

The Glean

August 2025

The monthly newsletter of Good Shepherd Presbyterian Church, Joppatowne, Maryland



A Note From the Pastor

Greetings to God's Family at Good Shepherd!

As you read this, I will be preparing to depart for vacation—a long awaited cruise to Scandinavia and northern Europe. I'm looking forward to time away, but from what I hear about these experiences, and I don't expect much rest and relaxation!

As we look forward to fall, I can tell you your leadership is busy! We had a very successful meeting of all our Elders and Deacons a couple of weeks ago; your officers were so enthusiastic that they scheduled another such meeting for January! I can truly say they serve the church with energy, intelligence, imagination and love!

There are things planned for the next few months: fellowship events, mission efforts, Bible study, and special worship experiences. Keep your eye on the calendar and take advantage as you are able. After almost eight months of service here at Good Shepherd, I am really feeling very much a part of the family and enjoying the opportunities I have had. It is a pleasure to serve as your Bridge Pastor!

Hope you are enjoying the summer...and looking forward to the fall.

Blessings,
Pastor Jack



Included in this edition:

Calendar of Events
Pocket Hearts
Important Reminders
Notes From Our Committees
Milestones
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Prayer Requests



In Memoriam



Michael Ndeme Elonge

We are saddened to learn of the unexpected recent passing of Good Shepherd member, Michael Elonge. While we await for details of funeral arrangements, please keep Michael's daughter, Mafese and the entire Elonge family in your prayers.

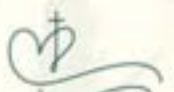
As we learn of service details, we will share them.



Calendar of Events

August 2025

Now through Aug 17	Backpack Collection for Riverside Elementary School
Sun. Aug 3	Worship 11:00 am Communion Coffee Hour Fellowship (after worship)
Sun. Aug 10	Worship 11:00 am Coffee Hour Fellowship (after worship)
Wed. Aug 6	Deacons Meeting 6:00 pm
Sun. Aug 17	Worship 11:00 am Coffee Hour Fellowship (after worship) *Final Day of Backpack Collection*
Thurs. Aug 21	Session Meeting 6:00 pm
Sun. Aug 24	Worship 11:00 am Coffee Hour Fellowship (after worship)
Sun. Aug 31	Worship 11:00 am Coffee Hour Fellowship (after worship)



Announcements

Sharing Table scheduled for August 9th is
CANCELED

Equipment logistics at the new location
are still in flux.

Our next Sharing Table Day is on
Saturday February 14th 10am-1:30pm



REDNERS RECEIPTS

Yes—we're still collecting them!

Yes—we're still receiving free money because of you!

And yes—we are so grateful for every receipt you drop off in the
box in the Narthex!!

We're excited to share that Julianna Shallenberger has lovingly
taken over this mission. Thank you, Julianna!

And a heartfelt thank-you to Pat Howe for her many dedicated
years managing this effort. Your service has made a lasting
impact. 🙏



Thank you, Edie!



After years of faithful service, dedication, and joyful leadership, we bid a heartfelt farewell to our beloved Music Director, Edie Grabowski, as she steps into retirement.

Edie has shared her incredible gifts with our congregation through music that has inspired, comforted, and uplifted us.

From leading the choir with grace to planning beautiful worship services and special events, her presence has been a true blessing to Good Shepherd Presbyterian Church.

While we will deeply miss her talent, leadership, and warm spirit, we rejoice with her as she enters this new chapter of life. May retirement bring her peace, joy, and time for all the things she loves most.



The choir, led by Farrell Maddox, gave Edie and the congregation a surprise farewell anthem.

Following the moving worship service, an Italian luncheon and cake was served in Edie's honor. Edie was presented with heartfelt gifts as a token of our deep appreciation for her years of dedicated service.


Thank you, Edie, for the music—and the memories.


