

I love this time of year when the trees are budding, the azalea is blooming and the birds of spring show up again. I often sit at the kitchen island in the mornings and listen to their playful song and watch them flit around and forage for food. Currently there is a cardinal couple who is hanging about in the trees in my backyard. I have been putting out bird seed for them. They show up every morning and enjoy their breakfast along with others.

For a couple days, I forgot to put out the bird seed. I was sitting at the kitchen counter working on a funeral service. In the quiet, I suddenly heard a pecking on the sliding glass doors to the backyard. I looked over and sitting there was the bright red male. He was pecking on the window with his orange beak and looking right at me!! Now, at this point, my imagination kicked into hyperdrive, and I imagined that he was saying “Hey lady, what’s up? You forgot to give us our breakfast.” I laughed at my fancifulness. Nevertheless, I stopped what I was doing and put out the bird seed for them and the many other birds, squirrels and chipmunks that I am apparently feeding in the neighborhood.

This experience — fanciful or not — reminded me how interconnected and interdependent all creation is, human, animal and plant alike. I was reminded by this tenacious, beautiful bright red bird, that ultimately all creation, human, animal and plant alike, is dependent upon God for life, for sustenance, for comfort, for joy.

All this brings to mind a Scandinavian folk hymn that I love — *O Day Full of Grace* — especially its most famous arrangement by Fredrik Melius Christiansen, published in 1943 for SATB mixed chorus. I first heard and sang it in college with the Lenoir-Rhyne A Cappella Choir. We closed every concert with the arrangement. It

was tradition. I loved it. I got goose bumps every time. Because, the words of the hymn spoke volumes to me (and still do) of the life and light of God in Christ Jesus that dawns and gives hope and joy to us and to all creation!

Christiansen's version is known for its sweeping style. It opens quietly with the bass voices and grows in volume as each voice of the choir is added, representing the dawning light of the Sun divine which rises over the world and dispels gloom from our hearts. It then speaks of the very trees of creation being endowed with speech and giving praise to God. It ends in pure glory as the choirs sing of departing with joy for the Fatherland where we shall walk in his endless light. Glorious!!

I can't say for sure why that moment with Mr. Cardinal made me think about the hymn, but it did. Maybe it was because I was working on a funeral sermon and this bird made me laugh and cry and remember how glorious it is that our Lord Jesus Christ, the Light of life, in that gracious midnight hour gave his flesh and then brightened the dawn with light and power so that all creation — human, animal, plant alike — may have life in him, now and forever. Glorious!!

I pray that you take time to enjoy the blooming of new life around us in nature. As you do, I offer for your reflection this verse of *O Day Full of Grace from our hymnal (ELW, #627, alternate text, verse 4)*:

*As birds in the morning sing their praise, God's fatherly love we
cherish,
for giving to us this day of grace, for life that shall never perish.
The church God has kept two thousand years, and hungering
souls did nourish.*

With you in Christ,
Pastor Kara



Good Shepherd Lutheran Church

Meeting Highlights

April 20, 2026

11 In Attendance | **7** Decisions | **2** Motions Passed

Key Decisions

- **Increase of ushers, counters & readers for Sunday Services**
 - Still need more individuals to help usher, count and lector. Anyone wishing to participate should sign up in the hallway.
- **Video of the Sunday Service**
 - Two licenses can be investigated.
- **Payroll Direct Deposit**
 - Authorization form for direct deposit of pay given to all employees at the time of their April pay.
- **Communion Practices/ Altar Guild**
 - To start using intinction for the Saturday services.
- **Lighting System-Social Room, Handicap Parking Spots, Shingle Repair**
 - Continue pursuing grant dollars for lighting update.
 - Repair church roof/shingles.
 - Continue to prepare for parking space painting.
- ⚡ **Hymn boards**
 - To pursue different types/styles of hymn boards.
- ⚡ **Parking lot sealing and space painting**
 - Agreed that the main parking lot needs to be resealed prior to any painting. Suggestion made to contact Richard Crouse whose company does paving.

Action Items

- **Video of the Sunday Service**
 - The Worship and Music Committee to investigate.
- **Payroll Direct Deposit**
 - Employees to complete and sign form, provide a voided check and return to the Treasurer.
- **Communion Practices/ Altar Guild**
 - Intinction used for the Saturday night services. No decision made on who will be making communion bread for the Sunday services.
- **Hymn boards**
 - Jenny to work with Worship & Music to determine the type/style of hymn boards to be installed.
- **Parking lot sealing and space painting**
 - Contact Richard Crouse regarding the resealing of the main parking lot.

