

*Preliminary Report  
August 2025*

## **2025 Annual Review**

*and a look ahead to FY2026*



Good Shepherd Lutheran Church  
1133 Reston Avenue  
Herndon, VA 20170  
703-437-5020  
[gslcva.org](http://gslcva.org)



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**[The following attachments will be published in an updated Annual Review, fall 2025]**

Financial  
Communications  
Discipleship  
Worship

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# Staff and Leadership

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## Church Staff

Senior Pastor	Jotham Johann
Assisting Pastor	Gary James
Business Manager	Georgia Thorstenson
Communications Director	Jeff Donahue
Director of Engagement	Heidi Cooper
Organist & Director of Choirs	Anne Lee
Administrative Assistant	Michele Clair
Community Service Coordinator & Youth Ministry Director	Holly Vanderhoof
Praise Band Director & Video Production Specialist	Matt Hardy
Children's Ministry Coordinator	Michelle Tenhaeff
Communications Assistant	Julie Schorfheide
Communications Assistant	Reid Otterbacher
Social Media Assistant	Chloe Vanderhoof

## Preschool Staff

Director	Sarah Brazell
Lead Teachers	Barbara Fay Michelle Maher
Assistant Teacher	Judy Kurak
Extended Care Teacher	Kristi Nickerson
Business Manager	Georgia Thorstenson

## Property and Facilities

Roger Thorstenson

## Board of Servant Leaders (through May 2025)

Chair	Laura Blackburn
Vice-Chair	Rob Fekete
Secretary	Drew Lipman
Member	Larry Austin
Member	Paul Kasulis
Member	Jennifer Pelletier
Member	Deanine Thrash

## (current Board)

Rob Fekete
Tony Esse
John Purtilo
Larry Austin
Drew Lipman
Jennifer Pelletier
Bernard Schoch

## Core Ministry Leaders

Worship & Celebration	Julie Schorfheide and Georgia Thorstenson
Discipleship	Pastor Gary James
Parish Life	Brian Cors
Mission	Pastor Jotham Johann
Congregational Care & Nurture	June McGurn
Administration	Pastor Jotham Johann

# Senior Pastor's Report

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Dear Siblings in Christ,

Grace to you and Peace from God our loving Father, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, and our Comforter and Counselor the Holy Spirit! Amen.

As you read the reports and plans from our capable and faithful staff and ministry leaders in the pages to come, please join with me in thanking God for all of His tremendous blessings! Please excuse us for any redundancies in our enthusiasm for the ministry of our Lord. In addition, please keep in mind that the final version, along with completed metrics and final financial information, will be provided when the books for the financial year totally close a few months from now.

Beyond our thanksgiving for His blessings upon our past financial year, we ask our Lord of Mission to bless our efforts and provide us wisdom and encouragement during this important, coming year! Finally, you will see our Top 15 accomplishments of the past 10 years. As I mark my 11th year as a pastor of this congregation, I give thanks to God for you and the tremendous attainments of the past decade. It has been an honor and privilege to serve alongside you and I am humbled to continue on in mission with you!

In Christ, I am,



The Rev. Jotham S. Johann, J.D.  
Senior Pastor

# Board of Servant Leaders

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With the approval of the FY2025 budget by the congregation in August 2024, the fiscal year started. The Board of Servant Leaders (BoSL) continued to work with the Finance Team and GSLC staff to improve reporting and ease the Board's monitoring of GSLC's fiscal health. As part of this process, the Board made changes to the BoSL Policy Manual to improve visibility into the Above & Beyond program and directed giving.

The Board held discussions to address the relationship between the GSLC preschool and the church. The Board enthusiastically supported the expansion for the preschool to a full-day program. As part of these discussions, the Board has drafted BoSL policies that it plans to complete in the upcoming year.

The Board spent considerable time holding discussions with the Columbarium Committee to identify a design and cost proposal that it could present to the congregation. The BoSL presented the proposal and received approval to proceed at a congregational meeting. Finally, the Board drafted a policy regarding columbarium installation, usage, pricing, and maintenance. The Board anticipates that it will finalize the columbarium policy in the upcoming fiscal year (FY2026) once definitive costs for the columbarium are available.

Robert Fekete  
BoSL Chair

# Finance

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This report will be published in the fall, after the FY2025 books are totally closed.

# Christian Life & Engagement

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FY2025 saw the continued growth of activities at Good Shepherd. These activities provided an opportunity for fellowship for members and guests, being well attended and enjoyed by all. A summary of several of these events follows.

- Two Connections Classes were held: the first in November 2024 for nine new members, who were welcomed into the congregation on February 2, 2025; the second class, in August 2025.
- The annual Good Shepherd Oktoberfest and Trunk-or-Treat was held on October 20, 2024, with about 100 people participating.
- The annual Women's Retreat was held November 8-10, 2024, led by author and speaker Donna Snow, with 40 women attending.
- A "Brunchgiving" was held between the services on Sunday, November 24, 2024, with about 75 people participating.
- The Ladies Advent Tea luncheon was held on December 7, 2024, with 32 ladies and special guests attending.
- A Ministry Fair, showcasing the various ministries we offer, was held in the Fellowship Hall between services on January 26, 2025. Each area of ministry had a display table with information about their work. Light snacks were served. The event was well attended.
- Chili Bingo was held February 2, 2025, with more than 100 people in attendance and multiple entries into the chili contest. Firefighters from the local fire station joined us to defend their title from 2024.
- A celebration of Georgia Thorstenson's 30th anniversary with Good Shepherd was held on March 16, 2025, following the 11:00 service. A catered lunch of Greek food was followed by a bit of roasting and well wishes from several friends and coworkers.
- A celebration of Pastor Johann's leadership of Good Shepherd over the past 10 years was held on May 4, 2025. A catered Italian lunch followed by a roasting and speeches from several congregational members rounded out the event.
- A food truck, featuring cupcakes and specialty coffees, was on hand July 27, 2025, following the service.

Planned events for the upcoming year (FY2026) include Rally Day, Oktoberfest, Brunchgiving, the Women's Retreat, and Chili Bingo.

## Parish Life

Parish Life at Good Shepherd is focused on engaging all people in meaningful activities of learning and discipleship, and increasing and growing in our faith, our relationship with God and with each other.

Through Life Groups, Good Shepherd offers a number of avenues to connect in the Word and with each other. Currently, six active groups meet on a regular basis. In addition to a Bible Study component, Life Groups include social activities to encourage fellowship.

