

JOURNEY TO THE HOLY LAND

An Interview with Pastor Chris After traveling to Israel & Palestine

Following a journey with Elias Tours in late January, we interviewed Pastor Chris to talk through some of his experiences and future travel plans for Good Shepherd.

Tell us a bit about what prompted the trip and who you journeyed with?

This was a pilgrimage/familiarization tour hosted and sponsored by Elias Tours, a company based in Bethlehem, Palestine, and Marietta, Georgia. Elias is a 20th-century child of Bethlehem and a third-generation tourism leader in his family. Elias invited me to join him last spring to travel with a group of ELCA pastors and church leaders to the Holy Land. He values not only the pilgrimage experience, but hosting those experiences to bring positive impacts both for the pilgrims and for the Palestinian communities on the ground. The global pandemic was devastating for the tourism industry, which is the lifeblood of the holy sites. It is good to rebuild the relationships that allow these life-changing visits to happen now and into the future.

What were some of the locations that you visited?

Familiarization tours are not vacations, so we compressed a lot of activity into a short amount of time. This means I am still processing all that I saw, heard, touched, tasted and smelled for sure! I can say without a doubt that kneeling in the place where Jesus was born and touching the ground where Mary gave birth will be a memory that is imprinted in me forever. Professionally, seeing the good work of the ELCA in the wider world was simply amazing. We had a chance to visit Dar al-Kalima University College of Arts and Culture in Bethlehem, and heard from its President and Founder, Rev. Dr. Mitri Raheb, an ELCA pastor. I remember hearing from Pastor Raheb back in the early 2000's when the university was still just a dream as he was touring the United States raising funds and partnerships. To see his vision alive and at work was amazing. We also visited Augusta Victoria Hospital, run by the Lutheran World Federation, which is focused on giving comprehensive cancer and kidney care to 5 million Palestinians.

Were you surprised at how emotional the experience was for you? What sorts of emotions did you feel?

I am not one to show emotions easily but one day had me crying three times: remembering my baptism at the River Jordan, visiting the place of Jesus' Birth, and hearing an impromptu choir singing Gloria in Excelsis Deo in the church



at the Shepherd's Field. In terms of my pastoral heart, the cry for justice by the Palestinian people is hard to overlook when you are welcomed into Bethlehem, in the West Bank, for four days of abundant hospitality, grace and joy from a people who have lost so much hope.

What's something you learned about the people that live there now? About the Palestinian Christian community for instance?

As I stated above, it is easy to get lost in the weeds of cynicism and dread, but with people like Pastor Raheb and the partnerships that continue to be built with allies both locally and abroad, change is coming slowly but surely. The Palestinian Christian community is about 1 percent of the population of the West Bank. They absolutely love to build relationships with others while sharing about their own stories and culture.

Did you find anything you weren't looking for while there?

I found a renewed sense of who I am as a pastor of the larger church. I found some new friends from new cultures and discovered I like vegetables a lot more than I used to!

Will Good Shepherd be making a trip in the future?

Well, this was a familiarization tour, this means that my hope is that now having been on the ground and seeing the lay of the land, we can begin planning for a pilgrimage from Good Shepherd. It is one thing to share the stories. The hope for Elias and the people of Bethlehem, is to bring people *back* to see and experience the Holy Land through their own eyes. Tentative plans are that we will do this in the summer of 2024. Stay tuned!



Baptisms

Walter Eric Bergstrom, child of Hannah and Ryan Bergstrom, baptized January 1, 2023.

Mila James Gold, child of Emily and Tyler Gold, baptized January 22, 2023.

(Pictured Above)



Christian Sympathy

Christian sympathy to Audrey Converse on the death of her sister, Madelyn Converse of Largo, FL who died on December 5, 2022

Christian sympathy to Jan Love and family on the death of her brother, Daryl Murken of New Glarus, WI who died on December 22, 2022.

Christian sympathy to Craig Schneider and family on the death of his mother, Janet Schneider of Madison, WI who died on December 31, 2022.

Christian sympathy to friends and loved ones of Bob Hanneman of Madison, WI who died on January 6, 2023 (Pictured Above)

Christian sympathy to Barbara Weaver and family on the death of her brother Thomas F. Breuch of Oak Park Heights, MN who died on January 4, 2023.

Christian sympathy to Anne Becker, Roxie Becker and family on the death of husband/father-in-law Al Becker of Fitchburg, WI who died on January 12, 2023.

