



Divine Shepherd Lutheran Church

The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod

January 2025 Newsletter

"My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me." [Saint John 10:27]



My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. John 10:27-28

Dear Sheep of the Divine Shepherd:

As we begin this new year let us take a look at an important early who was a confessional Lutheran theologian and pastor and was critical in the formation of the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod. Johann Konrad Wilhelm Löhe (1808–1872) whose profound contributions shaped Lutheran theology, worship practices, and global missions. Löhe's innovative work in the areas of diaconal (*acts of service and mercy*) ministry, liturgical renewal, and missionary outreach.

Born in Fürth, Bavaria, Löhe served as a parish pastor in Neuendettelsau, a small rural village in Germany. Despite the seemingly modest setting, his ministry reached far beyond the confines of his congregation. Löhe possessed a deep conviction that the church's mission extended to the entire world, a view firmly grounded in Lutheran theology. Inspired by Martin Luther's teaching on vocation and the priesthood of all believers, Löhe envisioned a church that not only preached the gospel but lived it through acts of mercy and service. One of his most notable contributions was his dedication to foreign missions. Löhe spearheaded efforts to send pastors and missionaries to North America to minister to German immigrants and establish Lutheran congregations. Early on he established congregations and schools in Frankenmuth, MI and his work led to the founding of Concordia Theological Seminary in Fort Wayne, Indiana, which remains a vital institution for training Lutheran pastors.

Löhe's passion for liturgical practices was another hallmark of his ministry. He sought to revive and enrich Lutheran worship, emphasizing the centrality of the sacraments and the liturgy. In his view, worship was not merely an individual act but a communal expression of faith, where God's grace was proclaimed and received through Word and Sacrament. His influential writings, such as *Agenda für christliche Gemeinden des lutherischen Bekenntnisses* (*Agenda for Christian Communities of the Lutheran Confession*), provided guidance on worship practices that balanced historical Lutheran traditions with pastoral sensitivity.

This liturgical focus also connected to his theological understanding of the church. Löhe emphasized the concept of the church as a diaconal community—a community called to serve. His efforts to establish deaconess training programs and diaconal institutions in Neuendettelsau were practical applications of this vision. These institutions provided care for the sick, education for children, and assistance for the poor, embodying the gospel's call to love and serve one's neighbor.

As a confessional Lutheran, Löhe upheld the authority of Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions, often engaging in theological debates with other Lutherans of his time. His insistence on doctrinal fidelity, paired with his pastoral and missionary zeal, shaped the identity of the Lutheran Church in both Europe and the Americas.

Wilhelm Löhe's contributions to Lutheran theology, missions, and liturgy continue to inspire the church today. His unwavering commitment to God's Word, his visionary leadership in missions, and his dedication to serving the neighbor embody the heart of Lutheran theology. As we reflect on his legacy, we are reminded of the enduring call to proclaim the gospel and live it out in service to others.

And so, as we begin this new year let us lift up our hearts and demonstrate our love for one another and love for our neighbor. Have a blessed new year!

Listen to Jesus,
Pastor Zimmer

Christian Stewardship

Repenting of “Feasts that Know No Fast”

Fresh off the Christmas season and the retail frenzy that accompanies it, January brings a shot of frigid air into the lives of the people we know and love. This is not a meteorological statement either. While it is true that January is one of the



colder months for those in North America, the cold front blast that hits us is the full force of credit card spending that fueled the retail frenzy. The bills for the gifts, the parties, the food and the travel have now come due. The credit card makes things convenient, but it also requires more discipline than many can muster. When the bills come in January for December’s celebration, it really puts a damper on things. Congregations often make the same mistake in stewardship. We often charge forward in doing what we always do or starting new endeavors without counting the cost. But at the end of the month, or the end of year, when the bill comes due, the red ink on the congregational balance sheet smacks the people in the face like a stiff north wind in January. We hunkered down. We circle the wagons. We start to panic. The work of the Gospel suffers.

The fifth verse of “Forgive Us, Lord, for Shallow Thankfulness” (*LSB 788*) addresses this January situation. The words penned by William Watkins Reid are very needful for us to hear as we start a new year, while dealing with the bills of past efforts and expense.

