



SHINER  
LUTHERAN

# 2024 Spring QUARTERLY CONNECTIONS

March 2024

*From the  
Vicar*



"Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God – what is good and acceptable and perfect." – Romans 12:2

Brothers and sisters in Christ, grace to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus the Christ. Amen.

In one of my classes this semester, we begin every class by reading Romans 12:1-13. Granted, it can get tiresome reading the same passage every other day. It is a good practice, however, because it allows us to dive deeply into the Word of God and experience the reality that every time we come to hear the Word of God, it meets us in a different place and will strike us differently.

Last class, as I heard the words of St. Paul read over ZOOM, verse two stuck out to me precisely, "so that you may discern what is the will of God – what is good and acceptable and perfect."

Every day, you and I discern what God wills for us in our lives and where we are called to go. Over the last six months, in particular, I have felt the weight of this discernment as I pray and listen to where God is calling me to serve in the church. I covet your prayers as I continue to move through the first call process and begin conversations with my synod staff as we collectively discern where God is calling me to serve in the church.

As you hear the words of St. Paul, I implore you to listen deeply to where God is calling you and how God is calling you to act so that you may be transformed by the power of the Holy Spirit.

May the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, guard your hearts and minds this day and always in Christ Jesus. Amen.

Yours in Christ,

*Vicar Daniel J. Volkmann*

Vicar Daniel Volkmann



Wartburg Seminary

## Ministry Areas

**WORSHIPPING** With the new church year beginning in late November, the area of worship was non stop busy. For three Wednesdays we held Advent services using the meditative Holden Evening Prayer. The Fourth Sunday of Advent was also Christmas Eve. We finished the blue of Advent celebrating Mary the Mother of Jesus at our 10:15 AM service, then transitioned into the white of Christmas Eve with one 6:30 PM Candlelight Service. In January we worshiped with a Polka Service, then moved into February with a special service of healing. After Transfiguration Sunday, Lent began. Ash Wednesday began with Pastor Chris and Vicar Daniel took ashes to SNRC residents, where they joined Father Joseph of the Catholic Church in distributing ashes. Two services for Ash Wednesday included Holy Communion. Wednesday Lenten Services began February 21 with the theme "Guided to the Cross," a thirty minute service with communion that begins at noon.



**Learning** Our Wednesday evening GIFT program, Growing in Faith Together, continues to thrive and grow. Some weeks over 90 youth and adults come for a meal and participate in classes. Other adults prepare, serve, and clean up after the meal. It is a joy and a challenge, since classrooms are overflowing as new children show up and are fed and welcomed. The GIFT Christmas program "One Night In Bethlehem" was adapted so that all those interested could join in telling the story for worship on Sunday December 17. New this year was a GIFT Christmas party with a meal, games, and a large group story. Meanwhile our three adults classes also thrived, with Vicar Daniel teaching Sunday mornings and Wednesday nights, and Pastor Chris teaching each Wednesday morning.



**CARING** The Caring Ministries work at helping others. In December the Giving Tree Project gathered 75 gift that went to large needy families identified by Shiner ISD. Christmas cards were addressed and sent to the elderly and homebound. Ongoing behind-the-scenes ministries such as soup for the ill, grief support, and Home Touch publications all are used as needed. Hands & Hearts Prayer Shawl Ministry continues to craft comforting shawls for those in need. The hard working hospitality team represented our congregation at Christmas in the Park and hosted receptions for the GIFT Christmas program, the Family Christmas Hayride, and a baptism. As a part of Caring Ministry, receptions following funerals were hosted with volunteers providing desserts or entire meals. Anyone who donated time or food in these events is actually contributing as part of our Caring Ministries.



**CONNECTING** Connecting includes supporting fellowship and outreach events. Our congregation participated in Christmas in the Park, reaching out to the Shiner Community. Ongoing groups such as canasta, dominoes, men's and women's fellowships, all are open to the Shiner community. The Family Christmas Hayride encouraged family participation. Another targeted group is JOY, Just Older Youth, that reaches into the retired community. JOY met in both December and February, enjoying fellowship and fine home cooked meals. A quarterly Women's Bible Study gathered in December and included a salad luncheon following their study. A Hearty Party & Dance was held for junior & senior high students and friends on Friday February 9 from 7-9 PM. Youth enjoyed treats and eats while enjoying the music, playing games, and appreciating the special decorations.