Christian sympathy to Val Wood, Sam Wood and family on the death of husband/father, Greg Wood of Verona, WI who died on January 18, 2023.

FINANCIAL DASHBOARD December 2022 Update

Statement of Activity - General Fund

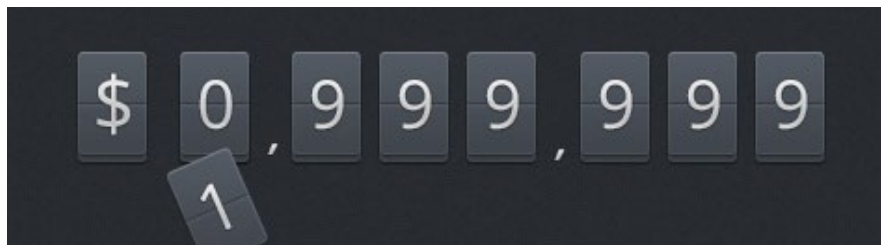
	Actual	Budget	Variance
Revenue	\$ 976,901	\$ 952,716	\$ 24,186
General, Admin & Program Expenses	(976,073)	(1,014,400)	38,327
Mortgage Principal - General Fund	(47,768)	(36,270)	(11,498)
Revenue less Expenses and Mortgage	\$ (46,940)	\$ (97,954)	\$ 51,014

Cash Balances

	June			
	December 2022	Fiscal 2022	YTD	Change
General Fund	\$ 749,056	\$ 691,410	\$	57,646
Board Designated Funds	112,154	411,295		(299,141)
Restricted Funds	425,536	376,270		49,266
Total Cash & Investments	\$ 1,286,746	\$ 1,478,975	\$	(192,229)

Mortgage Balance

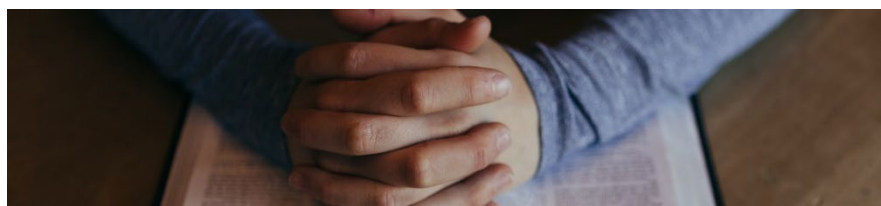
	June			
	December 2022	Fiscal 2022	YTD	Change
Loan Balance Outstanding	\$ 996,949	\$ 1,306,410	\$	(309,462)



DREAMING BEYOND

The Mortgage Hits a Historic Milestone

For the first time in more than 20 years, Good Shepherd owes less than \$1 million on our mortgage! Thank You to everyone who has committed to being part of the Dreaming Beyond debt reduction campaign to make that happen. Your gifts should make it possible to reduce the mortgage to \$0 in 2024 and allow Good Shepherd to look at God-sized dreams once again. If you want to join the campaign, there's still time to participate. Just go to gslcwi.com/serve/giving/ and fill out the intent to give form at the bottom of the page.



PRAYING TOGETHER

Do you know about the Prayer Chain?

Do you have a prayer request, or would you like to pray along with members of our congregation? Good Shepherd has a prayer ministry for that! Please contact Ronda Beggs to be added to the prayer chain or to find out how to submit a prayer request. Ronda can be reached at rbeggs@gslcwi.com or by calling 608-640-4931.

SOUPER BOWLSM HELP TACKLE HUNGER



Our Goal for Souper Bowl XXII
2,300 Cans of Soup
 More than 2,231 Cans of Soup
 from Souper Bowl XXI

Souper Bowl XXII Kicks Off February 5

Playing Times for Souper Bowl XXII Week Feb. 5-12

- Sunday 2/05 | 6:00 p.m. Service at the Verona Campus
- Wednesday 2/08 | 6:15 AMPED at the Verona Campus
- Little Blessings & 4K Pre-Schools | Madison & Verona Campuses

Soup can be brought to each Campus during Souper Bowl Week. There will be Soup Buckets in the lobby for your soup donations.

Playing Times for Souper Bowl XXII Sunday Feb. 12

- Sunday, 2/12 | 9:00 a.m. Service at the Madison Campus
- Sunday, 2/12 | 10:30 a.m. Service at the Verona Campus

Soups requested: Cream of Chicken, Cream of Mushroom, Chicken Noodle, Chicken with Rice, Vegetable Beef, any Chunky Style and packets of Ramen Noodles. No tomato soup please.