“Forgive us, Lord for feast that knows not fast ...” This hits us hard, doesn’t it? We love when the money is flowing, the parties are going, and things are getting bigger and better. But there is a time in life, and most especially in our spiritual disciplines, that we need to fast. The purpose of a fast is to step back, lay something aside for a time, and replace it with meditation on Scripture and prayer. This is designed to keep us from turning something that may well be good into an idol that separates us from the God who loves us in Christ.

“For joy in things that meanwhile starve the soul ...” In “The Parable of the Sower,” we hear Jesus talk about how the worries and cares of life choke out the growth of the seed of the Word that was planted. We know how this happens in our lives. Professional and youth sports do this. Materialism does this. Travel and leisure and do this. There is a list of things that we enjoy that starve the soul.

But it also happens in our congregations. When corporate stewardship is not managed in a responsible way, it can and does destroy individual stewardship. Is it good individual stewardship to support a ministry that doesn’t take its corporate responsibility seriously?

“For walls and wars that hide your mercies vast and blur our vision of the Kingdom goal.” This is the ultimate end of the idolatry of failed stewardship. We build walls between believers within the church and hamper those who are outside from coming to the Light of Life that is Jesus. The wars we fight over money and its impact on ministry do the same. It eventually blurs our vision of what we are here to do: share the Good News of Jesus. When the wintry blast of January hits us in this fashion, we are called to repent.

When the Holy Spirit uses the cold front of the call to repentance, we meet the God who forgives and restores. That is what He does for individual and corporate stewards. When the bills hit, they call us back to Jesus. He is the One who indeed forgives us our shallow thankfulness and leads us into the bounty of His mercy yet again.

– LCMS Stewardship Ministry: lcms.org/stewardship

January

Week of January 5-11

Sun, Jan 5, 8:30 am Divine Service
 Sun, Jan 5, 9:40 am Fellowship
 Sun, Jan 5, 10:00 am Bible Study
 Sat, Jan 11, 8:30 am Church Un-decorating

Week of January 12-18

Sun, Jan 12, 8:30 am Divine Service
 Sun, Jan 12, 9:40 am Fellowship
 Sun, Jan 12, 10:00 am Bible Study
 Mon, Jan 13, 6:00 pm Elders Meeting
 Wed, Jan 15, 6:30 pm Choir Practice
 Sat, Jan 18, 10:00 am Ladies Aid Meeting

Week of January 19-25

Sun, Jan 19, 8:30 am Divine Service
 Sun, Jan 19, 9:40 am Fellowship
 Sun, Jan 19, 10:00 am Bible Study
 Mon, Jan 20, 6:00 pm Council Meeting
 Wed, Jan 22, 6:30 pm Choir Practice

Week of January 26-31

Sun, Jan 26, 8:30 am Divine Service
 Sun, Jan 26, 9:40 am Fellowship
 Sun, Jan 26, 10:00 am Bible Study
 Wed, Jan 29, 6:30 pm Choir Practice

January Birthdays

02 Hayden Quinn
 06 Joan Fox (H)
 13 Hannah Bingenheimer
 13 Karen Moritz
 15 Paul Edgar
 15 Melanie Witzke
 18 Dawn Rousar
 20 Pat Gray
 31 Emily Zimmer



January Baptismal Anniversaries

05 Teresa Pape
 20 Pat Gray
 29 Joan Fox



Christmas Un-Decorating

Come and help us pack away the Christmas decorations on **Saturday, January 11**, beginning at **8:30 a.m.** Many hands make light work.



The Sound of Music

A special *thank you* to those who musically enriched our worship services during Advent and Christmas. All your time and hard work is greatly appreciated!

The Epiphany Season



As the Christmas season draws to a close, we enter the Epiphany season. The word Epiphany means “revelation” —God reveals how Jesus Christ is His Son, our Savior. The season begins with the Epiphany of Our Lord, a celebration of the visit of the Gentile wise men to the baby Jesus, who was born for all people. The season continues with Jesus’ baptism in the Jordan River and culminates with Jesus’ transfiguration before three disciples. Come and be a part of this joyous season as God reveals to us His Son, His plan and purpose, and His salvation.

