

Good Shepherd

LUTHERAN CHURCH

1500 Sand Lake Road | Holmen, WI 54636 | 608-526-4829 | gsholmen.org

January Newsletter 2026

KOKAVIM

As I write this on Tuesday, it is officially the Day of Epiphany. We celebrate it in worship on Sunday, sometimes referred to as the “Gentile Christmas”. The Gospel for the day is the Magi worshipping the Christ child, led by the star. Epiphany makes me think of these words of Simeon’s song as he held the Christ child in his arms at the temple: **“My eyes have seen your salvation . . . a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of your people Israel.”** (Luke 2:30,32)

Revelation, enlightenment, for the Gentiles is all about nations and ethnicities that had for many centuries blindly worshipped man-made gods, now given eyes to see. They now see the true God, in the coming of Jesus Christ, God’s Son. The Magi, the wise men, were among the first. They were Gentiles, non-Jews, who saw the light. First, the light of the star, then the light of Jesus the Savior’s face.

Like many of you, I am a Gentile. I have mostly German and some Swiss ethnicity. To remind myself of the riches of God’s grace to Gentiles like us, I had an idea recently. It came, strangely enough, as I was using a public parking garage in downtown La Crosse. To pay for parking, I realized I needed to enter my license plate number, but I couldn’t remember it, since I was given a new one recently. I thought of how personalized plates would be easier. For an extra \$15 a year, it would be worth it, *if* I found personalization that had any meaning. It came to me as I was reading a devotion book from WELS that has a daily Hebrew reading. The day’s Old Testament reading was Genesis 15:5. God had taken Abraham outside at night and said:

“Look up at the heavens and count the stars—if indeed you can count them.” Then he said to him, “So shall your offspring be.”

This is God’s promise of many children to Abraham—spiritual children, Jews and Gentiles—who would trust in Abraham’s seed, the Messiah, Jesus. The innumerable stars that Abraham saw, represent you and me and the entire Holy Christian Church. The Hebrew word for “stars” from Genesis 15, transliterated into English is: KOKAVIM. It sounds like, COE-ka-VEEM.

A few weeks ago, KOKAVIM was the personalized plate wording that I applied for with the WI DMV. Now, I pray they’ll accept the application. Further meaning is what God’s Word says in Philippians 2:15. It urges us to live out our faith in peace and purity in a crooked generation in which, **“you shine like stars in the universe, as you hold out the word of life.”**

In that regard, watch for an email announcement next week on the Men of His Word conference for men of our congregation. Also stay tuned for some fun fellowship events for our church – men, women, boys and girls – in the next months. These are more ways we can build friendship and unity. Shine together like stars with our Savior’s forgiving light.

Pastor Gregory Pope

Preschool News from Tammy Melott, Early Childhood Coordinator / Preschool Director

Happy New Year everyone! I pray this year is filled with God's continued blessings for you and your family, and for our ministry here at Good Shepherd. I can't believe almost half of this school year is done, and we are starting to get ready for the 2026-2027 school year.

We are doing this by starting to accept registrations from church members and current preschool families in January. You can access the registration form on our website, fill it out, and leave it on my desk in the office. There is also a \$62 registration fee per family.

We offer a T/TH class from 8:30-11:15, a M/W/F class from 8:30-11:15, a T/W/TH class from 12:30-3:15, and a M-F class from 8AM-3PM. New this year is after school care with the full-time class getting priority. This is being offered M-F from 3PM-5:30PM. Costs for everything can be found on our website. If you have any questions, please reach out to me.

On Sunday, February 15th we will open registration to the public with our Open House from 3:30-4:30. Please let any family members or friends know about this if they are looking for a preschool for next year. Our best promotion for our preschool is having our families and members spreading the word about the quality program that we offer at Little Lamb. Social media is a great way to do this as well. Your help with this is very much appreciated.

