



The Shepherd

January, 2025

A newsletter from Shepherd of the Spring Lutheran Church, Missouri Synod,
Colorado Springs, CO

Welcome to All

Sundays

Divine Service *9:00 AM (unless otherwise noted)*
Adult Bible Study *10:30 AM*

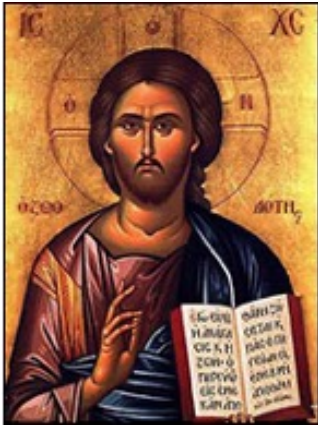
The Shepherd Calendar for January, 2025

- *Jan. 1, Wed. 9:00AM** **Divine Service**
Circumcision and Name of Jesus
- Jan. 2, Thurs. 4:00PM** **Elders meeting**
- Jan. 5, Sun. 9:00AM** **Vigil of the Epiphany**
Installation of new Church Council officers: President and Secretary
10:30AM Bible Study
- *Jan. 6, Mon. 7:00PM** **Divine Service** **Epiphany of Our Lord**
- Jan. 12, Sun. 9:00AM** **1st. Sunday after the Epiphany**
10:30AM Bible Study
- Jan. 19, Sun. 9:00 AM** **2nd Sunday after Epiphany**
Wedding at Cana
10:30AM Bible Study
- Jan. 26, Sun. 9:00AM** **Feast of St. Titus, Pastor and Confessor**
Baptism of Our Lord
10:30AM Bible Study

A New Year's Resolution Kept for You

Romans 8:31-39

Dear fellow redeemed in Christ Jesus, our Lord,



Well, it's happened...again! Another year has come and gone. I've learning that the older you get, the days, months, and years seems to go by faster and faster! Where does the time go: well, as it always has...one second at a time! It is hard for me to believe that its already been over three and a half years that I was called to Shepherd of the Springs! What blessing from our Lord!

As we begin 2025, this is a special time for us-a time when we look back upon the year that's about to end and look forward to the year that's about to begin. Its a time for us to take stock of our lives and the lives of those around us:a time for us to count and be thankful for the man blessings we've received in the past year.

Maybe 2024 was a banner year for you! Maybe it was a year that will produce nothing but good memories! Or maybe it was a year that could not have come to an end fast enough; a year that you would like to erase from your memory! Even so, whether great, or not so great, you may be excited to begin a New Year! Even those who are struggling and suffering and having a bad time of it right now, can escape their misery for a few moments during this time of year to hope and plan for 2025! Yet, as you begin, a New Year, you don't just leave your fate to hopes and dreams!

Many, maybe too many, will make a resolution or resolutions. You plan to change things! Good intentions are at an all time high and willpower is exalted to a place of invincibility. You resolve to make changes in your life! This will be the year you get healthy; you'll stop smoking or drinking so much and start exercising! You may resolve to stop eating junk food, eliminate frivolous snacking, and go on a healthy diet. These are resolutions you may make concerning your physical well-being.

There are other kinds of resolutions! You may resolve to be a little kinder, a little more patient, a little less angry. This will be the year that you'll make

your relationships better. You'll show more grace to your loved ones; you'll be more forgiving and understanding; you'll have more compassion on and be more generous to the poor and less fortunate; you'll visit your loved ones more often; you'll heal broken relationships. We're going to be good!

And finally, in addition to the resolutions concerning your physical well-being, personality and relationships; there is another set of resolutions that are often made for a New Year – those concerning your spiritual well-being! Many who've been away from the church for a while will resolve to go back to church. For those of you who attend Divine Services regularly, you will resolve to not miss a single service this year, to begin attending Bible Study (which I sincerely encourage), to begin devotions at home, to read the Bible and to pray daily! You resolve to grow in the Word and increase your faith this year! You resolve to spread the message of the Good News of Jesus to your family, friends, neighbors, and co-workers. You resolve to be a better Christian, a better and more faithful witness of your Lord Jesus!

In response to all of your resolutions, your pastor has good news and bad news for you! Let's begin with the bad news! The bad news is that while nearly everyone makes resolutions at the onset of a new year, very few are kept! While intentions are good, the flesh is weak! Many will not smoke their last cigarette on Jan 1, 2025 or take their last drink of too much alcohol. Many will not follow through with a healthy diet and daily exercise. Many will fail to be the new and improved nicer and more loving version of themselves. Many will not follow through on their resolution to attend Divine Service and Bible Study every week, to read the Bible and pray daily, and to be the soldiers for Christ they resolve to be! Some will accomplish their resolution (s)...most won't! The great majority of resolution makers will fail to live up to their good intentions. They may make it for a few days, weeks, even a month or two, but eventually the weakness of their flesh will win out and they will fail to live up to their expectations!

