



Volume 1 | Fall 2023

# The Shepherd's Horn



*Stories of faith & ministry from the community of  
Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in Cincinnati, OH.*



### **Our Mission**

*To be a caring Christian community  
where we Share God's grace, Grow  
in faith, and Serve others.*

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*Saturdays at 5 pm (Traditional)  
Sundays at 9 am (Contemporary)  
Sundays at 11 am (Traditional)*

Sundays live streamed at  
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Associate Pastor

**Rev. Alex Hoops**  
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**Samuel Cody**  
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**Amber Holdt**  
Children's Ministry Coordinator

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**Jen Jarman**  
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**Dr. Kevin Seal**  
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Special thanks to the staff & members for contributing articles and photos. Front cover photo credit: provided by Ken & Amber Holdt at HopeWood Shores (aka Camp Luther) in Summer 2023. See their article on Page 18.

The Shepherd's Horn is a quarterly publication of Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in Cincinnati, OH. Archived copies of The Shepherd's Horn can be found online at [goodshepherd.com/the-shepherds-horn](https://goodshepherd.com/the-shepherds-horn).

# The Journey Ahead

by Dr. Rev. Lorne Hlad | Senior Pastor



*“For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then we will see face to face. Now I know only in part; then I will know fully, even as I have been fully known.”  
– 1 Corinthians 13:12*

Living as part of a faith community over the last few years has often felt like an exercise in walking into a dense fog where you can't see what's in the fog, how long the fog will last, or what's on the other side of the fog. As Good Shepherd set out to call a new Senior Pastor, there was a high level of uncertainty in our country and within the wider church:

*Will this year be more of the same? How has ministry changed post-pandemic? How does the Church need to adapt and innovate moving forward? What will the post-pandemic church look like? How is God calling Good Shepherd to build the Kingdom moving forward?*

Thankfully, over the last year, slowly but surely, the fog began to lift. Many have remarked that Good Shepherd has arrived at a turning point in our life as a congregation and community. Said another way, it looks like we have closed one chapter in our story and are beginning to turn the page to write a new one. A greater sense of clarity has also accompanied this turning point in how the pandemic has impacted congregations, including Good Shepherd.

**First, social scientists and religious leaders now understand that the pandemic was a significant disrupting event that reoriented many people's daily lives and schedules.** The disruption in daily patterns caused by the lock-down “shuffled the deck” in people's routines and habits. Faith communities everywhere have felt the impact of this shuffling, most notably in worship patterns and attendance. Nationwide the pandemic has resulted in weekly worship attendance dropping 30-60 percent compared to 2019 data.

Good Shepherd has not been immune from this reality. In 2019 GSLC had an average weekly worship attendance of 373 people a weekend; in 2022 that number was 230 in-person attendees. While some of that reduction is for folks now worshipping online, there is no escaping the reality that the pandemic negatively impacted worship participation at faith communities everywhere. For decades research and data have pointed to the long slow decline of worship attendance in America - the pandemic served as an accelerant to the trend. *The good news is that Good Shepherd is once again growing and reaching more people through our weekly worship. Since arriving in March, our attendance has grown to 281 per weekend.*

**On the other hand, as the “fog” has lifted over recent months, it has simultaneously led others to search and seek out spiritual community.** While Good Shepherd has lost the engagement and participation of some members, we are experiencing a significant increase in engagement with others. In May, Good Shepherd welcomed 50 new members into the life of our community (the most in a single time over the last 15 years). There is a strong sense that those who are present and engaged in the life of our ministry are doing so with a deep sense of passion and intention. The disruption of the last few years has inspired many to seek a more profound sense of connection and meaning in their lives, cultivating a hunger for spiritual community and hope.

