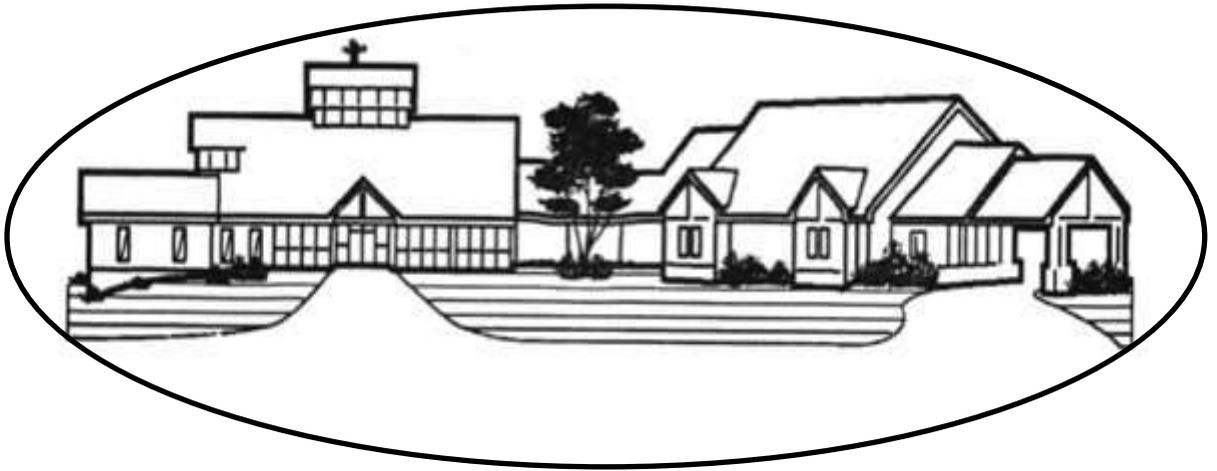

Agapegram

January 2018



ETERNAL SHEPHERD LUTHERAN CHURCH

220 Carson Road

Seneca, South Carolina 29678

www.eternalshepherd.org

office@eternalshepherd.org

Office: 864-882-3209 or 864-882-5512

Little Lambs Preschool: 864-882-3202



New Year's Thoughts

A Collection of thoughts as we enter into the New Year.

Christmas From Year to Year – Christmas is a time of joy for believers who celebrate the arrival of a Savior who both shares in our humanity and saves us from our fallen state. A reminder that God has not abandoned us, but acts for our eternal good. It's a great thought with which to end each year. Remember also that Christmas is a season of 12 days that takes us to January 6th and the celebration of Epiphany. That means the celebration of Jesus' birth both closes out the past year and carries us into the New Year. So, keep your decorations out, keep the carols playing, or, at least, keep pondering & proclaiming God's gift of Immanuel into 2018. It's the best way to start the New Year off right.

Thank You – What a wonderful collection of Christmas celebrations we had at Eternal Shepherd! I give thanks to (and for!) all those who contributed to our services and made them such a success. Please thank all those involved, too, as you see them. As I consider all the dedication that went into our Christmas activities, I also think back over the year and give thanks for so many faithful servants at ESLC. Thank you to all of you who lead, serve, and contribute to our work! From boards, committees, & ministries that continue their routines month to month; to our annual traditions like the Rummage Sale, Easter Breakfast, the Spaghetti Supper, VBS, etc.; and, to special events like all of our Reformation 500 activities this past year, **thank you to those who served!** It is through these efforts that we praise God, strengthen the faith of fellow believers, serve our neighbors in love, and build fellowship. Lastly, I'm thankful for this shared ministry we have together and for the support given to me by this loving congregation. Thank you all!

continued on next page...

Since We're Thinking about Babies - Christmas & Epiphany focus not just on a Savior in general, but on God who entered this world as a baby, was gifted with treasures as an infant, and who was welcomed into the family of God through circumcision (the Old Testament equivalent of New Testament baptism) when just 8 days old. God values babies and infancy enough to live through it himself. Scripture tells us *"children are a heritage from the LORD. The fruit of the womb is a reward from him."* (Ps. 127:3 EHV) In recognition of that truth, we have a group that will be going to Columbia on Saturday, January 6th for the annual March for Life. Let Deac. Holly know if you are interested in going with us.

