
Agapegram

May 2022



ETERNAL SHEPHERD LUTHERAN CHURCH

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Being Christians in a Not-So-Christian World



And he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, because my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will be glad to boast all the more in my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may shelter me. 2 Cor. 12:9 EHV

A highly abridged version of *A Little Theological Eavesdropping* by Rev. William Schumacher, *Concordia Journal* 47, 2021.

[A] great many Christians and non-Christians today sense that the church no longer exerts the same influence in the culture that it once did, that Christianity as a whole has lost much of the respect and status it once enjoyed. [F]or many Christians the shift causes alarm, grief, or even something akin to panic. This essay is intended, in a small but perhaps suggestive way, to assuage that grief and allay that panic. ...

I will draw on and develop some thoughts of the Ugandan Roman Catholic theologian Emmanuel Katongole. I have been privileged to listen in on theological conversations in which Africans have been trying to figure out the church's place in the world, the church's relationship to (and responsibility for) the world, and how the church survives and flourishes...

Increasingly, the church-in-the-world must realize that it has no reserved "sacred space" as a specially privileged institution in the culture; that the world around us will not automatically recognize and respect the role of the church in the world or urge people to pay attention to what we say. I've been thinking about this trend more recently, especially as I compare our circumstances in this country with what I see elsewhere in the world, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa. ...

Since the church (or churches, collectively) no longer leads or "governs" the culture or the community, then the church is always operating on foreign soil; every game we play is an away game with no home-field advantage. This means that the church does not, cannot, dictate the conditions or circumstances in which it lives in the world. Strictly speaking, the church-in-the-world has no "right" to official recognition, privileged tax status, presumptive moral authority, or prestige based on long-established respectability. The church's life and work in the world is not from a position of strength, but of weakness... [exactly where the power of Christ shines!]

Even though the churches, as the community of God's people, are not in any sense "in charge of" or "master" of the cultural, the society, and so on, nevertheless we are entrusted with responsibility for the world around us. The communities where we live, the society of which we are members, the culture that we help make and that partly makes us who we are ... all these have been placed into our care by the God who made us and put us in the world here and now.

...
One shape of this responsibility and engagement is what Emmanuel Katongole calls "resistance." This resistance stands in resolute opposition to the dehumanizing power of death and anarchy. ... In Peter Jackson's *The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King*, King Theoden of Rohan is confronted by the overwhelming odds against his army in the coming battle, as one of his men says, "We cannot defeat the armies of Mordor." "No," acknowledges Theoden, "we cannot. But we will meet them in battle nonetheless." The film captures vividly the sense in which the king's words are not defeatist but heroic, and they bolster the courage of his soldiers.

continued on next page....

Even if our power is insufficient to defeat the church's enemies of anarchy and evil [in this world], we neither surrender nor despair nor retreat nor escape, but we will go down fighting against everything that erodes, effaces, and perverts God's creation, especially his human creatures. [For we know that our Risen Savior has already won the war.] ...

Another way of expressing the church's responsibility for the world is *hope*: the church offers "hope" despite the evidence of the world! This is an important difference between "hope" and mere "optimism," which is the reasonable expectation that things are going pretty well and will probably turn out okay. But hope, anchored to the promises of God in Christ, may display a kind of recklessness even (or especially) in the teeth of the evidence. As the American poet Wendell Berry said it someplace: "Be joyful, though you have considered all the facts." ...

The church's hope is rooted in and lives from... God's salvation of the world in Jesus Christ: forgiving, healing, reconciling, restoring, re-creating, resurrecting. ...

The gospel... has the power to subvert false narratives (materialism, technological progress, sexual hedonism masquerading as freedom, etc.) and the power to resist the culture of death in all its forms. ...

The results [of the weak church living and giving witness in a broken world] are, alas, marked by weakness, failure, repentance, and tears; yet running through it is healing and grace.

[Boasting in our weakness, let us live in this world in resistance and hope, bringing healing & grace through the Gospel that declares: Alleluia, Christ is risen!]

He himself carried our sins in his body on the tree so that we would be dead to sins and alive to righteousness. By his wounds you were healed. 1 Peter 2:24 EHV

Pastor David





Deaconess' Musings

Easter...Eternally

But the house of Israel says, 'The way of the Lord is not right.' Are My ways not right, O house of Israel? Is it not your ways that are not right? 'Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, each according to his conduct,' declares the Lord God.