The Baptism of Our Lord



We will celebrate the Baptism of Our Lord in January. Though He had no sin of His own, Jesus undergoes baptism for us. He does this to fulfill all righteousness and to fill the water of Holy Baptism with Himself, His forgiveness, and His righteousness. So, rejoice in your baptism. For through that water combined with God’s Word, you are a child of God, clothed in Christ’s perfect righteousness, and a temple of the Holy Spirit!

2025 Offering Envelopes

The 2025 members’ new offering envelopes are in your church mail slot. Your annual tax letter will be in your mail slot later this month. If you have any questions please see or call, **Cynthia Szoldatits**, Financial Secretary.

Altar Flowers



Thank you to everyone who donated flowers to decorate the altar and sanctuary in 2024. A special thank you to **Ruth** for arranging the beautiful bouquets.

The 2025 flower charts are posted. This is a wonderful way to help beautify God's house, celebrate a birthday or anniversary, or remember a departed loved one. If you would like to contribute flowers to help beautify the sanctuary on a Lord's Day, please add your name to any open Sunday on the flower charts.

Ruth Ogden will do two altar bouquets for \$30. If you sign up, **Karen** will contact you to get your flower request, and a brief note to place in the worship bulletin. When the worship service is over, you are welcome to take your bouquets home.

Ladies Aid

We send all of you our wishes for a happy and healthy new year. Our Lord has kept Divine Shepherd in His care thus far and we trust that He will continue to do so.



Once again thank you for your Giving Tree and Food Drive contributions. These, along with funds from the Ladies Aid treasury and \$1,250 from Thrivent, were met with extreme gratitude. We helped 30 people (7 families, 9 seniors, 7 adults) and the food drive helped 17 people. Extra nonperishables were given to a charity.

A special thank you to Lisa and Ed Cruz for once again heading up the 'giving tree' and to Joan Sturm for spearheading the food drive.

All females are automatically members of the Ladies Aid. Please join us for the **January 18** meeting, at **10:00 a.m.** We will be planning activities for the coming months of the year. Suggestions for projects around our church building are welcome. Perhaps you have a suggestion for a social activity.

Ladies Aid Money at Work



Listed below are just a few of the projects Ladies Aid has contributed to in 2024.

- pastor appreciation/etc
- the Giving Tree/food drive
- cleaning supplies
- paper goods/drinks/etc for Sunday treats
- Alms Fund
- Seminary Student

These projects are made possible by your generous support of our garage sale and RaiseRight program. Thank you.

Ladies Aid Officers

President: Open
Vice President: Lisa Cruz
Secretary: Joan Sturm
Treasurer: Karen Moritz

Council Members

Chairman: Ed Cruz
Secretary: Laurrie Bingenheimer
Treasurer: Ron Ruisz
Vice Chairman: Open
Board of Trustees: Kelly Stewart
Financial Secretary: Cynthia Szoldatits

Altar Guild Members

Those serving on the Altar Guild for 2025

Denise Collins
Karen Moritz
Ruth Ogden
Joan Sturm
Julie Zimmer

If you would like to serve on altar guild, please contact Ruth.

Altar Guild Fund



If you are planning a future memorial donation, please consider giving it to Altar Guild to purchase additional frontals, banners, candles, altar cloths, etc to beautify the sanctuary.

Prayer Chain

Several members are part of a church prayer chain. If you (men or women) would like to join them in praying for our congregation's special needs, please contact Julie Zimmer at 712-584-5301.

Sunday Treats



Do you enjoy treats and fellowship after Sunday services? If so, please consider signing up on any given Sunday(s). Why not sign up with a friend? *Empty slots mean no treats.* To enable our diabetic members to enjoy these treats, please consider supplementing some of the "sugary goodies" with crackers and cheese and/or fruit. The 2025 sign-up sheet is posted on the Luther Hall bulletin board. Monetary donations are accepted to defray the cost of drinks and paper products, which are supplied by Ladies Aid.