What to Do About Aliens – Not the ones from other nations, but the other aliens inferred from Government studies of Unidentified Flying Objects that have made the news in the last couple weeks. Are we alone in this universe? Has God put sentient life on other planets? If so, have those creatures traveled here to earth? Or is this all flim-flam and swamp gas? Well, on January 11th, you can hear about the research and conclusions of one group of Christians in the movie Alien Intrusion. An intriguing look into the phenomenon believed by millions. If interested, we will organize a group to go. Learn more or book your own tickets for the one night showing at <http://alienintrusion.com>

As we enter the New Year given us by the Lord, a year of life and grace and thankful service, we pray:

"Teach us to number our days in such a way, that we bring a heart of wisdom... May the kindness of the Lord our God rest upon us. Establish the work of our hands for us. Yes, establish the work of our hands." Ps. 90:12, 17 EHV



Pastor David



Deaconess Musings

Always and Forever

From God the Father, virgin born to us the only Son came down; by death the font to consecrate, the faithful to regenerate. (*From God the Father, Virgin Born, st. 1 LSB 401*)
And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth. ~ John 1:14

Beginning from His home on high, in human flesh He came to die; creation by His death restored, and shed new joys of life abroad. (*LSB 401, st. 2*)

Though he [Christ Jesus] was by nature God, he did not consider equality with God as a prize to be displayed, but he emptied himself by taking the nature of a servant. When he was born in human likeness, and his appearance was like that of any other man, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death—even death on a cross. ~Phil. 2:6-8

Glide on, O glorious Sun, and bring the gift of healing on Your wing; to ev'ry dull and clouded sense the clearness of Your light dispense. (*LSB 401, st. 3*)

“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed... ~Luke 4:18

Abide with us, O Lord, we pray; the gloom of darkness chase away; Your work of healing, Lord, begin, and take away the stain of sin. (*LSB 401, st. 4*)

“You are to open their eyes, so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive the forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.” ~Acts 26:18

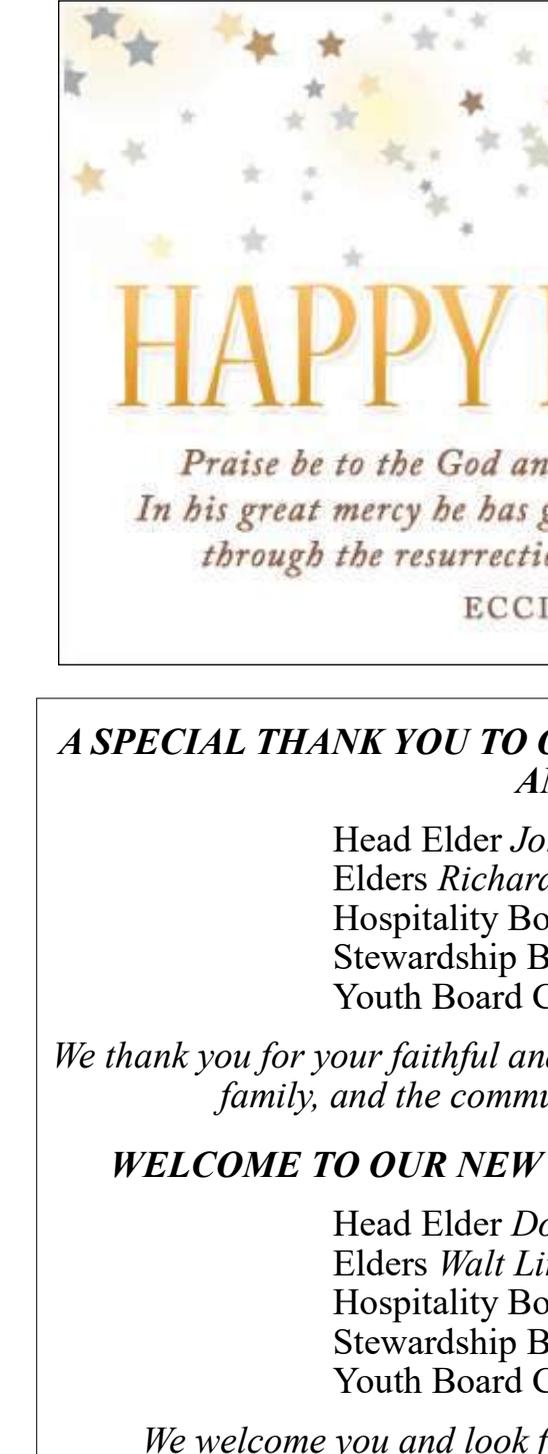
Lord, once You came to earth's domain and, we believe, shall come again; be with us on the battlefield, from ev'ry harm Your people shield.

