

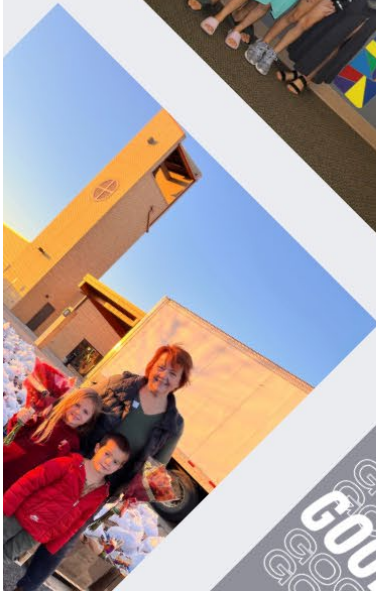
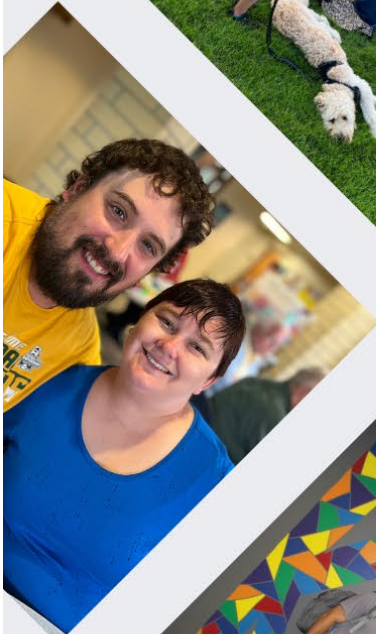
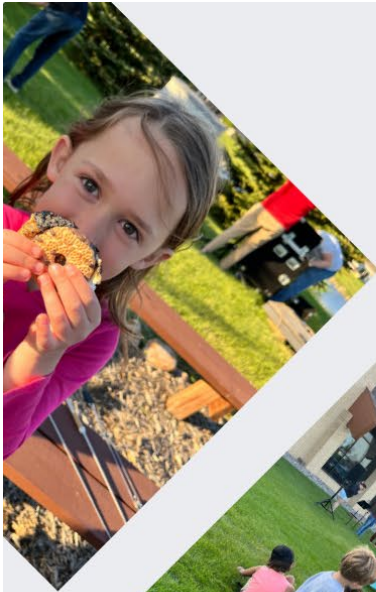
2023 ANNUAL REPORT



Good Shepherd
#FORFARGOMOORHEAD

LUTHERAN CHURCH OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD

MOORHEAD, MN



CHURCH COUNCIL REPORT

Rev. Mary Suomala Folkerds & President Brent Teiken



Brent Teiken
Council President



Rev. Mary
Suomala Folkerds
Lead Pastor

Early in 2023, the church council approved a sabbatical for Pastor Mary for the summer of 2024. Along with this approval, we assisted her in applying for a grant to cover a creative sabbatical activity. In the grant application, she wrote that she was seeking "an intentional encounter between self and God, finding balance between solitude and serendipity." She proposed taking a pilgrimage hike that ends in Santiago De Compostela, Spain. The Camino De Santiago is one of the most traveled Christian pilgrimages in the world. She was awarded the grant and will be taking off for this adventure at the end of May. She will hike 400+ miles alone and meet her family at the end of her pilgrimage. This grant also includes funds for the staff to participate in special continuing education opportunities.

What is a pilgrimage?

A pilgrimage is a journey with a sacred purpose, often to visit a recognized holy place. But a pilgrimage is not only about the destination; it is also about the "holy place" of the journey itself. An early name for the Christian church was "The Way," which helps us see our relationship with God as a journey.

As I prepare for this pilgrimage, I am researching supplies and trying to figure out what will go on my packing list. I find comfort in having a packing list. Many of us find comfort in packing lists and to-do lists. They give us a sense of control. But one thing that has been helpful for me is an item I found on the packing list for Young Adults in Global Mission. The last item on the list reads: "Make sure to pack an open mind and heart, a willingness to learn. Don't pack so many expectations that you have no room to receive what this place and its people can give you."

"Make sure to pack an open mind and heart, a willingness to learn. Don't pack so many expectations that you have no room to receive what this place and its people can give you."

This is good advice for our congregation as we look back at 2023 and travel into 2024. What is God teaching us right here and now? There's a story at the end of the Gospel of Luke where two disciples are walking from Jerusalem to a town called Emmaus. They had witnessed Jesus die on the cross three days previously, but they did not yet know he had risen



from the dead. As they walk, a stranger walks with them and helps them make sense of what God has been doing throughout Scripture. It isn't until they sit down to share a meal that they realize it is Jesus who has been walking with them. Jesus meets the disciples on the road, while they are still on their way to understanding.

Wisdom from Council Treasurer Karl-Heinz Mertins' pilgrimage, who walked the Camino with his wife:

- + The path of a pilgrim (and life in general) is not always easy nor free of obstacles—but endurance and a succession of small steps get you to the destination.
- + It is amazing how little stuff you need for our daily lives, and how lightly you can travel.
- + Rather than worry and plan every step, rely on the cross. It is never far away.

As a congregation, we are invited to walk a sacred path, not knowing what adventures and obstacles we will face, having faith that Jesus will meet us along the way.

2024 Good Shepherd Packing List:

Our congregation has grown over the last decade; however, our ministry budget has lagged behind that growth. To fuel our mission, Good Shepherd will work with a local fundraising group called PACE to determine how to build congregation-wide support for our mission, so we can be well equipped for big mission and ministry in the coming years.

A Hartford Institute of Religion study looked at the state of Christian congregations post-COVID. The study found that 54% of congregations are shrinking while 33% are growing. Just 12% of churches are stable. We can't be complacent in our mission! Our goal is to "Gather, grow, and go so that ALL may know the Good Shepherd."

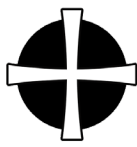
God's Peace,

Pastor Mary

Rev. Mary Suomala Folkerds
Lead Pastor

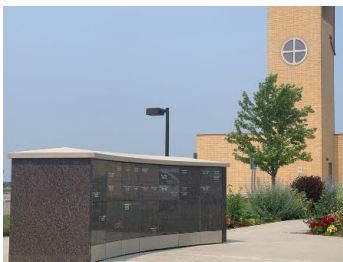
Brent Teiken

Brent Teiken
Council President



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GOOD SHEPHERD COLUMBARIUM

The Columbarium, a monument with niches for funeral urns to be laid to rest, is located south of the Church. Good Shepherd members may purchase a niche for \$1,400/niche (holds up to 2 urns). Questions? Contact the Church Office at 218.233.4980 or GoodShep@ktgs.org



CAPITAL CAMPAIGN: ON MISSION

Our mission at Good Shepherd is to Gather, Grow, and Go so that ALL may know the Good Shepherd! In 2022, we launched our "On Mission" campaign to pay down our mortgage and make improvements to our Sanctuary.

