AGAPEGRAM

A newsletter for Eternal Shepherd Lutheran Church & Little Lambs Preschool

November 2026

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Lutheran Favorites

By Pastor David Hammer

I… urge you to continue to contend for the faith that was delivered to the saints once and for all. Jude 3 EHV

We've just celebrated the Reformation, we are remembering our status as saints of God, and a day marked for Thanksgiving is fast approaching. All of which brings to mind a nice reflection I read earlier in the year called "Five Things I Love about Lutheranism" by Nathan Greeley of The Conservative Reformer substack:

This month marks ten years since I began attending a confessional Lutheran church. … As a ten-year anniversary is often considered an important milestone, it seems like a good occasion to briefly reflect on the things that I love about Lutheranism. …

1. The Book of Concord

… While a book of doctrine put together over four hundred years ago might sound like a boring or tedious read, the Book of Concord is anything but. This is the richest theology one can find outside of the Bible. While the confessions touch on numerous topics, the center of everything is always Christ and what he won for us on the cross. … It mirrors Scripture in all that it affirms and emphasizes. To read it carefully and take what it teaches to heart is to become wise and mature in the faith.

Continued on next page . . .

2. The distinction between Law and Gospel

... While other Protestant traditions often maintain this distinction in some way or other, Lutherans make it the key principle of theology. We insist that it is the hallmark of true Christianity, and the only way that we can properly understand the Bible, Christ, and ourselves. The Law expresses God's righteous requirements. ... The Gospel contains the promises about Christ and His benefits for needy sinners. ...

3. The real presence of Christ in the Lord's Supper

... We confess that in the Lord's Supper the body and blood of Christ are truly and essentially present in, with, and under the bread and wine. This being so, when we receive these elements, we receive Christ Himself, and if we eat and drink in faith, we partake of the life and salvation that He brings. ... Many people wonder how Christ's body and blood can be present in this way. Lutherans do not attempt to explain this. We deny that His body and blood are physically or tangibly present, but we believe they are present, nonetheless. ... For us, His words are enough to settle the matter.

4. Esteem for church history

... In Lutheranism... we have no shortage of esteem for and interest in our forebears in the faith. Lutherans in large part introduced the careful study of the church fathers, and we habitually and diligently seek wisdom, guidance, and encouragement from patristic, medieval, and Reformation-era sources. It can rightly be said that to be deep in Lutheranism is to be deep in history. ...

5. Johann Gerhard

... (1582-1637) ... a Lutheran theologian who spent most of his career teaching at the University of Jena. ... What makes him particularly notable is that he was both a clear and cogent writer of voluminous dogmatic treatises and a composer of marvelous pastoral and devotional writings. His Theological Commonplaces ranks as probably the greatest work of Lutheran dogmatics ever produced, while his Sacred Meditations (written when he was in his early twenties) is a devotional masterpiece that is in the same class as Augustine's Confessions. ...

... there are many other things that I deeply appreciate about my tradition. The doctrines of Baptism and vocation, the liturgy, the hymns, the art, the music of Bach, and the contributions of numerous other theologians all come to mind. But none are more valuable to me than these five. All five have formed me into the person I am, all have helped me to grow in the knowledge of God, all have brought joy to my soul, and all have increased my love for my precious Jesus.

[Full article found here: Five Things I Love about Lutheranism - by Nathan Greeley]

Saints of God, consider your own favorites and give thanks.

Bless the Lord, O my soul, and do not forget all his benefits. Psalm 103:2 EHV

Pastor David

Deaconess' Musings

By Deaconess Holly Cox

Sufficient Grace! Boastful Weakness?

As the weeks seem to fly by and as the end of the year looms in the distance, we are reminded of life's fleeting ways and the weaknesses of our own selves. Worries and doubts arise when we consider all that lies before us, and what remains to be accomplished and completed. We search and search and search for the "perfect __" that will make our lives that much better.

