

December 2011

The Flock

A publication of the Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd
Please view our calendar at www.mygoodshepherd.net

Congregational Budget Meeting 12/4/11 following 11:00 service

"Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word."

Luke 1: 26-38

The call

Two things seem clear when God chooses someone for a really important role. God usually chooses someone weak and insignificant - and God chooses that person to die.

As a young girl Mary would not have been taught to read - young boys, yes, but not young girls. Ancient peasant cultures counted females, including wives, among a man's possessions, along with slaves, oxen and donkeys. The selection of Mary's husband would be entirely her parents' affair. She could not refuse their choice. As a female Mary would be allowed to enter the synagogue, but had to remain in the back or in the balcony, behind a grill. If perchance she did learn to read, she was not allowed to read the Torah in the synagogue service. But God chooses the weak and insignificant to do God's great work.

Mary was also chosen to die. There are many ways of dying. Mary did her dying in shame and pain, as a refugee. God called Mary to the shame of becoming an unwed mother . . . all of this asked of a girl of twelve or thirteen. And her deaths were just beginning. As a widow she would watch her son die the painful death reserved for the scum of society.

Mary had no role in Jesus' public life. Hers was a hidden life. But Mary, as God's secret, became one of the most influential, celebrated women in history . . . This secret, weak, unlettered Mother of God, who is our mother, is the wisdom of God, the power of God.

God's call to Mary mirrors God's call to each one of us. In baptism, God calls us, despite our own insignificance, weaknesses and inadequacies, to "give birth" to God's compassion in our own Nazareths and Bethlehems. In that call, God calls us to "die" to our own doubts, fears, comfort and safety in order to embrace and be embraced by the new life of his Son's resurrection both in this life and in the next. If Mary, the young, unmarried pregnant teenager, can believe the incredible event that she is about to be a part of, if she can trust herself and believe in her role in the great story, then the most ordinary of us can believe in our parts, as well.

God interrupts

A college professor, herself a wife and mother, reflects on Mary's response to God's call to be the mother of his Christ:

"Let it be done to me according to your will."

"I have often wondered what I would have said in Mary's shoes. Would I have said *Yes*? I doubt it. I think I would probably say, *Excuse me? Or Um, thank you, but I'd really rather not.* The fact is, I'm not especially interested in being interrupted by God. God's plans seem rarely to coincide with my own . . .

"Actually, I'm better at grand, earthquake interruptions - dramatic interruptions that require moving, changing jobs radically redirecting life plans . . . It's the smaller interruptions - say the knock on my office door - that really irk me. When I hear that unexpected knock, I turn my face into a smile and try not to communicate to my visitors that I was in the middle of a really crucial sentence and would they please leave and close the door behind them?"

But this teacher, counselor and parent has discovered that those many interruptions may well be God knocking.

"Such interruptions . . . show me to be a prideful control freak who dares to think that whatever I've got on tap for the day is supremely important and who dares to think that I own my own precious time. They are interruptions that, when I let them, foster a little humility. And it is that hard-to-swallow fruit of humility that allows me to sometimes recognize these interruptions as God's way of gradually schooling me in the grand imperatives of letting go of all I cling to and following Christ."

[Lauren F. Winner, Assistant Professor of Christian Spirituality at Duke Divinity School, writing in *The Christian Century*, December 16, 2008.]

Our lives are a series of "interruptions" by God - "annunciations," if you will - in which God focuses our attention on his love and mercy, his compassion and grace, in the midst of our busy lives. May God "interrupt" our Christmas with the true joy of the season - and, like Mary, may we say *Yes* to the interruption; like Mary, may we accept, with gratitude and joy, God's invitation to bring his beloved Son into our own Bethlehems and Nazareths.

Pastor Chip

Christmas Schedule

"Scenes of Christmas", Choir, Sunday School, & Preschool Program, 3:00 p.m. December 18

Christmas Eve Candlelight Services – 7:00 & 11:00 p.m., Saturday, December 24

Christmas Day Service – 10:00 a.m. Sunday, December 25

New Year's Day, Worship & Holy Communion Service – 10:00 a.m. Sunday, January 1, 2012

Don R. Burlock, Director of Music

He put a new song in my mouth.... Many people will see this and worship him. Then they will trust the Lord.

It is so important to put energy into wonderful music ministry. The power of music reaches deep into the soul. Music is an integral part of our lives. We eat with it, drive, dance to it. The great American pastime is not baseball – it is music and sharing our opinions about it.

