



The Shepherd's staff

THE NEWSLETTER OF HOLY SHEPHERD LUTHERAN CHURCH
CHRISTMAS 2020 — ORINDA, CALIFORNIA

A WORD FOR THOSE WHO WAIT

For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. His authority shall grow continually, and there shall be endless peace for the throne of David and his kingdom. He will establish and uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time onward and forevermore. (Isaiah 9:6-7)

In these final days of Advent we prepare to celebrate the birth of Jesus our Savior. Perhaps more than in some years we may identify just a bit more with the prophet's talk of walking in deep darkness and longing to see some light at the end of the tunnel. We are ready to hear in a new key the prophet's announcement of the birth of God's promised Messiah.

Even so it is good to be reminded that the people of Israel heard these words while they were still threatened by captivity and exile. How ready were they to really believe that the simple birth of a child could be the way of God's deliverance and salvation?

We, too, in this season need to hear again those words of promise — words of hope for God's Messiah, a Prince of Peace, who will come as an agent of justice and righteousness to a world so longing and ready for such good news. We also need to hear the prophet's final promissory reminder that this birth is not ours to control. It is a call to faith and trust: "The Lord of hosts will do this."

God of promise, as we await your coming in this Advent season, help us to hear your words of hope in the gift of your Messiah with power to transform our world in the ways of peace, justice, and righteousness. Amen.

Used by permission of Luther Seminary, St. Paul, MN. To access a wonderful daily online devotional resource, visit <https://www.luthersem.edu/godpause/> or simply google "godpause"

EVENTS SCHEDULE

Amid these days of pandemic, we encourage you to stay connected with our community by participating in the following events:

Every Sunday at 9:30 am — Our weekly Facebook '**Worship Video Watch Party**' hosted by our pastors @HSLCORinda.

Every Sunday at 9:30 am — Our '**Weekly Worship Video**' is released on our webpage at www.holyshepherd.org.

Every Sunday at 10:30 am — Our popular "**Zoom Coffee Fellowship**" allows you to connect with others. The Zoom Meeting ID is 823 6201 2420.

Third Sundays from noon to 1pm — Our Sanctuary is open for socially-distanced Holy Communion. (*Join us on December 20th for our next gathering!*)

Tuesdays at 7pm — Our weekly 'Adult Ed.' class is currently on 'Christmas Break', but resumes on Tuesday night, January 5, 2021. Our Sun/Tuesday School Zoom Meeting ID # is 882 9062 7131.

Mission Partner Update: **New Life Band**

Over the last 40 years, the New Life Band has developed an amazing ministry to youth and students, primarily teenagers in Tanzania in many ways — including operating the New Life Secondary School to educate future leaders for Tanzania, school visitations, national youth conferences, gospel concerts and performances. Its ministry is committed to reaching out to help today's youth of Tanzania caught up in an atmosphere of poverty, unemployment, substance abuse, and lack of direction for their lives. They seek to serve young people intellectually, spiritually and emotionally.



HSLC member Tracy Blanchard reports that "As we approach the coming of the birth of Jesus, we remember those in need like our friends in the New Life Band in Tanzania. Because of the COVID-19 virus, many families are unable to pay their students tuition at the New Life Secondary School. The monthly cost to pay all teachers and staff is \$2,500. The teachers have not been paid for the past three months. Any financial assistance you might be able to offer at this time would be lifesaving for the NLB Secondary School ministry. We know these are tough times world wide and thank you for anything you might be able to do. This dynamic group of Christian servants is facing unprecedented challenges yet they remain optimistic, forward-thinking, and grateful to our God for many Blessings.

Asante sana sana!" (That's Swahili for 'Thank you very, very much!')

What is the New Life Band?

The New Life Band is an inter-denominational music team that serves as an instrument to transform the lives of youth and students in and around the East African nation of Tanzania through the gospel of Jesus Christ. This group of talented musicians excel in various genres of music, and have become ambassadors for peace, forgiveness and the Gospel — performing throughout Tanzania and in Africa, Europe and the United States.

The New Life Band received \$3,333 from Holy Shepherd in fiscal year September 2019 — August 2020, as part of our 'Giving Beyond Ourselves' — in addition to other direct support gifts! Your generosity has helped sustain the New Life Band through these days of COVID-19 and is MUCH appreciated!

