



# The Messenger

The Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd  
Olney, Maryland

January

2021

## **“Beginning with Mercy”**

*The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; his mercies never come to an end;  
they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.* (Lamentations 3:22-23 ESV)

Preaching on Christmas Day in 1624, the great English poet-priest John Donne declared that, in the beginning, there was mercy. Launching into the first point of his sermon, he states, “We begin with that which is older than our beginning, and shall over-live our end, the mercy of God.” God’s mercy, says Donne, “hath no relation to time, no limitation in time, it is not first nor last, but eternal, everlasting.” Noting that the Hebrew word for mercy, *racham*, fundamentally means *love*, Donne argues that mercy must be as eternal as God himself. “As long as there hath been love, (and God is love,) there hath been mercy.” This mercy, he says, is not only the solution for our sin but also the very basis of our being. “Mercy... began not at the helping of man, when man was fallen and become miserable; but at the making of man, when man was nothing.” Creation itself is an expression of the mercy of God. Existence is grace from first to last.

Donne was not the first person to recognize the eternal nature of God’s mercy. Some twenty-two hundred years earlier, the prophet Jeremiah proclaimed, “The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning...” Neither the prophet nor the poet was a Pollyanna; both were acquainted with grief. Jeremiah was the weeping prophet of God’s judgment, and he composed the above lines in the wake of Jerusalem’s destruction by the Babylonians. Donne experienced war, poverty, and the loss of his beloved wife; he had nearly died of illness the previous December, leading him famously to reflect, “Never send to know for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for thee.” And yet both Donne and Jeremiah realized that however painful and overwhelming the trials and tragedies of this life may be, they are ultimately insubstantial and fleeting compared to the eternal foundation of all reality: the loving-kindness of God. Sin doesn’t have the last word, and sorrow doesn’t have the last word, and death doesn’t have the last word. Because mercy has the last word. And the all-loving, world-making, sinner-helping, dead-raising mercy of God makes everything sad (in J.R.R. Tolkien’s delightful phrasing) “come untrue.”

“We begin...with the mercy of God.” Donne is undoubtedly engaging in a bit of word play: mercy is the beginning of his sermon and our beginning as well. As we enter 2021, it seems appropriate that we should also begin the New Year with the mercy of God; the dawn of another year seems as good a time as any to remember that “his mercies ... are new every morning.” As I write these words, the coronavirus continues its unabated spread and our politics is as divisive and dysfunctional as ever. We have just come out of a year that none of us could have predicted and are headed into a year that we can scarcely imagine. There will be more challenges to come. I pray, however, that in the face of all these things you would begin this year reflecting on the mercy of God—the mercy that made you, the mercy that took flesh and died for you, the mercy that daily forgives your failures, the mercy that will one day call you from your grave. As we enter 2021, remember that the virus will one day be vanquished, and the political antics of this present age will pass away, and in the end even death will be undone. But the mercy of God endures forever.

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# About People . . .



We continue to pray for:

. . . God's care for our Good Shepherd family: Former member **Janet Mullen** who is awaiting test results and possibly further testing for Covid 19.

. . . God's care for our relatives and friends: Suzi Lyman (Chris Pohlmann's sister) who lives in Arizona and has contracted Covid 19.

. . . New Life: Birth of **Lincoln Grant Cook**, born to Greg and Jenni Cook on Monday, January 4. He joins big sister, Lillian, in the family. We pray that Lincoln will respond well to the treatments for the complications he is experiencing, and that Jenni's blood pressure would normalize.

. . . Military serving our country: **Seth M.** stationed in Korea (Darlene M. request); **Trevor W.** now serving in North Carolina (Brianna H. request); **Libby S.** (friend of Jeanne B.) stationed in Ankara, Turkey; **Raphael** (neighbor of the Hoffman's) Marine Corps; **Mike H. Jr.** (deployed (friend of Ron & Cindy M.)

. . . those who mourn: For the family of **Lois Smith** (good friend of Jill Ruspi for over 30 years passed away earlier this week.

## For those who serve on the front lines of the pandemic:

Sarah King	Elena Wilson
Sarah Edsinger	Vicki Wilk
Thomas Gordon	Robert Seggel
David Hillhouse	Rosemary Sampogna
Deb Harman	Molly Mullen
Paul Fowler	Kathy Nicholson
Mike Rajnik	Phil Nicholson
Christine Birch	Dawn McCann
Judi Seggel	Sungjoon Ryou
Lori Falck (Dolores Falck's daughter-in-law)	

## Stewardship Sunday

To our brothers and sister in Christ, wishing you health and happiness in the New Year!

