



River Spirit

CHURCH OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD,
UNITED METHODIST OSWEGO, IL 60543

“The Good News”

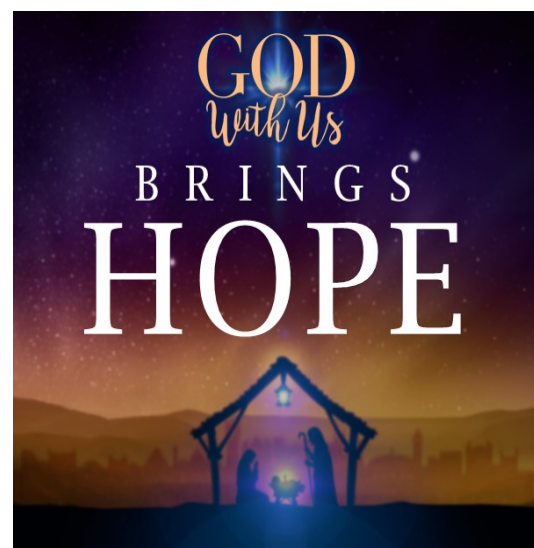
Worry and fear are pervasive these days. Even in pre-pandemic times, we could easily find plenty to worry about, but now we seem to have hit new levels of anxiety. Our country is politically divided and divisive. Gridlock arguments not only occur on the floor of Congress; they occur on social media, in neighborhoods, in churches, and in our homes. Friendships are realigning based on which presidential candidate was supported. Racial injustice and other forms of social discrimination continue, and voices of protest or silence keep the tensions high.

This is a season when we need Advent and the promise of Christmas. In the Advent study I am leading this season, author Adam Hamilton notes that, in the midst of our pandemic and other social ills, the coming of Jesus, the promise of Emmanuel, “God with us” is as important as ever. He writes: *“Over one hundred times in scripture, God, an angel, a prophet, the psalmist, or Jesus himself said to someone ‘Don’t be afraid’. Why not fear? Consistently the answer was because ‘God is with us.’”*

We still have much work to do in containing the spread of COVID-19, and setting a tone of civility and respect in the midst of our divisiveness.

But in the midst of it all, as we decorate our homes with symbols of light, joy, and peace, may we reflect the spirit of Jesus, whose coming at Christmas is meant to give us hope and comfort, and a reason to set aside our fear.

Peace,
Pastor Steve



www.goodshepherdoswego.org

December 2020

From The Office:

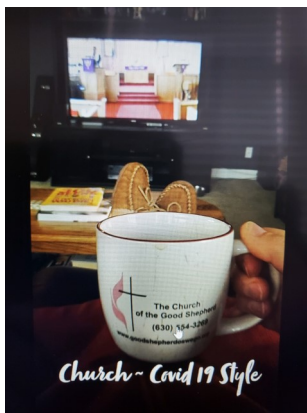


Photo by Debbie Klonowski

We have our worship service posted by 8:00 on Sunday mornings (Website and youtube with a 9:00 premier on Facebook) as well as Wednesday devotionals at 6pm, and Thursday story time for the kids at 11am.

If you would like to have a zoom meeting with your group and would like us to set it up for you email Jessie at publications@goodshepherdoswego.org

Our Sunday services and mid week events will remain ONLINE and posted on Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/gschurchumc/> as well as our website

www.goodshepherdoswego.org

and

YouTube channel.

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC7_pWWqaud8IFd9Im27oJNA?

Our office remains closed through August but you can call or email us with anything you need! 630-554-3269 or office@goodshepherdoswego.org

Poinsettia Orders! Help decorate our sanctuary and dedicate a poinsettia. We have 2 options this year. Our regular poinsettia order for \$12 and you may pick up your poinsettia the week of Christmas or just do a dedication with a free will offering. We will have the dedication list in the bulletin on Christmas Eve. Orders may be mailed to the church or sent electronically by December 15th.


CHRISTMAS POINSETTIA ORDER

Name _____

In Honor Of _____

In Memory Of _____

In Celebration Of _____

☐ \$12 purchase and pick up ☐ Dedication only & free will offering

Please return orders and payment to the Church of the Good Shepherd, UMC, PO Box 695, Oswego, IL 60543-0695. Thank you!

