



THE SHEPHERD'S STAFF

The Parish Paper of Shepherd of the Glades Lutheran Church
6020 Rattlesnake Hammock Road (Corner of Santa Barbara)
Naples Florida 34113

APRIL, 2026
Volume 29- Issue 4
Editors: Deanna Colbert & Lynn
Dickerman

Easter
Worship:
7:00, 8:30, &
10:30 a.m.

**Happy
Easter**

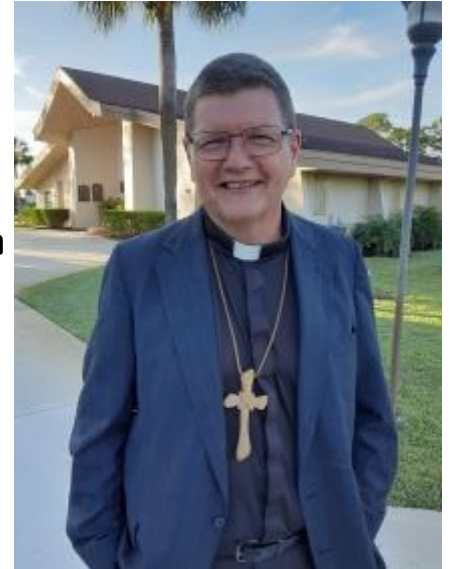
Celebrate the
resurrection of
our Lord!



**SHEPHERD OF THE GLADES
LUTHERAN CHURCH**

PASTOR'S PAGES . . .

CHRIST IS RISEN! CHRIST IS RISEN INDEED, ALLELUIA! It feels so good to be able to sing and say, “Alleluia” again in worship. God be praised! Lent is sometimes a long journey when the focus is on repentance rather than praising God for all the blessings in our life. The joy of Resurrection Sunday is amazing. The celebration of Christ’s resurrection brings us joy and peace as we recognize that there is nothing more powerful in life than God’s love for us. The uplifting music and Spirit of Easter Sunday is amazing. Thank you to the musicians and everyone who made Lent, Holy Week, and Easter so special. But it’s not just the music that is uplifting on Easter. It is the message of salvation. We know that because of Christ’s death and resurrection, even death has no power over us. Elvis Presley sang the song, “Why can’t every day be like Christmas?” but I would enjoy a song called “Why can’t every day be like Easter?” What would our lives look like if every day was like Easter? What would our lives look like if we lived each day believing that the power of love is greater than the love of power? What would it look like if we lived each day trusting and loving Jesus more than anything on this earth?



Have you ever noticed that there are more people in church at Easter and at Christmas? Some people are critical of those who come to church only on Christmas and Easter. But there is a reason people are drawn to these specific services. Christmas and Easter services are joyful and uplifting and the message of God’s love for us is very clear. At Christmas we are reminded that God loves humanity so much that God became human. Think about that for just a moment. There are many times in our lives we wonder why God allows things to happen in this world. But God loves us so much that God took on human form and became one of God’s own creations! That seems unbelievable. When we come to worship on Christmas, there is hope in the form of new life. There is peace in knowing that God is not a God far off, but one who has come near to us in Jesus Christ. There is joy in the knowledge of the promise kept that Christ would come to us. And there is peace in knowing that we are loved. The message of hope, peace, joy and love come full circle at Easter. We celebrate new life in Christ’s resurrection. We do not need to worry or be afraid of anything because Jesus has shown us the way, the truth and the life. Jesus has shown his love for humanity by sacrificing his life so that we may have eternal life. Because Jesus lives and was raised from death to eternal life, we too have the promise of new and eternal life! Easter and Christmas are amazing and life giving. So it should not be a surprise that more people come to hear the Good News of Jesus on Christmas and Easter. The church is filled with the message of God’s love for all people. The church is filled with a Spirit of Joy. And people are sent into the world to share that joy and peace and love with others.