Stewardship Sunday will be celebrated on January 10th, 2021. And as the New Year dawns, we are asking for your pledge of support during this Epiphany season, which honors the Magi and their gifts to Jesus. Please make every effort to join us in worship (either streaming or in-person) on the 10th. Pastor Tim will direct our hearts and minds to reflect on the gifts we pledge to bring to Jesus. We will focus on the gifts of our time and talents in late spring or early summer when getting together again in person may be possible, depending upon widespread administration of the vaccine.

The link below allows you to privately send in your pledge online. The Pledge cards you will receive in the mail can be placed in the offering plate on January 17th, the Sunday after Epiphany Sunday, or mailed to the church office at PO Box 280, Olney, MD 20830-0280.

<http://olneygoodshepherd.org/stewardship/>

With prayerful consideration please regard your stewardship pledge as a serious commitment, as it allows our church to plan its budget for its mission endeavors. If you are able to give more than before, be assured that God more than matches with His blessings anything that we do for Him (John 3:16).

So please make a thoughtful pledge by January 17th through the means listed above and continue to attend our worship services, either in-person or through streaming services at [www.olneygoodshepherd.org/worship](http://www.olneygoodshepherd.org/worship). And prayerfully consider how you might serve the Lord more in the coming year as we pray for and seek a return to normalcy. Thank you for your continued support and may God's peace that surpasses all understanding be with all of you in the New Year. Be safe and well.

Peace and love from your Stewardship Team

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# Youth Ministry

## **OGSLY**

(Olney Good Shepherd  
Lutheran Youth)

Early in December OGSLY participated in their annual Secret Santa activity. Obviously, this year was different. Our youth sent notes of encouragement secretly by mail and delivered small gifts to their Secret Santa recipients. The reveal date on December 20<sup>th</sup> during Sunday School was wonderful! All but two OGSLY members attended. After the Secret Santas revealed, everyone enjoyed sharing and listening to each other's Christmas family traditions.

In Sunday School, OGSLY is continuing to study, A Biblical Worldview. Soon participants will define what a worldview is, help us understand our own world view, and see the importance of looking at the world from a biblical perspective. We will examine what God says about important philosophical issues and work on our own biblical worldview by which to live.

In anticipation of 2021, OGSLY was asked about their hopes and dreams for 2021. Here's what they said:

I still wanna stay home in quarantine to be completely honest. But I don't want my family to keep losing people.

- Read the Bible
- No masks
- Seeing people
- Going places
- Going to the theatre
- **Going to restaurants**
- Going to the movies
- Going to concerts
- Going to school in person
- Participating in afterschool club activities in person
- Receiving the Covid vaccine
- No more Covid

- Health, joy, love, and peace for all
- Seeing friends
- Hugging people
- No more fear about being around each other

Our youth continue to pray for each other and for those in need of comfort during these difficult times. Sending blessings and prayers to all! Happy New Year!



- 1 – Bob R.
- 2 – Susan O.
- 7 – Eric M.
- 9 – Gina Q.
- 11 – Andy C.
- 12 – Debrah H.
- 13 – Thaddeus B.
- 18 – Tom L.
- 20 – Alexa R.
- 21 – Marissa H.
- 22 – Chuck D., Elijah R.
- 26 – Grant M.
- 27 – Carol B.
- 28 – Jason B, Howard H.,  
Elena W.
- 30 – Nancy N.
- 31 – Mark H.

## **Anniversaries**

### **IN JANUARY**

- 4 – Pastor Tim and Angela B.

*Congratulations*

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The Board of Social Ministry would like to thank all who participated in giving gift cards and helping in delivering the Christmas family presents. We were able to make Christmas a little better for **eight families** in the Olney area.

Bob Wolters

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## Christmas Decorations



Although there were fewer decorations this year than we normally have due to the coronavirus, we want to thank those who helped make the sanctuary so beautiful.

The poinsettias were ordered for us by Angela Boerger and arranged by Angela, Connie Strachan, Rachel Vincent, and Nancy Wald. They were also responsible for hanging the wreaths, and bringing the tree with angel ornaments and Chrismons downstairs.

Connie hung the banner with the three angels on the front right side of the sanctuary and Jim Strachan hung the Advent banner on the left side with Connie adding the "flame" each week in Advent.

Thanks to all who purchased the beautiful red, white, or marble poinsettias in front of the altar for all of us to enjoy.

