



# Good Shepherd Lutheran Church

## Shepherd's Staff

### April 2024

#### Quiet Despair and Its Remedies

*By Adam Koontz*

A sadness pervades the Christian church in our country. A sense of loss, vague and enormous and brooding, permeates our church life. Off in the distance, we seem to hear what sounds like the trumpet of retreat. While some of us run pell-mell in terror, others fall back by careful steps. All sense that the church's high-water mark was somewhere in the past, and the future we face is dark and unsure.

We do not express our sadness openly because it seems cowardly to speak of gnawing worries about fewer pews filled on Sundays, fewer men willing to be pastors or fewer schools to teach the faith to the rising generation, fewer in number as those children themselves may be. What fills our speech when we do speak of closing churches or closing schools or whatever else the future may bring is that "quiet desperation" Henry David Thoreau, in his book *Walden*, thought was characteristic of the "mass of men." What Thoreau imagined as a common human malady in every time is indeed common to our circuit meetings and church council sessions. Will we be able to get a pastor when our current pastor retires? Who knows? Will we be able to keep the school open in five years? No one can say. Will our church be around when my grandchildren are ready to be on the church council? It is anybody's guess.

What we fear to say aloud or do not know, Jesus says boldly and truly knows. Our Lord does not leave us in quiet despair about Himself or His Bride, the church. The disciples who feared everything were the disciples Jesus visited with His peace on Easter evening (John 20:19-23). If you find despair to be a familiar companion or know someone in despair — whether it is your pastor or your friend or your teacher or your father — consider these things:

#### 1) Christ is the Head of the church.

We cannot live our lives by our own sense of how things may go. Christ is alive. He had many apparently mighty foes, and He triumphed over them all, crushing death and Satan under His feet. At the head of every single Christian congregation is a living, triumphant Victor and King. To His voice we listen, and to Him we answer. His will is not that anyone in the United States of America should perish, but that all should repent and believe the Gospel of His death and resurrection for every sinner. If someone else had risen from the dead, if our doubts and fears had risen from the dead, then perhaps we should listen to them. But only He is the conqueror, so only His Word and His will have the say in our lives and in our churches.

**Service Time**  
**Sun. 9:30 am**

**Education Hour**  
**Sun. 11:00 am**  
**Sept.—May**

**Pastor**  
**Steve Bagnall**

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**872-2770**  
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**989-559-9740**  
**Email**  
**prbagnall**  
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**8:00am-12:00pm**  
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**2) The Head is our hope.**

The more we focus on our uncertainties and fears, the more power they have over us. After Jesus' resurrection, the disciples were still so afraid of the Jewish authorities, who had conspired with Pilate in Jesus' death, that when they gathered, they locked the doors. Their locked doors expressed their closed-off sense of the church — worthwhile enough to gather the already-convinced, fearful enough to make any newcomers impossible. Since our hope for the future is laid entirely on the triune God, we need not succumb to fear. Christ's peace is our present possession because the Lamb's blood cleanses us from all our sins. We do not wish that things would be otherwise than they are. We know that God's Son is working all things together for our good. The future is an unfolding of Christ's plan and ends with His triumphant return, to which we look forward with love and hope.

**3) Our Head has a bright future.**

Despair is only possible between Good Friday's darkness and Easter's brilliant light. You can hear a familiar quiet despair in the reproaches the Emmaus disciples offer to the unknown Jesus who walks beside them: "But we had hoped he was the one to redeem Israel" (Luke 24:21). You can almost see the shrug of resignation in their shoulders and the sigh of despair on their lips. Remember that even the women's Easter morning report of Jesus' resurrection was not believed at that time (Luke 24:22–24; Mark 16:14) — too incredible, too wild, too hopeful, a piece of wishful thinking. Our quiet despair is always our forgetfulness of His resurrection and our refusal to see how it changes everything. Since death is behind Him, the whole future is open to Him. And His future is bright.