A focus in FY2026 will be to expand the young adult group by creating a new ministry to families with young children.

Heidi Cooper  
Christian Life and Engagement Team



# Communications

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Fiscal Year 2025 reflected a continued upward trajectory in GSLC's digital communications, aligning closely with FY2024 trends. Our presence across social media, video teleconferencing, livestreaming, and recorded platforms sustained a consistent level of excellence. The few service availability interruptions that were experienced (2 to 4 incidents) were largely attributed to external factors such as power outages or internet disruptions.

We expanded our offerings significantly, recording musical concerts and holding congregational and staff meetings that resulted in more than 110 platform-based services. When livestream or recorded services faced disruptions, timely email notifications were sent to provide revised availability estimates. These measures, along with refinements to prior large-scale technology and hardware upgrades, ensured the continued delivery of high-quality content—thanks in part to our dedicated Audio/Video Team.

Virtual programming—including worship services, Bible studies, and fellowship events—continued its steady growth, bolstered by the Christian Life & Engagement Team and Parish Life initiatives.

## **Social Media Progress**

Our social media reach flourished on Facebook and Instagram, led by Social Media Assistant Chloe Vanderhoof. Monthly views now exceed 1,800, reflecting a 38% increase year-over-year. During the Thanksgiving-to-Christmas season, unique views surpassed 15,000, with non-follower engagement climbing to 24.9%.

## **Website and Online Calendar Enhancements**

Communications Assistant Reid Otterbacher collaborated with Special Projects Communication Assistant Julie Schorffheide to revitalize the GSLC website (<https://www.gslcva.org>). Together, they ensured the online calendar accurately reflected all church events through coordinated semi-annual planning sessions with ministry leaders and staff. The website also hosted timely updates on seasonal services, Life Groups, and musical programs.

## **Email Communications Metrics**

The Communications Team maintained a structured email campaign reaching more than 475 contacts. Hundreds of timely messages were distributed with an impressive open rate of 54%—surpassing industry benchmarks for similarly sized churches. This success is largely due to the inclusion of event details and vibrant photography that allowed recipients to witness and share in the life of our church community.

## **Transparent Reporting**

In FY2026, GSLC will continue its commitment to transparent and effective reporting through a robust publication schedule. This includes seasonal releases of the Above & Beyond catalog (fall, spring, and, if necessary, summer), the Annual Review, and the General Budget pamphlet—each designed to inform and engage the congregation. These publications will be complemented by increased integration with the GSLC website (<https://www.gslcva.org>), which will serve as the central hub for accessing detailed updates and supplementary information referenced in our print and email communications. This strategic approach ensures that all members remain connected and informed as GSLC continues to grow in mission and ministry.

## **FY2026 Communications Goals**

Looking ahead, GSLC will focus on increasing the value of email communications while maintaining its current livestream and recorded service platforms with minor targeted upgrades. Enhancements will center on the Praise/contemporary service, with improved lighting, stage design, and an added camera angle—funded through the Above & Beyond program.

Jeff Donahue  
Communications Director



# Community Service

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Community Service at Good Shepherd has continued to help people in our community. We work with various local organizations that provide support for people with food insecurity, homelessness, and various other needs among those living below the poverty line. Our partners include South Lakes High School (SLHS) Food Pantry, Cornerstones, The Closet of Greater Herndon, Lake Anne House (formerly Lake Anne Fellowship House), and Fellowship Square.

Our main initiative is hosting the SLHS Food Pantry 52 weeks a year. Good Shepherd began hosting the pantry in April 2020, during the COVID pandemic. A new stream of curbside distribution to families each week has organically grown and continues to be a strong need to the SLHS Pyramid school families. On average, we distribute approximately 400,000 pounds (200 tons) of food each year to families in need. Numerous volunteers support pantry operations at Good Shepherd, including food intake, sorting, packing, and distribution to the families at SLHS throughout the week. In FY2025, more than 2,200 volunteers (congregants as well as from the community) provided over 3,800 volunteer hours at the pantry. This year, the pantry surpassed distributing TWO MILLION SIX HUNDRED THOUSAND POUNDS of food and toiletries to children and families in need in our community!

Through our partnership with the SLHS Food Pantry we also supported the Do it Your Way 0.5k, the pantry's only organized fundraiser during the year. Last year, more than 30 people joined Good Shepherd's team, and we hope to have even more this year. With multiple churches, community businesses, and individual donations, the pantry raised more than \$45,000. Other Good Shepherd initiatives include meal and food support for the North County Hypothermia Shelter (December through March) through the Fairfax County Hypothermia Prevention Program. Since 2005, the Fairfax County Hypothermia Prevention Program has prevented death and serious injuries among the county's most vulnerable residents by ensuring that no one must sleep outside during the winter months. Since 2011, Good Shepherd has participated in this program as part of the county's North Fairfax location access provided by Cornerstones. Every Wednesday from the beginning of December through the end of March (17 weeks), we prepare, provide, and serve hot meals for 40+ guests.

We also provide grocery gift cards to Lake Anne House, Fellowship Square, Cornerstones, Dogwood Elementary, and the SLHS Food Pantry.

Seasonal drives include meals for Thanksgiving through Cornerstones, and Angel Trees for Cornerstones and Lake Anne House.

In the coming year, we are looking forward to undertaking congregation-wide service projects, including meal packing events, lunches and after-school bags for Embury Rucker Shelter among others, as well as continuing to support the other initiatives described above.

Join us as Good Shepherd Community Service continues to show God's love in action through service to others in need.

Holly Vanderhoof  
Community Service and Youth Ministry Team

# Congregational Care & Nurture

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The Congregational Care & Nurture Ministry, comprising more than 66 volunteers, helps support the mental, physical, emotional, and spiritual health of the congregation through devotional literature and opportunities to serve others at Good Shepherd. This ministry's volunteers organize memorial receptions, conduct member care visits, and provide occasional transportation to worship or doctor's appointments. Our four volunteers for the greeting card ministry send more than 700 greeting cards annually for life events (birthdays, anniversaries, illness/encouragement, and bereavement), plus three annual mementos for infant Baptisms.

