GOOD NEWS

Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd

The Quarterly Newsletter October, 2026

Beyond Our Doors

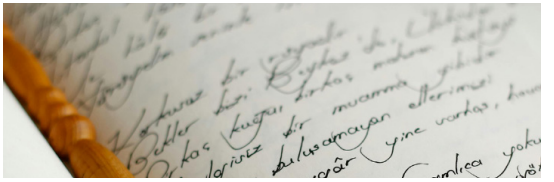
In preparing for the call of a new pastor, we have been asking important questions about who we are, how we can connect more deeply with our friends and neighbors, and where God may be leading us.

At our June Vision Retreat and our congregational conversation in August, we recognized that one of our gifts as a church is our welcoming spirit. But we also began asking what it really means to be welcoming. What might draw people to Good Shepherd? What might push them away? And how might we live out our faith beyond Sunday morning?

Two recent gatherings offered glimpses of connecting with our neighbors beyond these walls.

On October 3, we welcomed neighbors and their beloved pets for a beautiful Blessing of the Animals. It was a simple opportunity to celebrate God's creation, share a blessing, and connect with people through something they care deeply about.

The following Saturday, our Neighborhood Taco Party was a great success! Last year, about 25 neighbors



stopped by throughout the day. This year, with a more intentional effort to reach out—including banners, special guests and volunteers who spent time going door to door throughout the neighborhood, distributing flyers and inviting our neighbors—more than 300 people joined us for food, music, laughter, and conversation. Families enjoyed the festivities, children played, neighbors met neighbors, and Good Shepherd opened its doors and grounds to the wider community.

Neither gathering required anyone to be a member, attend worship, or make any commitment to our congregation. We simply offered hospitality and an opportunity to connect.

These were small but meaningful steps toward living out the vision we've been developing together.

But what comes next? How do we turn a friendly encounter into an ongoing relationship? How do we become better listeners to our neighbors? How might

that listening change us and shape the ministry we share?

These are some of the questions our leadership is exploring. The article that follows looks more closely at what it might mean for Good Shepherd to become a missional church.

I expect that, like the early church, we will discover the answers as we reach out, build relationships with those beyond our walls, and discern together where God is leading us.

We have no idea where the Spirit will guide us next. That is part of what makes it exciting. It will take curiosity, imagination, prayer, and a willingness to try new things.

One thing is clear: We can no longer simply wait for other Lutherans to show up at our doorstep.

The times, they are a-changin'! And I believe we are ready to change as the Spirit leads.

In Joy, Pr. Carol



What Is a Missional Church?

From Transactions to Relationships

In August, Pr. Alexia Salvatierra led a congregational conversation that left us excited about our next steps in ministry. Along the way, she invited us to consider becoming a missional church, and many of us left wondering what that means.

Norman Puck, who volunteered to lead our new Missional Church Task Force, spent time exploring that question. He boiled it down to the difference between transactional ministry and relational ministry. I think that distinction helps explain what Pr. Alexia was asking us to consider.

For years, Good Shepherd has cared for our neighbors through generous service. We collect food, support local schools, serve meals, and open our facilities to community groups. These are good ministries, and they're the foundation we build on. The question is what happens when we think about them differently.

Every year we give gifts to the teachers at the elementary school across the street. They appreciate the gesture, but most of us don't actually know them. What if we invited them to dinner, not to ask anything of them, but simply to get acquainted?

KNOW YOUR NEIGHBOR

Every week, food is distributed to families in our parking lot, yet few of us know the volunteers, much less the families who come. We could start by getting to know the volunteers over coffee, and from there find ways to build relationships with families, without making anyone feel something is expected in return.

Our Neighborhood Taco Party drew more than 300 people. But now what? The deeper question is how we move from hosting events to learning our neighbors' stories and letting them get to know us as well building relationships that last long after the party is over.



That's the shift from transactional to relational ministry. It's not about abandoning what we already do or simply adding more programs. It's about recognizing that ministry doesn't end when the gift is delivered or the meal is served. As we get to know our neighbors, we may discover new opportunities for ministry we hadn't imagined before. And our neighbors have wisdom and experiences to share with us, too.

The Missional Church Task Force will begin meeting soon. The group will work with "Thought Leaders" to consider how we can strengthen relationships through our existing ministries, explore new opportunities, and develop recommendations to bring back to the Council. As the work unfolds, there will be opportunities for the congregation to participate in the conversation.