With the monies raised, we were able to make a significant dent in our \$1.3 million mortgage and we have been enjoying the new sound system in the Sanctuary.



STEWARDSHIP: SUBSCRIBE TO THE MISSION

In 2023, we continued to focus on our Mission by encouraging everyone who considers Good Shepherd their faith community to "Subscribe to the Mission." If everyone donated \$10/week or increased their giving by \$10/week, we would make our expenses easily, year after year.

We were able to end 2023 in the black, and we continue to invite you to "Subscribe to the Mission," and join us in investing in your Good Shepherd family.

OFFICE HOURS
 Monday–Thursday, 10:00 am–4:00 pm
 Friday, 10:00 am–2:00 pm
 The church building is open and phones are answered during these times.

MEET *the* Good Shepherd team 

 PASTOR MARY <i>Lead Pastor</i>	 PASTOR TAYLOR <i>Worship & Mission</i>	 PASTOR MEGGIE <i>Adult Ministry</i>
 DEACON JULIE <i>Kid Ministry</i>	 DIANA <i>Youth Ministry</i>	 LINDA <i>Congregation Engagement</i>
 KYLE <i>Interim Technical Director</i>	 STEPHANIE <i>Marketing (part-time)</i>	 DENNIS <i>Finance (part-time)</i>

CONTRACT STAFF

- **Matt Endreson**, *Choir Director*
- **Tom Hanson**, *Traditional Accompanist*
- **Casey Bartz**, *Choir Accompanist*
- **Myrna Hanson**, *Campanelli Bell Choir Director*
- **Joe Lindquist**, *gsKids Ring+Sing Director*
- **Joan Engeseth**, *BeFriends Coordinator*
- **Kathy Kassenborg**, *Financial Secretary*
- **Jake Curry**, *Chef (At Your Service Catering)*
- **Sonja Teigen**, *Wedding Coordinator*
- **David Wirth & Dave Weidner**, *Custodians*
- **At Your Service Cleaning**, *Contract Custodians*



GIVING TO GOOD SHEPHERD: SET-UP AUTOMATED, ONLINE GIVING TODAY

Thank you for your trust and support as we continue to Gather, Grow, and Go for God's kingdom. **SCAN** the QR code. **ENTER** your gift amount. **CHANGE** the frequency to "regularly." **CHOOSE** "weekly, monthly, etc." **FINISH** the form and hit "continue."

PLEASE NOTE: *When choosing your giving method, choosing ACH (electronic withdrawal from checking) saves the church (and you) thousands of dollars each year.*

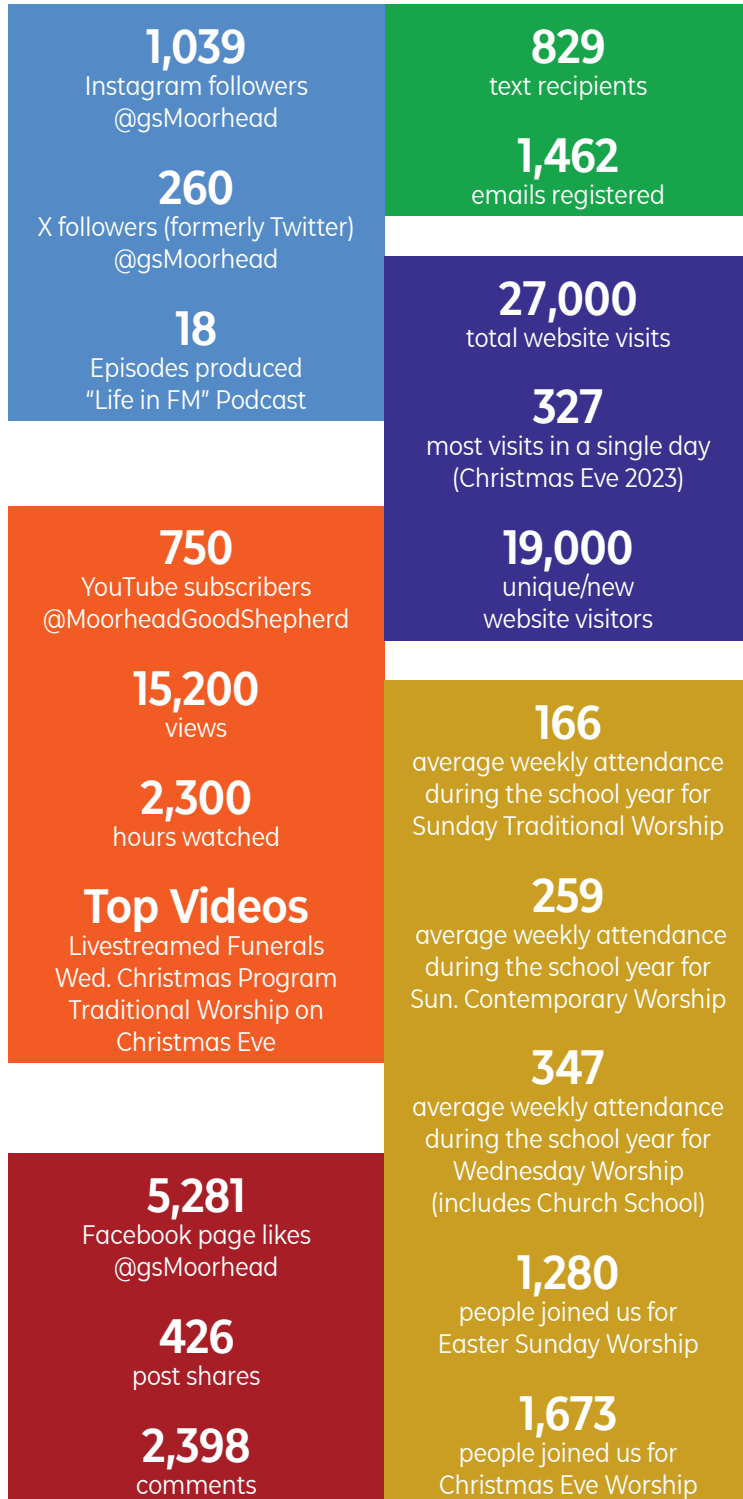
A NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

by *Stephanie Maier, Marketing Administrator*

What a difference a year can make! In 2023, we truly found our post-pandemic stride at Good Shepherd. The following pages highlight the facts and figures of a successful year of Mission. I encourage you to pay special attention to the "Faith Stories" to see how our ministry plays out in our every day lives. In 2024, we encourage you to find more ways to join us in ministry at Good Shepherd. God's blessings to you!

WORSHIP BY THE NUMBERS

Good Shepherd is available on-demand!



DOWNLOAD OUR APP

REGISTER FOR GROUPS

VIEW THE CALENDAR

GIVE SECURELY

WATCH SERMONS

Stay up to date on events, join groups, and give. DOWNLOAD the Church Center app on Google Play or the App Store. SEARCH for "Good Shepherd" and "Moorhead." ENTER your mobile number (you will receive a verification code). TYPE in the code, and you're in!

