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A publication focused on the journey ahead for
Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Woodstock, GA

CALL COMMITTEE NEWS

Dear Good Shepherd Family,

February 1, 2022

Going through the Appreciative Inquiry process together has been an amazing experience! It was a joyful process: recounting our fondest memories in community together, describing our faith journeys for all ages, reflecting on how God has used our hands to serve, and expressing our hopes for the future!

Our congregation has been blessed in so many ways over the years. We have had talented and caring Pastors, Associate Pastors, Associates in Ministry, Youth Coordinators, In-Reach and Out-Reach Coordinators, Musical Leaders, Office Coordinators, Media Coordinators, Sunday School Coordinator, Congregational Leaders on Council, Committee Members, Bible Study Leaders, Singers, Bell Ringers, Sunday School Leaders, Confirmation Leaders, Worship Servants, and the list goes on.

We, along with all these wonderful people, have poured our hearts into Good Shepherd. We have been wonderfully blessed. It is amazing to think this congregation started in an office park. We have come far over the years. With great leadership, and through the hard work of the members who were willing to jump in and help, we have grown and flourished.

While change and transition can be overwhelming at times, and we can feel unsure about where we are, it is abundantly clear that if we tap into these memories, we can be reminded of how much we can accomplish when we come together. In all of the stories told in the interviews we see our love of God, our love for each other, our openness and welcoming nature for all people, and our ability to persevere through times of change, as sources of strength. Our times in community together, whether in committee work, fall festival planning, Bible studies, choir, VBS, or Thanksgiving meals, were some of the most meaningful messages shared during the interview process.

Now we have another chance to come together in community to build the future we want. We must be willing to allow the Holy Spirit to guide us and help us embrace the changes that lie ahead with open minds, serving hands, and hearts filled with joy for our Lord. We are confident GSLC has a bright future ahead because of the solid foundation we created with the help of God through the years.

Together we are the body of Christ; together we are Good Shepherd.

The Good Shepherd Lutheran Church Call Committee

STAFF

Pastor Ruth Hamilton

Interim Pastor

pastorruth@gslutheran.org

Thomas Eisnor

Organist/Choir Director

music@gslutheran.org

Pam Weinelt

Praise Team Coordinator

Melina Thurmond

Youth & Family Ministry

Coordinator

Youthfamministry@gslutheran.org

Maureen Harkins

Office Coordinator

office@gslutheran.org

Donna Garges

Media Coordinator

Media@gslutheran.org

Aaron Frink

Custodian

Trina Hutchison

Call Committee President

callcommittee@gslutheran.org

GOOD SHEPHERD LUTHERAN CHURCH

1208 Rose Creek Drive

Woodstock, GA 30189

770-924-7286

gslutheran.org

[Facebook.com/gslcwoodstock](https://www.facebook.com/gslcwoodstock)

[Instagram.com/Gslutheran](https://www.instagram.com/Gslutheran)

SUMMARY OF APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY INTERVIEWS

Many thanks to everyone who participated in the Appreciative Inquiry process, whether as interviewer interviewee, or both. You provided the Call Committee with invaluable information that will help them develop responses for the Ministry Site Profile (the document that provides information about Good Shepherd as a congregation) and about the priorities for our ministry and our pastor as we move into the future. Your responses will also help shape the future ministry of this congregation.

For those who are interested in the congregation's responses, here is a brief summary of replies, with similar responses mentioned by more than one person grouped into one bullet point:

Question 1: When is/was the congregation at its best?

- When it had two pastors with two perspectives, two styles, different priorities
- When it began in the office park and everyone was involved, had a common purpose, and had fun together
- During times of high involvement, working and having fun together
- When we were focused on the needs of the congregation and the surrounding area, rather than more global and national issues
- When the pastor is challenging the congregation and pushing people a little out of their comfort zone (though not TOO far out of their comfort zone)
- When we offer a variety of activities that promote engagement from the congregation, such as Fall Fair and Men in Mission
- When the congregation came together to solve major problems
- When the congregation had creative worship
- When members initiated and led projects to respond to a particular need
- When it provided direct help to community and focused on community outreach

Question 2: What is distinctive about Good Shepherd?

- All are welcome
- Being Lutheran and caring about theology, the Gospel, liturgy
- Friendliness
- Caring for each other and others
- Music
- Technology
- Youth programs
- Spiritually supportive
- Homey, close-knit, family-like feeling
- Service-first mentality
- Focus on caring for creation
- Amazing teachers
- Responsible and faithful in our benevolence and commitment to the Synod/ELCA
- Quality of staff
- Being involved and getting others involved (shared leadership)

Question 3: Time you were most motivated, engaged

Comment: the times that people were most engaged and alive were when they were serving in some capacity in the congregation or through the congregation to the community. People often were most involved when they had children or after retirement.