We Remember in Prayer

Prayers for Healing

- Marilyn Nor.
- Gloria and Bert Ens.
- Doug and DoLoris Tim.
- Mary Helene Wag.
- Yvonne Tsc.
- Dr. Bob and Carole Wey.
- Susie Mor.
- Bruce Neu.
- Jeff Kli.
- Henry and Carol Kra.

Prayers for Comfort

- Harry How.
- Rolf Ben.
- Marilyn and Kristi Lin.
- Marian McG.
- DeLane Riv.

Prayers for Those Serving

- Megan How.
- Brian Hen.
- Peter Kle.

December Celebrations

Birthdays

13th John Sha.	24th Bill Hun.
14th Deepak Kum.	24th Marla Sch.
1st Howard Rod.	14th Solveig Law.
4th Hank Cho.	15th Terry Ham.
5th Karen Heu.	18th Bert Ens.
12th Gretchen Ste.	19th Dorelle Kem.
13th Paul Heu.	22nd Abigail Gar.
13th Bob Sch.	22nd Lisa Mer.
	25th Ted Gam.
	25th Michael Ste.
	27th Diana Neu.
	29th Russ Bli.
	30th Mary How.

Anniversaries

December 11th — Russ and Opal Bliese — 72 years (WOW!)
 December 13th — John and Pastor Pam Schaefer Dawson — 6 years
 December 16th — Rolf and Donna Benseler — 59 years (WOW!)

It's Beginning to Look a Lot Like Christmas!"

"Just because we're old doesn't mean we can try new things!", said one of the members of our Tree Lighting Team.

On Monday, December 7, Tom Gilbertson, Terry Hamre, Dave Coburn, Jerry Perry and Mike Stenson — along with HSLC friend Jim Taylor — worked diligently (and creatively!) to light the tree(s) in the parking lot circle.

The next day, we got a call from one of our near-neighbors, saying "Wow! I've lived here more than 35 years and I don't think you've ever done something so wonderful for the community at Christmas. GREAT JOB! We love it!"



Let Your Light

So Shine

Before Others!



By Steve Swanback

LARC Council Liaison

Due to the pandemic, any organization serving the aged community has found 2020 had a very trying year

— and (sad to say) you need to include LARC on that list.

This year actually began on a high note with the completion of the construction and the opening of additional space to better serve our community. But then the pandemic hit, and we had to close the in-person program in March.

Knowing the importance of our programs to our local community, members of our staff (including Director Beth, Carolyn, Kay and Pastor John) developed a visionary approach to continue to serve our clients. It took time but LARC reopened on-line in August with an approach that is unique - staff actually interact with clients on line in real time - singing songs, playing games and just being present (virtually). It has kept the program alive and although the number of clients we can serve is limited it has been enthusiastically received. Unfortunately, until there is a clear end to the pandemic this will be our operating mode.

Now for the sad news - at the end of the year we will be losing our beloved Program Director, Beth Montgomery. (See *Pastor John's letter on this same page.*) Beth is leaving us to become a full time care taker of her parents - so even in her next adventure she will still be giving back. To say losing Beth is a loss immensely understates her value to the LARC program. Her enthusiasm, her vision for what the program could be, and her outreach to the local community has been "above and beyond". As we begin to explore our next steps she will be sorely missed and in our prayers.

Saying 'farewell' to Beth Montgomery for her decade of service to our beloved LARC program would be challenging under the best of circumstances — and is made all the more challenging by COVID-19. Nonetheless, we going to TRY to make this work!

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO SEND A 'THANK YOU' OR 'FAREWELL' CARD we're putting together a 'Card Basket' to present to Beth prior to her departure.' send your cards to *Beth Montgomery, c/o Holy Shepherd Lutheran Church, 433 Moraga Way, Orinda, CA 94563*

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO JOIN IN A CASH GIFT FOR BETH TO HELP EASE HER MOVE visit the donation page on the LARC website and click on the Givelify tab at the bottom of the page, then use the "Beth Montgomery Gift" envelope.

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO JOIN IN A ZOOM 'OPEN HOUSE' AND SAY FAREWELL join our Zoom 'Open House' at 11am on Tuesday, December 29, 2020. Just drop in for a few moments and say 'thanks' or stay for the hour and hear Beth share stories of her time among us! **Zoom Meeting ID: 415 425 6988 / Passcode: 94563**

Thank You, Beth!