Must be received by December 15th

Call or email the office at office@goodshepherdoswego.org or 630-554-3269

Online Giving

*Make a Secure Donation
Schedule Recurring Gifts*

GIVING: Online giving is available and is appreciated as we will still have our regular operating costs and bills. Please mail in your giving to P.O. Box 695 5 W. Washington St. Oswego IL 60543 or use our E giving for online giving

<https://giving.ncsservices.org/app/giving/goodshepherdoswego>

Good Shepherd Health Team



COVID-19 Response

Church of the Good Shepherd's Church Council has taken on the role of "Health Team" as we consider when and how we can return to in-person worship. **No date has been set at this time, as our congregation and building size limits our ability to safely open our doors.** After discussing a document from our Bishop and the Northern Illinois Conference that lists "Absolute Guidelines" and "Best Practices" for Phase 3 and 4, the Health Team has decided to continue with online worship only. Examples of the restrictions that led to that decision include the limit of 50 people for a gathering in any 24 hour period, the social distancing that may limit our numbers well under 50 people, and the restrictions against singing (which is one of the more dangerous ways that a virus can be spread).

Thank you so much for your patience and understanding in the meantime, as we find creative ways to continue to be the church together!

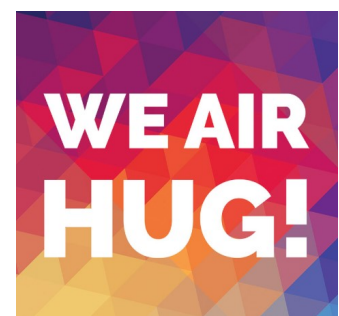
Peace,
Pastor Steve

The Church of the Good Shepherd has been meeting on a regular basis. Most recently, our Health Team agreed that worship services will return when our area reaches stage 5. Groups allowed inside our building at this time will be limited to: groups who contribute to our online worship production, recognized Good Shepherd groups, our Little Shepherd Preschool, and others with a previously agreed-upon contract. We are keeping watch on safety guidelines set by the Northern Illinois Conference and how they apply to our own building and ventilation system. Our goal is to be sure all who enjoy our church building can do so in a safe and healthy environment.

Cleaning supplies, PPE, and thermometers are available for church groups meeting in the church. They are located in the Gathering Room closet and down in the lower level foyer (where the PADS mats are usually kept)



Masks are required when entering the church building at any time. Thank you.



Graceful Generosity

Published to help you grow as a steward of God's grace.

Understanding Stewardship

- † The motive for Christian stewardship is love and gratitude.
- † The purpose is to glorify God.
- † The guide is the revealed will of God.
- † The efficiency is the power of God's grace.

Sharing the Christmas Story

The season of Advent has provided opportunity for us to reflect on God's great love for us fallen sinners that has caused him to send his very own Son who came for the ungodly, even for those who will never acknowledge his sacrifice and who reject his free gift of salvation.

Along with the joy that we have in our Savior, especially at this time of the celebration of his birth, the knowledge that not all experience this joy brings a sorrow to us as it does to the heart of our Lord.

Just as God in his love sent his Son into this world to save the lost, so we are now sent to tell others of that love. Our church's mission is to follow Paul's admonition to Timothy:

"Devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to preaching and to teaching. Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers."

1 Timothy 4:13, 16

Together we preach and teach the Word from the pulpit and through our Bible classes. Together we strive to live as Christ would have us live, persevering by grace, in order that we might bring glory to God and extend his Kingdom. We are grateful for this partnership in the Gospel and for your gifts of time, talents, and financial resources that you so willingly share in order to carry out God's work on earth. God's blessings on your Christmas worship and celebration with loved ones.



Giving to Jesus

Christmas is such a wonderful time of the year because we get the opportunity to celebrate the wondrous gift of God's Son, Jesus. Because of God's gift to us on the very first Christmas, Christmas has become a gift-giving season. With so many people to give gifts to such as sons and daughters, moms and dads, aunts and uncles, grandmas and grandpas, etc., it is difficult to find the right gift for everyone. God has no such problems. He knew exactly what each person needed. In fact, he knows our needs better than we know them, and he knew them before we were ever born. And the timing of his most indescribable gift was perfect.