Book Club

Hello fellow readers, with the weather turning colder, there is nothing better than curling up with a good book. The book I have chosen for January is If It Rains by Jennifer L. Wright. There are 2 at the library and it is on Hoopla as an audiobook. We will meet Thursday, January 15th at 6:15 at Features in Holmen. There will be a sign up out the beginning of January. Happy Reading 😊



Updated Council Member Listing

- Jacob Werre: President & HR team
- Jim Pagel: Treasurer
- Ryan Radloff: Secretary, Worship and Inreach/Spiritual Care
- Dan Schams: Education
- Chad Wacker: Building & Grounds & Technology
- Chad Klein: Fellowship and Evangelism

Did you know that Good Shepherd has a Benevolence Fund?

It's true! Good Shepherd has a Benevolence Fund that is meant to help members who are in need. There is a process in place for determining if a person or family is in need and that process starts with talking to Pastor Pope. However, currently our Benevolence Fund has limited money in it so the church council is asking for members to consider giving to this fund to try to build it back up. Thank you and please talk to Pastor Pope or Jacob Werre if you have any questions.

Catechism Mentorship Program

We are looking for one more male mentor and two more female mentors for the new catechism mentorship program we are attempting to start at Good Shepherd.

This program will pair each catechism student with an adult member who can be a role model, answer questions they may have and also invite them to participate in church activities such as ushering, greeting, volunteering at an event, etc. The mentor would touch base with a student on a monthly basis so the time commitment is minimal.

If you feel like you'd be interested in helping with this or would like to "nominate" someone who you feel would be a good candidate, please reach out to Jacob Werre at jacobj_4@hotmail.com or 608-606-4426 to get more information.

Recovery in Christ has a New Time

Recovery in Christ meets every Wednesday in the Meditation Room at 1:15 pm at Coulee Recovery Center (933 Ferry St. 608-784-4177) La Crosse, Wisconsin. RIC is a Bible support group for those in addiction. Contact Pastor Andrew Franzo, Grace Lutheran Church, La Crosse, Wisconsin to learn more information or to check if the group is meeting (715-574-6602). Tim Gray has podcast entitled "Recovery Under the Cross." Enter "Recovery Under the Cross" in your browser.

Attend the Men of His Word Conference this February!

Good Shepherd is organizing a group of men and boys who would like to attend the 17th Annual Men of His Word Conference on Saturday, February 21 in Oshkosh, WI. We can carpool together and if we register as a group and before January 31st, we can get a discount.

Are you brave? Even in today's world most people expect men to be brave, to have courage. Courage is especially needed when under fire. Marriage is hard. Parenting is hard. Work is hard. Life is hard, even - perhaps especially for men. Where will we find strength? How will we gather the courage needed to live as godly men? In Isaiah 43:1-2 God promises strength, even and especially when passing through the fire. Join us this year so that God can provide Courage Under Fire.

This year's keynote is presented by Pastor Jared Oldenburg from 922 Ministries in Appleton, WI. He is joined by 14 Brothers in faith to help bring sessions on a wide variety of topics relevant to our lives as Men of His Word.

With worship led by Koine, there are no shortage of options to help you along your faith journey. Join us on Saturday, February 21, 2026, at the Oshkosh Waterfront Hotel and Convention Center in Oshkosh, WI to learn more about how God gives you Courage Under Fire.

Don't miss out on this opportunity for early bird pricing. Find out more at <https://www.menofhisword.org/oshkosh.html>.

If you are interested in attending, please reach out to Jacob Werre, jacobj_4@hotmail.com, 608-606-4426.