The Soup is donated to the Good Shepherd, Allied and Badger Prairie Food Pantries. We are also asking for your help with monetary donations, so the Pantry Coordinators can use the money to purchase needed food and other items given at the Food Pantries. Checks can be made to Good Shepherd with Souper Bowl in the memo line. If you donate cash, please do so carefully and indicate that it is for the Souper Bowl. You can also donate online at gslcwi.com/SouperBowl. Select 30-Souper Bowl from the drop-down selections under 2023 General Fund. The Souper good news is you can make your monetary donations any time before Souper Bowl Sunday.



CONGREGATIONAL CARE Did you know about the Meal Train?

Did you know that Good Shepherd has a meal ministry? If you know of someone or if you are in need of a meal due to a hospitalization, illness, death of a loved one, birth of a child, please reach out to our Hospitality Coordinator Ronda Beggs at rbeggs@gslcwi.com. If you like to cook and would like to be one of our meal train providers, please let Ronda know that also.

MEMBERSHIP New Member Gathering February 12

Interested in learning more about membership at Good Shepherd? Come join us for a new member gathering on February 12th at our Verona Campus. We'll gather at noon in the Fellowship Hall. Lunch will be provided. Children are welcome. Please email rbeggs@gslcwi.com for more information or to RSVP.

FIRST COMMUNION Fed & Forgiven Class on March 14

Communion Instruction is offered for children: Kindergarten-5th grade. Family can choose from in-person group class on March 14, 6:00 p.m. Verona Campus or at-home family led learning (with materials provided by Good Shepherd). First Communions will be recognized at worship during Lent. For more information and to register, visit: gslcwi.com/first-communion

MEN'S MINISTRY Boundary Waters Trip this August

Rick Thomas and Derek McCarty will be leading a 5 day, 4 night canoe and camping trip to the Boundary Waters this August. The cost of the trip is estimated to be around \$500 and will include any needed gear and meals. The trip is open to men 18 years old and above. If you are interested, please email Rick Thomas at: rthomas@gslcwi.com by February 9.



Children's Choirs Starting Up

There are now opportunities for Children's Choirs at both campuses! If interested, please contact music coordinator Matt Skibo at miskibo@gslcwi.com For more information!



Good Shepherd
LUTHERAN CHURCH

Madison Campus (MAILING ADDRESS)

5701 Raymond Rd.
Madison, WI 53711-4231
608-271-6633

Verona Campus

7291 County PD
Verona, WI 53593
608-845-8955

Fax 608-271-2657

info@gslcwi.com

gslcwi.com

Sunday Worship Times

In-Person & Online

9:00 a.m. Madison Campus

10:30 a.m. Verona Campus

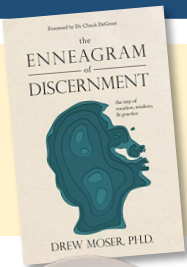
6:00 p.m. Verona Campus

Non-profit Org.
U.S. Postage

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Upcoming Events | gslcwi.com/events



February 4th : Enneagram Retreat

Dr. Drew Moser joins us at the Madison Campus from 9:00 – 1:30 p.m. to explore the faith implications of this popular personality tool.



February 21st : Shrove Tuesday Pancakes!

All are invited to stop by Madison Campus for a free in-person meal at Good Shepherd on February 21st from 5-6:30 p.m.



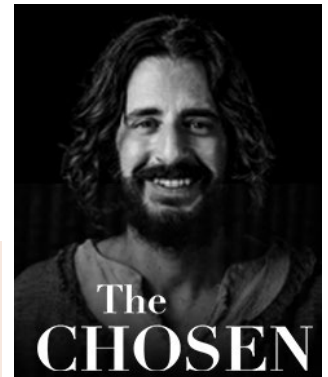
February 22nd : Ash Wednesday Worship

This month we begin our Lenten journey with Ash Wednesday worship services at 12 noon in Madison and at both campuses at 7 p.m.



March 3rd & 4th : Feed My Starving Children Mobile Pack

Register today to sign up for the Mobile Pack event coming to Verona Campus next month! Visit give.fmsc.org/verona today!



Starting February 28

Weekly gatherings to watch & discuss season one of a new television series.

Gather in-person to watch, eat & discuss or connect with an online group!

Contact Eric Holmer eholmer@gslcwi.com for more info!