

The Shepherd's voice

A SEASONAL NEWSLETTER | HOLY SHEPHERD LUTHERAN CHURCH, MARCH 2016 – VOLUME 1

SPEAKER SERIES REACHES LAMORINDA COMMUNITY

Holy Shepherd hosted a 5-week speaker series about various faiths, which was very popular among members and nonmembers from the Lamorinda community.

In the five weeks between the Christmas season and Lent, Holy Shepherd Lutheran Church hosted a speaker series about various faiths as an outreach event. Held on Wednesday evenings in the Center for Ministry (CFM), the series included speakers on the following faiths:

- Eastern Orthodox
- Islam
- Judaism
- Buddhism
- Lutheranism

The events drew between 70 and 100 people per lecture, and the Outreach Committee was most excited that about half of the attendees were not members of Holy Shepherd. Non-members had also spread the word about this speaker series in local businesses and on the web.

If you missed a speaker or would like to hear a lecture again, the five lectures are available to stream on the church website:

www.holyshepherd.org.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

On February 14th, Holy Shepherd officially welcomed 14 people to our community! Please be sure to greet these new folks when you see them around the church. Welcome!

- Jessica Casale and Casey Scheld (Alameda)
- Eric, Julianna, Alexandra, and Lucas Haas (Oakland)
- Paul Heilmann (Lafayette)
- Bill Hunter (Moraga)
- Eric and Natalie Larson (Richmond)
- John, Angela, Cate, and Camille Shanahan (Moraga)

Key Events

- March 20th Palm Sunday
worship at 8:30 and 10:45 a.m.
- March 24th Maundy
Thursday worship at 7 p.m.
- March 25th Good Friday
worship at noon and 7 p.m.
- March 27th EASTER
SUNDAY worship at 8:15 / 9:30 /
10:45 a.m. with Easter Breakfast in
Gregersen Hall 8:30 - 11:00 a.m.
- March 28th - April 1st Door
Installation and Narthex
Renovation
- April 2nd - April 9th Rancho
Santa Marta Youth Trip
- April 23rd Holy Shepherd
Christian Preschool 7th
Annual Dinner/Fundraiser
5:30 - 9:00 p.m.

Pastor's Pen

The coming days of Holy Week are days for us to pay special attention to Jesus' journey to the cross.

They are days for us to hear the stories of people whom Jesus encountered along the way. And they are days for us to realize that we are those very people.



We think of Peter. And we realize that we, too, are guilty of running away from our commitments. Though Peter once boasted, "Even though I must die with you, I will not deny you," within 24 hours he would deny Jesus three times. In what ways have we said "God, I'm with you" and yet reneged on such commitments?

We think of Judas. And we realize that we, too, are more interested in our own agendas than in the agenda of our Lord. The Bible is clear to point out that we make Judas-like choices every time we place our own agendas and personal priorities over the priorities of our Lord. Judas may have "done the deed", but we are all his "partners in crime."

We think of Pontius Pilate. And we realize that we, too, are tempted to choose easy answers rather than the right ones. As governor, Pilate had to make a decision about Jesus' fate, and the Bible declares that his choice was based on "popularity" and "expediency", rather than "right" and "wrong". Oh, how easy it is to slip into those "easy answers" rather than the "right ones"!

We think of Caiaphas. And we realize that we, too, are tempted to abuse what authority we've been given. (Caiaphas was the high priest in Jerusalem at the time of Jesus' crucifixion, and was entrusted with particular authority, an authority which he chose to abuse.) Though we may be quick to point out ways that others in authority abuse and misuse their power, Caiaphas' decision is a reminder that the temptations of power are nearly universal.

We think of people like Mary and Mary Magdalene, the disciples and the crowd. And we realize that in their story we find our stories too. The Gospels allow us enough glimpses of the people around the story of Jesus' suffering and death that none of us can say "I'm not there" or "that wouldn't have been me." Each of us has a place in the pain, even as each of us is offered a place in the promise of Easter that awaits.

But most of all, we discover in His story – that story we call "Holy Week" – that there is forgiveness of our sin, hope for our future and strength for our journeys. Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Easter Sunday together help us to taste and see and hear the amazing depth and breadth of the love which God in Christ has for us. I hope you'll make the effort to lay your own things aside long enough this coming Holy Week to join us as we discover our places in the greatest story ever told.

Love + Joy + Peace
Pastor John

Council Notes

From Council President, Lisa Merlin

During Council meetings we have discussed ways to improve communication with the Congregation. A revised website is under construction and this newsletter is being prepared by volunteers on the Council. We hope that this will enhance the sharing of information within our Congregation.

The Council has also been discussing a number of finance-related topics as Holy Shepherd works to fill all of the roles that our beloved Jack Pease used to handle. Short-term solutions have been implemented and we are working to develop a long-term plan.

We anticipate that the final 2015 financials will be available soon. With generous late-year giving by members, our budget shortfall has been erased. In order to reduce costs, we are preparing to re-amortize our CFM loan.

We are interested in your comments, questions, and feedback. Please reach out to council members with your concerns.

Editorial Board

Pastor John Valentine

Pastor Joshua Serrano

Lisa Henson, Church Council

Claire Wildman, Church Council

Please contact Lisa Verley in the Church office with comments on the newsletter.

We anticipate preparing approximately six newsletters per year, with our next newsletter in May-June. We are a volunteer-based publication, so your patience is appreciated as we develop a publication schedule and format.