FINANCIAL REPORT: STATISTICAL REPORT

Membership	Baptized	Confirmed
Membership as of 1-1-2023	2,933	1,868
Members Received in 2023		
By Baptism	55	
Transfer In (New Members)	54	39
Affirmation of Faith (New Members)	23	55
Members Confirmed in 2023 Plus, 6 students who are not yet members were confirmed		27
Formerly Affiliate, now Full Members	1	1
Subtotal of Members Received	133	122
Members Removed in 2023		
By Death	25	25
Transfer of Membership	3	11
By Removal (inactivity)	14	18
Subtotal of Members Removed	42	54
Membership as of 12-31-2023	3,024	1,936
Ministerial Acts		
Baptisms	55	
Affirmation of Faith (New Members)	23	
Affiliate Members	12	
Weddings (on and off-site)	20	
Funerals For members & guests	31	

MINISTRY: WORSHIP & MISSION

Rev. Taylor Wilson, Pastor of Worship & Mission



*Rev. Taylor Wilson
Pastor of
Worship & Mission*

At Good Shepherd, we offer many ways to worship God throughout the week. While in-person worship on Wednesdays and Sundays is still our 'bread and butter,' we've continued to put an emphasis on providing our members and broader community to be on mission with us even from afar. Besides livestreaming our Sunday services on Youtube and Facebook Live, we also post content regularly on Instagram, Facebook, and Youtube throughout the week—so make sure you're connected with us on social media. You can also check out past sermons and hear interesting conversations on the Life in FM Podcast, which is getting a fresh re-launch for Lent 2024!

Our music groups have continued to flourish this past year, with fantastic leadership in our areas of worship. Matt Endreson directs the Good Shepherd Choir, Myrna Hanson conducts Campanelli, the Good Shepherd Bell Choir, and Joe Lindquist guides the gsKids Ring+Sing program. We're grateful to have Casey Bartz and Tom Hanson doing a wonderful job as our accompanists. In our contemporary services, I've continued to put an emphasis on recruiting and equipping others for worship leadership.

If you're interested in getting involved upfront, or perhaps behind the scenes on our production team, reach out and we'll get you connected!

LIFE
in
FM

the GOOD SHEPHERD
FARGO-MOORHEAD
PODCAST

Listen on
Apple Podcasts Spotify

14 episodes produced in 2023!
Available wherever you get your podcasts.



Adult Vocal Choir directed by Matt Endreson



Campanelli Handbell Choir directed by Myrna Hanson



gsKids Ring+Sing directed by Joe Lindquist

FAITH STORY: MY GIFTS FOR GOD

by Kaelyn Lombard



Kaelyn & Scorch

During my senior year of high school (2020), my grandpa passed away from leukemia. He was the biggest supporter and motivator of my faith journey. I specifically remember one day, recently after we found out he had been diagnosed and after finding out the time he had left with us, when he sat down with me and told me that he was so proud of how far I had come in my faith journey and that he knew God was not done with me yet. He also

told me that it was very important to him that his grandkids have a strong relationship with their creator and that he was grateful that he got to see me grow in the time that he had on this earth. From that moment on, I knew that even though I was going to struggle with God about why something this bad could happen to a man who was so, so good, I had to stay strong in my faith.

The following year I came to MSUM as a freshman. This was the first time I had ever been on my own, and I knew after a month of being up here that something was missing. The weekend after, I started "church shopping", but was not having any luck. Nothing seemed to be the right fit. After trying out different churches every Sunday for the first semester, I was invited to Good Shepherd with a girl that I met in one of my classes. I was desperate to find a church that gave me a special feeling. We attended the contemporary service that morning and the moment that worship started, I felt this immense feeling of peace and I knew that I had found my place. Following the service, Pastor Taylor came up to my friend and

me and made a point to let us know that he noticed that we were new and that he was glad we were there. I started attending every Sunday after that, and finally, in my second year in Moorhead, I became a member of the church and the Sunday morning worship team. I was immediately welcomed by all team members and am continuously encouraged by them. They all have become role models and people that I look up to. The feeling and sense of belonging at Good Shepherd is unlike anywhere else. Everyone is so inclusive and inviting, and I have been "adopted" into families that I have come to babysit for. I even sit with them most Sundays!



Kaelyn Sharing Her Voice

For today and forever, I will be proud to call Good Shepherd my home. Being a part of a family that is inclusive, inviting, loving, kind, and motivating is a family that I always want to be part of, and I thank God every day for leading me to my forever church home.

"Each week it takes 15 volunteers to serve in the band and production team to effectively pull off a worship service for live and online worship!" —Pastor Taylor



Worship Band Volunteers

SANCTUARY SOUND UPDATES

New Sound System

As a part of the On Mission Capital Campaign, the sound system was upgraded in October 2023! This project involved removing old equipment and wiring and adding new wiring, speakers, sound board, and other equipment. The speaker system provides better coverage to all areas of the sanctuary, especially the choir area and the front right seating area. The sound

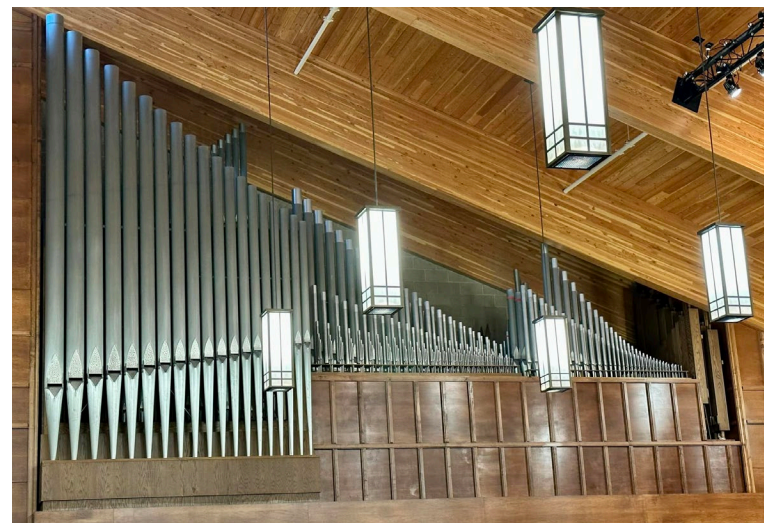
board and other equipment were upgraded to have more capacity and be more universally compatible with other equipment in the future. Additionally, repairs were made to the sound infrastructure allowing for more choir mics, a more reliable hearing assist system, and expanding the band inputs on the channel.



Upgraded Sound Board Allows for More Sound Options

Pipe Organ Update

In summer 2023, the Sanctuary's Casavant Organ received a complete electrical update. The organ was originally built with leather pouches that helped control the wind to the pipes. After nearly 70 years of service at the original Good Shepherd location and at our current site, the leathers finally wore out. Allen Moe with the Moe Pipe Organ Company worked all summer to upgrade our organ with technology that was not available 70 years ago. With 1,600+ new valves installed, the windchests closed back up, and the wind lines connected, the blower was turned on for the first time in the fall. The organ is ready to worship with us for the next 70 years!



