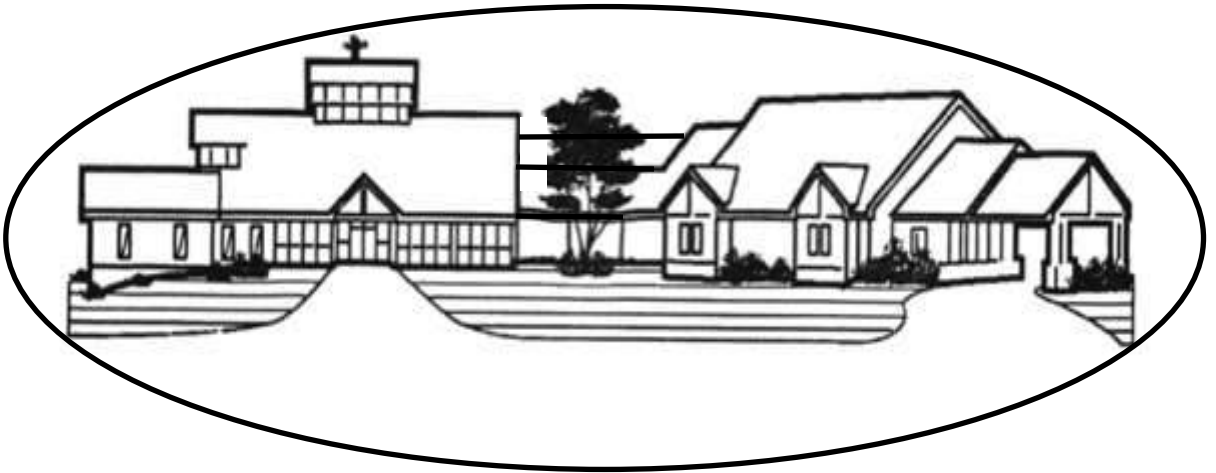


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# Agapegram

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February 2026



ETERNAL SHEPHERD LUTHERAN CHURCH

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Seneca, South Carolina 29678

[www.eternalshepherd.org](http://www.eternalshepherd.org)

[office@eternalshepherd.org](mailto:office@eternalshepherd.org)

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Little Lambs Preschool: 864-882-3202



## Ordinary Transfiguration

*There he was transfigured in front of them. His face was shining like the sun. His clothing became as white as the light. Matthew 17:2 EHV*

As we move toward Lent, we will soon mark the end of Epiphany with the Transfiguration of Our Lord. Lutheran writer Gene Veith reflects on how our own lives might be “transfigured”:

Yesterday was the last and climactic Sunday of Epiphany, in which we contemplate the ultimate light-dawning revelation of Christ: His transfiguration. The veil was lifted for just a moment, and Peter, James, and John were given a glimpse of Jesus in the glory of His Godhood. After this high point, He descends the mountain and sets His face to the humiliation of the Cross, as the church also moves from the celebrations of Epiphany into the Lent.

God’s presence in its fullness was manifest in Christ. But there are other examples of God’s presence that are veiled behind ordinary-seeming appearances. What if they could be transfigured?

... Where else is God present in the ordinary realm?

God’s Word. What if your Bible were transfigured so as to reveal its true nature? What if you opened your Bible and the pages suddenly started to shine, flooding the darkness of your room—as with your heart—with light?

Church. What if, in the course of an ordinary church service, the church’s true nature as the Body of Christ were suddenly manifest. The pastor started to glow from the light of preaching God’s Word. The ushers started to shine. Everyone in the pews would be suffused with light. And what if we could suddenly perceive our own true status as temples of the Holy Spirit, in whom Christ dwells?

Vocation. God is present in the vocations of everyday life, giving daily bread, conveying His blessings, and caring for His creation by means of ordinary human beings carrying on the work that He has given them. What if we could glimpse Him—in the fields, the workshop, the office—as we carry out our callings? The transfigured factory shone like the sun. The market became white as light.