A song can often touch people in a way that a sermon can't.

Music brought me into my relationship with the Lord. I remember at a young age tip-toeing into the sanctuary and listening to the preliminary music. How it spoke to me and blessed my soul. Music can bypass intellectual barriers and take the message straight to the heart. In Psalm 40:3 David says, "He put a new song in my mouth...Many people will see this and worship him. Then they will trust the Lord"

Please desire to serve the Lord with me through the medium of music. If you enjoy singing or playing an instrument let me know. We are looking at ways to enhance our music program. In months to come I will talk to you about Contemporary/Traditional music and what we need to do in the church today to keep singing a new song!

We are selecting music with the guidance of the Lord, speeding up the tempo and using updated lyrics. Music is a critical element of worship that can't be ignored. We need to understand the incredible power of music and harness that power by being willing to set aside our own personal preferences and use the music that will best reach the unchurched for Christ.

Please join the Choir if you enjoy singing. Join our Bell Ringers if you enjoy the bells and let me know if you have a talent. I promise you will be used in the ministry of the Lord.

Movie Nights for December Movies are at 7:00 p.m. in the Sanctuary

December 6 – *Breaking the Press*

BREAKING THE PRESS ends up being a modern re-telling of the story of the Prodigal Son, set in the milieu of championship high school basketball in Texas. BREAKING THE PRESS could have used a better narrative structure overall, but it delivers satisfying, dramatic, inspiring evangelistic entertainment for media-wise viewers.

December 13 – *The Most Wonderful Time of the Year*

A modern-day female Scrooge gets a taste of Christmas romance in this family film from the Hallmark Channel. Jennifer (Brooke Burns) is a stressed-out single mom whose holiday spirit is awakened when her eccentric uncle Ralph (Henry Winkler) comes for a visit and brings along a handsome stranger, Morgan (Warren Christie), who was stranded at the airport. ~ Sandra Bencic, Rovi

December 20 – *A Boyfriend for Christmas*

Holly is not looking forward to Christmas. Her brother has a wife and kids to bring to their parents' house. She hasn't had a boyfriend since Ted. Holly loved Ted but he broke her heart when he chose to break up with her when he was transferred to an out of town newspaper owned by his family's publishing empire. Oh, and work is unrewarding--today the woman Holly was helping failed to regain custody of her kids when pro bono lawyer Ryan Hughes never showed up at the hearing. Knowing she will never meet Hughes, Holly has to settle for dictating a nasty letter to him. Holly's friend Diane tries to perk her up by promising to send her a great Christmas present. So when a handsome man with a Christmas tree knocks at her door, she realizes Douglas Firwood is her present and she can take him home to her parents for the day as a boyfriend she is serious about. Holly thinks the day is going perfectly--she and Doug are hitting it off.

Give a Good Gift for Christmas!

Together as the ELCA, we do more than we could ever do alone: grow our congregations, inspire new leaders and care for those around the world who live with hunger and poverty.

ELCA Good Gifts are a creative way to do just that. Your gifts go beyond your regular congregational offering to support the ministries of the ELCA that mean the most to you and your loved ones.

God's global barnyard



Pig
\$30.00

A pig in the pen is like money in the bank. Within months, a tiny piglet grows to weigh over 200 pounds! Should a family have a failed harvest, medical expense or other unexpected financial need, this pig can be cashed in for big bucks at the market.



Goat
\$50.00

Goats can survive hot temperatures, rocky terrain or drought—you name it! This makes them especially valuable for families living in hot, dry climates where it's tough to raise other animals. Fresh milk, which is great for children, can also be used to make cheese, yogurt and other dairy products to eat and sell. As goats multiply, families often share the offspring with neighbors in need, helping lift entire communities out of hunger and poverty.



Chicks
\$10.00

Ten little chicks make a big difference! When they are just months old, these chicks begin laying eggs, which make nutritious meals for families who are hungry. The many extra eggs are often enough to allow a family to start a small business by selling them for additional income.



Alpaca
\$175.00

The soft fleece of an alpaca can be made into colorful clothing, bedding and rugs that are much warmer and softer than those made from sheep's wool. These products sell for a high price at the market. And since alpacas have a long life span, a family can depend on this steady source of income for 20 years or more.