The Pastor's Page

It is with heavy hearts that we recently received news of the resignation of Elizabeth Montgomery as Program Director of the Lamorinda Adult Respite Center, effective at the end of the current calendar year. As Beth noted in her resignation letter, her decision was truly a difficult one, but she finds it necessary to "be moving to Roseville to assist (her) elderly parents as they 'age in place'."



Over the course of Beth's tenure among us, LARC grew from a 'boutique' program serving a limited number of households on a part-time basis, to a premiere, full-service Adult Day program serving 35+ families on a regular basis (pre-COVID). We are rightly proud of her efforts to serve as 'chief LARC evangelist' throughout her tenure. She was a true champion for the LARC program, sharing stories of LARC and its mission with the wider community, and inviting both individuals and community organizations to "get with the program" in support of the families LARC serves.

More importantly, Beth never let her administrative responsibilities distract her what she had come to discover was truly her most important task — that of offering a listening ear, a supportive shoulder and wise guidance to spouses and other caregivers of those struggling with dementia. It was a rare day that Beth didn't have a visitor in her office, sharing the story of the burdens which dementia had laid upon their household. And – in many of those cases – she was able to offer support by making LARC services available to that family.

We are truly thankful for Beth's decade of service to both the LARC program and the LARC community – even as we grieve with Beth about the needs her parents are facing which has brought her to the point of making this difficult decision. Like we, she is confident that "once the pandemic is over, LARC will come roaring back to life, and continue to be the premier social Adult Day Program in the area." But for now, we can only say "Thank you, Elizabeth Montgomery, for your efforts on behalf of some of the most truly vulnerable people in our community, and for committing a decade of your life to making a real difference in theirs!"

Go in peace and in hope, Beth, knowing that you have made a difference in the lives of hurting families!

The Rev. Dr. John B. Valentine

Executive Director of the Lamorinda Adult Respite Center

Christmas Week Worship Schedule

ADVENT 4

Sunday, December 20th

9:30 — **Online Worship**
(via Facebook or our website at
www.holyshepherd.org)

10:30 — **Zoom Fellowship**

12 – 1pm — **Communion**
Socially-distanced and safely-
served Holy Communion
available to all in our Sanctuary

CHRISTMAS EVE

Thursday, December 24th

Our **Christmas Worship** Video
available online
via Facebook or our website

CHRISTMAS 1

Sunday, December 27th

9:30 — **Online Worship**
(via Facebook or website)

10:30 — **Zoom Fellowship**

FROM THE FINANCE OFFICE

If you plan to make a contribu-
tion to our church and would like
it to be recorded in 2020, please
drop your check into the locked
mailbox outside of the CFM by
no later than Thursday, Decem-
ber 31st. Checks sent by mail will
need to be delivered by the 31st
as well. Thank you!!!



*Thanks be to God
for his indescribable gift.*

A Note from Tom Gilbertson

Our Stewardship Team Facilitator

Have you seen our Stewardship Tree? I KNOW that some of you (and most of our neighbors) think that we lit a Christmas Tree in our parking lot this year (See the article on page 2 of this newsletter.) But really it's our Stewardship Tree! For if you look closely, you'll notice that isn't just one tree, but three trees working together as one (kind of like the Holy Trinity!)

You see, we lit (and daily light) that 'tree' to call attention to the presence of the Christmas Star. We light it as a reminder of God's gift and God's love and God's hope. We light it to declare in our own way that on Christmas Eve God sent his only begotten Son to be the Savior for his people and all people

Christmas is a reminder that God's gives good gifts to God's people every day And it's also a reminder that we have opportunity to give gifts to others — to our neighbors, to the church and to the world! And it is your stewardship, your on-going gift-giving, that makes our ministry possible.

Consider that someone who came before you actually planted those three trees — which have now grown to 65 feet-tall — and that now they are lighted and able to hold the Christmas Star! May those trees, and the lights they now hold, be a reminder to all of us that we plant seeds, God makes them grow, and the world gets to enjoy their benefits. They are a reminder that we are called to be stewards of the gifts of God — so that all might know God's love! And a merry Christmas to you all!

Holy Shepherd Lutheran Church

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