



Dear Good Shepherd,

As I write, I am mindful that the season of Advent is almost upon us. The core of Advent is waiting in hope for the coming of Jesus. In our faith life, we speak about his advent in various ways.

One way is akin to our confession in the Apostles' Creed, "He will come again to just the living and the dead." Throughout Advent, on Sunday mornings, we will hear various voices from scripture that affirm this understanding of the second coming of Jesus. The prophet Isaiah proclaims that on that day God will gather all the people on the holy mountain, and there will be no more suffering and war, rather a universal reign of peace. Paul encourages us to be patient and live now in the light of Christ's coming in the future, which means living in harmony with one another, in accordance with the command of Jesus to love God and love your neighbor as yourself. John the Baptist calls us to repent and make a new beginning, in preparation for the coming of the Lord who will baptize us with the Holy Spirit and fire. Finally, Jesus speaks and says that we will not know the day or the hour, so KEEP AWAKE. Be intentional and present in the living out of our faith in the light of his coming.

Another way we speak of his coming is by the power of the Holy Spirit in our lives now. Even as we wait with patience and hope for the coming of the Lord, we also rejoice at his presence among us now. Throughout Advent, on Sunday mornings, we give thanks and praise for Jesus our Emmanuel, God with us. We celebrate what we already have: Jesus present with and for us: in

word and holy supper, in church and in our homes, in silent reflection and in works of justice and love. Throughout Advent, we pray that God open our eyes and ears to the wonders of Christ's advent among us now.

This truth and grace of Christ is so important to hold onto. The expectation of Christ coming again to usher in universal peace and the reality of Christ with us now, strengthening our faith in the promises of God. Why is this important? Because you are embarking on a big change in the congregation's life. On November 30, you will enter into a new yoked ministry with Salem Lutheran Church in Delmont. This means sharing with another congregation of God's people the Pastor's time and compensation. This means changing Sunday worship time for Salem to 8:30AM and Good Shepherd to 11AM. This means sharing in the work of the gospel. This means keeping each other in prayer. This means living in harmony with one another.

I know that such change can be jarring. We all may be anxious. But I also hope that we are open to what God is doing new with his people at Good Shepherd and Salem. I hope as we grow into a yoked ministry, we remember Jesus' words when he says, *"Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."* [Matt. 11:29-30]

What will be most helpful as we move into a new future together is to remember:

One, Jesus is with us, and that we do not bear the changes and the work of the gospel alone. First and foremost, we are yoked with Jesus. Jesus is our primary ministry partner. His way of living by forgiveness and love, justice and peace, faith and hope is an easy yoke to bear because we are yoked to him, now and always!

Two, a rule of thumb I learned early in life is "more hands make light work." Salem and Good Shepherd can be a blessing to

each other. Not merely for financial means of support, but sharing in the yoke of ministry. More youth and adults yoked: working together, learning together, worshipping together, praying together. It's important to remember that while each congregation will retain its own identity and ministries specific to their contexts, we also will have one another for mutual support.

As the Pastor of this new yoked ministry, I am hopeful. I am hopeful that sharing the financial compensation package will alleviate some anxiety about each congregation's sustainability. Even more, I am hopeful that Salem and Good Shepherd will find in each other a faithful and helpful ministry partner. I am hopeful that for activities and events at Good Shepherd, I will see Salem people showing up for you! I am hopeful that for activities and events at Salem, I will see Good Shepherd people showing up for them!

And I am grateful. I give thanks to God for the many ministries at both Good Shepherd and Salem through which we can see the the redeeming love of Christ being shown to one another and others. I give thanks to God for your willingness and courage to walk in the light of the Lord as God is doing a new thing within and among us!