**Finally, the pandemic has reinforced the lesson that while our ministry methods may change, the mission remains unchanged.** The pandemic accelerated the rate at which we have adopted

ministry methods like live streaming, online studies and community groups, video production, and social media usage. Crises have a profound way of sparking innovation and change. These methods are just some of how congregations have been stretched to expand their ministry reach for the sake of the Gospel. The mission hasn't changed. The methods have just expanded.

**“Trauma is the change that happens to us that we don't choose. Healing is the change that happens to us that we do.”** The last few years have forced congregations to change and adapt in ways they could have never imagined. The question for us now is how to move forward. What is the change we will choose for ourselves in support of restoring God's world with grace & peace? Knowing what we now understand, where do we go from here?

The answer to that question is simple but not easy. **We press on with a renewed commitment to help people learn to be the heart, hands, and feet of Jesus in the world.** We remain committed to the Church's calling to be a witness to the resurrection of Christ and, in so doing, pursue God's vision of the world being restored with grace and peace. The mission remains the same because we are still the Body of Christ who has been entrusted with the work of discipleship and proclamation of the Gospel.

In support of our mission, Church Council adopted these guiding principles for our congregation: *Moving forward, we want to enhance the ways Good Shepherd helps people grow in faith, connect in community, and serve the world. Our congregational leaders, staff and lay, are excited to create new opportunities for people to grow in their discipleship and support one another.*

Looking toward 2024, Church Council and I plan to launch a 6-month Mission & Vision Task-force, which will develop a new 3-5 year strategic plan for our ministry. This group of leaders will be charged with developing & presenting the following crucial pieces to shape our future:

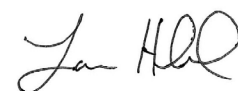
- **Renewed mission & vision statements for Good Shepherd**
- **A new set of guiding principles and values that reflect our culture.**
- **3-4 key focus areas that will guide our ministry over the new few years.**

You can also expect ample opportunities for you, the members of Good Shepherd, to engage in the vision process. We will all spend a season discerning the ways God might be calling us to serve in the future as a community!

While we do not know what the future will bring, we can rest knowing that Good Shepherd's mission is part of God's broader mission for the world. As we lean into the future, I pray that you know the impact and significance your engagement makes in support of our mission. Your dedication to worship, community, and mission makes all the difference in the vibrancy of our congregation.

May we all cling to the crucified and risen Lord, trusting in God's unfailing love and mercy to lead us into the future.

In Christ's love,





## Navigating 34 Years of Ministry

by Rev. Patricia Badkey | Associate Pastor

When Scott Puthoff asked me to write an article reflecting on my 34 years of ministry at Good Shepherd, I suddenly began wishing I had been more consistent in my journaling! Alas, I was not, so this has caused me to ponder what thoughts and ideas influenced my 34 years of ministry at Good Shepherd.

In May of 2003, at the Southern Ohio Synod Assembly, I had the privilege to hear Pastor Herman Fudge speak on the anniversary of his 75th year of ordained ministry (Pastor Fudge was 100 years old when he died). Pastor Fudge said many things that day as he reflected on his ministry, but the one thought which struck me was about how the church changed over time and how, led by God's spirit, it consistently needed to be changing and evolving, decade to decade, so it could more faithfully serve in the world, so to reflect the love of Jesus. He finally summed up his thoughts by saying something like, "and I discovered God was with us in the midst of all these changes."

Why do I mention Pastor Fudge? As you might imagine, in the last 34 years I have seen

Good Shepherd grow and change in many ways. And here is the other truth, I have grown and changed in my 34 years of ministry too. Just for the fun of it, I decided to look at my letter of call which was extended to me in July 1989. My letter of call stated that my main responsibilities were to general ministry - 25% of the time, young adult ministry - 25% of the time and youth and family ministry - 50% of the time. The last year and a half of my ministry has looked so different than what was stated in my letter of call as I served as interim senior pastor until we called Pastor Lorne in March of this year, all the while shepherding Good Shepherd's care ministries, Milestone Ministries and Fellowship events.

