

Good Shepherd News & Notes

The Epiphany of Our Lord: January 7, 2024

3825 Wildbriar Ln., Lincoln, NE 68516

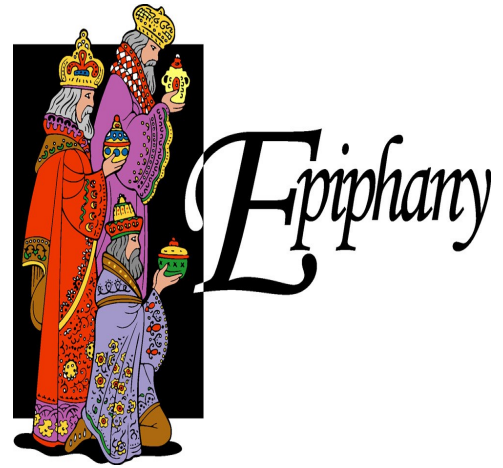
Church Office: (402) 423-7639

E-mail: info@goodshepherdlincoln.org

Website: www.goodshepherdlincoln.org

KNNA radio: 95.7FM or www.thecross957.org

Services broadcast live Sundays at 8 am & 10:30 am
and Wednesdays at 6:30 pm



HOUSE BLESSINGS

by Vicar Jacob Garrison

God's people have always believed that blessings are more than just well wishes. When Jacob tricked Isaac into receiving the Messianic blessing, Esau didn't try to argue that they were just words that didn't mean anything. Instead, something had actually been given to Jacob, even if it couldn't be seen, through the mouth of Isaac—and there weren't any take backs. The reason there weren't any take backs is that Isaac's blessing was God's blessing. And praise be to God that He doesn't do take backs. Even when we reject His blessings they remain. Jesus died to bless all nations, regardless if they want it or not. As Christians, we live in this blessing. A blessing is a word, but we know that God's Word is living and active and does what it says. Therefore, it is natural for Christians to desire the blessings/words of God placed upon themselves and upon things they care about, just as Jacob desired. Luckily, we don't have to trick blind old men to get blessings, instead we can just ask those whom God has appointed to give His blessings: pastors.

Pastors are essentially just people who give God's blessing to the world. They announce forgiveness, and they don't just announce it as a nice thing that you can hear, but when they announce it Jesus says "If you forgive anyone their sins, they are forgiven them" (John 20:21). When the pastor speaks as ordained by God, you might as well imagine it is Jesus speaking the word. Before God's throne you are, in reality, not counted as a sinner. Pastors bless you, but they can bless other things as well. Pastors bless things in the church like the altar, the hymnals, the pews, and the organ that they might be used to enrich and protect the lives of God's people as they worship. They can also bless things outside the church, like your home.

Jesus says in Matthew 12:43-45 that evil spirits (demons) roam around looking for empty places to inhabit. Jesus is talking about guarding our hearts, but if we understand what Jesus is saying, we shouldn't be ignorant of demons moving around in the world. Christ protects us from demonic possession, but that doesn't mean that they aren't around and ready to torment us. Demons like to live in places where evil has been done previously. So, if you've moved into a home or apartment, it is right to want God's blessing of light and protection over it, to cleanse it. This is true for new houses as well. Your house may look nice and clean and God be praised for that, but it would be a mistake to think that just because something looks nice and new that satan wouldn't still be around. Let your home be blessed by the Lord and ward off evil. You bless your body as the temple of the Holy Spirit. Bless your home as a temple in which your family worships by their Christian living. Further, you may want your home to be blessed after something horrific has happened in or near it. (see page 2)

If some evil has been done, God's word helps ward off the evil. Most crucially, if you suspect or have witnessed demonic activity in your home, let God's worker, the pastor, come and cast it out just as Jesus did throughout His earthly ministry.

Maybe you're thinking, I'm blessed at the Divine Service every Sunday, why would my home need to be blessed? And fair enough, you are blessed and protected from all evil. In fact, when you are blessed in baptism you could say that you don't need any more blessings. But that is a spiritually immature thing to say. You still sin and live in darkness and need to hear and receive the same blessings from God over and over again. So, why wouldn't you want God's blessings to be deliberately spoken by the pastor upon the place where you sleep and spend some of the most important moments of your life? The Lord wishes to be near you. This is a way by faith to welcome Him near you outside of the Divine Service.