What if we saw our marriages as God sees them, as manifestations of Christ and His church? Or if we could glimpse the light of God’s love and authority in that of parents?

In a sense, all of these can be transfigured in the eyes of faith, as we consider them in light of God's Word. But we are not yet in the realm of glory. We are in the realm of the cross.

So the spiritual reality that permeates our everyday lives and the presence of God that is all around us are all hidden, right now, making them easy to forget and to ignore.

Perhaps these epiphanies will be part of what we will experience in eternity. The Apostle Paul speaks of the difference between our limited perceptions now and the complete perception that awaits us after our own transfigurations at our own resurrections: "For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known" (1 Corinthians 13:2).

<https://www.patheos.com/blogs/geneveith/2018/02/transfigured/>

Even without the manifestation of a divine light, may God transfigure our hearts to see this life for what it is intended to be by God's design.

*Uncover my eyes, and I will behold wonders...* Psalm 119:18 EHV

*Pastor David*

### **FOR YOUR INFORMATION: FELLOWSHIP SUPPERS:**

Wednesday night fellowship Suppers began on Wednesday, 1/21 and will continue through the Wednesday prior to Ash Wednesday. Everyone is welcome and asked to bring a dish to pass. This is an informal and friendly get-together that begins at 5:30pm and ends at 6:30 when the choir meets to practice, however if you wish to sit and visit longer, you're welcome to. If you'd like to enjoy some extra fellowship during the week, please join us.





## *Deaconess' Musings*

### Mastering the Basics

*For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures...*

*~1 Corinthians 15:3-5*

Pre-Deaconess Holly, the clarinet player, knew/heard/tried-but-not always-followed this phrase: “Know your scales and arpeggios, and you can play just about anything from sight.” Did I always listen to the sage advice of my teachers? Nope. I thought to myself, “I know the basics. I don’t need to keep going back to those. Let me at the Mozart Clarinet Concerto!”

Time after time, and lesson after lesson, it was obvious when I did and didn’t practice my basic foundations of clarinet – it showed when it came to the pieces that I was required to perform for testing. I wasn’t really ready to take the time to really get those basic patterns under my fingers and was never truly able to master the instrument.

To be able to master anything, be it a musical instrument or martial art form, the basics – that foundational work – is key. To everything. From those basic scales or movements flow the more complex passagework and precise techniques.

It is the same with our faith. It is probably not a good idea to jump right into Francis Pieper’s *Christian Dogmatics* with the Communication of Attributes (of Jesus Christ), without first understanding who Christ is. The Communication of Attributes may never be a thing you really desire to study in-depth (totally fine by-the-way), but you can know who Christ is. You can know and learn, and then know and learn some more, the crazy importance of why we sinful humanity needed this incarnate God-Man to be born, suffer, die, rise from the dead, and reign as ascended King of Kings.

You may never desire to dive deep into the finer, more intricate points concerning the doctrines of the Trinity, but you can hear and learn, and hear and learn again – that you are not God, even though you want to be/act/speak as Him. You can hear and know about the good gifts God the Creator has granted you – simply by being born and given into a family. You can hear and know that even though you think you’re happy, deep down we all struggle with discontent, heartache and sin.

It may seem basic and simple, but the beautifully simple-complex nature of our faith is that Christianity is all about Jesus...for you. That the Christ, this Jesus of Nazareth, is both God and Man...for you. That this Jesus, the only begotten of the Father, was born, suffered and did not fall to sin, and died...for you. And that this Jesus Christ, Savior long-foretold, broke those chains of death, rose from the dead, ascended to the Father, and reigns as Ruler of All...for you.

We confess it daily. This simple combination of words. But in them, we find all that we need to know, now and forever. Sometimes a return to the basics is needed. You know them... keep knowing them.