Yes, the mission and work of Good Shepherd and the ministry I was called to has changed over the decades. In many ways it has had to because we were listening to the God's spirit calling us to do new and unexpected things as we sought to be a caring Christian community in Cincinnati. Here is what we discovered: God was with us during all these changes. I am grateful for God's constant love and presence



which has sustained us over these years.

There is an old African proverb which says, “it takes a village to raise a child.” I suspect that you have heard this proverb too. This short proverb conveys the message that it takes many people (“the village”) to provide a safe, healthy environment for children, where children are given the security, they need to develop and flourish, and to be able to realize their hopes and dreams.

However, I do not think this is only true for children, I think it is true for all people. We all need a village. Thus, I have often thought this African proverb, “it takes a village”, is applicable to the church, the body of Christ in world. In Ecclesiastes 4:9-10a, it says, “Two are better than one because they have a good reward for their toil. For if they fall, one will lift up the other.”

God created us for community, and we need the church, the body of Christ to thrive and grow as disciples of Christ. As followers of Jesus, we need each other and the various gifts

each has been given by the God’s spirit to build up the church and to complete God’s mission and ministry in the world. It is hard to follow Jesus all by ourselves. New Testament professor Dr. Merlin Hoops said it well when he wrote about the impact of Romans 12 and 1 Corinthians 12 on the life of the church: “the only one who has all the spiritual gifts is the one who was crucified and is now risen. That none of us has all the spiritual gifts is sign that we really are in this all together and we need each other.”

One of my greatest joys in ministry is when I observe a Good Shepherd member using the spiritual gifts God had given them in baptism to do God’s saving work in the world. I always marvel as I see people joyfully using their gifts such as teaching, hospitality, service, mercy, generosity, and others in our church building and also places such as Taft Elementary, Habitat for Humanity, IHN, Tikkun Farms and in their homes and at their places of work. God has created us for community and the world needs the body of Christ to put their gifts to work so all are touched by the transforming love of Christ. It takes all the members of the



body of Christ, using their spiritual gifts, to spread the love of Christ throughout the world.

If you have been a member of Good Shepherd, I would dare say that you have seen and heard me cry while I have preached. As a good friend once pointed out, I have typically done this when I am talking about God's unconditional love and grace. For me as a Christian, God's amazing grace is such a gift. I recognize I need that grace daily in my life so I am set free from all the brokenness that weighs me down. Early in my life I recognized that we often carry with us the heavy weight of our sin. But scripture does remind us, that God loves to make beautiful things out of dust.

My faith has taught me to cling to God's grace and love shown to us through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. I know that God's grace, love, and forgiveness always has the last word. This has allowed me to live my life as both saint and sinner. I am not perfect but guided by God's spirit I attempt to live my life reflecting God's love for the world. I have to

say that some days I do better than others, but I step out each day praying God's love will shine through in what I say and do.

I used to be hesitant to look at my flaws, the places where I failed in being faithful because I saw them only as my failures. In the song title Anthem by Leonard Cohen, these lyrics inspired me to be honest when it came to my life of faith. He wrote these words which I found encouraging, "Ring the bells that still can ring. Forget your perfect offering. There is a crack in everything. That's how the light gets in."

These words encouraged me to look at my whole life and not be afraid to step out each day, knowing I am both saint and sinner but I have God's grace and love working in my life and transforming me. This reminded me to go forth with good courage knowing God's love will guide me. Paul reminded us of this when he wrote in 2 Corinthians 5:17, "So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: see, everything old has passed away; everything has become new." God certainly sends out us, imper-





fect saints, as servants to the hurting world.

Finally, I want to thank you for allowing me to serve as your pastor for these 34 years. We have walked many roads together, supporting, caring, nurturing, and encouraging one another in our lives of faith and as disciples of Jesus. At the end of the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 7), Jesus encourages his followers to build their lives on all he taught them by saying, "Everyone who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. And the rain fell and the floods came and the winds blew and beat on that house but it did not fall because it had been founded on the rock." I pray God will always direct the work and ministry which takes place at Good Shepherd so it will reflect what Jesus, our Rock, taught us through his words & actions.