Rian volunteered to inquire.

Officer Reports

- **Minutes** — Approved
 - As amended. Personnel Committee report should reflect that the proposal to change the rate for non-members to rent the social room was tabled for further review.

Motions

- To Accept Minutes Report As amended. (Passed unanimously)

- **Pastor** — Approved
 - Feb and March submitted and accepted as presented

- **Treasurer** — Approved
 - Report accepted as presented.

Motions

- To Accept Treasurer Report As Presented (Passed unanimously)

Next Meeting

Check the church calendar for the next council meeting



The Youth will be selling Jimmy & Nino Sunseri Monster & Atomic Pepperoni Rolls. **Delivery Date will be June 12th.**

Order form is posted in the Commons Area or you can scan the QR Code below to order & pay!



Save the Date! Tentative Lock In at Good Shepherd
Friday, June 26th

Looking into possibility of Pirate Game, Gettysburg
Overnighter as well as an Evergreen Drive In Night.

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

Contact: Rachel King 724-454-6476



**THANK YOU TO OUR
SUNDAY SCHOOL
TEACHERS**

HUGE THANK YOU to our wonderful Sunday School Teachers (Jack Gesalman, Jackie Gesalman & Andrea Territ) for another wonderful year! We appreciate all their time and dedication!
Sunday School will kick back off in the Fall.



Adopt a MONKEY from the display case for a **\$30** donation! All money will go towards this years Vacation Bible School. If not interested

in adopting a monkey you can take Dottie (Ocelot) or Tia (Anteater) off the wall located in the Commons Area and donate amount indicated on them by placing it in the offering plate or office with cash or check attached.

Dottie



Tia

Community Fellowship Upcoming Events



June 22-25th 8:45-12:00PM-
Rainforest Falls VBS
Register TODAY



June 13th –
Community Yard Sale
Food for purchase in Social Room/Set up
a table for \$10.00 and sell your items!



July 15th 6:00-8:00PM –
Christmas in July
More information to come

September 12th-
Chicken BBQ
More information to come

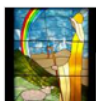


October 16th 6:30-8:30PM –
Trunk or Treat
More information to come

December 4th 6:00-8:30PM-
Light Up Night
More information to come



(*All activities are tentative & subject to change*)



Good Shepherd Lutheran Church



www.goodshepherdgbg.org

*Good Shepherd Lutheran Church
presents*

RAINFOREST FALLS

Exploring the Nature of God

June 22-25, 2026

8:45am - 12:00pm

\$15 per child

All are welcome!

Must be fully potty trained.

Scan the QR code to register

Deadline to register is May 24



Good Shepherd Lutheran Church

Christmas

IN JULY

WED. JULY 15
6-8PM



Food Trucks
Christmas Movie
Foam Machine & More!

Plus, see what's in store -
we're unveiling the
2026 Light Up Night theme!

Save the Date:
Friday, December 4, 2026

Hot Dog Sunday

Join us for Hot Dog Sunday! On the last Sunday of every month* gather in the Social Room following the 10:30am service. Enjoy a toppings bar, chips, side, and a drink with your hot dog!

*Excluding November, December, June, July & August.

News & Announcements

The deadline for the June, July, August Newsletter is May 18th.



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
3rd Sunday of the month.



**Congratulations to our April winner
Fran Ober**

*The cross was located on page 7

**Women's meeting & BGS (Books, Games & Scriptures) Sun.,
May 3rd 12:30 - ?**

All women are invited to pack your own lunch and stay for an afternoon of business & fun! If you'd like, bring any book(s) you might want to share with the group. Then lend & borrow for a nice summer read. We'll discuss how the convention and May dinner turned out and make plans for the next couple months. Hopefully we'll have some information on the local summer theaters and be able to pick an outing to plan. Then as time allows, we'll have some laughs and play a game or 2. Contact Karen Gesalman at 724-309-2667 with any questions.