**4) His bright future is ours too.**

If Christ had not risen, then the disciples as a group at that time and your congregation as a group of Jesus' disciples today would have no purpose. We could go the way of all purely human organizations: After their purpose has passed, they go the way of all flesh (Job 34:15). That would make sense if Christ were dead. Then we could throw up our hands in resignation and accept death ourselves. Since He is risen, we have not been joined to a body of death, destined to perish, bound to fade away. We were baptized into a death like His that we should all share in a resurrection like His. Christ's church moves always from life to life, alive in Him now and headed for life everlasting.

**5) Despair is not your master. Christ is your Lord.**

Forget what lies behind, the steps your family or your congregation could have taken but did not. Put aside the bitterness of the past and the regrets that you did not see earlier or grasp sooner what would make for the Gospel's growth in your home or in your town. Christ is not only Lord of the past, reigning over black-and-white photographs of large confirmation classes or happy baptismal parties in churches now closed. Christ is also Lord today and now and always.

Think of who in your area needs the hope He brings today. Ponder what would deepen your church's knowledge of His peace right now. Act on what is always true: He is alive, and heaven is open to all believers in His promise. Our despair is rooted in our forgetfulness of His victorious life; our joy and hope are rooted in our remembrance of this conquering hero. After every enemy sought to destroy Him, He stepped forth from the grave, wounded on our behalf, crowned with life and victory. In Him, we more than conquer.

*This article originally appeared in the [March 2024 issue](#) of The Lutheran Witness.*

## Ian's Vicarage Placement-it's a big deal!

Excitement builds at our LCMS seminaries as the day of vicarage placement draws near. As they gather for the special placement worship service, the men and their families do not know their assignments. Where will they be moving in just a few weeks? Will they be headed close to their home town, or far across the country? What kind of church will it be?

These men – including Ian – have heard Jesus's call to leave home and dedicate themselves to intensive study of God's Word. Now they will get their next big taste of the life that lies ahead, placing themselves under God's direction and going wherever He sends them.

Before receiving their placement, each seminary student meets with the vicarage place-

ment director to explain his own background and any special needs or preferences he or his family may have. Some men pray they will be placed in a large parish where they can experience the teamwork that goes on in that setting. Others may hope to go to a church with a Lutheran school. Others ask to be sent far from the place they come from, so they can experience something new. After consulting other professors to determine what kind of experience would best suit each man, these advisors sit down with the District Presidents from across the country to match vicar candidates with congregations.

Vicarage consists of one year of in-service education (kind of like an internship). Under the supervision of a local pastor, Vicar Habicht (as he will be



known) will gain practical experience in the daily life and ministry of a pastor. In addition to regular preaching opportunities, vicars usually assist in planning and leading services of the congregation and are mentored as they learn to visit the sick and shut-in members of the congregation, youth and confirmation work, leading Bible Study and many other facets of pastoral life.

**The assignment service can be livestreamed on Tuesday, April 23rd at 7:00 pm thru the following webpage:**  
[ctsfw.edu/daily-chapel](https://ctsfw.edu/daily-chapel)

## Women's Saturday Bible Study

Did you know that Good Shepherd's LWML group hosts a Women's Bible study every month?

The group invites all women to join them on Saturday,

April 20th at 9:00 am, in digging a little deeper into what God has to say to us through His Word.

If you have any questions about the Bible study, speak with Allison Schulz.



## Voters' Meeting- Sunday, April 21

On Tuesday, April 16th Church Council will meet. They will be establishing the agenda for April's Voters Meeting. If you have an item that you would like to bring before the voters, please give it to a council member before their meeting. Council members are

Ron Pawloski, Jerry Guinther, Roger Gnagey, Beth McCallum, Pete Martin, Paul Kruse, Judy Hahn, Anna Irwin, Shannon Horning and Gin Lounsbury.

## Fortress Mission Fund Distribution

At the April Voter's meeting the assembly will decide where to send this year's proceeds from the Fortress Mission fund (\$6,826.64). If you have a suggestion to add to the ballot let pastor know.

Remember that a mission has as its main work delivering the gospel to people

who are currently unbelievers, and that, in order to qualify, a group must meet our doctrinal standards. A more complete explanation is available on the "What are Missions?" sheet on the narthex table.

The deadline to make your mission suggestions is April 6th.