To You, O Lord, all glory be for this Your blest epiphany; to God, whom all His hosts adore, and Holy Spirit evermore. (*LSB 401, st. 5, 6*)

New Year, same you. New Year, same sin. New Year, same Jesus. While there are some things that we want changed, Jesus remains constant. Though low and sinful we may be, Christ proclaims us redeemed, forgiven, and baptized children.

Another year has ended. Another year begins. May we always and forever remember that our days and our lives are now founded in the death and resurrection of our Christ Jesus. Through Him we can go into the New Year boldly, knowing where our true assurance lies.

Deaconess Holly



HAPPY NEW YEAR

*Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ!
In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope
through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.*

ECCLESIASTES 3:11

A SPECIAL THANK YOU TO OUR OUT GOING COUNCIL MEMBERS AND ELDERS

Head Elder *John Cochell*
Elders *Richard Hull & Serji Amirkhanian*
Hospitality Board Chair *Elaine Grotheer*
Stewardship Board Chair *Donna Lang*
Youth Board Chair *Katie Baumann*

We thank you for your faithful and dedicated service to our Lord, your church family, and the community. We appreciate your service.

WELCOME TO OUR NEW COUNCIL MEMBERS AND ELDERS

Head Elder *Doug Zirbel*
Elders *Walt Lindow & Monty Moore*
Hospitality Board Chair *Susie Williams*
Stewardship Board Chair *Janet Walker*
Youth Board Chair *Kerry Blount*

*We welcome you and look forward to our time of service together.
Thank you for answering the call.*

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

As I sit here writing this, I realize it was four years ago when I wrote my first article for the Agapegram as your Council President. What an incredible experience it has been so far! It has been a privilege to work with so many amazing members and with Pastor Hammer. It has surely been a blessing from the Lord!

As another year ends, so do Council member's terms end. I would like to express my thanks to Donna Lang, Katie Baumann, John Cochell, and Elaine Grotheer for their time served on Council as they leave their positions. I also would like to thank their replacements, Suzie Williams, Janet Walker and Doug Zirbel for stepping up and heeding the call to serve. I recall a former Council President from another congregation who after serving for many years in this capacity, always said he had the easiest job because he had such a hard working council supporting him. I now realize what he was feeling when he said that, because it is true. No one person can perform all the work that is needed to support a church and having such faithful and dedicated members doing their part has not only made my job easier but has also made such a positive difference here at ESLC.

I pray that your Christmas celebrations were blessed with worship, rest and a special time spent with family and friends. Please join me in welcoming 2018 with a renewed joy and a desire to serve and may our Lord bless you and yours with His love, mercy and strength in the New Year and beyond!

*In His Service,
Rudy Carbone
Council President*

Finance Board By: Bob Massa, Chairman

As we start the new year (both church and budget) as a board we have two important needs. The first being an audit of our finances which was completed last year by Steve Stroul and his congregational team. Unfortunately, this year Steve is unable to oversee and lead the audit. As a result, we need a volunteer to lead and direct this function. There are audit programs available to assist and guide in completing the audit. Please contact Rich Hesemann or myself if you are willing to perform this task for the congregation.

