

AGAPEGRAM

October 2026



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Psalm 27 in Triplicate

By Pastor David Hammer

*The Lord is my light and my salvation— whom
shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life
— of whom shall I be afraid? Psalm 27:1 EHV*

In the Monday morning bible class in recent weeks we've done studies of the appointed Psalm in the lectionary for the week. The selected Psalm for Pentecost 17 on 9/20/26 was Psalm 27. A wonderful text and a favorite of mine, in part because verse 1 is my confirmation verse. I encourage you to grab your favorite translation (or two) and read through this Psalm of David.

For a longer, verse by verse working through the text, here's the link to the full bible study recording: [2026.09.21.MondayBibleStudy.PsalmOfDay.27.mp4](https://www.eslc.org/2026.09.21.MondayBibleStudy.PsalmOfDay.27.mp4) Here's a reflection on the text by Pastor Garrick Beckett from The Lutheran Column: [Psalm 27: The Light that Casts Out Fear – The Lutheran Column](https://www.lutherancolumn.com/psalm-27-the-light-that-casts-out-fear/) But if nothing else, enjoy the rhyme and meter of this paraphrase set to English language poetry conventions (also by Pastor Beckett):

Continued on next page . . .

The Lord's my Light—my Saving
Grace.

Of whom shall I fear to face?
The Stronghold of my life is He.
What foe could rise and trouble me?
When evildoers sought my fall,
their strength dissolved—their plans
grew small.

Though armies rise, my heart won't
fear,
for God's Protection is always near.
One thing I seek, and this I Pray,
to dwell within His House each day, —
to gaze upon His Beauty bright
and learn His Will through day and
night.

In trouble's hour, He hides my soul, —
within His Tent, He keeps me Whole.
Upon a Rock, He lifts my head
above the foes my heart once dread.
With shouts of Joy, I'll raise my Song,
and in His Courts, I'll linger long.
O Lord, hear now the Voice I bring;

have Mercy as to You I sing.

Your Face I seek; O do not hide.

Be Near, my God—my Hope and
Guide.

Though father, mother, both may
flee,

the Lord will Hold and carry me.

Teach me Your Way, make Straight
my path, —

defend me from my Rival's wrath.

I Trust I'll see Your Goodness shine
and Rest within Your Love divine.

So Wait, my soul—be strong, take
heart;

for God is Near; His works impart.

With Patient hope, through Trials
grim,

I'll wait in Trust and strength for Him.

*Wait for the Lord. Be strong and take
heart, and wait for the Lord!*

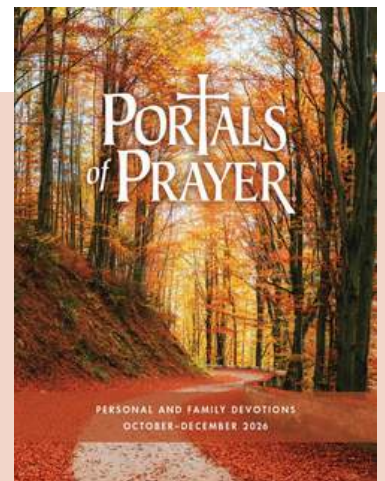
Psalm 27:14 EHV

Pastor David

Portals of Prayer

October - December 2026 Edition
Now Available!

Check the Narthex Shelves!



Deaconess' Musings

By Deaconess Holly Cox



Autumn arrives and the world outside soon changes and prepares for wintertime, whether we wish it to or not. And as we move out of summer's long, hot days and into fall's cooler, colorful ones, this time of transition never fails to bring a certain time of contemplation and introspection.

The main thought: change.

It is a word that could invoke many a thought and attitude. It is a thought pattern that frightens the best of us. It is inevitable and something that will touch each one of us – no matter our age or stage of life.

We all experience various changes with our lives, whether it be a new marriage, the arrival of a new child, graduation, job promotions/losses, moving, death of a family member or spouse, death itself, etc... But while all people on Earth experience the very same things, we remain anchored through unpredictable waters

Our Lord God remains our constant source of life and hope. He is our anchor, in whom we find “strong encouragement to hold fast to the hope set before us” (Hebrews 6:18, 19a). No matter the change we will face in this life, God proves a most trustworthy and ever-present companion who is “the same yesterday and today and forever” (Hebrews 13:8).