As we enter a new season of Advent and a new season of life in the gospel together, I offer you this pray from *ELW Vespers* [p.317]: *O God, you have called your servants to ventures of which we cannot see the ending, by paths as yet untrodden, through perils unknown. Give us faith to go out with good courage, not knowing where we go, but only that your hand is leading us and your love supporting us; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

Let us go forth in peace. For Christ is with us.  
Thanks be to God! — The Reverend Kara J. Propst



Minutes recorded by J. Gesalman in absence of the Recording Secretary

**Call to Order** – 6:40 PM by B Gesalman, Chair

**Attendance;** Andrew King, Brian Gesalman, Jenny Luffy, Greg Bittner, Jack Gesalman, Andrea Territ, Amy Donahue, Linda Turchetta, Denny Clawson, Rev Paul Gruesu

**Excused;** Diana Salentino, Jim Stewart

**Devotions;** Brian Gesalman

### **Accept Agenda**

Items added: none

– Motion to accept by J Luffy, seconded and approved

**Communications:** letters received from two families to transfer membership to another Lutheran Church

### **Reports**

– Pastor Gruesu reported on his visitations to members and meetings, and conducting Bonnie Altman’s Funeral. He attended the Bishop Convocation in Bolivar

- February Minutes; Motion to Accept D Clawson, seconded and approved
- Treasurer and Asst Treasurers reports; Motion to accept A King, seconded and approved

### **Committee Reports**

**Community Fellowship** – Looking for volunteers for the 4<sup>th</sup> annual Light-Up Night, Friday December 5<sup>th</sup> at 6-8:30

**Rocking Horse Preschool** – At the Oct 2025 RHPS Board meeting it was reported that we currently have six 3-year old students and fourteen 4-year old students enrolled. The RHPS Bylaws were revised and submitted to the Congregation Council for approval. The teacher contracts were signed and submitted to the Congregation Council President for final signature. All website updates are complete. The 2025-26 RHPS Board phone list is in the

process of being updated. Reviewed ideas for celebrating the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of RHPS in the 2026-27 school year. Magnets, memory books and gathering classroom pictures for a family tree are some of the ideas being explored. The West Point Fire Department visited in October and the Police Department is scheduled for November, October 17. Next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, November 12 at 11:45.

## **Old Business**

**Search for Partner Congregation** Modified agreement has been approved by both congregation and starting on November 30. Need to find three members of Good Shepherd to serve on the Parish Council that works with Salem Lutheran on coordination, etc.

**Internal Audit** L Turchetta presented audits of Rocking Horse, W/ELCA and the Treasurer/ Asst. Treasurer. Fixed asset inventory was discussed. Move to approve internal Audit by J Luffy, approved

**Organist Update** G Bittner reported no progress but we have December covered.

**Review Council Roster** There is one less candidate than vacant positions so we need a minimum of one more candidate

**Annual Reports** Get Committee reports in to R King in December

## **New Business**

**Finance Committee 2026** Initial Look at 2026 budget

**Motion by J Gesalman;** To change the pay period for the year back to January thru December. Approved.

**Worship Schedule;** Christmas Eve service – services at Good Shepherd scheduled at 4:30 and at Salem at 7:30. Members of both churches are encouraged to attend either service. Christmas Day service is at Salem at 10:00. Pastor Office Hours are Tuesday at 12:00 till 4. Saturday worship schedule will have Pastor Propst once each month and Pastors Dennis and Clement will continue to alternate. Look at calendar for details. Text her at 304-668-9890

**Adjournment:** Motion by. Closed with Lord's Prayer, Next meeting December 15, 6:30



## **Farewell from Pastor Ed**

It has been almost four years since I began leading worship at Good Shepherd on Sunday mornings, and for a period of time, Saturday evenings. I have enjoyed getting to know you all, the members of the congregation. I have appreciated working with you and the welcome you gave me when I arrived. I am heartened by the number of activities and outreach events Good Shepherd has to the community of West Point, the strong music and Sunday School programs, the leadership of the council and others, and the fellowship among the members.

I pray that God will continue to guide and encourage you as you begin a new chapter in the life of the congregation, partnering with Pastor Kara Propst and Salem Lutheran Church, Delmont. May God be with you all in the coming months of transition.



