

The Shepherd's *staff*

THE NEWSLETTER OF HOLY SHEPHERD LUTHERAN CHURCH — EPIPHANY 2026

433 MORAGA WAY, ORINDA, CALIFORNIA — WWW.HOLYSHEPHERD.ORG — (925)254-3422

LET THERE BE LIGHT!

Between the seasons of Advent and Christmas (which highlight the coming of our Lord) and the season of Lent (which highlights the selfless service of our Lord) falls the season of 'Epiphany' — a time to remember that He was (and still is) the One who brings light into our dark and dreary world.

The Year of our Lord 2026 has gotten off to a pretty ignominious start. Between our nation's intervention in the nation of Venezuela, the horrifying news of at least 2500 deaths on the streets of the Iranian capital (half a world away), and the tragic death of Renee Good at the hands of federal law enforcement agents on the streets of Minneapolis (closer to home), many are both anxious and fearful of what tomorrow might bring.

But perhaps the bigger challenge we face personally in the face of these events is understanding the significance of them, and making sense of how we should rightly feel about them. Some have social media feeds and connect with news providers who tell us that the bad actors in these situations are one party, while others of us have social media feeds and connect with news providers who tell us that the bad actors in these situations are exactly the opposite party. And we're all seemingly left to wonder how others could be so foolish as to not see things the way we do.

At times like this, perhaps ALL of us should remember the first words spoken at the moment of Creation — that divine pronouncement "Let there be light!" Light is what we need. For light reveals the truth about ourselves, our situations and the world in which we live. And misinformation, disinformation and downright falsehood are banished when things are brought into the light.

May the God who first declared "Let there be light" shine on each and all of us. And may God's light allow us to see God's truth about ourselves, our situations and the world in which we live. May we be people of the light amid these dark and dreary days — for God is the One whose word declares "Let there be light!"

WEEKLY EVENTS SCHEDULE

We encourage you to join in!

Sundays at 9:30 am — In-person worship with Holy Communion happens in our Sanctuary.

Sundays at 9:30 am — Our in-person worship services are "Live-Streamed" via Facebook @HSLCOrinda.

Sundays at 10am — Sunday School for Kids happens twice monthly following KidTalk. (Upcoming class dates are January 25, February 8 and February 22!)

Sundays at 10:30 am — Coffee Fellowship takes place in the CFM following our worship service.

Sundays at noon — Our 'Worship Video' is available at www.holyshepherd.org.

Mission Partner Update: Winter Nights Shelter

'Homelessness' is one of those issues that our society seems utterly unable to solve. Though many individuals and organizations have tried to make a dent in the issue over the years, it never seems to make much of a difference. But there's a well-worn story about a man who was walking along the beach when he noticed a boy picking something up and gently throwing it into the ocean. Approaching the boy, he asked, "What are you doing?" The boy replied, "Throwing starfish back into the ocean. The surf is up and the tide is going out. If I don't throw them back, they'll die." "Son," the man said, "don't you realize there are miles and miles of beach and hundreds of starfish? You can't make a difference!" After listening politely, the boy bent down, picked up another starfish, and threw it back into the surf. Then — smiling at the man — he said: "I just made a difference for that one."

"Making a difference that that one" could well be understood as the mission of the Winter Nights program. By providing a safe place to sleep, nutritional meals, supportive services and the embrace of a community, Winter Nights helps homeless families actually recover from hardships and get resettled. This winter, the Winter Nights Family Shelter is coming to Orinda for two weeks in mid February. Once again, it will be again housed at Orinda Community Church, and our Holy Shepherd family will serve as co-hosts during that time.

There are numerous opportunities to help — with meal prep, with meal service and clean-up, with homework assistance and tutoring, or maybe just being a friendly visitor. Contact Karen Rose Kalvass for more information or if you'd like to help!



WINTER NIGHTS Family Shelter

The Winter Night Family Shelter is a ministry which was begun by the Interfaith Council of Contra Costa County in 2004. Holy Shepherd has been a proud supporter of the Winter Nights program throughout the now twenty-one years of its existence. Over the course of that time, YOU have helped break the cycle of homelessness by sheltering and feeding 1263 people (including 758 children!)



Celebrating You on Your Special Day

Birthdays

Ellin S. — 1/11
Arwin Ch. — 1/12
Sharon T. — 1/15
Alexandra D. — 1/19
Chris M. — 1/19
Craig W. — 1/19
Matt V. — 1/20
Mary D. — 1/21
Otto T. — 1/22
Elaine N. — 1/25

Nine B. — 1/28

Scott. G. — 1/30

Mitchell Ch. — 2/1

Bryant Ch. — 2/4

Joan K. — 2/10

Lauren K. — 2/13

Barbara P. — 2/15

Marci B. — 2/17

Alanna L. — 2/18

Austin Mc. — 2/18

John G. — 2/21

Isaiah K. — 2/23

Nadine C. — 2/26

Stacey R. — 2/28

Karen R-K — 2/29

(No birthday this year!)

Anniversaries

George and Karen R-K — 1/5
John & Joyce H — 2/3

Ash Wednesday (the start of the season of Lent) happens on February 18th this year. We'll gather for Ash Wednesday worship (*with our friends from Our Savior's in Lafayette*) at 6pm here at Holy Shepherd. Save the date!



