

The Shepherd's *staff*

THE NEWSLETTER OF HOLY SHEPHERD LUTHERAN CHURCH — EASTER 2026
433 MORAGA WAY, ORINDA, CALIFORNIA — WWW.HOLYSHEPHERD.ORG — (925)254-3422

A CALL FOR A CALL COMMITTEE!

At its meeting on the evening of April 15th, the Holy Shepherd Lutheran Church Council gathered for its regular monthly meeting to attend to the work of our congregation. But the results of that meeting were anything but 'regular'!

At its meeting on the evening of March 13th, President Joan Kiekhaefer and Pastor John Valentine detailed for the Council a unique opportunity – one whereby we might restructure our budget and add a second pastor to our staff without significantly impacting our overall financial picture. While a number of our councilfolk were ready to jump at the opportunity immediately, they mutually agreed to pause and to pray and to ponder. Following up on a month of reflection, at its meeting on April 15th, the Council unanimously green-lighted that action, and took the first step toward engaging in something known as a “Call Process”, which (per our congregation’s constitution) is the only way we can bring an ordained pastor into service among us.

Pastor John Valentine (who has worked with a whole number of call committees during his years of service as the Conference Dean) explained to the Council that – per our constitution – the only way to actively consider adding a second pastor to our staff would be to seat a “Call Committee”. That Call Committee would then work in partnership with the synod office to identify and consider possible candidates for such a position. IF the Call Committee is able to find a candidate whose gifts and abilities mesh well with who we are and who we hope to be, we would then have another congregational meeting to formally call that candidate into service among us.

That being said, our Church Council has called for what they anticipate will be a brief meeting of the congregation following worship on May 10th at 10:50am. The purpose of that meeting is to further clarify this unique opportunity, and to consider seating a Call Committee to add an additional pastor to our staff team!

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.

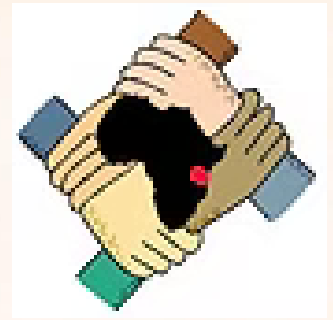
Sundays at 10am — Sunday School for Kids happens twice-monthly following KidTalk. (Upcoming dates are April 26, May 10 and May 24!)

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.

Ministry Partner Update: International Health Partners

Great things are happening for the people of Tanzania because of people like you!



We recently received a beautiful letter from Paula Lofstrom – the managing director and ‘door-knocker-in-chief’ of IHP – detailing the excitement around the opening of the first of many units of their new hospital (the Chihoni Medical Center.) In part, it reads:

Hello wonderful people! We’re excited for sure! And thanks beyond measure, because, without you, there would be no story to tell! Almost a million dollars was transferred from the US to Chihoni to get us to this point! Of course, this is only the beginning. You bought the ground, you paid for the hours and hours and piles and piles of paperwork that were needed to obtain the permits for us to begin building. You paid the salaries of up to 60 workers a day. You paid for the cement, gravel and sand to make the concrete blocks. You paid to have the boreholes drilled and pumps put in so we could have water. You paid for lumber and plumbing supplies, and for the people who knew how to install them. You paid for masons and carpenters to make doorframes and doors. Thank you!

You bought the equipment to stock the laboratory and a pharmacy full of medicine. You’ve bought the operating room equipment, so we could be prepared to do an emergency C-section the day we opened the doors. You’ve bought all the supplies needed in the exam room: gloves, syringes, stethoscopes, etc. Thank you!

And now – at long last – your donations are serving people that would be sick and possibly die without the care you want them to receive. Thank YOU!

International Health Partners (IHP) is a non-profit medical ministry that serves the people of Tanzania by providing excellent healthcare to those who need it most. IHP seeks to integrate medical knowledge, techniques, and best practices within the East African culture. They employ and train local health care professionals and rely on the generosity of others to build resource efficient facilities without sacrificing the care for their patients. IHP continues as one of Holy Shepherd’s major ministry partners in our 2025/26 budget.

PRAYER list

"To be a Christian without prayer is no more possible than to be alive without breathing." — Martin Luther

For Healing and Hope

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

For Those Serving Meghan and Brian P.

For Peace

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

Carole S. – April 2
Andrew R. – April 5
Bill Ho. – April 7
Gail Bj. – April 14
Elizabeth H. – April 20
Art M. – April 23
Ed. Sz. – April 24
Joan B. – April 29
Steve B. – April 30
Jeff K. – April 30

Johanna B. – May 3
Linda G. – May 4
Julie C. – May 5
Terry O. May 10
Linda H. – May 13
Carol Su. – May 13
John H. – May 19
Bethany V. – May 24
Dave L. – May 26
Tommy H. – May 28

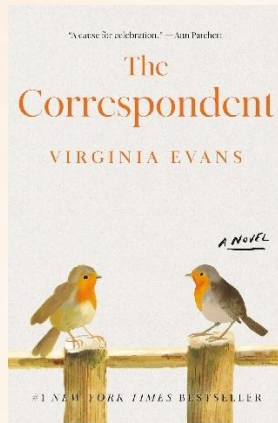


Lauschs – April 25
Wildmans – April 27
Berchtolds – May 14



It is with heavy hearts that we relay the news of the death of long-time Holy Shepherd member **Russ Bliese** in early March. Russ – who had relocated to a retirement community in Ventura to be closer to family – had turned 100 on December 29th. Thanks be to God for Russ’s long life and for the ways he enriched our congregation for nearly half-a-century.