**Blue Christmas Service** Thursday, Dec 18<sup>th</sup> **7:00pm** Good Shepherd  
**Christmas Eve Service** Wednesday, Dec 24<sup>th</sup> **4:30pm** Good Shepherd  
**7:30pm** Salem Lutheran  
*(Christmas Eve Service time may alternate year to year)*  
**Christmas Day Service** Thursday, Dec 25<sup>th</sup> **10:00am** Salem Lutheran  
**Lessons & Carols Service** Sunday, Dec 28<sup>th</sup> **11:00am** Good Shepherd



**Thursday, December 18**

**7:00 pm**

Not everyone experiences the Christmas season as a joyful time. For some people, the holiday season can be difficult and generate feelings of loneliness, sadness, or loss. This can be for a variety of reasons: the death of loved ones, separation or divorce, trying to find employment, feelings of melancholy or depression. Whatever the reason, the holiday season can be for many people a time of isolation and/or sadness. At the same time, the nights are getting longer with the longest night of the year on December 21.

The Blue Christmas/Longest Night service is a modern service designed for anyone who is stressed, lonely, or grieving. Everyone is welcome: Lutheran, Christian, non-Christian. The simple worship service of readings, song, and a brief reflection is designed to validate what we are feeling, and help us sense God's presence in the midst of what can be a difficult time.

All are welcome to come. Please share with anyone you think would be interested in this service.





## Congregation Council

We have four positions on Congregation Council up for election at our annual meeting on **January 18<sup>th</sup>** after the Sunday service. All four are three year terms; therefore, we are looking for at least four candidates. The two of the expiring terms are Amy Donahue and Andrea Territ, who have both stated they will run for re-election. Linda Turchetta is not seeking re-election. Bonnie Altman had served almost two terms but passed away. We missed her on council the last two meetings. Council meets once a month, usually on Mondays, and members serve as a liaison to + one or more church committees. To be eligible to run or vote you have to be a confirmed or adult contributing/communing member of Good Shepherd. If you are interested in running, contact Brian Gesalman or the church office. A slate of candidates will be published in the Bulletin of Reports. A person can be nominated from the floor at the annual meeting.

**Annual Meeting** will be held **Sunday, January 18<sup>th</sup>** following the **11:00AM** service in the Social Room. Sandwiches and sides will be provided. Please join us



to learn about the status of the church. Please sign up in Commons Area if you plan to attend so we have a count for lunch.



\*Just a reminder in order to vote you must have communed and **contributed in 2025**.





## Pastor' Purse

Once again we are collecting a Pastor's Purse for our pastors, which this year will be Pastors Dennis, Clement, Sheehan and Propst. If you would like to contribute place your donation in an envelope clearly marked Pastor's purse or mail to the church office so it is received by the **21<sup>st</sup> of December**. If donating by check please make the check payable to Harry Harbaugh.

## Offering Information

As part of Congregation Council's request, all active members are being assigned new computer identification numbers which also serve as offering envelope numbers. Yes, this means you are receiving a new envelope number as of January 1<sup>st</sup>. These envelopes will be available in December to be picked up but please do not use them until 2026! Your old envelope number will be used until December 30<sup>th</sup>. We are asking that all contributions for 2025 be made no later than Dec 28<sup>th</sup> so the Financial Secretary can record them in 2025. If you need information on whether you have met your pledge or similar information, please contact Kathy Wolfe, Jack Gesalman or the church office.

Financial statements will be available January 6<sup>th</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup> for those that do not get them by e-mail.





## Mitten Tree

We are having a Mitten Tree again this Advent. It is actually a Mitten-Knit hat- Glove- Scarf- Winter hat,

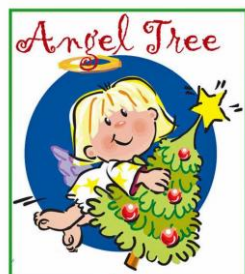
Warm socks- booties Tree. Bring your donation to the church and put it on the tree by the greeter's table. You must have it here by the **14<sup>th</sup> of December** because we will be packing them and delivering them to the Salvation Army for their distribution on **December 20<sup>th</sup>**. Help decorate our tree with bright and colorful warm accessories. Thank You!

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We are partnering with West Point Elementary to provide gifts to the children in need this Christmas. Angel's will be hung with a child's age and gift suggestion. Names will be posted on the wall in the Commons Area. Please bring in your wrapped gift by **Sunday, Dec 14<sup>th</sup>**.

Please include the assigned number on all gifts. Help make a child's Christmas merrier by donating a gift today.