"When the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law, to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons." Galatians 4:4

How do we respond to what God has given us? Shouldn't we be asking, "What have I given to him?" Certainly, we don't go to the malls to shop for Jesus. The greatest gifts we can give him are not found there anyway. The best gift that we can possibly give him is our hearts and to show him our love by faithfully and obediently doing what he asks of us. God is pleased when we allow him to work through us as channels of his love to others. We will remain his channels when we stay focused on the most indescribable gift, the gift of Jesus.

May we all keep Christ as the heart of our Christmas and make Jesus the reason for our joy.

Tell the Good News

Here we are, ready to celebrate the birth of Christ – a major event, even for those who don't believe in him. Today this celebration is heralded back in October, or at least November, by merchants filling their shelves with enticing gifts, decorations, cards, and all the trappings of Christmas.

How different from the first Christmas! Mary and Joseph settled down in an inn.

There were no photographers waiting outside to snap the first picture of the new king. No one knew what was happening! No one, that is, except for the parents and the host of Heaven who made the announcement. But to whom was this announcement made? To the powerful who would speed through the towns and villages, spreading the news? No, to shepherds who were outcasts, hired hands who were so low on the social scale that they weren't even allowed to give testimony in a court of law. They weren't even allowed to come into the Temple. Yet these were the ones chosen by God to tell the good news. These wretched creatures saw the angels with *"... the glory of the Lord [shining] around them"*

They heard the message the angels brought:

"Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord ... you will find a baby ... lying in a manger." Luke 2: 9, 11, 12

They saw, they listened, and then they went to see for themselves. After receiving the Good News, they spread it.

"When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them." Luke 2:17-18

If lowly shepherds could tell the story, can't we as well? *"All who heard it were amazed,"* Luke writes, but he doesn't say all believed. All we're asked to do is tell the story. How could fear, uncertainty, or apathy hold us back? This is the biggest news mankind has ever received! As stewards of the Gospel, we have no choice but to follow the example of the shepherds and *"spread the word concerning what has been told [us] about this child."*



Blessings on Your Stewardship Journey!



United
Methodist
Women

FAITH • HOPE • LOVE IN ACTION

This is a season of joy! A time when we celebrate the birth of our Saviour, Jesus, as a babe in a manger. This year during COVID, racism, and a nation divided, more than ever we need to celebrate Jesus' birth but also acknowledge and worship Him as the resurrected Messiah, the one who came to save us all.



Because of COVID, our December UMW Unit meeting has been cancelled along with our annual Chili Supper. Our Chili Supper is our UMW's main money raising event that supports our giving to UMW and other mission causes locally, nationally and internationally. So, won't you join us for a **"Chili-less Supper."** Think about what you would have spent in time, donations, or actually dining with us for the Chili Supper and donate that money to our UMW by sending a check to our treasurer, Judy Schurman at 367 Cascade Lane, Oswego. Please mark your check "Chili-less Supper." In that way you will help us strive to live out the part of the UMW Purpose that states "to expand concepts of mission through participation in the global ministries of the church." I am proud to be the President of our UMW which consists of so many dedicated and committed women along with being part of a generous church.

This was an important year for the national UMW as the Board of Directors was elected. I found this interesting so am including an excerpt from an article in the November/December 2020 **response** page 36 by Tara Barnes, editor.

Every four years, United Methodist Women members elect a national United Methodist Women Board of Directors. Twenty women are elected at quadrennial jurisdiction events: Four from the North Central, Northeastern and South Central Jurisdictions, two from the Western Jurisdiction, and six from the Southeastern Jurisdiction based on the number of members in each region. Each jurisdiction also elects two alternates. Five additional directors are later nominated and elected by the national organization to help ensure diversity.

United Methodist Women jurisdiction events are usually large, in-person gatherings with worship, speakers, workshops, volunteering and actions in addition to elections. This year, because of COVID-19 safety concerns, the events were cancelled and elections, for the first time, took place online.

The representatives elected from our North Central Jurisdiction were from Indiana, Michigan, Dakotas, and West Ohio. The alternates come from Illinois Great Rivers and Iowa.