Our second need is a something we identified last year and have been unable to resolve. Eternal Shepherd is blest to have two talented and excellent individuals serving in the roles of Treasurer and Financial Secretary; however, should either be unable to carry out their duties for a period of time the church has no adequate backup to assume their duties. We are actively seeking one or two individuals to train as assistants who if needed can step in and perform these duties. Again, if interested, contact Rich or myself.

Meanwhile, pray that we find individuals willing to assume these duties for Eternal Shepherd.



Epiphany Sunday

January 7th

9:45 - 10:45 am

**For Preschool thru 8th Grade
In the Downstairs Fellowship Hall**

MARCH FOR LIFE - COLUMBIA, SC, SATURDAY, JAN. 6TH: Join us as we take a group down to our State Capitol for the **2018 Stand Up for Life March and Rally** on Saturday, January 6th! We will leave at **8:00am** from ESLC for the **11:00am Event Start in Columbia**. Please contact Deac. Holly or Kyra Carbone to sign-up and for more information!

THANK YOU:

I would like to thank you all for the generous Christmas bonus, Christmas gifts, goodies, the beautiful cards of love and encouragement, and for always making me feel a special part of the ESLC family. Thank you. Blessings, may His peace, joy, and love fill your New Year!

~Celeste Entrekin

Living in Hope

by Kerry Blount

I Corinthians 13:13; Titus 1:1-2; Hebrews 6:13-20; Psalm 146:5-6

At a presentation on the impact of taxes on retirement resources a few months ago, the astute financial advisor at the front of the auditorium barked forcefully, “Hope is not a plan!” He wanted to emphasize that a well-thought-out approach to saving and managing enough money for retirement is a better option than “hoping” one’s investments and savings will grow and last as long as they need to. In the financial world, I believe he is right. But that’s the last I heard of his decidedly mundane lecture. Unexpectedly, my mind shifted instantly to an entirely different plane. Instead of financial advice, I heard four insistent words in my mind: *“Hope IS the plan!”*

Hope is the plan? Yes, indeed. It is included right there with Faith and Love as one of three spiritual principles that remain unshakable, reflecting the Trinity. How could Noah accomplish the work God had given him without a steadfast hope that God would bring to pass all that He had revealed? How could Job endure all the afflictions Satan could muster without a bedrock of hope that God would hear his case mercifully, either in life or in death? How could Abraham and Sarah endure the passing childless years without clinging determinedly to the hope that God would make a great nation through the son of promise? When Abraham tried to do it himself, he was soon forced to acknowledge that his plan was not God’s plan. Hope was the plan for all of them, because the only power who could accomplish what was needed and what was promised was the Almighty!

The path to the fulfillment of our hope often remains uncertain on this side of Heaven. It was uncertain for Job, who cried out, “Though He slay me, yet will I hope in Him!” It was uncertain for Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who acknowledged that, although they hoped for rescue from the fire, that might not be God’s plan for them. But their uncertainty was “how,” and never “if.” Together they could say with the psalmist, “Our hope is in the Lord our God, the Maker of heaven and earth, the sea and everything in them, Who remains faithful forever.”

In the financial arena, a prudent person should avoid living *on* hope and prepare diligently to care for his/her family (Proverbs 6:6-11). From a spiritual perspective, a faithful person should follow the example of Noah, Job, Abraham, the “Fiery Furnace Boys,” and the “great cloud of witnesses” that lived *in* hope, confident that their God—and our God—will fulfill every promise: forgiveness of sin, resurrection from both spiritual and physical death, eternal life with the Creator of the universe. Not one of those is within your or my control. Not one of us has the power, or faith, or love to make those promises come true. For us, *“Hope IS the plan!”*