## Volunteer Opportunity

Spring is finally here and pretty soon the grass will turn green and start growing. The trustees are looking for people who will take a turn mowing our church grounds this summer. Our mowing season starts in May and runs through October. There is a lawnmower for your use in our

shed. We do ask that you bring gasoline to fill the tank. Sign up on the bulletin board in the hallway if you are able to help. Thank you!



## LWML Spring Rally

The Thumb Zone of LWML will have their spring rally at Trinity Lutheran Church in Forestville on Tuesday, April 23rd, 6:00 pm.

Guest speaker will be Joy Hudson from POBLO. People Of the Book Lutheran Outreach is a organization the shares the love of Jesus with Muslims and other immigrants and refugees living in the US.

Bring non-perishable food,

winter coats (in good condition), household items (kitchen supplies, towels, blankets), or sewing supplies as an ingathering for POBLO.

A light dinner and rally will follow the presentation.

Cost is an \$8.00 registration fee & a free will offering.

If you would like to carpool to Forestville, speak with Allison Schulz.

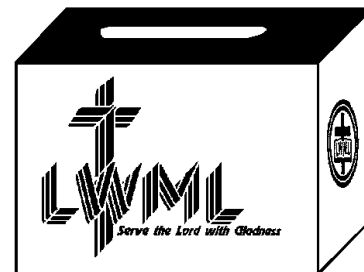


The LWML Michigan District Convention is June 28th—30th in Grand Rapids. Early bird registration prices are open until April 15th. Speak with Allison Schulz for all the details.

## LWML Mite Collection

Thank you to everyone who has contributed to the special Lenten mite collection. There is still time to get your mites into the collection. Bring in your small

mite box and empty it into the large one on the narthex table.



## What is Orphan Grain Train?

Orphan Grain Train is a non-profit Christian volunteer network that shares personal and material resources with people in need in America and 71 countries around the world. Orphan Grain Train—Michigan in Sebewaing is the operational center of this network in our state. A secondary processing

center is in Flint. Volunteers gather and process donations of clothing, medical supplies, quilts, and other aid to meet real needs. Orphan Grain Train is a recognized service organization of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod and is a loving response to Jesus Christ's example as a servant and His love for us.



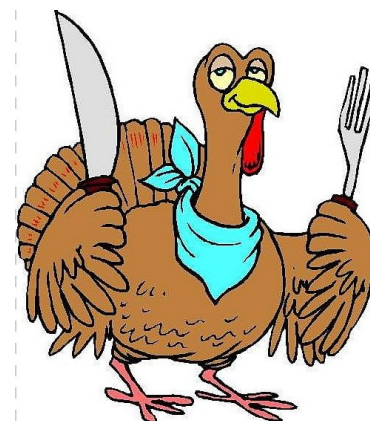
Learn more at [ogt.org](http://ogt.org) or contact the Michigan Branch Manager, Pastor David Reed, 989-600-2264.

## Turkey Dinner- April 14

Our annual Turkey Dinner will be served noon until 2:30pm. It will be served all-you-can-eat buffet style like last year. Ticket prices will remain the same at Adults \$12.00, Children 5-12 \$6.00, and under 5 free.

Wanted: Plastic grocery bags to pack take outs in and larger yogurt and cool whip containers to hold leftovers.

Donation slips and Volunteer opportunities are on a table at the back of the narthex.



## Bake Sale

As part of the Turkey Dinner day tradition our Women's Ministry group is sponsoring a bake sale that will start at 11:00 am and run till everything is gone. It is a busy weekend, but the sale needs baked goods to be successful. Can you help out? Bake a treat or two to

donate to the sale or make a purchase of your favorite baked goods.

All proceeds go toward Women's Ministry projects here at Good Shepherd and to missions and mercy care agencies.



## Homebound Members

Barb & Alan Rogers  
5260 Black River Rd.  
Naubinway, MI 49762

Bea Rhinehardt  
Stonegate Health Campus  
2525 DeMille Blvd.  
Lapeer, MI 48446

Dale & Audrey Leslie  
3204 Leslie Rd  
Decker, MI 48426-9747

Shirley Kappen  
3192 Cass City Rd.  
Cass City, MI 48726

Loretta Hacker  
6152 Greenland Rd.  
Cass City, MI 48726

Lois Moslander  
2760 Phillips Rd.  
Cass City, MI 48726

Joanne O'Dell  
4334 Krapf Rd.  
Cass City, MI 48726

Marcia Hoffman  
Heritage Hill Assisted Living  
1430 Cleaver Rd.  
Caro, MI 48723

Ruth Balzer  
6391 Beechwood Dr.  
Cass City, MI 48726

## Youth Fundraising

Thank you to everyone who has attended one of our meals, purchased subs, donated pop cans or Thrivent Choice dollars.