May you have a safe, healthy and blessed Christmas!

Janet McCarty
UMW President





- Grab a coffee and join the UMM online Fridays at 7am! I am planning on have these meetings every Friday morning at 7:00 AM until we can meet at the church again. Contact Craig McGregor for the zoom link.
- We are always looking for people interested in the UMM stocking of the Kendall Co. Food Pantry on Wednesday evenings at 5:00pm.

Please contact the church office at 630-554-3269 or office@goodshepherdoswego.org with any questions.

Good Shepherd United Methodist Men December News

The Northern Illinois Conference of the United Methodist Men held their Give Day on Monday, October 19th.

As you know, the United Methodist Church is suffering financially due to structural changes and the pandemic. The national United Methodist organization has had to cut budgets and of course **United Methodist Men**, being especially important to the budget but not essential to sustaining the organization, has had funding significantly reduced.

The General Commission on United Methodist Men provides essential resources (materials and expertise) to local men's ministries like ours and plays a significant role in advancing Scouting, leadership training, and other initiatives. For example, the Northern Illinois Conference could have never managed the recent Spiritual Congress without the expertise of a national manager who has a lot of experience conducting large virtual meetings.

UMM is unique in that it receives only 25% of its funding from the general church so a gift of any amount is appreciated. We need to expand our team of supporters. You can be a part of this important mission work of United Methodist Men in scouting and men's ministry around the world.

There is still time even now. Be sure to tell your friends, family and church members about the ways men's and youth's lives are being transformed through the power of the Holy Spirit. To donate, please use the information below. There are many ways to give, the United Methodist Men thank you for your generosity.

Text: UMMEN to 44321 or On line: <http://bit.ly/ummgive2020> or Call: 866-297-4312

You can also email ghanke@gcumm.org, rvance@gcumm.org or ssheid@gcumm.org. Thank you for changing people's lives through your support of the General Commission on United Methodist Men.

Thanks,
Craig Mc Gregor
630-346-2239 (c)





Salvation Army Red Kettle

Regrettably, with the ongoing threats related to coronavirus, we will not be seeking volunteers from the church to ring the bell at the Salvation Army Red Kettle this year. However, the need to financially support this organization continues and is probably more urgent now than ever. The UMM and the UMW have already provided monetary donations in their respective names from their organizational funds. Arrangements have also been made for the church to accept monetary donations for the Salvation Army, consolidate them together, and provide all of those funds to the Salvation Army in the name of the Church. For those interested, simply send a check for your donation to the church (made out to the church) and mark the check and the envelope "Salvation Army Red Kettle Donation".

If there are individuals that feel they can safely devote a couple hours (or more) to manning a Red Kettle this year, the opportunity still exists and the assistance would be greatly appreciated by the Salvation Army. You can easily commit to one or more 2 hour shifts, at a time and location of your choice, by going online to <https://registertoring.com>. Simply follow the prompts once at this website and you'll be able to participate.

We hope that we, as a church, will be able to significantly assist the Salvation Army on a monetary basis this year, and look forward to coming years when we can again resume this tradition that we have had for over 25 years at Church of the Good Shepherd by volunteering our time to "Ring the Bell".



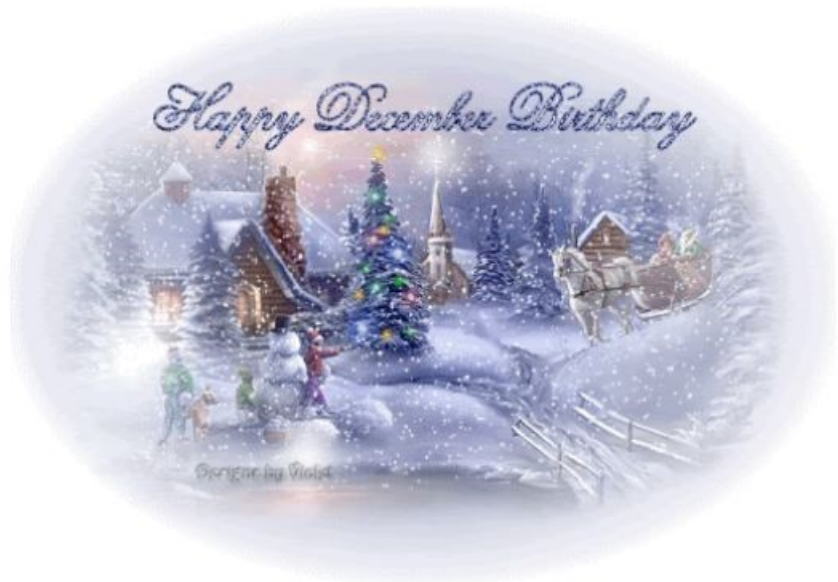
A HUGE THANK YOU to everyone who stepped up and purchased gifts for the three families (14 people) from Share Your Blessings and the 50 children from Angel Tree. Christmas will be joyous this year because you cared. I'm singing God's praises for your generosity. May you have a blessed Christmas!



