

Memory Lane News



Good Shepherd Methodist Church
179 Memory Lane, Cotter, AR 72626
Mailing Address: P.O. Box 586, Gassville, AR 72635

January 2024



From the Pastor's Desk

According to the calendar 2023 has come and gone and 2024 has arrived! Praying that all of you are preparing not only for the cold weather of winter, but preparing for a year of worship, a year of gratitude.

As I was preparing for my sermon the Holy Spirit made me acutely aware that worship and an attitude of gratitude helps us to face the hard times in life and to enjoy our blessings, especially our gift of salvation.

Looking back over 2023 we are grateful for the people who worked so very hard to help us through the disaffiliation process. I personally am so proud of them and of this congregation who helped us "pray our way" through the process and to see how God has blessed us to be a blessing to others.

Our worship leaders have worked very hard to help us lift up our praise to our Heavenly Father. The membership has been so faithful to fill the several positions of service during worship. Mission and Outreach have begun a new ministry that will serve students and their families who attend the Cotter School. We have opportunity to offer hope to those who come through the court system because of issues with alcohol and /or drugs.

Our Blessing Boxes are filled with personal care and food items. Then there are the worker bees who keep our building in good repair and those who take care of our membership records and finances.

Because of sound financial practices we are able to fund worship, missions, and all the other requirements necessary for keeping a congregation practicing the love of God – not so much as requirements, but as love to be shared.

This is not bragging, but a voice of encouragement to keep up the work of Christ Jesus. As Christians we recognize that our gifts for service are given to us by the love of God.

Please receive the following suggestion with a heart of love: Would you take some time to look back over your Christian walk? If you do not see growth or if you feel stuck, ask yourself what do you need to do differently? Are you in love with Jesus? Do you talk to Him daily? Are you reading short passages of Scripture and asking the Holy Spirit to help you understand what you are reading? Do you have relationships that are uplifting? Are you attending Sunday school and worship services? If you can't attend, are you watching preaching on TV? Or reading sermons? Are you sharing your gifts and talents with the Body of Christ Jesus? No matter how you "feel," do you know deep in your being that you are a child of God and loved unconditionally? I would like very much to visit you any time. Life can be difficult, and we all need someone to walk with us and to remind us of how much God loves us



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We now have a Church Suite program that will be very helpful as we move into 2024. Julie Smith is available to introduce you to the many helpful ways this program can be used in ministry work.

Anyone working with the children on Wednesday nights **must** have a background check and work with the training programs available through *Ministry Safe*. Contact Julie Smith for help with this.

May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. We are not alone!

Schedule of Events

Adult/Children Sunday School.....9:45 am
Sunday Service 11:00am at Church
..... or YouTube (Good Shepherd Cotter)
Movie& Dinner—Monday..... 4:00 pm
Recovery Group—Thursday..... 10:00am
Meet in basement of church
Women of the Good Shepherd - Third Tuesday
of the month at 10:00am



Congratulations to John and Linda for tying the knot!

Take Time to “examen”

I’m grateful to live in an area with distinct seasons. Each time of year has unique characteristics that give way to the next. “For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven,” says Ecclesiastes 3:1 (ESV).

Each change of season also lends itself to *examen*, a spiritual practice that involves reflection. Typically done daily, examen invites people to recall past events (highlights, struggles, even mundane activities) and consider when they especially sensed God’s presence or when he seemed distant.

Try a deeper examen four times a year as the seasons change. As a starting point, use your answers to these questions:

- Looking back at the past season, when did I see God at work? What was life-giving to me?
- In what areas did I need God to work? What was life-draining?
- As I enter this next season, how is God inviting me to engage more with his presence?

—Janna Firestone

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Committee Reports

Mission & Outreach Committee

The Good Shepherd Mission and Outreach committee is kicking off the new year with the start-up of a new after school program for students in the Cotter school region. We will be providing after-school programming and mentoring on Wednesdays, which will include an evening meal with the families of the attending students. Our mission is to reach out to students in need of educational, support, mentoring, and spiritual education. We will begin this new program January 17th, weather permitting. We continue to support the Blessing Boxes located in Cotter and Gasville, Arkansas.



Mike & Linda Demass

Worship Committee

The Worship committee continues to meet regularly to discuss special services and improve our weekly services. We have expanded our Worship Team to include pianist, organist, one choir member, song leader, & assistant song leader. We have also been following the Ecumenical Calendar and introducing new hymns to the congregation with great success. We have done this in the hopes that the hymns we sing are more relevant to Pastor Jimmie's Sermon. We continue to try to improve our Worship Service also with solos, duets, and other special music. Cecil has taken on the big task of providing a weekly bulletin and a prayer request insert. Barbara continues to head up the Presentation Team;

Jim takes care of the ushers; and Julie incorporates multiple people to coordinate the other responsibilities, such as liturgist, candle lighters, computer operator, and special readings or prayers. Thank you all for pitching in to make our Worship Service more meaningful.

At our last meeting, October 28, 2023, we adopted by consensus the Purpose of the Worship Committee which is:

With love, we pray that we will do what we can to:

- 1) Enhance our worship time, collectively and individually.
- 2) Prepare the hearts of God's people to receive the message.
- 3) Provide a holy time of reflection and renewal.

Christina suggested that we might sing an offertory hymn, "All That I Have" for most Sundays. We are working to get this into our service with people accustomed to participating, and presentation folks accustomed to making the words available. As with anything new, it takes a bit of time.

Future projects we want to explore:

- 1) It is still under discussion, but we are open to the idea of helping with the after-school children's program with a time of music if that is desired by the organizers of the after school program. It is thought that this might come about later after their original plans have been facilitated.
- 2) Also still under discussion is the possibility of having a 5th Sunday time of singing (perhaps from older hymnals), sharing, and sandwiches.

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Committee Reports

It has been suggested that we do this at 4 o'clock on the 5th Sunday. It has been suggested that we might open this to the public and invite another church to join us. (Jo Anna is hopeful that another pianist can share in the piano playing.) Prior to the 5th Sunday gathering, we will use older hymnals such as 'Heavenly Highways' and 'Cokesbury' as our source of hymns in the Fifth Sunday morning service.

Jo Anna Smith,



Membership Committee

The membership committee has spent several hours with Julie Smith, learning about the new church suite program. The program allows for inputting membership/attendance information and keeping records for Baptism and Confirmation. This provides a single home for all records.

We also started taking attendance for all church services with the help of Sam. This information is then transferred to the new program.

Christina Ruszczyński

Because Jesus Said So



One intriguing person in the Passion account is the thief on the cross whom Jesus promised a same-day entrance to paradise (see Luke 23:43). Pastor and radio host Alistair Begg says he can't wait to meet that man and ask how everything unfolded.

"You were cussing [Jesus] out with your friend," Begg says. "You've never been in a Bible study. You've never been baptized. You didn't know a thing about church membership, and yet you made it!"

In a sermon, Begg pictures an imaginary angel at the pearly gates, growing frustrated during the sinful thief's entrance interview. After receiving no clear answers from the thief about doctrines such as justification, the angel finally asks, "On what basis are you here?" The thief simply replies, "The man on the middle cross said I can come."

By Faith

'Tis by the faith of joys to come
We walk through deserts dark as night,
Till we arrive at heaven our home.
Faith is our guide, and faith our light. ...

Cheerful we tread the desert through,
While faith inspires a heavenly ray,
Though lions roar and tempests blow
And rocks and dangers fill the way.

So Abraham, by divine command,
Left his own house to walk with God;
His faith beheld the promised land,
And fired his zeal along the road.

—Early American hymn

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Spaghetti Dinner



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