~Ezekiel 18:29, 30a

Strong words. Words of judgement and condemnation to a people who were not adhering to the words of the Lord. The nation of Israel had yet again turned away from following the commands of God and had fallen into sin and error, resulting in the Lord allowing their current exile in Babylon. Through the prophet Ezekiel, the Lord called out the people and their insistence on following their own hearts and minds, believing that their ways are better and more just than the Lord's Will. However, as He had done in the past, God promises Israel salvation and rescue and does not leave them without hope.

The Lord continues through Ezekiel, *"Cast away from you all the transgressions which you have committed and make yourselves a new heart and a new spirit! For why will you die, O house of Israel? For I have no pleasure in the death of anyone who dies," declares the Lord God. "Therefore repent and live."* (Ezekiel 18:31-32)

A call to repent and live. Here we see just one of many of such calls to the ancient Israelites, and yet these words find their echo today in the Church and her members. How often have we, ourselves, declared the Lord's ways to not be right, or just? How often have you, yourself, considered your own flawed, sinful thinking to be above reproach? We, like the Israelites of old, are constantly turning away and foregoing the Lord's good and perfect Will for thoughts and deeds that only lead to corruption. To sin. To death. To eternal separation from our Creator.

Thanks be to God! Through Christ's Passion and death on Good Friday to His resurrection on Easter morning, God proved that *"while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."* (Romans 5:8) For without Good Friday and Easter, where would our hope be found? In our own ways? The world has disproved that countless and countless times. Let our hope always be found in that bright, shining eternal Easter morning. For Christ had died, but now lives forever! We have been forever united with Christ in His death and resurrection! So, repent, live, and rejoice!

Rejoice for your God has paid your price. Rejoice for your Christ is not dead, but eternally alive. Rejoice for the Holy Spirit leaves you not alone but filled with new life.

Easter is not one Sunday, but your entire life, the now and the yet to come. Christ arose and brings blessings eternal to you and the world.

*Blessed Eastertide!
Deaconess Holly*

**ESLC has many opportunities for service.
Below are just some of the wonderful opportunities available.**



Contact: Sue Hauser



Hospitality

Contact: Colleen Wakeman



**Mission Quilt Sewers
(Blanketeers)
Contact: Marlene Bell**



Contact: Deek Decker



**Comfort Dog Ministry
Contact: Kyra Carbone**



Contact: Deaconess Holly Cox

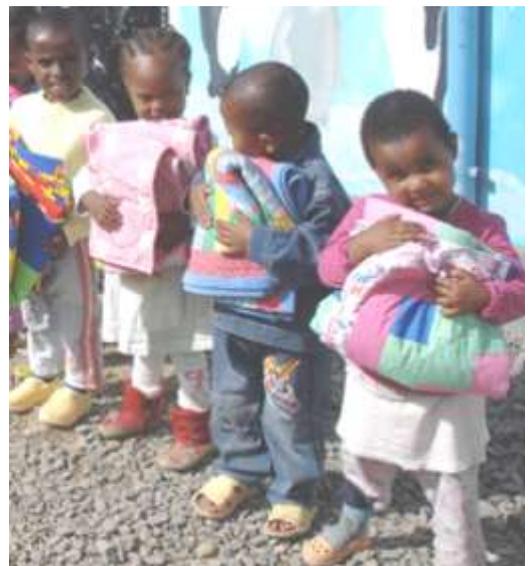


Contact: Terri Baumann

MISSION BLANKETEERS!

Yes, I am using “Blanketeers” because I feel that “quilters” give the wrong opinion of WHAT this group does. Our group compile tops that are made by several members that delight in making the beautiful quilt tops. I need help in compiling the tops with batting and backing.

There is NO sewing. It is a production line of cutting large pieces of material and batting and as simple as holding a ruler—which is just as important. If you have 3 hours free on the second Tuesday of every month (except December), please consider this endeavor. We are a small group, but a mighty group. Contact Marlene Bell 864-710-8947.



