



# The Shepherd's *staff*

THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF HOLY SHEPHERD LUTHERAN CHURCH

ADVENT / CHRISTMAS 2021 — ORINDA, CALIFORNIA

## FILLED WITH HOPE AND GRATITUDE

*Surely God is my salvation; I will trust, and will not be afraid, for the Lord God is my strength and my might; he has become my salvation. With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation. And you will say in that day: Give thanks to the Lord, call on his name; make known his deeds among the nations; proclaim that his name is exalted. Sing praises to the Lord, for he has done gloriously; let this be known in all the earth. Shout aloud and sing for joy, O royal Zion, for great in your midst is the Holy One of Israel. (Isaiah 12:2-6)*

There is so much hope embodied in this beautiful reading from Isaiah, yet our own reflections of that hope may seem small and inadequate. God is our salvation and our hope, and is indeed worthy of our thanks and praise.

As Christians we are called to share the gospel. We are to make known God's deeds among the nations and to proclaim God's name. In this secular age, this commandment is exceedingly difficult for many of us. But if we truly believe that God is our salvation, if we truly love and believe that God has done such glorious things, how can we not share our experiences? How can we keep this light hidden away when it is the very thing that has brought us life?

Sharing the love of God does not imply coercion. Those tactics do not work anyway. It means sharing our experience with those who do not know Jesus. It means publicly living out a Christian life. It means extending invitations, and it means welcoming those who come seeking. Like the prophet Isaiah says: Shout it aloud and sing for joy!

*Glorious God, our one true hope, bless us with a generous spirit and the desire to share the good news about you. Give us courage and strength to enter the world and share your life-giving message with your creation. Amen.*

*Used by permission of Luther Seminary, St. Paul, MN. To have a wonderful daily online devotional sent to you via email each morning, visit God Pause at [luthersem.edu/godpause](http://luthersem.edu/godpause) or simply Google "godpause".*

## EVENTS SCHEDULE

We encourage you to join in the following events — virtually and/or in-person:

**Every Sunday at 9:30 am** — Our weekly in-person worship opportunity in our Sanctuary!

**Every Sunday at 9:30 am** — Our in-person worship services are "Live-Streamed" via Facebook @HSLCORinda.

**Every Sunday at 10:30 am** — Coffee Fellowship time takes place following our in-person worship service.

**Every Sunday at noon** — A recording of our weekly 'Worship Video' should be accessible via our webpage at [www.holyshepherd.org](http://www.holyshepherd.org) or our Facebook page @HSLCORinda.

**Third Sundays from 10:30a to 11:30a** — Following morning worship on the third Sunday of each month, our Sanctuary is open for socially-distanced Holy Communion. (*Join us on December 19th!*)

**Tuesdays at 7pm** — Pastor John and/or Pastor Pam lead "Adult Ed" — a Zoom-based online fellowship opportunity. The Zoom Meeting ID# is 861 5874 8710 and the Password is 94563. (There will be no adult ed on Dec 21 / Dec 28 / Jan 4.)

# Social Ministry Update: Christmas Gifting Opportunities

*Give a gift to Jesus this Christmas — for it was he who said ‘When you did it to the least of those who are my sisters and brothers, you did it to me!’*

Pastor John once recalled during a sermon his childhood disappointment at getting socks and a sweater and a coat for Christmas — and noted that it was because he had the luxury to take such things for granted. But what about those who can't take such things for granted? To those, such basics as socks and warm clothes are a Godsend!

