



SHEPHERD OF THE HILLS

LUTHERAN CHURCH, SCHOOL, AND CHILD CARE

Congregational Report
January 26, 2025

Our mission: To lead people into a life-changing relationship with Jesus

ShepherdLutheran.com

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Shepherding the Flock

Rev. Dr. Christopher Kennedy, Senior Pastor, pastorchrist@shepherdlutheran.com

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

2024 was another eventful year at Shepherd, and 2025 promises to be filled with an abundance of meaningful ministry as well. My ministry New Year's resolutions are twofold: support our resurgent youth ministry and chart the course for outreach.

Youth ministry: Under Lauren White's leadership, we now have an eight-member youth leadership team, a monthly Youth Night (16 kids attended this month!), and regular outings for sixth through 12th grade. To take youth ministry to the next level, I'm in the process of forming a call committee to search for a full-time Director of Youth Ministry. Lauren will focus primarily on children's ministry. It's great to see our youth ministry moving in such a positive upward trajectory!

Outreach: We have about a dozen active outreach ministries at Shepherd. These initiatives of our congregation, as well as our community connections, are vital to carrying out the Great Commission and keeping our church outward-focused. To highlight outreach and discern future direction, we're having an all-congregation **Outreach Forum 3-5 p.m. Sunday, Feb. 23 in the Sky Rooms**. Please plan to be there! At the forum, we'll do a Bible study on outreach, hear from leaders of our congregation's outreach ministries, debrief the results of the recent outreach survey, and have table discussions to discover our members' passions and community connections.

We trust in God to guide us as we seek to serve Him faithfully throughout this year!

God's blessings,
Pastor Chris

[Katy Rohr, School Principal, krohr@shlutheran.org](mailto:krohr@shlutheran.org)

Three things I want you to know about my ministry area...

1. As we reach the halfway point of the school year, our dedicated teaching staff remains committed to each student's success—spiritually, academically, and emotionally. They continue to foster a positive, supportive environment that encourages curiosity, critical thinking, and faith development.
2. Our Shepherd Showcase is scheduled for Thursday, January 30 from 5 to 6 p.m. The theme, "Deep in the Heart of Shepherd," will showcase our campus with a Texas flair. Stop by and join us for the fun!
3. We have an amazing group of parents serving on our "Retention & Recruitment Committee." Together, they help strategize how to market Shepherd in San Antonio and keep families connected to our school. We are grateful for their time and dedication to helping SHLS grow!

Ministry metrics ... Our annual chapel baptism service is coming up on Wednesday, February 5. We've already had several families inquire about baptizing their children during the service. It's exciting to watch God's kingdom grow in our community.

I'm thankful for ... All the donations to Gifts for the King. Thank you for supporting our scholarship fund so that we can continue to financially support our SHLS families.

A great comment I heard recently at church was ..."Your school creates a warm, welcoming environment where both students and families feel like they are truly part of a caring community."

[Dale Stein Jr., Congregation President, dalesteinjr1@gmail.com](mailto:dalesteinjr1@gmail.com)

2024 was a very busy year. I'm looking forward to a much quieter coming year. I hope.

I hope you noticed a copy of the proposed Constitution and By-Laws were included in the Jan. 10 Newsletter. I have submitted these to the LCMS Texas District Office for a proofreading and received a minor correction. I am hoping to have a congregational gathering by the end of next month so the congregation can vote on the changes.

With our new FLC, I've been comparing our "older" buildings and have notice some wear beginning to show. If any of you have noticed any area needing some help, please inform me or Jeremy.

I have noticed more families attending our services and look forward to this continuing this year.

[Mike Miller, Head Elder, 2021mamiller.papa@gmail.com](mailto:2021mamiller.papa@gmail.com)

Three things I want you to know about my ministry area ...

1. It is a great honor to work with the dedicated and talented Board of Elders and Deaconesses.
2. Working with "Tim's Volunteers" on Tuesday mornings ranks very high in my favorite weekly activities.
3. Members of the Tuesday morning crew are Tim Eickstead, Brenda Rosales, Bertha Moher, Kenny Bilbro, Doug Bielefeldt, Gary Larsen, Mark Melcher, and myself. Everyone contributes and makes the morning fun and blessed.

I'm thankful for ... all of the volunteers who served in the numerous services during Advent and Christmas.

A great comment I heard recently at church ... "Using our young people to help with Communion, acolyting, and offering speaks to our responsibility to proclaim the Gospel to future generations."

[Rev. Andy Johnson, Associate Pastor, pastorandy@shepherdlutheran.com](mailto:pastorandy@shepherdlutheran.com)

Three things I want you to know about my ministry area ...