If you would like the pastors to come and bless your home, the season of Epiphany is the perfect time for it. The Church throughout history has practiced house blessings during the season of Epiphany. Just as the Magi visit the home of Jesus during Epiphany, so the pastor can visit your home. The pastor will come, maybe with his vestments, and do a short service where he reads some Psalms and other Scriptures, you all sing hymns, pray over the house, and receive a formal blessing for the house. He can also go room to room and bless the home, or bless a specific part of the home. Historically, it's customary to invite others over to your home for this occasion and have good Christian fellowship afterward. Christians gathering as the kingdom of God on earth stifles satan's power while the Lord's face shines brightly. Your King Jesus has defeated all darkness, and by blessings He continues to bring His kingdom of light to you today.

LUTHERAN FOOD PANTRY

We continue to collect toiletry items for the Lutheran Food Pantry. The following items are on the list of preferred items:

Family size toothpaste

Family size shampoo

Family size soap

Toothbrushes (no battery or electric, please)

You may also bring travel sizes of these items for the collection box. The box is located by the south balcony stairs on the round table. Thank you for your help in filling this need.

MISSION PROJECT FOR JANUARY

Lutherans for Life is Good Shepherd's mission project for the month of January. Christmas – and a new year – offers opportunity for the joys of looking forward. Simeon and Anna exemplify and inspire faith that finds strength and celebration in anticipating. The Heavenly Father who escorted us thus far will also usher us ever onward. Neighbors facing surprise pregnancies or suffering terminal diagnoses need to know. For their sake, please do not keep silent (Psalm 62:1)! We will be celebrating Life Sunday, January 14.

DAILY BIBLE READING GUIDE

Lutheran Bible Translators has produced a daily Bible reading plan which covers the New Testament minus Revelations and portions of the Old Testament including Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Isaiah, Nehemiah and Esther. If you would like to follow this plan for 2024 and journey through most of the Bible, you can pick up a copy from the clipboard at the Information Center.

CHANGE OF INFORMATION CARDS

There are yellow cards on the information center to fill out if you have recently changed address, email address or phone contact number. The church office staff would appreciate it if everyone would assist us in keeping our information current.



PRAYERS FOR THE WEEK

If you have a prayer request, please contact the church office at (402) 423-7639. Your request will appear for 6 weeks. If you would like to keep it on the prayer list, you may

call during the 6th week to renew it.

- **Barb Poppe**, with short-term memory issues (4)
- **Pastor Luke Russert**, for a successful adjustment of his medication (2)
- **Sharon Burke**, dealing with Parkinson's disease (1)
- **Leena Mackey**, grand-daughter of Linda Clark, with continued medical issues (6)
- **Linda Clark**, undergoing medical tests (6)
- **Glenn**, friend of Karen Kammann, diagnosed with untreatable cancer, Pray for peace and comfort for him and his wife Cathy (5)
- **Jack Walker**, hospitalized (2)
- **Taylor**, grand-daughter of Holly Herrod, for continued healing (4)
- **John Reigle**, for successful back surgery and recovery (3)
- **Lynn Oshner**, friend of Marilyn Meyer, recovering from heart surgery (4)
- **Don Wiese**, moved to hospice care (6)
- **Terry Meier**, friend of Terry Fitzgerald, undergoing medical testing (5)
- **Shari**, sister of Tish Loomis, having a medical procedure (5)
- **Gail Stachura**, for recovery from neck surgery and successful healing (3)
- **Kyle Lundberg**, cousin of Karen Kammann, for an accurate diagnosis and successful treatment (1)
- **The son of Jordan**, friend of Michael Jensen, who is having seizures (3)
- **Ellie Anderson**, friend of Grace Marshall, dealing with worsening pain that is incapacitating her (6)
- **Gary Chura**, brother-in-law of Maureen Marshall, in hospice care with pancreatic cancer (6)
- **Kelli Stott**, daughter of Bob & Elaine Van Valkenburg, recovering from a knee replacement (4)

- **Elaine Egner**, having medical issues (6)
- **Chris**, son of Elaine Egner, in rehab at Brookside (6)
- **Tish Loomis**, having a medical procedure on Dec. 19th (6)
- **Elaine Van Valkenburg**, in rehab at Tabitha (3)
- **Bennett & Corbin**, friends of Karen Kammann, dealing with severe health issues (5)
- **All who are** dealing with COVID and other respiratory illnesses (1)
- **The family of the sister of Joyce Thompson**, who was taken to her eternal home unexpectedly (1)
- **Rose Bock**, grandmother of Angela Von Busch, recovering from surgery (2)
- **Steve Waldren**, father-in-law of Melissa Waldren, recovering from brain surgery (1)
- **Judy Korte**, mother of Sara Nispel, hospitalized (1)
- **The family of Marilyn Mathis**, mother of Shelley Kurtzer, who was taken to her eternal home (2)
- **Thanksgiving for the birth of Lucy Marie Kranz**, daughter of Rev. Mark & Bethany Kranz, brother-in-law and sister of Jeana Wood (2)
- **Thanksgiving** for the washing of Holy Baptism for **Liam Charles Roth**, son of Trent & Tarrin Roth today (1)