The **Take Them A Meal** team brings/sends meals to the ill, infirm, and their families, as well as families with newborn babies. Now-retired lead Caroline Ruppap found and set up the Take Them A Meal app and ran the ministry for five years; we thank her for her service. The work involved in leading this ministry is occasional (when a need arises), minimal, and can be done from anywhere with an internet connection. All volunteers are still in place. If you are interested in leading this ministry, please contact June McGurn.

The CC&N teams maintain rosters of those willing to help in all the above.

*Portals of Prayer* and various care ministry pamphlets, found in the church entryway and admin wing foyer, are part of the CC&N budget; so is Taking Faith Home, the weekly handout distributed through our Friday emails and also available at the welcome centers in the entryway and Fellowship Hall.

In addition to the above, the Ministry conducts programs/events.

In March 2025, the Ministry worked with **INOVA** to conduct a blood drive, the first at Good Shepherd in years. Thirty-seven potential donors signed up to donate whole blood, thirty-four of whom were GLSC members.

Nineteen people so far have taken the three-hour **Walk in the World of Dementia** class to learn the stages of dementia and learn the techniques that work in each stage; to participate in an exercise that simulates what their loved one is going through; and to practice proven, hands-on techniques for approaches to patient-centered care.

Fourteen people so far have taken the **Red Cross** certification class for CPR/AED (defibrillator). Certification lasts for two years.

Eight hikes and walks have been enjoyed so far, and there are more to come, including the very popular Winter Walk of Lights at Meadowlark Gardens the first Sunday in January.

If you are interested in participating in any of these classes and activities, please contact June McGurn.

Finally, in FY2025 the Congregational Care & Nurture team created a medical equipment lending bank for Good Shepherd. Members have donated medical equipment in good condition, and borrowed items when the need arose, returning them when the need has passed.

We urge you to donate medical equipment in good condition so others can use it when you are finished with it. Then borrow medical equipment when you'll need it while recovering, or when an elderly relative visits. Overstock of individual types of items will be donated to The Closet.

Ask June McGurn how to donate or borrow.

If you have any questions about the Ministry, its programs, or wish to volunteer, please let me know!

June McGurn  
Congregational Care & Nurture Team

# Discipleship

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The **Discipleship Ministry** provides curriculum and supplies for all Good Shepherd education and youth programs, including Sunday School (ages 2–5th grade), middle school (grades 6–8), and high school (grades 9–12), as well as basic materials the Adult Bible studies (with the understanding that study guides and books provided will be reimbursed by Bible study attendees). This Ministry also conducts classes and offers special events related to Confirmation, First Communion, and middle and high school youth ministry activities, such as retreats and fundraising events.

The **Children's Sunday School** program maintained steady attendance throughout 2024-25, welcoming new students as others moved away. A cadre of six volunteer teachers, led by Children's Ministry Coordinator Michelle Tenhaeff, shared the love of Jesus using the Spark curriculum, which corresponds with the Revised Common Lectionary (Sunday morning readings). The Spark curriculum will be retired at the end of the 2025-26 Sunday School year following a successful six-year run. Lesson activities included the Bible story, crafts, and games designed to teach that Jesus Loves You! The overall program also included a Christmas presentation for families and friends, along with multiple service projects: South Lakes Food Pantry (twice) and Embury Rucker Bagged Lunches (twice). Budgeted resources for the 2025-26 Sunday School ministry will fund curriculum, supplies, initiatives to increase attendance, and expanded service projects.

The 2024-25 **Confirmation Class** included ten 7th and 8th graders, confirming four members of the class on Pentecost Sunday (June 8, 2025). The confirmation curriculum is traditionally focused on the teachings of Luther's Small Catechism, using LCMS and other Lutheran instructional videos, along with classroom discussion and written lesson completion. Students completed Year A, seven 1½-hour sessions on the Old and New Testaments, the Trinity, and the Lord's Prayer. Additionally, confirmands are required to serve as acolytes, participants and assistants at VBS, and in designated service projects. Second-year confirmands are required to develop and present to the congregation a personal faith statement.

In 2025-26, confirmation students will complete the Year B seven-session curriculum, which includes the Lutheran Essentials: Law and Gospel, the 10 Commandments, Word and Sacraments, and the Apostle's Creed. The students will participate in a small number of class team-building events and the confirmation rehearsal meal. During 2024-25, three high school and college-age young adults received adult confirmation instruction.

The **First Communion Class** comprised six students (4th through 7th grade) and their parents. The students received First Communion on Maundy Thursday. Students completed a revised five-session curriculum, which was focused on the Lutheran teachings about the Lord's Supper, the Means of Grace, sacraments, confession, forgiveness, communion elements, and the real presence.

**Vacation Bible School (VBS)** at Good Shepherd this year (June 2025) was a major success, registering more than 90 children. Fifty-seven teen and adult volunteers decorated and led class presentations, sessions, rotations, and crews for a high-energy week. The focus for the week, using visual, printed, and vocal resources was that Jesus is a faithful friend because we can always "TRUST JESUS"—for He is our True North! VBS is one of Good Shepherd's biggest outreach ministries, with about 75% of the participants, including volunteers, coming from outside the Good Shepherd membership.

**Middle School Sunday School** realized a 120% increase in participation in 2024-25 thanks to the dedicated efforts of Youth Ministry Director Holly Vanderhoof and five member volunteers. The **Middle School Ministry (MSM)** program also experienced consistent weekly growth in regular attendance throughout the year. In addition to meeting weekly for Sunday School, Good Shepherd middle schoolers participated in the Southeastern District (SED) Middle School Gathering—"Make it Matter"—at King of Glory Lutheran Church, Williamsburg, Virginia. The GSLC participants, in company with more than 200 other middle schoolers from fellow SED churches, shared experiences and fellowship through a packed line-up of programs, worship, and games. Connecting with middle schoolers outside of Confirmation and

## ***Discipleship, continued***

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Sunday mornings continues to be challenging, but we are blessed with steady growth and new connections as we implement new strategies and programs to facilitate MSM growth.

The **High School Sunday School and Youth Ministry (HSM)** program was vibrant and energetic this year. Sunday school students met weekly during the school year, and additionally through HSM gatherings, which included the SED Fall High School Youth Gathering, the Great Pumpkin Hunt, Friendsgiving, Mall Scavenger Hunt, Top Golf, and other evening fellowship sessions. The youth enthusiastically fundraised for workcamp through weekly donut offerings, Christkindlmarket, Chili Bingo, and the Palm Sunday Pancake Breakfast.