2026 Designated Outreach is Reagan's Journey.

In 2012, Reagan's family decided to start a free pediatric closet where families, caregivers, agencies, and hospitals could help the children they serve get medical equipment they desperately needed without waiting upwards of 6 months navigating through insurance denials and appointment wait times. Custom equipment is best, but no child should have to wait and insurance will only cover 1 piece of equipment every 3-5 years and as we know children are constantly growing! Reagan's Journey accepts gently used pediatric durable medical equipment and unused medical supplies. The items are sanitized and redistributed to children in need. Anyone who is caring for a child with special needs and is willing to make the trip can schedule an appointment to have access to the items. On average they serve 500 families per year by giving them the supplies they need for their kids - for FREE! We are asked to help by donating to their Wish List:

- **Monetary Donations:** Their greatest need. It costs \$150 per family to operate the Reagan's Journey Closet. Financial support keeps it FREE. Please make checks payable to: SWPA Women of the ELCA & Designate to: Reagan's Journey

Mail checks to: Janet Fishovitz 136 Clearwater Drive
Ellwood City, PA 16117

- \$25 Gift Cards: Amazon, Walmart, Sheetz
- Baby Wipes
- Disposable Adult Bathing/Cleansing Wipes

If you or someone you know would like to donate gently used pediatric medical equipment, please contact them to see if they are able to accept it at this time. Their phone number is 724-826-0778, their email address is info@reagansjourney.org and their website is reagansjourney.org Thank you for your donations.

2026 Triennial Gathering “I Am Worthy” July 16-19, 2026

Des Moines, IA Registration is open. Go to the following website: <https://www.womenoftheelca.org/new-triennial-event-page> to see the lineup of speakers and workshop leaders. Our very own Rev. DaMisha McFarland-Pollock will be a chaplain at the event. There is also links there to register to attend.

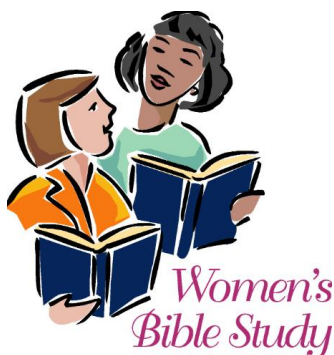
Registrations are transferable to other people if you decide not to go. If you have any questions, please contact Donna Petrell or Jennifer Armstrong-Schaefer. We hope that you will consider attending the triennial gathering as they are a life-changing event.

Women of the **ELCA**  **Ladies Dinner**

Mon., May 11th, 2026 at 6:00pm



Women \$25 / Girls ages 6-12 \$10 age 5 and under Free
Cash or Check payable to the Women of the ELCA
Last Day to get a Ticket is Sunday Morning May 3rd



There will be a **women's summer bible study** series at Zion's Lutheran Church in downtown Greensburg again this summer. Information with dates and times will be available soon.



2026 Joint Retreat SW & NW PA at Camp Lutherlyn
"Stop, Listen, Hear" September 25-27, 2026

Our theme Bible verse is Mark 4:23 "If you have ears to hear, then hear!" (nrsvue). It's going to be an incredible weekend filled with faith, fellowship, and fun as we take time to slow down, listen for God's voice, and truly hear His message. The Retreat Committee is still looking for a few more people to join us and help make this year's retreat amazing! If you'd like to be part of the planning team, please contact either Angeline Schaefer at 724-787-5235 or Donna Petrell at 742-457-9662. We can't wait to gather together and see everyone at Camp Lutherlyn this September!



At Lutherlyn Saturday, May 9, 2026

11:00 – 4:30PM

FREE! RAIN OR SHINE!

***There are many awesome indoor
and outdoor activities!***

Campfire, crafts, gaga ball, archery, pony rides, zipline, bouldering room, hikes, nature activities, hay rides, games, sports, archaeology, disc golf, jump pillow, tours, great food, worship, and MORE! The best part.... EVERYTHING IS FREE! No registration is needed. Just show up with all your friends, family, neighbors, and anyone else looking for a fun, free day.

11:00 am - Join Us for Worship at Steinger Memorial Amphitheater

(Baker Chapel is rain location)

Noon - 3:00 pm - FREE Lunch served in the Dining Hall

Noon - 4:00 pm - TONS of ACTIVITIES!!

(detailed schedule below)

4:00 - 4:30 pm - Closing Campfire

Anyone under the age of 18 must have a parent/guardian/chaperone with them. We do not collect emergency contact information or medical details so minors CANNOT be dropped off for CampBlast. It is acceptable for an adult to bring a group of children or youth but that adult is responsible for their supervision while at Lutherlyn.

See their website at

<https://www.lutherlyn.com/programs/campblast.html> for more info



ATTENTION MEALS ON WHEELS COOKIE BAKERS

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

MAY

COOKIE BAKERS (GROUP 1) Cookie Sunday is May 10, 2026.

Carol Clawson	Sue Strasser
Barbara Henderson	
Fran Ober	

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.