*~ Deaconess Holly*

**February 18, 2026**  
(Elder's Path)



**Ash Wednesday begins  
a time for prayer, fasting  
and preparation...**

**Or, is Ash Wednesday a time to remember...**

**From Dust You Came,  
And To Dust You Shall Return.**

**My Ash Wednesday encounter is a bit different.**

**Ash Wednesday is the ONLY day of the year when  
Christians declare their faith publicly with the sign of the  
cross.**

- ❖ **The TV Weatherman has a cross on his forehead.**
- ❖ **The waitress has a cross on her forehead.**
- ❖ **The driver next to me has a cross on her forehead.**
- ❖ **The saints of ESLC have a cross on their foreheads.**

**Ash Wednesday becomes a witness to our fellow  
believers that we are not alone and share in God's  
greatest gift, His Son.**



**Ash Wednesday is our opportunity to  
share our belief in a public way those  
around us.**

## **MINISTRY OF THE MONTH: TOYS FOR GOD'S KIDS**



### **Turning Scrapwood**

Into Smiles



In case you did not know, there is a group of folks here at ESLC, known as Smilemakers, who toil year round to make toy cars for children throughout the world. The group is beginning their 12<sup>th</sup> year of making the wooden toy cars. At the end of 2025 they had made over 25,000. That's smiles brought to the faces of over 25,000 children!

The cars are sent out with mission teams, individual missionary's, the military, and through Samaritan's Purse shoeboxes. The group meets every couple months or so to assemble the cars which becomes a time of good conversation and fellowship usually followed by lunch at a local restaurant. Everyone is welcome to come and help, as long as they don't mind getting a little glue on their fingers.

Help is needed with the cutting out, sanding, drilling and routing of the cars to prepare for assembly. To do this you would need some woodworking equipment. Mike Hauser or Pastor Ray Ramsburg can help you with what equipment is needed. Give one of them a call if you would like more information. And be sure to check out the "Ministry of the Month" bulletin board near the mailboxes. This month it's full of information about TFGK!



### **Changing Lives**

One car at a time!



## Comfort Dog News

Interested in Becoming a Member of ESLC's Comfort Dog Team 2?

“Sharing the mercy, compassion, presence, and proclamation of Jesus Christ to those who are suffering and in need.” (LCC Mission Statement)

### How To Get Involved

Come to our informational meeting to hear about our ministry.

Learn the many ways you can serve, both out in the community and behind the scenes.

Get any questions you have about the Comfort Dog Ministry answered.

<b>Date:</b>	February 1st
<b>Time:</b>	After Late Service
<b>Location:</b>	Room 301

We're excited to welcome you into this rewarding ministry—see you there!  
Any questions? Contact Judy Reese

To God be the glory!

Judy Reese – Top Dog Team 2

618-980-1134, [topdog2eslc@gmail.com](mailto:topdog2eslc@gmail.com)

## **WOULD YOU BE INTERESTED IN ATTENDING A FINANCIAL SEMINAR AT ETERNAL SHEPHERD?**

We want to make sure that we have enough interest to justify the time and energy required by the presenters to put on this seminar since the last two seminars were poorly attended.

**If you are interested, please answer this short questionnaire** using the displayed QR code or link <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/SDTMQBB> to help us determine the interest level and the topics you would like to have covered.

Sue Hauser, Stewardship



## **STEWARDSHIP NEWS**

As we are beginning to settle into 2026, please consider donating some of your time to ESLC. The JOBS, Joyous Opportunities for Believers, below lists new chances to serve within the Eternal Shepherd family. If you would consider filling any of the positions, please contact the person identified for additional information.

One reason that Eternal Shepherd is such a great community of believers is because of all the service that we freely give within the church and in the community.

Thank you for seriously considering fulfilling some of our needs.

Sue Hauser, Stewardship

### **Eternal Shepherd J.O.B. Board Joyous Opportunities for Believers**

#### **Ushers and Readers.**

If you are interested in servicing during worship services, please contact the church office at 864-882-3209 or email [office@eternalshepherd.org](mailto:office@eternalshepherd.org).

#### **Handicap Ramp Building Assistance**

If you like to build things, please join the team that builds ramps throughout the community. Please contact Deek Decker at 864-356-2135 for more information..