In July 2025, HSM joined Group Mission Trips and thirteen other churches from around the country for workcamp in Elizabeth City, North Carolina. More than 230 campers formed 40 work crews to work on 31 homes, completing more than 7,000 service hours with projects such as ramps, decks, stairs, and painting. With hard work and prayer, campers were able to overcome a variety of roadblocks, completing 111% of the designated projects, as additional work sites were added upon completion of the original project base. Good Shepherd youth also enjoyed a batting session at The Barn in Elizabeth City, as well as an afternoon sail with Maritime Ministries at Mid-Atlantic Christian College. As part of the sailing event the campers were briefed on Maritime Ministries' mission to share the Gospel in areas inaccessible by air. Workcamp has proven to be a transformational event for residents, teens, and volunteer leaders.

This year, workcamp participation was expanded to include college-age students, providing a remarkable opportunity for these young adults to assume and grow as leaders, including, on one occasion, managing their own work crew. They were a strong asset to the Good Shepherd group, and we look forward to their continued involvement and contribution in the years to come.

The **Adult Bible Study** program consisted of two classes on Sunday morning and two other weekly Bible studies. Total attendance for the two Sunday Bible study classes averaged 22 attendees each Sunday. The Sunday morning programs were a Women's Bible study led by Heidi Cooper, and a Bible study focused on the core of Lutheran theology and biblical events. Three volunteers adroitly led the Sunday morning Adult Bible Study through studies on the Minor Prophets, Revelation, and a multiple-week discussion of the biblical significance of the cross. This Bible study continued to meet throughout the summer.

Also, as part of the adult education program, Saturday sessions on *Improving Your Conversation with People of Other Religions* were led by member volunteers during 2025. To date, 22 people have participated in those sessions. Plans for the upcoming educational calendar include added Saturday Bible study events focusing on the broader biblical and theological issues the church encounters in today's society. Educational plans for 2025-26 also include a third 13-session adult study titled *The Sticky Faith Guide for Your Family* and *Spiritual First Aid*, a Friday evening/Saturday event, presented by Lutheran Church Charities (LCC).

Pastor Gary James, Holly Vanderhoof, Michelle Tenhaeff  
Discipleship Team

# Mission

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Fiscal Year (FY) 2025 Mission activities focused on planning, execution, and allocation of Good Shepherd budgeted and Above & Beyond (A&B) funds to promote national and international mission-related outreach efforts.

The Good Shepherd Mission Team began the planning phase by reviewing last year's outreach efforts to determine if funds were still needed going forward and, if so, if they should remain a priority for Good Shepherd. As a team, we decided to end support for the Good Seed effort (mainly because it seemed well funded outside of Good Shepherd) and to add a new missionary line item to replace the line item for the Mantey's, who ended their mission service and returned to the United States the prior year. We determined that there were several A&B items worthy of continued support and decided to incorporate some of them into the base budget. In order to stay on budget, we shifted some base budget items to the A&B catalog. This was done primarily to feature new items in the catalog for the congregation to consider supporting (rather than a request to fund a repeat of the items from the prior year).

Good Shepherd continued our long-standing support to the Southeastern District with an allocation of \$25,000. We also maintained our support to Lutheran World Relief in the amount of \$5,000. Helping Hands was allocated \$1,000 with the team drawing funds as needed to purchase quilting materials.

For U.S. Mission Support (\$5,500), GSLC provided support to Lutheran Braille Workers, Alaska Mission for Christ, and Mid-Atlantic Lutherans in Mission. Samaritan's Purse and Evergreen Lutheran School line items were moved to the A&B catalog.

For International Mission Support (\$13,500), GSLC provided support to Lutheran Braille Workers, Food for the Poor, World Vision, Principe De Paz Iglesia Luterna (formerly from A&B Catalog), and Faith Aid (Fraher family support). Mission support for efforts in Kenya (Osira) and Tanzania (Payne) were moved to the A&B catalog.

The A&B catalog featured line items in the amount of \$25,500 for Mustard Seed House, additional support for Fraher family and Lutheran World Relief (beyond base budget), Samaritan's Purse, Evergreen Lutheran School, and LCMS Missions (Osira and Payne). As of the writing, Mustard Seed House, Fraher family support, Evergreen Lutheran School, and LCMS missions (Osira and Payne) are fully funded! We are hopeful the remaining two items will be fully funded prior to the end of the fiscal year.

Bill and Lisa Schuler  
Mission Team

# Property & Facilities

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During FY2025, Good Shepherd's Property & Facilities Team made numerous enhancements and repairs to the building and grounds to improve support for worship, ministry teams, and day-to-day operations of the church and preschool. Many of the team's accomplishments are described below.

## **HVAC Systems**

The HVAC upgrades completed during the previous years performed well during FY2025. Miscellaneous repairs (e.g., valves, electrical contacts) to several of HVAC components (AHU#5, ACC#1A, 6B, Chillers 1 and 2) were necessary. The condensate pan under AHU#4 rusted through, causing minor water damage to the ceiling in the copy room.

Upgrades to the AC portions of the HVAC system are planned to be implemented in phases in the future.

## **Building Functionality, Safety, and Comfort**

Gutters, downspouts, and drainage tubing were installed to reduce the amount of water flowing onto the playground from the sanctuary roof. Additionally, drains were installed near the playground sidewalks to reduce water pooling near the doors.

High humidity in the sanctuary continues to be an issue during the hot and humid summer months. Mold has reappeared in the sanctuary ceiling above the Fulfillment Window. ServPro has been contacted to correct the problem.

A failure of the piping and valves that provide hot water to the preschool caused minor flooding and also damaged the exhaust gas blower motor. The leaking piping and valves were replaced and the water heater was repaired by replacing the exhaust gas blower motor and associated circuit card.

The dehumidifier in the copy room was replaced after failure of the previous unit. This dehumidifier is necessary to keep the paper from curling during the summer months.

## **Grounds**

Improvements to the GSLC grounds included removal of dead trees, replacement of the face boards on the entire playground fence, repairs to leaks in the irrigation system, and replacement of the bulbs in the parking lot and sidewalk lighting.

Construction of the columbarium has commenced and will be completed in the next fiscal year.

## **Contract renewals**

Several contracts for maintaining the church in good operating order were replaced during 2025, including trash and recycling removal, HVAC maintenance and repair, irrigation maintenance, and IT support.