Underlying all this is an ancient biblical calling. The prophet Jeremiah told God's people to seek the welfare of the city where they lived. Becoming a missional church means taking that seriously: listening to our neighbors and building real friendships, trusting that God shows up in those relationships, often in unexpected ways.

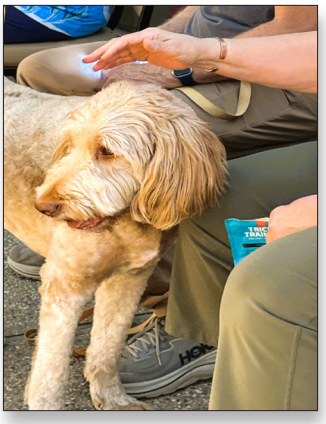
Becoming missional doesn't begin with creating something new. It begins with getting to know the people already around us—and letting them get to know us.

CELEBRATING OUR COMMUNITY



On Saturday, October 3, LCGS welcomed neighbors and their beloved pets for our Blessing of the Animals. In the spirit of St. Francis of Assisi, who celebrated God's presence in all creation, we gathered to give thanks for the animals who share our lives and bring us so much joy, comfort, and companionship.

There were wagging tails, friendly greetings, and opportunities to meet neighbors, both two-legged and four-legged! It was a simple and meaninful way to celebrate God's love for all and extend our welcome beyond our church doors.



NEIGHBORHOOD TACO PARTY WHAT A DAY!

Our second annual Community Taco Party on Saturday, October 10, was a wonderful success! More than 300 people joined us for an afternoon of food, music, laughter, and neighborhood fellowship—a tremendous increase from the approximately 30 neighbors who attended last year. And we even came in $500 under budget!

DJ Madonna kept the music going, children enjoyed the bounce house slide and face painting, and families gathered over a delicious lunch of tacos, tortas, and quesadillas. Our returning caterers served up favorites including carne asada, al pastor, chicken, and chorizo, along with refreshing aguas frescas. The Good Shepherd community also contributed with fresh fruit, cookies, cupcakes and even a pumpkin pie nd whipped cream!

We were also pleased to welcome Salinas Mayor Dennis Donohue and City Council Representative Andrew Sandoval, who joined us to meet and talk with members of the community.

Our Mission: Just Mingle!

The heart of the party was never simply

about serving great food or putting on a fun event. It was about getting to know our neighbors.

We encouraged Good Shepherd members to step outside their usual circles, greet new faces, learn names, and begin conversations. We hope the connections made that day will be the beginning of lasting relationships with people in our surrounding neighborhood.

Thank You to Our Volunteers!

A special thank-you goes to everyone who made the day possible—from those who planned and organized the event to those who helped with setup, food, hospitality, and cleanup.

We especially want to recognize the volunteers who spent hours going door to door throughout the neighborhood, distributing flyers and personally inviting our neighbors. Their efforts helped make this year's turnout possible.

Our second annual Taco Party was more than a successful community event. It was another opportunity to open our doors, share some joy, and begin building relationships beyond our church walls. We look forward to seeing where these new connections lead!



NOVEMBER: REMEMBRANCE & GRATITUDE

NOVEMBER 1

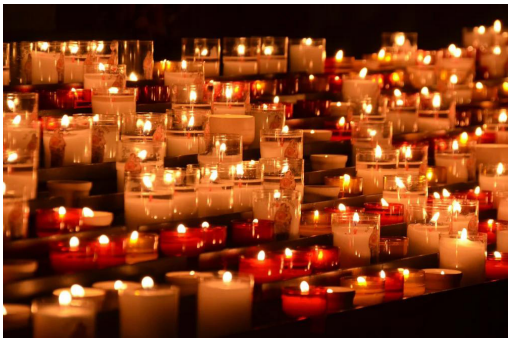
All Saints Sunday

Gathering in Remembrance

On All Saints Sunday, we remember and give thanks for those who have gone before us in faith, especially loved ones who have died during the past year.

We invite you to bring photographs of loved ones to display in the Narthex. During worship, there will be opportunities to light candles and write names on the paper along the altar railing. Bells will ring as we remember those who have died.

All Saints is a tender and beautiful reminder that in Christ, love reaches beyond death and we remain connected in the communion of saints.



9:30 am Sunday, November 1
Bring photos of loved ones

NOVEMBER 25

Thanksgiving Eve & Pies

Giving Thanks Together

This year, we will gather with our friends from St. Philip's and Iglesia Luterana El Buen Pastor for a shared Thanksgiving Eve worship service. Together, we will give thanks for God's faithfulness, the blessings of community, and the many ways we care for one another.