BLANKET SUNDAY - MAY 10, 2026

Mothers' Day weekend this year is May 9th and May 10th, and once again Good Shepherd Church members are invited to participate in a collection to fund the acquisition and distribution of blankets and other disaster relief items to people in need. For the small sum of \$10.00 you can give a blanket to help victims of earthquakes, storms, fires, or the ravages of war. Please use the Blanket Sunday envelopes provided with your weekly bulletin or in the commons area to make your donation in honor of or in memory of a mother, grandmother or other special woman this Mothers' Day. (You can also make a donation to honor special men, if you choose.)

IMPORTANT

Please read



Community Support Needed for West Point Community Parks & Recreation

West Point Community Parks & Recreation Inc. is reaching out to our neighbors, families, and supporters during a critical moment that will shape the future of a cherished local resource.

The West Point Community Hall serves as a hub for events and celebrations, while the surrounding preserved green space offers a peaceful setting for families, youth programs, and outdoor activities. The property is also home to the West Point Volunteer Fire Department, further strengthening its role as a cornerstone of public service and safety.

Despite this mission, our application for property tax exemption has been denied by the Westmoreland County Tax Assessment Board following opposition from Hempfield Township. As a result, we now face an annual property tax burden exceeding \$17,000.

For a nonprofit organization like ours, this is not just a financial challenge—it is an existential one. Such a significant expense would make it unsustainable for us to continue operating, placing at risk the very programs, services, and shared spaces that so many in our community rely on and value.

An upcoming trial hearing in May 2026 will determine whether we can secure the exemption necessary to continue serving the community. This is where your support becomes vital.

Your voice matters. Whether you have attended events at the hall, enjoyed the open green space, participated in youth activities, or simply value having a preserved community + gathering place, your perspective can help demonstrate the importance of this organization. Community input can play a powerful role in helping the court understand the long-term benefits this space provides to local families and residents.

If you are willing to stand with us and support this effort, please reach out to **Helen Webb Mucci at 724-454-3518** to learn how you can help. Together, we can work to preserve this important community asset for current and future generations.

West Point Community Parks & Recreation Inc.

Committed to community, preservation, and connection



Enrollment for Rocking Horse Preschool for the 2026-2027 year is OPEN for 3 Year Old & 4 Year Old Classes.

AM Classes fill quickly so register early



Preschool Class Portal
(3 & Young 4 year olds)



Pre-K Class Portal
(4 & 5 year olds)

The Food Pantry is in need of a restock! All donations greatly appreciated!

Cereal, Pancakes, Syrup, Pasta, Pasta Sauce, Alfredo Sauce, Soup, Canned Meat, Powdered Milk, Fruit, Soup Etc..



June 13th – Community Yard Sale

Interested in setting up a table in the Social Room to sell your items? Cost for 1 table is \$10.00. Contact the church office by May 31st.

Happy Birthday to:



May

Susan Rhome	(05/01)
Colin Ecker	(05/02)
Gregory Harbaugh	(05/02)
William Benton	(05/03)
Dennis Clawson	(05/09)
Anthony Japalucci	(05/09)
Halla Miller	(05/17)
Addison Hoone	(05/18)
Luke Sikora	(05/18)
Ashley Fearer	(05/21)
Terry Mays	(05/21)
Cameron Alderson	(05/22)
Matthew Alderson	(05/22)
John Mathers	(05/22)
Kristen Ecker	(05/23)
Iver Tarris	(05/23)
Mycal Jones	(05/27)

(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
Jerry Plummer
Nancy Flinner
John Strasser
Chuck Ober
Kay Wright
Joy Stynchula

Friends and relatives of the Good Shepherd family:

Lauren Floyd
Brian Murphy
Janice Territ
Gianna
Chris Brinker
Tobi Geyer
Maxine Shroyer
Bob Neumann
Elaine Grace
Kevin Ober
Silas Howells
Maria Meyers
David Beistel
Joanie S

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



Find a Frog... and Pray!



As you find a frog hidden around the church, take it home as a reminder to **pray** for our upcoming VBS!

Let **F.R.O.G.** guide your prayers:



F – Families

Pray for the families our children will return to each day—that hearts would be open and lives impacted beyond VBS.



R – Relationships

Pray for crew leaders as they build meaningful friendships with their kids, showing Christ's love in real and lasting ways.



O – Outreach

Pray for every child who will hear the Gospel—that seeds of truth will be planted and grow in their hearts.



G – Guides

Pray for our teachers and volunteers as they lead, teach, and serve—that God would give them wisdom, energy, and joy.

Thank you for being part of what God is doing through VBS!