Memorial Day

By Bob Massa Head Elder

While touring Arlington National Cemetery on our recent visit to Washington D.C., I sensed the somberness, solitude, and serenity of this hallowed ground. So much of our history is there in the grave markers, the Tomb of the Unknown Soldiers, the Lee/Custis House, the Kennedy Memorial, and various other monuments. I began to wonder if there were Chaplains buried there and decided to investigate and if yes, could I write about it in May's Agapegram since at the end of the month we celebrate Memorial Day.

Memorial Day was originally called Decoration Day and was celebrated annually on May 30th as conceived by General John Logan to honor fallen Civil War soldiers whether Union or Confederate fighters. The first celebration was held on May 30, 1868, when 5,000 people decorated approximately 20,000 military graves with flowers while children's choirs sang hymns and prayers for these fallen warriors were offered. New York was the first state to declare it an official holiday and was soon followed by other northern states. Southern states had their own designated day to honor fallen Confederate soldiers until after World War I when the day was changed to honor fallen American soldiers from any war.

However, southern states continue to honor their Confederate dead: January 19th – Texas, Alabama, Florida, Mississippi, and Georgia – April 26th, North Carolina, and South Carolina – May 10th, and finally Louisiana, Kentucky, and Tennessee – June 3rd.

In 1971, the Uniform Monday Holiday Act moved Decoration Day to the last Monday in May and officially changed its name to Memorial Day.

There is a hill in Section Two of Arlington National Cemetery called Chaplains Hill and at its top it has four monuments. The first monument was erected in 1926 and is dedicated to 23 chaplains of all faiths who died in World War I. A second monument erected in 1981, is dedicated to 134 Protestant Chaplains who died in World Wars I and II. In 1989, a third monument was dedicated, a Catholic Chaplains Memorial to the 83 Catholic Chaplains who died in World War II, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War. A Jewish Chaplains Memorial became the fourth monument and was dedicated in 2011 to the 14 Jewish chaplains who died serving in the United States Armed Forces.

Not every chaplain honored on the memorials is buried at Arlington; however, one chaplain lain there is Major General Gerhardt W. Hyatt, a Lutheran Chaplain who served in World War II and Korea and was Army Chief of Chaplains from 1971 through 1975.

In December 2000, President Bill Clinton signed into law the National Moment of Remembrance Act which encourages all Americans to pause wherever they are at 3 PM local time on Memorial Day for a minute of silence to remember and honor those who have died in service to the nation. Let's offer a prayer of thanksgiving on this Memorial Day for all our fallen soldiers but especially for these unarmed servants of the Lord who shepherded our sons, daughters, fathers, and mothers while in combat.

***Hold Thou Thy cross before my closing eyes;
Shine through the gloom, and point me to the skies.
Heav'n's morning breaks, and earth's vain shadows flee;
In life, in death, O Lord, abide with me.***

Hymn 878: 6



Meet Our Newest Members

Meet Gary Smith

Saying “Good Morning” to his wife Patty is the best way to start his day! Visiting and FaceTime with his two grands (7 & 4) another. The Smiths moved here from MA, where Gary served as CFO for his family fire sprinkler business. Golf, fishing, cooking, travel and singing (now with the ES choir) his hobbies. He’s been in church choirs for 40 years & served in a variety of different positions including as Church President.. This chorister has traveled to the Sistine Chapel in Rome, the waterways of Venice & Pompeii, Australia, the Greek Ruins, Russia, Estonia and several other countries along with many areas of the US. “I am retired so relaxing is now a common trait in my life!” Not so his senior year at the U of MD where he took 16 courses so he & Patty could get married soon after graduation. A member of the ELCA for 45 years he noted the direction turning very liberal with theological changes which went against his moral & Christian ethics. He tuned in to some ESLC services on YouTube & decided here was where he belonged! Welcome, GS.

Meet Ned & Beth Renfroe

“We are very happy to be members of ESLC!” This couple moved to Seneca from Naples FL where Ned, a Naples native, owned a business for 30 years and Beth taught Middle School until raising their two daughters, Devon getting her PhD at Carnegie Mellon and Sarah living in Atlanta with her husband. Like so many of us , they moved here because of beautiful Lake Keowee, the proximity to the mountains and the change of seasons. Beth enjoys cooking, genealogical research & reading; together they like boating, flying, motorcycle riding and pickleball. “We both look forward to worshipping, growing & serving The Lord with our ESLC family!”