Call Committee Contacts

If you need to reach a member of the Call Committee, an e-mail address has been set up at:

callcommittee@gslutheran.org

Sending an e-mail to this address will include every member of the Call Committee.

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Question 4: Ways that the congregation has made contributions to you or promoted growth in you

- Bible studies, worship, Sunday school (attending and teaching)
- Support and prayers in difficult times
- Friendships, community, a sense of belonging
- Growth in leadership, inter-personal skills
- Deeping and broadening interests and involvement
- Change through participation in outreach
- Spiritual growth
- Leadership has helped me to grow; my gifts and skills have been affirmed
- GSLC was a place where I could feel the love and peace of God
- Comfortable and safe place to worship without being judged
- Variety of options for growing in faith
- Mission trips, youth activities are appreciated by parents

Question 5: Ways that you have contributed to GSLC

Comment: Respondents had contributed in a wide variety of ways. They liked the options for participating in small to major ways.

Question 6: Wishes for the future: Pastor

- An engaging, dynamic, extroverted pastor who reaches ALL members and delivers a good message that brings people back.
- Pastor with charisma and energy who is laid-back, young enough to engage with youth, not so young they cannot engage with older congregants.
- A pastor with new ideas; who will reach out to young people and who can grow the congregation
- A pastor who is non-political, non-controversial
- A pastor with strong sermon skills
- A pastor who is caring, who visits the sick and shut-in and prays with them
- A pastor who can unite us and take us further by casting a vision that all can pursue, individually and collectively
- A mid-career pastor with mission-development and outreach experience and gifts
- A pastor who will fully engage all demographics represented in the congregation: youth, young adults, families, seniors

Question 6: Wishes for the future: Ministry and Mission

Congregation

- Develop a cohesive vision so that the congregation is working together
- Continue to be an open and inviting congregation
- Be a church that connects Scripture to life in a relatable way.
- Develop opportunities for more Lutheran formation and faith formation
- Continue strong congregation support of the Synod
- Find ways to become more diverse
- Care for and Inclusion of all members, new and old, younger and older
- Focus on the big picture: God's presence with GSLC and guidance through the Holy Spirit

Leadership

- Develop new lay leadership
- Increase participation from members
- Hire more staff



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- Increase financial support

Community/Outreach

- Increase engagement with the community
- Offer concerts for the community

Worship

- Continue to offer a variety of worship options and styles
- Continue to offer online worship
- Develop more music programming with more participants
- Reimagine the types of worship offered
- Redesign the praise service
- Recruit more communion ministers for the homebound

Communication

- Communicate frequently with members
- Make use of more and better technology
- Create a Member Directory with pictures

Programs

- Continue and increase youth ministry
- Create opportunities for youth to serve within the congregation as well as outside of it
- Develop more opportunities for inter-action among those who attend the different worship services
- Start an evening Bible class
- Gather for fun and fellowship
- Develop a prayer group
- Start a grief support group
- Develop programming for Empty Nesters
- Develop programming for unmarried adults
- Start more small groups
- Create more common-interest groups
- Develop a lecture series based on topics chosen by the congregation

NEXT STEPS FOR THE CALL COMMITTEE

Using the information that the congregation provided in the Appreciative Inquiry interviews as well as data about the congregation and our community context, the Call Committee is working to complete the Ministry Site Profile (MSP). This is the document required of all congregations that are seeking new ministers. It describes the congregation, including its gifts, programs, sense of mission, and plans for the future, as well as the qualities that a new pastor will need to lead the congregation into that future.

When the call committee has completed the MSP, they present it to the congregation council, even reading it line by line, explaining how they arrived at the set of skills and gifts they identified as needed in the next pastor. In order to complete the MSP, the congregation council needs to approve compensation and benefits to include in the MSP that will be offered to the candidate and recommended to the congregation. Once the MSP is approved by the congregation council, it is submitted to the office of the bishop to be posted online and to serve as a guide for recommending candidates.

The Call Committee plans to have a draft of the MSP sent to the synod bishop by March 1. At that point, the synod may suggest some revisions in order to improve the document. After the synod receives a final version, names of and information about potential candidates for pastor will be provided by the bishop. The Call Committee will then review that information and begin to schedule interviews with potential candidates. The Call Committee will meet next on February 9.

Please continue to pray for the members of the Call Committee and for the people who may become Good Shepherd's next pastor.