*Jesus Christ is the same
yesterday and today
and forever.
~Hebrews 13:8*

And even though for a time, our lives be mired with change, sorrow, distress or tears, we hold an anchored hope in Jesus Christ and lean on His never-failing grace and forgiveness. For through every change and season of our life, we rejoice in the future that has yet to be revealed when all will be made perfect and complete through Christ.

Until that day, we take comfort and rest when we face the multitude of changes in our unchangeable, immovable, ever-present Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Deaconess Holly

Every Day

By Jim Bluhm, Head Elder

Have you ever sent just an emoji? 🤔

No words, just an emoji? 😬

Just to express a feeling without words?



Every night we crawl into bed with a very long prayer list...

Our family

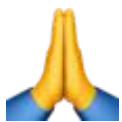
Our friends

Our church

Our country

Our adult children are always near the top of the list. We want our adult children to know that they in our thoughts and prayers every single day.

Almost every night we send our adult children no words, just three emoji:



Every night they know three things...

- They know they are in our prayers. (And that they should be praying, too.)
- They know that we are safe in our beddy. (And we hope they are, too.)
- They know that we are sleeping in the Lord's care.

Now I lay me down to sleep,
I pray the Lord my soul to keep.

If I should die before I wake,
I pray the Lord my soul to take.

If I should live another day,
I pray the Lord to guide my ways.

Upcoming Festival Sundays in the Church Year

Reformation Sunday

Sunday, October 25, 2026

Holy Communion
at Both Services

All Saints' Sunday

Sunday, November 1, 2026

Holy Communion
at Both Services

Comfort Dog News

By Judy Reese, Top Dog for Team 2

Comfort Dog Team 2

Our comfort dog ministry is ready to grow, but Team 2 cannot begin training, placement, and outreach until a Primary Caregiver is in place for our new comfort dog.

Caregiver Requirements

- 1) **Eligibility:** Must be a member of Eternal Shepherd Lutheran Church and live within a reasonable distance of the church.
- 2) **Home environment:** Must live in a house, not an apartment or condo; having other pets is evaluated on a case-by-case basis.
- 3) **Role responsibilities:** Serve as a trained handler, learn the dog's commands, and care for the dog's daily needs.

Blessings of Being a Caregiver

- 1) You will help make this comfort dog ministry possible for our church and community.
- 2) You will serve as an essential part of a ministry that brings compassion, care, and Christ-centered comfort to others.

3) You will share daily life with a highly trained, gentle, and loving comfort dog.

If you are interested or even just curious about the caregiver role, please talk to Kyra or Rudy Carbone. They have served as primary caregivers for Seth for the past 7 years and would be happy to answer questions about what the role involves.



Little Lambs Preschool Says Thank You!

By Sue McCart

Giving Tree Campaign

Your generosity has helped shape the lives of hundreds of children and families over the past 25 years, and we are deeply grateful!

Thank you to everyone who has contributed to our **Giving Tree Campaign**, supporting the refurbishment and expansion of ESLC's outdoor playground and activity areas. Your gifts will help create safer, more enjoyable spaces for our preschool students, young church members, and their families.

As shared previously, we are beginning with the **Small Playground**, located adjacent to the Little Lambs classrooms. We are currently in the process of obtaining contractor bids, and your contributions are bringing us one step closer to making this exciting project a reality. Thank you for helping us create a space where children can play, explore, and grow together!

Your Pie Dockside Fundraiser

Our recent fundraiser at **Your Pie Dockside** was a wonderful success, thanks to the many ESLC members and preschool families who joined us! It was such a joy to share a meal with so many familiar faces and to watch the preschool children enjoying time together on the grass. We are grateful for your continued support of Little Lambs Preschool.

All proceeds raised for LLP (**\$2,687.50**) will help support our operating expenses and our mission of **bringing God's love to our community**.

If you missed this fun event but would still like to support this ministry, please visit the **ESLC website**, select **Online Giving**, and click on the **Little Lambs General Fund** tile.

Thank you for your continued generosity, encouragement, and support of Little Lambs Preschool!

Sue McCart, Chair
Little Lambs Preschool Board

Little Lambs Preschool From Our Director

By Gina Cote

"The earth has yielded its harvest; God, our God, blesses us" Psalm 67:7

As we head into the month of October, we are thankful for the cool mornings and the wonders that God reveals to us in the season of autumn.