It's very important to be honest with yourself! You and I and all people are sinful human beings! We are imperfect. We do fail. We are NOT good! We know this, since our sinful nature rears its ugly head every single day! So with all this bad news...your pastor does have good news for you! The good news is that there is One who makes resolutions and keeps them!

Your Lord God resolved to save you from all your sins by sending His Son into the world to fulfill the Law you can't fulfill and to pay the price you owe for your sins...on His cross. God is ALWAYS faithful to His resolutions - He sent His Son, Jesus, the Christ, who accomplished everything necessary for your

salvation. Your Lord is a resolution-maker and a resolution-keeper! He makes promises and is completely, 100%, faithful to them. He knows your pitiful condition. He knows how incapable you are of keeping the resolutions you make. He knows that your weak flesh is more often than not stronger than your good intentions. And yet, He loves you anyway, and He resolves to shower you with His forgiveness, life, and salvation—to keep you in the one, true faith that you may be His forever. This is the remarkable Good News I have for you as you begin 2025!

In the words of St. Paul from Romans 8:

“What, then, shall we say in response to this? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all -- how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. Who is he that condemns? Christ Jesus, who died -- more than that, who was raised to life -- is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword?

As it is written: ‘For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.’ No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Rom. 8:31-39).

This is one of the most beautiful passages in all of Scripture. You would be hard-pressed to find a more wonderful and appropriate passage to consider, to pray, and to memorize, as you begin 2025!

Dearly beloved, your Lord assures you that nothing that has happened in 2024, whether good or bad, nor anything that will happen in 2025, whether good or bad, will ever separate you from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus your Lord! That’s the Good News, the Gospel, and it far outweighs the bad!

As you look back on 2024, and look forward to 2025, here’s a New Years’ resolution you can count on: Your Lord Jesus is with you at all times. He is with you through the good and the bad. He is with you when you mourn, suffer, and grieve. He is with you when you’re sick, when you’re diagnosed with a fatal disease, when you’re on your deathbed. He is with you through financial difficulties and broken relationships. He is with you when you celebrate the birth of a child, when you experience the joy of marriage, when

you're healthy and experience wonderful blessings in your life. He is with you at all times! That's His resolution and He WILL KEEP IT!

Even though you're a sinner and do not deserve His love, His blessings, or Him to be with you, He is! He has always been there, ever since He placed His Name upon you and sealed you with the Holy Spirit at your Baptism. He comes to you in the Divine Service through His Word and Sacrament. He gives you His very Body and Blood to strengthen and preserve you in the one true faith. He resolves to continue to be with you throughout the coming year. He will continue to meet you here, in His Holy House, to forgive you of your sins, to feed you with His Life-giving Word and Holy Supper, and to strengthen your faith! He resolves to love you completely and He has kept, and always will keep, His resolution to you!

Dearly beloved, know and believe this and continue to come to His Most Holy Place where He promises to meet you; and 2025 will be a year of tremendous blessing for you, no matter what comes your way.

In Jesus' Holy and Precious Name,

Pastor +++



Members

Ron Dodge

Cheri Penwell

Darrell Root

Marlene Schmidt

Military

Major (CH) Gerson Flor (Canadian Armed Forces)

Captain Rob Landers (USAF) (Barry's Son-in-Law)

Captain Abel Wilson (USAF) (Friend of SSLC)

1LT Frederick Heidt (USAF) (Friend of Larry and Sue)

Master Sergeant (USMC) Kyle Chase (Dale & Kari's Nephew)

First Sergeant (USA) Benjamin Kueter

Sergeant First Class (USA) Jordan Etchells (Dale & Kari's Son)

A1C Trevor Smith (USAF)

Cadet Ethan Dodson (USAF Prep School)

Family Members

Gayle Rathbone (Heather's Mother)

Patty Krueger (Barry's Widow)

Kathi Chase (Kari's Sister)

Rainer Dieterle (Conny's Father)

Dennis Etchells (Dale's Brother)

Eli (Shannon and Ben's nephew)

Blake (Shannon's brother)

Raquel (Lindsay's sister)

Janice Patterson (Pastor's Mother)



John Chrysostom, Preacher

January 27



You may be surprised to know that “Chrysostom” was not John’s family name. It’s actually a moniker that was given to him due to his eloquent preaching; thus, “Chrysostom” is Greek for “*golden-mouthed*.” This was the endearing term that his parishioners called him, and soon so did everyone else.

