



SHINER  
LUTHERAN

# 2021 WINTER QUARTERLY CONNECTIONS



<sup>39</sup>*In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country* (Luke 1:39)



Where are you going? This question could be asked in many settings, “Where are you going?” Parents ask teenage children on Saturday night; a person with dementia may ask this question repeatedly, “Where are you going?”

It is a pertinent question for Christians to ask this winter. At Shiner Lutheran Church, we are certainly moving. There is so much going on, from Bible studies to GIFT to special Advent services in December, and who can forget a massive youth Christmas pageant and two Christmas Eve services? And, as we move into January and February, we move into the season of Epiphany. Did you know that I turn 40 in February? Your pastor seems to be moving over the hill! We are moving and shaking at Shiner Lutheran Church, yet we need to ask the question, “Where are you going?”

Mary, the mother of Our Lord, set out and went with haste to visit her relative Elizabeth in the 6<sup>th</sup> month according to the Gospel of Luke. Mary knew that she had to leave Galilee for that Judean town after she had been visited by the angel Gabriel. The virgin Mary would conceive a son and name him Jesus. There would be many questions; still, Mary set out and went with haste. Mary knew where she was going.

We are going to keep moving forward at Shiner Lutheran Church. This is not to say that there will not be questions along the way. I do know that the Lord is alive and is with us through the power of the Holy Spirit. At times, God beckons us to keep moving. Just as Mary set out with haste at the beginning of the Gospel of Luke and how, at the end of the Gospel of Matthew, the angel at Jesus’ empty tomb told the women to tell the disciples of the resurrection and then to go to Galilee where Jesus would meet them – now is the time for us to keep moving forward!

I want to close out 2021 at Shiner Lutheran Church with renewed passion and to go into 2022 with purpose. Make weekly worship a priority, if that has slipped. If you are able to give a special year-end financial gift to the church, now is the time. Now is the time to light candles, and now is the time to be a light shining in the darkness.

My vision for the church in 2022 is to continue working on a balanced ministry. We need to nurture programs that reach both young and old, ministries that reach members and non-members. We also need to focus on our commitments such as the church mortgage payment. The church needs you and your family to join us as we move forward, together.

Where are you going? I’d love for you to join me!

*Pastor Chris Reinold*

## Ministry Areas in Action

### WORSHIP

The last three months brought variety in our worship. This time of the church year we celebrate the festivals of Reformation, All Saints Sunday, and Christ the King Sunday. While our Blended Blessings Band played many Sundays, also featured were Vicar Daniel, the Polka Spirit Band, The Country Gospel group, and guest pianist Leah Matocha were also featured. Special moments included the Blessing of the Animals in early October, the naming of all the members and friends who passed away since the last All Saints service, and the unique Thankoffering emphasis on Christ the King Sunday. The new Altar Guild group met monthly for instruction in the area of the chancel care duties. The Altar Guild helped with the October training of acolytes and set the altar with a bounty of harvest for Thanksgiving. Diane Schroeder began talks on the symbolism in our sanctuary windows.



### Learning

The foundation of our learning area remains the GIFT program—Growing in Faith Together—that meets each Wednesday evening with a meal and lesson time. The attendance averages around 60+ participants, with several new families joining GIFT in the past months. Vicar Daniel teaches the adult learners, studying Philipians in fall and now studying the book of Ruth. Pastor Chris teaches confirmants, adults volunteer to teach Godly Play to the elementary ages, and a special youth gathering curriculum guides the high school group ed by Mallory Volkmann. Parents have stepped in to provide food, and volunteers pitch in to clean up after the meal. In late November, GIFT classes also began practicing for the December 19th Christmas program. Back in September, a pizza fundraiser collected \$732 towards youth learning activities such as church summer camp.

### service



In September we participated in the churchwide emphasis of God's Work, Our Hands. After collecting items over the summer, volunteers packed up 52 Personal Care Kits, while others visited homes of some of our elderly and raked, swept, trimmed and cleaned outside areas. Quilters added boxes containing 209 quilts they had crafted and all the kits and quilts were transported to a gathering center in Marion for shipping to Lutheran World Relief for distribution throughout the world. In October, a new fellowship began with a Friday luncheon for "Just Older Youth" - JOY. Also in October, a fifth Sunday covered dish dinner helped celebrate Reformation Sunday. November saw the first meeting of a new Women's Fellowship, a group that hopes to meet monthly for snacks, conversation, and fellowship. Our part in the Shiner Food Pantry continues with members donating food items, hosting the breakfast monthly, and Vicar Daniel lending a hand when he is available Thursdays.