OWLS

Good Shepherd's OWLS (Older Wiser Lutheran Seniors) will be meeting for games and fun on the first Friday of each month. The next gathering will be on Friday, Jan. 5th at 2 pm in the fellowship hall.

WHO AM I?

The 2024 Higher Things Conference for confirmed youth will be at the University of the Ozarks in Clarksville, AR from July 16-19. The theme is "Who Am I" which is based on Isaiah 49: 16a. Sign-up sheet is located on the bulletin table. Deadline: January 19th. Please bring any questions to one of the pastors.

Good Shepherd News & Notes

STEWARDSHIP MOMENT— Isaiah 60: 6
– “They shall bring gold and frankincense, and shall bring good news, the praises of the Lord.” Faith in God moves the heart toward thanksgiving, which moves us toward making offerings to the Lord in His house. It’s simply what Christians do: Our thanksgiving to our Lord for all His benefits to us simply must overflow into sacrificial giving to the Lord. What Isaiah prophesied, the Wise Men did, and we still do today: We give with a thankful heart.



BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES (Jan. 7 thru Jan. 13)

People celebrating birthdays are:

Benjamin Sandman	Nancy Fleck
Pastor Adam Moline	Chris Kort
Steve Eckhoff	Ellie Egger
Brileigh Twarling	Mark Reinke
Aaden Von Busch	Miriam Buhr
Scott Indgjer	Reid Egger
Zaylee Zimmerman	Sally Lacy
Tiffany Walker	

Couples celebrating anniversaries are:

Del & Cathy Meints
Joe & Sharon Burke

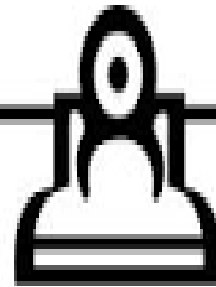
LIFE MOMENT

Nothing and nobody comes into existence apart from the will and the Word of the Lord God Almighty (Genesis 1: 3). This means God desires the survival of every human life from fertilization to forever. We court great danger if we go against this intent or counsel others to do so (Psalm 29: 7-8). Instead let us receive neighbors as blessings and enjoy our Father’s favor (Mark 1: 11)!

PICTORIAL DIRECTORY

If you have not already had your photo taken for Good Shepherd’s new pictorial directory, watch for another date in January when photos will be taken. We want to include as many members and regular attenders as possible.

Freedom requires virtue; virtue requires faith; faith requires freedom.
— ***The Federalist Papers—James Madison, John Jay, and Alexander Hamilton (Publius)***



FINANCIAL INFORMATION
DECEMBER 25, 2023

WEEKLY BUDGET NEED:
\$ 11,184.00

ATTENDANCE:
WED., DEC. 27: 45
SUN., DEC. 31: 223

GENERAL FUND OFFERING:
\$ 5,366.06

OUR OUTSTANDING MORTGAGE: \$ 1,665,667.46

Our goal is to pay off the mortgage by 2030. We need \$2,300 per week donated in principal only payments to accomplish this.

Between Oct. 1 and Dec. 31, 2023
We have received
\$ 10,578.50
in principal only gifts.

Principle Only Gifts from
October 2022– Oct. 1, 2023
\$ 197,307.69

Vicarage Fund 12/31: \$ 550.00

SERVING AT GOOD SHEPHERD THIS WEEK:

DOORKEEPERS: (Sun., Jan. 7): 8 am: Tim Higgins
10:30 am: Loraine Harnett
(Wed., Jan. 10): Ruth Cheek

ELDER TODAY: (Sun., Jan. 7): Ken Knaus
(Wed., Jan. 10): Ken Knaus

USHERS: (Sun., Jan. 7) 8 am: Kaldahl, Stehlik, Stepps
10:30 am: Eckhoff, Perrin, Princes
(Wed., Jan. 10): Von Busch (D & R), Huff, Schmidt

