



WORSHIP & MUSIC


Fear not...Good News is on the way




Candlelight Christmas Eve Worship

We are grateful to gather in-person and online to celebrate the birth of our Savior. We will be offering candlelight Christmas Eve services at both of our locations, with streaming available for each campus.

Madison Campus

4:00 p.m. 
6:00 p.m.
7:30 p.m.

Verona Campus

10:00 a.m.
4:00 p.m. 
6:00 p.m.

 LIVESTREAM AVAILABLE

Advent is a season of hope, anticipation, and preparation—a time to ready our hearts for the coming of Christ. This December, our Faith in Action focus celebrates our Worship & Music Ministry, the heartbeat of our community. One of Good Shepherd's greatest strengths is the rich diversity of our worship expressions across campuses—a rare and beautiful gift worth celebrating. At Madison, worship is rooted in the traditional Lutheran liturgy, offering a deep theological and musical heritage through hymns, organ, choir and bells. Verona's morning service brings a vibrant, modern spirit led by a band and shaped by praise and prayer, while the evening service invites reflection, silence, and meaningful liturgical moments like candle lighting, connecting ancient practices to present-day life. Through each song, prayer, and expression, we encounter the beauty of God's story unfolding among us.

There are many ways to engage with life at Good Shepherd this Advent. From worship and fellowship to family and community events, each act of participation strengthens our shared mission: to welcome, forgive and serve. Together, we celebrate God's work in our midst and experience the joy, hope and light of the season.

This month, our Advent devotional invites reflection on the theme "Do Not Fear," inspired by Luke's Gospel

and the world into which Jesus was born—a world of uncertainty, oppression, and instability not unlike our own. Mary, Joseph, the shepherds and the magi each faced real fears, yet God's redemptive story broke through, inviting them—and us—into courage, trust and hope. Let the devotional guide your prayer, reflection, and engagement as we acknowledge fears, embrace God's light, and participate in acts of worship, service and love this Advent season.

May this Advent season be filled with the joy of music, the hope of Christ's coming, and the shared celebration of God's work through all our ministries. Where faith is expressed, prayer is lifted, music and God's story are shared, worship comes alive, and God's light shines in our hearts and our community.

Jared Stellmacher
Director of Worship & Music

DECEMBER FOCUS

Faith in Action: Worship & Music

This month, we lift up our Worship & Music Ministry, the heart of our life together. In every service, rehearsal and shared song, we experience God's story unfolding among us. Take time this December to pray for and thank all who serve—musicians, choirs, handbell ringers, readers, ushers, tech teams and more—whose gifts help us experience God's beauty and grace in powerful ways. Where faith is sung, spoken, and shared—worship comes alive!

Baptisms

Jonah Reed Elswick, child of Kyle and Brooke Elswick, baptized on Sunday, November 23.

Christian Sympathy

Christian Sympathy to Jean Cohee and family on the death of her uncle, Orville Sette of Juneau, WI, who died on October 27, 2025.

Christian Sympathy to Kathy Werner and family on the death of her husband, Mark Werner of Verona, WI, who died on November 13, 2025.

Christian Sympathy to Connie Halverson and family on the death of her husband, Craig Halverson of Madison, WI, who died on November 16, 2025.

Pastor Dara's Doctorate Survey

Did you know that Pastor Dara is in a Doctor of Ministry program? She is currently working on her thesis project which is titled, "Finding Rest for Your Soul: Changing Attitudes about Sleep and Exhaustion in a Busy Congregation." During this year, Pastor Dara will be inviting you to take part in this study in several different ways as we explore together the importance of rest in our spiritual lives. If you want to help, take this survey, please visit gslcwi.com/rest and look for more opportunities to come!



Members Gather to Craft Advent Wreaths in Madison & Verona

In late November, members of all ages gathered after worship to create Advent candle wreaths to mark the coming season. Thank you to the volunteers who helped provide instructions and guidance on the crafts. To download the 2025 Advent Devotional and check out more events visit gslcwi.com/advent.

FINANCIAL DASHBOARD October 2025 Update

Statement of Activity - General Fund

	Actual	Budget	Variance
Revenue	\$ 668,118	\$ 646,186	\$ 21,932
General, Admin & Program Expenses	(744,791)	(767,005)	22,214
Revenue less Expenses and Mortgage	\$ (76,673)	\$ (120,820)	\$ 44,146

Cash Balances

	October 2025	June Fiscal YR 2025	YTD	Change
General Fund	\$ 475,771	\$ 574,578	\$	(98,807)
Board Designated Reserves	598,691	-		598,691
Donor/Grant Restricted Funds	494,108	362,559		131,549
Capital Campaign Projects Fund	28,687	27,497		1,190
Columbarium	105,409	91,840		13,569
Total Cash & Investments	\$ 1,702,666	\$ 1,056,474	\$	646,192



People flourish at Good Shepherd

Thanks to hundreds of members who have turned in their Intent to Give and Time and Talent cards for our 2026 Flourish Generosity campaign. So far, returning donors are increasing their giving by an average of 8% a year. Since 2019, giving to our general fund has increased 2% total. However, did you know inflation has gone up 26% in that same period? If you haven't turned in an intent card yet, please consider increasing your giving in 2026 so we may continue to flourish. For a deeper dive into the numbers, including the impact eliminating our mortgage has had on the budget, go to gslcwi.com/flourishupdate for more details.

If you still need to fill out an Intent to Give card in 2026, visit gslcwi.com/intent.