Following worship, we'll continue the celebration with ples! A wonderful opportunity to share gratitude, food, and friendship across our congregations.

6 pm November 25
Good Shepherd
580 Larkin St
Salinas, CA

DOROTHY'S KITCHEN — HOW YOU CAN HELP.



Dorothy's Kitchen is planning a traditional Thanksgiving dinner for those experiencing food insecurity. The menu includes turkey, mashed potatoes, green bean casserole, cranberry sauce, fruit salad, rolls, and dessert. They are expecting around 600 this year because of the current high prices of groceries (and everything else!).

You can support this special meal. The list of items needed can change, look for an updated list in the Narthex. Donations can be brought to church or dropped off at Dorothy's Place, 30 Soledad St., Salinas, between 10 and 5. Call Rita Locke (831-597-4530) for delivery of perishable items, or contact any Church in Society member for more information.

You can also write a check to LCGS with "Dorothy's Thanksgiving" in the memo line. Donations can be made through Sunday, November 22.

DECEMBER: COMFORT, HOPE & JOY



December 21

The Longest Night

A Service of Light and Dark

Comfort and Hope

Christmas can be a joyful season, but not everyone experiences it that way. For those needing a break from the rush of the holidays, for those grieving a loss, feeling lonely, or simply overwhelmed we are planning a quieter, more reflective Christmas worship experience.

On the longest night of the year, we will gather for prayer, music, candlelight, and moments of silence, remembering that God's light shines even in our darkest times.

All are welcome, whatever this season holds for you.

6pm, Monday, December 21

December 24

Christmas Eve

Celebrate the Birth of Christ

Join us at Good Shepherd as we celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ with a special candlelight service, with special music, beloved Christmas carols, prayer, and the good news of God's love coming into the world.

Whether Good Shepherd is your church home or you're visiting for the first time, you are warmly invited to celebrate Christmas Eve with us.

6pm, Thursday December 24



December 5

Christmas Music Event

Details Coming Soon

Our Worship & Music Team is exploring possibilities for a special Christmas musical program this year. We're reaching out to potential performers and hope to have more details to share soon. If we're unable to arrange a concert, we'll look forward to gathering for a Christmas Dinner and Carols celebration instead.

Seasonal Reflections

Autumn brings not only a change in the weather but a change in the church calendar. We move from Thanksgiving and gratitude for God's many gifts into Advent, a season of reflection, anticipation, and hope.

As we journey toward the manger, we prepare once again to welcome Christ, the Light of the World. Through worship, prayer, and music, we celebrate the hope, peace, joy, and love of this holy season.

We look forward to sharing these celebrations with our Good Shepherd family and have also invited our neighboring ELCA congregations—El Buen Pastor, Epiphany, and St. Philip's—to join us as they are able.

We invite you to join us in worship and fellowship throughout this season of thankfulness, hope, and renewal.

Debra Gruttadauro, *Worship & Music*

Angel Tree Time Again!



Beginning in mid-November, the Angel Tree will be decorated with gift tags for sixteen children whose parents cannot be home with them this Christmas. Each child has two Christmas wishes, for a total of thirty-two gifts. Your gifts help these children feel remembered and loved, and maintain a connection with their parents.

Every year, Good Shepherd members help make these Christmas wishes come true! Won't you be an Angel for a child this year? Contact Rita Locke or a Church in Society member for details.

Congregational Meeting

More Than Just Church Business!

At our annual congregational meeting on December 6, we'll elect Council members, adopt our 2027 budget—including a compensation package to support calling our next pastor—and take up something we haven't done in quite a while: review and update our Constitution and Bylaws.

Now, I know. Constitutions and bylaws don't exactly get people excited. But I think this is an important—and even exciting—opportunity for Good Shepherd.

We haven't undertaken a comprehensive review of these documents since 2015. In the meantime, our congregation has changed, the world around us has changed, and we've been asking some important questions about who we are and where God is leading us.

Along with required updates, our Constitution Task Force has been asking some practical questions: Do our governing documents reflect how we actually do things? Are there better ways to organize our work? What will help us carry out our ministry in the years ahead? These are choices we get to make together.

And that's what makes this more than updating rules. It's an opportunity to think about the congregation we're becoming and how we can work together to live out our mission.

Voting members will receive the proposed amendments and explanatory materials in advance of the meeting. Please take some time to read them, bring your questions, and join us on December 6.