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Good Shepherd will also be taking a collection for Toys For Tots. If you would like to donate a new toy the boxes will be in the

Commons Area. Donations will be picked up **December 18<sup>th</sup>**



## *Christmas Poinsettias*

Sign-Up sheet is posted all orders must be placed by December 1<sup>st</sup> Cost: \$12.00



Don't want to miss out on events & interested in joining the youth group!?

Contact: Rachel King 724-454-6476

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### December

- 7<sup>th</sup> - NO Sunday School** (Advent Dinner)
- 14<sup>th</sup> - NO Sunday School** (Christmas Concert)
- 21<sup>st</sup> - Christmas Party 9:45AM**
- 28<sup>th</sup> - NO Sunday School**



### January

- 4<sup>th</sup> - NO Sunday School**
- 11<sup>th</sup> - 9:45AM**
- 18<sup>th</sup> - 9:45AM**
- 25<sup>th</sup> - 9:45AM**



The season of advent is upon us. We are excited to celebrate together with all of our Good Shepherd family and friends. We welcome you to join in a variety of events and services coming up. The Advent services at Good Shepherd are Saturday evenings at 5:30 and Sunday mornings at 11:00. Friday December 5<sup>th</sup>, West Point and Wendover Light Up night will be held at Good Shepherd from 6:00-8:30pm. Our Advent Dinner will be at 5:00pm on Sunday, December 7<sup>th</sup>. At the dinner we would like to welcome especially during this Advent season our new Pastor Kara J. Propst. Following the dinner join us for a performance from some of our Good Shepherd members in Off-Grid Christmas a comedy with a Christmas message. The following Sunday, December 14<sup>th</sup> at 11:00am will be our annual Choir Concerto accompanied by our Bell Choir. A Blue Christmas service will be held on Thursday evening, December 18<sup>th</sup> at 7:00pm. Christmas Eve services will consist of a 4:30pm service at Good Shepherd, and a 7:30pm service at Salem Lutheran Church, in Delmont. There is also a Christmas Day service at 10am at Salem Lutheran. Please join us as we welcome the coming of Jesus.

May your season of advent be blessed,

Brian Gesalman

Congregation President



**Sunday, December 7<sup>th</sup>  
at 5:00 PM.**

Sign-Up is posted in the Commons Area. Join us following the dinner for a production of Off-Grid Christmas in the sanctuary.

**Sunday, December 14<sup>th</sup> at  
11:00AM**  
Please plan to attend!



Good Shepherd Lutheran Church's Annual

# Advent Dinner

Sunday,  
Dec. 7  
5PM

Start your Advent journey off by enjoying a delightful dinner & fellowship, followed by a brand new Christmas Comedy with performances by some of our very own members! Please sign up by December 1.



*Off-Grid Christmas* features malfunctioning tech, rogue garland, awkward HOA drama, and a heartfelt retelling of Christ's birth. It's a hilarious and moving holiday satire about faith, family, and finding light when the power goes out. Because Christmas can't be downloaded!





Good Shepherd Lutheran Church

**TRIVIA NIGHT!**

Sponsored by Fellowship Committee

**SAT. JAN. 24 • 6:30PM**

**Join us  
for an evening  
of Trivia Fun!**

Show off your knowledge  
of history, television,  
movies, pop culture,  
music, and much more.

**FREE to play!  
Teams from 2-4 players.**

Light snacks will be provided,  
but feel free  
to bring something to share.

Please register on the sign-up sheet  
in the commons area

## Trivia Night

**What space is Immediately after New York Avenue on the classic Monopoly board?** On January 24<sup>th</sup> at 6:30, Fellowship Committee is again hosting a Trivia Night full of fun, food and music and questions to challenge your trivia knowledge in the format of most Trivia Nights. We are encouraging teams of 2 to 4 players to answer questions in a power-point format. Teams can be formed that very night so don't worry about the teams. Jack Gesalman is again the host. A signup sheet will be posted in January. If you want to help with snack + type foods, contact Jack, the committee is providing some food and drink. Every year it's getting better. If you knew that the answer to the above question was **Free Parking**, you should plan on attending.



## *News & Announcements*

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\*To include something in the bulletin, please have it to the church office by 9:00 am. Tuesday.