January Birthdays

Julia	Larson	1/4
Shealyn	McCoy	1/6
Brook	Gartner	1/9
Ben	Brinks	1/12
Oakley	Behn	1/15
Bethany	Radloff	1/15
Vicki	Blashaski	1/16
Carolyn	Schams	1/16
Lona	Marks	1/17
Dawn	Underberg	1/18
Anne	Bolstad	1/21
Pamela	Boisen	1/22
Chris	Helmreich	1/23
Michael	McCarty	1/23
Henry	Stuefen	1/24
Lisa	Carlson	1/25
Skylar	Sobkowiak	1/26
Ben	Carlson	1/27
Marissa	Gerke	1/27
Elijah	McClellan	1/27
Daniel	Carlson	1/29
Kathy	Werre	1/29
Jacob	Carlson	1/30
Tyler	Carlson	1/30
Julie	Peterson	1/31

February Birthdays

Katelyn	Carlson	2/2
Devin	Landers	2/2
Hannah	Larson	2/3
Gloria	Burmester	2/5
Janet	Nelson	2/5
Mia	Gerke	2/6
Eden	Blankenship	2/7
William	Peterson	2/7
Steven	Underberg	2/9
Butch	Weinberger	2/9
Sarah	Larson	2/10
Callie	Horstman	2/12
Andrew	Appold	2/13
Deb	Horstman	2/14
Noah	Radloff	2/17
Joan	Stephan	2/18
Matthew	Raabe	2/19
Amber	Collins	2/20
Sue	Stallman	2/21
Jean	Stengel	2/21
Kathy	Brenengen	2/22
Rebecca	Rosenbrook	2/22
Naomi	Thompson	2/24
Dolores	Yanzer	2/24
Rebecca	Karwoski	2/25
Greg	Peterson	2/25
Jo	Brinks	2/28

- If your birthday isn't mentioned and you would like it to be or your birthday is incorrect, please let the church office know, office@gsholmen.org.
- Please note that the church calendar is subject to change. For the most up-to-date calendar, please check our church website as the calendar changes often. www.gsholmen.org

Ushers, Greeters, Counters and Cleaners

January Schedule

Sunday, January 4th		Clean Week of January 4th to January 10th		
9:00am Ushers	Greeters	Counters & Cleaners		
Jacob Werre	Kathy Werre	Counters:	Cleaners:	
Mark Bateman		Sylvia McDonald	Patten	<i>Sanctuary</i>
		Jacqueline Kinsey		
Sunday, January 11th		Clean Week of January 11th to January 17th		
9:00am Ushers	Greeters	Counters & Cleaners		
Erik Sjolander	Amy Sjolander	Counters:	Cleaners:	
Karsen/Dawson Sjolander		Erik Sjolander	Newman	<i>Sanctuary</i>
		Dave Karbula		
Sunday, January 18th		Clean Week of January 18th to January 24th		
9:00am Ushers	Greeters	Counters & Cleaners		
Mike Melott	Tammy Melott	Counters:	Cleaners:	
Dan Peterson	Julie Peterson	Aaron and Sarah Larson	Gamoke	<i>Sanctuary</i>
Sunday, January 25th		Clean Week of January 25th to January 31st		
9:00am Ushers	Greeters	Counters & Cleaners		
John McDonald	Sylvia McDonald	Counters:	Cleaners:	
Kyle Sime	Ashley Sime	Al Herbers	McDonald	<i>Sanctuary</i>
		Carl Newman		
Church Wall Dusting--Herbers				

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
9am - Worship 10:15am - Family Bible Study	6:30pm - Worship		New Year's Eve 6:30pm - New Year's Eve Service	New Year's Day		
9am - Worship with Holy 10:15am - Family Bible Study 10:15am - Sunday School	6:30pm - Worship with Holy	Epiphany	5pm - Catechism Class	8pm - Church Council Meeting		
9am - Worship 10:15am - Family Bible Study 10:15am - Sunday School	6:30pm - Fellowship Team Meeting 6:30pm - Worship		5pm - Catechism Class	6:15pm - Book Club @ Features		
9am - Worship with Holy 10:15am - Family Bible Study 10:15am - Sunday School	Martin Luther King Jr. Day 6:30pm - Worship with Holy		5pm - Catechism Class	6pm - Church Council Meeting	6pm - Church Game Night	
9am - Worship 10:15am - Family Bible Study 10:15am - Sunday School	6:30pm - Worship		5pm - Catechism Class			