Casavant Organ Pipes in the Sanctuary

MINISTRY: ADULT FAITH FORMATION

Rev. Meggie Bjertness, Pastor of Adult Faith Formation



Rev. Meggie Bjertness
Pastor of Adult Faith Formation

Sam, as we'll call her, had never really understood Jesus. Growing up Catholic, the Bible had always seemed confusing, and God had always seemed angry and distant. She had not been to church in years. Then, she was invited to Good Shepherd by a friend. To her surprise, the people were warm and inviting. Then, Sam's friend invited her to join a Connect Group. The discussions were interesting, the group members seemed to like her, and the God they discussed didn't seem so bad.

Slowly but surely, Sam began to grow comfortable at church, with God, and with her faith. She still has questions, doubts, and fears, but now, she has a group of people to whom she can ask her questions!

This is the kind of life change that I want for each person in our church. I dream of a church where people feel comfortable talking about their faith, flipping through the Bible, listening for the voice of God, and having the resources to answer their life questions. How does this happen? Big change happens in small groups!

Highlights of 2023 included:

- + Sharing in preaching, leading worship, music, and pastoral care
- + Seeing 137 people participate in new groups (groups that didn't exist in 2022). That's in addition to the 200+ who were already in groups!
- + Organizing studies on The Walk, Revelation, Who Told You That?, Seamless, and ELCA World Hunger
- + Restarting the Blog and training new Befrienders
- + Organizing a Mission Jamaica team and two Guess Who's Coming to Dinner events

In the coming year, I hope to start even more groups to help our community grow in faith. It is important to Grow so we know how to Go!

Everybody needs a group. What's yours?

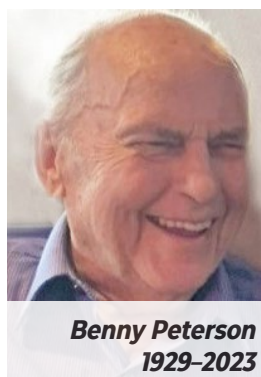


Guess Who's Coming To Dinner Event



FAITH STORY: BEFRIENDERS

by Armin Piphó



Benny Peterson
1929-2023

One of the joys in my life was to have been a BeFriender to Benny Peterson.

Benny and Lola had helped me for years as ticket takers for high school basketball tournaments when I was the athletic director at Concordia College. So this was always a wonderful remembrance and topic of discussion when Benny and I would get together.

We would have coffee every couple of weeks at McDonald's. But in May, when my wife, Terry, and I moved to the lake, getting together was going to be difficult and Benny was beginning to struggle health-wise. Benny liked to text so it became our new way of communication. In fact, we texted almost every day. I would tell him how my garden was growing or if I caught some fish or how my golf game was going, and he would always text me right back about his day or how he was feeling.

And then, our texts became more personal, and we shared more about our personal lives and our faith lives and how much we had been blessed. We always ended our texts by expressing our love for each other and that God was always with us. I believe I provided some comfort and support to Benny during the last few months of his life through these texts, and I believe he made me a better person during this time as well.

BeFRIENDERS is a listening ministry of care at Good Shepherd. Members are trained to assist homebound members of our congregation—they listen, visit, send encouragement, and offer social interaction. BeFRIENDERS faithfully walk alongside their BeFRIENDERS during this phase of life.

If you or someone you know would like a visit or would like to join the BeFriender Team, email GoodShep@ktgs.org.

MINISTRY: KIDS & YOUTH

Deacon Julie Wilson, Director of Kids Ministry
Diana Wright, Youth Director



Dcn. Julie Wilson
Director of
Kids Ministry



Diana Wright
Youth Director

What a wonderful year of teaching kids to love, know, and praise Jesus!

- + 47 students participated in their First Communion milestone—they received a special blessing and communion during worship
- + 28 third graders received new Bibles with a special cover made by Barb Spilde
- + 28 students attended Luther Crest Bible Camp in Alexandria, MN, for day, week, and family camp

Church School

- + 358 Church School students, age 3 to grade 5
- + 50+ leaders
- + 2 sessions, Wednesday evenings & Sunday mornings

Vacation Bible School (VBS)

- + 2 weeks of VBS
- + 263 students registered
- + 55 youth and adult volunteers shared their talents and faith as leaders
- + Every Moorhead public school received a donation of Spud gear & snacks

Youth

Confirmation looked different in 2023 with the introduction of Electives. In the spring, Confirmation students were given their choice of topics from cooking, wood-working, emotional intelligence, Lutheran 101, a service learning project, and many more options. These classes connected students with congregation members—showing students all the ways they can serve God.

- + 175 registered for Confirmation
- + 68 elective classes (31 different topics to choose from)
- + 33 confirmed (October 2023)
- + Youth Group sessions offered—trivia, bonfires, and glow-in-the-dark capture the flag to name a few

Thank you for the many people who give of their talents, prayers, and financial gifts to help children grow in faith.



Welcome, Baby Wright!

Parker Josephine Wright was born on May 12, 2023. She is the daughter of our Youth Director, Diana, and her husband, Tyler. Her fur-brother, Hyzer, wasn't quite sure about her, but everyone is adjusting well.

FAITH STORY: EVEN WHEN IT'S HARD

by The Cote Family

Every summer, Good Shepherd welcomes a whole bunch of kids into the church to learn and grow in faith through Vacation Bible School. And every summer, there are a handful of 3-year-olds and 4-year-olds who are a little scared to be without their caring adult for those hours.

In 2022, one of those kids was Eli Cote. He did NOT want to be here without his mom, Lacey, and it didn't matter that his sister, Emma, knew the ropes and was happy to head to her spot by herself. Staff was able to distract Eli by walking from door-to-door checking the weather until his mom came for pick-up. It was a rough week for "Eli the Weather Guy," but he said he would try again.

In the fall, it was time for Eli to go to Church School, and it went about the same as it did in the summer.

In 2023, Eli was once again at VBS, but he ran ahead of his mom a bit. He still needed to see some familiar faces—and get a hug or two—but he had a wonderful week.

In the fall, he started in the 4-year-old room, and it was touch-and-go at the beginning. Once Eli found his niche, he was happy to go, and he participates in class each week.

We asked Lacey why she kept coming back—even when it was hard—and she shared, "I met my best friend at Bible Camp, and we continued to go to camp together every year. Today, we are still friends and have been there for each other through some really great and really hard times. My daughter, Emma, is always sure of herself and ready to go. Eli needs a little push, and he needs to find his people to be comfortable. Good Shepherd has our people, and I hope Emma and "Eli the Weather Guy" can find their forever friends."

Even when it's hard, even when you feel like your kids—or you—didn't get a thing out of the service. Come. Worship with us. Bring the kids. God gave them their wiggles—and Deacon Julie will give them suckers!