*Celebrate Pastor Pat's 34 years of ministry at Good Shepherd & wish her Godspeed in this new chapter of life at her Retirement Celebration on November 19th. Details coming later in fall.*



## Taft Elementary: Past, Present, Future

by Sue Matz and Beth Townsend

Our hope for the community of Taft Elementary from the beginning was that the students & staff would know they are loved through our service to their community. We could have never imagined how God would take that hope and use it to expand our relationship to something so much deeper.

**The Early Years:** In the fall of 2006, then-Senior Pastor Larry Donner met the founder of the Adopt A Class program, Bill Burwinkle, for a meeting. The program's goal was to pair elementary students with caring adults who would serve as role models while expanding the students' ideas of what they could accomplish in life. After hearing Bill talk about the program, Pastor Larry committed Good Shepherd to support one 2nd and one 3rd-grade class at William H. Taft Elementary School in Mt. Auburn for the remainder of the school year.

Our first program at Taft was a Christmas party for our two adopted classrooms. Beth Townsend volunteered to organize the event. Through a small group of staff & members, the Taft students were treated to Christmas Party that included gifts, a craft which created gingerbread houses out of graham crackers & milk cartons, and a snack of cookies & hot cocoa.

The early years consisted of just a few visits per year: a Christmas party and a year-end field trip. That first year, our trip was to the Cincinnati Zoo. Students, teachers, and several Good Shepherd members loaded a yellow bus for the short trek to explore the Zoo. While walking with our groups, we not only learned students' names but also a little about their lives. It was enlightening for those early volunteers to learn the students' most pressing activity of the day was lunch because many of the students experienced hunger daily.

**The Middle Years:** As we better understood Taft Elementary and their needs, we also began finding new ways to serve their community. We increased our yearly visits by adding Halloween & Valentine's Day celebrations, with volunteer-made treat bags provided for other holidays. We also adopted another 2nd & 3rd-grade classroom, which meant we became the "adopters" for the school's entire second & third-grade student population.

Also growing were our desires to develop better relationships with the students. As luck would have it, Adopt A Class asked all partner organizations to create a "Pen Pal program" through which students could practice writing & reading while forming a supportive relation-



ship with someone. Good Shepherd created the Pen Pal program, which continues to this day and is organized by Anne Miller. The benefits were immediate: students looked forward to reading their pen pal letters & it gave them a way to express themselves through something other than a classroom assignment. Even more, students expressed a desire to meet their new friends & get to know them better.

It was during these middle years that Good Shepherd was growing into an integral part of the fabric of Taft Elementary. We hosted an annual school supply drive, purchased uniforms for students, and participated in the Box Tops for Education fundraiser.

**Taft Elementary Today:** The Adopt A Class program expanded its focus around eight years ago to have mentor groups act as positive role models, provide job readiness skills, and offer exposure to a variety of career paths through monthly educational programs. In order to meet these new program standards, Good Shepherd members & Taft teachers formed a team to work collaboratively on these new goals. This team, now led by Kathy Peterson, created a yearly curriculum that would support the teaching efforts of Taft Elementary by encouraging both soft skills (like kindness, teamwork, and caring) and science skills.

The science skills were a response to Taft's desire to establish a Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) classroom & lab. Sue Matz, a trained chemist and natural teacher of all things science, helped the STEM teacher



set up and create the classroom. Sue & Dean Matz along with Beth & Mark Townsend further supported education in science skills through a Good Shepherd-sponsored 2nd-grade robotics team, who showcased their work at a competition of students throughout Cincinnati. Finally, Good Shepherd members from across different service groups came together to create an outdoor education space where students can learn about gardening and get their hands dirty while exploring the natural world.