PASTOR'S PAGES (CONTINUED) . . .

So dear church, why can't every day be like Easter? Where is that resurrection joy we experience on Easter? What prevents us from making Christ known not just at Easter and Christmas, but every day? There is a lot of time between now and Christmas and there are people who don't realize that the joy of Jesus isn't just found at Christmas and Easter! We celebrate the resurrection of Christ each and every Sunday! We celebrate God's love and forgiveness every Sunday - the day of Christ's resurrection. Imagine the joy you can share with others by inviting them to join you and come to church on Sunday. Imagine the joy you can experience and share when you live like Jesus lived and love like Jesus loved. People were drawn to Jesus because of his passion and love for others. Elvis may not be able to write or sing the song, "Why can't every day be like Easter?" but it sure would be fun if someone did! Have a blessed Easter celebration. Christ is alive! Alleluia. May we celebrate the life of hope, peace, joy and love Christ offers us.

+Pastor Jeff

CARING CONNECTIONS . . .

PRAYER LIST

Please keep the following people in your thoughts and prayers:

Family of Beverly Adams	Joanne Hogan	Cheryl Oliver
Chris Carlson	Michelle Hubb	Jim Pisarski
Bruce Corson	Nadine Kelly	Matthew Popp
Janet Eichler	Anita & Nick Lehr	Family of Vernon Rasmussen
Family of Ellie	Family of Elizabeth Lite	Susan Schacht
Family of Barbara Gega	Vickie Livingston	Pastor Bill & Phyllis Stewart
Colleen Glackin	Patricia Lussy	Prudy Waters
Rodney Heindel	Family of Patty Musielak	Dean Welch
Barbie Harris	Anna-Marie Myers	Family of Nikki Wykstra
	Larry Newman	

Please let us know when someone should be added or removed from the Prayer list.

FINANCIALLY, HOW ARE WE DOING? . . .

PERIOD: Three Months Ended March, 2026

	Actual	Budget	Difference: Favorable (Unfavorable)
Operating Income	\$100,840	\$153,545	(\$52,705)
Operating Expense	\$98,600	\$106,586	\$7,986
Net Income (Deficit)	\$2,240	\$46,959	(\$44,719)

Another month of good news is that we are still in the black for the first three months of the year. However, we are still \$44,719 behind in our budget. Thank you to all our generous and faithful supporters of the mission and ministry of Shepherd of the Glades Lutheran Church!

COUNCIL CORNER . . .

SHEPHERD OF THE GLADES LUTHERAN CHURCH FEBRUARY 10, 2026, COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

February 10, 2026, COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

Members in attendance: Pastor Ungs, Penny Morken, President, Bill Nicklay, Vice-President, Pam Bhathena, Secretary, Scott Krenz, Treasurer, Mary Winsor, Director for Discipleship, Becky McDanel, Council Member, Gunar Strungs, Council Member, Tom Dunlop Council Member, Sue Kautz, Council Member, Barb Tommingo, Council Member, and Sandy Haberman, Council Member.

Absent: Brad Caulder, Council Member. Call to order by President Penny Morken. Devotions: Penny Morken

A motion to approve the revised minutes of January 13, 2026 was made, seconded and approved.

Pastor's Report:

Thank you for time off to be present for our Granddaughter's 3rd birthday. Time away for spiritual renewal and recentering is very important.

Meetings: *Endowment Committee *Weekly Friday Staff meetings *Weekly Tuesday text study *Caloosa Conference pastor's meeting * Fellowship meeting to help organize coordination of Hanson Hall for welcome back meal and Sundae Sunday *Regular communication and coordination of Hanson Hall with Pastor Orlando Camerez of Iglesia Conexion and Pastor DJ of Eglise Baptist Church. *Met with new NA group coordinator that is using Hanson Hall Saturday evenings at 9 PM. *Attended required educational ZOOM meetings regarding Dinner Church history and ideas for starting this new ministry.