Eli & Emma Cote

In 2023, the Church School students sang a new song at their Christmas Programs. "Glory, Glory, Hallelujah" is an original song written by Pastor Taylor Wilson. Listen to it on Spotify!

MINISTRY: CONGREGATION ENGAGEMENT

Linda Bartholome, Congregation Engagement Director



Linda Bartholome
Congregation
Engagement
Director

Thank you to our countless volunteers! We could not do this without YOU sharing your 4Ts: time, talent, treasure, and testimony!

- + Altar Care Team (decor & communion prep)
- + Front Desk Volunteers
- + Funeral Servers
- + Lenten Lunches
- + Parade Walkers for the Greater Moorhead Days & the Concordia Homecoming Parade
- + Sunday Coffee/Donut Servers

- + Wedding Coordinator, Sonja Teigen
- + Wednesday Suppers, by Chef Jake Curry

Feed My Starving Children Fargo Pack

Challenged by needs he saw on a mission trip to Honduras in 1982, late Minnesota businessman Richard Proudfit heard God say, "If you've seen my starving children, feed them." Feed My Starving Children was founded in 1987 and began working to develop an effective and nutritious meal formula.

Good Shepherd has participated in the packing for Feed My Starving Children Fargo Pack for years and started packing when the first site was in Atonement Lutheran Church's gym 10 years ago. We had 89 volunteers who packed meals in 2023!

Good Shepherd's Giving Tree

Thank you for the outpouring support of our Giving Tree this year! We were able to provide gift cards, towels, blankets, and diapers to our friends at Micah's Mission/Churches United for the Homeless. We also supported families in our congregation and families connected with Lutheran Social Services and the Heart of Clay ministry!

Adult Christians Together (ACT, 55+)

The ACT group gathers once a month for food and fellowship. We have a great mix of speakers, music, games, and celebrating those special holidays of the year! Our Oak Grove carolers were part of our Christmas celebration in December—what a treat! ALL are welcome to join in on the fun!



Oak Grove Carolers at the December ACT Gathering

We invite you to be a worship volunteer—
communion assistant, greeter, usher,
reader, & hospitality team member!
Email Linda@ktgs.org today!

Helping Hands (Linda Bartholome, staff liaison)

Thank you for the opportunity each Tuesday morning to work with this wonderful group of gentlemen. They are a team with a lot of wisdom, wonderful talents, and a great sense of humor. Thank you for saying "YES" to all the requests we present them. We are always looking for others to join the group!

The Pancake Feed is the Helping Hands' one fundraiser for the year. The group puts a lot of time into this fundraiser, and we are grateful for the Good Shepherd students who continue to partner with our Helping Hands at this intergenerational event. The group also receives several donations through many memorials throughout the year.

The Helping Hands share their time and talents in many ways by...

- + Preparing boxes and helping sort and distribute food for our once-a-month Ruby's Pop-up Pantry
 - + Providing lawn care and snow removal
 - + Supporting our summer LAMP team—Barb and Karen Spilde head to Thompson, Manitoba, to lead Bible school (thank you, ladies!)
 - + Painting and helping with numerous projects around the church—and I mean numerous!
 - + Supporting our Good Shepherd youth
- I cannot wait to find out what's in store for 2024!



Helping Hands Members Loading Giving Tree Items for Delivery

Women's Ministry (Linda Bartholome, staff liaison)

What a great group of women who continue to serve at Good Shepherd—through quilting, serving funerals, and serving in other areas in our community. The women also support our students by providing Bibles for our 3rd graders. The revenue received comes through monthly offerings and contributions received from Good Shepherd members. The women's checking account balance at the end of 2023 was \$1,334.13.

- + Dorothy Suomala leads Bible study each month; we are grateful for Dorothy's leadership!

- + Tuesday morning quilters were busy throughout the year and sent 80 quilts off to Lutheran World Relief in May and October. They also provided quilts to our Habitat for Humanity family who moved into their home in November.
- + Our once-a-month Wednesday afternoon quilters produced 87 lap quilts that were delivered to many of our members—several who were homebound.
- + The Year-end Christmas gathering is always a hit!
- + A big thank you to Janis Eidsness and Arlene Teigen for serving as our New Life Center representatives!



Isaiah with his grandma, Kathy, at Carols+Cocktails



Women's Circle Bible Study Advent Brunch

Ruby's Pop-up Pantry

Good Shepherd has the privilege of hosting Ruby's Pop-up Pantry each month. We now have three years under our belt and continue to receive blessings as we load boxes of food in vehicles each month. We have a core group that comes to unload the pallets from the semi, sort foods into boxes, pack bread (we call them our bread ladies), run shares out to the two different lines, and organize extra donations to our many partners in the community. There is a spot for everyone of ALL ages!

Ruby's Pantry by the numbers:

- + 34 million pounds of unwasted food
- + 140 food suppliers
- + 10,000 shares distributed last year
- + 87 locations served nationally
- + 22 years in caring service
- + 12,500+ volunteers serving every year across all sites

We are FOR Fargo-Moorhead and we will continue to serve our community. God is calling us to serve our neighbors!

Ruby's Pantry + Good Shepherd
COMMUNITY
Food Event
 Volunteer by yourself,
 with a friend, or with family.
 There is a job for every ability!
3RD THURSDAY (MONTHLY)
 Good Shepherd South Parking Lot
\$25=2 BOXES OF FOOD
 GoodShep@kts.org

FAITH STORY: FAITH OVER FEAR

by Kathy Johnson, inspired by Isaiah Beck

My commitment to my faith and church has been lifelong for me. I have always taken advantage of all the media options at Good Shepherd, but especially during the COVID pandemic. I depended on the Facebook posts, emails, and personal texts to keep me connected. I developed a strong anxiety that physically made me ill and afraid to return to crowds and worship. I still took part in all the ministries I could, but couldn't quite get the jump start I needed to get me back in the pew.

My 19-year-old grandson, Isaiah, was looking for a training or employment opportunity that he couldn't get in his little home town in upper Michigan. He was born with some speech and language disabilities and apraxia—a disorder of the brain and nervous system in which a person is unable to perform tasks or movements when asked—which have made communicating difficult for him. His brain is full of knowledge but sharing it is a challenge. We have always been very close so when his parents and I discussed him moving here with me, he was all for it. In June 2023, my home became his home.

He had been to Good Shepherd before and loved the contemporary service so he talked me into coming back. I couldn't say no and thought after one time he probably wouldn't care to return. BUT, immediately, staff and members welcomed him and embraced his willingness to take part. His beautiful smile and kind willing heart are his gifts. The Ruby's Pantry Ministry became his favorite ministry. Every week he would study the bulletin and circle what he thought we should take part in or give money to. He became a servant doing God's work where he could. He loves the music, but you won't usually hear him sing. He signs songs that he learned like "Jesus Loves Me," or a few others. He counts on seeing the familiar faces each week and seeks out Linda or Don Bartholome as he walks in the building. As I head to Arizona for a few months this winter, I trust Isaiah will be cared for and prayed for while I'm gone.