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Don't Miss the  
**DEADLINE!**

The deadline for the February newsletter is Monday, January 25. Please email articles to [nancy.wald@olneygoodshepherd.org](mailto:nancy.wald@olneygoodshepherd.org). or leave them in the newsletter mailbox in the copier room. Thanks, Nancy



## Church Staff

Thank you sincerely to the generous people of Good Shepherd who contributed toward a gift for each of us during the Christmas holidays. Thank you for remembering Pastor Tim, as well as the office, music and newsletter staff at this special time of year. We hope you and your families are richly blessed at this Christmas season. Happy New Year!

Sincerely,

Pastor Tim Boerger

Cate McDonald

Maria Sampogna

Nancy Wald

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## 2021 Flower Chart for Altar Flowers

Thanks to all of you who have this year provided flowers to beautify our chance! The 2021 flower Chart is now up and located in the administration wing hallway. The cost is **\$25.00 for each vase**. If only one family signs up the cost will be \$50.00. If no one signs up, there will be no flowers for that week. There are envelopes made up and beside the current flower chart. Please make check payable to LCGS, mark for Altar Flowers, and place in the offering plate. [Thank you also to all the people who have served as flower arrangers this past year, namely, Matt Quinn, Rachel Vincent, Angela Boerger and Connie Strachan.](#)



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## LifeLight Bible Class Begins again in January (part 2 of Genesis)

If you would like to join this group, contact Kathy Nicholson at [kathylifebalance@aol.com](mailto:kathylifebalance@aol.com). We do two sessions per year (now on Zoom) and this will be the second nine-week session. The cost for each study booklet of the materials is \$10.00 per session. New members are always welcome.



**C.A.R.E.**  
(Caring and  
Respecting  
Everyone)

(Saturday Morning LCGS Men's Group)



The Men's Group will meet on January 9 from 7:30-9:30 a.m. and will get together on Zoom to discuss topics from the Bible.

### SUNDAY MORNING CLASSES

Pastor Tim's Bible Class from 9:30-10:15 a.m. on Zoom

#### Children's Sunday School

Children's classes at 8:45 with Cindy King. Contact her at [cindyk5@verizon.net](mailto:cindyk5@verizon.net) and she will send you a link to join the class.

#### High School Sunday School

OGSLY meets Sunday morning at 10:00 a.m. via Zoom. Contact Steve Gordon for more information.

### OTHERS

Book Club – Sunday, December 13 on Zoom at 6:00 p.m.

LifeLight Bible Class – Monday Night on Zoom from 7:00-9:00 p.m. beginning again in January - Kathy Nicholson

Women's Bible Class with Pastor Tim  
Thursday mornings 10:30-12:00 noon on Zoom – 1-2 Fascinating Bible Stories



You are invited to join one or more of these groups. Call the office at 301-774-9125 for information, or to contact the people in charge, or email at:

[office@olneygoodshepherd.org](mailto:office@olneygoodshepherd.org)



Book Review Group

### **The Good Shepherd Book Club**

will meet on

**Sunday, January 10, 2021**

**On Zoom at 6:00 p.m.**

#### **“Running with Sherman”**

(The Donkey with the Heart of a Hero)  
Written by Christopher McDougall

Who knew a donkey could teach mankind so much? But Sherman had a mind of his own and he went and did what he wanted to not what Christopher McDougall wanted him to do. Like mankind Sherman needed a purpose in life and Chris came up with one. So, join us on zoom and we will discuss the very valuable lessons of life that Sherman taught us. Hopefully we will soon be able to gather together as one and enjoy good food and companionship. But in the meantime, zoom will have to do.

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### **Bible Verse to Remember** **Matthew 2:1**

Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the east came to Jerusalem.



## Greetings for a Happy New Year!

On behalf of the Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd, we would like to thank you for your support and effort as we hosted our first ever – LCGS Cares - Food Drive.

On December 19th, LCGS was blessed with the Art Scherer Crisis Response Grant which was created to help meet the needs during this pandemic. The grant has been provided through Mid-Atlantic Lutherans In Mission ("MALIM"). To learn more about "MALIM", visit their website at: <https://www.malim.org/>

Special thanks to Rev. Tim Fangmeier who is currently the President of the Board. Deaconess Robie Hillhouse (former LCGS member) and Deaconess Deb Lennox were instrumental in helping LCGS obtain grant approval (see MALIM Board photo below). We are truly thankful for MALIM and their desire to reach out to help those in need and to supply Lutheran congregations with needed resources to spread the Good News.