It is hard to believe that we have already finished our first few months of our new school year. The children have settled in and we are all enjoying our new school routines. We are so blessed to be able to share in this most important ministry of Eternal Shepherd Lutheran Church with all of our Little Lambs students and families.

On September 17th, the "Farm" came to Little Lambs Preschool! Mrs. Sara Foster, a former parent from our school, brought some of her farm animals to meet all of us. We met lambs, bunnies, a few chickens and of course the beloved farm dog. We always appreciate Sara and her willingness to share her animals with our students.

The students also spent the day milking a "cow", washing the play animals and much more! What a fun day we all had!

In the month of October, we will be taking our annual trip to the Little Cane Creek Pumpkin Farm. This farm is a perfect field trip for our school. The children get to go on a hayride, see the corn fields and get an "up close" visit with the cows. Always a memory to be treasured!

We will also be holding our Donuts with Dudes where our students bring a special "dude" (dad, grandpa, uncle, etc) with them to school to share a donut and a special time with their guest in the classroom. They will do a craft together and their guest will get a glimpse into the life of a preschooler!

We continue to ask for your prayers as we go through our autumn season! The sniffles have begun so we ask for prayers of health and wellness for all our children as well as our teachers. Your continued support is greatly appreciated!

Blessings,

Gina
LLP Director

ATTENTION THRIVENT MEMBERS

Thrivent has updated their Choice Dollars program so that we can direct the 2026 Choice Dollars now instead of waiting until February or March of the following year. But these 2026 donations need to be made before December 31st. Thrivent member you should have received this notice in June.

So, it is time again to direct your 2026 Choice Dollars to the charity of your choice. Thrivent allows donations to thousands of charities including Eternal Shepherd. Please donate these funds as you prefer. If you received an email, all you have to do is click on Direct Now, or you can log into your Thrivent account to donate or call Thrivent at 1-800-847-4826 and specify your Thrivent Choice.

Prison Ministry

The Prison Ministry team visits Oconee County Detention Center in Walhalla once a quarter. Our next visit is planned for, Saturday, December 12. We will have devotions and take prayer requests. Along with the devotions, cookies are given to the inmates. Usually around 30 dozen cookies are needed to be baked and bagged.

If you are interested in serving our Lord in this important ministry as a volunteer assisting with devotions and prayer requests, leading devotions or baking cookies, leave a message with Delane Dukes or Lisa Stankiewicz.



Stewardship News

By Sue Hauser

We are happy to report that the candidates have been found for the four open positions on ELSC Council for 2027. Thank you to those volunteers.

As usual, we encourage everyone to find a way that they can serve within this ESLC congregation or in the community within their time and ability constraints. Every month in the Agapegram, **JOBS, Joyous Opportunity for Believers**, identifies ways to serve. These volunteer

positions are also posted in the Church Bulletin Board. Do any of your likes, skills or passions coincide with the positions listed on the next page? If so, please contact the person identified. One reason that Eternal Shepherd is such a great community of believers is because of all the service that we freely give.

Thank you for taking the time to review the church's needs.

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.

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.

Little Lambs Monitoring

The Safety Committee is looking for volunteers to monitor the cameras and radio on Friday mornings. If you can watch a camera screen, push and button and dial 911 in case of an emergency, your help is needed. Please contact Paul Fredrickson at 864-434-2854 if you can help.

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.

Prison Ministry Volunteers

If you are interested in visiting, distributing Bibles, leading devotions or baking cookies quarterly for the Oconee County Detention Center, please contact Delane Dukes at 864-247-4282 for more information.

Nursery Volunteers Needed

Volunteers are needed to watch over our youngest members especially during the Sunday School hour or second Service. If you are interested, please contact Nicole Beattie at 864-710-1574.

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.

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.

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 issue. Please contact Pastor Hammer or Denise Stewart at 864-882-3209.

Assistive Listening Options Now Available

Thanks to a generous ESLC donor and the recommendations of their family, Eternal Shepherd Lutheran Church procured and installed a new Auri assisted listening system on 18 September. This system, provided by Active Life Hearing, uses Auracast technology to support worshipers who use hearing aids. We also want to recognize the expert technical services provided by Cecil Murray. This system has been installed in both the Sanctuary and the Fellowship Hall.

Auracast is a newer type of Bluetooth that allows our transmitter to send audio to multiple listeners at once, without requiring the usual Bluetooth pairing. Only certain hearing aid models (as well as certain phones and Bluetooth earbuds/headphones) will work directly with Auracast.