## **Plans for the Next Fiscal Year**

Flooding of the streambed behind the playground remains a problem during torrential rains. The plan is to clean up the ditch and install a flood barrier to minimize flooding of the playground.

Two light fixtures in the Fellowship Hall have failed. We plan to replace them with modern LED fixtures. If successful and cost effective, this effort could lead to a broader replacement of fluorescent bulbs with LEDs.

Construction of the columbarium has begun. Although the hardscape will likely conclude in 2025, the associated plantings and establishment of the grounds maintenance will extend into FY2026.

Thanks to the many volunteers who have helped control operating costs by assisting with scaffolding, repairing doors, replacing light fixtures, repairing plumbing leaks, and many other tasks too numerous to mention. Collectively, the contributions of time by the volunteers saved the church significant funds and greatly enhanced the safety, comfort, and functionality of the facility and grounds.

Roger Thorstenson  
Property and Facilities Team



# Worship & Celebration

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During FY2025, Good Shepherd continued to offer numerous ways to worship: traditional and Matins settings in the sanctuary and Praise/contemporary services in the Fellowship Hall; “family focused” services on Christmas Eve and Easter; livestreaming and recording one service each week; midweek Lenten services; and additional services for Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve, Maundy Thursday, and Good Friday.

Here is a brief list of highlights from this year:

- Welcomed Matt Hardy as Praise Band director.
- Continued to recruit and train worship assistants.
- Working with Communications Director Jeff Donahue, recruited and trained volunteers to be projectionists during services in the sanctuary and the Fellowship Hall.
- Held a Service of Lessons and Carols on the Second Sunday of Advent.
- Held midweek Lenten services at noon, with recordings released by early evening.
- Upgraded a welcome center in the Fellowship Hall for those who participate in Praise/contemporary worship services.
- Welcomed youth as worship assistants/worship leaders at two services this year.
- Held two concerts: in September, featuring Anne Lee, organ, and Hart Guonjian-Pettit, trumpet; and in June, featuring the Sanctuary Choir, with Anne Lee, director and piano, Charlotte Lee, violin, and Hart Guonjian-Pettit, trumpet.
- We rejoice in the robust in-person attendance during our summer worship schedule, and also the continued growth of our virtual ministry.

## Looking Ahead to FY2026

We plan to continue our current worship schedule. Additionally, working with our A/V specialist and with the Property & Facilities Team, we will explore replacing the screens in the sanctuary, which are old and have been distorting color and images for some time.

## Volunteers

We would like to acknowledge the tremendous participation of volunteers throughout the Worship & Celebration ministry area. Every week, we rely on ushers, scripture readers, prayer leaders, communion assistants, acolytes, choir members, greeters, Altar Guild members, cantors, seasonal decorators (those who put up decorations as well as take them down), and many others who support and make our worship services run smoothly.

Reports that follow give additional information about the Music Ministry, the Praise Band, and our Audio/Visual team.

Julie Schorfheide and Georgia Thorstenson  
Worship & Celebration Team

## Music Ministry

### Sanctuary Choir

Last year, the three newly appointed section leaders served with remarkable commitment and dedication. We also continued to benefit from the steady commitment of our brass players, particularly our trumpeter/leader Hart Guonjian-Pettit, whose ongoing collaboration has been a great asset. We look forward to further strengthening this relationship in the coming year.



# ***Worship & Celebration, continued***

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Notably, a number of volunteer singers joined our choir this year. They have been faithfully attending rehearsals and services whenever they are in town, contributing significantly to the depth and consistency of our sound.

With just one additional rehearsal and relying mainly on Sunday rehearsals, the Sanctuary Choir presented a meaningful and well-received concert on June 1. All volunteer singers, our regular section leaders, as well as our in-house trumpet player Hart Guonjian-Pettit and violinist Charlotte Lee, took part in this special event. The video recently published on the GSLC YouTube channel has been well-received and continues to be viewed .

## **Men's Choir**

The Men's Choir has continued its tradition of offering an anthem during summer worship services each year. We are grateful for the all the members' enthusiastic participation and support, which has allowed this group to become a consistent presence and an additional ensemble within our music ministry.

## **Handbell Choir**

With a well-established group of dedicated volunteer members and the occasional support of substitute ringers, the Handbell Choir continues to build strong relationships while offering anthems and preludes regularly throughout the year, including on several festival Sundays.

## **Organ & Trumpet Concert**

Last September's Organ & Trumpet Concert at GSLC was a resounding success, all thanks to the enthusiastic support of our congregation and staff. You made the event truly memorable.

As the music director and organist, I am constantly working and praying to provide the music for present and future worship services and concerts. I am grateful for the support GSLC has provided for this ministry. May God be praised always!

Anne Lee  
Organist & Director of Choirs

## **A/V and Praise Band**

### **Audio/Visual**

Our 2024-2025 year was one of transition and growth both inside and outside of the A/V closet at Good Shepherd. We welcomed our permanent Audio Engineer, Adam Sherman, to the team and have worked to establish best practices and redundancy behind the scenes. Adam has excelled at internalizing the demands of his job, as well as bringing his smile and dedication to each worship service.

The "behind the scenes" efforts have accomplished the following:

- We repurposed components already owned by GSLC to "rehabilitate" the older systems that get the "slides" everywhere they need to be around campus. This prolonged the system's life by three years. Because of the inevitable failure (in August 2025) of the system that is more than 20 years old, I will be installing a direct "reconditioned" replacement for minimal cost.
- We programmed a universal control panel for the livestream that can combine and automate tasks such as camera movements and livestream aesthetic choices. This allows us to focus our attention on timing and precision instead of the manual movement of the camera.
- We set up a separate device to use in the event of a primary system crash or internet failure to maintain the livestream and preserve all of the data to allow for later editing and posting.

Additionally, we used the microphones and sound system to support two specialty concerts: the Organ and Trumpet Concert in September and the Choir Concert in June. Because we planned for the possibility of

## ***Worship & Celebration, continued***

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these concerts during the audio system upgrade, it was possible to record high-quality audio without excessive additional equipment!