## Ministry Areas



**SUPPORTING** As our congregation activity grows, the many teams and individuals in the Supporting Mission Group work to make sure our facility and finances support the other ministry areas. Although we have a few part-time staff members, many others volunteer their time and talent to keep things running smoothly. Much of this is a constant setting up, taking down, and resetting rooms for different activities. Others trouble shoot problems, meet with repair people, or participate in special clean up days. Finally our Finance Team, Contributions Counters, office volunteers, Endowment and Audit Committees keep us functioning smoothly.





Certain teams and individuals have expended enormous energy over the winter quarter. We thank those we name below and the many others that are not named at this time. Thanks to:

- Our Hospitality Team who hosted many receptions this past quarter and also represented our congregation at the Christmas in the Park.
- The Funeral Reception crew headed by Norma Goetz, enlisting many volunteers and coordinating food donations in the time of a family's bereavement.
- JOY coordinators Carol Harris and Sandy Machacek who plan and prepare excellent meals for the group.
- The Giving Tree coordinators Carol Harris and Mary Ann Fojt who organized this well supported effort.
- The Altar Guild who have served behind the scenes, caring for our chancel area and taking steps to maintain and improve the linens, acolyte robes, and altar furnishings. This has been made possible through generous donors who value the sanctuary setting for worship. .
- The many volunteers who make our Wednesday night GIFT program possible. We especially thank Pastor Chris and Gemayel for their many hours of planning and preparing that make this outreach successful.

## Our Congregation

During the past months, the following joys and sorrows took place:



*The following members entered the Church Triumphant in the last three months:*

- **Thomas Lee Honigschmidt**, who passed away January 22, 2024.
- **Joy Lynn Machacek** who passed away February 18, 2024.
- **Oren Carl "Buddy" Remmers** who passed away February 20, 2024.

*Newly baptized members during the last three months:*

- **Mary Louise Smith**, infant daughter of Jordan & Samantha Smith, was baptized on February 18, 2024.



*Jason Nerada & Raylee Regmund Chesser were united in marriage on December 9, 2023.*

*Dillon Wayne Jansky & Amber Olivia Pustka were united in marriage on February 24, 2024.*

## Administration

### 2024 CHURCH COUNCIL

- Brian Baker
- Shannon Blaschke
- Sandra Blum
- James Davis
- Holly Heinsohn Kropp
- Michele Pokluda

- Mike Vaughan
- Duncan Wallace
- Eric Winkenwerder
- Randy Zaruba
- Pastor Chris Heinold
- Vicar Daniel Volkmann

**President: James Davis**  
**Vice-President: Michele Pokluda**  
**Secretary: Brian Baker**  
**Treasurer: Shannon Blaschke**



During the past three months, Church Council has acted to consider and complete various actions.

**December meeting:** Elected officers; Set Installation of Council for January 7, 2024; Determined that beginning in February, Quarterly Connections will be primarily sent electronically. Individuals without computer access may request a print copy. Some print copies will also be available for pick up at church.

**January meeting:** Appointed Kim Zaruba, Rae Nell Janik, and Phyllis Pietsch to the Audit Committee to audit the church books as well as Cub Scout Pack 231; Determined which council members would serve on Mission Groups: Worshiping (Brian Baker & Mike Vaughan); Learning (Michele Pokluda & Holly Heinsohn); Caring (James Davis & Duncan Wallace); Connecting (Sanday Blum & Randy Zaruba) and Support (Shannon Blaschke & Eric Winkenwerder).

**February Meeting:** The 2024 Scholarship Committee will need to be appointed at the March council meeting; May 15<sup>th</sup> @ 6:00 PM will be the next Mission Group meeting; As of June 2024, we will no longer be insured by Church Mutual. Randy Zaruba will research possible alternatives; Security cameras were discussed as being useful for our facility. The discussion & research of this proposal has been tabled to the Property Committee.