The deadline for the February Newsletter is January 19<sup>th</sup>.



## December/January Committee Meetings

**\*Anyone welcome to JOIN!\***

**Sunday, January 4<sup>th</sup> 6:00PM-** Community Fellowship

**Sunday, January 4<sup>th</sup> 7:00PM-** Light Up Night/Recap





## Find the cross (+)

In each monthly Newsletter there will be a hidden cross (+) that can be found in one of the articles! If you find, please turn in where it was found including page # and article found in with your name & number on a piece of paper. At the end of each month, all who turn in will be entered into a monthly drawing to win a prize!

In order to be entered your slip must be turned into office into container labeled

Find the cross by the  
**3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday** of the month.



This newsletter contains **2** hidden crosses (+) must find all **2** for a chance to win!

## Congratulations to our November winner

**Pat Gatons**

\*The cross was located on page

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*Thank You!*

I would like to thank everyone who helped in anyway with Bonnie's funeral luncheon I know she would have been happy with the pickled/deviled eggs her favorite as well as the jello Dorothy Gesalman makes. I would also like to thank everyone not only for the birthday cards and phone calls I received over my birthday but the get well cards, prayers and calls about my son Kevin when he had his heart issues. He is doing okay and recovering at my house. I am blessed to be part of this church family.

God Bless & Love, Fran Ober

## **Annual Women's Epiphany Tea Sunday, Jan. 4, 2026 12:30pm-**

All women are invited to attend a lovely lunch and afternoon featuring a variety of exquisite teas. Also, we will be honored to have German exchange student, Onno Lohmann, tell us about Christmas and Epiphany customs in his country. Please bring a friend, a favorite mug or teacup to use and a tea savory or sweet to share such as finger sandwiches or cookies. We may have other surprises too! Please sign up to attend on the sheet by the fountain (or RSVP to Karen Gesalman at 724-309-2667) so we can prepare appropriately.



**Save the dates: May 1-2, 2026 SWPA Women of the ELCA convention**

**July 16-19, 2026 national Triennial Gathering in Des Moines, IA**

## **SWPA Women of the ELCA Designated Outreach 2025:**

Robin's Home Veteran Services is a transitional housing program providing care for homeless, unstably housed and low income female veterans and their children. **Thank you for your donations to their program.** Thru the end of the year we will only be accepting monetary donations which are desperately needed and appreciated. Do this by making Checks Payable to: SWPA Women of the ELCA and Designating them to Robin's Home. Then Mail them to: Janet Fishovitz 136 Clearwater Dr. Ellwood City, PA 16117.





## **ATTENTION MEALS ON WHEELS COOKIE BAKERS**

**Homemade or Store Bought are welcome!** Please drop your cookies off **AT THE CHURCH.**

### **DECEMBER**

**COOKIE BAKERS (GROUP 4) Cookie Sunday is December 14, 2025.**

Janet Ambrose	Patti Benton	Carol Clawson
Jenny Luffy	Michele McMahan	

### **JANUARY**

**COOKIE BAKERS (GROUP 1) Cookie Sunday is January 11, 2026.**

Barbara Henderson	Fran Ober
Carol Clawson	Sue Strasser

We are still collecting cookies for **Meals-on-Wheels**. At **180 meals per day, 5 days a week**, we get enough cookies for about **2 days**.

***New contributors are always welcome.***

### **Cookie Donation, Meals-on-Wheels**

I want to thank all those who donate to our Meals-on-Wheels Cookie Program. The center really appreciates all our contributions.

We are always open to new donators. Some months we get 3 or 4 persons donating; other times we get six. We keep losing our long-time contributors due to health reasons, aging, moving away, etc. If you would like to contribute buy a couple packs of cookies or bake up a few batches. (No nuts or coconut). You can bring them to the church and put them in the kitchen on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday or Saturday of any month, mark them M.O.W. and put you name on them.

Thank You, Dorothy Gesalman



2027 will mark the 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Good Shepherd. We will be forming an Anniversary committee early 2026 to plan festivities to make this exciting milestone. We are also looking to do a new directory next year. If you are interested in being involved in either or both, please contact the church office! Come share your ideas to make this the best Anniversary yet!!