Comfort Dog News

Three years ago in April of 2019, Seth became a member of our church and with his team began the ministry of sharing the “Mercy, Compassion, Presence and Proclamation of Jesus Christ to those suffering and in need.” (LCC Mission Statement). Since then, he has completed 830 visits in and beyond our local communities. Of course, we appreciate Seth’s hard work and his willingness to go on a visit, but he needs his team to make it all happen. I am very grateful to God for keeping our team together through the last three years which is comprised of 8 handlers and 10 ministry partners. It hasn’t always been easy especially when the pandemic hit and there were numerous scheduling changes, but we worked through it all and stayed strong, praise God!

We are not sure what the future holds but we keep going and do our best to follow where God leads. We trust Him for the outcome of every encounter as we share the love of Christ with those we meet. We are blessed with a very good dog who is healthy and happy. We ask for your prayers as we continue the Lord’s work and that we have “opportunity eyes” in reaching out to those we meet who are suffering or in need.
Happy 3rd Anniversary Seth and Team!

*To God be the glory,
Kyra Carbone, Top Dog*



START OR JOIN A MISSIONS TEAM – Priceless Memories

Welcome Home Team Honduras



Planting Schools in Haiti. Harvest is Abundant & Growing Every Year



CHEVAK ALASKA
SALTILLO MEXICO
CAN-DO CONCORDIA
DISASTER RESPONSE
ADD YOUR MISSION!

CONTACT:

Lars Helland
Pastor Ray Ramsburg
Pastor David Hammer
Richard Grotheer
Deaconess Holly Cox
Milo Bell
Deek Decker



Hi Eternal Shepherd Lutheran Church Members,

I wanted to say thank you for your donation of \$500! This will be a true blessing for our families like Sara and her son, Finn, pictured here. While in Ripple of One she has progressed in her career and is saving for the future. To hear more about how Sara and her son are progressing please go to our website!



Thank You Again,

Catherine Sturgeon
Administrative &
Impact Specialist

Ripple of One - *STOP Enabling and START Empowering*

Office: 864.882.8777 Cell: 864.477.0190

Twitter: ripple_of_one

Facebook: Ripple of One

[Ripple's Website -- Read Life about Real Life Change](#)

General Office Hours: Mon-Thurs 9-5 Fri 9-3 (*Please call for an appt*)

Scrip Cards are available and make great gifts as well as earn money for Eternal Shepherd at the same time. Please note we have Publix, Ingles and Walmart gift cards available. For orders please contact **Beckie Rau** at (864) 944-6096. After the order is received one of the Scrip ladies will contact you to make arrangements for delivery. Scrip Card Team: **Beckie Rau, Libby Dunlap, Elisabeth Baker & Sue Hauser**. ~Thank you for your support.



CHURCH VOLUNTEER APPEAL FOR BABYREAD

Volunteers Needed for BabyRead during the Pandemic
BabyRead volunteers continue to stay in touch with families by texting, phoning and dropping off books once a month. We need volunteers more than ever to provide our moms and babies with books and moral support. Become a BabyRead volunteer by emailing Caren at babyread@charter.net. To learn more about BabyRead, go to www.babyread.org.



VOLUNTEERS NEEDED: Habitat For Humanity is in need of volunteers throughout the organization. There are jobs for men and women in all areas. Please consider helping in this worthwhile organization. Find out more about serving with us at <https://www.oconeehabitat.org>.

ON-LINE GIVING Remember you can give on-line. Just go to our church website at www.eternalshepherd.org and click on the On-line Giving bar in the top right corner on the homepage. ~Thank you for your faithful support.



FOOD BANK NEWS: Please help us in collecting preferred needed canned, or boxed grocery items each month to help restock the Golden Corner Food Pantry's shelves. May's preferred product is "Rice or Spaghetti Noodles" (Please place items in one of the trash cans marked Food Bank down by the main Fellowship Hall). ~Thank you for your generosity and support.



CARD CART NEWS! - If you have a chance, stop by the Card Cart Ministry Display in the Fellowship Hall. You might find a card that is just perfect for someone you know! There is a wide variety for all kinds of occasions and the price is perfect!!! \$.50 for all cards and \$5.00 for a box of 12 found on the bottom of the cart.