Most Holy Father, we praise You for making the surety of our hope, Jesus our Lord, the Plan. By Your Spirit living within us, grow that hope so it is unshakable, a tree planted beside living waters, bearing fruit in its season as You intend. Even in our darkest hours, Lord, grant us the hope that draws us to persevere in faith and love, awaiting with confidence the fulfillment of all You have promised. We pray this in the name of our steadfast Hope, Jesus the Christ. Amen

“The Lord delights in those who fear Him and put their hope in His unfailing love.” Psalm 147:11

THE NEW 2018 FLOWER CHART is now hanging on the bulletin board in the Narthex. There is also a new, eye-catching, yellow information sheet above the calendar which hopefully will answer any questions you have about how it all works. Please check it out and feel free to sign up on any of the Sundays listed through the end of the year. Thank you!



Honduras Mission 2018: We are a month and a half away from packing our trunks for our Honduras Mission trip and hopefully everyone is excited about this opportunity to reach out and share the love of Christ. We will be able to buy a good bit of medicine and other services with the money received in our Helping Hands drive but there are still more needs. We have one last opportunity this month, when we put out a couple trunks to collect medicine, girls hair ties and boys combs. **Note: A list of the medicine needed will be on the trunks, plus the medicine must be sealed and have an expiration date beyond March. The trunks will go out Jan. 14th thru Feb. 4th.** *Thank you for your participation in this mission trip. ~Your Honduras Mission Team.*

**Little Lambs Preschool
Spaghetti Supper & Silent Auction**

**Saturday, Feb. 10th
5:00 - 6:30 pm
at**

**Eternal Shepherd Lutheran Church
220 Carson Road Seneca, SC 29678**

Tickets: \$8.00 Adults and \$3.00 Children
Lots of fun, great auction items.
All proceeds help support our Little Lambs

Tickets will be on sale Jan. 10th thru Feb. 10th.
*Please see Roberta Port, Gina Cote -Preschool
Director or any Preschool Board Member.*

We look forward to seeing you there!



Comfort Dog News

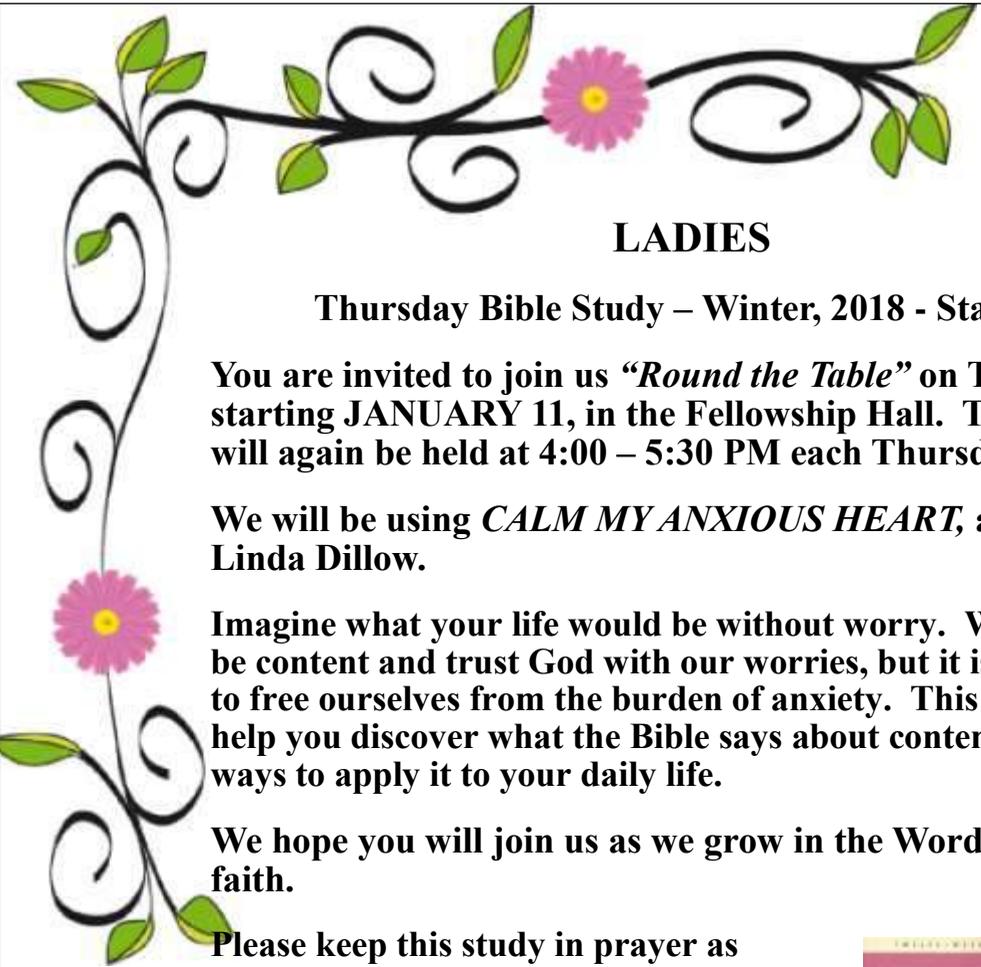
“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.” 2 Corinthians: 3-4