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## Christmas Word Find

G	C	P	M	E	H	E	F	F	N	Y	Y	A	S	E
V	F	I	O	G	K	N	O	C	Y	R	R	I	L	B
Z	H	S	J	Z	X	U	H	E	G	A	B	Z	N	B
H	A	T	I	D	U	R	X	S	Z	M	E	I	P	E
R	P	L	R	S	I	L	E	N	T	N	I	G	H	T
R	K	O	Q	S	N	E	M	E	S	I	W	A	J	H
Y	L	X	T	Y	Z	S	W	C	Z	S	P	E	P	L
M	I	M	F	H	F	N	P	N	S	J	V	E	K	E
J	A	B	T	T	B	A	R	I	O	R	S	X	Z	H
S	A	I	Y	L	Y	T	E	K	V	O	F	L	W	E
H	A	Y	E	Y	T	I	G	N	J	I	O	E	E	M
F	A	M	K	R	H	V	N	A	E	V	U	G	P	E
M	A	A	N	W	A	I	A	R	S	A	S	N	O	E
C	I	H	O	T	C	T	M	F	U	S	O	A	H	F
D	J	E	D	K	Q	Y	S	V	S	W	T	E	K	Q

JESUS	HAY
MARY	ANGEL
JOSEPH	FAITH
WISEMEN	HOPE
MANGER	FRANKINCENSE
NATIVITY	MYRRH
BETHLEHEM	SILENT NIGHT
CAMEL	LORD
DONKEY	SAVIOR
STAR	CHRISTMAS



# Happy Birthday to:

## December



Owen Dematt	(12/01)
Barbara Henderson	(12/01)
Patti Benton	(12/07)
Jessica Askey	(12/08)
Janet Ambrose	(12/09)
Megan Kubinec	(12/12)
Paul Fox	(12/14)
Donna Sheridan	(12/14)
Dawn Isler	(12/17)
Connor Wodoslawsky	(12/18)
Judy Swigart	(12/20)
Donald McIlwain	(12/25)
Timothy Adamson	(12/26)
Brian Gesalman	(12/27)

# Happy Birthday to:

## January



George Mursch	(01/01)
Dominic Hawes	(01/02)
Lois Cairns	(01/09)
Tyler Fauth	(01/09)
Howard McMurtrie	(01/11)
Dorothy Gesalman	(01/13)
Abigail Fox	(01/14)
Kathleen Mursch	(01/15)
Shelley Cottrill	(01/17)
Deborah Fox	(01/17)
Charles Luffy	(01/17)
Karen Neiderhiser	(01/18)
Leo Porterfield	(01/19)
Karen Mays	(01/20)
Paige Hill	(01/22)
Joyce Coates	(01/23)
Ryan Downs	(01/25)
Kayden Askey	(01/28)
Andrew King	(01/29)
Rachel Boggs	(01/31)

(If we have missed your birthday, we do not have it in our records. Please help us update them. Thank you)

**PRAYER LIST - Our thoughts and prayers are with the following:**

**Good Shepherd Members:**

Tony Mariani  
Jackie Guhl  
Jane Elliott  
Val Pollock  
Erik Williams  
Mac McMurtrie  
Bill Ambrose  
Jerry Plummer  
Nancy Flinner  
John Strasser  
Chuck Ober  
Kay Wright

**Friends and relatives of the Good Shepherd family:**

Lauren Floyd  
Brian Murphy  
Janice Territ  
Gianna  
Chris Brinker  
Tobi Geyer  
Maxine Shroyer  
Sarah Besser  
Bob Neumann  
Elaine Grace  
Kevin Ober  
Silas Howells

**Those in care facilities:**

**Redstone Highlands:** Donna Sheridan, Dorothy Stewart

**Mt. View Senior Care:** Carole Bridges

**Woodcrest Senior Living Community:** George Billig

**Those in the Service**

**NATIONAL GUARD**

Spencer Geohrig

**NAVY:**

Derek Leach

We pray for the safety of all military personnel and their families and give thanks to God for their service to our nation.

We welcome names for the Good Shepherd prayer list. Names will appear on the list for one month unless we are contacted to keep them longer. Thank you

