

Agapegram

May 2026



A NEWSLETTER OF
ETERNAL SHEPHERD LUTHERAN CHURCH
& LITTLE LAMBS PRESCHOOL

www.eternalshepherd.org



Psalm 23 and Easter

The Lord is my shepherd. I lack nothing. Psalm 23:1 EHV

I often use this space to pass along articles or information I come across in my own reading that I think might be of interest. This month I couldn't decide between some interesting news out of Rome and another biblical-archaeology connection. So, I decided on neither (but the links are provided if you're reading online at eternalshepherd.org) and chose instead a reflection on the 23 Psalm in honor of Good Shepherd Sunday on April 26 written by Pastor Elder McCants of Holy Cross Lutheran Church in San Antonio. He writes:

David penned Psalm 23, trusting God as his Shepherd. But Jesus is the ultimate Shepherd who laid down His life for us (John 10:11).

The Shepherd's Provision is green pastures. He Makes us lie down (v2). Jesus gives rest to weary and troubled souls (Matthew 11:28). Even in Gethsemane's dark valley (v.4), He submitted to God's Will (Luke 22:42).

The Shepherd's Guidance, "He leads us beside still waters" (v2). Jesus guides us through life's turmoil (John 16:33). He calms storms in which we are in this sinful and evil world (Matthew 8:26). Jesus died and rose from death and the grave (1 Corinthians 15:55-57).

The Shepherd's Protection, Even though I walk through the darkest valley, we will fear no evil because Jesus is with us (v4). Jesus faced death's darkness (John 19:30) – but rose victorious (Matthew 28:6)! Now He walks with us in all valleys (Matthew 28:20).

The Shepherd's Feast, "You prepare a table before me... My cup overflows" (v5). At Jesus' table (Luke 22:30), we feast on forgiveness, grace, and eternal life – thanks to His resurrection!

The Shepherd's Home, "Surely goodness and mercy will follow me... I will dwell in the house of the Lord" (v6). Jesus leads us home (John 14:2-3). Because He lives, we have eternal green pastures today and in Heaven (Revelation 21:4).

Prayer: Lord Jesus, our good Shepherd, guide and protect us all the way into Heaven. In Your precious Name. Amen.

A new twist in 500 years of [Lutheran-Catholic](#) disagreement.
A [seal of Isaiah the Prophet](#) likely found.

I am the Good Shepherd. The Good Shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. John 10:11 EHV

~ Pastor David

Daniel's Ballad Dinner Event

Mark your calendars for the **Daniel's Ballad Dinner Event** from 5:30-8:00 pm on Saturday, May 9, 2026. All are invited!

A live musical presentation of **Daniel's Ballad, A Folk Opera** will be offered in ESLC's Fellowship Hall. This musical event takes us further into the fascinating Old Testament book of Daniel. While the last experience celebrated the stories of the exiled Judeans as recorded in Chapters 1-6, the coming presentation reprises those events and delves further into Daniel's dreams and visions as described in the later chapters of Daniel.

Ellen Sheppard (Scottie's sister) has written a lively and entertaining score for Scottie's lyrics concerning the challenges facing Daniel and his friends during the Babylonian exile, then reaches further into the descriptions of Daniel's own visions and revelations as described in chapters 7-12.

Sometimes toe-tapping, sometimes emotionally dark, the historical events of the Judean exiles, as well as Daniel's vivid descriptions, are interspersed with the Gospel message to further illustrate God's plan for His children.

Prior to the 6:45 pm musical presentation, a pot luck supper will be held 5:30-6:30 pm in the Fellowship Hall.

Donations are encouraged! All proceeds from **Daniel's Ballad Dinner Event** will help support the Missions Programs of ESLC.

Please join us for this first-ever presentation of **Daniel's Ballad, A Folk Opera**.