This year, our Social Ministry Team has identified two Christmas gifting options which you may wish to take advantage of — as a way to share the joy of Christmas with others:

- 1) A **“Cash for Coats” Drive** to provide our friends at Friendly Manor and the Hillcrest Clothes Closet the ability to purchase winter coats in ‘hard to find’ sizes. Karen Rose Kalvass notes that recent clothing drives at a number of local churches have netted an abundance of warm coats in standard sizes, but that kids’ coats and XXL coats are in demand that far-outpaces the supply. Your cash contributions will enable staff of those organizations to purchase just what is needed to fill in the gaps and keep hurting people warm this holiday season!
- 2) **Extra Gifts** to our primary ministry partners. We cherish those ministry partners we have worked with over the years, precisely because we KNOW that they do good work and that they strive to be good stewards of our gifts to them. Some are domestic, some are foreign. Some provide medical care, some provide a hot meal, some provide meaning to life. But ALL of them do God’s work with their hands and our funds. Extra Gifts to our ministry partners will make a difference for good in their programs, and in the lives of needful people.

You can give a Christmas Gift to either our ‘Cash for Coats’ Drive or our identified ministry partners (see the box on the above right) by mailing a check to the church office or putting a check in the offering plate in the Narthex on Sunday morning, clearly indicating which program(s) you select to support.

Even easier, you can go to our website at [www.holyshepherd.org](http://www.holyshepherd.org) and click on the Givelify tab for our online giving portal. There you can use your credit card and identify specifically which organizations YOU would like to make a difference in this Advent / Christmas season.

And know that — however you choose to give — you are living out God’s call to love God by serving your neighbor!

## OUR MONTHLY PRAYER CONCERNS FOR DECEMBER

### For Healing/Strength

Gloria & Bert E.  
DoLoris & Doug T.  
MaryHelene W.  
Dr. Bob & Carole W.  
Suzi M.  
Judy B.  
Diana N.  
Pete & Zach Schm.  
Cristi Ch.

### For Peace/Comfort

Harry H.  
Rolf B.  
Donna G.  
Carol K.  
Bob & Krist L.  
Marian McG.  
DeLane R.  
Marilyn N.  
Igor & Rita S.

### For Those Serving

Meghan H.  
Brian H.  
Peter K.



## How Your Gifts Might Make a Difference!

**A \$25 gift to Loaves and Fishes** could purchase two cases of bottled water for distribution with meals for hungry people in our county

**A \$30 gift to Lutheran Social Service** could purchase kitchen essentials to help a one-time foster child transition into their own apartment

**A \$35 gift to Rancho Santa Marta** could purchase two pairs of new shoes for those previously-neglected kids who now call the Ranch their home

**A \$40 gift to International Health Partners** could purchase a post-surgical care kit to ensure wound care and healing for a recent patient

**A \$50 gift to the New Life Band** could pay a full week’s salary for one of the band members or support staff as they do their missional work

## DECEMBER



### Birthdays

1st Howard Rod. (96!)	24th Bill Hun.
4th Henry Cho.	24th. Marla Schr.
5th Karen Heu.	25th Michael Ste.
12th Gretchen Ste.	27th Diana Neu.
13th Paul Heu.	29th Russ Bli. (96!)
13th Bob Schw	30th Mary How.
13th John Sha.	
14th Solveig Law.	<b><u>Anniversaries</u></b>
15th Terry Ham.	11th Opal and Russ Bli. (72 years!)
18th Bert Ens. (97!)	13th Pastor Pam Schaefer and John Daw.
19th Dorelle Kem.	16th Donna and Rolf Ben. (59 years!)
22nd Abigail Gar.	
22nd Lisa Mer.	

# A Stewardship Moment

From Steve Swanback, Treasurer

As we all know the Church is a “community of believers” but when I think of those words at this time of year it is always the word “community” that fills my heart. “Community”, after all, is a place where like-minded people gather to share – their life story, their faith, what is happening in their life this week, their concerns for others or whatever is on their minds. And “Community” is also something most of us need –that which gives us a feeling of connectedness to something larger than ourselves. Fortunately for us Holy Shepherd is a “Community” - a place where we can all come and share ourselves. For that I am thankful.

We often talk this time of year about looking back and reflecting on a year filled with blessings, heartache, good fortunate or whatever the case may be. As we enter into this holiday season and the new year I would encourage us all to look forward as well. I am hoping we can look forward to a new year with a desire to strengthen our commitment to our Holy Shepherd Community, a vow to invest ourselves in our ministries and a yearning to renew our focus on our faith outreach.