#### **Church Website Webmaster**

The webmaster manages and maintains the Eternal Shepherd's website. Key responsibilities include ensuring that the site is running smoothly, updating contents, maintaining security and troubleshooting technical issues. Please contact Pastor Hammer or Deaconess Cox at 864-882-3209.

#### **Little Lambs Preschool**

If you have an accounting or bookkeeping background and would like to assist the preschool, please contact Jon Tyner at 513-600-1329 for more information.

#### **Property Management Volunteers**

If you are concerned about the upkeep and maintenance of the church facility and property, please consider assisting with special projects or on an as needed basis. Please contact Paul Sherman at 864-602-3262 for more information.

#### **Altar Care Members**

Serve as a member of the Altar Care team. Timeframe is one month a year and training is provided.. The main duties include preparing the altar before the service and changing paraments during the assigned month. Please contact Tracy Cochell at 404-433-7338 for more information.



# **Eternal Shepherd J.O.B. Board**

## **Joyous Opportunities for Believers**

### **Hospitality Members**

If you like cook or entertain, please join the team that assists in the kitchen preparing food for various church functions, please contact Colleen Hesemann at 864-784-0421.

### **Toys for Gods Kids Volunteers**

Help is needed in cutting out the car bodies using a scroll saw or band saw. If this is something that you would like to do, please contact Pastor Ray Ramsburg at 904-583-1214 or Mike Hauser at 864-719-0474 for more information.-

### **Christian Outreach Volunteers**

If you are interested in evangelism and charitable services within our community, please consider joining this team. Please contact Ann Miller at 864-637-8353.

## **ENGLISH COUNTRY DANCING!**

Learn English Country Dancing taught by Evie Hammer and Jocelyn Johnsonwall in the fellowship hall. This is a social dance that is taught and walked through by a caller where you are in lines or circles while walking, skipping, and doing simple turns. It is traditionally danced with couple pairs who are sorted into groups or circles.

**Times:** 6:30-8pm.

**Dates:** Thursdays 1st, 3rd, & 5th of the month:

Jan 15 & 29, Feb 5 & 19, Mar 5, Apr 16 & 30, May 7 & 21

On May 21st we will have our final dance with a potluck to celebrate. All ages and skill levels invited! We cannot wait to see you there!

- Evie and Jocelyn

## **Music and Worship Committee Information**


The Music and Worship Committee invites interested members to serve as ushers. This role is an important part of our ministry to the congregation, helping to create a welcoming and orderly worship experience. A handbook outlining the guidelines is provided, and the Elder Liaison to the committee is available to offer individual guidance and support.

In addition, we are seeking additional readers for both worship services. Proclaiming God's Word is a vital and meaningful part of each service. Readers are given advance notice, and we are happy to assist anyone who would like more information or encouragement in this role. Our congregation is strengthened through the generous sharing of time and talents by our members. We prayerfully encourage you to consider how you might serve in these important ministries.

## EXCITING NEWS FROM HAITI



**This is the graduating class from the Concordia Theological Seminary located at Laochikit. These Pastors and Deaconess's will work throughout the country of Haiti. The seminary is in fellowship with the LCMS and includes foreign students. Samuel built a church on his land called Pas Bonbon, and was the lay minister of that church. He is now an Ordained Pastor, and continues to grow both the church and school at Pas Bonbon. There is a river joining Pas Bonbon and that is where Samuel conducts baptisms on a regular basis. I wonder how many graduates were in the class Pastor Phil McLain taught in 2017!**

Pastor Phil teaching the seminarians and Pastor Walta interpreting. 7 hours straight with only one 10 minute break. 





## Honduras Mission News

It's time to pray if you have not started already. When you read this your Honduras Mission Team will be just weeks away from departing for Honduras to serve there for a week. Prayer partners are assigned for each missionary but everyone is asked to pray for the team and for the people of Honduras that they will be seeing. The activities have been set and the funds raised to cover these expenses. A great big THANK YOU to Doug & Denise Zirbel and their "Your Pie" store at Dockside Clemson, for hosting the latest fund raiser which helped to provide the funds needed for ministry.