### **Praise Band**

As Praise Band Director, I listened to the opinions and requests of multiple members of the congregation, worked with Scott Shepherd (our Praise service audio engineer), Roger Thorstenson, Vicki Peter, Gary Budzier, Julie Schorfheide, and others on cleaning, reconfiguring, and redecorating the Praise Band stage, and auditioned and hired a vocalist for the coming year. I created, and have been updating, a Spotify playlist featuring songs often sung during our worship services. This playlist aims to help those unfamiliar with our music to become more comfortable with it, offering moments of peace and enjoyment for all who love our Praise music. Additionally, we added eight new songs along with three full strings arrangements to the regular line-up. I was heartened to see and hear the positive feedback for songs like “Praise,” “Even If,” and “House of the Lord.” This coming year, I plan to re-arrange songs for our new vocalist and continue to add songs that are beloved by members of the congregation. Please, do not hesitate to communicate with me about what music is most important to your worship experience!

Matt Hardy

Praise Band Director & Video Production Specialist

# GSLC Preschool

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Good Shepherd Lutheran School has served as a ministry of Good Shepherd Lutheran Church since 1981, providing a Christ-centered education for preschool children ages 2½ to 5 and Christian outreach to the community. Our students include children of the congregation, children of other Christian congregations, and children from families who claim no faith community. Our program welcomes and celebrates the individual development of all children spiritually, emotionally, socially, educationally, and physically as they learn and play in Jesus' love.

Our half-day preschool, 9:15 a.m.–12:15 p.m., expanded its hours in the 2022–2023 school year and continued this last school year, to include an extended-care program from 12:15 p.m.–3:15 p.m. The preschool had two classes meeting four and five days per week, with the extended care being offered four days per week meeting the needs of our current families. The school year ran September 3 through May 23. The 2025 summer camp was expanded in several ways. First, we expanded camp to 6 weeks (June 23 to August 1.) Second, we opened it up to current students and the entire community. Third, we expanded to include ages 2 to 10. And finally, we extended the hours to be from 8:00 a.m.–6:00 p.m. (but only had students signed up until 4:00 p.m.).

## Staffing

In August 2024, I was hired as the new Preschool Director, with Kathy Otterbacher, the interim director, helping me with the transition. During the school year, we had one Lead Teacher working five days a week, and a second Lead Teacher working three days a week as a Lead and one day a week as an Assistant Teacher. We also had one Assistant Teacher three days per week and another only one day per week. We had one Extended Care Teacher four days per week. All new staff and volunteers received all background and health checks required by the Virginia Department of Education. We also continued to have the same bookkeeper on staff. In May 2025, Barbara Fay, a staff member for 25 years, retired.

In August 2024, our new Lead Teacher completed First Aid and CPR training. In June we held a First Aid and CPR class for our summer camp staff, the new Lead Teacher for Fall 2025, and the Director. This training is required every two years.

Pastor Johann served as our preschool Executive Leader. He and Pastor James each led chapel sessions once per month. The preschool director and one other staff member led the remaining chapel sessions. Our School Advisory Team was made up of two church members and one current preschool parent who is also a church member. The team supported the preschool ministry focusing on current policies, staff issues, and future needs. The team met two times during the year. The preschool also received a large amount of volunteer assistance from the GSLC Property Team and from the previous interim director.

## Curriculum

We will begin using several new curriculum programs, as our current program was out of date. They are: *Abeka Bible*, *Handwriting Without Tears*, and *Haggerty Reading*. We will continue our weekly chapel and music. The three new curriculum programs are being paid for with Circuit 9 grant funds received.

## Expansion

We have been making many changes and plans for the final phase of our expansion plan, which will begin this Fall, in the 2025-2026 school year. We are offering the following options:

Before school care	7:30–9:00 a.m.
Half school day	9:00 a.m.–1:00 p.m.
Standard school day	9:00 a.m.–3:00 p.m.
After care	3:00–5:00 p.m.
Late after care	5:00–6:00 p.m.

## ***GSLC Preschool, continued***

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As part of the expansion, we are now accepting children beginning at age 2 (instead of 2½) and those who are not yet fully potty-trained. We have purchased an appropriate toddler changing table to meet this need.

This last school year we also began using Procare software. This program can be used for many tasks, but we initially used it for teachers and the Director to communicate with parents and to track student attendance.

### **Marketing**

There has been continued activity to market the preschool to help increase student numbers. We have continued paying for Google, Facebook, and Next Door ads. We have continued to make adjustments to our website. We met with a consultant from Genisus, gaining more insight on marketing ideas. This was paid for with the Circuit 9 grant we received.

### **Facility**

After the school year ended and before the summer camp began, the Property Team had volunteers remove the rotting fence boards in the playground area, and replaced with new ones. We also had some major work done on the playground by a landscaping company. They added some drainage in the area around the building/sidewalk where water would settle after a rain. They also dug out most of the old mulch (15 years' worth). We then purchased new mulch to put in a thin layer throughout and the required 6 inches around the playground equipment. The Circuit 9 Grant provided the funds for this work and the new mulch. We had volunteers spread the new mulch. Unfortunately, several days after the playground was complete, there was a massive storm that flooded the ditch behind the playground, and most of the new mulch was washed away. The property team is looking at a "sandbag" project to solve the problem of possible future ditch flooding. Upon completion of that project, we will address purchasing additional new mulch to spread on the playground area.

### **Financial Status**

We applied for, and received, two grants this last school year, from the Southeastern District (SED) and the Circuit 9 Mission Endowment Fund. These provided us with funds for various items, with several large ones being continued marketing ad expenses in Google, Facebook, and Next Door; funds for old mulch removal in the playground and new replacement mulch; and for teacher classroom iPads and new curriculum costs.

We were also able to purchase a new, industrial, toddler-sized changing table, thanks to the generous Above & Beyond donations from the church. Because of this, we will be able to accept non-potty trained students next school year. We were also able to purchase light tables and cover other operational costs from Above & Beyond donations.

We ended the last school year in the red, as the number of students did not totally cover the staff costs. This will most likely still be the case this next school year, especially with offering the expanded hours. This is all expected with a new expansion program.