Good Shepherd prayed for me even when I couldn't walk in the door, and they have included my beloved grandson, accepting him as he is, a child of God (and a Packers fan)! We pray for this church and its mission daily and seek ways in which we can give back after all God has blessed us with.

FAITH STORY: FROM THE HOLY LAND TO A HOLY FOOD PANTRY MINISTRY

by Rev. Mary Suomala Folkerds, Lead Pastor

I went on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land with a group of pastors in January 2023. We went to places that are part of our biblical vocabulary – Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Jericho, Nazareth, and the Sea of Galilee. We walked where Jesus walked and learned about history and culture along the way.

Our first stop in Bethlehem was Shepherd's Hill. This is the place they say that the angels visited the shepherds to announce Jesus' birth. I thought we would open our Bibles to Luke chapter 2 to hear of Jesus' birth. But no, our Bible Study leader, Dr. Michael Chan, asked us to turn to the Old Testament book of Ruth. This book takes place in Bethlehem. The name Bethlehem means House of Bread. The book of Ruth is about a woman named Ruth and her mother-in-law, Naomi. Naomi was from Bethlehem, and she returned to Bethlehem after her husband and sons died in the land of Moab. Her daughter-in-law, Ruth, came back with her to Bethlehem.

Two themes in the book of Ruth are:

- + The characters go beyond what is required to show compassion—Ruth showed more compassion to her mother-in-law than what was required. And Boaz showed more compassion to Ruth than was required.
- + Emptiness and fullness—Naomi returned to Bethlehem empty, without a husband to support her, and she was filled up with all the care and compassion she received from Ruth and Boaz.



Camel Riding



Jesus' Birthplace



Sea of Galilee

As I participated in our monthly Ruby's Pantry food ministry this month, I thought of how Good Shepherd is like Bethlehem once each month – it is a House of Bread, like the meaning of Bethlehem. And the themes from Ruth play out in this place each month. About 300+ cars of people come empty and leave full – each with 2 large cardboard totes of food for only \$25. And 75+ volunteers who show up each month to organize and distribute the semi-truck of food go above and beyond what is required to love their neighbors. This is a holy ministry that we get to share in.



KariJo Hansen, Official Hug Therapist

FAITH STORY: OFFICIAL HUG THERAPIST

Meet KariJo Hansen

"Good Shepherd Lutheran Church is a place of JOY!" KariJo Hansen truly believes and lives out this statement. She enjoys participating in the Choir, reading in worship, BeFriends, and visiting during coffee hour. KariJo is very proud of her Norwegian heritage and led a "Beginning Norwegian" class as a Confirmation Elective.

You will often find KariJo greeting people as they come into the building, "I just want to make sure that every person who walks into Good Shepherd feels welcome!" And she does just that. You will always find her with a smile, and sometimes you catch her with her "Official Hug Therapist" name tag. Thank you for your faithful energy, KariJo!



KariJo Greeting with Dorothy Suomala

BAPTISMS

Celebrating

- + Savannah Marie Brookshire, Jan. 15
- + Eve Catherine Montplaisir, Jan. 15
- + Everlee Bev Johnson, Feb. 19
- + Thalliah Mae Buhr, Feb. 19
- + Theseia Renae Buhr, Feb. 19
- + Cohen Dean Paulsen, Feb. 19
- + Colt Douglas Muehler, Mar. 5
- + Sullivan Theodore Retka, Mar. 5
- + Cooper Scott Schwartz, Mar. 5
- + Hayden Michael Gilberts, Mar. 19
- + Lillia Rose Norris, Mar. 19
- + Lucca Jacob Norris, Mar. 19
- + Rowdy LouAnn Williams, Mar. 19
- + Hattie Nichole Benz, Apr. 16
- + Lennon Rose Aho, Apr. 23
- + Londyn Elizabeth Aho, Apr. 23
- + Mason Travis Aho, Apr. 23
- + Alexis Nicolette Kunkel, Apr. 30
- + Jadeveon Alex Kunkel, Apr. 30
- + Claire Aubrey Berg, May 7
- + Natalie Wander Holleman, May 7
- + Kendall Rae Stark, May 7
- + Miles Harrison Boedekker, May 21
- + Laura Lane Ouellette, May 21
- + Olivia Joyce Ouellette, May 21
- + Emma Mae Thielges, May 21
- + Kohen Wayne Beckius, Jun. 4
- + Cooper Scott Grove, Jun. 4
- + Hollie Rose Barry, Jun. 11
- + Gabriel Harry Somdahl, Jun. 28
- + Bennet Matthew Mecklenburg, Jul. 2
- + Santiago Robert DeLa Rosa, Jul. 16
- + Ashton Kelly Magpantay, Jul. 16
- + Josephine Isabel Mireault, Aug. 6
- + Grady Mark Pieterick, Aug. 20
- + Noah Jo Dwyer, Aug. 27
- + Brooks Paul DeJong, Sept. 3
- + Parker Josephine Wright, Sept. 3
- + Maisie Jade Brauch, Sept. 17
- + Chloe Eleonora Clark, Sept. 17
- + Collins Noel Ehrlin, Sept. 17
- + Liam Elmer Fike, Oct. 1
- + Lucie Jude Gee, Oct. 1
- + Isla Danielle Andersen, Oct. 8
- + Chloe Harlynn Wagner, Oct. 8
- + Brooks Dominic Bosh, Oct. 15
- + Stella Rose Hasse, Oct. 15
- + Aksel Harlan Henrickson, Oct. 15
- + Ophelia Melody Lynn Krautkremer, Nov. 5
- + Ardie Cohen Schwartz, Nov. 5

- + Ivy Rae Dosch, Nov. 19
- + Ellerie Ann Scholand, Nov. 19
- + Kennedy Lorraine Mertens, Dec. 3
- + Kingston Jon Hansen, Dec. 31
- + Lenora Jane Solwold, Dec. 31

DEPARTED SAINTS

Remembering

- + Erma Stordahl
- + Wes Hodges
- + Marlys Rieckman
- + Audrey Angstman
- + Emily Houglum
- + Tim Langeberg
- + Luella Olson
- + Elwood Skarpness
- + Bob Nyquist
- + Linda Mandsager
- + Bonie Zeayee George
- + Ed Foss
- + Bruce Lien
- + Tracy Tjon
- + Marie Malley
- + Joyce Miller
- + Benny Peterson
- + Lynda Lohmeier
- + Bruce Worner
- + Joyce Kloubec
- + Selma Anderson
- + Marian Schroeder
- + Eugene "Gene" Huber
- + Marietta Gunderson
- + Chris Jacklovich
- + Jim Neiman
- + Maren Bakken
- + Charlotte Haug
- + Bob Nick Sr.
- + Jim Lizakowski
- + Pastor Ernie Mancini

