



River Spirit

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

“The Good News”

As I read and listen to experts talk about best practices for a healthy life, I repeatedly hear about Gratitude. Gratitude is a high value for people of faith, for as we stay in touch for what we are grateful for in our lives, we are better able to thank God and categorize these gratuities as blessings. Ritually, when we prepare for Holy Communion, we recall with gratitude what God has done through our spiritual ancestors, from liberation of slavery in Egypt, to the gift of our savior Jesus Christ. A strong sense of gratitude is what keeps us balanced as we face difficult days.

Some people find it helpful to make regular gratitude lists to give them a balanced perspective in their lives. Some may practice this on a daily basis, writing down, or praying about 10 things they are grateful for.

I would like to list 12 reasons why I am grateful today. The 12 represent our paid staff at Good Shepherd, who, collectively, have given us 129 years of ministry in the name of Jesus. (Interestingly, I notice that it has been exactly 129 years since our building was formally dedicated!)

Our Custodian Bonnie Kennedy has been with us for 27 years, giving us her dependable and skillful ministry of hospitality. Our Administrative Assistants Diane Baum (who also serves as our Treasurer) and Jessie Livingston prove themselves invaluable for the many ways they support our staff and congregation. Rachel Conover has fashioned a strong youth ministry that keeps our young people involved in church and growing as disciples.

Our music ministry brings such beauty and strength to our worship experience: Cheryl Todd as our organist and Handbell director, Jonathan Tatar as our vocal choir director, Sue Gilla as our choir accompanist, Jon Conover as our Reborn praise band leader, along with talented and faithful band members Tom Hartnett, Elaine Green, and Peyton Elliot. Finally, I include myself as pastor, for I am grateful to be here, and grateful to serve with such talented and committed ministry partners.

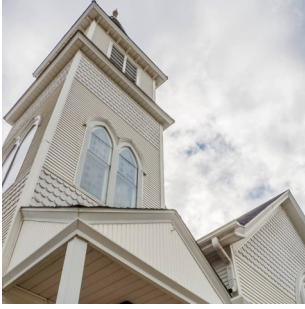
And of course, I am grateful for you and the ways you have heard and responded to God's call in your life. Let us serve together in this newish year with grateful hearts.

Thanks,
Pastor Steve



5202 YrærbøT

From The Office:



Please call or email ahead when visiting the office.

office@goodshepherdoswego.org

Diane and Jessie continue to check voicemail and email regularly.

If you would like to have a zoom meeting with your group and would like us to set it up for you, or need an announcement added to our weekly or monthly news, contact Jessie at

publications@goodshepherdoswego.org



Contacting Pastor Steve:

For our newer congregants and for others who may have forgotten, Pastor Steve's contact information is always listed monthly on each issue of the River Spirit, online on our weekly Sunday bulletin, and in our church photo directory. For your convenience, you can also put his info in your phone's Contact List. For joys, concerns, needs, questions, appointments, or just a chat with the Pastor, call him on his direct church cell phone

630-608-7843 or email him at pastor@goodshepherdoswego.org



GIVING: Online giving is available for your convenience. 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>

which can also be found on our website under the giving tab. ~ Thank you!



2024 Year End Contribution Statements are now available. If you are currently on our email list please look for your statement there. If you are not currently on our emailing list and would like to be added please contact the office at office@goodshepherdoswego.org



PUBLICATION DEADLINES: Reminder- **River Spirit deadline is the 15th of each month.** If you have an event later in the month that you would like included in the River Spirit– you may contact Jessie by the 15th to save space for your article. publications@goodshepherdoswego.org

The deadline for weekly news is NOON on Wednesdays. Please submit your written announcements to publications@goodshepherdoswego.org

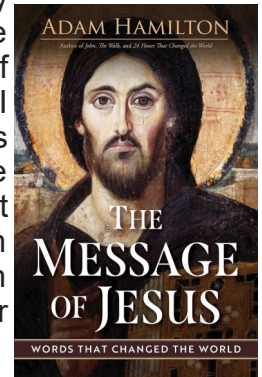
Thank you ~ Jessie



Many thanks to Diane Clodi for her heartfelt and dependable leadership of our Prayer Chain these past two years. This position will now be handled by Pat Rogerson who can be contacted for prayer needs by phone 630-220-1649 or email prayerchaingoodshepherd24@gmail.com. Contact Pat also if you would like to be added to the prayer chain.



LENT BIBLE STUDY with Pastor Steve: *The Message of Jesus: Words that Changed the World.* Pastor Steve invites you to sign up for a 6 week class every Monday night in Lent at 7:00 pm in the Gathering Room. We will study scripture using Adam Hamilton's new curriculum: "The Message of Jesus". We will explore six of the most important themes in Jesus' teachings, why they matter, and how they speak to us today. The book explores Jesus' preaching on the Kingdom of God, the Sermon on the Mount, the parables, the "I am" sayings in John, and more. Jesus' message is not only life-changing, but world-changing. Please purchase your own student book online (about \$15). Bring your bible to class or borrow one from the church. Please sign up in the Gathering Room (or contact the church office) and provide your email.