Hospitality Happenings for May

5/1 – Woo & Lisa Wagner

5/8 – Rev. Phil & Margi McLain

5/15 – Craig & Kathy Bergeson & Bill & Ginger Barthel

5/22 – Denise Zirbel

5/29 – ???



Hospitality is up and running very well this post-Covid period. We had 5 Lenten Dinners hosted by: Youth, Honduras, Elders, Comfort Dog and Altar Guild. All was very good and provided a lot of fellowship to all. We now have two "pumper" pots for the regular coffee and one pot for the decaffeinated coffee, so now, we shouldn't run out for the people in line. Finally, our best wishes to Cier Beck (who serves with me on Hospitality as co-chair) as she recovers from surgery. Finally, we look forward to anyone who would like to join our group. Everyone is welcome. ~*Blessings, in His name, Colleen Wakeman*

May Birthdays

- | | |
|---------------------|-------------------------|
| 1 – Diane Williams | 17 – Pastor Justin Pahl |
| 2 – Vendo Toming | 21 – Carole Bluhm |
| 4 – Jean Feldt | 22 – Caroline Scott |
| Mildred Harth | 23 – Teri Massa |
| 5 – Debbie Krueger | 24 – Vicki Tramble |
| 6 – Marlene Ranck | 25 – Joyce Dittmer |
| Thomas Wood | Cindy Gibson |
| 7 - Don Del Priore | 26 - Pat Jacques |
| 8 – Harold Koeplin | Lydia Wolber |
| 9 – Alice Mercer | 27 – Mike Dittmer |
| Lar Miller | Lynne Smith |
| 10 – Lauren McCrary | 28 – Micky Louderback |
| Sarah Sorrell | 29 – Betty Terry |
| 11 - Cara Murray | 30 – Rowan Bunning |
| 13 – Skip Wakeman | Barb Swift |
| 14 – Jill Roeder | 31 – Katherine Sitler |
| 16 – Kathy Bergeson | |
| Chris Gibson | |
| Kyle McKibben | |
| Laura Thoma | |



May Anniversaries

- 4 - Grover & Delores Stewart
- 5 - David & Laura Broderdorf
- 8 - Jim & Jane Fireovid
- 9 - Bob & Teri Massa
- 13 – Michael & Sami Johnson
- 14 - Richard & Elaine Grotheer
- 16 - Craig & Terri Baumann
- 19 - Craig & Kate Wells
- 22 – Tom & Karen Eckersley
- 23 – Brian & Tracy Keefer
- 24 – Harold & Lucille Koeplin
- 27 – Barry & Peggy Voeltz
- 28 - Rich & Colleen Hesemann
Dan & Linda Huth



SPECIAL GIFTS/MEMORIALS

In March the following gifts were given:

**The Comfort Dog Ministry Fund received gifts of \$1,020.00,
a gift of \$922.00 from Thrivent Choice,
and gifts of \$290.00 from hosting Lenten Supper**

The Disaster Response Team Fund received a gift of \$200.00

**The Elders Fund received a gift of \$19.23,
and a gift of \$600.00 from CCCF Giving Thanks Grant**

**The General Fund received a gift of \$400.00 from Blessings Shared Grant,
a gift of \$1,500.00 from Schwab Charitable,
and a gift of \$827.00 from Thrivent Choice**

The Haiti Missions Fund received gifts of \$705.00

The Honduras Mission Fund received gifts of \$690.00

**The Little Lambs Preschool Fund received a gift of \$ 96.80,
and a gift of \$1,000.00 from Schwab Charitable**

The Operation Christmas Child Fund received gifts of \$245.00

**The Property Contingency Fund received a gift of \$1,500.00
from Schwab Charitable**

**The Senior Member Care *Fund (based on Galatians 6:10)*
received a gift of \$100.00, and a gift of \$300.00 from Thrivent Choice**

**The Youth Fund received gifts of \$329.00 for National Gathering 2022,
and received gifts of \$500.00 from hosting Lenten Supper**



Little Lambs Tales

Now learn the parable from the fig tree. When its branch has already become tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near. Matthew 24:32

Summer is near! It is hard to believe that we are in our last month of school at Little Lambs Preschool!

From awaiting the transformation of our caterpillars into butterflies and spending our time admiring God's beautiful creation in the varying colors of all the landscape surrounding the church; the children and staff at Little Lambs are enjoying this time of year!