St. John Chrysostom was a dominant force in the fourth-century Christian Church. Born in Antioch around 347 AD, John was instructed in the Christian faith by his pious mother, Anthusa. After serving in a number of Christian offices, including acolyte and lector, John was ordained a presbyter and given preaching responsibilities. His simple but direct messages found an audience well beyond his hometown.

In 395 AD, John Chrysostom was made patriarch of Constantinople. His determination to reform the church court, and city, brought him into conflict with established authorities. Eventually he was exiled from his adopted city. Although removed from his parishes and people, he continued writing and preaching until the time of his death in 407 AD. It is reported that his final words were “*Glory be to God for all things! Amen.*” His life can remind us that following Jesus does not automatically mean an easy or prosperous life, even in a “Christian” setting.

The best way to know how his preaching and writing were like is to give you a sample. The following is a short example from John’s Second Homily on St. John 1:1,

“In the beginning was the Word.”

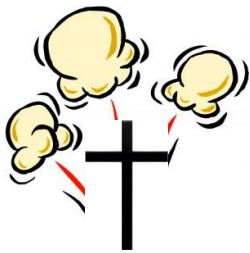
Were John about to converse with us, and to say to us words of his own, we needs must describe his family, his country, and his education. But since it is not he, but God by him, that speaks to mankind, it seems to me superfluous and

distracting to enquire into these matters. And yet even thus it is not superfluous, but even very necessary. For when you have learned who he was, and from whence, who his parents, and what his character, and then hear his voice and all his heavenly wisdom, then you shall know right well that these (doctrines) belong not to him, but to the Divine power stirring his soul.

From what country then was he? From no country; but from a poor village, and from a land little esteemed, and producing no good thing. For the Scribes speak evil of Galilee, saying, "Search and look, for out of Galilee arises no prophet" [John 7:52]. And the Israelite indeed speaks ill of it, saying, Can any good thing come out of Nazareth? And being of this land, he was not even of any remarkable place in it, but of one not even distinguished by name.^[1]

Prayer: O God, You gave to Your servant John Chrysostom grace to proclaim the Gospel with eloquence and power. As bishop of the great congregations of Antioch and Constantinople, he fearlessly bore reproach for the honor of Your name. Mercifully grant to all bishops and pastors such excellence in preaching and fidelity in ministering Your Word that Your people shall be partakers of the divine nature; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, One God, now and forever. Amen.

^[1]Translated by Charles Marriott. From Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, First Series, Vol. 14. Edited by Philip Schaff. (Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Publishing Co., 1889.)



Catechetical Kernel

The History of the Advent Wreath

As with many long-standing customs, the origins of the Advent wreath are somewhat debated. Some histories of the Advent wreath say that Christians simply adapted an even earlier custom from pre-Christian Germanic tribes. Supposedly, then, these pagan people tried to break the darkness of winter with candles and invoke the sun god to return with the warmth and light of spring. In addition, the evergreen wreath would remind them that there is still life and the circle of time would again come back to spring.

According to this viewpoint, Christians later placed a Biblical meaning to the old customs. Now the candles pointed to Jesus, the Light of the world (St. John 3:17-21.) The evergreen wreath now reminded believers that our God grants new and everlasting life in Jesus Christ, The First and the Last, The beginning and the end! It may also symbolize the infinity of God.

The Advent Wreath



The wreath was also a symbol of victory, for a garland wreath was often placed on victors in contests or conquests. So naturally, a Christian can think of the crown of life that Jesus has won for us. The four candles in an Advent wreath would then emphasize the four week period of penitence and preparation during Advent, as we eagerly await the coming of the Light of the world to bring new life and hope. The Advent wreath became quite popular in homes in post- Reformation Germany and it seems pretty certain that in many German homes families had a custom of lighting four candles during Advent, candles placed in a wreath of evergreens.

When these candles were lit, Scripture and prayer was part of the custom and the family devotion time was a time of instructing the children about Christ's First and Second Advent. Later the custom crossed over different denominational lines and other faith traditions. The Advent wreath is more than a pretty decoration. It is a symbol during the four weeks of the Advent season to assist in turning one's thoughts and heart toward Jesus.

The Meaning of the Advent Candles

Many different meanings have been given to the four candles and the other parts of the wreath. None are right or wrong. Here is one common interpretation of the meaning of the various parts of the Advent wreath.

Most Advent wreaths use three colors – violet, rose, and white.