The past almost two years have found us in a bit of a “holding pattern”. Although it is not over, I feel we have turned the corner on this “time of Covid” and it is now time to plan where we go from here. You have all been so generous with your time, your talents, and your financial support through it all. I hope you will continue to support our “Community” next year as well as we move on.

As I am sure you are all well aware on the financial side we accept your financial support in several ways including: direct deposits (one time or recurring), through stock donations or contributions from Donor Advised funds, from retirement accounts (these last three offer potential tax reliefs), our Givelify online-giving portal or through the weekly offering plate. We would appreciate your ongoing support. If you have any questions you can speak to me, Steve Swanback, treasurer.

Stay tuned for presentation of a Stewardship Program in the next year where you may have the opportunity step up and offer your time, your talents or your financial support for the ongoing ministries of Holy Shepherd.

## Tis the Baking Season!

Looking to share a little Christmas joy??

Join us for a cookie exchange on Saturday December 11 from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m. Because COVID is still among us, we ask that you bring your treats bagged separately (3-4 cookies per bag). We will also have a small gift exchange (no more than \$5) that will be very fun.

The cookies will be set up inside, and we will meet outside. Please call Cristi Chow at (925) 876-0352 if you have any questions.



## A WORD FROM PASTOR JOHN



'Tis the season .... for shopping and celebrating and sending out cards to our friends.

'Tis the season .... for throwing fiscal caution to the wind and spending more than we probably should on gifts for our loved ones.

'Tis the season .... for eating way too much rich food in the awareness that it will mean more to lose when it comes time for New Year's Resolutions.

There are lots of advice-mongers who love to tell us how best to remember and celebrate the season we call “Christmas” — especially amid the continued pandemic turmoil which we're facing. But maybe the best advice I've probably ever heard about how best to prepare for Christmas comes from one of our own FaithBuilders Confirmation students just about a decade ago. This particular middle-schooler wrote:

*“Thinking about Jesus and his great gift of Christmas makes me feel sad and curious and concerned and upset and good all at once. I feel sad because I know that this little baby is going to give his life for me and everyone. I feel curious because I don't understand what could possibly make him want to do that for me. I feel concerned because I know that God loves me and don't know if I can always love God back in return. I feel good, knowing that he is watching and protecting me 100% every moment of every day. I feel upset when I think about how we treat him even though he does so many great and wonderful things for us. I guess it just shows how much he really cares. And I thank him and trust him and love him for that.”*

I don't know about you, but to me that is what preparing for Christmas is really all about. Thinking about the amazing gift of love that God shares with us in Jesus, and thanking God for that great gift this day and every day.

May these holy days of the Advent / Christmas season find you filled with the Christ-Child's gifts of Hope and Love and Joy and Peace!

# ADVENT / CHRISTMAS WORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

## THE SUNDAYS OF CHRISTMAS

- Sunday, December 19th at 9:30am is the date for our annual Christmas Music Fest. While it's been TOO long since we have been able to celebrate worship with a full slate of musicians, we can't just stop singing of Christmas joy.
- Sunday, December 26th is the First Sunday of the Christmas Season — and a great time to gather with friends from church in thankfulness for the gift that is Christmas. Join us for worship at 9:30 am.
- Sunday, January 2nd is the Second Sunday of the Christmas Season. Start the New Year right by joining us at worship and commend the year ahead to the One who creates all things!

## CHRISTMAS EVE 2021

Friday, December 24th is Christmas Eve! We will be worshipping at 4pm and 6pm this year and would invite you to join us as you are able.

- The **4pm service** will feature the more-contemporary musical leadership of Tom Henry and Marc Levine.
- The **6pm service** will feature the more-traditional musical leadership of Bethany Valentine and Julie Hamre.

Note that — due to pandemic restrictions — we will not be offering Holy Communion this Christmas Eve, but we WILL be sharing in our classic candle-lighting traditions at both services.

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