

# The Shepherd's Staff

Monthly Newsletter of  
Good Shepherd Lutheran Church at Swan's Trail  
swanstrail@outlook.com      www.swanstrail.org  
5511 64th Street SE, Snohomish WA 98290  
Church Phone 425-334-1220

**FEBRUARY 2022**



## From the Bishop:

I don't usually write about personal things for this monthly column, but I have a birthday this month (it is not a significant birthday – it doesn't end in a zero or a five) but a birthday is a birthday. And a birthday is always a blessing – it is a marker that we are still given time on earth to be with loved ones, work to make this world more livable and loveable for others, learn and grow, listen and speak, play and dance in God's Spirit of love.

I remember a significant birthday ten years ago that I celebrated. It was very low-key birthday. My parents and my family were there. We had some sort of food that I don't remember and a cake that was probably chocolate. That was it. But I was so thankful to be celebrating it. You see, in the summer of 2011 I was diagnosed with an aggressive form of breast cancer. I underwent chemotherapy, a bilateral mastectomy, and radiation. In February of 2012 I had finished chemo and surgery and was just beginning radiation. (I am perfectly healthy now.)

This is what I wrote on my blog on [www.my lifeline.org](http://www.my lifeline.org) exactly ten years ago:

*The other day I was complaining to some friends that it is hard for me to get motivated. I said, "I am not a depressed person but it is so hard to do things right now." My friend Laura said to me, "Maybe it's because you are battling cancer and have had months of toxic drugs, major surgery, forced work leave, a little too much mortality staring you in the face and no hair or eyelashes. Personally I think that's enough reason to feel what you are feeling." ...*

Today I re-read what my friend Laura said and her words hold true for me and for so many of us right now. For many it is hard to be motivated and do things right now. We have had months – years! – of a pandemic, political divide, anxiety, forced separation, and, for some, physical and emotional difficulties as well. It makes sense that we are weary. And we can give ourselves and others compassion during this time.

And ... at the same time ... we also know that this is not the end.

We place our trust in God that this is only a season in our lives and in our world. A season that eventually we will look back on, be amazed how we survived and thrived, and be thankful for the place we are called to next.

Here is how I ended my reflection from ten years ago:

*As I close this blog post, I am reminded of the passing of seasons and the amazing presence of God. When I began treatment, summer was in full bloom. We have gone through the falling of leaves, the dormancy of winter, and are now on the cusp of spring. This is where I feel my body is, too. I am ready to live a new life of health and wholeness, hope and gratitude. Psalm 30:11-12 says it so well: You have turned my mourning into dancing; you have taken off my sackcloth and clothed me with joy, so that my soul may praise you and not be silent. O Lord my God, I will give thanks to you for ever.*

May we rest and may we breathe.

May we live and move and dance in the Spirit.

May we trust that through all things God is present with us – above us, beneath us, before us, and behind us.

May this year bring us resiliency and hope.

May we – *together* – be filled with Christ's love and compassion for one another and for ourselves.

+ Bishop Shelley Bryan Wee

[bishop@lutheransnw.org](mailto:bishop@lutheransnw.org)

## ***Prayer Requests***

**Let us pray for the whole people of God in Christ Jesus  
and for all people according to their needs:**

***Our own Congregation as we work through the transition process on the path to seeking our next Pastor***

***The Eldridge's on the loss of Fred's father***

***Ron Walther and family on the loss of his wife, Joanne***

***Michele Coady on the loss of her mother***

***The Kloes family on the loss of Karla's mother***

***For health concerns:***

***Kandi Eldridge***

***Bob Amberson***

***Richard McCutchan's sister***

***Heidi Ferria, Pat Heifort's daughter***

***Bo Henderson***

***Juli Reed, who is struggling with MSA***

***Karla Kloes' sister, Fara Schwencke***

***For all others who are in need of healing and wholeness,  
especially those affected by COVID 19***

***For peace all around the world,***

***For our Congregational Leaders and for all people according to their needs.***

**Into your hands, Oh, Lord, we commend all for whom we pray,  
trusting in your mercy through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.**

***Prayer Requests should be submitted to  
Pat Pehling [pehling@frontier.com](mailto:pehling@frontier.com)***

### **From your President**

My President's Report for our Annual Report focused on how grateful I am for our congregation. We've all experienced a couple of difficult years and then to be without a pastor has left so many "jobs" to be done. It has been gratifying that there have been so many willing to step up and see that the "jobs" are covered! We may be a small church family but we are "mighty"!