The class is offered Monday March 17 through Monday April 14th.



January brought along with it fun learning experiences about winter, arctic animals and the Inuit people. We went "ice skating" using wax paper, we built igloos using our classroom blocks, and we talked about which animals hibernate.



We held our first ever drive-in movie night! We saw so much creativity in the box cars that the families made, with a total of 23 cars. We snuggled into our boxes, munched on popcorn and fruit snacks, and enjoyed a movie with our families. The families have already requested that we do this again!

Thank you for the donations from our Giving Tree! Every little bit helps and the children feel so special knowing that the church family is involved with their school. In addition to the items on the Giving Tree, we are also in need of spare 3T and 4T size clothing to keep on hand in case of spills and accidents.



Enrollment for the 2025-2026 school year is open now! Hopefully you've seen our fliers in downtown locations!

Blessings,
Amanda Sidhu





United
Women
in Faith

The United Women of Faith installed their officers for 2025 during the 8:30 service last Sunday. Thank you to all.

Executive Committee:

President- Amanda Sidhu
Vice president- Kay Bonebrake
Secretary- Shar Momich
Treasurer- Barb Wood
Nominations chair - Barb Schilling

Mission Coordinators:

Membership, Nurture and Outreach - Phyllis Wagner
Program Resources- Janet McCarty
Social Action - Gail Ford
Spiritual Growth and Prayer Chain - Pat Rogerson
Wedding Coordinator- Shar Momich
Funeral Coordinators - Kay Bonebrake and Pat Rogerson
Kitchen Coordinator- Pam Dodson

Circle Leaders:

Agape - Barb Schilling
Covenant - Carol Dodd
Faith- Janet McCarty
Grace - Pam Dodson

We have NEW flooring in Fellowship Hall! It is beautiful. Thank you to our Trustees and everyone who helped bring this together.

With the new floor, there are new ways to care for it. Thank you!

- Clean Up Any Spills Right Away
- If needed, Clean with a lightly dampened cloth using only water
- A drop cloth must be used if using any paints or stains





- Grab a coffee and join the UMM in person or online Fridays at 7am!
- The United Methodist Men are holding their coffee hour in person. For those who wish to attend via zoom, there will be an internet connection in the gathering room. Join us to find out what is happening with U.M.M. and the church.
- 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.



The United Methodist Men will be having their monthly Men's Luncheon at Olive Garden, 2620 US-34, Oswego on Wednesday, February 19th at noon. Please join us for fellowship and a fine meal.



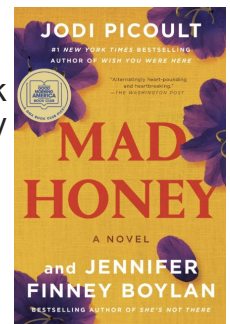
You are invited to brunch on February 9th, 9:30-11am. This month, brunch will be provided by Rachel Conover and the Youth Group!

A free will offering will be taken.



We've selected *Mad Honey* by Picoult and Boylan as our book club pick for January. Our next meeting will be at Nancy Patush's house on Tuesday, February 11, 2025 at 2:30 p.m.

New members are always welcome!





“The purpose of our Missions Team is, **first and foremost**, to serve others. We intend to fulfill our mission by connecting our congregation to the many ways the Church of the Good Shepherd can, and already is, serving others at the local, national, and global levels.”

The Mission Team will serve dinner at Hased House in February. Please watch for details in the weekly EBlast to see how you can help.

The team will be meeting in February to plan our year of missions. We will provide updates in the River Spirit and the weekly EBlast. The Mission Team members are Debi Blocker, Laura Galindo, Janet McCarty, Sara Poniatowski, Aidan Poniatowski, Roland Saka, Melody Watson (chair) and Pastor Good. If you have suggestions for our Church Missions, please contact any of the Mission Team members.



A huge thank you to Rachel Conover and the Youth Group for all their hard work cleaning out the attic! You are all doing an amazing job!



Volunteer at Feed my Starving Children

Feb. 14th 5 pm -6:30 pm

Address

555 Exchange Court, Aurora, IL 60504

Click to fill our [Volunteer Form](#) or



Confirmation Class Thursdays 6:30 pm

Click to fill our [Volunteer Form](#) or



Scan Me

Confirmation is an important time for the youth. Confirmation is a time for youth to start taking more independent steps forward on their faith journey. We are thrilled that you would like us to be a part of that journey.

