more and cover most of that gap. We cannot count on that happening. Some expenses may also come in below budget because our estimates include room for unexpected costs.

GSLC has funds that can help cover a shortfall, although recent payments have reduced them. As of September 30, 2026, the church reported $163,660 in net assets without donor restrictions, meaning these resources are not limited to a purpose specified by a donor. The committee recommends keeping $160,000 available for possible needs, such as a loss of preschool rental income if the preschool leaves and we cannot find a replacement tenant.

As of June 30, 2026, GSLC had $253,798 in a Thrivent money market investment. The church reported $34,609 in endowment funds and $210,631 set aside for purposes specified by donors.
This year, we opened a Thrivent brokerage account so members can donate stocks or other securities. GSLC can sell those gifts and use the proceeds to support the church.

With help from Alan Boda and Jennifer Taylor, we completed our audit review of Christ Lutheran Church's finances as part of an agreement to review each other's records. Christ Lutheran plans to review GSLC's financial records for the year ended June 30, 2026. We are also setting up prepaid PEX cards so volunteers can make large purchases, such as expenses for group trips, without using personal credit cards.

July 2025- June 2026 Income Statement

Good Shepherd Lutheran Church

Statement of Activities-Summary (Annual Report)

Date Range: Jul 1st 2025 - Jun 30th 2026

Accounts	Actual Jul 01, 2025 - Jun 30, 2026	Budget Jul 01, 2025 - Jun 30, 2026
Revenues		
Offerings	536,022.01	474,858.00
Other Income	45,908.19	40,053.00
Total Revenues	**$ 581,930.20**	**$ 514,911.00**
Expenses		
Benevolence	25,034.00	36,250.00
Facilities		
Fixed Facilities	15,400.75	14,800.00
Utilities	33,768.40	28,600.00
Planned Facilities Upkeep	27,360.39	16,700.00
Other Facilities		
Technology	11,544.77	9,500.00
Total Other Facilities	38,317.44	36,500.00
Total Facilities	114,846.98	96,600.00
Administrative		
General Office Admin	10,415.23	10,900.00
Other Administrative Expenses	4,166.89	4,200.00
Total Administrative	14,582.12	15,100.00
Compensation		
Senior Pastor	135,766.62	135,987.00
Music Staff		
Organist/Choir Director Comp	26,223.28	27,040.00
Music Staff Other	24,098.70	23,345.00
Total Music Staff	50,321.98	50,385.00
Support Staff	114,597.37	123,839.00
Custodial Staff	21,633.47	22,032.00
Other Personnel Costs	19,200.45	22,800.00
Total Compensation	341,519.89	355,043.00
Programs (54)		
Faith Formation	8,707.24	17,000.00
Fellowship	2,829.41	5,000.00
Stewardship	2,192.13	2,000.00
Outreach	3,046.96	2,500.00
Worship & Music	7,280.88	14,000.00
Congregational Care	383.03	30.00
Other Programs	2,767.79	4,950.00
Total Programs (54)	27,207.44	45,480.00
Total Expenses	**$ 523,190.43**	**$ 548,473.00**
Net Total	**$ 58,739.77**	**($ 33,562.00)**

Mutual Ministry Committee

Submitted by: Trina Hutchinson, Holly Jones, Jeff Nugent, Matt Provost

Purpose: The Mutual Ministry Committee serves as a sounding board and safe space for the rostered leaders to share their thoughts and receive support.

We have all called upon our rostered leaders for support in times of stress or to talk through difficult issues. But who does a pastor go to when they need that kind of support? That's where Mutual Ministry steps in. This committee, selected by the pastor and the President of the Congregation Council, allows the pastor a venue to discuss sensitive issues, ask for help, or sometimes just brainstorm solutions. Discussions are held in confidence, so there is no visible record of the committee's work. So, if you haven't heard about the committee, they are doing their job.

In addition to this work, Mutual Ministry also supplies the pastor and staff with food for the long Christmas Eve day of worship. The committee feeds the body and the spirit.

Outreach Committee

Submitted by: Molly Maher, Cathy Mattocks and Sharron Ryan

Purpose: To promote, in cooperation with the Pastor and Outreach Chairperson, all welcome, awareness, promotion, advocacy, and outreach service of this congregation. Or alternately, to share the Good News with those outside of the congregation and those in need.