### **THANK YOU TO**

- All the Council Officers and Ministry chairs who served in 2021. Your contributions to the ministry at Good Shepherd were outstanding and greatly appreciated.
- All the new and continuing Council Officers and Ministry Chairs taking responsibilities for 2022
- Our Transition Team for their leadership and guidance in these coming months.
- Pastor Erik Samuelson for his partnership in this Transition process.

**CHURCH WEBSITE** is at [www.swanstrail.org](http://www.swanstrail.org). Take a look when you get the chance. It has some good links to other church related websites that might be helpful to you. It also has the Sunday readings for those who like to look ahead. Suggestions of what to include in the site are most welcomed.

### **WELCOME**

Welcome and thank you to our new 2022 Church Council! Please give them all the support you can!  
Also, welcome to Pastor Erik Samuelson, who will be guiding us through the Transition process!

Hello people of Good Shepherd Lutheran Church!

I'm Rev. Erik Samuelson, and I'm excited to get to work with you over the next 9-12 months as your "transition partner." This role is part of a new way that our Synod is helping congregations with "transitional ministry" (or what used to be called "interim ministry") when your pastor retires or takes another call. Some of that role will be filled by a "care pastor" who will be with you on Sundays and provide leadership for worship and pastoral care. While I won't teaching, visiting, leading worship, or preaching (except occasionally) I will be working with your newly formed transition team and church council to lead you in the transition process. We will be looking at your congregation and community context, exploring new mission and ministry possibilities, and doing the work needed to begin the call process for your next pastor. There is a lot to do, but I already know that you have wonderful committed and faithful leaders who are ready to engage deeply and listen for how God is calling Good Shepherd into your next phase of life and ministry—and I'm excited to walk alongside you as we figure that out together.

A little about me: I grew up in Everett, went to PLU in Tacoma, went to seminary at Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary in Berkeley, CA. My wife, Tauni, is an RN at Children's Hospital in Seattle, we have two daughters aged 14 and 16, and one standard poodle. When the weather isn't the way it has been lately, I'm often on my bicycle, and in fact, one of my regular rides (from Everett to Lowell to Snohomish and back via the trestle) takes me right past Good Shepherd's building. I was ordained in 2006 and my first call was to a little church in Spokane. In 2011 I was called as Campus Pastor at Trinity Lutheran College in Everett. When Trinity closed in 2016, I joined what I like to call the "spiritual gig-economy" (think "Uber for Jesus") and have spent the last 5 years serving part-time in two congregations (Freeborn in Stanwood, and Faith in North Marysville, where I still am ¼ time) and that's what allows me the time and energy for this work with you. More and more I've leaned into the coaching and consulting work that I've been doing on the side throughout my ministry, and that's what I'm mostly up to these days. I work with congregations in the Stillaguamish Cluster, with our Synod's Directors for Evangelical Mission around innovative ministry starts, and as certified leadership coach, I coach leaders and teams in churches and non-profits around the country. Much of my work has been in discerning God's calling for individuals and for communities, and I believe small congregations have important roles to play in what God is up to in the world.

I've been working with your transition team since just after Christmas, and they are ready and excited to get this process started—and we hope that you'll join in and participate along the way. The transition team is reading some books together, and there are two short books (both by Thom Rainer) that you might want to read along with us. The first is called "Autopsy of a Deceased Church" and the second (a more hope-filled follow up) is called "Anatomy of a Revived Church." You can order them online, or reach out to someone on the transition team to borrow a copy.