From the days of our first visits with Taft, we've seen firsthand how food insecurity impacts many Taft students. The Free Store Food Bank provided weekend food packs for the students for many years; however, the number of food packs delivered to the school served no more than five percent of students. God again provided us a way to serve when the school asked if we could provide more food packs. For a couple of years, members of Good Shepherd assembled weekend food packs at church and transported them to school. To help with holiday breaks, we used funds from a Thrivent Grant to provide food for students over Christmas and Spring Breaks.

It became clear the need for food was great in the community of Taft Elementary. In 2018, Taft was finally recommended as a location for an onsite food pantry by the Free Store Food Bank. To support the new pantry, Good Shepherd agreed to serve as leaders. Working with the school's Resource Coordinator, Mrs. Elizabeth Cone, we ensured the pantry was stocked & staffed. With Good Shepherd purchasing the



freezer & the Free Store providing the refrigerator, the pantry opened for business. The pantry has grown since then, also offering household items and toiletries which are obtained and packed through the leadership of Kathy & Bill Shuman and your service at events like “God’s Work. Our Hands.” Weekend.

We also have discovered an opportunity to support the community by helping improve literacy at Taft Elementary. We serve as tutors to our 2nd-grade classrooms through the leadership of Mary Naylor, provided books to students throughout Taft Elementary through the donations of members and leadership of Mary Adams, built, installed & stocked several Little Free Libraries on campus through the dedicated work of the Monday Morning Work Crew, and provided a book vending machine in the newly appointed Taft Library for students to obtain books through their reading and math achievements.

**Impacts of the Ministry:** More than anything, the relationships that we’ve built with the



students, families, and staff of Taft Elementary have opened our hearts to how God is working through our gifts & talents.

Pantry volunteers routinely report their favorite part of serving is getting to know the families that use the pantry. Over time, volunteers and families develop relationships as they chat during pantry visits.

Students are so very excited to have the opportunity to work with a tutor. Their faces light up when our members walk into the classroom. Of course, tutors are sharing God’s love with the students through their service & encouragement, but the love shared by the student is just as meaningful to the tutor. Serving as a tutor is a very special gift.

Our hearts burst with joy when we hear the stories of students reading to their younger siblings or giving books to others through the efforts of our literacy program. It reminds us that God takes our gifts and increases their impacts in ways we could have never imagined.



It is a sight to behold when a student earns a gold coin to obtain a new book from the vending machine. We aren't quite sure if the coin or the book is more exciting. What we do know is how our hearts smile when we see that same student hugging their new book as they walk back to class.

There is no greater excitement than the day on which donated books arrive in the classroom. Experiencing the joy of the students when receiving and reading their books is quite a treat! Good Shepherd is blessed to help these students build their own libraries.

Years after our original 2nd-grade robotics team competed, we still receive hugs and updates from the students when we run into them in the hallways. These long-standing relationships are a great reminder of the words of Maya Angelou: "People will forget what you said and did, but they will never forget how you made them feel."

Even the teachers & staff have reported the small gestures & gifts we provide to them lift their spirits. Little acts of love like bringing fresh flowers to the classroom or providing lunch for the staff often mean more than we will ever know.

**The Ministry Continues to Grow:** We could have never imagined the ways God would invite us to walk with the community of Taft Elementary. From people serving as pen pals, to folks assembling hygiene kits or weekend food packs, to the donations for books and uniforms, and members serving as tutors, our ministry has grown from its humble beginnings to what it is today through the support of the entire community of Good Shepherd.

We don't know what new ways God will call us into a relationship with Taft Elementary in the future. We do know that there will be lots of listening and discussions with Taft as well as time discerning the next steps.

We also know that God will be with us on the way, guiding us long into the future. And that His love will be at the center of whatever path our journey with Taft Elementary takes.