*"...Daniel always ends all his visions and dreams, however terrible, with joy, namely with Christ's kingdom and advent."
~ Martin Luther ~ As quoted p. 1394 The Lutheran Study Bible*



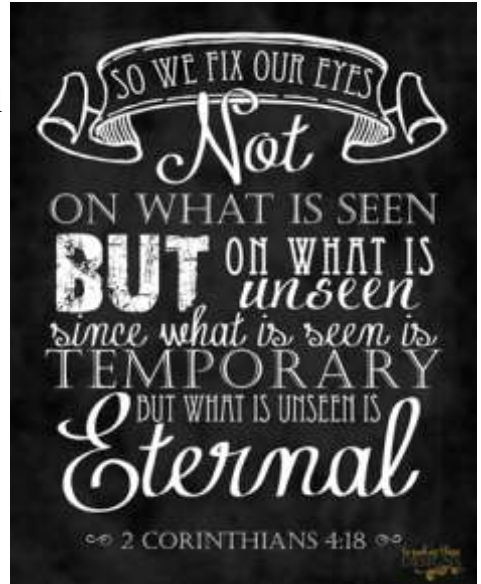


Deaconess' Musings

Steadfastness throughout Change & Transition


“April showers bring May flowers.” Excitement and joy over various planned events, such as graduations, the long-anticipated end of another school year, or upcoming retirements, await many throughout these upcoming days and weeks. But what may be overlooked or downplayed is that with the closing and end of whatever that particular event signifies, therein lies a defined moment of breaking away. No longer a Middle School student; but a High School student. No longer a High School student; but a College student or full-time worker. No longer a full-time worker; but a retiree. There are a myriad of other things that could be inserted, but we simply do not have the space.

Experiencing times of change and transition is to be expected in this life we live. We cannot avoid it. We can try, but attempting to halt change is just as helpful as telling the leaves in autumn to not fall from their tree branches. Eventually, as with the seasons of the earth, the seasons of our life continue on as they have for all who have lived upon this world. And while it may feel like we are in a constant state of fluctuation, we cling to a God that never changes, experiences transitions, or loses interest in us due to what we did/did not accomplish.



Thanks be to Him who gave His Son, Christ Jesus, to die and rise again, to become our constant source of comfort, assurance, and forgiveness in a world so full of never-ending upheaval. He is our unseen comfort in times when it feels like the world will never sit still and remain the way it “should be.” But we can face the various impending changes of this life with the full assurance that Christ is ours, as we are His. May we always look to Him who changes not, and the peace and comfort He gives as we continually lean upon God’s mercy on account of Christ.

~ Deaconess Holly



Eternal Shepherd Lutheran Church
Annual Church Picnic

Saturday, May 30
12:00 Noon

Provided: Bar-B-Que

Bring: Side dish to share
Beverage, Lawn Chair

Location: Wagner/Sorenson Barn
135 Slippery Rock Drive
Pickens, SC 29671

RSVP: Signup sheet on the Bulletin Board in the Narthex.
Also signup sheet to ride the Church Bus to the picnic location.
Contact Tracy by May 23 to reserve a seat.

Questions??? Call:
Tracy 404-433-7338
Woo 864-320-9182



Eternal Shepherd's Board of Christian Outreach Has added Huntington's Disease

ESLC's Community Outreach efforts are a large varied collection of ministries in our community (and beyond!), serving a wide range of individual needs, large & small... made possible through God's grace + His guidance, + generous resources from our giving members, and hands'-on servants, led by our own Ann Miller.

Motivated individuals and groups have all stepped up when called upon for needs & recent requests for countless cookies for incarcerated individuals - plus the perfect porch ramps to aid accessibility needs; & promoting the Gospel of God's grace thru Christ Jesus, that is disseminated across the Carolinas - to name just a few... these local mission opportunities are limitless!

A very recent addition to BOCO Outreach involves families affected by "HD" - short for "Huntington's Disease" - a rare genetic inherited condition that is akin to dealing with Alzheimers/dementias, Parkinson's, ALS, and brain cancer...at the same time!

Its total devastation is cognitive, physical and it is a progressive disease - without a cure, and ultimately fatal. In latter stages, HD patients are unable to walk, talk, think or swallow... Since it's largely unknown, it is often misunderstood or misdiagnosed.

Although HD commonly strikes during an adult's prime working/child-rearing years, I am seeing increasing cases of "juvenile" JHD patients through HD support groups, etc., where onset occurs among children, and teens. Those individuals have a more rapid struggle, & a lifespan into their 30s.

One family we are focusing on is a young mother in her early 30s, in Spartanburg, a location without an LCMS congregation...