*Our Fifth Quarter Fellowship grew with more participation and we now see that Fifth Quarter is a real outreach to all Shiner youth— a witness to faith and fellowship. JOY and GIFT also reach out to the community as welcoming, safe places to meet with others. We continue to reach out electronically as well. Each week our online streaming of our worship service garners 170-200+ views, with some of our distant viewers also sending in contributions for our congregation. Some changes in our video tech line up have resulted in new volunteers filming on Sundays. We still could use more volunteer camera operators, as there are Sundays we must mount the camera in a stationary position rather than following the flow of the service. Our sound input and output continue to be refined to help our electronic worshippers.*



## Ministry Areas in Action



### SUPPORT

This fall, due to the pandemic, the festival event of the past few years was scaled back to a BBQ fundraiser only. Volunteers pitched in and a successful event took place October 24th. The cost of the chicken and other supplies was covered by a few generous donations. After expenses, the funds raised totaled \$ 12,555.53, which has been placed in the money market building fund from which our monthly building payments are drawn. These past months we worked to sign up more volunteers to support our ministries. In October, volunteers washed windows in the Gathering Place and dusted and refreshed the sanctuary. A volunteer crew replaced lightbulbs in the sanctuary. Other volunteers continue to maintain the lawn and landscape. The property planning team handled additional repair and maintenance issues as needed. A new church data management program was installed, with volunteers learning the new program. In November, orders were taken for the Shiner Lutheran embroidered shirts. The semi-annual congregational meeting in November approved the 2022 budget proposal which included our monthly mortgage obligation. Elections were held, and all nominees were elected by acclamation.



*We have many silent servants and others that thrive on remaining totally anonymous. Nevertheless, we recognize with gratitude both those listed and not listed. Our congregation is truly blessed! We say thank you to...*

- Mason Guettner, Tammy Guettner, Ronnie Bruns, Pastor Chris, & Brian Pokluda who replaced chancel lights & moved chancel platform.
- Brian Pokluda for reworking the attic light and repairing the parsonage fence gate and closet light.
- Carol Harris who was instrumental in starting JOY and who with Sandy Machacek provided the meal.
- All our BBQ leaders and volunteers, including Scott Fojt and the cooking team, Bridget Boedeker and the kitchen team, servers, ticket sellers, bake sale leaders and all the brownie & bake sale bakers
- Hospitality and property volunteers that make our church welcoming and ready for others.
- Pastor Chris & Gemayel, Vicar Daniel & Mallory, for their constant efforts to support and grow our ministries—we appreciate them every day and not simply during October Clergy Appreciation Month!

## Our Congregation

During the past months, the following parochial events took place:



September 7, 2021—Allyne Albrecht, baptized and confirmed member passed away. Her funeral was held in our sanctuary.

In addition, weddings of members were celebrated in our sanctuary:

- September 18, 2021— Jordan Pietsch & Garrett Goebel
- November 13, 2021— Samantha Neal & Jordan Smith



## Administration

### 2021 CHURCH COUNCIL

- Sandra Blum
- James Davis
- Debbie Ealy
- Brian Baker
- Danna Murrile
- Tim Harris

- Mike Vaughan
- Holy Heinsohn Kropp
- Shannon Blaschke
- Kristin Neal
- Brian Pokluda
- Pastor Chris Heinold
- Vicar Daniel Volkmann

**THANK YOU to those serving as the 2021 officers:**

**President: James Davis**  
**Vice-President: Brian Pokluda**  
**Secretary: Kristin Neal**  
**Treasurer: Sandra Blum**