COMING AND GOING—CHURCH UPDATES

NO ONE LEFT BEHIND

Holy Shepherd's newest mission partner, No One Left Behind, is a charity to help Afghan and Iraqi interpreters who served with our troops abroad resettle in the U.S. These interpreters arrived in the U.S. penniless, disconnected from family support networks, and unequipped to find jobs or build lives in their new home. As Matt Zeller, co-founder, explained in the CFM on February 28th, his non-profit seeks to provide 120 interpreters and their families with fully furnished homes, one car, three months of housing/rental payments, and employment placement assistance. As part of our support, a container to store donated furniture will be placed in the upper parking lot in the coming months. To donate, please contact Bobbie Preston (925-376-8474, bobbie@nooneleft.org).

SENDING OUT OUR YOUTH

The annual youth trip to Rancho Santa Marta is coming up in early April (April 2-9). Along with our two pastors, our youth will build, paint, prune, fix, and play. The working ranch is home and school to children who have learning disabilities. Check with the Pastors if you have items to donate to the Rancho Santa Marta community.

GLADIATOR IN A TUTU

Our own Rebecca Oczkus helped to organize a recent fundraiser for Camp Okizu, a residential camp designed to provide families affected by childhood cancer with a fun and supportive environment. Thanks to a generous donation from a member of the Congregation, six members were able to attend this dance performance event at the Bentley School, which raised over \$8,000!

INTERNATIONAL HEALTH PARTNERS

Holy Shepherd was fortunate to host Denny and Paula Lofstrom on Sunday February 14th to hear about the progress of their children's hospital in Zinga Tanzania. Denny and Paula came out of retirement to use their medical skills to help build health care facilities in Tanzania. They are opening their third hospital in Tanzania, a much needed children's hospital in Zinga. They have come a long way and are about to begin accepting patients. To view their progress, go to www.ihptz.org to see what additional plans they have for the hospital and how you could become a part of this remarkable project.

NARTHEX RENOVATION UPDATE

The Property Committee has been working on upgrading the Sacristy Doors and renovating the Narthex for several months now. Thanks to Marla Schroeder, on the Committee, who worked with Pastor John and the Council to arrange for new doors to be installed in addition to other upgrades in the Narthex! The project is planned to begin shortly after Easter so as not to conflict with that Season. Thank you to the generous Congregation members who have chipped in to defray most of the cost of the project!

WATCH THIS SPACE

The oak tree in front of the CFM did not survive long beyond the opening of the new facility, partially due to the drought, and had to be removed (see photo below). Plans are underway to plant a new tree and to improve the area in front of the CFM, perhaps in consultation with Jack Pease's family as a remembrance to him.



UPCOMING EVENTS

Sunday, March 27th - EASTER BREAKFAST

We are bringing Easter Breakfast back this Easter Sunday! Breakfast will be available 8:30 - 11a.m. in Gregersen Hall, featuring eggs, pancakes, sausage, juice, and coffee. Please contact Cristi Chow if you'd like to volunteer (925-253-9953).

Saturday, April 23rd - PRESCHOOL FIESTA

The 7th Annual Preschool Dinner/Fundraiser is coming up! We will have dinner (Mexican style), live music and dancing, Buki the clown, face painting, and a raffle. Tickets (\$45/person for adults, \$12/child age 3-12) for dinner and the raffle can be purchased by returning your RSVP or by contacting Susie Koeper (925-254-3429, susiekoeper@holyshepherd.org). If you would like to donate raffle prizes, please contact Lisa Verley in the church office or Miss Susie.



CHAPLAIN'S WINGS

Pete and his angels have sent over 2,000 "Easter" letters of encouragement and support to our military personnel in combat zones in the Middle East. When asked about 3-4 times a year, would you be willing to write a letter of appreciation to someone fighting for the safety and freedom of people here and around the world? Thoughtful letters only take a few minutes to write and demonstrate to our soldiers that they are remembered and prayed for back home. Contact Pete Schmitt (akapete2@comcast.net).

LOAVES AND FISHES

We provide crews on the 2nd Thursday and 4th Wednesday of each month to prepare and serve hot lunches at Loaves and Fishes dining rooms in Martinez and Pittsburg. Crews prepare and serve salads, rolls, fruit and a main dish. Contact Pete Schmitt (akapete2@comcast.net) with any questions; he can always use more willing hands in the kitchen.

UPCOMING CLOTHING DRIVE - April 3rd

To benefit Hillcrest Church Clothes Closet in Pleasant Hill, Friendly Manor in Oakland, and Trinity Center in Walnut Creek. All clothing, from dresses and suits to jeans and t-shirts, will be accepted - new/gently used socks and underwear are a top priority! Sweat shirts, coats, jackets are always needed. Pajamas, bath robes, and swim suits are also welcome. This will be a 1-day event on Sunday, April 3rd. Final pick up will be at 1:30 pm that day. Contact Karen Rose Kalvass at 925-284-8130 (krkvolunteer@gmail.com).

WINTER NIGHTS SHELTER

This year Holy Shepherd will again be partnering with Orinda Community Church April 13-17 to provide food and overnight shelter to homeless families at their facility. We help them during that time to prepare and serve meals. Contact Karen Rose Kalvass at 925-284-8130 (krkvolunteer@gmail.com).

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Sunday Worship 8:30 a.m. and 10:45 a.m.
Office Hours Mon–Thurs, 8:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.
Church Office 925-254-3422
Website www.holyshepherd.org

Holy Shepherd Preschool 925-254-3429
Preschool Email preschool@holyshepherd.org
Lamorinda Adult Respite Center 925-254-3465
LARC Email larc@holyshepherd.org



HOLY SHEPHERD LUTHERAN CHURCH

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