She's married, suffering mightily with HD, and trying to raise 3 year old & 9 year old boys. Our 'Upstate HD' group reached out to LCMS Vicar Bruce Selin, leading Synod exploratory efforts in that area, as well as a caring network of other Christian folks.

This patient was recently plugged into an excellent HD Neurology network in April - now the challenges are to draw up a plan for corresponding transportation and the babysitting and "mother's helper" needs + ultimately Christian preschool in the fall - the paternal grandparents, who had been helping out - both died - within six days of each other - right before Christmas... Dad is gainfully employed (they're not seeking handouts), so initial efforts are underway to cover unique, ancillary, expenses - plus childcare or "helping hands" assistance...

Plans are being drawn up during May and June, with specific scheduling needs. It's just a matter of time before our "Ramp" ministry will be called upon to assist. We will feature more about HD during June - as BOCO will be the Ministry of the Month, & we will provide specific ways then in which ESLC can assist with our initial "adopt a family" - if you'd like more information or know a family affected by HD, let Kathy Bergeson know (bergesonemail@gmail.com). More to come and thanks always for all of your "generosity of spirit", at Eternal Shepherd!

~Kathy Bergeson

FOOTHILLS CARE CENTER BABY BOTTLE DRIVE



It is time for our annual Baby Bottle Drive to benefit the Foothills Care Center (FCC)! Eternal Shepherd has been supporting FCC for over 14 years with the baby bottle drive and other donations. We will provide an envelope for the donations. **The Baby Bottle Drive will begin on Mother's Day, May 10th and run through Sunday July 26th.**

Your generosity throughout the years has been greatly appreciated by FCC and the clients that frequent the center for hope, assistance, guidance, and love. Most importantly, precious babies' lives are saved! Please prayerfully consider supporting the Baby Bottle Drive this year.

Special envelopes will be placed in your church mailbox. Please make checks out to Eternal Shepherd Lutheran Church, write "Baby Bottle Drive" on the memo line. If you prefer to donate online, use your existing Eternal Shephard online account. Then select the Foothills Care Center tile.

We will donate the money we collect to the Foothills Care Center in August. For questions or more information call Tracy Cochell at 404-433-7338.

STEWARDSHIP NEWS

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.

The JOBS, **Joyous Opportunities for Believers**, lists new and continuing chances to serve within the Eternal Shepherd family. Please consider and review the current needs.

Does your skills and heart lead you to consider any one of these positions? If so, please contact the person listed to find out more information.

The JOBS bulletin board in the hallway also promotes these service needs.

Sue Hauser, Stewardship

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

Christian Education Secure Volunteers

Secure volunteers are needed for VBS which will be held the week of June 15th to 19th. Contact Cyra Phelan for more details at 843-302-1167.

Youth Board Chairman

If you are organized, friendly, and great at delegating, you'd be a fantastic youth board chair! This is not a "youth leader" position. As chair, you will facilitate youth board meetings, discuss activities and ideas with the board members (who are fantastic!), manage the budget, and delegate leaders and planners to lead and attend youth events throughout the year. The chair reports monthly to Council. Please contact Amy Rebholz at 412-327-7621 with any questions.

Christian Outreach Chairman

If you are interested in directing our evangelism and charitable services to the community, this job is for you. You will lead monthly Christian Outreach Board meetings and attend Council. You will also request disbursement to various charities that the church supports. Please contact Ann Miller at 864-637-8353 for more information

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 Holly Cox at 864-882-3209.

Eternal Shepherd J.O.B. Board

Joyous Opportunities for Believers

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 as need basis. Please contact Paul Sherman at 864-602-3262 for more information.

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.

Ushers and Readers

If you are interested in serving during worship services, please contact the church office at 864-882-3209 or email office@eternalshepherd.org.

Church Library Helper

Assistance is needed in the church library twice a month. Please contact Cyra Phelan at 843-302-1167.

Hospitality Members

If you like to 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.

Altar Care Members

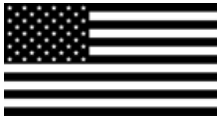
Serve as a member of the Altar Care team. Timeframe is one month a year and training is provided. The main duties include preparing the altar before the service and changing paraments during the assigned month. Please contact Tracy Cochell at 404-433-7338 for more information...



Comfort Dog Ministry Team 2 – Needs you!!