Cow
\$500.00

A cow has got it all: milk, meat, fertilizer and calves, which can quickly strengthen a family's financial stability. Milk from a cow is packed with calcium and essential nutrients to help nourish a family, and the extra milk and dairy products can be sold at the local market for income. When a cow gives birth, a family can trade the calves for other necessities.



Duck

\$20.00

The mere presence of a duck on a farm can help a family produce a more bountiful harvest than ever before. How? A duck is the best natural pesticide around! Its favorite foods include all of the bugs and weeds that harm a farmer's crops while fertilizing the field at the same time. But that's not all. Large, protein-rich duck eggs make great, nutritious meals.



Sheep

\$125.00

The warm and durable wool from sheep is especially valuable for a family living in poverty. Wool can be easily made into hats, sweaters, coats and blankets to keep family members warm and dry. These products—and even the wool itself—can be sold at the local market for extra income. And what's more, sheep's milk can be used to make nutritious dairy products.



Fish

\$250.00

Give your neighbors a fish and they will eat for a day ... give your neighbors a community fish farm and they will eat for a lifetime. The project begins with a pond, fish food, training and just a few fast-growing fish, like tilapia. Very quickly, the pond teems with enough fish to regularly provide healthy meals for families in the community.



Family Farm

\$715.00

A cow, a couple of goats, 10 chicks, two pigs, a duck, farming tools—plus training and marketing support—can help a family farm its way to a fresh start. With new tools and techniques, crops will grow bigger and stronger than ever before. Eggs, milk and meat from farm animals will provide enough food to eat and sell on the market, helping a family escape the cycle of hunger and poverty for good.

Choose your gift: _____

Make checks out to: The Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd.

Name: _____

Address: _____

We will send your gift choice and your money to the ELCA Good Gifts program.
Thank you so much for your gift!

"A Cure or a Healing?"

A cure is when you get physically well. Your body mends from an injury, you recover from your illness. You go back to life pretty much as it was before the illness or injury.

I always pray for a cure, and I let the people I'm praying for know that I am praying for a cure. I have seen times when against all medical hope people have seemed "miraculously" cured. I have seen times when the body--with the help of modern medicine and skilled medical practitioners--cured itself. And there is no reason not to think that God is involved in such cures--after all, God created the human body with natural capacities to recover from illness and injury. I have seen times when the cure is partial; cancer goes into remission, heart disease is held at bay with bypass surgery, AIDS kept under control. And I have seen times when there is no cure and the patient dies. I always pray for a cure.

But I also pray for healing. You are healed when your mind and spirit are at peace with what's happening to your body. So much illness and injury are accompanied by mental and spiritual anguish, by fear, by anger and bitterness, by loneliness, by confusion, by religious doubt and despair, by a strong resistance to accepting and coming to terms with what's going on with you. Healing comes with an acceptance of what's happening, and the trust that even if I die, yet shall I live (John 11:25-26). When healing has happened, people are at peace with themselves, with their family and friends, and with God.

Over the years, I have seen:

- People who have been cured but not healed. They left the hospital or the sick room physically restored, but still emotionally, mentally, and spiritually distressed.
- People, like the man I mentioned earlier, who have not been cured, and have not been healed. This is a bad death.
- People who have not been cured, but have been healed. They may remain ill or they may die, but now they face their continuing illness or their death in the company of those who love them, with an acceptance grounded in trust that their lives are kept safe in the love of the God who made them. When they die, it is a good death.
- People who have been both cured and healed. This is wonderful.
- People who were healed long before illness or injury struck; people who live so close to God in mutual love that they are able, like St. Paul, to be content in all things.

Of course, there will come a time when no amount of prayer will bring a cure. Human mortality is 100 percent. We will all pass through the gates of death. It is good, then, to pray for both ourselves and others that when the time comes to die, we will have a good death.

So pray for those who are ill or injured. Pray for a cure and pray for healing, and let them know you are praying. Pray during your fixed time of prayer, and pray when you are with them, even if your prayer consists of words spoken in the silence of your own heart while you hold their hand.

Please keep the family of Ed Decker in your prayers.
Ed joined the Saints of Heaven on Monday, November 28, 2011.

Cards may be sent to:
Norma Smith
10370 S Lake Drive
Largo, FL 33773

A memorial service for Ed is scheduled at Good Shepherd for
Tuesday, December 13, 2011 at 11:00 a.m.

Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd Council Meeting
November 17, 2011

Little Lambs: A total of 71 students are enrolled. There is work day planned for 1/7/12 for the play ground and other projects. Volunteers are needed.

Finance: Kathy stated that we have enough money to pay the bills right now and the 2011 budget deficit is about \$24,000.

Old Business:

1. Copier lawsuit. Our lawyer made the offer. Nothing has been received back at this point. There was a question regarding whether there was a timeframe for an appeal? Chuck will ask David Bulluck, our lawyer, on the timeframe. **Note: David notified us, November 28, that the Plaintiff has filed a "Motion For Order of Referral to Mediation" and a "Notice That Cause is at issue and Ready To Be Set For Non-Jury Trail". He is in the process of setting a date for Mediation. The amount in question is approximately \$13,600. (~\$10,000 in lease fees due and ~\$3600 value of the copier). We will try to settle for less.**

2. A search committee for a Youth and Family Director will be scheduled sometime in January 2012. Michael Gentes, interim director, contract ends May 31, 2012. So the goal for this committee will have a recommendation for approval before then.

New Business:

The congregational meeting is set for Dec 4th. There will be one budget forum scheduled. It will be between the 1st and 2nd Service on Sunday Nov 27th.

The Finance Committee presented their propose budget for 2012 and it was thoroughly discussed. Pastor Chip asked the Council to have Sherry's base salary increased to \$29,690. She had been receiving a bonus of \$500/month and he recommended that that amount be rolled in permanently.

A motion was made and passed to recommend to the Mutual Ministry Committee for review to have Sherry's salary increased to \$29,690. The Mutual Ministry Committee met Nov. 20 and approved the recommendation. So the proposed budget will so reflect this base salary for Sherry. Also, at this meeting, the Committee scheduled their next meeting for Dec. 5 to begin reviews for John Karnes and Judy Mercer.

Ministry reports:

Youth Committee reported that the pumpkin sales resulted in approximately a \$11,000 profit and that there is also approximately \$8,000 for youth projects after freezing \$11,000 for next year's pumpkin purchase.

Next Council meeting will be Dec. 15, 2011 at 7 PM.

Chuck Harrison
Council President

	Church	Little Lambs
Needed weekly	\$ 7,020.00	6,877.00
Receipts for the week	5,636.00	11,766.00
Needed YTD	312,470.00	300,956.00
Receipts YTD	247,793.00	339,959.00

Thank You!

Thank you to those who cleaned the Kitchen! The Kitchen looks great!

Elaine Frick
11-10-11

WELCA NEWS

WELCA = Women of the ELCA
All women of Good Shepherd are invited to join!
You also do not have to be a member to participate
in any or all of WELCA activities!

CORRECTION FROM LAST MONTH'S FLOCK!!!
WELCA's Annual Christmas Brunch and Cookies for Home Bound
is SATURDAY, DECEMBER 3rd, 0930-11:00am.
Wrong date was printed in November's Flock.

Please join us for brunch. Food... entertainment... fellowship...
and we will be packaging cookies to be distributed to our home bound members.
Food is provided. WELCA asks that you bring some cookies (homemade or store bought)
the morning of the brunch.
Look for sign up sheet in the Narthex on bulletin board.

There are no circle meetings for December unless printed in the weekly church bulletin.

WELCA would like to thank everyone who has attended any of the going on's this past year.

And also to thank those who have made it all possible.
Without you and the help, it would not have been possible!

Looking forward to a enjoyable 2012 with WELCA.

Keep an eye out for future happenings beginning after the first of the year!
Until then, Merry Christmas and Happy Blessed 2012 from all of us on the WELCA Board!

Food Pantry

Thank you for your continued donations of non-perishable food to the Interfaith Food Pantry. Please continue to leave your donations in the small room in front of the Ladies Room in the narthex.

Canned soups, stews, beans, peanut butter, spam and cereals are always welcome!

A Christmas Cookie Recipe

In gratitude for the generous support we enjoy from the Lutheran community throughout the year, Lutheran Services Florida would like you to enjoy the following recipe.

Please continue to keep the work of Lutheran Services Florida in your prayers.