With gratitude and love,
Your Good Shepherd Church Family




Pocket Heart Mission



Di Houser, member of Good Shepherd spearheaded a morning gathering of determined Good Shepherd learners — yarn in hand and love in their hearts—as they learned to crochet a heart small enough to fit in a pocket, yet big enough to hold a message of hope. 

Initially researched and suggested by Sue Thompson as a powerful and meaningful way to connect with someone in need, these Pocket Hearts are more than just handmade creations—they're heartfelt reminders that no one is truly alone. Each stitch carries a prayer, a wish, or a whisper of encouragement for someone who may be hurting, grieving, or simply needing a moment of comfort. 

The mission is beautiful in its simplicity: to place a bit of love into the hands of those who need it most. Whether shared with old friends or new friends or strangers in the grocery store, each heart says: 

You are seen. You are loved. You matter.



Notes from the Deacons

A ministry of compassion, witness and service following the example of Christ

We'd like to take a moment to lift up and sincerely thank Norma Webster, who faithfully reaches out each week to members who are going through challenges or whom we haven't heard from in a while. Her calls, visits, and quiet persistence in reconnecting with others are truly a ministry of love. Norma, we are so grateful for your servant's heart!

If you know of someone who could use a visit, a phone call, or a simple card in the mail—please reach out! We are always grateful for suggestions and updates.

Looking Ahead: Special Events and Outreach:

- We were thrilled by the success of Bagels & Blooms, a beautiful event of hospitality and hope. We plan to make this a legacy annual tradition in memory of Sue Thompson! To support its future, we're considering a special offering to help cover the cost of the flowers, which have always been generously donated by Sue Thompson.
- Backpack Drive for Riverside Elementary (August): Last day to donate is Sunday, August 17
- Blessing of the Pets (September): Pending—stay tuned!
- Church Picnic (October): Exploring option of an old-fashioned picnic with games, fellowship, and food in a picnic setting
- Thanksgiving Boxes (November): Pending – stay tuned!
- Deacons Corner (December): Our annual mission of Christmas gifts for teenage foster girls.
- Live Nativity (December): It's happening! More details to come
- Minute for Mission Event: Information from two vital nonprofits, Harford Family House, a Harford County organization that works with unhoused families and Shifting Gears, a new venture to support foster young ladies who have aged out of the foster care system - Date TBD
- We're also exploring how we can deepen our relationship with the Good Shepherd Children's Center. A warm, welcoming presence—like coffee with parents or seasonal events—can show families that our church cares about their children and their journey. More to come on this meaningful partnership

With gratitude and love,

Chris Bohns and the Deacons (Norma, Michele, Julianna and Kelly)



"Let all that you do be done in love." – 1 Corinthians 16:14



Session Snapshot



Here is a snapshot of what happened at Session this past month:

- Session meets on the 3rd Thursday of every month and is charged with the governance of the church.
- Session consists of the following church elders:
 - Bill Starke
 - Clay Maas
 - Vickie Maas
 - Cindy PreVatte
 - Greg Donelson
 - Mike Bohns
- Interviews for candidates for the Music Director position are in the process. If you know anyone with a musical background who may be interested, please pass the word that Good Shepherd is seeking a new Music Director.
- Session approved the formation of a small subcommittee consisting of Chris Bohns, Vickie Maas, Clay Maas and Kelly Donelson to review and submit a draft Upper Room Use Agreement. More information will be forthcoming in the new several months.
- Session received reports from the various committees including the Board of Deacons, Children's Center committee, Facilities committee, Worship Committee.
- Possibilities for new banners for church services are being reviewed.
- Church members have an opportunity to receive AED device training. If you are interested, please see Clay Maas.



Committee Spotlight

Facilities Team



(from left) Greg Donelson, Mike Bohns and Clay Maas

The question was recently asked: "Do you know who mows the church lawn every single week?"

The answer? Mike Bohns.