On May 4th we will be holding our Spring Program. This will be held in the Sanctuary at 10:30 am where all our children will be performing songs for our parent community. We held our very first spring program last year and it was such a success that we have decided to make this an annual event! The parents enjoy seeing their children perform the chapel songs that we have been singing all school year and some other fun songs that the teachers incorporate into the daily class day! We anticipate this will be an event that will continue through the years.

Our last day of school is on May the 25th! On this final day we will be celebrating the end of our successful school year with a picnic for our families. **Our picnic will be held outside at Little Lambs Preschool!** **Please be aware that between 10:00-12:00 the lower parking area will be closed off to car traffic.**



On May 27th at 9:30 am we will be sending off our 4's as we hold our annual Graduation program. As these beautiful children of God fly their wings into kindergarten, please join us in congratulating them! We pray that God continues to watch over them in their faith journey through life.

Thank you for your continued prayers for our preschool ministry! All the staff at Little Lambs Preschool feel blessed to be here surrounded by such a loving and faithful community.



We wish all of you a blessed and peaceful summer!

*In Christ,
Gina*

Cloud Cookies

Jesus was "lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight" (Acts 1:9, NRSV).

When you make these cloud cookies, remember what the angels said to his apostles: "This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven" (verse 11).



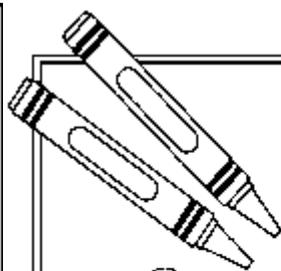
What you need:

- An adult to help
- 1 white cake mix
- 1 egg, beaten
- 1 container (6 oz.) of frozen whipped topping, thawed
- 3 cups powdered sugar



What you do:

1. Combine cake mix and egg.
2. Fold in whipped topping.
3. Drop by teaspoonfuls onto powdered sugar and coat well.
4. Place on ungreased cookie sheet.
5. Bake at 350 degrees for 8-10 minutes or until tops are firm.

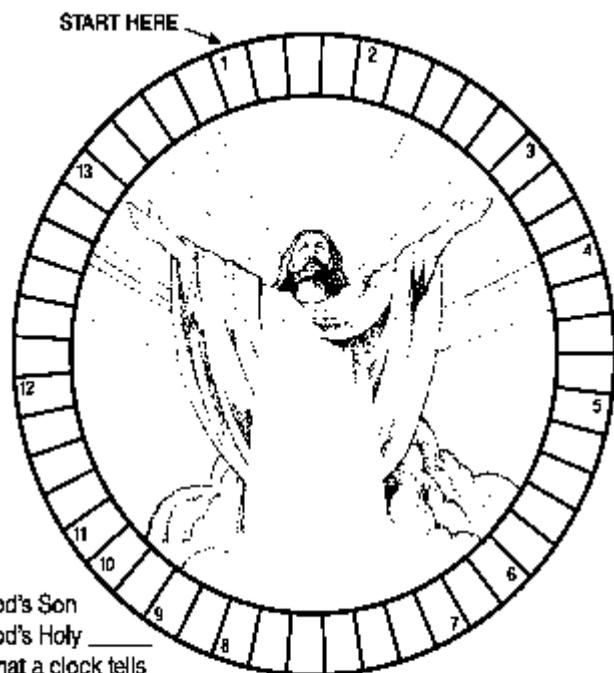


Just for KIDS

Ascension of the Lord

On the day Jesus left his disciples and went up in a cloud to heaven, he said to them, "I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you." (John 14:18, KJV).

Read the clues below. The last letter of each word is the beginning of the next word.



1. God's Son
2. God's Holy _____
3. What a clock tells
4. Our planet
5. Where Jesus is now
6. Opposite of Old Testament
7. An onlooker
8. Place to see clouds
9. Modern word for thee
10. Opposite of down
11. Authority or strength
12. Comes back
13. Searches for

Answers: 1) Jesus; 2) Spirit; 3) time; 4) Earth; 5) heaven; 6) new; 7) witness; 8) sky; 9) you; 10) up; 11) power; 12) returns; 13) seeks

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 Cox

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
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Seneca, SC 29678