## Ways You Can Serve With Taft

### Pen Pals

*Provide a student a pen pal friend to help them read & write while making a new friend.*

**Contact: Anne Miller,**  
[ranco@cinci.rr.com](mailto:ranco@cinci.rr.com)

### Food Pantry

*Stock pantry and help visitors find food & household items they are looking for. Pantry is open weekly.*

**Contact: Kathy Shuman**  
[kathyshuman52@gmail.com](mailto:kathyshuman52@gmail.com)

### Classroom Visits

*Visit classrooms, meet the students, and help with the monthly program. Visits are monthly throughout the school year.*

**Contact: Kathy Peterson**  
[peteramund@hotmail.com](mailto:peteramund@hotmail.com)

### Tutoring

*Work one-on-one with a 2nd or 3rd grade student as you help them with math & reading. Weekly visits.*

**Contact: Mary Naylor**  
[marytnaylor@gmail.com](mailto:marytnaylor@gmail.com)

### Literacy Team

*Help promote literacy at Taft Elementary. Meets about once per month.*

**Contact: Mary Adams**  
[adamsmarydmjk@gmail.com](mailto:adamsmarydmjk@gmail.com)

### School Garden

*Helps maintain and works in Taft's outdoor educational space. Meets seasonally.*

**Contact: Sue Matz**  
[sgmatz13@gmail.com](mailto:sgmatz13@gmail.com)



## Junk, Joy, and Jesus

by Jen Jarman | Director of Ministry & Mission

Taking a summer trip with the Senior High Youth Group, aka The Flock, was never a question at Good Shepherd. Ever year, The Flock had a summer trip to look forward to.

The questions were always the what (like what are we doing???) and the when (when do we do it??). Would it be a mission trip, an ELCA Youth Gathering, or a fun trip?

And when in the summer would it be scheduled? Not too close to the Fourth of July, but - of course! - before band camp started.

These were the big questions we asked each year. But never was there a discussion about the summer youth trip because there was always a summer youth trip. Until COVID...

During 2020 and 2021, there were no summer youth trips due to COVID restrictions and

the ELCA Youth Gathering being canceled. In summer 2022, we planned a mission trip to serve with the Appalachian Service Project in West Virginia. Unfortunately, our trip was cut short after 3 days of serving due to heavy rains and flooding at our worksite.

With the last three years being canceled or cut short, I was very grateful for the amazing 3 days of adventure, laughter, and Jesus with our Senior High youth as we visited the Laurel Highlands of Pennsylvania for a rafting adventure on the mighty Class III Youghiogheny River.

Our trip began with a bonus side excursion to Laurel Caverns, Pennsylvania's largest cave with over 4 miles of passageways. We took the Guided Tour that colorfully lit and showcased the natural features of the cave. We enjoyed it so much that we stayed a while longer and also

took the Self-Guided tour. While the 17-story uphill trek back to the entrance was challenging, we laughed all the way.

We were warmly received by the staff at Laurelville, a Christian Retreat Center, where stayed for our trip. We had delicious meals in the Dining Hall and comfy lodging accommodations (linens included!). While we failed to get a campfire started due to wet firewood, we made the best of it by making s'mores in the microwave of the kitchenette. I also rightfully earned bragging rights as the mini-golf champion, one of the amenities that we enjoyed during our stay.

The next morning, we hiked the trails around Cucumber Falls to begin our high adventure day. This was definitely the highlight of the trip for Sara Zink (Grade 11): *“My favorite part of the trip was when we were on our hike. We were so adventurous and I loved exploring in nature. I felt God when we climbed behind the waterfall and saw the rainbow. It was so beautiful and I loved the peaceful feeling of the mist falling on my face.”*

Rafting the Youghiogheny River was the highlight adventure of the trip (can you say Jump Rock without getting excited??). There was plenty of laughter, adventure, and just maybe a couple of prayers to Jesus above the bigger rapids while on the river.