Help is needed with one more activity and that is making Salvation Bracelets for the children we will see while there. We are asking the church to join us on February 8<sup>th</sup> after the late service to assemble these bracelets. Five colored beads are strung on a string which tell the story of Christ. These are given to the children as the story is told to them. The beads are green, for Creation; black for sin; red for the love of Christ/the blood of Christ; white for forgiveness; and yellow/gold for Heaven. The children then take the bracelets home with them and excitedly tell their friends the story. They are the best Evangelists.

The team has a few last minute housekeeping chores before heading for GSP in the early morning hours of Feb. 21<sup>st</sup> and the departure for Honduras. After their return on Feb. 28<sup>th</sup> they will share the results with the congregation at one of the Wednesday Lenten dinners. Hearts are warmed and lives changed both in Honduras and back here in the States. There is always room for more on the team for next year so keep praying for God's leadership in your serving.

THANK YOU Eternal Shepherd for all of your support which makes this mission trip a possibility and a reality.

Que Dios te Bendiga (May God Bless You)  
Your Honduras Mission Team

**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. **February's** preferred product is "***Canned Soup***" (Please place your items in the containers marked Food Bank down by the Fellowship Hall). *~Thank you for your generosity and support.*



## **DO YOU WANT TO LEARN HOW TO CROCHET?** Then it's your lucky day!

Crochet classes will once again be offered the hour before the Spring Ladies Bible classes, beginning with the second class on January 22<sup>nd</sup> at 1:45 pm, and continuing before each subsequent Spring class. Just arrive early and you will be taught! Sue Hauser will once again share her expertise with us. All crochet hooks and yarn will be supplied. Please let Sue know if you are interested in joining this class or please sign up on the sheet on the bulletin board in the Narthex. Thank you!



### **Feed The Hungry Dates in 2026**

Saturday, January 17

Saturday, April 11

Saturday, July 11

Saturday, October 10

Please add these dates to your calendar and remember that we will also need cookie bakers for those dates as well. If you would like to volunteer please call Mark Kunkel at (248)766-8002. *Thank you*

### **Music and Worship Committee Information**

The Music and Worship Committee invites interested members to serve as ushers. This role is an important part of our ministry to the congregation, helping to create a welcoming and orderly worship experience. A handbook outlining the guidelines is provided, and the Elder Liaison to the committee is available to offer individual guidance and support.

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Our congregation is strengthened through the generous sharing of time and talents by our members. We prayerfully encourage you to consider how you might serve in these important ministries.

# Little Lambs Tales

*“And so we know and rely on the love God has for us. God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in them.”*  
*1 John 4:16*

It is the month of February, and we are reminded of God’s great love for each one of us and the demonstration of His love through these beautiful children of Little Lambs Preschool.

It is hard to believe that we are ready to begin planning for our next school year!

Registration for our 2026-2027 school year will begin February 1st for our current families with open registration beginning Feb 16<sup>th</sup>. Registration forms are available on our website or you can pick one up at the preschool during school hours.

As we close out the month of February, our children will be getting ready for warmer weather, longer days and preparing for March and Dr. Seuss Day!

All of us at Little Lambs Preschool thank you for your continued support and prayers for this ministry of our church. We continue to bless God for giving us the opportunity to care and love these beautiful children and watch them grow in their relationship with the Lord.

Blessings to you and your families!

Gina

\* A JAR OF \*  
**Love and  
 Appreciation**



*Sometimes we forget to show love and appreciation to people who are closest to us. Use this fun craft to let everyone in your family know how much you care.*

**What you need:**

- Plastic jar with lid
- Heart-shaped foam pieces
- Heart-shaped stickers
- Glue
- Construction paper
- Scissors
- Pencil or crayons