Call Committee CORNER

Dear Friends in Christ,

Your Call Committee has been busy, and we're grateful for how the process is unfolding. We're currently in conversation with a candidate we're excited about meeting in person!

If the Call Committee decides to recommend this candidate, here's what happens next: the committee will bring its recommendation to Council. Council will negotiate a compensation package, arrange opportunities for the congregation to meet the candidate, and bring the call to the congregation for a final decision at a special congregational meeting. We'll share more at each step as we're able.

As part of our work, we've also been exploring possibilities for organizing our ministry in ways that make the best use of our resources, sustain a living wage for our pastor, open up other staffing possibilities, and build a strong foundation for the future. One possibility is a shared pastoral call with St. Philip's Lutheran Church in Carmel Valley.

These discussions are still preliminary, and a shared call would require further conversation and agreement among both congregations and the pastor. We've kept Council informed, and our congregation will be involved in discussion and discernment before any final decisions are made.

Please pray for the committee, for those discerning a call to serve with us, and for all of us as we listen together for where God is leading.

Peace be with you all,
Andrea Puck

Living Waters

Living Waters is a time to deepen our faith, explore prayer, and connect with God and one another through Scripture, reflection, and conversation. Whether you've participated before or are joining us for the first time, there's always room at the table!







El Salvador Opportunities

Santa Cruz al Salvador (SCaS) has another exciting delegation to El Salvador planned for November 15–24. So far, we have seven people committed, including one new delegate, Pr. Diane Ford from Trinity Presbyterian, and six "veterans" of at least one delegation.

We held an orientation meeting in October. One question people often ask is, "How much walking is involved on these trips?" As more transportation has become available in the rural communities we work in, there is not much required walking now, so that should not be a factor for most people.

Talk to Steve Barrett if you would like more information about SCaS delegations and this year's trip. These are wonderful, life-changing experiences!

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University Student Sponsorships



SCaS is offering a new way to encourage and support our 16 university scholarship students. We are proud to support these outstanding students pursuing a variety of majors, including public accounting, psychology, pre-med, dentistry, nursing, social work, and veterinary medicine.

It costs $1,080 to support one university student for a year. In addition, most of our students use the SCaS-funded student house in San Salvador, and the rent increases every year. To maintain this support, and perhaps broaden it, we are offering member churches and individuals the opportunity to personally sponsor a university student.

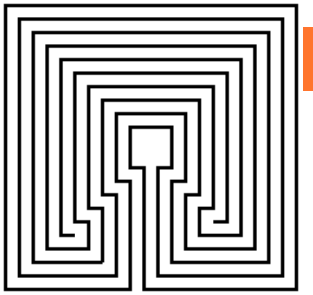
If our church, your family, or you individually are able to commit to giving either $1,080 ($90 a month) or $540 ($45 a month for a half scholarship) annually for two years (2026–27), SCaS will connect you with a university student. The student will share their education story and communicate periodically with you.

We already have 2026 letters and videos from all the students that your SCaS board member can share. Several students have asked whom they should address their letters to, and that is the origin of this idea. They like the opportunity to have a sponsor from the U.S. who encourages them personally.

We welcome donations of any amount. Every donor who commits to $540 or more will receive the name, letters, and contact information for a student of their choice.

Please contact Good Shepherd's SCaS board members, Steve Barrett at scbarrett@aol.com or Dr. Tim Friederichs at twf450@yahoo.com, for more information.

LABYRINTHIAN NEWS



Our Property Committee is moving steadily ahead with plans to relandscape our front yard and parking lot. If you would like to help accelerate the process, we would love for you to join the committee and lend a hand. We are currently gathering bids from local landscapers to begin installation.

The centerpiece of our new design is a beautiful labyrinth. For those unfamiliar with them, a labyrinth is not a maze. While a maze contains branching paths and dead ends, a labyrinth is a single, continuous, winding path that leads to a center point and back out again.

Labyrinths are ancient structures dating back over 4,000 years. Over time, they became a Christian spiritual tool for meditation, contemplation, and prayer. Walking the path can represent an internal spiritual journey toward God or serve as a symbolic pilgrimage. One of the greatest benefits of a labyrinth on our property is that it will serve as a permanent “welcome mat” for our neighbors and the wider community.

Our design features a nine-circuit path spanning roughly 38 by 38 feet. Inspired by the famous medieval labyrinth at Chartres Cathedral in France, it has been adapted into a square shape to ease construction. Built flat with flush pavers, it will offer a smooth walking surface.