### Church Council

As the governing body of our congregation, the church council oversees our finances, contracts, policies, and human resources. For example, our church council has continued to revisit and adjust the safety precautions our congregation takes in regard to the CoVid pandemic. During the past few months, the council established a distribution schedule for any funds we receive from undesignated bequests. This year we have begun to receive a bequest from the John and Elda Fritsche Charitable Trust. The funds from this bequest will be released to all its beneficiaries over the next two years. The church council has established the following distribution schedule for the trust funds we receive: 50% for Capital Improvements (such as the Building Fund reserve); 25% for the Endowment Fund; 15% for UDML Ministries; 5% General Fund; and 5% for Mission Support. The Fritsche Trust money received through October 31, 2021 has been distributed according to this plan. The council also decided to reduce the number of council members from twelve to ten. Our constitution reads “up to twelve” council members, so this change does not need further approval. As we have expanded church lay leadership through Mission Groups, the church council functions more fully as an executive body that oversees our congregation. This can be done with fewer council members. We thank Tim Harris, Debbie Ealy, and Holly Heinsohn Kropp who all filled council vacancies during 2021. Two of these slots were not refilled for 2022. As a result, the church council begins 2022 with ten members.



The quarterly meeting of Mission Groups was held on November 21, 2021. Although attendance was less than ideal, good food and great conversations were plentiful. The focus for all the groups were the questions “From the perspective of your mission groups, where did you see God in 2021?” and “From the perspective of your mission groups, what areas need to be strengthened and how can this be done?” Some of the answers shared in the debriefing of all the groups included:

### WORSHIP

God was seen in: the birth of a new Altar Guild willing to be trained and serve; dedicated worship volunteers; despite changes, continuing volunteer camera coverage; and our online worship service. Needs included more shared responsibility especially in video and sound tech areas.

### Learning

The greatest God sightings were in the energy and vitality of the GIFT program. Needs included a clean up plan for GIFT and youth involvement in worship.

### service



God was seen in: the birth of a new fellowship, JOY, for older adults; the return of fellowship meals on 5th Sunday and for funerals; the response to cards sent out by the group; our work with the Shiner Food Pantry; and the Giving Tree Ministry. Needs included support and strengthening of Joy and joining in fellowship at the Food Pantry.



God was seen in: the response and support of our electronic presence as a ministry, including the quantity of worship views; the refinement of our facebook page to reflect our congregation; and establishing an Instagram presence, especially for youth. Needs include continued support of the hardware and technicians needed for electronic witness and follow-up plan for electronic and in person contacts.

### SUPPORT

God was seen in the formation of a Finance Team, a renewed Endowment Committee, an unexpected bequest, volunteers working to revise the constitution, and the ongoing repair and maintenance tasks performed quietly by volunteers. Needs focus on the sustainability and vitality of our congregation with an understanding of finances, a capital campaign to support our mortgage, and completion of the constitution revision process.

## Administration & Finance



At the Congregational Meeting on November 14, congregational leaders were elected by acclamation. Those elected include:

- Church Council 3-year term: James Davis, Sandra Blum, Holly Heinsohn, Duncan Wallace
- Endowment Committee 3-year term: Karen Vaughan
- 2022 Synod Assembly Delegates: Mike & Karen Vaughan
- Nominating Committee: Dee Schierschwitz, Karen Pokluda, Chuck Stratman

A report on the Shiner Lutheran BBQ noted that income (tickets sales, donations, bake sale) less expenses netted a total of \$12,550.53 which will be added to building fund reserves.

**New \$ Budget** At the same meeting, the 2022 proposed budget was considered. Although the medical expenses for the pastor and family increased, cuts were made in other areas to result in a budget that was actually \$89.24 less than the 2021 budget. The proposed 2022 budget of \$353,584.12 was adopted unanimously.



Our Finance Team and Endowment Committee met together in October to discuss the earnings from the Endowment investments. The group connected with Justin Jaks from Jaks Financial who manages one of the LPL Endowment Fund variable investments. Justin provided an explanation of that portfolio's investment plan. A second LPL fund is managed by Pietsch Wealth Management. The meeting discussion continued regarding the harvesting of earnings from investments to use according to Endowment Fund Policy. Since we now have a viable Finance Team that is monitoring all congregation finances, some procedural recommendations were made. In October of each year, the Finance Team will examine Endowment earnings and recommend the amount of money that the Endowment Committee could distribute while retaining investment viability. Before the end of the calendar year, the Endowment Committee is charged with determining the exact distribution of these earnings according to the Endowment Fund Policy: One third to capital improvements (such as the Building Fund for mortgage payment); one third to local needs (including scholarships, cemetery care, trainings, etc.); and one third to benevolent causes of the ELCA (Crosstrails Ministry, World Hunger, Disaster Response, Global Missions, etc.). This comprehensive distribution was determined when the Endowment Fund was established, but has not always been strictly followed. Financial reports will more accurately reflect the distribution of Endowment earnings. Because this may affect scholarship funding, a non-budget line item will also now allow donations that will be dedicated solely to Shiner Lutheran Scholarship without deposit into the Endowment Fund.