Unique Ways to Give at Good Shepherd

Did you know Good Shepherd can accept stocks or direct gifts from your IRA as a donation? You might have additional ways to contribute to Good Shepherd that help maximize your charitable impact. Good Shepherd can accept appreciated assets, such as stocks, or donations made directly from your IRA through a Qualified Charitable Donation or QCD. If you want to give to Good Shepherd using these types of options, please send an email to accounting@gslcwi.com. In the email, indicate the type of giving (Stock, IRA, etc). Provide the member name, estimated amount of gift, name of financial institution (if an IRA) or number and type of shares of stock and how you would like your funds distributed. If you have any questions, reach out to Good Shepherd's accountant at accounting@gslcwi.com.

Upcoming Advent Events & Opportunities



Advent Hymn Sing & Lunch

- Wednesday, December 3 at 11:00 a.m.
- Pastor Sheryl Erickson | serickson@gslcwi.com
- Sanctuary & Peterson Hall @ Madison Campus

A time of Advent music, lunch and fellowship. This lunch is open to all as a time to visit with folks you know and folks you don't know yet.



Advent by Candlelight

- Thursday, December 4 at 6:30 p.m.
- Ronda Beggs | rbeggs@gslcwi.com
- Verona Campus

We'll read scripture. We'll sing carols and enjoy desserts brought by attendees. There will also be a Labyrinth Walk lead by Pr. Dara.



Blue Christmas Worship

- Thursday, December 11 at 6:30 p.m.
- Jared Stellmacher | jstellmacher@gslcwi.com
- Madison Campus Sanctuary

A gentle, contemplative gathering for anyone facing grief, loss, or hardship: such as the death of a loved one, life after divorce or separation, the loss of a job, illness, or other difficult situations.



Carols, Cabernet & Cookies

- Sunday, December 14 at 7:00 p.m.
- Jared Stellmacher | jstellmacher@gslcwi.com
- Toot & Kate's Wine Bar | Verona

Sing along to your favorite carols and enjoy a beloved Good Shepherd tradition!



Annual Christmas Concert

- Monday, December 15 at 7:00 p.m.
- Jared Stellmacher | jstellmacher@gslcwi.com
- Madison Campus Sanctuary

Experience the beauty of the season with Good Shepherd's annual Music Monday Christmas Concert featuring Handel's Messiah.



Christmas around the Tree

- Sunday, December 21 at 6:00 p.m.
- Sarah Iverson | siverson@gslcwi.com
- Verona Campus Sanctuary

An evening of stories and songs to ponder, pray, praise, and prepare in this Advent season.



"Leap of Faith" Documentary Screening Coming January 24

The Good Shepherd Foundation is sponsoring a screening of a unique and timely documentary from the director of "Won't You Be My Neighbor?" Over a year, 12 diverse Christian leaders explore contentious issues and seek fellowship at retreats in Grand Rapids, Michigan. They navigate divisions while holding onto their shared belief in love, testing the bonds they build. Final location and time to be announced soon!

2026 Women of the ELCA Triennial Gathering this July in Des Moines

The Women of the ELCA Triennial Gathering takes place every three years and gathers 1,500-3,000 women leaders, participants and newcomers for four days of worship, inspiring speakers, workshops, service projects and more! We invite you to join with our ministry as we seek to nourish women's faith and love and to inspire women to proclaim their identity, intent and actions. The theme for the 2026 Triennial Gathering is "I am Worthy" focusing on Psalm 139:14 "I am fearfully and wonderfully made." Psalm 139:14. Early Bird Registration is available until January 5, 2026. Prices goes up on January 6. For more information go to: womenoftheelca.org/new-triennial-event-page Questions? Please reach out to Helen Sheahan at helenswo15@gmail.com or Ronda Beggs at rbeggs@gslcwi.com

Save the Date for Bowl XXV

Please mark your calendars for Souper Bowl XXV on Sunday, February 8, 2026. The kickoff to Souper Bowl XXV will be the 6 p.m. Service on Sunday, February 1st followed by big plays from the AMPED students and the Little Blessings Preschool during the week. All the soup donated will go to the Good Shepherd Food Pantry, the Allied Drive Food Pantry and the Badger Prairie Food Pantry in Verona. Our challenge is to donate more than the 2,705 cans of soup during Souper Bowl XXIV.

2026 Altar Flower Signups Available

You can sponsor an altar flower bouquet(s) for 2026 in memory or in honor of a loved one, or for a special occasion. Sign up on the altar flower chart at the Madison Campus or online at gslcwi.com/flowers OR by sending an email to Judy at jhoard@gslcwi.com. Each arrangement is \$60. When paying by check, please make it payable to Good Shepherd Lutheran Church with "altar flowers" in the memo line.



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gslcwi.com

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Madison, WI
Permit No. 1265

Advent Highlights

Explore all Advent events at
gslcwi.com/advent



ADVENT CONCERT

The Brilliance

Sunday, December 7
6:00 p.m. | Verona Campus

We're thrilled to welcome back The Brilliance, a dynamic New York-based group known for their poetic lyrics and soulful sound. Sponsored by The Good Shepherd Foundation.



ADVENT CONVERSATION

Will Willimon

Tuesday, December 9
6:30 p.m. | Madison & Zoom

You're invited to a special in-person and online event featuring one of America's most influential preachers. Will Willimon will join us via Zoom for a conversation about the often misunderstood season of Advent.



CHRISTMAS CONCERT

Handel's Messiah

Thursday, December 15
7:00 p.m. | Madison Campus

Enjoy Good Shepherd's 50-voice choir, orchestra, and guest soloists, including Matt Skibo, under the direction of Jared Stellmacher. This free, joy-filled concert is open to the public and made possible through the Good Shepherd Foundation.