I'll be preaching at Good Shepherd on February 13<sup>th</sup> and after the service we will be gathering in the fellowship hall to start a process where we tell the 100+ year story of Good Shepherd—and start to create a giant timeline of all the ways God has been present in your life together so far (we will be done long before kickoff of the SuperBowl so don't worry). A month later (Sunday, March 13<sup>th</sup>) I'll be back with you and we'll review that timeline as we start to reflect on what ministry has looked like and how God might be calling us next. I've lead this exercise in several congregations, and its actually quite fun—everyone has a part of the story and always some of the longest-tenured members are surprised by some bits of history they had never heard before. There will be a way to participate via Zoom as well if you aren't comfortable being in person—watch your email for details. I hope you'll join us.



## **MINISTRY OF COMMUNITY SERVICE – Marilyn Errey**

Good Shepherd Lutheran Church at Swan's Trail has boxes in the narthex for food donations which will be brought to the Snohomish Food Bank. Please consider bringing items to help our surrounding community. Also, as we move into this new year of transition, please consider other ways Good Shepherd can help build community throughout the year. Thank you for your contributions!

## **MINISTRY OF YOUTH AND ADULT FELLOWSHIP – Karla Kloes**

On Sunday, March 6th at 2:00 PM, the youth and their families are invited to visit the Reptile Zoo in Monroe, WA. If you are interested in attending, please contact Dean at [swanstrail@outlook.com](mailto:swanstrail@outlook.com) before 2/28/22.

Please consider hosting Fellowship after worship. Coffee will be ready so just need some simple treats and provide clean up. Sign up is in the notebook in the Fellowship Hall.

## **MINISTRY OF GIFTS – Dell Deierling**

### **THANK YOU!**

Thank you to all who are faithful in their offerings and support of Good Shepherd. Your generosity of time, talents and offerings are greatly needed and very much appreciated! Together we will succeed in supporting the needs of our ministry for 2022.

### **OFFERING OPTIONS**

To help you with your gift giving we continue to offer a couple of options should you not be donating in person. Please feel free to mail your contribution to the church. As a second option, most banks will send out checks for you via a bill pay type application. Check with your bank or your on-line banking website. An additional option is a Tithe.ly donate link on our website, <https://www.swanstrail.org>. We will receive reports from the Tithe.ly site as the funds are transferred to the church bank account to be able to credit you for these gifts as normal for year-end reporting. With this option you can decide to cover the transaction fees for the church if you wish.

## **MINISTRY OF WORSHIP –Donna Garland**

Wow, we are into the second month of 2022 and time is flying! Council elections have taken place and I will be your Ministry of Worship councilperson for this coming year.

January ended and February begins with Pastor Paul Benz with us for two Sundays. Pastor Erik Samuelson, our transition pastor/coach will be preaching on February 13<sup>th</sup>, it promises to be a wonderful experience. All the while Council and Synod are working diligently for an interim care pastor for our congregation.

Please consider signing up for readers, greeters, communion assistants, and Sunday Supervisor. Each role has a vital part in keeping our church life going and vibrant. The sign-up notebook is in the fellowship hall. Let me know if you have any questions about what these positions entail.

I hope to share information about what Ash Wednesday and the Lenten season will look like soon

## **BUT HOW CAN WE SING? by Bonnie Thoreson**

Psalm 137 is a lament full of shocking hyperbole, but also has served as an anthem of hope. The original version was written in response to the grief and suffering of the Israelites held captive in Babylon during the sixth century B.C. Verses 2-4: "*On the willows there we hung up our harps, for there our captives asked us for songs, and our tormentors asked for mirth, saying, 'Sing us one of the songs of Zion!' How could we sing the Lord's song in a foreign land?*"

Our present day "foreign land" is called corona virus December 2019. Our breathing in and our breathing out could kill us or others. Just typing those words is heartbreaking. How can we live in this foreign land? I keep searching for studies about the dangers/possibilities of creating live music. The last one I read concluded that singing without a mask causes more risk than the playing of a wind instrument.