Pumpkin Oatmeal Chocolate Chip Cookies

(republished from Christmas-Cookies.com)

- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 cup quick cooking rolled oats, uncooked
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1 cup butter, softened
- 1 cup packed brown sugar
- 1 cup granulated sugar
- 1 large egg, slightly beaten
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1 cup canned pumpkin
- 1 cup semi sweet chocolate chips

Preheat oven to 350 degrees Fahrenheit. Grease baking sheets. Combine flour, oats, baking soda, cinnamon and salt; set aside. Beat together butter and sugars until light and fluffy. Add egg and vanilla; mix. Alternate additions of dry ingredients and pumpkin, mixing well after each addition. Stir in chocolate pieces. For each cookie, drop 1/4 cup of dough onto prepared baking sheet. Bake 20 to 25 minutes until firm and lightly browned.

Benevolence Sunday – The Second Sunday of Every Month

Don't forget that benevolence Sunday is the second Sunday of every month! Every second Sunday of the month there will be offering baskets placed in the front of the first pews. You may place your benevolence offerings in the baskets as you go forward for Holy Communion.

These special offerings are to help with our 2011 budget. We have \$24,000 in our 2011 budget for benevolence. The council voted to pay \$5000 upfront and then receive the remaining amount through special second Sunday offerings.

Benevolence dollars are paid to the Florida/Bahamas Synod. Our Synod then gives 55% of all benevolence money received from all Synod congregations to the larger church.

Benevolence dollars go to support the mission and ministry of the wider church...both Synod and larger church. Benevolence dollars help to support our Lutheran colleges and Universities, Camps, Nursing Homes, Seminaries, Lutheran Social Services, Lutheran World Relief, Lutheran World Services, Lutheran Disaster Relief, Lutheran World Missions, new mission congregations and on and on and on.

Thanks for your giving!!

Our Homebound

Anderson, Ralph - 489-3359
Oak Manor Village #167
3600 Oak Manor Lane
Largo, FL 33774

Beddow, Dorothy - 392-4747
11485 63rd Avenue N
Seminole, FL 33772

Burke, Yvonne - 346-2531
Arbor Oaks
1701 68th Street N.
St. Petersburg, FL 33710

Carlson, Wendell - 584-1915
Pinecrest # 603
1150 8th Ave SW
Largo, FL 33770

Conelly, Norine - 343-4182
6930—32nd Ave N
St. Petersburg, FL 33710

Ducan, Else - 392-2581
11029 91st Ave N
Seminole, FL 33772

Goberville, Florence - 397-8943
6740 121st St N
Seminole, FL 33772

Julius, Jim & Virginia - 585-6504
Pinecrest #2306
1150 8th Ave SW
Largo, FL 33770

Krug, Fred
Freedom Square Nursing Center
Room 128
10801 Johnson Blvd.
Seminole, FL 33772

Petersen, Penny
Grand Villa
750 Starkey Road
Largo, FL 33771

Pfarr, Jane - 470-9614
11019 Unit A
126th Ave
Largo, FL 33778

Rubush, Bob -
10801 Johnson Blvd. #129
Seminole, FL 33772-7735

Rubush, Margaret - 398-3767
10801 Johnson Blvd. #352
Seminole, FL 33772-7735

Scarborough, Marie
The Inn at Freedom Square
10801 Johnson Blvd.
Seminole, FL 33772

Schmidt, Jim
12180 Latana Drive
Crossville, TN 38572

Severson, Lucille
Palm Gardens of Pinellas
200 16th Ave S. E. Room 148D
Largo, FL 33771

***May your Christmas be joyful, peaceful and bright,
And filled with the love of that first holy night!***

Happy Birthday to those celebrating in December!



Ron Rich	December 4
Carol Crouse	December 6
Lyle Anundson	December 7
Ralph Anderson	December 8
Bailey Brucato	December 11
Katy Mennel	December 13
Kristi Varley	December 13
Duke Wheeler	December 14
Kathy Austin	December 15
Louise Beckman	December 15
Drew Meyer	December 15
Lindsey Gentes	December 16
Charles Sultzman	December 17
David Frisco	December 18
Jim George	December 18
Charles Lee	December 18
Mackenzie McAndrew	December 18
Danny Mennel	December 19
Dorothy Beddow	December 20
Joyce Middleton	December 20
Elayne Peterson	December 22
Meghan Tucker	December 22
Jim Julius	December 23
Ethan Bernier	December 24
Sally Wheeler	December 24
John Karnes	December 25
Sky King	December 25
Eric Ott	December 26
Bob Beyus	December 27
Alexander Jensen	December 28
James Wise, III	December 29
Wendell Carlson	December 30