NEW MEMBERS

Received February 2023

- + Matthew & Taylor Gess, Thea, Charlie & Ezra
- + Al & Diane Holleman
- + Tara Larsen
- + Kaelyn Lombard
- + Chuck McWethy
- + Andrew Ohe
- + Lisa Samuelson
- + Jeff & Karen Wallevand
- + Frederick & Nicole Weiss, Lelah & Kenny

Received April 2023

- + Brian & Ashley Benz, Paxton, Isla, Waverlee, & Hattie
- + Ben & Karly Bondy, Louis & Jack
- + Michael & Katherine Chan, Eden & Elijah
- + Alex & Tiffany Mireault, Madelyn & Josephine
- + Lee & Pam Nelson
- + Charles & Susan Peterson
- + Josh & Sarah Tommerdahl, Laila, Everly, & Boden

Received July 2023

- + Doris Krueger
- + Frank Marquette
- + Merv & Barb Olson
- + Lyn Stoltenow
- + Linda Thomas

Received October 2023

- + Paul & Suzanne Baker, Carissa Amundson, Ashton, & Colton
- + Eric Clay
- + Cam Ellingson
- + Rob & Karis (Hanson) Green
- + Faith Henkel
- + Beverly Henning
- + Earl & Kathy Holland (affiliate)
- + Robby & Emily Lundbohm, Jackson, Ellie, & Griffin
- + Justin & Emily Monroe
- + Dan & Kristi Pflingsten
- + Susan Rommesmo
- + Zachary & Janie Schroeder, Mathias, & Eugene
- + Lisa Ziegler

Received December 2023

- + Maren Bakken
- + Isaiah Beck
- + Casey Ekeland
- + Chris & Nicole Goplerud, Easton, & Greyson
- + Karen Mathison
- + Glen & Sharon Witt



Sacrament of Baptism

How can we
pray for you?

Let's name it—life can be hard.
The Prayer Ministry Team will pray for you!
Send prayers or join our team—
GoodShep@ktgs.org or 218.233.4980.
All prayers are confidential to the ministry.



"SANCTUARY" PAINTING BY ELLEN JEAN DIEDERICH

"It has been an honor to create two paintings that depict the Sanctuary and the Gathering Area of Good Shepherd. These paintings were commissioned by a loving anonymous donor whose goal is to provide a fundraiser to reduce the church home mortgage debt." —Sincerely, Ellen Jean Diederich

With gratitude, your support of this generous fundraising effort is encouraged. Please see the cards and reproductions in the Gathering Area or inquire with the Church Office by contacting 218.233.4980 or GoodShep@ktgs.org.

HAPPY 70TH, GOOD SHEPHERD!

The Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd was started in 1952 by the Home Missions Department of the Evangelical Church. Rev. Sanford Sorgen was called as the congregation's first pastor. Services began on March 15, 1953, at Riverside Elementary School, with the first building being completed one year later. The official "certificate of incorporation of religious society" was on June 15, 1953. Our original church held 300 people, and the congregation quickly outgrew their space. The Sanctuary addition was dedicated in October 1967.



Original Church on 6th St in Moorhead (near Eventide)

Groundbreaking for our existing church was in the summer of 2006.

A portion of our plot of land at 40th Avenue and 28th Street was gifted to Good Shepherd by the Johanson family with the "if you build it, they will come" attitude. In 2007, Good Shepherd moved to its new home and had its first worship service on June 3! Good Shepherd members embraced the move and were hands on with their generous gifts and prayers.

May God continue to bless our congregation with the ability to bring the Good News to more people as we continue to be "For Fargo Moorhead"!



FAREWELL TO LONG-TIME STAFF MEMBER

Thank you for your service, Karen!

Karen Skarpness worked at Good Shepherd for 25 years, first as the secretary and receptionist for 22 years and then as the Data Systems and Finance Manager for the last three years. In the last three years, she helped the transition into online giving, built a new church database, and guided the refinance process for the congregation's mortgage.

We as a staff and congregation are grateful for her years of dedication to the mission of Good Shepherd. Her position was eliminated due to a post-COVID staff audit led by Rev. Mary Suomala Folkerds and the Executive Team of the Council. The conclusion was that the financial operations of Good Shepherd have not changed sufficiently to keep a full-time staff member in this role.

Going forward, Good Shepherd has utilized a local company that does church accounting. Dennis Nelson, long-time Good Shepherd member, has been hired as a part-time Finance Administrator to interact with the staff, the accounting firm, and the congregation.

FINANCIAL REPORT: COUNCIL TREASURER

Karl-Heinz Mertins, 2023 Council Treasurer



*Karl-Heinz Mertins
Council Treasurer*

Gather. Grow. Go! To translate these words into action, so that Good Shepherd may function as the church we aspire it to be, requires people, buildings, and—above all—faith. Because the first two ingredients are reliant on your monetary support, as the year-end approaches, the financial team and Council face the trepid question “are we going to make budget?” By November, doubting Thomas enters the stage, and it seems only a Christmas Miracle can right our

listing ship known as the General Fund. And once more, we find ourselves at the end of 2023 humbled and tremendously grateful for your year-end fireworks of giving. ***Because of your generosity, and further helped by building use fees, the total annual revenues for the General Fund added up to a record \$1,196,499 which is \$49,668 or 4.3% above budget!*** This is augmented by an influx of ERC (Employee Retention Credit) funds of \$110,570.

*“She opens her arms to the poor and extends her hands to the needy.”
—Proverbs 31:20*

Not unexpected in the current economic climate, the total annual expenses rose to \$1,176,885 which is \$30,054 or 2.6% above budget. For this strong finish with \$20,249 in the black to happen, our staff and clergy used their frugal mindset and saved money where possible. Thanks to staff and volunteers, buildings and landscaping have been well-maintained without undue shortcuts. Lighting systems have mostly been converted to energy-saving LED technology. The ongoing Capital Campaign has already yielded in \$536,800—pledged and given as of 09/30/2023—to reduce our mortgage debt and to update audio installations in the Sanctuary.

We grew the Maintenance Reserve Fund by \$11,000 out of the General Fund. The reserve shall help with future repair and maintenance needs of our aging building and its increasing technology content. One pending issue is the water damage on the roof that is continuing to be addressed.

Our church is committed to sharing treasures and talents with the local community and the world. Total benevolence disbursements in 2023 exceeded 9.8% of envelope giving, or \$100,440 in absolute terms! Support went to initiatives like Feed My Starving Children, Habitat for Humanity, and Churches United. The Benevolence Contribution page in this Annual Report lists details of the Church-related and Local benevolences that were shared in 2023 by this church family. You made a difference.

Greater Things Have Yet to Come

Looking forward to 2024 and beyond, it is obvious that the Good Shepherd is set up to grow and become more impactful in the Fargo-Moorhead area. We are blessed with three energetic pastors and creative ministry staff; effective programs and processes have been developed that can be expanded. To retain this team requires adequate funding, not just for salaries and benefits, but for continuing education, better tools, equipment, and facilities that enable personal growth and advancement.