Our inner drive to "be the best we can be," takes us farther and farther away from seeing the reality of who we really are: sinful, fallen creatures in need of our Creator's mercy and pardon. We come before our Lord God meek and lowly, with no right to boast of our own deeds and accomplishments, and He graciously forgives us of our shortcomings, lack of trust, and our inability to place Him foremost in our hearts and minds. For through Christ Jesus, who died but rose from the dead and now lives forever, we also died to sin and are raised to new life in Him and for Him through our Father's grace.

Through these lenses of our new and forgiven self, we see the foolishness of what the world yearns and seeks after. We understand that we cannot achieve the "perfect" anything by our own accomplishments and that what we so desperately need is forgiveness and grace given only through the Savior, Jesus Christ, who's "power is made perfect in weakness" (2 Corinthians 12:9). While we may suffer any form of affliction in this life, we are called to hold fast to Christ and His all-sufficient grace. His grace and power turns even the most wretched of things (our sinful human self) into a being fully and wholly dedicated to Christ, saved and made whole to serve Him and one another.

Thanks be to God for Christ Jesus, who, through His almighty power, takes our weak and feeble beings and uses them for His works in this world. And while we may face suffering and pain, we are made to "boast all the more gladly of [our] weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon [us]. For the sake of Christ, then, [we] are content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when [we are] weak, then [we are] strong." (2 Corinthians 12:9b-10) We are made strong in God's power working through our very weaknesses and failures, and are shown that His grace is truly sufficient. For now, and for eternity.

Deaconess Holly

Upcoming Festival Sundays in the Church Year

All Saints' Sunday

Sunday, November 1, 2026
Holy Communion
at Both Services

Last Sunday of the Church Year

Sunday, November 22, 2026

Thanksgiving Day Service

Thursday, November 26, 2026
Holy Communion

First Sunday in Advent

Sunday, November 29, 2026



Comfort Dog News

By Kyra Carbone, Top Dog for Team Seth
864-932-8308

The Comfort Dog team continues our regularly scheduled community visits in addition to those unexpected visits that arise whereby we are called to go and serve.

At the end of September, we learned about a 10th grade Pickens High School student who died in a tragic UTV accident.Typically, when something like this happens, I reach out to the school or facility to see if Seth could be of service. The principal at the school was so appreciative of this offer and we were able to greet all the students that Friday. Several of the students spent a lot of time with Seth and you could see they were struggling with their emotions. Other students were just thrilled to see a dog in school (especially the girls) and Seth was showered with lots of love! We handed out many of Seth's ministry cards and shared Seth's verse with many of the students. We may never know the impact of our visit or how God uses Seth/us in those instances, but we always pray that we bring with us Jesus' light and comfort to those who are hurting or in need.

Upcoming Plans:

·**November 11-12** - Seth and team will be visiting the Marine Corps Security Force Battalion in Kings Bay, GA.

Approximately 1,200 Marines and Navy personnel serve at that base where their mission includes safeguarding our nation's nuclear weapons. Eighty percent of the service members are under the age of 23, who are far from home, and are often unable to return to their families during the holidays. We will be joined by 4 other LCC K9 Comfort Dogs from North and South Carolina, Florida and Georgia.

·**November 20** - Seth and team will once again visit Lutheran Towers in Atlanta, GA to spread some love to the low-income residents there. We are so grateful that we will be bringing with us 60 hand-made quilts our Mission Quilters lovingly offered to us. We know these beautiful quilts made by loving hands will bless the residents greatly.

·**December 13 and 20** – Seth's team will be holding our 10th Annual Howl-Le-Lu-Ya Dog Biscuit Sale! We will have those yummy homemade dog biscuits baked and packaged for you to give to your pup, grand pup or neighborhood pup once again this Christmas! Stay tuned for next month's Agapegram for more information.



Pickens High School
Visit September 25, 2026

Little Lambs Preschool Says Thank You!

By Sue McCart
Chair, Preschool Education Board

As fall approaches, our Little Lambs students and staff eagerly anticipate the annual Thanksgiving Feast with their families on Thursday, November 21, in the Fellowship Hall. This special gathering is a beautiful time of connection, conversation, and fellowship shared over a delicious meal.