Even with all the excitement and adventuring, we still took time to gather for devotions and share our “Junk, Joy, and Jesus” each evening. It was in these quieter moments where we could more easily reflect on our exciting and busy days to see where Jesus showed up.

While we were only there for a couple of days, I know those moments of laughter, excitement, and fellowship will linger in my life and the lives of our youth long after. And those moments serve more than just memories of a good time, but also reminders of where God showed up and that God always loves us.





## Member Profile

by Scott Puthoff | Director of Digital Ministry & Communication

**This month, we welcome new members, Jake & Megan Rounds and their three children, Ryleigh (5), Aiden (3.5) and Ellery (2) to the Member Profile column.**

Jake & Megan were both born and raised in the Cincinnati area. Jake grew up in New-  
tonsville and went to Clermont Northeastern and Megan grew up in Montgomery where she graduated from Sycamore. They met each other at the University of Cincinnati, during their Sophomore year while taking a Sign Language class together.

Both Jake & Megan were raised in the faith. Megan attended Prince of Peace Lutheran in Loveland for many years. Jake was raised Methodist especially connects with his spirituality in nature. They discovered Good Shepherd Lutheran Church through Megan's parents, Good Shepherd members Jan & Bill Whitmore.

What really drew them initially to Good

Shepherd was both Kids & Parent Connect. They liked the program for their children and the overall community feel on Sundays. Eventually, they made the decision to become members because they felt connected to the mission of Good Shepherd and wanted to be a part of a community that provides so much for others.

When Jake & Megan aren't working in their jobs in the healthcare IT field, they enjoy spending time outside with their family camping, hiking, and generally exploring nature.

Jake is also a member of the Sycamore Advisory Commission, while both Jake and Megan belong to the Shelton Trace Association - a conservation organization committed to maintaining the Shelton Trace National Recreation Trail and promoting its use by hikers, bikers, equestrians, and people that value wild & scenic lands.

**Welcome to Good Shepherd Rounds Family!**



# Best Time of The Year

by Jill & Jim Messner

It seems like just a few weeks ago the kids got out of school, and now - just like that - we find ourselves at the start of the best season of the year.

Which season, you might ask? Football season? Parents are you thinking “Back to School”? Maybe you are dreaming a little bit of that pumpkin spice back in your coffee...or beer? Nope...none of those.

**The best part of this season for our family is participating in “Trunk or Treat.”**

Why? Well it’s the wonderful memories that we’ve had from the event! It was our girls’ first experience of trick or treating - all from the safety of the church parking lot. We also love spending time with our church family and meeting families from the Preschool & surrounding neighborhoods at this one-of-a-kind community event.

As our girls have grown, our involvement has changed. They still dress up and trick or treat, but their favorite part has become, by far, decorating our trunk. Each year our family tries to outdo our decorations from the previous year.

Our past themes have been: Days of Thunder complete with a Hot Wheels car track running from out of the back of the van, a tropical luau with Stitch (in the pouring rain), and a video game arcade with Wreck-in-Ralph (complete with nearly the entire family in costume!).

So, get excited Good Shepherd, it’s almost time to break out the decorations again! Whether you go all out like us or keep it simple with some Halloween decorations, it’s all about having fun, connecting with friends, and being a blessing to the kids that show up!

Signs-ups start in early October for this year’s Trunk or Treat, happening on Friday, October 27th at 6 pm.





## A Place Apart

by Amber & Ken Holdt

We've been going to Camp Luther, now called HopeWood Shores, located on the banks of Lake Erie as a family since 2017. Along with our children, Lily (12), Isaac (10), Kate (8) and Hannah (6), we look forward to our annual pilgrimage with other Good Shepherd families to this 'place apart'.

This year was no different. Our Week 5 Family Camp was blessed with beautiful weather, a wonderful staff, and great connections with friends old & new. We thoroughly enjoyed the daily activities like foosball, relay races, parent-child games (shuffleboard, corn hole and volleyball), Discovery Time, swimming in the pool, and taking in the sunsets. It's a great place to just kick back and relax and let the kids run and play.