Beginning the week of December 20<sup>th</sup>, we developed an LCGS tri-fold brochure that contained details about LCGS, SCCC and our mission, as well as information about our live streaming, many thanks to Marc Gregory for the contribution of printing these beautiful brochures for us in color to include into our bags for the food drive. We are prayerful that seeds may be planted through this effort.

On Sunday, December 20<sup>th</sup>, we had helpers to set up the work zones by moving tables. The following volunteers: Maria Sampogna, Ken & Joyce Kubu, Toni, Melissa and Ian helped prepare the bags for stuffing. These volunteers also folded the brochures, inserted the following items into an envelope and each was stapled to the outside of each bag:

- the LCGS tri-fold color brochures
- the "Father's Love Letter" tract
- the Portals of Prayer devotional mealtime prayer in English and/or Spanish translation
- a blessing for a Happy New Year with a message to consume or refrigerate the chickens as soon as possible.

This team also packed PPE (masks, hand sanitizer), cans of green beans, packets of flavored rice and a pack of cookies into the grocery bags. On Sunday afternoon, it became apparent that these grocery bags were quite empty, it was hard to envision the size of the bags that we would be provided from Safeway.

On Sunday afternoon, another visit to Matt at the Safeway in Olney and we were able to collaborate, a special order including 100 boxes of cereal, 100 boxes of pasta, 100 bags of uncooked rice and 100 cans of chopped tomatoes with chilies. These additional items would provide more meal options for the recipients.

On Tuesday, another day to pick up items from the Safeway, these items included the 50 loaves of bread and 50 packages of tortillas, but, it was only a partial order.

On Wednesday, December 20<sup>th</sup>, Eric loaded up his van with 101 chickens, the boxes of cereal, the bags of rice and the cans of tomatoes with chilies beginning and 1 pm. From 2:30-5:30 p.m. we distributed 75 warm rotisserie chickens and 75 bags of groceries. Bob Wolters was able to deliver 3 chickens to a few members in need in addition to 1 bag of groceries. The remaining chickens and a few bags of groceries went to a local men's shelter. Some canned items went into the LCGS pantry. Other mission outreach pastors and lay leaders were able to pick up and distribute 60 chickens and 60 bags of groceries to areas of low income including: Brookeville, Silver Spring, Aspen Hill, Hyattsville, Wheaton and beyond, we had several drive through recipients from Olney.

Special thanks to: Sandy Langer, Vicki Wilk & Paul Fowler who offered a blessing from Numbers 6:24-26 as Bernd, Tom, Sherrie Dean, Bob Wolters and Eric loaded the chickens and groceries into the vehicles.

Thank you so much to Melissa, Ian and Toni Deedy for their flexibility and help during the week to ensure everything was ready for Wednesday even when my schedule fluctuated so much. Melissa used her artistic capabilities to make our beautiful signage.

Many thanks to Tom and Vicki for their help delivering the two bags of groceries and two chickens to Jackie, Anthony, David and Gio. Jackie was sick at home with her three sons and couldn't make it to the food drive.

Thanks to Bob Wolters for making our special deliveries to our two member families that needed an extra helping hand this week.

We thank Cate, who was instrumental in providing us with additional support, as needed.

With a grateful heart and special thanks to Eric who spent his vacation days picking up several large loads of food from Safeway many times this week, as well as, ensuring the remaining chickens and groceries made it to the men's shelter. Not a single item went to waste.

We couldn't have made this event happen without the help from each of you. Your quick offer to help and ensure that we maintained the social distance during this time of quarantine, was purely a wonderful example of "**Jesus's Love in Action**".

Blessings for a Happy and Healthy New Year!

Darlene



Grocery Items (partial)



Printed Material



(L to R) Back Row - Ian & Melissa Deedy ,  
Eric Maxfield, Sherrie Dean;  
Front Row Bernie & Sandy Langer, Vicki & Tom Wilk



Sandy & Bernie Langer, Sherrie Dean  
unloading final items and bags of chickens



Melissa Deedy, Vicki Wilk, Bernie & Sandy Langer,  
Ian Deedy, Sherrie Dean loading final items in bags



Toni Deedy loading items in bags



Melissa Deedy loading items into bags



Ian Deedy loading items into bags



Darlene loading items into bags  
outside



Paul Fowler & Eric Maxfield moving chickens/groceries

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**The deadline for the February issue is  
Monday, January 25, 2021**

**Current Sunday Worship Services  
are live streamed at 11:00 a.m.**  
Sunday School – Zoom classes only  
Check page 5 for Times.