Help bring us "together" this Christmas season! and make a quick holiday greeting video to share with the congregation! Be as simple or fancy as you would like- the most important part is YOU! If you need help recording a video you can ask a family member to record for you or set up a time with me to do a quick zoom call! These will be shared in our our weekly worship videos and I will make a full greeting video when I receive them all. If you would prefer to send a picture, written greeting, or both that will work too! Send to publications@goodshepherdoswego.org. Please submit your greeting by December 9th or the 15th.

December Birthdays

12/1	Ric Kayer
12/3	Chris Martin
12/4	Peg DeVol
12/4	John Momich
12/5	Don Snyder
12/6	Sherry Gillofo
12/9	Justine Farrow
12/9	Craig Logston
12/10	Phyllis Wagner
12/12	Ann LeClercq
12/13	Donna Mason
12/13	Diana Mewmaw
12/14	Isaac Zilvitis
12/15	Lucietta Saka
12/18	Bob Baker
12/19	Trent Roberts
12/20	Karen Pleskovich
12/21	Lukas Dobbin
12/22	Margaret Wackerlin
12/23	Carol Dodd
12/25	Maggie Giles
12/28	Jaycee Fourmont
12/28	Nick Randazzo



Please notify the church office if you have a special life event that you would like included in our next newsletter. Email us by the 15th of the month at publications@goodshepherdoswego.org Thank you.

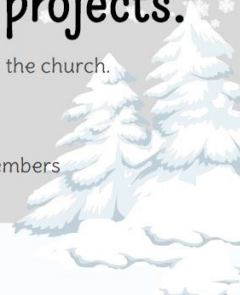


The Youth decorated the outside of the church and are inviting the congregation to stop by and add an ornament to the tree! What a wonderful activity for us.



This year the youth group will be working on a few different projects.

- * Community Christmas Tree outside the church.
- * Christmas Play
- * Holiday Cards for Congregation Members



www.goodshepherdoswego.org

The Church of the Good Shepherd



United Methodist
5 W. Washington St.
PO Box 695
Oswego, IL 60543

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



Everyone is Welcome!

- Wheelchair Accessible building
- 8:15 AM traditional and 10:30 AM contemporary services.
- Weddings dates available for our beautiful 1890's sanctuary and downstairs reception area. 630-554-3269.
- We practice open Communion, we honor the Evangelical tradition of using grape juice and bread and gluten-free
- Space available for weddings, parties, events and meetings. Alcohol not permitted.



Find us on
Facebook

Pastor: Pastor Steve Good

pastor@goodshepherdoswego.org

Youth Director: Rachel Conover: jessicarc31@gmail.com

Executive Assistants: Diane Baum and
Jessie Livingston

Church Office Hours: Mon-Fri 9am-3pm

Newsletter Editor:
publications@goodshepherdoswego.org

Office Email: office@goodshepherdoswego.org

Little Shepherd Preschool:
little shepherdps@sbcglobal.net

Director – Amanda Sidhu Teacher: Eileen Lesak

Teachers Aides: Vincenza Ferguson & Ellie Guzman

Choir Director: Jonathan Tatar

Custodian: Bonnie Kennedy

Nursery Attendant: Shannon Cronin

Organist & HandBell Choir Director: Cheryl Todd

Pianist: Sue Gilla

Reborn Praise Band: Jon Conover, Band Leader