The opera, *Nabucco*, (Italian for Nebuchadnezzar) by Verdi is based on the Babylonian captivity. At the time of its premiere, Italy was fragmented and the northern region was under the thumb of the Austrian Empire. Since the opera was based on the Bible, the censors couldn't stop it. But the people who heard it, especially the section now known as "The Chorus of the Hebrew Slaves," which paraphrased the sentiments of Psalm 137, took it as a call for freedom for all Italians. You can find it on youtube. It's a powerful chorus.

Many other musical renditions of Psalm 137 exist, including "On the Willows" from the musical *Godspell*. It's a haunting three-part song performed while the disciples wait in the Garden of Gethsemane.

Getting back to today, to our church, I give thanks to all of you who continue to sing through masks. It's silly for me to compare our suffering to those who are victims of war and subjugation, but I believe that one of the reasons Psalm 137 is in the Bible is to allow us as imperfect, fearful, discouraged people to vent. to let our humanness burst forth. Since March 16th, 2020 I have been trying, through emails, to keep our church choir "together." But how can we sing in the midst of covid, of transition, of almost total uncertainty?

To quote a Bible commentator in his discussion of this seemingly despondent psalm, "The good news is that God loves us and chooses us anyway." Even so, my heart still grieves. In my church office I have left the choir music I was excited about using for the season of Lent 2020 scattered where I left it on March 15th of that year. I look at some of it occasionally and remember...

God creates hope out of our remembering, especially when human logic says, "No way!" Such as when the small group of people who were in church on January 16th produced an inspiring crescendo as they one by one returned to their seats during communion, adding to the refrain, "Great is Thy faithfulness."

And that's how we sing in a foreign land.

Cathy Karlsen sent this note in with her offering last week so wanted to share it with all of you:

"To GSLC people, Sure miss you all and will be a joy to be back whenever that is. Many events in life have made it not possible to join you in person the last 3 years. The last 2 though I have enjoyed my on-line version to keep connected. I miss my little service work on Sundays, the many welcoming faces of all of you and just being there. Please continue prayers that I will be able to join you again soon. My prayers and thoughts continue to be with you all. A special thanks to all who continue to serve the church so well. With love, Cathy"

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**SPECIAL OCCASIONS IN OUR CONGREGATION:**

*(If we don't have your family's special dates, please write them down and pass it along to Pat Pehling - we'd like to include everyone!)*

**HAPPY BIRTHDAY**

February	8	Karen Goodnight
	9	Rachel Homme
	14	Evelyn Agostinelli
	15	Terry Danner, Joann Wilson Barstad
	18	Joanne Martina
	22	Jillian Nofziger

27      Tyler Reed  
28      McKenna Kloes

## **HAPPY ANNIVERSARY**

Les and Joanie Gilbert – February 12  
Jeremy and Randi Lee Young-February 29

## **Lutheran Counseling Network - Faith and Everyday Life**

### **February 2022**

*The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep hear his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he has brought out all his own, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice. (John 10:2-4)*

These verses about the Good Shepherd are comforting, no matter our age. When we are young, we have a special affinity for the Good Shepherd. We are open to the love and care the Shepherd gives, and are able to give back that same deep love. We want to hear our names and follow. We find joy in being sheep of the Good Shepherd.

As we grow, our scope changes, and we look beyond the safety, love and care of this loving relationship. We develop interests that take us to different places. We may stray off the path. But when that happens, the Shepherd comes looking for us. The Shepherd values each of us, seeks after us when we are in danger, and welcomes us back into the fold.

The beautiful thing is, we are never too old to be sheep. In fact, the older we get, the more we need that comforting assurance that the Good Shepherd knows us, loves us, and will never let us go. We do not always know what lies ahead. But we know the Shepherd, who leads the way. All we need to do is trust and follow. No matter our circumstances, it's a comfort to know we can rely on the Good Shepherd.