Our Mission Groups of Worshiping, Learning, Caring, Connecting and Supporting meet at least twice a year. Since the Leadership Retreat was scheduled in January and Lent came early this year, the first 2024 Mission Group meeting is scheduled for Wednesday May 15, 2024. This meeting gives an opportunity for all areas of ministry to look beyond their own specific goals and see the larger view of our place in the Shiner community and beyond.



On Saturday January 13 a **Leadership Retreat** was held at the El Shaddai Retreat Center near Yorktown. Anyone interested in the life and health of our congregation was invited to participate. Over 20 leaders traveled to El Shaddai, worshiped together, shared a meal, and spent three sessions discussing our congregation and its vitality and sustainability. Participants better understood our congregation's path.



On January 30, 2024 one of our two Semi-Annual Congregational Meetings was held following the Sunday worship service. The main item of business was to review and accept the 2023 Annual Report, copies of which had been made available prior to the meeting.. The motion was made, seconded, and passed to approve the 2023 Annual Report. Likewise, the minutes from the November Congregational Meeting were approved. The next scheduled congregational meeting will be in November of 2024.



The office is usually staffed on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday mornings. 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) when the staff is not in the office. Pastor Chris can be contacted directly at his church cell number (830-203-2906).

## Giving



The Planned Giving Campaign ran from September 17 through October 30, 2023. This effort was made to insure funds were available for the next three years of mortgage payments along with 18 months of payments to be held in reserve. Our goal was \$475,000 in donations and planned giving. Our goal was met and the Finance Team is now looking at guidelines to start paying down on the loan principal. Individuals are asked to honor their commitments as we continue with our planned giving throughout the life of the building loan. Any and all contributions are appreciated!

### Four ways to give your offerings and other gifts to your church:



#### Offerings

Traditional giving is through offerings. On our church envelopes, giving can be designated to General Fund (operating expenses), Building Fund (mortgage payments), Endowment Fund (long term investments), Improvement Fund (facility projects and repairs), or other specific needs that you specify. New pew envelopes are in the pew pockets if you forget yours. Remember many households give monthly rather than weekly, and others give electronically, so good attendance does not always mean substantial giving for the week.



Mailing in your offering to P.O. Box 26, Shiner TX 77984 is always an option. Some faithful givers may prefer to give their envelopes in this way. Others give by mail because their connection to our congregation is through our livestreamed services, and they do not live in Shiner.



#### Online Giving

Online giving is an option for those with computer access. Gifts can be by bank transfer, credit or debit card. If giving by credit card, there is a choice to give a few dollars more to cover card fees. Online giving can designate funds (like General or Building) and can be given once, by your schedule, weekly, monthly, or yearly. To give online go to [www.shinerlutheran.org](http://www.shinerlutheran.org), our website, and click on Connect/Give to get a direct link to our VANCO electronic giving platform.



#### MOBILE GIVING

Texting is also a way to give electronically. Text to 1-844-697-3838, specify an amount and give through a credit or debit card. Choices are similar to online giving.— and it can even be done during worship if you so choose. All gifts count!



We were blessed in December by special end of year giving that helped to bring us to a good financial position at the conclusion of 2023. Planned Giving Commitments were met in the first months after the Planned Giving Campaign. Memorials were dedicated to both the Building Fund and to the Memorial Fund. We have been blessed by generosity.



#### Noisy Offering

Noisy Offerings are gathered on the last Sunday of the month. The Caring Mission Group determines the recipients of the offering. The December offering of \$176.25 was dedicated to our Camper Fund. January's offering of \$103.25 was donated to the Shiner Community Food Pantry. February's Noisy Offering of \$141.00 was given to Lutheran Disaster Response for use where it is most needed.

## Looking Ahead



### Help us get ready for Holy Week & Easter:

- Sign up to donate and dedicate an Easter Lily
- Reserve your place for the Seder Service that includes a meal



- Donate individually wrapped small candies to be used to stuff Easter eggs for the Easter morning Egg Hunt (needed by March 20th so eggs can be stuffed)

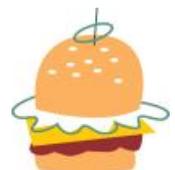
- Sign up to help provide food for our Easter breakfast buffet and enjoy the fellowship between the worship services



- Bring flowers to help decorate the Easter cross after the 7:00 AM service on Easter morning



Campers will host a Hamburger Fundraiser on Saturday April 13 at the annual Car Show at Green Dickson Park. Come and enjoy a noon meal at the park or get a burger to go and help the camper fund!