Handlers:

- Anyone 18 or over interested in working with our comfort dog.



- Military Veterans
- Retired Police Officers or other First Responders

A handler does not have to be a member of our church. If you know of anyone that you think would be interested in finding out more, please give them my information.

Caregiver:



- Must be a member of ESLC.
- This is the Comfort Dog's primary home.
- You will be living with a well trained dog.

Anyone interested or you just have questions, please contact me.

Judy Reese – Top Dog 2

topdog2eslc@gmail.com or (618)-980-1134

Honduras News:

If you missed the report from the Honduras Team at the Lenten Supper on March 25th you missed the wrap-up of another successful mission trip to Honduras. Medicine was dispensed, water filters installed, dental work done, eye glasses fitted, children fussed over and loved, and the Gospel proclaimed. Lives of both Hondurans and North Americans were changed in a week of proclaiming the love of Christ through all of the Mission Team's activities.

Plans are already being made for the 2027 trip which will be from **March 13 to March 20, 2027**. This is Spring Break for many of our local schools and universities which will hopefully make being part of the mission team more accessible for some folks. If you have ever wondered what it would be like to be a missionary then this short-term mission trip is just the ticket to introduce you to foreign missions in a safe and secure way. Contact John Co-chell, Pastor Ray or any team member if you would like more information. The team is already forming for the 2027 trip. Now is the time to pray about responding to God's call to "go and make disciples of all nations".

Dios te bendiga (God Bless You), Your Honduras Team

Toys for God's Kids

The Ministry shouts out a big **Thank You** to our High School Youth Group for choosing to assemble toy cars as their meeting project. Pastor Ray and Mike Hauser brought 400+ cars to assemble and they completed all of them in just over an hour. Oh to be young again. These cars will go throughout the world to bring smiles to children's faces. **Thank You** to ESLC's newest group of **SMILEMAKERS"!!!**



Meet Dalton Giles!

Since the age of 8, this 27 year old man has lived in Westminster. Dalton is a meat cutter at Ram Cat Alley's STOCK & BARREL. He has an older brother who provides Uncle Dalton with an 11 year old niece and a 4 year old nephew. Dalton's main hobbies are cooking, video games, trying to read history and theology, and an attempt at gardening. He claims $\frac{3}{4}$ of a degree in Theater from N. Greenville U, has worked at a summer camp and ironically, once lived for months in a Memory Care facility in Venice, FL (he worked there). He was raised Christian by his parents in the Baptist/Pentecostal tradition. In discussing religion with his best friend (a Lutheran living in NC) he became aware of the virtue of the Lutheran faith so he, seeking a liturgical church, joined ESLC. Welcome DG !



Welcome Parks Canipe!

Coming from Cheraw SC, this Clemson sophomore in Mechanical Engineering has some unusual interests - beekeeping and scuba diving! He is a member of ROTC and after graduation plans to join the Air Force. He found ESLC through online research and social media. Parks, we are glad you did!



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.

Our next Feeding the Hungry Ministry Event is Saturday, 4/11/26. To prepare for this event, we need approximately 8 volunteers to help assemble the sandwiches and pack the lunches.

PLEASE NOTE THE SCHEDULE: We will meet at church in the Fellowship Hall at 9:30am on Saturday, 7/11/26. It will take approximately one hour to complete this task. Then later on that same morning, Saturday, 7/11/26, we will need approximately 8 volunteers to assist with the delivery, set-up, and handout of the lunches to the Our Daily Bread home. We need to be there by 11am. If you would like to volunteer for either of these times, please call Mark Kunkel at (248) 766-8002 and let me know? Thank you for your support!

Dylan is Going to Ghana in June:



You probably recognize Dylan, he is taller than Lars and typically sits toward the front during the Adult Sunday School hour. During our recent voters meeting, a motion was made and unanimously agreed upon to help finance Dylan's Mission Trip this coming June to Ghana, Africa. Dylan will be going there to create a Navigator Team, and teach them to duplicate what he is doing at Clemson, University

Campus Ministry. The next time you see Dylan, ask him about his upcoming trip to Ghana – he certainly is Blessed to Be A Blessing.