1st CANDLE – (purple) THE PROPHECY CANDLE or CANDLE OF HOPE – We can have hope because God is faithful and will keep His promises made to us. Our hope comes from God. *“And again, Isaiah says, ‘The Root of Jesse will spring up, one who will arise to rule over the*



nations; the Gentiles will hope in him.' May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit" (Romans 15:12-13).



2nd CANDLE – (purple) THE BETHLEHEM CANDLE or THE CANDLE OF PREPARATION – God kept His promise of a Savior who would be born in Bethlehem. Preparation means to “get ready”. Help us to be ready to welcome You, O God! *“As is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet: ‘A voice of one calling in the desert, ‘Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him. Every valley shall be filled in, every mountain and hill made low. The crooked roads shall become straight, the rough ways smooth. And all mankind will see God’s salvation”* (St. Luke 3:4-6).



3rd CANDLE – (rose...not pink!) THE SHEPHERD CANDLE or THE CANDLE OF JOY – The angels sang a message of JOY! *“...and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn. And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, ‘Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.’ Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, ‘Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests.’ When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, ‘Let’s go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about”* (St. Luke 2:7-15).



4th CANDLE – (violet) THE ANGEL CANDLE or THE CANDLE OF LOVE – The angels announced the Good News of a Savior. God sent His only Son to earth to save us, because He loves us! *“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him”* (St. John 3:16-17). Thus, this candle may also reminds us of the Christian’s great hope of resurrection and everlasting life because the Christ Child will come again on the clouds of heaven with His angels. *“The angel said, ... He will be great, and will be called*

the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give him the throne of his father David... and of his kingdom there will be no end” (St. Luke 1:32-33).



5th CANDLE – (white) “THE CHRIST CANDLE” – The white candle reminds us that Jesus is the spotless Lamb of God, sent to take away the sin of the world! His birth was for His death; His death was for our birth! *“The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, ‘Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world” (St. John 1:29). The prophet wrote, “Arise, shine; for your light has come” (Isaiah 60:1). Jesus said, “I am the light of the world. He who follows me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life” (St. John 8:12).*

“Now there was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a member of the Jewish ruling council. He came to Jesus at night and said, ‘Rabbi, we know you are a teacher who has come from God. For no one could perform the miraculous signs you are doing if God were not with him.’ In reply Jesus declared, ‘I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again.’

‘How can a man be born when he is old?’ Nicodemus asked. ‘Surely he cannot enter a second time into his mother’s womb to be born!’ Jesus answered, ‘I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit. Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit. You should not be surprised at my saying, ‘You must be born again.’ The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit’” (St. John 3:1-8).

A Blessed Advent to you as you await your Lord’s Advent!



**Happy
Birthday**

1-01 Helen Margaurite Goforth

1-14 Shannon Kueter

1-20 Marlene Schmidt

**2025 SSLC Volunteer
Opportunities!**



Help with cleaning the Church— weekly vacuuming, etc. See Larry Groggel

Volunteer to add to our refreshments occasionally. See Carol Ross.

Help with accounting after Divine Sunday. See Dale Etchells



Just Released: Earliest evidence of Christianity north of the Alps

Submitted by Gary Law

In December, the Frankfurt Archaeological Museum released its findings on what is called the “Frankfurt silver inscription”. It is a small 3.5 cm (1-3/8 inch) long silver amulet with a thin silver foil rolled in it. It was obvious the silver foil contained an inscription. The foil, after years in the ground, was too brittle to unroll. Although discovered in 2018, it has taken years of study and analysis to decipher the text.

The amulet was found in a tomb in a cemetery belonging to the ancient Roman city of Nida which was one of the most important Roman settlements in Roman Germania. The excavation is in the modern city of Frankfurt. The significance is that the tomb is dated between 230 and 260 AD and the amulet is the earliest evidence of pure Christianity north of the Alps (north of Italy). It was found in the grave of a 35-45 year old man who was still wearing the amulet around his neck.

The breakthrough didn't come until 2024 when a special x-ray machine and software was able to “digitally unroll” the foil. It was determined that the foil contained 18 lines of text. Several features make the text unusual for the period. The text was entirely in Latin. Normally they were written in Hebrew or Greek. They would also include elements of Judaism or pagan influences. This amulet, however, is pure Christian.

Some of the expressions contained in the text were only known to exist many

decades later. The amulet is now considered one of the most important testimonies to early Christianity. This unknown man has provided a witness for Jesus after almost 1800 years!

Translated text:

(In the name?) of St Titus

Holy, holy, holy

In the name of Jesus Christ, Son of God!

The Lord of the world

resists [to the best of his ability]

All attacks(?)/setbacks(?).