**THRIVENT
FINANCIAL®**

Directing Choice Dollars is a great way for eligible Thrivent members to show support for what matters most to them. If you have not given your Choice Dollars to Divine Shepherd, please do so. Thrivent members and Choice Dollars are an important source of support for the work the organization does. Why not do everything you can to make sure that you are getting the most out of your participation. A reminder, that all 2024 Choice Dollars will have to be donated by **March 31**, or they will be lost. These dollars are used to support various church/member's needs. Thanks.

Follow Us on Social Media

Follow us on social media to keep up to date with church happenings and events, find a variety of new and old congregational photos, and read inspirational posts and quotes from Holy Scripture, the Lutheran Confessions, and various Christians throughout the centuries.

Facebook: fb.me/DSLCCbolingbrook

Twitter: @dslc60440

Thank You

Thank you to Barb Potempa (financial secretary) and Doug Quinn (Treasurer) for their years of service to DSLC. May God continue to bless them.

Thank You

First, a big THANK YOU to Ladies Aid for the party of cake, cookies & treats. To all the wonderful church members of Divine Shepherd, for all the well wishes bestowed on me, party in Luther Hall and great gift! I will never forget you in my service I gave to our Lord & YOU! My many blessings are in my heart as great MEMORIES OF DIVINE SHEPHERD in these past 32 years. Barb Potempa

Portals of Prayer

Now that 2025 is here, we are asking those who make use of the "Portals of Prayer" devotionals to pay this year's annual subscription rate of \$15.00. Simply submit this via the offering plate, earmarked Portals of Prayer. Blessings on your continued study of God's Word.

Our Cleaning Crew



A special thank you to our church's cleaning crew for all their hard work in helping to clean our church facilities on a regular basis. This volunteer cleaning crew works diligently to vacuum, dust, scrub, mop, tidy, empty trash, and prepare our facilities each weekend. If you can clean once a month, please see Kelly Stewart.

An additional thank you to all those volunteers who have helped to take down, clean, serve, and set up on Sunday mornings and for special events. Your help and service are greatly appreciated!

Important Phone Numbers

Church office: 630-759-5300

Pastor Zimmer: 583-880-9532

Head Elder: 630-360-5573 (Scott Collins)

Prayer Chain: 712-584-5301

Newsletter info: 630-759-3188 (Karen Moritz)
(items are due January 27)

RisiseRight (Manna)

Shop with RaiseRight cards are available throughout the year for everyday expenses and gifts for any special occasion. Next order date is **January 19**. Pre-purchased cards are available after Sunday services and forms are on the bookcase in Luther Hall.

Your Organization:

Divine Shepherd Lutheran Church – Manna

Your Coordinator: **Lisa Cruz**

630-636-6359 • dslcmanna@yahoo.com

<http://www.raiseright.com>

Your Enrollment Code:

B2LD2C7A55973

Love Is God

Love is God shining through you.

Love is giving what you'd like to receive.

Love is taking the time, even when you do not have the time.

Love is listening with your heart.

Love is remembering.

Love is being there.

Love is believing in the good, the true, and the beautiful.

Love is the light of the world.

May Christ's love shine thru you now and always.

The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love.

(Galatians 5:6)

(American Greetings)

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The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love. (Galatians 5:6) (American Greetings)

God's Resolutions

We often resolve to improve the "little things" in life (time, weight, finances, etc.) that we completely forget about the "big things" that God would have us focus on! What are these big things? God has ten of them for you:

1. Fear, love, and trust in God above all things.
2. Call upon God's name in every trouble, pray, praise, and give thanks.
3. Hold preaching and God's Word sacred and gladly hear and learn it.
4. Honor, serve and obey, love, and cherish your parents and other authorities.
5. Help and support your neighbor in every physical need.
6. Lead a sexually pure and decent life, and love and honor your spouse.
7. Help your neighbor to improve and protect his possessions and income.
8. Defend your neighbor, speak well of him, and explain everything in the kindest way.
9. Help and be of service to your neighbor in protecting his inheritance and house.
10. Urge your neighbor's spouse, workers, to be faithful to Him.

Happy, healthy 2025