The Outreach Committee has responded faithfully in completing the following outreach opportunities

- God's Work, Our Hands on September 12 was an opportunity to work at Mostly Mutts, Homeless Vets Thrift Store and GSLC where we packed Trunk or Treat bags and wrote thank you notes to our 911 operators.
- Coin boxes generated a total income of $3583.50 This money was donated to Carmel Elementary to take care of the lunch debt for students in need.
- The blood drives in 2026 collected a total of 186 units
- Hunger Walk amount raised was $2077.00. We received a percentage back from Inspiritus of $498.48. The committee voted to donate to MUST Ministries.
- GSLC participated in the annual Christmas parade in Woodstock in December 2025.
- We also had a scarecrow in the annual downtown Woodstock Fall contest
- We donated Christmas gifts and stuffed animals to 35 children at Carmel Elementary School
- We donated 67 gift cards to The Homeless Vets of Cherokee County. We also donated 75 stuffed animals for the family Christmas party.
- We donated $500 to Community Grace Church in Grayson, Ga
- We donated $500 to Men in Mission
- We donated $500 to the building fund for the Cherokee Homeless Veterans
- We donated $200 to The Drake House for Mother's Day
- We donated $200 to The Extension for Father's Day
- We donated $100 for The Summer Lunch Program
- We donated $100 to the Give A Kid A Chance program
- We donated $500 to MUST Ministries for turkeys and hams
- Martin Luther King, Jr. service day we delivered bags of cookies and handwritten thank you notes to fire stations
- Caregivers Support Group held a day event March 14 which highlighted funeral planning, hospice care, Alzheimers awareness and health care directives.
- The card ministry donated $1200 to youth missions with the help of two Thrivent fund donations.
- Yarn Angels keeps a few prayer shawls on hand for Pastor to pass out as needed, They also send baby blankets, sweaters, mittens and hats to The Encouragement Project
- Sleep in Heavenly Peace has given us three opportunities to help build beds for local children.

We hosted a bedding drive March 7, 2026 and will do a second drive in October.
- We participated in Trunk or Treat and passed out 240 bags of treats.
- We donated 56 backpacks to Give a Kid a Chance with the help of a Thrivent fund donation. 8 GSLC members helped gather school supplies, take photos and register for food baskets.
- We donated underwear and sweatpants to Carmel Elementary school clinic
- Taste of Habitat raised over $45000 to contribute to two Habitat builds. $6000 was contributed by GSLC families as seven members stepped up as sponsors which added to our ticket sales.

We hope to deepen our partnership with Carmel Elementary with a reading program. We are also open to new opportunities with Cherokee County Homeless Veterans, Mostly Mutts and MUST Ministries.

Personnel Committee

Submitted by: Jenny Champion (chair), Kristin Freeman, Gina Crittenden, Gordon Swordsma, Tracy Launders, Pastor Karen Boda, and Deborah Ezell (Council Liaison)

Purpose: To make recommendations to the Congregation Council, in cooperation with the pastor as head of staff, that will enable decisions to carry out the obligations of the congregation as an employer.

- Plan and conduct Annual Performance reviews for staff
- Conduct quarterly one on one meetings with individual staff members to check in and have a conversation
- Submit Personnel budget recommendations to the Finance committee and Congregation Council
- Update and maintain Personnel Policies and Procedures, offer letters, contracts, and background checks, for all staff
- Continue to provide partial healthcare funding for our full-time staff
- Welcome Vicar Sam Maier as the Pastoral Intern through August of 2027
- Welcome Katie Reome to be the Youth and Family Ministry Intern through August of 2027

The Personnel Committee expresses gratitude for the ongoing support from the congregation and Pastor Karen during 2026. We commend our staff for their adaptability and dedication to the ministry of Good Shepherd.

Michelle Provost, office coordinator, has created an outstanding organizational structure for the daily functioning of our office and building and keeps things running smoothly. Donna Garges, media coordinator, continues to ensure that all communication is timely and professional, and has served as the lead for all technology enhancements. Pam Weinelt, Praise Team Director, and Anna Kate Peed, Organist, Choir/Bell conductor, have filled our worship with music and given us creative and beautiful ways to praise God. Aaron Frink, custodian, keeps our building spotless and configures (and reconfigures) all meeting spaces. Carrie Escamilla, bookkeeper, keeps our finances accurate and timely. We are grateful for each of them.

We are pleased to welcome our two new interns, Vicar Sam Maier and Katie Reome, to our team and look forward to their continued contributions. We remain committed to listening to staff and congregational feedback and engaging in thoughtful discussions to meet the church's evolving needs. Our goals for the coming year include maintaining oversight of personnel matters and fostering a supportive and productive work environment

Stewardship Committee

Submitted by: Bill Krull Chair, Members: Valerie Whiteman, Janice Swinford, Jaime Escamilla, Beverly Stichtenoth, Lee Hebeisen, Tom Evangelista, Dana Whitaker, Linda Drage

Purpose: To nurture a culture of generosity and abundance mindset within the congregation. To share stories that inspire members to generously share their time, talents, and treasures to support the church's ministries and build God's Kingdom. To provide opportunities for members to discover and develop their gifts, and to encourage responsible and joyful financial stewardship.