The God(?) grants the well-being entry.

This means of salvation(?) protects the person who

surrenders to the will

of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God,

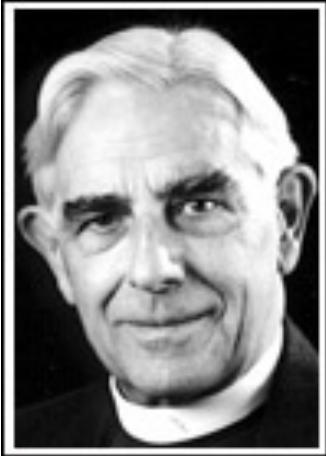
since before Jesus Christ

all knees bow to Jesus Christ: the heavenly,

the earthly and

the subterranean, and every tongue confess (to Jesus Chris





Timothy Dudley-Smith----Who?!

Compiled by Evelyn Law

Although you probably don't recognize his name, Lutheran Service Book (LSB) contains 16 hymns written by Timothy Dudley-Smith. The hymns you might be most familiar with are "Be Strong in the Lord" (LSB #665) and "No Tramp of Soldiers' Marching Feet" (LSB #444). In all, he published about 500 hymn texts, even though he didn't start composing until age 34. His first hymn was "Tell Out, My Soul, the Greatness of the Lord" (LSB #935).

Dudley-Smith frequently noted he wasn't actually musical. He didn't write any music, just the metrical poetry that could be put to various singable melodies. However, he realized the importance of hymns. He observed that "Many people learn more theology from hymns than from anywhere else. They provide a corporate participation in a unique way, enabling an expression of praise, penitence, commitment, and a whole range of things together. Also, I think, for many people, the hymn offers the chance to express emotions which are in their hearts, but which they would find difficulty in articulating themselves."

Dudley-Smith was born in Manchester, England, on December 26, 1926. His father was a schoolteacher who frequently read poetry to his children at bedtime.

When Dudley-Smith was 11, his father died, which proved to be a pivotal event for the young boy's faith. "I had prayed when I knew he was ill, and you might think that my prayers not altering the situation would have put me off," he said in an interview. "But it didn't. It introduced me to my need of a heavenly Father."

Around that time, he decided he wanted to be a minister, and the Church of England ordained him in 1950. During his ministry, he served as a parish priest, an archdeacon, and a bishop. He edited a Christian magazine, *Crusade*, which was founded after Billy Graham's 1955 London crusade. He also served on various other editorial committees.

He was an honorary vice-president of the Hymn Society of Great Britain and Ireland, a Fellow of the Hymn Society in the United States and Canada, and a Fellow of the Royal School of Church Music. In 2003 he was awarded the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire (several ranks below a knighthood) for services to hymnody, in 1991 a Master of Letters degree conferred by the Archbishop of Canterbury, and in 2009 an honorary Doctor of Divinity from the University of Durham.

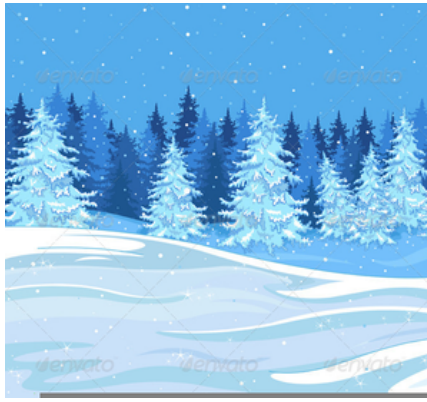
Dudley-Smith retired to Cambridge in 2019 and died there peacefully on August 12, 2024. His wife, June, died in 2007 after 48 years of marriage. He is survived by daughters Caroline and Sarah and son James, who followed him into the ministry.





A Thank You from Pastor and Yong

Dear beloved, Yong and I want to extend a sincere, heart-felt thank you to all of you who gave towards the collection gathered for us this Christmas. We were deeply touched when you presented to us a card with such a generous gift! It is an absolute blessing for Yong and me. It is also a great gift of God that He has called me to be your servant of His flock here at Shepherd of the Springs! Thank you, again, for your generosity! We also want to thank all of you who sent us Christmas cards and who presented us with other Christmas gifts and goodies. Thanks again to all of you! It means more than you could possibly know!



January 1, 2025

*"Tomorrow is the first blank page
of a 365-page book.
Write a good one."*

— Brad Paisley



***The Shepherd newsletter is a publication of Shepherd of the Springs
Lutheran Church, Missouri Synod***

A Confessional, Evangelical, Sacramental, and Liturgical Church

Where the Lutheran Reformation Lives!

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