"Prayer isn't about us getting God to see things from our perspective. It's about God getting us to see things from God's perspective, and about moving us from a place of self-focus to one of outward focus and community."

For Healing

Yvonne G.
Louise H.
Donna Z.
Ed S.
Judy B.
Judy H.
Russ R.
Joan B.
Delane R.

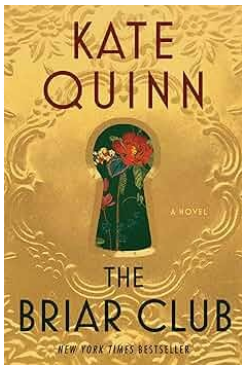
For Those Serving

Meghan and Brian P.

For Peace

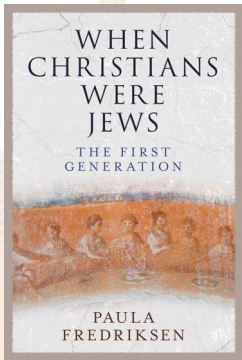
Kristi L.
Marian McG.
MaryHelene W.
Diana N.
Mark Z.

Women's Book Club



The Women's Book Club gathers monthly (at 10am on the first Saturday of each month in our Center for Ministry) to reflect on works of both contemporary and classic authors. Next up is *The Briar Club* by Kate Quinn — which they'll tackle on Saturday, February 1st. Talk to Juanita Gilbertson or Bethany Valentine if you'd like more information.

Academic Bible Study



The focus of this year's edition of 'Academic Bible Study' is "Insights into the New Testament" — and the Winter quarter finds participants diving into Paula Fredriksen's *When Christians Were Jews*. This scholarly volume explores Christianity's Jewish beginnings, and challenges students to rethink some long-

cherished assumptions about the early church. This quarter's class schedule includes sessions on January 21, February 4 and February 25 — at 7pm in the CFM or via Zoom. Contact Pastor John for more information or a copy of this quarter's book.

Church Council Updates

Property issues were front and center at the Church Council meeting on January 7th.

- President Joan Kiekhaefer reported that final details are being nailed down, and that our new solar system should be installed on the roof of the CFM later this Spring. Thanks to all who helped fully-fund this project!
- Pastor John reported on the flooding situation which occurred in the Preschool over Christmas Break. Three classrooms and one bathroom were affected, requiring us to relocate a portion of Preschool operations into the Center for Ministry while repairs take place. Thanks to Steve Swanback for helping address the underlying issues with drainage moving forward.

A Word from Pastor John



Among my favorite songs of the Epiphany season is Christopher Wordsworth's classic "Songs of Thankfulness and Praise" (#310 in the ELW Hymnal.) It begins by recounting the story of the magi's visit to the baby Jesus, and then shifts to the texts we read during Epiphany about weddings and healings and miracles of every sort. The verses then conclude with the assertion "*Anthems be to thee addressed, God in flesh made manifest.*"

If I understand the somewhat archaic language of that hymn correctly, it is an invitation to thankfully sing God's praises for the ways in which we see God at work in the Word and in our world. Though the words of that hymn are old, I find the spirit of that song to be surprisingly relevant. They're an invitation to look at our own lives and enumerate some of the ways that God is at work in our lives and in our worlds, and to say "Thanks" for those manifestations of God's goodness to us and among us.

For example:

- I'm thankful for those folks who stepped up while I battled a nasty case of the upper respiratory flu in the days before and after Christmas — who served communion and led worship to help me save my voice and to those who did some urgent visits when I wasn't up to the task. I saw God's love manifested in you!
- I'm thankful for the gifts which you shared with me and my family as a part of that annual 'pastoral gift' appeal. The overwhelming abundance of those gifts this are a reminder that what we do together at Holy Shepherd matters to us and matters to God's world. Thank you for your support and your encouragement. Again, I see God's love manifested in you!
- I'm thankful for those folks who stepped up and helped amid our recent flooding event in the Preschool. To those who filled sandbags and those who fixed drains and those who cleaned drainage ditches at all hours of the day and night, thank you! I see God's love for our church's preschool families manifested in you!

Thank you one and all for your support and your partnership in this ministry which we share! I see God at work in you!

OUR 2026 DRIVE-THRU CRAB FEED IS COMING SOON!

Our annual 'Drive-Thru Crab Feed' is scheduled for Saturday, February 21st (2:00p to 4:00p) and Sunday, February 22nd (10:30a -11:30a) in support of Holy Shepherd's community ministries. Each meal is priced at \$75 (and includes a \$50 tax-deductible receipt.)

Each Crab Meal includes 3 lbs. of local Dungeness crab (freshly-caught/cracked/cleaned), along with some fresh-baked Semifreddi's bread, a serving of tasty pasta salad and a fresh-baked cookie for dessert!

Food Pickup — Swing by our parking lot at 433 Moraga Way between 2p and 4p on Saturday, February 21 (or after worship on Sunday, February 22) where you'll be greeted by our Crabby Crew! They'll hand you your prepackaged / bundled meal kit so that you can take it home and get to eating some tasty, tasty crab!



Contact Cristi Chow in the Church Office or visit www.holyshepherd.org for more information
PLEASE NOTE THAT PRE-ORDERING BY THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 19th IS REQUIRED!

Holy Shepherd Lutheran Church

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