ACOLYTES: (Sun., Jan. 7) 8 am: Broderic Beed
10:30 am: R. J. Huff
(Wed., Jan. 10): Kyler Cover

ALTAR GUILD ASSISTANT: (Sun., Jan. 7): Raiya von Rentzell
(Wed., Jan. 10): Lucy Pflanz

COMMUNION SET-UP: (Sun., Jan. 7): Paula Erickson/Marilyn Meyer
(Wed., Jan. 10): Dennis & Reva Von Busch

COMMUNION CLEAN-UP: (Sun., Jan. 7): Deborah Grimmette
(Wed., Jan. 10): Dennis & Reva Von Busch

COFFEE SERVERS: (Sun., Jan. 7): Sharon Wilkens, Connie Swenson

VOTERS' MEETING

Good Shepherd's semi-annual voters' meeting will be held in the sanctuary on Tuesday, January 30th at 7 pm. Come for information about the decision to request a vicar for the August 2024 — July 2025 year. We will also hear some up-to-date information about other important coming events and opportunities. See you there!

THE AMAZING SOUP COOK-OFF CONTEST

Sunday, January 21st Good Shepherd will hold a soup cook-off at noon(ish) in the fellowship hall. Sign up to make your special soup recipe and compete for the prized "Golden Ladle" trophy. The congregation is invited to attend and rank the soups in order of their favorites. A free-will offering will be taken to support our church library.

A sign-up sheet and contest rules are in the narthex; please sign up by January 17th. A sign-up sheet for donations of cinnamon rolls, cookies, or dessert bars is also in the narthex. Mark your calendars for this opportunity to warm up in the cold month of January, sample some great soups, and have a fun time with good fellowship.

Consider spending 1% of your time (14 minutes) every day of 2024 in God's Word and prayer.

GOOD SHEPHERD SHUT-IN MEMBERS:

Several of our shut-in members have requested to be listed in the News & Notes in order that members might pray for them.

Ron Amack (at home)
Betty Bluhm (at The Grand Lodge)
Joe & Sharon Burke (at home)
Jim & Peggy Cather (at home)
Elaine Egner (at home)
Shirley Kalina (Pemberly Place)
Janet Kniep (at home)
Tish Loomis (at home)
Dorian Merritt (at home)
Cindi Olson (Country House)
Dean Posner (Holmes Lake Rehab)
Alice Urbach (at home)

Anita Armitstead (at home)
Irma Brandt (Yankee Hill Village)
Jim & Marilyn Carr (at home)
Georgene Duer (at home)
Verneda Gerdes (at home)
Arlyss Ketelsen (at home)
Jerry Kohl (The Woodlands)
Lynda Mahloch (Legacy Estates)

Francine Poppe (Azria Health, Central City)
Marvin & Joyce Thompson (The Landing)
Don Wiese (Southlake Village)

On the tall table next to the pro-life display is a way for you to send birthday and anniversary greetings to our shut-in members. There are cards to sign or you may write a short note to those having birthdays and anniversaries in the current month. **There are currently no birthdays or anniversaries to celebrate among our shut-in members.** Thank you to everyone who has taken advantage of these opportunities to stay in touch with our shut-in members.



KNNA-LP 95.7 FM VOLUNTEER

The Cross is always looking for volunteers to help, but currently we have a very specific need. We would like to update our radio station website or perhaps completely rebuild it. We have hundreds of hours of programming that needs to be properly archived for easier access. If you have computer/website experience and can help with this project, please contact Curt Christiansen or Pastor Moline. Thank you.

KNNA-LP 95.7 PROGRAMMING

There have been many changes recently regarding the programming on KNNA. There have been a few programs that have ended production and a few new programs that have been added. These changes are now being formalized and a new schedule should be available mid-January. Look for it on the table in the narthex. Thanks for listening!

[Luther] taught that good works do not save a person, but only faith, without good works . . . He did not say that, to be saved, a person must have faith and, in addition to that, good works, or love; but he did teach that those who would be saved must have a faith that produces love spontaneously and is fruitful in good works. This does not mean that faith saves on account of love which springs from it, but that the faith which the Holy Spirit creates and which cannot but do good works justifies because it clings to the gracious promises of Christ and because it lays hold of Christ. It is active in good works because it is genuine faith. The believer need not at all be exhorted to do good works; his faith does them automatically. The believer engages in good works, not from a sense of duty, in return for the forgiveness of his sins, but chiefly because he cannot help doing them.

— C. F. W. Walther —