We recommend you visit your hearing aid provider and ask these questions to determine if your hearing aids are compatible with Auracast:

- “Do my hearing aids support Auracast broadcast audio?”
- “Are my hearing aids Auracast-ready but require a software or firmware update that you can install?”

If your hearing aids are Auracast-enabled, you should ask these additional questions:

- “Which app do I need to have on my phone to connect my hearing aids to an Auracast stream?”
- “Can you show me, in the hearing aid app, how to find and join an Auracast stream in places like churches?”

If your hearing aids are not Auracast-enabled, you should find out if your hearing aid uses T-Coil technology that needs to be enabled.



*Our church’s broadcast stream will show as “**Sanctuary**” and “**Fellowship**” in your hearing aid app.

Continued on next page . . .

If you do not have Auracast-enabled hearing aids and would still like to use our assistive listening system, use a personal Auri transmitter like this one, along with earbuds or headphones, during the service to connect to our live audio. We also have personal T-coil loops that plug into the Auri device, if you have T-coil-enabled hearing aids. Please ask an usher for assistance.



If you have an Android phone and use Bluetooth ear pods or headphones, your cellular phone provider should be able to tell you whether your device can connect to Auracast directly and how to connect. As part of the rollout of this system over the next few weeks, we will have short training sessions after late services on Sundays as needed to ensure everyone who wants to use this capability are able to do so.

If you have any questions or concerns with this system, please contact Fred Bell at (703) 967-1489 and he will consult with Active Life Hearing to address these questions or concerns.

FEEDING THE HUNGRY MINISTRIES *By Mark Kunkel*

Our next Feeding the Hungry Ministry Event is Saturday, 10/10/26.

To prepare for this event, we need approximately 8 volunteers to help assemble the sandwiches and pack the lunches.

NOTE SCHEDULE:

We will meet at church in the Fellowship Hall at 9:30am on Saturday, 10/10/26. It will take approximately one hour to complete this task.

Then later on that same morning, Saturday, 10/10/26, 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!

MISSION BOARD NEWS:

BAPTISMS in Pas Bonbon Abound

By Lars Helland

This last month I did a devotion at both the Council Meeting and the Prison Ministry based on the news media referring to the Mark of the Beast and how we can expect a computer chip to be the real Mark of the Beast when it is placed inside our right hand so we be able to buy and sell yadayada. They reference [Revelation 13:16–18](#). When I read about the mark on the forehead as well, I was reminded of what we have as a mark on our forehead during our baptism. Yes, when you were baptized the words were spoken “receive the sign of the cross both upon for Forehead and on your Heart, MARKING YOU as one redeemed by the blood of Christ. I then coined a new phrase “The Mark of the Feast”. The Feast being the victory celebration over Death, the Devil Satan, and the power of the Evil Foe. Martin Luther’s prayers included “Let Your holy angel be with me, that the evil foe may have no power over me. Amen”.

The Mark of the Feast does that and more. In contact with Pastor Walta and Pastor Samuel regarding the baptisms in Pas Bonbon, Haiti I encourage them to remind all the families of the churches at

Laochikit and Pas Bonbon. ALL of the children in those two schools, are baptized. Pastor Samuel conducts the baptism in the river next to the school. We feed the 320 children of Pas Bonbon every day through Trinity Hope at 28 cents per day per child. We feed them encouragement through the Word and their baptism. The Staff at Pas Bonbon is certainly Blessed to be a Blessing. More information on our Missions please contact me.

Lars Helland

Mission Board Chair

Lars.Helland48@gmail.com

Your support is greatly appreciated!



Mission Board News

By Pastor Ray Ramsburg

The Honduras team for 2027 is formed, however, if the Holy Spirit touches your heart and encourages you to become a short-term missionary to Honduras, team leader John Cochell will be happy to welcome you aboard. The dates are March 13 to March 20, 2027 with the first team meeting being Sunday, September 27, 2026 immediately after the late service. The mission is medical with an Evangelistic outcome which means you will be assisting the people of Honduras with some basic medical needs while at the same time sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ with them.

Funds are needed to buy supplies such as medicine, tooth brushes & paste, eyeglasses & sunglasses, rice & beans, water filters and other supplies.