**ENDOWMENT COMMITTEE**



Loose change (or bills) are gathered as a special Noisy Offering on the last Sunday of the month for special mission work. During the past few months, Noisy Offerings were given to Lutheran World Relief (\$210.54), Texas Lutheran Campus Ministry (\$95.05), and Legacy Ranch (\$211.84) and St. Nicholas Ministry (\$181.74) Thank you!



*Planned legacy giving enables churches and non-profit organizations to continue to exist, despite the uncertainties of offerings. In the past we have been blessed with bequests, oil leases and other special donations that have enabled both ministries and facility improvement. Special legacy giving is also the financial base that made our endowment fund possible.*



**Scheduled office hours are Monday—Wednesday from 9 am – Noon**  
**The staff is also on site most Tuesday & Wednesdays until 4 pm.**  
**Other staff hours are flexible. Please leave a message at 361-594-2345 or email [shinerudml@att.net](mailto:shinerudml@att.net) for assistance.**

At times the exterior office entrance may be locked, but the entrance from the parking lot into the Gathering Place usually remains open for building access. Our email is checked remotely ([shinerudml@att.net](mailto:shinerudml@att.net)) when the staff is not in the office. Pastor Chris can be contacted directly at his church cell number (830-203-2906).

## Opportunities



Minneapolis is the site for the July 2022 ELCA Youth Gathering. Lutheran youth from all over the country come together to worship, sing, pray, serve, and grow in faith and friendship. We have registered two youth and two sponsors—Emma Davis, Jaydn Shimek, Pastor Chris and Mallory Volkmann — who will travel to Minneapolis by charter bus with other participants from the SWT Synod. Efforts to fund this trip included a bake sale in November that raised \$ 1,122 through generous donations of both money and baked items. Both prayers and financial support are truly appreciated!



The following report is on the 34th Southwestern Texas Synod Women of the ELCA Virtual Convention that was held on September 24 & 25, 2021. The theme was Thank God for the Harvest (sowing and reaping). “I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for Harvest.” John 4:35

About 50+ women attended the convention from their homes or congregational homes. The convention opened on Friday night with Worship and Holy Communion led by Rev. Rosemarie Doucette, Ganado. After worship, a virtual meet and greet with activities was held.

The convention started on Saturday morning with Gathering Music led by Cynthia Lopez from San Pablo de San Antonio. Bishop Sue Briner shared news from the Synod and thanked the Women of the ELCA for continuing to look for ways to change as we face unanticipated challenges. She reminded us that adaptive leaders keep focused on our mission, individual and communal faith practices and discern what to hold on to and what to let go of.

Representatives from Lutheran Men in Mission asked that all those in attendance share with their congregations that the Lutheran Men in Mission organization is there to provide support. More information may be found at [www.lutheranmeninmission.org](http://www.lutheranmeninmission.org).

Lyn Bangs, a Yoga Instructor, led a morning and afternoon break of chair yoga. We learned that we can do a lot of stretching while sitting.

Anne Helmke, Faith Liaison with the City of San Antonio, was the morning Guest Speaker. Anne shared with us the difference we can make when we all work together. She shared that the Peace paradigm she uses which is: P=Peace; E=Education; A=Action; C=Connection, communication, and collaboration; E=Enthusiasm. She also brought in the Beatitudes (words of Jesus). Blessed are...Ripe and ready are...

Lisa Brown, Director of Volunteer Services from New Life Children’s Center at Canyon Lake, was the afternoon guest speaker. Lisa shared information about the girls served at New Life, the items given to each girl when they arrive, and the available volunteer opportunities.

The convention offerings included: Physical offering to CAM (Christian Assistance Ministry in San Antonio); Monetary offering: 25% to SWT Synod Women of the ELCA; 50% to Women of the ELCA Church-wide; 25% to Katie’s Fund; and Facebook Auction: 50% to Cosa Rican Lutheran Church and 50% to CAM.

