

Good Shepherd Lutheran Church
118 E. Mason Street
Lena, Illinois 61048

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O for a Thousand Tongues to Sing

Christmas is now over. The Christmas Tree is packed away for another year. The Day of Epiphany has come and gone and we are now in the Time After Epiphany. One of the hymns that comes up in our services in January is "O for a Thousand Tongues to Sing".

The Wesley brothers sent word to their sainted mother, Susanna, of their conversion. She did not know what to make of it. "I think you have fallen into an odd way of thinking", she replied "You say that till within a few months you have attained to a strong and lively hope in God's mercy through Christ. Not that I can think that you were totally without saving faith before, but it is one thing to have faith, and another thing to be sensible we have it.

Charles Wesley was very sensible of having it. His life changed, and he gained victory over both his temper and his unfortunate drinking habit. "I was amazed to find my old enemy, intemperance, so suddenly subdued, that I almost forgot I was ever in bondage to him."

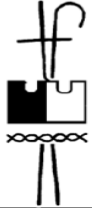
He also began to spread the news of what had happened to him. "In the coach to London," he wrote, "I preached faith in Christ. A lady was extremely offended...and threatened to beat me. I declared I deserved nothing but hell; so did she; and must confess it, before she could have a title to heaven. This was most intolerable to her."

New vitality came into Charles' public preaching. He discontinued the practice of reading his sermons, and began preaching extemporaneously. He found a fruitful arena for ministry at the infamous Newgate Prison, and allowed himself to be locked up with condemned men on nights before their executions, that he might comfort and witness to them during their final hours.

As the first anniversary of his conversion approached, Charles wrote an eighteen-stanza hymn describing his praise to the Lord. It was titled, "For the Anniversary Day of One's Conversion," and the first stanza began: "Glory to God, and praise, and love..." Verse seven began, "O for a thousand tongues to sing," inspired by a statement Charles had once heard: "Had I a thousand tongues, I would praise Him with them all."

Beginning with a 1767 hymnbook, the seventh stanza was made the first, and when John Wesley compiled his Collection of Hymns in 1780, he chose this for the first hymn in the book. Congregations today usually sing verses seven, eight, nine, and ten of Charles Wesley's original hymn which we know today as "O for a Thousand Tongues to Sing"

Taken from "Then Sings My Soul" by Robert J. Morgan.



January 2025 Newsletter

GOOD SHEPHERD LUTHERAN CHURCH

118 E. Mason, Lena, IL 61048 Phone # (815) 369-5552

Thoughts from the Pastor

Greetings in Christ,

This month I am celebrating the first anniversary of my ordination and my first full year as your official Pastor. God has blessed us in so many ways and I am thankful that I have been able to serve you all. And now we look forward to what God has in store for us in this new year.

Christmas and New Year's are times for new beginnings and we approach them with hope. But if you are anything like me, then there is a good chance that you will fall on your face if you made any New Year's resolutions. To me, these resolutions are always proof that I am not able to save myself by my own works, which can often be pretty pathetic, and if I'm really determined my resolutions may last as long as a week or so. Good intentions don't ever seem to get me very far.

But by God's grace and the Holy Spirit, wonderful things are possible, and it is amazing how much good we can accomplish in spite of our good intentions. I've lived long enough to know that God is always there and that his grace is enough. As Paul writes in II Corinthians 12, God says, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." So when we are weak, then we are strong, because our strength comes from God and not from ourselves.

And so we go forward into a new year with confidence and hope, not in ourselves, but in the grace God has given us through Jesus his Son.

Blessings in Christ,
Pastor Thomas

Good Shepherd's Annual Meeting

Will be held on January 26th, 2025 at 10:30am following service.

Committee Chairs, please get your reports to the church secretary by January 12th.

Weather Lore

Flowers... that have a second bloom in the fall or hold onto their blooms late in the season forecast a colder winter.

Highlights from Good Shepherd's December Council Meeting

On December 12, 2024 at 10:45am, Council Meeting opened the meeting with devotions and snack. Check-in followed.

Secretary's Report: The November Secretary's Report along with minutes of a Special Meeting Held Nov. 3 Secretary's Report was approved unanimously

Treasurers Report: Jay Andrews reviewed the November Treasurer's Report and Council fully approved Treasurer's Report.