Galatians 6:9 tells us not to grow weary in doing what is right, for we will reap at harvest time, if we do not give up. With God's help, we can do this! Please join the Stewardship Committee as we pray for Good Shepherd and our future. How is God asking you to use your heart, your hands, and your treasures?

Stewardship continues to meet on the third Thursday of every month at 6:30. We meet in person at the church.

The team created a new Stewardship drive this year. With a "Rooted and Built up in Him" theme, we kicked off the drive with the Annual Fall Harvest celebration. Brats and hot dogs with wonderful side dishes brought by our members were enjoyed by everyone! We had roughly 70 people enjoy the harvest.

We had one Ministry Fair this year held in conjunction with the start of the school year. It was very well attended, and many of our serving committees and groups ended up with new members. Serving is not a lifelong commitment, but we encourage everyone to be involved in some way, even for one or two years. Change is good, and we encourage everyone to be a part of God's Work at Good Shepherd.

We continued our discussions with Thrivent to determine how they might be able to bring knowledge and understanding to our members regarding best practices in our daily lives, as well as our finances. We look forward to some wonderful, engaging opportunities for learning at all levels and ages. We look to schedule our first event in the spring of 2027.

We continue to welcome new members to the Stewardship committee. Serve with us for a year and see what you think.

Thank you to each member of the Stewardship committee for their selfless generosity of their time and talents!

Worship & Music Committee

Membership: Kay Abramson, Paulette Alderfer, Pastor Karen Boda, Carrie Finney, Chuck Storla (Council Liaison), Melinda Mundis, Anna Kate Peed, Ben Setzer (Chair), Debbie Radcliff, Don Vogt, Pam Weinelt

Purpose: In partnership with the pastor and Director of Music, to provide input on and support for all worship services of this congregation, and all activities directly related to these services.

The committee discusses many aspects of worship at Good Shepherd. This report will highlight several of the most important.

Why is worship so important to us? Here in this place and at that time we encounter God and others in a different way. In word and sacrament, we find encouragement, we show gratitude, we experience joy, we gain direction, we connect.

In person attendance at services has averaged 177 per Sunday, both services included. Online participation has averaged 59 each Sunday. Even though summer attendance has typically been lower than the rest of the year, attendance during this past summer remained steady.

We give thanks for all who serve during worship and enrich every service. We also thank those who over this last year updated descriptions of duties for Sunday Servants and conducted training sessions: acolytes, altar guild, lay readers, ushers, worship assistants, and greeters.

We have had several youth services this past year, alternating between the early and late service. These services are a powerful reminder of the faith of our youth and their ability to share that faith with us. Hearing the youth read and preach the Word, join us together in prayer, and serve communion gives us great hope in the future of the church. Youth services are a good way for all members of the congregation to support our youth.

Special services during Advent and Lent were thought provoking, solemn, and joyful. Christmas services were held at 4, 7, and 9 on Christmas Eve and at 10 on Christmas morning. Attendance was wonderful around Christmas as we worshipped together with members, family, and community.

Over the Summer, Pastor Boda collaborated with members of the congregation on a series of messages centered around weaving us together. As a physical symbol and reminder, a tapestry was created with donated strips of cloth, IV tubes, and other materials that had meaning to the donors. The tapestry now hangs in the narthex.

For an our Celebration of the Arts Sunday this Fall, many members of the congregation shared their artistic creations in varied media. Special music highlighted the services that Sunday. These activities provided a tangible example of the sermon theme for the day.

Updates to the sound system were completed and have provided better sound quality, especially for online attendees. We give thanks for those who help to live stream our services, a ministry which reaches those who are unable to attend.

Youth & Family Committee

Committee Members: Tammy Frink, Jenny Champion, Karen Epstein- Council Liasion, Eva Schwartz - Youth Council Representative

Purpose: Working with church leadership, create, support and aids in the implementation of the Youth and Family Ministry of the congregation.

The Youth and Family Ministry committee spent the past year diligently working to facilitate, plan, and execute events and learning opportunities for our youth with various congregational activities and events, while the Personnel committee actively searched for a Youth and Family Coordinator to lead this ministry. The committee was able to continue to provide meaningful opportunities for youth and families to grow in faith and some of those highlighted activities included:

- Intergenerational Family Fun Activities: Cagle's Farm, Gingerbread House decorating, Family bowling at Stars and Strikes
- Service Projects: Mostly Mutts Thrift Store, Hunger Walk and preparing a meal for the students at Grace House (Georgia Tech)
- All- Georgia (Feb.) and AFFIRM (June) events presented by the Southeastern Synod
- Youth Sunday Services where youth actively led all parts of worship including the sermon
- Vacation Bible School in June where we served 80+ children with 50+ volunteers
- Fundraising: Annual Cookie Walk, Envelope Giving with all monies raised to support youth trips
- Student Recognitions: Senior Sunday, Backpack Blessings, New Drivers
- First Communion classes
- Confirmation- Three youth were confirmed and spent their third year in service by assisting at Toys for Tots and making the communion bread for worship as well as an educational visit to the Legacy Museum in Montgomery, AL
- Created a new scholarship opportunity for college age students with the Mary McCoy Youth Scholarship
- Continued to offer Sunday School classes to children in grades K-5th and Middle School and High School as well as several adult Sunday School classes
- Welcomed two different youth interns in Julia-Bennett Polley (Jan-Apr) and Katie Roeme (Aug-July)

The Youth and Family Ministry committee is so very grateful for the contributions by all of our congregation members that allowed our youth program to continue this past year with many opportunities for fellowship and service. This congregation is blessed with so many volunteers willing to assist in youth related activities. We had over 50 volunteers for our annual VBS week and Janice Swinford did an amazing job of planning and organizing a fantastic week. We have volunteers that assist with weekly Sunday School lessons, attending "Family Fun" activities and engaging with our youth in conversation and community. We welcomed our first Youth "Interns" who have helped to strengthen our youth program and serve as another leader in our youth's faith journey- Julia-Bennett Polley (Spring 2026) and Katie Roeme (August 2026-July 2027). Thank you for your love and support! We are also grateful for the youth and their families that remain active in this community as they are truly rooted in Christ's love.

Appendix A - Congregational Meeting Minutes - Sept. 13, 2026

Special Congregation Meeting - Minutes

Sunday, September 13, 2026

Attendance: See Attached

1. Call to order – Janice Swinford (Council President) 11:11 am
2. Quorum confirmed (20% of average weekly attendance, i.e., > 36)
3. Reading of Mission Statement – All

   "We are called, gathered, and blessed to be a community and instrument of grace for all sheep of the Good Shepherd."

4. Approval of Agenda, proposed Eva Schwartz, seconded Pam Strong, approved
5. Approval of Semi-Annual Congregational Meeting Minutes, June 7, 2026, proposed Carrie Finney, seconded Travis Bryan, motion passed
6. Approval of Nominating Committee Candidates for 2026-2027: Melinda Mundis, Craig Stichtenoth, and Clint Gruwell. Motion proposed by Rob Homer, seconded Kris Hebeisen, motion Passed.
7. Remediation of drainage issue ("The Ditch"):
   a. Current situation: Broken pipes, clogged downspouts and gutters, incorrectly installed drainpipes, rainwater flooding the entrance sidewalk, water leaching into a closet wall, dangerous ditch that threatens the integrity of the Education Building.
   b. Needed: complete overhaul of the water drainage system.
   c. Proposal: Downspouts, gutters, and drains added, all of which will exit in a larger pipe to the storm sewer. The work will be completed in one week with grass, rocks and dirt filled back in over the work areas.
   d. Proposed Motion: to authorize the expenditure of existing reserve funds for drainage and erosion control improvements in the amount of $27,899. The work is to be done by Advanced Drainage Solutions. Proposed Vic Rowell, seconded Jim Mattocks. Motion Passed
8. Closing Prayer – Vicar Sam Maier
9. Meeting Adjourned 11:17 am

Appendix B - 2026 Good Shepherd Lutheran Church Leadership

Rostered Staff

Pastor ..... Rev. Karen Boda

Staff

Bookkeeper ..... Carrie Escamilla
Church Custodian ..... Aaron Frink
Media Coordinator ..... Donna Garges
Intern Pastor ..... Vicar Sam Maier
Organist/Choir Director ..... Anna Kate Peed
Office Coordinator ..... Michelle Provost
Praise Team Coordinator ..... Pam Weinelt
Youth and Family Ministry Intern ..... Katie Reome

Council Members

President ..... Janice Swinford
Vice-President ..... Karen Epstein
Treasurer ..... Rob Homer
Financial Secretary ..... Beverly Stichtenoth
Secretary ..... Jason Launders
Council Member ..... Ruth Clark
Council Member ..... Karen Epstein
Council Member ..... Deborah Ezell
Council Member ..... Chuck Storla
Council Member ..... Mary Wilson
Youth Council Member ..... Eva Schwartz

Committee Chairpersons

Congregational Care ..... Open
Facilities and Maintenance ..... Arnie Ludvigsen
Fellowship ..... Tracy Launders
Finance ..... Gail Setzer
Mutual Ministry ..... Trina Hutchison - Holly Jones - Jeff Nugent - Matt Provost
Outreach ..... Molly Maher, Cathy Mattocks, Sharron Ryan
Personnel ..... Jenny Champion
Stewardship ..... Bill Krull
Worship and Music ..... Ben Setzer
Youth and Family ..... Kristin Freeman

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Good Shepherd Lutheran Church