The Thanksgiving Feast is just one example of how Little Lambs Preschool reaches far beyond the classroom. We welcome families of all backgrounds and circumstances, including children being raised by single parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, and other extended family members. Through a Christ-centered education rooted in compassion, love, and understanding, we have the privilege of making a meaningful difference in the lives of young children and their families.

We are deeply grateful to everyone who contributed to our **Giving Tree Campaign** to refurbish and expand ESLC's outdoor playground and activity areas. Together, we raised **$13,765**! Combined with other funding sources, these gifts will help create a safer, more inviting playground for our preschool students, young church members, and their families to learn, play, and grow together.

As Little Lambs Preschool celebrates **25 years of planting seeds of faith**, we invite you to prayerfully consider making a year-end gift to sustain and strengthen this vital ministry. Your generosity helps provide essential classroom supplies, support our dedicated teachers, and offer tuition assistance to families facing financial challenges.

Little Lambs Preschool operates on a very limited budget, and every gift, and every prayer, makes a difference. Your support is more than a financial contribution; it is an investment in children, families, and the future of this important ministry. Together, we can continue providing a faith-filled environment where young hearts are encouraged, families are supported, and the love of Christ is shared throughout the greater Seneca area.

May God continue to bless Little Lambs Preschool and all the children and families whose lives we are privileged to touch.

Little Lambs Preschool
From Our Director

By Gina Cote

"Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good; His love endures forever"
1 Chronicles 16:34

We are ready for the month of November! A time to give thanks here at Little Lambs Preschool. We are thankful to the parents who entrust their little ones to us each day. We are thankful for the children who remind us through their words and actions the love of our God and the beauty of His creation. We are thankful for the support of our staff as we gather in prayer each morning and are reminded that God is with us through the good days and bad. We are thankful for this church and the many members who continue to support us in so many ways.

In the month of November, we will be busy giving thanks and sharing our gifts of faith, family, and friends with our children.

As I write this letter, we are heading into a busy few weeks celebrating our "dudes" (dads, uncles, grandpas, etc.) with a morning called "Donuts with Dudes". The children are excited to bring their special guest into their classroom for the morning to show them their classroom, and their morning routine! And of course, share a donut hole or two!

We are then heading to our annual field trip at Little Cane Creek Farms! Always a fun day on the farm! We will take a hayride and see the corn growing and the cows grazing.

Since we are one of the first groups to go on the hayride for the day, the cows are usually very hungry, and the children have lots of fun feeding them the corn! They also can say hello to other farm animals as well as meander around a maze in the corn fields. Because this farm caters to young children, there will be lots of jumpy houses and a large trampoline for the children to enjoy.

Our annual Thanksgiving Feast will be celebrated on November 19th. We will be holding this event in the Fellowship Hall and look forward to celebrating the wonderful blessings God has given to us. This is a potluck event where the parents and teachers bring the meal, and all our Little Lambs families sit down for a yummy feast of good food and more importantly fellowship. Thank you to our Preschool Board who takes special care cooking and providing all the turkey for our Feast!

After this event, we will take a break and allow our families to travel for the Thanksgiving Holiday with their families and friends. School will be closed from November 23rd through November 27th.

Thanks for your support & continued prayers!

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 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 passion 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.

Sue Hauser, Stewardship

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

Upper Elementary Sunday School Teacher
Board of Christian Ed is seeking an upper elementary (3rd-7th grade) assistant Sunday school teacher. We provide materials and are looking for adults to help pre-confirmands grow their faith. Please contact Cyra Phelan.

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.

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 needed" basis. Please contact Paul Sherman at 864-602-3262 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.

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.

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 a 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.

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

DO YOU KNOW ABOUT SCRIP?

Have you ever wondered why each week in our announcements there is a name listed as the contact person for the Scrip program? Do you know how this program operates? It has been functioning for over 25 years at Eternal Shepherd and still remains an underutilized opportunity.

The scrip program involves providing gift cards to you at face value, while ESLC buys them at a discounted price. For example, a $100 Ingles card costs ESLC $95.00. The church receives $5 from your purchase.