The 2024 budget is still a linear progression of the last couple of years, a practice that foreshadows future deficits and won't be sustainable. Over the longer term a quantum leap in funding is envisioned—so that ALL may know the Good Shepherd, Jesus Christ.

To this end, a portion of the ERC money will be allocated to leverage the expertise of the PACE Fundraising consultancy in Fargo and conduct in 2024 a feasibility study on opportunities to improve revenues and member engagement. With thanksgiving, we are pleading for your continued, steadfast assistance throughout 2024.

Greater things are still to be done in this city!

600+ households donated to Good Shepherd's mission and \$100,000+ was given to partner ministries!

NW MN Synod, Lutheran World Relief, Churches United, Habitat for Humanity, Global Missions, Luther Crest Bible Camp, MSUM Lutheran Campus Ministry, Heart of Clay Jail Ministry, New Life Center, Oak Grove, Valley Christian Counseling, YWCA Women's Shelter, Neighborhood Church, Feed My Starving Children

\$4,172 was collected for Noisy Offerings for local & global organizations—collected the first Sunday & Wednesday of each month!

**Thank you for Subscribing to the Mission!
Where can generosity take us in 2024?**

MINUTES: ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

January 29, 2023 | 9:30 am | Good Shepherd Sanctuary
Number of Attendees: 130 (quorum of 100 reached)

Called to Order, 9:37 am: Tom Staiger, 2022 Council President

Opening Devotion: Mackenzie Tadych, Council Secretary
+ The Coffee Bean

Approval of Agenda for 2023 Annual Congregational Meeting
+ Motion by Colleen Hyde, Second by Linda Fiedler
+ Passed

Approval of Minutes of 2022 Annual Meeting on January 30, 2021 (p.24, 2022 Annual Report)
+ Motion by Beth VanderLinden, Second by Dan Altenbernd
+ Passed

Approval of Minutes of Special Congregational Meeting on June 5, 2022 (p.25, 2022 Annual Report)
+ Motion by Denis Johnson, Second by Gail Messerschmidt
+ Passed

Report of the Church Council: Tom Staiger, 2022 Council President (p.2, 2022 Annual Report)
+ Accomplished a lot toward debt reduction goal
+ Rev. Meggie Bjertness joined our staff in the role of Pastor of Adult Faith Formation

Reports of Pastors:

- + **Rev. Mary Suomala Folkerds (p.2, 2022 Annual Report):** Gather, Grow, and GO—so that ALL may know the Good Shepherd. Thank you to everyone who is making this our Mission every day.
- + **Rev. Taylor Wilson (p.6, 2022 Annual Report):** Celebrate all who help make worship happen every week!
- + **Rev. Meggie Bjertness (p.8, 2022 Annual Report):** Six months on the Good Shepherd Team—thank you for welcoming her in and letting her be a part of the Good Shepherd Family!

2021 Financial Report: Karl-Heinz Mertins, Council Treasurer (p.16-23, 2022 Annual Report)
+ Overview of annual revenues and expenses
+ Came out ahead—surplus will be brought into 2023 budget
+ Refinanced in 2023 after three bids. Settled at 3.875% with the ELCA for a savings of \$1,800/month.

Presentation/Adoption of 2023 Budget: Karl-Heinz Mertins, Council Treasurer (p.20, 2022 Annual Report)
+ Budget proposed from 2022 actual numbers
+ Increased funding into the General Reserve Fund

(\$1,000/month)

- + Goal to lower debt
- + Motion to approve budget by Karl-Heinz Mertins, Second by Dennis Nelson
- + Approved

Election Candidates presented: Brent Teiken, 2022 Council Vice President

- + No nominations from the floor
- + Ballot presented

New Business: No New Business

Recognition of Outgoing Council Members: Rev. Mary Suomala Folkerds

- + Matthew Hallaway
- + Dennis Nelson
- + Jerry Bjelde (deceased)

Ballots Counted: 130 cast. Ballot approved as presented.

- + Brent Teiken, President
- + Galen Clow, Vice President
- + Tom Staiger, Past President
- + Karl-Heinz Mertins, Treasurer
- + Mackenzie Tadych, Secretary
- + Sarah Hofer-Hanson, Family Life
- + Erin Labrenze, Family Life
- + Dan Altenbernd, Spiritual Growth
- + Zach Staples, Outreach
- + Larry Erdmann, Administration

The Lord's Prayer and Adjournment at 10:14 am

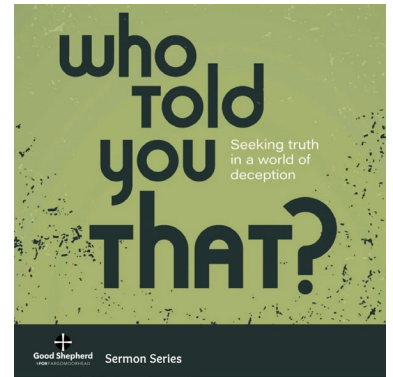
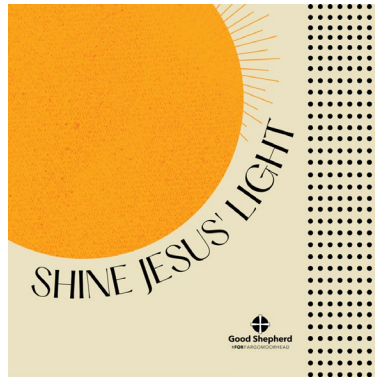
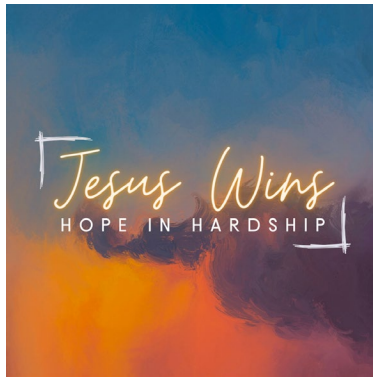
- + Motion by Dan Altenbernd, Second by Phyllis Paulson
- + Passed

Mackenzie Tadych, Council Secretary



Pastor Mary, Pastor Taylor, & Pastor Meggie Ready to Start Worship

A YEAR IN SERMONS



Quilts on the Altar: Prepared for Donation to Lutheran World Relief and Members of Good Shepherd



Pastor Meggie & Deacon Julie Ready for VBS 2023

You're invited to Good Shepherd!

WORSHIP

SUNDAYS
 8:30 am, Traditional (+livestream)
 9:30 am, Church School + Confirmation + Fellowship
 10:30 am, Contemporary (+online)
 11:00 am, WDAY 970 AM Radio

WEDNESDAYS
 5:00 pm, Dinner
 6:15 pm, Worship + Church School
 7:00 pm, Confirmation

gsMoorhead.com

Lutheran Church of the
Good Shepherd

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OUR MISSION

○ ○ ○ ○ LUTHERAN CHURCH OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD

We **gather** joyfully, **grow** spiritually,
 and **go** faithfully so that ALL may
 know the Good Shepherd and have
 abundant life in His name.



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