1. I've taken over following up with guests who fill out a connect card or text in to our guest number. It's been enjoyable to reach out to them and learn about how they found their way to us.
2. I'm always here to help if you or your small group have Bible study questions or need help finding a new study. Don't hesitate to reach out!
3. Mark your calendars for Lent. We'll be offering another small group series and we'd love everyone to be a part of it.

Ministry metrics ...

As a result of the Crash Course Bible studies in 2024, we were able to include more than 50 additional people in a Bible study.

I'm thankful for ... the holiday season here at Shepherd and some good time with family and friends in Nebraska after Christmas.

A great comment I heard recently at church was ... "It's so nice to see the kids enjoying the new playground!"

[Jeremy Gawf, Business Manager, jqawf@shlutheran.org](mailto:jqawf@shlutheran.org)

- As of Dec. 31, 2024, the weekly average giving was \$20,632. Ministry Plan need for 2024 was \$20,871. Ministry Plan need for 2025 is \$21,104.
- As you can see, the playground and signage on the FLC building are complete. The marquee is scheduled to be completed by the end of January
- I have received several compliments regarding the new playground. I love seeing all the smiling faces enjoying the new space when I walk around campus.

[Roger Howard, Director of Worship, roger@shepherdlutheran.com](mailto:roger@shepherdlutheran.com)

Three things I want you to know about my ministry area ...

1. March at Shepherd of the Hills is going to be extra-musical, as we will be welcoming TWO touring ensembles from the LCMS Concordia University System! Tuesday, March 4 will feature a concert by the **choir and orchestra** from Concordia, **Ann Arbor, Michigan**. The following Tuesday, March 11 will feature a concert by the **wind symphony** from Concordia, **Seward, Nebraska**. Both groups will present music for our school or child care students the following mornings. Please contact me if you would be interested in hosting some college musicians in your home on March 11 (no housing is needed on March 4), and set aside those two evenings for some outstanding music!
2. Auditions are underway for a guitarist/vocalist to join our Saturday praise team. This part-time position will help bring our Saturday worship service to the next level. Please share names and contact information with me if you know people who would be interested.
3. Our choir nearly doubled for Advent and Christmas, and we retained four singers who have agreed to continue singing through the rest of our season. God continues to provide talented people to serve in music ministry at Shepherd, and there is always room for more.

I'm thankful for ... the positive responses to our first service of Lessons and Carols on Dec. 8 and our worship services for the Christmas season. I appreciate all the favorable comments (and even the constructive ones!) that reaffirm my calling to Shepherd and the "good fit" I have experienced since arriving three years ago; how time flies when you're having fun!

You can help by ... hosting some college musicians for an overnight homestay (see item 1) to include breakfast and a ride back to church.

A great comment I heard recently at church ... "We're praying for Michael" (hospitalized for successful stent surgery and now recovering at home).

[Lauren White, Director of Christian Education, lauren@shepherdlutheran.com](mailto:lauren@shepherdlutheran.com)

Three things I want you to know about my ministry area ...

1. Youth group has begun meeting on the first Sunday of every month for Bible study and will also meet for fun off-campus events as well.
2. First Communion will take place again this spring – Pastor Andy, Pastor Chris, and I are looking forward to this fun class! We will have a Christ in the Passover Presentation that is open to anyone who would like to attend April 6.
3. Our second annual Daddy Daughter Dance is coming up in February. Looking forward to this night under the stars!

Ministry metrics ...

- 2024 average for Shepherd's Kids was 38 kids per weekend.
- 16 youth attended January's Bible Study.
- 14 students have signed up for First Communion already!
- We had 98 people in attendance at the Gingerbread Bash with another 45 who completed it at home with their family for a total of 143 people who participated!

I'm thankful for ... a fantastic group of people who help lead children's ministry each week!

A great comment I heard recently at church was ... "My favorite thing about youth group was being able to bond with those my age in church."

[Nanette Tondre, Director of Communications, nanette@shepherdlutheran.com](mailto:nanette@shepherdlutheran.com)

Three things I want you to know about my ministry area ...

1. The 2025 Venue Ministry is off to a great start!! We have a new club volleyball league locked in through May!
2. I have relinquished bulletin duties to Roger Howard! Roger graciously offered to take over the production of weekend bulletins to free me up for other duties. THANK YOU, ROGER!!
3. I'm looking forward to training for the new marquee!

Ministry metrics ... For the month of January, the Venue Ministry has the school gym booked Monday through Friday; the Family Life Center booked Mondays, Wednesdays, and Saturdays; and the Family Life Center Sky Rooms have two private parties booked.

I'm thankful for ... the blessing of each day the Lord grants me to be a part of the Shepherd family.

A great comment I heard recently at church was ... "Coming to church is like coming home to family."