How to Walk the Labyrinth

There is no right or wrong way to walk a labyrinth. Many people find comfort in a simple, three-part movement:

Releasing (Walking In): Let go of daily distractions, stresses, and worries. Walk at your own natural pace, allowing your mind to quiet.

Receiving (The Center): Pause for reflection, prayer, or simply to experience a sense of peace and clarity.

Returning (Walking Out): As you retrace your steps, consider how to integrate what you experienced into daily life, returning to the world feeling grounded and refreshed.

Building this beautiful space is a collaborative effort. If you would like to contribute financially to our landscaping and labyrinth project, any donation would be deeply appreciated. Thank you for your continued support as we build a more welcoming space for all.



Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

We are in the Season of Thanks. This is a time of gratefulness, appreciation, and giving thanks for all the blessings that have been bestowed upon us.

It is also the Season of Giving, sharing our time and talents with one another. My favorite thing to do during this season is to give to those in need without them knowing it's coming. Surprise visits, gifts, and treats when no one is expecting them! It brings me great joy to see the expressions on people's faces when they receive a gift they had no idea was coming. Giving in secret.

Next month, I will be on a three-week cruise, experiencing different cultures, meeting people, and visiting new places. I'll be learning about their history, both the good and the bad, and taking it all in. It will be a humbling experience to meet people who share their life stories, experiences, and lessons learned along the way. I know some of you can't wait to see the photos as I share my experiences in different countries on Facebook!

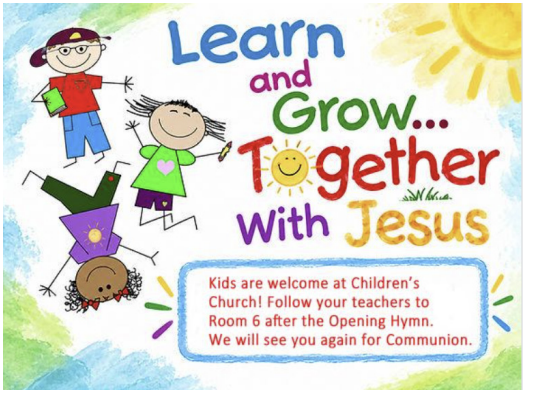
That is also a form of giving. Sharing.

I hope your Thanksgiving holiday will be filled with thankfulness, gratitude, and the remembrance that the greatest gift of all is Jesus Christ, who came to us in humble surroundings and became the sacrificial lamb, showing us the depth of God's love. The greatest and the least.

Peace,
Mark Nelson,
President

Children's Time During Worship

Children are invited to explore Bible stories through crafts, activities, and conversation during Sunday worship. It's a time to learn, make friends, and grow together in faith!



Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd

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Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd is a diverse congregation where all are welcome!

Our Mission Statement

To Know Christ as Savior, Lord, and Friend;
To Grow in Christ through Worship, Bible Study, Prayer, and Christian Fellowship;
To Go in Christ's name to proclaim the Good News of His love, care for the needy, and make Disciples of all.

Council, Ministry Teams, Staff

DISCIPLES
All Members of LCGS

Pastor
Pastor Carol Been
Interim Minister

2026 COUNCIL MEMBERS
Corinne Barrett,*Vice President*
Tom Campbell
Casey Jerome
Dan Kemper, *Treasurer*
Carol Melland, *Secretary*
Mark Nelson, *President*
Andrea Puck

STAFF
Temp Office Administrator & Facility Rental Coordinator
Sonia Godines
Accompanist
Giuseppe Nozicka
Bookkeeper
Mary Ann Henriques
Custodian
Sonia Godines

MINISTRY LEADS
Altar Guild
Kim Legard

Call Committee
Andrea Puck, Co-chair
Steve Barrett, Co-chair

Children's Ministry
Donna Kemper
Corrine

Church in Society
Ida Nuttall, Co-chair
Rita Locke, Co-chair

Eucharistic Minister
Mary Nickols

Missional Church Task Force
Norman Puck, Chair

Personnel
Corinne Barrett, Chair

Property
Tim Martin, Co-chair
Andrea Puck, Co-chair

Spiritual Formation
Steve Barrett, Co-lead
Andrea Puck, Co-lead

Stewardship & Finance
Chris Jensen, Co-chair
Dan Kemper, Co-chair
Carol Melland, *Financial Secretary*

Tabitha's Joy Circle
Kim Legard, Co-chair
Ida Nuttall

Worship/Music
Debra Gruttadauro

Website, IT
Norman Puck
Diane Dahms