There are many types of gift cards available. A box labelled “Scrip” is found on a small table in the narthex by one of the front doors. Attached to the front of the box are order forms showing what gift cards are available and the percentage profit available for the church.

When you would like to order, simply fill out the form with the desired cards indicated and attach a check. You can either give it to the scrip lady identified in the bulletin or leave in the scrip box. The requested gift cards will be delivered the following Sunday.

When you would like to order, simply fill out the form with the desired cards indicated and attach a check.You can either give it to the scrip lade identified in the bulletin or leave in the scrip box. The requested gift cards will be delivered the following Sunday.

In addition, the scrip lady carries Ingles, Publix, Food Lion and Walmart gift cards that are immediately available each Sunday. You can also contact the scrip lady by phone or email with any orders that you would like during the week.

Through the years the scrip funds have been used for many things. It helped pay down the mortgage in the early years. It has helped to pay for choir robes, the piano in the sanctuary, updates to the organ, carpet, tables and chairs for the Fellowship Hall, and many other projects.

Christmas is coming soon. Plan ahead and buy your gift cards though the ESLC scrip program.

Thank you for your support.

The Scrip Ladies –
Beckie Bau, Sue Hauser,
Scottie Fredrickson and Elaine Randles.

Assistive Listening Options Now Available at Eternal Shepherd Lutheran Church

Thanks to a generous ESLC donor and the recommendations of her 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. The system eliminates all background noise so the only thing heard is the speaker's voice during church services and adult Sunday School between services.

Information on this system, along with recommended actions you should take if interested, is available on the lectern (by the Auracast sign) as you enter the Sanctuary.



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.

MISSION BOARD NEWS:
"Whom shall I send?"

By Lars Helland

There are many opportunities to serve at Eternal Shepherd through our Missions Board. Below is a list of contacts on the Mission Board and their responsibility.

Lars Helland
Board Chair & Team Leader for Haiti
Lars.Helland48@gmail.com

Pastor Ray Ramsburg
Toys for God's Kids
bonsairev@charter.net

Pastor Bill Barthel
Chainsaw Team Leader
11barthel@gmail.com

John Beattie
Disaster Response Team Leader
jnb137sc@gmail.com

Nicole Beattie
LERT Trainer Southeaster District LCMS
jnb137sc@gmail.com

Richard Grotheer
Financials and New Opportunities
grotheer904@gmail

John Cochell
Honduras Team Leader
JohnCochell@gmail.com

Terri Baumann
Operation Christmas Child Team
Leader.craig.baumann@att.net

Kathy Bergeson
Lutheran Women's Missionary League
bergesonemail@gmail.com

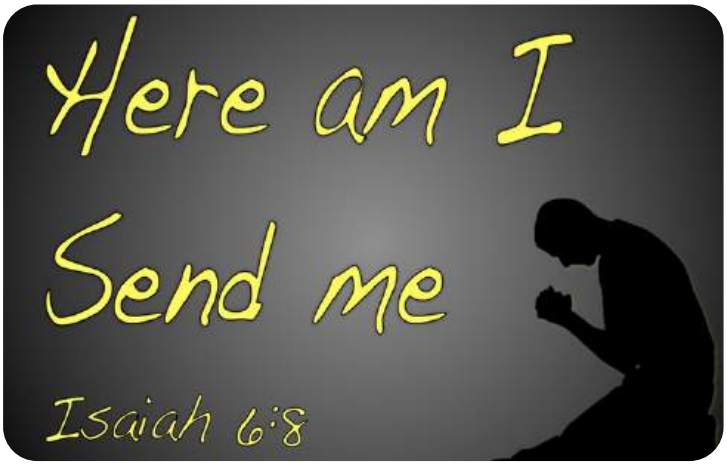
NOTES:
Honduras Medical Team currently has 25 signed up for the March 13-20, 2027 trip.

Toys for Gods Kids needs woodworking help cutting out the toy cars.

Disaster Response includes many items including Sheet Rock work, floor replacement, painting inside and out, working with the chainsaw team, basically fix storm damage.

If you have a mission you would like to sponsor, please contact
Richard Grotheer or Lars Helland.