Pastor's Report: Pastor Thomas provided his November report and noted attendance has grown since the summer. His report received unanimous approval

Committee Reports:

Learning Committee: Council was reminded of the upcoming Christmas Program Dec. 22 and that the Sunday School program is continuing.

Finance Committee: Jay Andrews stated the 2025 Budget has been drafted and will be submitted to Council for approval. Andrews also commented that the church secretary's computer is running on Windows 10 which will no longer be supported after October 2025. A new computer has been added to the 2025 budget. Jay Andrews stated that Pastor Thomas had gifted the Treasurer a new laptop as the current computer was outdated and could no longer be updated.

Scholarship Committee: Darci Meier provided the second reading of the Scholarship requirements which was approved.

Audit: Jay Andrews announced that audits for years 2021, 2022 and 2023 have been completed. The audit for 2024 is expected to be completed in January after all December bills have come in.

A motioned was made that all standing committee reports be approved. Council approved.

New Business: The date of Jan. 26, 2024, has been selected for the Annual Congregational Meeting. Council fully agreed. It was suggested that all end of year reports be submitted by the end of 2024. The Endowment Funds Distribution was also approved. Donations are as follows: Piece Corps, \$2,000: Voices, \$1,000: Tylers Justice Center, \$1000: Lutheran Outdoor Ministry Center, \$700: Madonna Renewal Center, \$300: Pine Ridge Retreat Center, \$700: Lena Food Pantry, \$300 and ELCA Disaster Relief, \$300. Council unanimously approved. The total of \$6,300 will be paid from the Special Funds Endowment Trust. The 2025 Budget was submitted and reviewed by Jay Andrews, Finance Committee member. A motioned to approve the budget was presented Full Council agreed. The budget will be presented at the annual meeting for congregational approval.

With no further business, a motion to adjourn was made, Council stood in agreement and recited the Lord's Prayer.

The next meeting will be January 9, 2025.

Respectfully submitted,
Darci Meier, Secretary.



Our Purpose Statement

“As a community of women created in the image of God, called to discipleship in Jesus Christ, and empowered by the Holy Spirit, we commit ourselves to grow in faith, affirm our gifts, support one another in our callings, engage in ministry and action, and promote healing and wholeness in the church, the society, and the world.”

The revitalization of Hannah Circle continues as we adjust after the pandemic and the cross-country move of our dear friend and leader, Rene'. We meet after worship on the first Sunday of the month in the Confirmation Room. Grab a cup of coffee and a snack and bring it upstairs. For about an hour we enjoy fellowship and a devotional.

Our Piece Corp Quilters continue with their faithful ministry of sewing quilts to be distributed near and far.

Whether you attend Circle or not, all women are encouraged to subscribe to Gather magazine. Subscriptions are \$19.95/year for six issues. The magazine has a variety of articles as well as a Bible Study. Subscription cards are available on the Women of the ELCA bulletin board in Fellowship Hall. You can find more information online at www.gathermagazine.org or by talking with Sheila.

All women of the ELCA are members of WELCA and are welcome at all of our Good Shepherd, synod and churchwide activities!

Respectfully submitted,
Sheila Keene

We are so thankful to, the Good Shepherd musical director Janis Kurth, to pianist Karen Nie-meier and organist Tena Rackow, along with Choir and Chimes groups and for the Men's Group for providing your musical services throughout the year. . Thank you for volunteering your time and sharing your beautiful gift of music with us.

Treasurer's Report

Jay Andrews

| | |
|-----------------------------|---------------------|
| Incoming November 2024 | \$5,161.10 |
| Expenses November 2024 | <u>\$9,723.66</u> |
| Net Income (Loss) | \$(4,562.56) |
| Income, Year to Date 2024 | \$103,213.07 |
| Expenses, Year to Date 2024 | <u>\$101,554.17</u> |
| Net Income (Loss) | \$ 1,658.90 |

Devotion Books

January-March issues of Christ in Our Homes and The Word in Season are available now. These devotion books are helpful ways to keep growing our faith. Start a new year with word of God every day! Take one home today!

NORTHERN ILLINOIS SYNOD

Northern Highlights
Northern Illinois Synod WELCA
November 2024

PRESIDENT REPORT

As I said in my President's Report at our 2024 Convention in Kewanee, Illinois, according to scripture, the eye is not the whole of the body, nor is the hand or feet. The same can be said for the NISWO President and any officers or board member. We each need the other to make the whole. We need each the other to make a plan come together. Each of us does not spring up from the earth whole and complete. We have Venerated elders who come before us, teaching and modeling our faith and how we are to take action.