When I read about the Lutheran Church Charities Comfort Dog Ministry and how these sweet, gentle and specially trained dogs are used in and around their communities and beyond, I am amazed at the beauty of this ministry. These dogs provide Comfort with a capital C! In an article recently featured in our newspaper, two LCC Comfort Dogs, Pax and Phoebe, were ministering to students at an elementary school after the South Texas Church shootings. The dogs were brought in to offer their love and comfort to the students attending there. The school counselor mentioned that the dog's presence can help students talk about how they're feeling or just make them feel better if they're too young to put their feelings into words. She went on to say when speaking about Pax, "He just brings so many smiles and lots of love and comfort to our building, and we're just really, really blessed." Can't we all use a little comfort from time to time and especially when we are going through a crisis? God uses these dogs, their handlers and ministry partners to offer His Comfort during these difficult times. I see so many opportunities around our community where a Comfort Dog could be the bridge to this kind of compassionate ministry. And this is just what I am dreaming and thinking about, who knows what God will open up to us as a congregation should we move forward with this amazing and unique ministry.

We are moving closer to reaching our first goal of raising the initial deposit of \$7500. Thank you to all who supported the *Howl-le-lu-ya Dog Treat Sale!* Thanks to your support, along with the hard work of 13 dog biscuit makers and a Thrivent Action Team Card we raised **\$1068!** This amount will go towards the \$7500 deposit to secure our very own Comfort Dog. Please note, for those who are interested in serving on the Comfort Dog Ministry Team or for those who want to learn more about it, **we are having a meeting on January 14, 2018 right after late service in room 300.** Thank you for your generosity and support! *Kyra Carbone, Top Dog*





LADIES

Thursday Bible Study – Winter, 2018 - Start-up

You are invited to join us “*Round the Table*” on Thursdays, starting JANUARY 11, in the Fellowship Hall. The study will again be held at 4:00 – 5:30 PM each Thursday.

We will be using *CALM MY ANXIOUS HEART*, a study by Linda Dillow.

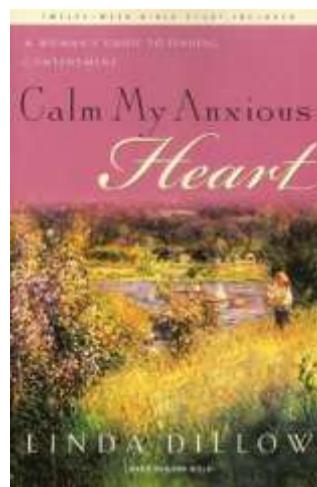
Imagine what your life would be without worry. We want to be content and trust God with our worries, but it is a struggle to free ourselves from the burden of anxiety. This course will help you discover what the Bible says about contentment and ways to apply it to your daily life.

We hope you will join us as we grow in the Word and in our faith.

Please keep this study in prayer as we prepare for it. Prayers are also appreciated for all those attending.