Sarah Brazell  
Preschool Director

# Annual Statistics

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## **Baptisms**

Emma A. Bentley 1/18/25  
Finn E. Stone 2/15/25  
Savannah C. Taddei Maas 3/30/25  
Landen C. Plourd-Terlecki 8/10/25  
Atlas R. Terlecki 8/10/25  
Maximilian P. Terlecki 8/10/25

## **First Communion**

Rose E. Austin  
Calvin S. A. Franker  
Spencer T. Hoplin  
Bradley P. Noble  
Margaret D. Noble  
Xavier J Darius Raye

## **Funerals and Deaths**

Marlys Jean Jacobson Rustad 12/28/24  
N. Diane Pederson 4/26/25  
Helen Skillman 6/20/25

## **Marriages**

Melissa Shebat and David Witkop 10/ 27/24

## **Confirmed**

Luke O. Arehart  
Timothy E. Austin  
Andrew R. Misleh  
Ryder M. Morgan

## **Received into Our Fellowship**

Jennifer and Luis de Niz  
Darren Leitsch  
Sean, Karen, Joseph, Spencer, Bradley, and Margaret Noble  
Randy and Melanie Stockman  
Carey and Savannah White

## **Released from Our Fellowship**

Kevin and Patti Niewoehner  
Blake, Abigail, and Christopher Lawrence  
Anne and Charlie Clapp

# Other Attachments

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Additional attachments will be published in the fall, after the completion of Fiscal Year 2025.

# **“Top 15 of 10”**

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This year, we marked and celebrated the 10th year of Pastor Johann’s ministry at Good Shepherd.

In looking back over the past decade, it seemed natural to consider what the top 10 accomplishments of that decade might be. But instead of 10, we came up with the Top 15 of 10 (years).

What follows is that Top 15 list, plus some commentary about the entries and bullet points to expand upon what those Top 15 items have meant in concrete terms.

## **1. Breaking ground on virtual ministry and expanding IT**

In March 2020, Good Shepherd’s virtual ministry went, quickly, from zero to 60. The onset of the Covid pandemic, and the sudden halt of in-person worship (and everything else), necessitated a new approach.

Before the pandemic, GSLC did not offer a virtual ministry. We had a social media presence and shared pictures, events, and information on an ad hoc basis. We now offer weekly virtual services on Facebook Live, YouTube, and Vimeo as well as consistent social media postings on Facebook and Instagram. We average over 1,700 views of our virtual services monthly, not to include the thousands we see during the Christmas and Easter services. On social media we have thousands of monthly views, and many of events and offerings of the church are highlighted with pictures.

- Sanctuary service and Praise service online, streaming, recorded, and posted on various platforms
- Midday, midweek Lenten services recorded and posted on various platforms
- Podcast, featuring sermons and music (mainly Sanctuary Choir anthems); begun during Covid and retired when listenership declined in subsequent years
- Midweek Recharge (a mini, midweek devotion and connection point during Covid; recorded and posted online)
- Praise songs playlist on Spotify
- Facebook upgraded, with more regular posts; Instagram account begun
- Website upgraded

## **2. Updating our technological wherewithal and know-how**

None of the virtual ministry expansion would have been possible without the upgrade of our technological wherewithal and know-how, thanks to the expertise of a dedicated team. A multi-year effort has resulted in an upgrade to our audio systems, projection capabilities, and behind-the-scenes technology stack that has allowed us to further His Word.

- Audio upgrade, including new speakers, in sanctuary
- Wired mics in sanctuary
- A/V systems overhaul in sanctuary
- Multiple cameras in sanctuary and Fellowship Hall
- Projection upgrades in sanctuary and Fellowship Hall
- Hardware required to record, edit, and post services in sanctuary Fellowship Hall
- Replacement and supplemental lighting in Fellowship Hall
- A/V in the church entry area
- Sound control panel
- Video teleconference system in Room 202
- Hired staff and recruited volunteers for virtual ministry tech needs



## ***“Top 15,” continued***

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### **3. Becoming the staging ground for the South Lakes High School Food Pantry AND**

### **4. Becoming known for community service by growing our community service and mission partners**

When area schools shut down in March 2020 because of the Covid pandemic, we opened our doors to our partner, the South Lakes High School Food Pantry, so that the pantry could operate out of our church while schools were still closed. This partnership has grown from a makeshift pantry in the Fellowship Hall to having dedicated pantry rooms on our lower level. Church members, neighbors, and local grocery stores donate food to the pantry. Each week, year-round, 30 to 50 volunteers show up to sort food and pack bags. Once packed, the bags are delivered to the school by a caravan of cars. In the current fiscal year alone, more than 2,200 volunteers provided more than 3,800 volunteers hours at the pantry. And this year, the pantry surpassed distributing TWO MILLION SIX HUNDRED THOUSAND POUNDS of food and toiletries to children and families in need in our community.

Our commitment to helping our neighbors has extended to participation in Food for Neighbors, Helping Hungry Kids, A Simple Gesture, grocery gift cards for Dogwood Elementary School, packing lunches for the Embury Rucker Shelter, providing meals for the North County Hypothermia Shelter, and more.

Here is a sampling for local and international service efforts we have supported over the years.

- Cornerstones
- The Closet of Greater Herndon
- Hypothermia Shelter
- Fellowship House (aka Fellowship Square)
- Meals of Hope – Rise Against Hunger
- Dranesville Elementary weekend grocery packs
- Dogwood Elementary grocery cards and other donations
- Laurel Learning Center Pool passes
- Adopt-a-Highway participation
- Helping Hands (lap robes for local hospice; quilts sent overseas via Lutheran World Relief)
- WorkCamp
- Support of LCMS missionaries
- Village of Joy in Haiti, in partnership with Food for the Poor
- Kingston Jamaica Lutheran community development
- Prefabricated houses in Turkey for earthquake victims
- Bethania Kids
- Lutheran Braille Workers
- Lutheran World Relief
- Iglesia Luterana Principe de Paz
- Evergreen Lutheran School, Detroit

### **5. Free to Dream (FTD) debt-reduction effort**

Through this fundraising effort, and the ongoing generosity of members to the program, Good Shepherd will have decreased its mortgage debt from approximately \$6 million to about \$1.1 million by the end of FY2025, enabling increased giving in other directions.

## ***“Top 15,” continued***

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### **6. Above & Beyond (A&B) giving program**

The Above & Beyond giving program began in 2017 to enhance and grow our ministry programs further than our general budget could accommodate. Each year, ministry teams have identified projects and needs that go beyond the basics covered by the General Fund, and our members and friends have responded by making donations above and beyond their regular contributions. Many of the Top 15 accomplishments have been made possible through A&B support.

### **7. Completing our staff overhaul: core staff and Core Ministry leadership**

Good Shepherd has recently completed a multi-year process of reconstituting its staffing. Only three workers remain on the current staff from the pre-pandemic era, due to retirements, repositioning, the needs of the new digital age, and pandemic-era issues. A number of Core Ministry leaders have also joined our ranks or been replaced by other servants. The addition of Pastor James as Assisting Pastor has been a blessing to Good Shepherd’s ministry as well.