We will be having a fund raiser beginning Sunday October 18, 2026 which we call "Helping Hands for Honduras". We have held this each year since 2014 when we began these mission trips. A garden glove is given to those who want to help and is filled with loose change, cash or a check if so desired. These funds will help cover the expenses and we are very thankful to you, the members of ESLC, who have supported us over these years. We could not complete this ministry without your participation and as such you are a part of our Honduras Mission Team. Again, thank you for your support.

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

TOYS FOR GOD'S KIDS:

The Smilemakers of ESLC assembled 600+ toy cars last month which will bring smiles to children's faces throughout the world through mission teams and through Samaritan's Purse Shoeboxes. We need woodworkers with equipment and assemblers with a heart for bringing joy to children. If you are interested please contact Mike Hauser or Pastor Ray Ramsburg for more information.



God's Blessings

Operation Christmas Child News

By Terri Baumann



IT'S SHOEBOX PACKING TIME!

Our 11th Annual Shoebox Packing Party will take place on **Saturday, 10/10 from 2-4pm** in the Fellowship Hall. Snacks will be provided. Please come and help us fill 420 shoeboxes with gifts and toys for children around the world who will also hear the Gospel. Bring your kids and grandkids, and come experience the joy of this ministry! If you've never packed shoeboxes before, you're in for a treat!

Thanks to your generosity we have raised enough money to cover the \$4,200.00 in shipping costs through the Operation Christmas Child Designated Fund. Donations to that fund to date for 2026 currently total \$6,935.00. Praise be to God for HIS provision!

COMING IN NOVEMBER:

National Collection Week will take place every day between 11/16 and 11/23.

All those who indicated their interest in volunteering by signing up back in July to help during National Collection Week were contacted by email and should have already

received the Volunteer Schedule for National Collection Week! If you have not received it, please contact me and let me know. My email is: craig.baumann@att.net.

My email to the volunteers contained the hours that our drop-off location will be open, when you're scheduled to work our drop-off location, as well as what position you're filling. The training video will also be included in the email. Please watch it as soon as possible (It's less than 10 minutes long) and let me know once you've finished watching the training video.

It is an honor to be involved with this ministry and I thank all of you for your generosity, support, and willingness to help! Please contact me if you have any questions or wish to be more involved. The next meeting of the Operation Christmas Child Committee will be on **SUNDAY, OCTOBER 4th during the late service in Room 301!**

In His Service,

Terri Baumann
Project Leader
(864)482-1243

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. October's preferred product is "Peanut Butter".

Please place your items in the containers marked "Food Bank" down by the Fellowship Hall. Thank you for your generosity & support!



October Birthdays		October Anniversaries
1 Jim Fireovid	12 LiLi Stankiewicz	5 Joshua & Isabella Kirchner
2 Noah Gemkow	13 Amy Rebholz	8 Larry & Jan Snyder
David Stupke	14 Elaine Grotheer	9 Deac. Holly & Shannon Cox
3 Elisabeth Baker	Tristan Phelan	Alec & Teresa Todd
Cathy Daly	15 Elijah Wolber	Dave & Deb Buckman
Roderick Eslinger	18 Liz Kuhlman	12 David & Rebecca Rutkiewicz
William Harth	Ken Schneider	19 Carl & Katherine Sitler
4 Jason Fireovid	19 Juanita Dettman	20 Fred & Debbie Bell
5 Dave Compton	Norman Dukes	22 Dave & Mary Compton
Tina Hundsorfer	20 Cas Marszal	Peter & Laura Thoma
6 LuWanna Johnson	Craig Wells	Tony & Sandy Alford
7 Evelyn Cox	22 Ann Bonagura	Larry & Ann Miller
Lisa Wagner	23 Mark Kunkel	
Sue Wennermark	24 Helga Johnston	
9 Jeep Feldt	Kim Wennermark	
John Presley	25 Bob Morriss	
Sue Schneider	28 David Rutkiewicz	
12 Tyler Beck	29 Bon Kruse	
Niki Johnsonwall		

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)



ESLC Staff

Pastor David Hammer

Deaconess Holly Cox

Office Manager: Denise Stewart

Preschool Director: Gina Cote

Choir Director: Rick Schmidt

Choir Accompanist: David Phillips

Organist: David Phillips

Missionaries

David & Dr. Arianna Shirk, Kenya

Dylan Chamberlain, Clemson Univ.

*Eternal Shepherd Lutheran Church
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