This is an 12 week study and will end on Thursday, April 5. Books are available on www.amazon.com or www.christianbook.com. A baby-sitter will be available for this study.

**Questions? Call or e-mail:
Janet Walker
Char Beyer
Margi McLain**



FEEDING THE HUNGRY OF SENECA, SAT. JAN. 13TH

On **Saturday, January 13th** we'll be serving our hungry friends in Seneca. We'll plan to meet behind the Market Basket in downtown Seneca (or at Our Daily Bread depending on the weather). Please come and join us the sign-up sheet is on the bulletin board in the narthex. If you're planning on helping prepare the food, meet at church at 9:45am. If you just want to serve, arrive at 11am behind the Market Basket in downtown Seneca. Any questions, call my cell at (770) 331-1300. *Thank you all for sharing your love with our neighbors. ~John Cochell*



FOOD BANK NEWS:

Please help us in collecting preferred needed canned, or boxed grocery items each month. These items will help restock the Golden Corner Food Pantry's shelves. Each month we will have a different preferred product featured. **January's** preferred product is **"Canned or Dried Beans"** Please help us overload the collection box (the big blue trash can marked Food Bank down by the main Fellowship Hall). *~Thank you for your generosity and support.*



Greeting Cards— Birthday! Get Well! Encouragement! Praying for You! Sympathy! Thinking of You! Cancer/Difficult Times! Anniversary! Baptism! Thanksgiving! Christmas! All these cards have been restocked in the cart in the Fellowship Hall. They are still \$.50 a card and \$5.00 for a whole box. Take a little extra time and check them out.

SCRIP CARDS

Please remember that **Scrip cards make great gifts and earn money for Eternal Shepherd at the same time.** Please see your scrip ladies today or pick up an order form located by the Scrip box in the narthex. *~Thank you for your support.*



SPECIAL GIFTS/MEMORIALS



In *November* the following gifts were given:

In loving memory of *Dr. Vil Griffin*
the Choir Fund received a gift of \$20.00
and

In loving memory of *Jean Lindgren*
the Choir Fund received gifts of \$70.00
and

In loving memory of *Don Robertson*
the Choir Fund received gifts of \$540.00

Other Gifts:

The Alaska Mission Fund received gifts of \$600.00

The Capital Campaign Building Fund received gifts of \$570.00

The Choir Fund received a gift of \$50.00

The Comfort Dog Ministry Fund received gifts of \$1,125.00

The Debt Reduction Fund received a gift of \$50.00

The Elders Fund received gifts of \$1,383.00

The Food Bank Fund received a gift of \$20.00

The General Fund received a gift of \$1,000.00 from Fidelity Charitable Grant

The Haiti Mission Fund received gifts of \$290.00

The Honduras Fund received gifts of \$3,361.00

The Lutheran Bible Translators Fund received gifts of \$20.83

The Special Missions Fund received a gift of \$100.00

The Special Missions Fund—Shirk Mission received a gift of \$100.00

The Youth Fund received a gift of \$25.00

Little Lambs Tales

*“Those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength.
They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary,
they will walk and not be faint.” (Isaiah 40:30)*

As we ring in the New Year at Little Lambs Preschool, we are reminded of God’s promises of hope and renewal. After several weeks of rest and relaxation, the teachers and staff are ready to enter into the new year of 2018!

We will be focusing our attention this month of January on the season of Winter! You will see a lot of crafts, songs, and stories that revolve around snowmen, ice castles, animals that hibernate in the winter and anything related to snow!

On January 10th we will be celebrating this month of Winter with our “Frozen” day! What fun we will have! The children will be skating on a pretend ice rink in the playroom, making lava lamps and creating their very own frozen chocolate covered bananas!

As the month of January concludes we will look forward to ushering in the month of February and the theme of love for God and one another. And mark your calendars as we prepare for our annual Spaghetti Supper on February 10th!

We are renewed and refreshed in the presence of these beautiful children of God and feel God’s continual blessings at work!