Racial Justice Network has been pursuing a study on “What Racism has to do with me?”, meeting monthly. If you would like more information about the convention, please contact Holly Heinsohn.



If you or someone you know would like to receive the weekly email update “Weekly Connections” please call the office at 361-594-2345 or email the office at [shinerudml@att.net](mailto:shinerudml@att.net). We do send out a few print copies to those who do not have email. Stay connected and let us know how to reach you!

## Looking Ahead

### December

In December we will walk through the four weeks of Advent, marked by the lighting of the Advent wreath. We will set aside quiet and peaceful moments in the 7:15 pm Advent Services on Wednesdays Dec. 1, 8, 15, & 22. J.O.Y. —Just Older Youth—will gather for a holiday meal on Friday December 10. Sunday December 19 brings the GIFT Christmas Program during worship and the opportunity for a hayride, caroling, and refreshments that evening at 6 pm. Fellowship groups meet for women on Tuesday Dec. 7 and men on Tuesday Dec. 14. GIFT takes a break and will not meet Dec. 22 or 29. Christmas Eve on Friday December 24 has two candlelight worship services—at 5:00 pm with a Country Gospel flavor and at 10 pm with Vicar Daniel playing the organ. On Sunday December 26, we will continue to celebrate with a special service of of the word (no communion) that uses Lessons & Carols to reflect the joy of Christmas.

### January

*The new year will begin with the installation of all the 2022 church council members during worship on January 2nd. On Tuesday January 4th, our weekly activities will resume after Christmas break. Plans are being made for a possible leadership retreat, possibly on Saturday January 22, where Church Council, Mission Group Members, and other interested leaders meet to gather ideas and a vision for our congregation's vitality and sustainability. The 2021 Annual Report will be available for review prior to our January 30 Semi-Annual Congregational Meeting. Following worship, the meeting will blend into the Fifth Sunday Covered Dish Dinner, celebrating the past year and looking forward to the new opportunities of 2022.*

### February

February will bring the last weeks of the Epiphany season. JOY (Just Older Youth) will gather again on Friday February 11 at 11:30 am for a meal and fellowship. Other weekly programming will continue. During the last weeks of the Epiphany's season of light, youth will hopefully be available for a special worship service. Transfiguration Sunday finishes February in a blaze of light before we turn to Ash Wednesday and the beginning of Lent on March 2.



- December 1—Advent Worship services begin on Wednesday @ 7:15 PM
- December 10—J.O.Y. meets for a Friday Christmas meal @ 11:30 AM
- December 19—The GIFT Christmas Program is part of Sunday Worship
- December 24—Christmas Eve Candlelight Services @ 5 & 10 PM
- December 26—Sunday Worship Lessons & Carols revisits the amazing story of Christmas
- January 2—All Church Council members are installed during Sunday Worship
- January 22—Leadership Retreat (tentatively)
- January 30—Semi-Annual Congregational Meeting follows worship
- January 30—5th Sunday Covered Dish Dinner in conjunction with Congregational Meeting
- February 11—J.O.Y. gathers for a Friday meal at 11:30 am.
- February 20—Mission Group meetings follow Sunday Worship

*Please check Weekly Connections for other events as they are added to the calendar!*

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SHINER LUTHERAN CHURCH **QUARTERLY CONNECTIONS** WINTER 2021-2  
*Publication schedule is now late May, August, November and February.*



## WORSHIP

**SUNDAYS @ 10:15 am**

In person or online  
@ Shiner Lutheran Facebook Page



**SUNDAY  
December 19  
@ 10:15 am**



**Wednesdays @ 7:15 PM**  
December 1, 8, 15 & 22  
A time of reflection & peace  
using Holden Evening Prayer



**CHRISTMAS EVE  
CANDLELIGHT SERVICES**  
@ 5:00 PM  
with a Country Gospel flavor  
@ 10:00PM  
with Vicar Daniel as organist

**Visit Our Website: [www.shinerlutheran.org](http://www.shinerlutheran.org)**

**News/Events/Calendar** tab shows the weekly calendar, links to the monthly view of the calendar, archived Weekly and Quarterly Connections, and a link to the church facebook page.

**Connect/Give** tab shows our church contact information, the link to our electronic giving platform, and information on indirect ways that giving is possible.