Our classes start on Thursday Jan. 30th
Classes will be held on Thursdays at 6:30 pm



Church of the Good Shepherd United Methodist
5 W. Washington Street/PO Box 695 Oswego, IL 60543
www.goodshepherdoswego.org
(630) 554-3269
office@goodshepherdoswego.org

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ

January, 2025

Here's the Church financial results for 2024. After a great month of March, contributions were generally flat until the last couple months. It's a pleasure to report that, with great contributions in both November and December, contributions for the year ended up only about 1.5% below the record level of 2023. Thanks to all for their generous contributions and outstanding support of the Church!

From an expense standpoint, normal operating and administrative costs, payroll expenses, and apportionment were, in total, about 3.2% higher than the levels that we had in 2023. All of these expense increases were the result of the continuing expansion in various Church programs, coupled with a very significant inflationary impact in many operating expense categories. The adjustments to work schedules and responsibilities made by all staff members continues to allow proper accommodation of all the changes in worship schedules, building use, and revised work requirements. The trustees and other church committees continued their exceptional dedication to controlling their expense obligations. The results of their efforts were outstanding! We are fortunate to have so many great, dedicated people associated with our Church! By the end of October, we had used up all of the excess funds carried over from 2023 to stay current with our obligations. With the strong contributions received in November and December, we concluded the year with all expenses, including conference apportionment, paid in full. We also had excess general fund contributions of about \$25,000. Finance voted to tithe 10% of this excess to our Mission Team for them to redistribute to worthy missions of their choice. The remaining excess will roll back into the Church's dedicated general funds to cover bills in the New Year.

What can we expect in 2025? Our 2025 budget forecasts an increase in total expenses resulting from pay increases being provided to staff, along with continued inflationary increases in some specific operating and administrative expenses. Our anticipation is that income from contributions will be sufficient to offset these increased expenses. The number of responses to November's annual request to provide 2025 Estimates of Giving is a slightly behind those received last year. Having these estimates provides significant help in our ability to properly manage church finances. If you have not yet sent one in, it can still be done by contacting the church office. With two Sunday morning services, Sunday School and Adult Christian Education sandwiched between them, along with Sunday gathering room and fellowship hall hospitality, we continue to see more people in church! On-line worship is still available and an ever increasing number of other church programs are also available. This provides many ways to become more personally involved with the Church. The contributions that you are making on a regular basis through the mail, by using other e-giving methods, and in person at worship services are needed and very much appreciated! Please prayerfully consider continuing, or even increasing them as personal finances allow. With everyone's help, your Church will continue to stay up to date with all of its expenses, have funds available to make improvements, continue to retain our valuable staff, and continue to bring the Lord's message to everyone.

Yours in Service to the Lord,

Ed Bradley, Finance Committee Chairman

February Birthdays

2/2	Dawn Friel
2/2	Nancy Mallec
2/3	Judy Eggenberger
2/4	Melody Watson
2/5	Stella Lamb
2/7	Sarah Leffel
2/8	Pamela Rhoads
2/13	Oliver Green
2/13	Alyssa Marple
2/14	Jamisyn Leffel
2/15	Tom Todd
2/19	Jacob Rodriguez
2/20	Bob LeClercq
2/21	Danielle Zapfel
2/25	Jesse Perez
2/26	Shelley Doolittle
2/27	Barb Hanson
2/27	John Lundy



Our annual Global 6k to provide clean water to women and children around the world takes place Saturday June 7th at 9 am at Hudson Crossing Park near downtown Oswego. Come to walk, run, or crawl, or to cheer on those who will! Cowbells and other noisemakers may be provided by our sponsoring organization, World Vision. This event is perfect for inviting friends and neighbors to participate. Watch for more information that will include a link to donate to Team Good Shepherd as we help to make a difference in our world. In the meantime, questions can be directed to Pastor Steve at 630-608-7843 or pastor@goodshepherdoswego.org

www.goodshepherdoswego.org

The Church of the Good Shepherd



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

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



Pastor: Pastor Steve Good

pastor@goodshepherdoswego.org

Youth Director: Rachel Conover: jessicarc31@gmail.com

**Executive Assistants: Diane Baum and
Jessie Livingston**

Church Office Hours: Tues-Fri by appointment

**Newsletter Editor:
publications@goodshepherdoswego.org**

Office Email: office@goodshepherdoswego.org

**Little Shepherd Preschool:
[littleshepherdps@sbcglobal.net](mailto:little shepherdps@sbcglobal.net)**

Director – Amanda Sidhu Teacher: Jessica Exline

Teachers Aides: Vincenza Ferguson & Tracy Johnson

Choir Director: Jonathan Tatar

Custodian: Bonnie Kennedy

Organist & HandBell Choir Director: Cheryl Todd

Pianist: Sue Gilla

Reborn Praise Band: Jon Conover, Band Leader