Bible studies: Due to large attendance and space availability in the church, the Wednesday bible study now meets weekly at 10:30 AM. There were as many as 16 people attending in person. At this time, no one is joining us online. Marcia Schacht continues to lead the women's bible study the fourth Friday of every month at 10 AM and it is very well attended.

Memorial service for Barbara Gega will be held Monday February 16th at 1 PM. Please attend if you are able to show support to her family.

Movie Matinee will be this Sunday beginning at 12:30 PM. All are welcome to view a family friendly romantic comedy. Invite a neighbor!

Pastoral Calls - January Congregation home visits/member visits (6) Home bound communions (3) Hospital/clinic/rehab visits (6) Hospice visits (0) Pastoral call on Friends of SOTG (1) Potential new member visits (2).

Director for Discipleship's Report:

- 1 house visit - Continue to be a part of weekly Bible studies and Sew Sews meetings. We now have 7 regular people coming each week to Sew Sews - Have completed three of the four required Zoom trainings for our new Dinner Church Ministry.

- Scheduled another movie matinee with Pastor Jeff now that it's season again. It will be this upcoming Sunday. Hopefully, there will be a good turnout - Led 2 Bible studies while Pastor Jeff was gone - Led service alongside Pastor Doug while Pastor Jeff was on vacation -Had a meeting with a representative from Lighthouse of Collier, a non-profit for the blind and visually impaired here in Naples. She contacted me to meet and give me some informational materials to pass along to our congregation members. She also invited me to set up a tour if that is something our congregation members might be interested in.

Candidacy/Seminary:

I received acceptance and offer of admission letters from both seminaries (Wartburg Theological Seminary & Lutheran School of Theology Chicago) that I applied to. I officially accepted at Wartburg. I also had my Candidacy entrance interview with the Candidacy Committee of our Florida-Bahamas Synod in Tampa, where they officially granted me into candidacy with/through them.

Committee Reports:

EDUCATION COMMITTEE: Sunday School is still being offered for all children during the Sunday worship service with Charlotte Wahlig teaching the class. Bible Study is held every Wednesday morning, led by Pastor Jeff. Marcia Schacht continues with her Women's Bible Study. It is held the 4th Friday of every month. Discussions are underway for the Easter Egg Hunt, more information as time gets closer. Submitted by Becky McDanel

COUNCIL CORNER (CONTINUED) . . .

FELLOWSHIP REPORT: Welcome back brunch was attended by approximately 100 people. We collected \$204 in free-will offering towards the backpack project. Strawberry sundae Sunday was a success - served close to one hundred. Working on Ash Wednesday soup. Other Lenten soup Wednesday needs to be discussed further. Submitted by Sue Kautz

LOCAL MISSIONS/SOCIAL CONCERNS REPORT: Donations to St. Matthews House during January 2026 were outstanding, thanks to the generous and thoughtful donations supplied by our congregation. Council members discussed creating a new supply of Blessing Bags. The Council made a decision to use the donations from the Lenten offerings as a 50/50 project toward our Backpack and Blessing Bags. Mary Winsor will also make an announcement during church services regarding the need for donations to assist in this project. Submitted by Pam Bhatena

ENDOWMENT COMMITTEE REPORT:

This committee met February 8, 2026; items discussed, of Council interest:

The Endowment Fund account with the ELCA Ministry Growth Fund ended the 2025 calendar year with an increase to the balance; the Ministry Growth Fund's one year return was 13.5% consistent with its target benchmark (13.8%) and the NASDAQ ENDOW benchmark (13.3%).

The Committee will begin making a calculation of the Fund's principal or "corpus," adjusted for inflation, each year at the start of the gifting cycle.

The Committee is in the process of completing formal investment and spending policies, in regard to spending, we will begin using a model based on spending a relatively fixed amount of the account each year, probably in the 4-5% range. This should allow us more predictable and consistent gifting, especially in regard to assisting recipients involved in projects of several year duration.