I've been known to say that going to Convention is like going to a family reunion. I stand by that statement. I had the greatest pleasure this last September of being NISWO Board President and, therefore, running the business meeting while looking out on the sea of my WELCA family. Actually, it did start with my family. My mother, Barbara, was the person at Bethany, my home congregation, who nominated me for Board President. Not too far from her, was my Congregational Unit President, Barbara McNeil, who originally nominated me a year earlier for the one-year term of NISWO Board President. Barb also encouraged me to attend a Triennial the first time to St. Louis, MO, and then eventually as a voting delegate.

Amongst the congregation were women I worked with for years in our Southwest Conference when I was able to serve as Conference Convener, Sharon Courtwright and Myrna Sandburg and current Presiding Conveyor, Katherine Jansen. There was Jan Butterfield and Amy Laurin my first NISWO Board presidents when I worked as the board secretary. Esther Prabacher, an encourager and leader during the NIS visit to the Arcot Synod in India when we signed a pledge of Companion Synods in January 2008. Fellow board members Judy, Margaret, Kim Choin, Ann Terry, Ruth Ann Hartman and Sharon Waddle. This cloud of witnesses supported me before being board president was a twinkled in my eyes. I thank you for being my encouragers and my backbone then and now.

Grace & Peace,
Jeana Jeana Fors,
WELCA President

Bible Trivia

Who wrote the text of the Epiphany carol "We Three Kings of Orient Are" ?

A) Father Joseph Mohr B) Phillips Brooks C) John Henry Hopkins Jr. D) Charles Wesley

Answer on page 8

We lift our prayers for

Lynn Lyvers, Jerry, Fern Harnish, Taylor B., Denny Bergmann, Rene', Paul Fahr, Gary Hudik, Brady Meier, Virgil Martin, Tena Rackow, Marilyn Fulfs, Todd Schlachter, Cyndy Schumacher, Duane Tessendorf, Connor Stadermann, Brooke, Jon Forsythe, Diane, Randy, Brian, Paul Heller, Janet, Ryse Stone, Nicole, Meghan and her baby, John, Chuck, Joyce, Terri, Tina, Julie, Jamie, Crystal, Katie, Christian, Anna, Abby, Karla, Jacob and his family, Richard Gordon, Kay, Shanna, Kathy, Charlie, Brad, Jack, Tina, Joe, Sue, Emma, Cindy, Lamar Hail, Connie, Rachel Collins, Hanna, Mr. & Mrs. Ron Heckman, Jeri, Allie, Al, Bruce Stewart, Pam, Caroline, Tina D., Howard D., Jim DeMontigny Jr., Anita, Eric, Roger, Larry, Linda Kruger-Kleckler, Norman, Vivian, Tina Cheeney, Dennis Bokemeier, Susan Anderson, Brenda, Sylvia Jones, Madilyn Yeager, Kara Allen, Christine Beyer, Judy, Bob Schulz, prayers for stroke patients, Kenny Frie, Pete Grandstad, Steve Rothschadl, Nathan Lott, Gary L. Hartwig and Josh.



Lena Lions Club
P.O. Box 311
Lena, Illinois 61048

*Members of Good Shepherd
Lutheran Church.*

The Lena Lions Club, along with the Veterans Assistance of Stephenson County and the Winnebago County Veterans Drop in Center would like to say "Thank You Very Much" for your participation again this year in our annual collection. This year's collections of socks, gloves, personal care items and other things showed once again, the caring hearts of the people in our area and their desire to help our veterans.

The Lions Club greatly appreciates working with you on this event. This year we had seven area churches as well as My Friends Closet participate in our efforts. I look forward to working with you again next year, as we need to continue to remember those whom have serviced our country to assure our freedoms.

*Thank you again,
Lena Lion Co-Chairs
Bill Crichton and Gary Meyers*

Thank You

We are blessed by everyone who purchased poinsettias to decorate the sanctuary for Christmas. Their beauty brings peace, joy and warm memories of loved ones.

Prayer Chain:

If you have a request for the Prayer Chain, please call the Church Office to submit your request at 815-369-5552. We are also looking for anyone who would like to join the prayer chain.

We send prayer through the phone chain and e-mail. You pray your own and pass on to the next person in the prayer chain. God hears our prayers.