One of our favorite moments at HopeWood Shores this year was when three 5th-grade boys, Isaac Holdt, Elliot Puthoff, and Daniel Fuentes, chose to sit in the front row on the final night at the candlelight singalong in the chapel. Together, with the counselors and other campers, these three were picking the songs we sang (Drop Kick Me Jesus anyone?) while truly singing their hearts out. The light on their

faces and the joy in their hearts was a sight to behold (and Ken now knows how much singing potential these boys have for their future in the Victory Singers)!

These youngsters were fully engaged in the moment, while growing in their faith and friendship, which brings a smile to a parent's face. And it's been awesome to see that this relationship just wasn't relegated to camp: they find each other each Sunday at church and hang out, while at the same time make coordinated requests to their parents to schedule friend time outside of church.

We also feel we have a really good rhythm while at camp: Lily is connecting and heading off independently with the preteens, Isaac's and Kate's friend groups are taking shape, and Hannah is finding moments of unbridled independence such as running full tilt to Children's Choir in the Chapel. Camp provides that space for our children grow in their independence and faith in a safe, caring environment, which is a major part of the community feel at camp.

It's been a couple of years since we've been able to attend camp at HopeWood Shores. We

were so blessed to be back again. The impact of camp was really brought home this year, again on Friday at chapel. Tears streamed down the faces of many of the children - and even a few adults - as we were sharing the peace and preparing to say our goodbyes to another year of camp. In that moment you really realize that camp isn't just a vacation - it's more than that - it's a place where you can get away and truly tap into what it means that God loves you unconditionally, regardless of who you are.

Highlights don't end at camp either. In the days and weeks following camp, our niece Ava, who joined us this year, and Lily were busy texting lyrics, song titles, and YouTube links of the camp songs - and begging for the rest of Ava's family to join us in 2024.

Camp provides an environment and clarity like no other. You can let the kids run and not have to worry. You can make new friends and strengthen your existing relationships. You can enjoy delicious food that you don't have to cook. You can even hear God's call to start a new position in Children's Ministry (congrats on your new role at Good Shepherd Amber!!).

We can't wait for the next year of camp. We hope we'll see you, your spouse, your parents, your kids, and maybe even your cousins there too!

*Good Shepherd will again head to HopeWood Shores for Week Five of Family Camp (July 7-13, 2024). Reach out to Jen Jarman ([jjarman@goodshepherd.com](mailto:jjarman@goodshepherd.com)) if you'd like more information OR grab Amber or Ken Holdt one Sunday morning if you'd like to hear more about their camp experiences.*



# Upcoming Events

Learn more at [goodshepherd.com/events](http://goodshepherd.com/events)

## **“God’s Work. Our Hands.” Weekend September 9-10**

Volunteer with a service project as we join Lutherans around the country in sharing God’s love with our neighbor.

## **Rally Day September 17 at 10 am**

Find a group & way to serve.

## **Trunk or Treat October 27 at 6 pm**

Trick or treat in the GSLC church parking lot. Set-up starts at 5 pm.

## **Spooky Halloween Concert October 29 at 7 pm**

Fun organ concert for the whole family. Wear your Halloween costumes!

## **Pastor Pat’s Retirement Party November 19 (time TBD)**

Celebrate Pastor Pat’s ministry & wish her God-speed in this new chapter of life.

## **Grateful Pies November 21 (time TBD)**

Give thanks for our gifts with pies & fellowship.

## **Christmas Concert December 3 at 3 pm**

Christmas hymns and songs performed by Good Shepherd musicians.

## **Handel’s Messiah Sing-along December 17 at 3 pm**

Join in the 250 year-old tradition in singing Handel’s Messiah with a professional orchestra and soloists.

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