Youth are important to Shiner Lutheran! Upcoming events:

- Family Movie Night Friday April 5 @ 5:00 PM
- Youth will be leading worship on Sunday April 28.
- Nineteen youth will be attending camp, most on the week of June 30-July 5.
- Vacation Bible School will take a deep dive with a SCUBA theme July 8-12.
- In late July, two of our high school students will travel with adults to the 2024 ELCA Youth Gathering in New Orleans.

## Looking Ahead – Dates for your Calendar



- Wednesdays March 6, 13, 20—**Lenten Worship @ noon**
- Sunday March 3—**First Communion** with reception following
- Sunday March 10—**Country Gospel Service**
- Sunday March 24—**Palm Sunday Service** with Processional & Scarf Dance
- Thursday March 28—**Maundy Thursday Seder Service @ 6:00 PM**
- Friday March 29—**Good Friday Service @ 2:00 PM**
- Sunday March 31—**Easter Services @ 7:00 AM & 10:15 AM**
- Sunday March 31—**Easter Breakfast @ 8:15 AM**  
**Easter Egg Hunt @ 9:30 AM**



- Friday April 5—**Family Movie Night @ 5:00 PM**
- Sunday April 7—**Confirmation** with reception following
- Thursday April 4—**Women’s Bible Study @ 11:00 AM**
- Saturday April 13—**Camper Hamburger Fundraiser** at the SVFD Car Show
- Sunday April 28—**Youth Led Worship Service**



- Wednesday May 1—**GIFT End of Year Party @ 5:00 PM**
- Friday May 10—**JOY @ 11:30 AM**
- Sunday May 12—**Mother’s Day Polka Service**
- Wednesday May 15—**Mission Groups meet @ 6:00 PM**
- Sunday May 19—**Day of Pentecost; High School Grads honored** with reception



- June 30-July 5 our group of campers heads to Camp Chrysalis.
- July 8-12 are the dates set aside for VBS this summer.
- July 16-20 Two youth will travel to the ELCA Youth Gathering in New Orleans



**Please contact the church office if:**

- \*Your address or phone number (including cell phone) has changed, or you have dropped your land line.
- \*You do not see your birthday, baptism, or wedding anniversary in our lists, meaning the information is not in our data base.
- \*A household member has moved away.
- \*You or a household member have changed to a different church affiliation.

*Please see **Weekly Connections** for times & other events as they are added to the calendar. Check the up-to-date electronic church calendar by clicking on the link in your Weekly Connections or visiting the church website.*

***Quarterly Connections** is transitioning to a primarily digital publication, with print copies available at church if needed. Those home bound without computer access can request to be mailed a copy. Please be sure the church has your correct email address on file.*

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**SHINER LUTHERAN CHURCH QUARTERLY CONNECTIONS SPRING 2024**  
*Publication schedule is now at the end of February, May, August, and November.*



**WORSHIP**

**EVERY SUNDAY @ 10:15 am**  
In person or online @ Shiner Lutheran Facebook



**SUNDAY March 23—Palm/Passion**  
Processional begins worship

**THURSDAY March 28—Seder Service at 6:00 PM** (must reserve a place to attend)

**FRIDAY March 29—Good Friday Service at 2:00 PM**



**MARCH 31  
EASTER SUNDAY SERVICES**  
with Holy Communion  
In the sanctuary

**7:00 AM & 10:15 AM**



**8:15 AM Easter Breakfast**  
(served until food is gone)  
& Flowering of the Cross  
**9:15 AM Sing at SNRC**  
**9:30 AM Egg Hunt**



**Visit Our Website: [www.shinerlutheran.org](http://www.shinerlutheran.org)**  
**News/Events/Calendar/Connect/Give— Information and Links**