CHAMBERLAIN (9), Dylan

514 Issaqueena Trail

Clemson, sc 29631

dylan.chamberlain@navigator.org (Dylan)

843-810-7207 (Dylan)

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 *"Boxed Spaghetti and Bags of Rice"* (Please place your items in the containers marked Food Bank down by the Fellowship Hall). ~*Thank you for your generosity and support.*



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 7th we will be celebrating Muffins with Mom. We will honor our moms, aunts, and grandmothers on this day. Our guests will come into their child's classroom prior to pick up and enjoy a delicious snack and spend some time with their child in various activities. This is always a very special time!

Our last regular school day is May 20th and we will be gathering as a school for our end of year picnic. This will be held at the preschool on both the small and big playground as well as the blacktop between the two playgrounds. This means that the lower parking area will be closed to car traffic on this day from 10:00-11:30.

May 21st is our 4K Graduation. This will be held at 8:45AM in the Sanctuary for our families with a cookie reception following in the Fellowship Hall. You will find a table in the Narthex with our 2026 graduates! We are so proud of them all and know that they are ready for kindergarten!

Because of the numerous days of closings this year due to the inclement weather we will be holding an extra 3 days of school for our families of Little Lambs Preschool. We will be in session for some summer fun on May 26, May 27, and May 28. These days will be held at the same time as our normal school day sessions.

Thank you for your continued prayers for our preschool ministry. We are blessed to be a part of this warm and welcoming family of God.

We wish all of you a blessed and peaceful summer!

In Christ,
Gina

May Birthdays

- | | |
|---------------------|-----------------------|
| 1 - Diane Williams | 19 - Guy Loftin |
| 2 - Vendo Toming | 21 - Carole Bluhm |
| 4 - Jean Feldt | 22 - Caroline Scott |
| Mildred Harth | 23 - Teri Massa |
| 5 - Debbie Krueger | 24 - Vicki Tramble |
| 6 - Thomas Wood | 25 - Joyce Dittmer |
| 7 - Don Del Priore | 26 - Pat Jacques |
| 9 - Alice Mercer | Lydia Wolber |
| Lar Miller | 27 - Mike Dittmer |
| 11 - Cara Murray | Lynne Smith |
| 14 - Jill Roeder | 30 - Rowan Bunning |
| 15 - Paul Sherman | Bob Heller |
| 16 - Kathy Bergeson | Barb Swift |
| Laura Thoma | 31 - Katherine Sitler |

May Anniversaries

- 4 - Grover & Delores Stewart
- 5 - David & Laura Broderdorf
- 8 - Jim & Jane Fireovid
- 9 - Bob & Teri Massa
- 14 - Richard & Elaine Grotheer
- 16 - Craig & Terri Baumann
- 19 - Craig & Kate Wells
- 21 - Mark & Sandy Kunkel
- 22 - Tom & Karen Eckersley
- 23 - Brian & Tracy Keefer
- 26 - Mark & Ann Bonagura
- 27 - Jeff & Mary Ann McKay
- John & Tiffany Presley

HOPE SEEDS

Here's a chance to fight world hunger without leaving your own backyard! We can do this by partnering with Hope Seeds!

Hope Seeds is a non-profit organization based in Bradenton Florida and founded by a member of Hope Lutheran Church. They have distributed over 15 million seed packets through mission partners to some of the most impoverished areas of the world. The mission partners share seeds, provide information, and most importantly, proclaim the Gospel to those who face hunger daily. Hope Seeds provides seeds especially selected for various areas. Some of the countries they have sent seeds to include Haiti, Kenya, and Uganda. While the Gospel is shared they seek to **empower people with sustainable food production skills, seeds, and resources**. A selection of seeds is given out which can provide a variety of vegetables capable of sustaining a family or village

How can we help? Hope Seeds is able to purchase most of the seeds they need- except for okra. The variety of okra they prefer is no longer available commercially. So they need planting partners to grow the seeds. The wonderful news is that the variety of okra grows very well in South Carolina. Susan Tyner has grown them for the last two years. Her plants produced approximately 4,600 seeds per plant! That's an impact!

If this sounds like something you would be interested in, please contact Susan Tyner (ssstyner@gmail.com). She would love to give you seeds, provide information on how to grow and harvest the okra, and tell you more about Hope Seeds.

Thanks for fighting world hunger in your own backyard!

ssstyner@gmail.com (Susan)
513-608-0915 (Susan)



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

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