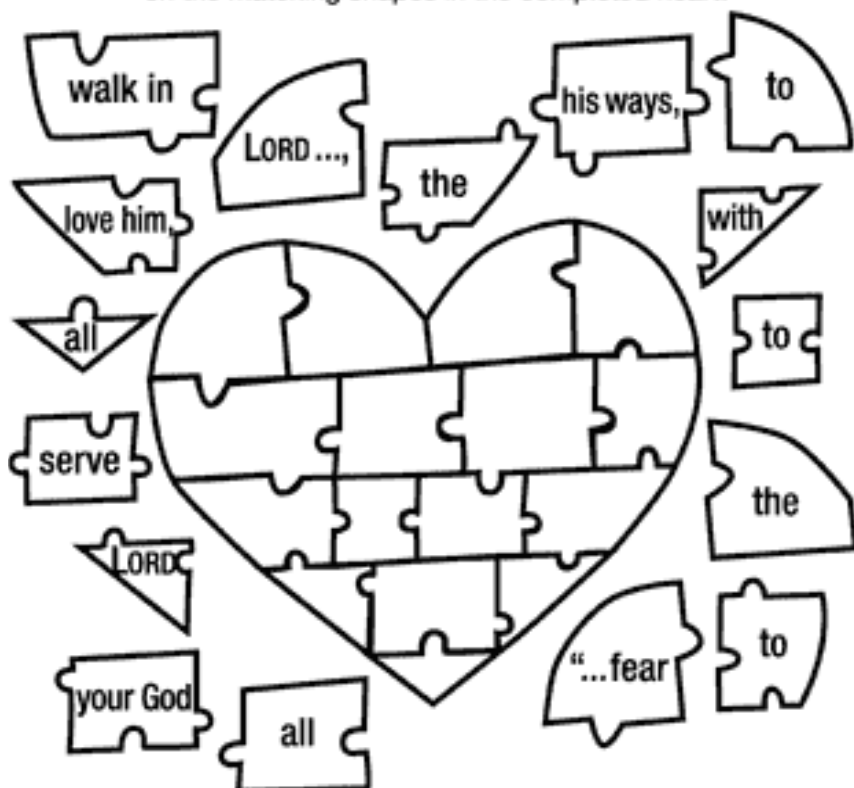
**What you do:**

1. Decorate the jar and lid with heart-shaped foam pieces and stickers.
2. Cut out 2" or 3" heart shapes from the construction paper.
3. On each paper heart, write what you appreciate and love about your family and each member. Have all family members do this, too.
4. Place the heart messages inside the jar. Fold them in half, if necessary.
5. On each day in February, pull out one heart and read the message aloud to the family.
6. Notice the changes in your family when everyone feels loved and appreciated!



In Deuteronomy 10:12 (NIV), Israel is asked a question that's also for us to answer: "What does the LORD your God ask of you?"

To find the answer, write the words from the puzzle pieces on the matching shapes in the completed heart.



*... your heart and with all your soul ..."*

Answer:  
 "... fear the LORD ... to walk in all his ways, to love him, to serve the LORD your God with all ..."

## **February Birthdays**

3 - Mary Ann McKay	20 -April Henderson
Laina Rebholz	23 –Susan Sherman
4– Isabella Kirchner	25 - Mary Compton
6– Dave Goeckel	Skyler Wood
8 - Vincent Presley	26 - Fran Port
10– Kyra Carbone	27 – Abbey Zirbel
14 - Gary Lehmann	28 – Sue Hauser
Ned Renfroe	Lars Helland
16 – Jan Snyder	
17 - David Bucy	
18 – Cier Beck	
John Olenyn	

## **February Anniversaries**

7 - Greg & Christine Davis  
9 - Scott & Patty Kaltrider  
Dave & Liz Kuhlman  
Scott & Susan Robirds  
20 - Neal & Cier Beck  
25 - John & Nicole Beattie

## **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: Terri Baumann  
Preschool Director: Gina Cote  
Choir Director: Rick Schmidt  
Choir Accompanist: David Phillips  
Organist: David Phillips

## **MISSIONARIES**

Nate Esala, Lutheran Bible Translators  
David & Dr. Arianna Shirk, Kenya  
S.E.D. Missionaries to Peru