Our Congregation at Eternal Shepherd is certainly Blessed to be a Blessing!



Helping Hands for Honduras

Your generosity strengthens ESLC's Mission Team as we serve thousands of Hondurans with medical care, eyeglasses, water filters, and Bibles. Every gift helps us extend Christ's love in practical, life changing ways.



How You Can Contribute:

Scan the QR Code to give electronically or place a check in the offering plate with memo: ***Honduras Helping Hands***

If you use the QR code to donate, please sign in to your Vanco account - or create one - so your contribution can be properly credited to you.

Thank you for your support and prayers.

"Through love serve one another."
Galatians 5:13

TOYS FOR GOD'S KIDS:

This year we have been able to fill about 2000 Samaritan's Purse shoeboxes with our little toy cars.

We could have done more but that was all we were able to make. We continue to cut cars to provide them to mission teams that travel to various foreign countries and therefore we are still looking for folks with the equipment to do this.

Please contact Mike Hauser or Pastor Ray if you think you can do this. Join us to help put smiles on children's faces throughout the world.



Operation Christmas Child News

By Terri Baumann, Project Leader
(864) 482-1243

Our 11th Annual Shoebox Packing Party was a great Success! A big THANK YOU to the twenty people who came out in the rain and packed 420 Shoeboxes in 2 hours! Seth showed up to encourage our packers! We had lots of fun and fellowship! The fruit of our labors is stacked up in the Fellowship Hall, awaiting National Collection Week. Following that week, they will all be placed into larger containers for their trip to the Processing Center in Charlotte, NC. Because of our efforts, 420 more children will hear the Gospel this year! Thank you for supporting this ministry!

DON'T FORGET: If you couldn't come to our packing party at church, we are running our Virtual Packing Party Online through November 30th. Our goal is to pack 45 shoeboxes online. They will end up in hard-to-reach countries that are hostile to the Gospel. Please access the website for our Area Team through this link: https://build-a-shoebox.samaritanspurse.org/goal/view/54d35489-2011-4241-a21a-3670e9f58033
OR this QR code:

NATIONAL COLLECTION WEEK (**NCW**) will take place every day between 11/16 and 11/23.

Our hours of operation are listed below:
Monday 11/17 – Friday 11/21 3pm-5pm
Saturday 11/22 10am-12pm
Sunday 11/23 2-4pm
Monday 11/24 9-11am

All those who volunteered to work during NCW should have already received the schedule. If you have not received it in your email, please check your spam folder and be sure to let me know. A very short training session will take place following the late service on 11/8 for anyone who still needs to view the training video or may have questions. Everyone will need to fill out their short-term volunteer forms at that time. Watch the bulletin for announcements and reminders, and call me if you have any questions at all!

COMING IN DECEMBER: Our church bus is taking a trip to the Shoebox Processing Center in Flowery Branch, GA on Saturday, Dec. 5th. We will be working from 10am – 2pm at the Center. Please Sign-up on the sheet on the Narthex Bulletin Board and watch the bulletin for more information.

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 "Fruit".

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



November Birthdays		November Anniversaries
3 Joyce James	22 Delores Stewart	1 Joyce & Richard Thompson
6 Rick Cochell	23 Christine Davis	2 Rich & Colleen Hesemann
7 Craig Baumann	Tom Eckersley	4 Christian & Katie Getchell
8 Jenna Fireovid	Cindy Munro	16 Rick & Suzanne Lucas
11 Jim Jacques	24 Woo Wagner	20 Doug & Denise Zirbel
Margi McLain	25 Jocelyn Johnsonwall	25 Sherwood & Patsy Drexel
Lois Owens	30 Milo Bell	David & Judy Hammer
12 Gerry Durham		27 Mike & Sue Hauser
13 Kate Wells		
15 Joan Callahan		
John Gemkow		
Scott Kaltrider		
Carol Nichelson		
Tiffany Presley		
16 Patty Kaltrider		
19 John Durham		
20 Deac. Holly Cox		
John Lindgren		
21 Ronda Parrish		





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)

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

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.