Rain or shine, Mike faithfully maintains our (very large!) church lawn—helping to keep our grounds looking beautiful and inviting for all. And when winter rolls around and the grass stops growing, Mike doesn't take a break—he shifts gears to make sure our parking lot is safe and clear from snow and ice. Mike has been a hardworking, dedicated member of the Facilities Committee for years and quietly handles many, many tasks.

Another vital member of the team is Greg Donelson, whose talents really shine when there's something big to build. Both Greg and Mike are the masterminds behind our beloved live Nativity set. Greg's current project is coordinating the plans for the Children's Center renovation.

And then there's Clay. Now, Clay may not know the difference between a hammer and a screwdriver (his words, not ours!), but don't let that fool you—he's an essential part of the Facilities Team. Clay is the friendly, reliable face who shows up when a vendor arrives: whether it's the Stair Chair technician, the carpet cleaners from Stanley Steemer, the crew from Clear Tree trimming branches, or the delivery of Engineered Wood Fiber for the playground—Clay makes sure they get where they need to go and that the job gets done.

Interested in joining this team? -- They are always looking for a few more helping hands!

Whether you're comfortable changing light bulbs, tightening screws, painting touch-ups, raking leaves, helping with set-up or cleanup for workdays, or simply checking that everything is in working order—there are plenty of ways to pitch in. You don't need special skills—just a bit of time, a cooperative spirit, and a desire to care for our church home.

Because when everyone does a little, no one has to do a lot.

Think about it!



Milestones



August Birthdays to Celebrate!

Jane Workman - August 1st

Chris McKemy - August 3

Cindy PreVatte - August 4

Edie Grabowski - August 10

Isabella Victorine Elonge - August 14

Winsome LaComb - August 16

Sue Maddox - August 22

Mike McKemy - August 24

Ashley Andrews - August 25

James Andrews - August 26



On your special day, we give thanks for your life and the light you bring to Good Shepherd.

May this new year bring renewed strength, laughter, and blessings.

If you would like your important milestone recognized in The Yarn, please contact deacon, Kelly Donelson



Look at What's Happening at
Good Shepherd Children's Center



Water
play



Look at What's Happening at
Good Shepherd Children's Center



Indoor PICNIC



with our favorite stuffies



Look at What's Happening at
Good Shepherd Children's Center

Learning Through
ART



Check out our Facebook page for even more photos of all the great July activities



Scan the code with your smartphone camera



Prayer Requests



Lifting One Another in Prayer

Whether you are facing a challenge, celebrating a joy, or simply need to feel God's presence more deeply, we are here to pray with and for you. Please keep the following members and friends in your prayers, and know that your church family is holding you in theirs.

- Mafese Elonge, daughter of Michael, and the entire Elonge family as they mourn the sudden passing of their beloved Michael Elonge.
- Becky McKemy and her entire medical team as the McKemy family as they manage Becky's health challenges. Prayers that the medical team can bring comfort and healing.
- Sarah Weich who has returned home from Lorien and who wishes for peace and comfort in these final days. Pray for God's gentle presence to be with her and for strength and grace for those who love and care for her.
- Monica Mikhail and her mother Evonne as Evonne continues to have health challenges.
- Little Olly Wilson who is home now and out of his leg casts. He still has a long medical journey ahead of him but is very happy to be reunited with his puppy!
- Cindy PreVatte and her step-grandson who was involved in a motorcycle accident. Cindy asks for prayers for her family and the entire medical team at Bayview. Pray for clarity of x-rays, clarity of a plan, and pain management that does not include opioids.
- Anyone who has an unspoken prayer need - You know the needs of our hearts even when we cannot find the words to speak them aloud. Today we lift up an unspoken prayer—one that is tender, private, and known fully only to You.

Gracious and loving God,

We ask for Your comfort in what is heavy, Your peace in what is uncertain,
Your wisdom in what is confusing, and Your presence in all things.

Wrap all who are in need in your healing and comfort, and remind them that they are never alone.
In the quiet, may Your Spirit bring assurance, healing, and hope.

In Jesus' name we pray,

AMEN