Thank you for your constant support and prayers for this most important mission of Eternal Shepherd Lutheran Church. Little Lambs Preschool certainly appreciates each and every one of you!



*Blessings to you and your families,
Gina*

Creation KALEIDOSCOPE

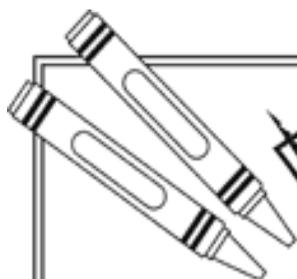
Make this fun craft to remember what our heavenly Creator made.

What you need:

- Adult help
- Tall chip can with lid
- Hammer and nail
- Acrylic paint; paintbrush
- Water, glitter, white glue
- Colored tissue paper
- Stronger craft glue (not hot glue)
- Star stickers or sequins
- Two 4" x 5" pieces of clear Con-Tact paper
- Scissors; pencil; permanent marker

What you do:

1. In bottom center of can, hammer a hole with a nail. Paint outside of can. Let dry.
2. Add glitter and a little water to white glue. With a clean paintbrush, glue tissue paper to bottom outside of lid.
3. Add stars to sticky side of Con-Tact paper. Place a matching piece on top, sticky sides together.
4. Put craft glue along edge of can opening. Glue Con-Tact paper square over opening. Let dry.
5. Place lid on can, over Con-Tact paper. Turn lid to get kaleidoscope effect.
6. With marker, write "In the beginning ..." on can.



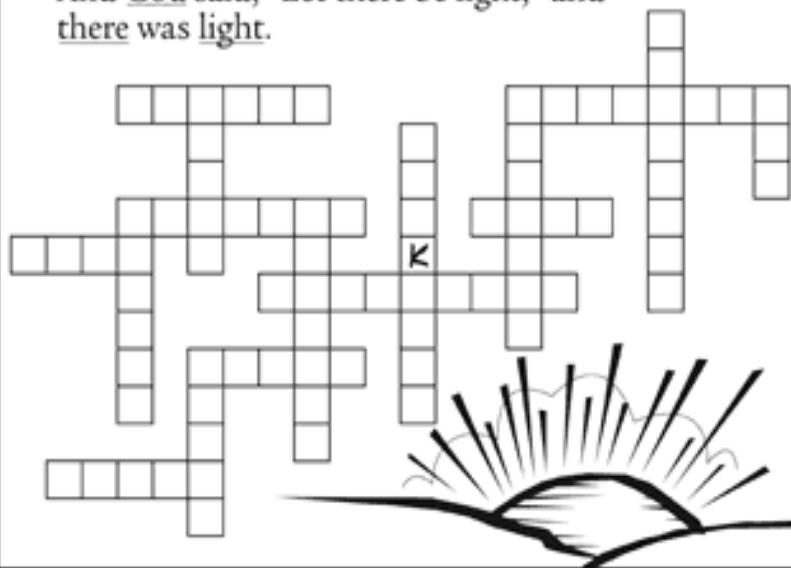
PUZZLE

The Beginning

The start of a new calendar year is a great time to praise God for his amazing creation.

Directions: Read Genesis 1:1-3 (NIV), below. Place the underlined words into the crossword. One letter has been provided to help you start.

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters. And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light.



SERVICE TIMES

8:30 a.m. Worship Service
(Communion 2nd & 4th Sundays)

9:45 a.m. Sunday School
& Adult Bible Study

11:00 a.m. Worship Service
(Communion 1st & 3rd Sundays)



THOSE WHO SERVE

Pastor: David Hammer

Deaconess: Holly Lustila

Secretary: Celeste Entrekin

Preschool Director: Gina Cote

Choir Director: Rick Schmidt

Choir Accompanist: Michelle Rowland

Organist: David Phillips

MISSIONARIES

Joanna Johnson, Taiwan

Nate Esala, Lutheran Bible Translators

David & Dr. Arianna Shirk, Kenya

S.E.D. Missionaries to Peru

Eternal Shepherd Lutheran Church
220 Carson Rd.
Seneca, SC 29678