Because of you, we are able to travel to Arkansas this July to attend the Higher Things gathering.

If you would like to donate to the can/bottle drive, bring your cans in and put them in the box in the educational wing hallway. If you would like the group to pick them up from your home, contact Michelle Hoppe at 989-670-1164.



## Kitchen Cleaning

The kitchen needs a good cleaning before our annual Turkey dinner. A date has been scheduled: Wednesday April 3rd at 9:00 am. Mark your calendar to come and help.

There is also a date scheduled after Turkey dinner to do a final wipe down of the cupboards and counters; Tuesday, April 17th at 9:00 am.

## Quilting

The Good Shepherd quilters will meet on Tuesday, April 9th and 23rd. They start work at 10:00 am and usually finish around 2:00 pm. Bring a lunch and join in or drop in and work for as long as you are able.

If you would like to help out at home by finishing the quilt tops or sewing squares, speak with Sharon Rockwell or Joann Guinther.



The Women's Ministry Executive Committee will meet on Tuesday, April 9th. If you have an idea or project that you would like Women's Ministry to take on, speak with any committee member: Gin Lounsbury, Traci Schulz, Allison Schulz, Chris Weippert, Amy Talaski, Joann Guinther, Diane Lowe and Beth McCallum.

# February Financial Report

submitted by Roger Gnagey; Treasurer

**Year to Date:**

|                     | <b><u>Income</u></b> | <b><u>Expenses</u></b> | <b><u>Difference</u></b> |
|---------------------|----------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|
| <b>Current</b>      | \$22,008.12          | \$25,213.65            | -\$3,205.53              |
| <b>Missions</b>     | \$1,164.00           |                        |                          |
| <b>LRPF</b>         | \$425.00             |                        |                          |
| <b>Com. Ser.</b>    | 0.00                 |                        |                          |
| <b>Facility Use</b> | <u>15.00</u>         |                        |                          |
| <b>Total:</b>       | \$23,612.12          |                        |                          |

**Thumb National CD**

|                     |              |
|---------------------|--------------|
| Easton Estate:      | \$282,739.40 |
| Church Reserve:     | \$26,024.90  |
| 2020 Savings:       | \$12,443.30  |
| Easton Scholarship: | \$137,676.34 |
| Office Equipment:   | \$6,773.81   |
| Trustee Fund:       | \$28,383.11  |

**Church Extension Fund**

Total: \$13,653.10

**February:**

|                   |                    |                  |                    |
|-------------------|--------------------|------------------|--------------------|
| <b>Current</b>    | \$11,371.50        |                  |                    |
| <b>Expenses</b>   | <u>\$10,894.53</u> | Checking acct.   | \$70,238.18        |
| <b>Difference</b> | \$476.97           | Dedicated accts. | <u>\$53,110.24</u> |
|                   |                    | Balance          | \$17,127.94        |

Copies of the monthly reports are available on the Narthex table.

**April 3**Kim Frank  
Mari Lowe**April 4**

Kian Hope

**April 5**

Tony Schuette

**April 10**

Kris Adams

**April 11**

Wendy Leppert

**April 12**

Cheryl Guinther

**April 14**

Elyse Hoppe

**April 17**Jim Guinther  
Cindy Kruse**April 18**

Janice Sting

**April 20**

Paul Kruse

**April 21**

Marty Zawilinski

**April 23**

Ona Kramer

**April 26**Kate Collins  
Evelyn Jameson**April 27**

Diane Lowe

**April 28**

Jason Reinke

**April 29**

Mike Lowe

**April 1**

Eric &amp; Brittany Guinther

**April 14**

Scott &amp; Tana Shrader

**April 30**Chris & Anna Irwin  
Sam & Wendy Leppert