If you are interested or have any questions, please feel free to contact the church office.



Veterans' Assistance Commission of Stephenson County

15 N. Galena Avenue
P. O. Box 695
Freeport, Illinois 61032
Telephone: 815-233-7282
Fax: 815-616-8334
Email: vacsc@stephensoncountyil.gov

Good Shepherd Congregation,

We would like to extend a heartfelt thank you for your generous donations of much-needed items to support the footlocker.

Your generosity means everything to our commission and the veterans in this community in which we serve. Thank you for choosing to donate to support the veterans and the footlocker.

Wishing you a merry and blessed Holiday Season.

God Bless,

Gary Eisenhower, President

Deb Holmes, Executive Assistant



It's powerful to watch what happens between someone's arrival and departure from LOMC. To see the renewal adults have experienced to see kids overcome fears, connect deeply with nature, and grow in faith. To see young adults developing incredible leadership capacity. People leave LOMC changed

Geneva Lutheran Church brought a group of middle schoolers for the first week of summer camp in June when asked at the end of the week what they appreciated most, they mentioned the canoe venture that was one of the most challenging experiences they'd faced. When asked where they experienced God, they shared about the "Brave Walk" (designed around Matthew 26:36-46) they did up to Stoney Point on the lower prairie. They left changed-formed in faith, ecology, and leadership.

People LOMC changed-kids, young adults, and adults alike. Whether here for a weekend retreat, a week of summer camp, or a summer as a counselor...people leave LOMC changed.

As LOMC's new Executive Director, it is a privilege to hear people's stories of transformation through LOMC. Their encounters with God. The ways LOMC shaped them as leaders and equipped them for the lives they are living. There are so many stories of transformation through LOMC's 50 years of ministry. And there are so many stories yet to be formed in the years ahead.

The spirit is moving at LOMC. And we're following.

This year LOMC will have welcomed over 1,000 guests. Truly incredible! After several challenging years through the pandemic, we're experiencing renewal in retreats and program participation. In October LOMC celebrated it's 50th Anniversary during Autumn Fest, with 400 guests through the day including nearly 100 staff alumni.

The spirit is moving LOMC. And we're following the call.

Sincerely,
Clyde Andrew Walter
Executive Director



January Birthdays

- 1-01 Tim Gordon
- 1-02 Elizabeth Kurth
- 1-03 Brady Meier
- 1-03 Shayleigh Albright
- 1-08 Tena Rackow
- 1-10 Noah Schoaf
- 1-11 Tamara Albrecht
- 1-13 Heather Fye
- 1-14 Courtney Lawson
- 1-15 Isabelle Schoaf
- 1-16 Sarah Baker
- 1-17 Gary Meyers
- 1-17 Owen Martin
- 1-18 Tim Aurand
- 1-21 Tyler Raders
- 1-27 Becky Huttenlocher
- 1-28 Jan Wybourn
- 1-28 Denise Flack
- 1-28 Heather Block
- 1-29 David Graff
- 1-29 Bailey Schoenhard
- 1-30 Marilyn Fulfs

If we missed your birthday (or someone in your family) please call the office so that we may update our records!

We are looking for volunteers at the Le-Win Food Pantry.

Good Shepherd helps with Le-Win Food Pantry on the 4th Saturday of even numbered months from 8:20am-11:30am. Needs are high and we are looking for 2 volunteers for upcoming even numbered months. If you are interested, put your name on the sign up sheet at the ramp or contact the church office.

**Bible Trivia
From page 5**

Answer: John Henry Hopkins Jr.

The Rev. John H. Hopkins, an Episcopal priest, wrote the text of this hymn in 1857 for a Christmas pageant at the General Theological Seminary in New York City. Phillips Brooks, also an Episcopal priest, wrote the text to "O Little Town of Bethlehem" in 1865. Charles Wesley, the brother of John Wesley, wrote the text to "Hark! The Herald Angels Sing" in (about) 1739. Father Josef Mohr wrote the text to "Stille Nacht" ("Silent Night") in 1816.

Source: 12/31/2024, Copyright 2024 FunTrivia, Inc



Make-A-Smile cards for

Lena Living Center

Each month we will send cards to the Lena Living Center. This ministry was started to share love of Christ to the residence in the nursing home. We are responsible for 10 cards each month. If you would like to help with this ministry, just bring cards to church by the 10th of each month. Please sign and include short encouraging words. Our hope is to make them smile!