- Hired Pastor James as Assisting Pastor, Discipleship Ministry lead
- Hired Director of Engagement
- Expanded the Communications department
- Combined Director of Choirs & Organist position
- Dissolved Office Assistant position
- Hired new staff and recruited volunteers for virtual ministry tech requirements
- Recruited volunteers for a range of office tasks

### **8. Navigating the pandemic (with no loss of life to our membership)**

While our virtual ministry offerings contributed in large part to “pandemic navigation,” (see No. 1 on the Top 15 list), we also met the needs of our worshipping community—bearing in mind best practices at the time—by offering outdoor worship services every week, from June 2020 until June 2022. Services were held in the lower parking lot and included the celebration of Holy Communion each week. Not one outdoor service was cancelled.

### **9. Establishing the Connections Class—and receiving hundreds of new members**

Our new member class—the Connections Class—was redesigned to make it more streamlined and focused on immediate integration of new members into the life of Good Shepherd. Additionally, visitors are welcomed by greeters and individually approached by our Director of Engagement or one of her team members. Even before setting foot on our campus, visitors can get a sense of what Good Shepherd is all about by exploring our website or viewing our online Virtual Tour (another project completed during the pandemic). Also adding to our welcoming atmosphere are the consistent use of nametags by members and the establishment of an online membership directory, both of which encourage a feeling of community.

- Coordinated approach to welcoming and engaging visitors and new members
- Introduction to Good Shepherd devotional and worship opportunities
- Introduction to opportunities to volunteer
- Pair new members with long-term members
- Nametags at worship and events
- Online tour of the building
- Online photo membership directory

## ***“Top 15,” continued***

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### **10. Engaging our members; high level of volunteering**

Over the past several years, the staff and Core Ministry leaders have worked to involve more volunteers, partially due to the Business Manager’s and Senior Pastor’s philosophy that, “at the end of the day, the church is a volunteer organization” (Pastor Johann). Involving more volunteers encourages more members and participants to be involved, offering their time and talents, and raising personal stewardship to the Lord and His church. Efforts that make visitors feel welcome (greeters, nametags, online directory) also foster a feeling of community for members.

- Ministry Fair highlighted volunteer opportunities in Worship, Discipleship, Parish Life, Mission, and Congregational Care and Nurture (See also “The Role of Volunteers,” page 25.)
- Calendar and descriptions of volunteering opportunities on revamped website
- Reorganized News & Announcements to list volunteering opportunities available in worship onsite and online.

### **11. Improving health**

- Walks
- Hikes
- Dementia ministry
- Blood drive
- Red Cross certification training
- Medical equipment lending bank

### **12. Increase in fellowship activities and events**

Good Shepherd has a long history of offering fellowship activities and events as a way to build, rebuild, and cement friendships and community. Events beloved through the years (e.g., Chili Bingo, Fall Festival/Trunk-or-Treat) have been supplemented with opportunities to relax and enjoy one another’s company, such as food trucks, “Brunchgiving,” celebrations of milestones, and so on. What follows is a partial list of fellowship activities both old and new.

- Sunday School teacher appreciation
- Celebrating major work anniversaries
- Volunteer Appreciation lunch
- “Brunchgiving”
- Women’s Book Club lunch
- Bus to Sight & Sound in Pennsylvania
- Fall Festival with Trunk or Treat
- Women’s Retreat weekend
- Advent Tea
- Christkindlmarket (formerly Pasta Supper and Christmas Shoppe)
- Chili Bingo
- Pancake Breakfast
- Craft groups for VBS décor
- Concerts in sanctuary
- Life Groups
- Weekly Prayer Meeting

### **13. Columbarium Peace Garden**

Due to congregational generosity and the reservation of individual niches, installation of the Columbarium Peace Garden has begun. Contracts have been signed for the landscaping.

## ***“Top 15,” continued***

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### **14. Beginning our HVAC and roof overhaul**

- Ionizers installed
- Upgraded computers that run the HVAC system
- Boilers replaced
- Partial cooling replacement – parts due this year

### **15. Preschool expansion**

Major steps have been undertaken to realize the expansion of Good Shepherd’s preschool program. A full description of this progress and plans for the future are presented in the preschool’s report (pages 16-17). Here is a brief recap of steps taken along the way so far.

- Planning, application, approval completed for expansion of hours
- Summer Camp for ages 2-10, with volunteering opportunities for up to age 14 starting Summer 2025
- Full-day or flexible hours for ages 2-6 starting Fall 2025
- Marketing (e.g., Google ads)

# The Role of Volunteers

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Good Shepherd has been blessed with many volunteers who donate their time and their talents daily, weekly, and monthly. We cannot name our many volunteers individually, but this each indicates the areas in which they serve and some of their tasks. Every minute of their service is greatly appreciated and is felt by all.

## **Board of Servant Leaders**

**Worship & Celebration:** acolytes; Altar Guild; Sanctuary Choir; Handbell Choir; Men's Choir; cantors; communion assistants; greeters; prayer leaders; scripture readers; projectionists; openers; closers; Kitchen Crew (coffee setup and cleanup); offering counters; seasonal décor

## **Office Support**

**Discipleship:** Adult Bible Study leaders; Middle School Ministry; High School Ministry; Confirmation mentors; Children's Sunday School leaders; Vacation Bible School; library support

**Parish Life:** Life Group leaders; Connections Coaches

**Christian Life & Engagement/Congregational Events:** everyone who helps set up, run, and clean up for our many events throughout the year

**Missions (National & International):** Team members; Helping Hands

**Community Service:** SLHS Food Pantry; Youth WorkCamp; other support for local schools; The Closet of Greater Herndon

**Congregational Care & Nurture:** Take Them a Meal; memorial services; greeting card ministry; member care visits; hike and walk organizers; transportation; prayer groups

**Administration:** Finance team assistance

**Property & Facilities:** help with scaffolding, repairs, and many other tasks too numerous to detail; Columbarium committee

**Communications:** proofers; writers; those who offer ideas, consultation, and other input

**Preschool support**



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SHEPHERD**  
LUTHERAN CHURCH

**LOVE. GROW. SERVE.**

**Building up God's people through His word for His world**