Women's Book Club gathers at 10am on the first Saturday of each month in our Center for Ministry to reflect upon works of contemporary and classic authors. They will tackle The Correspondent by Virginia Evans on May 2nd and then Theo of Golden by Allen Levi on June 6th. Speak with Juanita Gilbertson or Bethany Valentine if you'd like to know more.



A Word from Pastor John



In a recent sermon entitled "The Age of Anxiety", I ran through a brief litany of things about which we may be fairly anxious and found a number of you nodding your heads! (*'Nodding heads' is the Lutheran equivalent of a hearty "Amen!" in the faith traditions of the African-American community!*) There IS much about which we may be fairly anxious in our world today. And I would include near the top of my list of stressors the apparent breakdown of a shared appreciation for the nation in which we live. But rather than just lamenting what seems to be lost, as God's people we are called to be actively engaged in setting things right.

In recent days, I've been excited to learn about a campaign called "faith250". In a time when the moral thread holding our democracy together is wearing thin and we are losing sight of our shared values, faith250 seeks to be about the work of setting those things right. It is an inter-faith / multi-faith effort to counter the division, contempt, and toxicity that threaten to tear the country apart, and instead gather in conversation about the values that sustain this country of which we are a part.

The faith250 Leadership Team has identified four key texts which are at the heart of our nation's self-understanding:

Thomas Jefferson's formative "Declaration of Independence",

Emma Lazarus' poem "The New Colossus" engraved on the base of the Statue of Liberty,

Frederick Douglass' address entitled "What to the Slave is the Fourth of July?", and

Katharine Lee Bates' haunting anthem "America the Beautiful".

Together with Temple Isaiah, Lafayette-Orinda Presbyterian Church and other faith communities in Lamorinda, we'll be breaking bread and sharing conversations about what those texts mean to each of us – and to learn what they may mean to others.

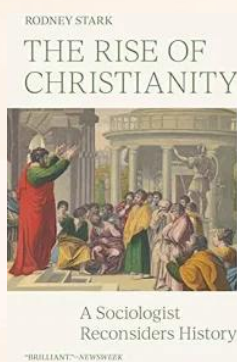
In the days leading up to our nation's 250th birthday this Fourth of July, I can think of no better way of living into our shared calling to be invested in the work of building up our community and our nation. Watch our church website, our Facebook page or our weekly worship bulletin in days ahead to learn how you too might get involved in faith250!



Solar Project Update!

The crew at Sunlight and Power knew that our project was ready to roll – and they discovered a window of opportunity on their calendar – and the rooftop solar installation project on our Center for Ministry got expedited! Hooray! We're only awaiting a series of inspections from County authorities and PG&E, and we'll be generating our own electricity! Thanks to Jerry Perry, Steve Swanback, Joan Kiekahefer and our anonymous donor of the dollar-for-dollar matching funds who worked together to make this dream a reality!

This Spring, the participants in our **Academic Bible Study** group are working to understand just how it was that the Christian Church grew from less than 40 fearful disciples to being the dominant faith of the Roman Empire in less than three centuries. Under the guidance of Pastor John, they're currently reading Rodney Stark's study "The Rise of Christianity". Chapters 4-6 will be the focus of discussion on April 22nd and chapters 7-10 on the evening of May 6th.



Chromatica Choral – the community choral group we host for weekly rehearsals – is offering their Spring concert "**There is Sweet Music Here: Music to Move the Soul**" in our sanctuary **at 4pm on Sunday, April 26th.**

Join them and enjoy them!

SOME WORDS OF HEARTFELT THANKS!

As I reflect on the days of Holy Week and Easter through which we have just journeyed, I am filled with gratitude for the many people who worked so hard to make our worship services special.

- Thank you to the members of the Altar Guild for the many changes made to the altar area during this week.
- Thank you to the musicians who provided meaningful anthems throughout this season - with an extra-special thank you to music directors Bethany Valentine and Tom Henry and musicians Julie Hamre and Marc Levine. They work very hard to pick the right music and bring it to life during our services.
- Thank you to the members of our congregation who attended the Maundy Thursday service at Our Savior's Lutheran Church. It was special to worship together with our friends from OSLC on Maundy Thursday and Good Friday.
- And finally, a heartfelt thank you to Pastor John for shepherding us through this Holy Week.

Diana Riveness – Council Rep. for Worship & Music

As the 2025/26 school year draws to a close, we would be very remiss were we not to thank our HSLC Sunday School crew for another amazing year of service to our kids and our community! When KidTalk ends in the context of worship, I relish the opportunity to say to our kids "You can follow your teachers and head off to Sunday School!", for I know that some fun and faith-filled activities await them. Thanks (from all of us) to Elizabeth Humphrey, Joan Kiekhaefer and Dave Lausch for making Sunday School happen this past year (and for a whole number of years before that as well!)

Pastor John (and all the KidTalk Kids!)

Holy Shepherd Lutheran Church
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