The current Endowment Committee Bylaws indicate that the Memorial Fund falls under the jurisdiction of the Endowment Committee. Historically the Committee has not had any actual involvement in the management or disbursement of funds from the Memorial Fund. The Committee would like to transfer those duties to the Executive Committee, while we begin the process of formally amending the Church Constitution to reflect that change. Constitutional changes require an approximately two year time frame as written.

The Committee intends to amend its Bylaws in regard to a 12/13/2022 revision to Article III, Section A. We believe the revision as written, which would allow the immediate expenditure of newly received donations, has the potential to threaten the permanent duration of the fund. The revision will be brought to Council later in the year, making it available for vote with the Congregation Meeting in December 2026. Committee elected Gunar Strungs, Chairman.

PROPERTY REPORT:

Committee discussed the options for new flooring in Hanson Hall. The Air-conditioning people have been suggesting recommendations for repairs which will be further discussed for approval. A decision has been made to purchase two more cameras for the sanctuary to include additional angles. Also, two microphones to pick up voices from congregation when speaking, along with hearing aids with Bluetooth for members in need. We haven't put the mulch down yet because the labor needed has doubled. The committee is working on getting volunteers. Submitted by Bill Nicklay

EVANGELISM REPORT:

The goal of the Sew-Sew group for 2025-2026 is to complete 50-60 quilts. So far, we have 30 quilts completed thanks to additional committee members and material donations from our members. The Backpack Program will continue this year, as this project has become a tradition at SOTG. Submitted by Barb Tommingo

TREASURER'S REPORT:

In January offerings and other income was approximately equal to expenses. January attendance and offerings were down slightly compared to January prior year. The Church reserve investment accounts continue to benefit from the strong stock market. We continue to make progress in setting up a Vanguard account for the Church. The account was established and we are in the process of transferring investments from Truist. Once done, Church investments will be more diversified and have a lower risk profile. Submitted by Scott Krenz

COUNCIL CORNER (CONTINUED) . . .

A motion to approve the Pastor's Report, Treasurer's Report, and all Committee Reports were made for approval, seconded and passed.

New Business:

Council discussed organizing an Usher Committee. Becky McDanel and Penny Morken volunteered to create a list of interested committee members and will include training for new ushers .

The Annual Congregational Meeting will be held on February 22, 2026 after Church Service. Pam Bhatena, our Council Secretary, will not be available that day so Sandy Haberman will be taking her place.

Next meeting: March 10, 2026 at 6:00 p.m. Closing Devotions: Pastor Ungs
Meeting Adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted: Pam Bhatena, Council Secretary

A NEW COMMUNITY OUTREACH . . .



**EAT, PRAY, LOVE
DINNER**

✦ AN EVENING TO PAUSE,
CONNECT, AND SHARE. ✦

You're invited to join a community dinner designed to bring people together in a welcoming and respectful environment.

LAST SATURDAY OF EACH MONTH
5 TO 6:30 P.M.

SHEPHERD OF THE GLADES LUTHERAN CHURCH
HANSON HALL
6020 RATTLESNAKE HAMMOCK RD

ALL ARE WELCOME!

Please stop by the church office to pick up some of these flyers to place in your communities or other locations to advertise this new way of meeting the spiritual needs of those in our community. The first "Dinner Church" will be in Hanson Hall on Saturday, April 25th, at 5:00 p.m.

NEWS IN THE SHEEPFOLD . . .



If we have missed your birthday or anniversary, please call the office so we can update our information and not miss you next time! YOU are special to us!

HAPPY APRIL BIRTHDAYS TO . . .

- April 1 Vicki Dunlop
- April 2 La Morris Cook
- April 5 Elizabeth Cianflone
- April 7 Jacqueline Masterson
- April 7 Shari Presentin
- April 12 Marilyn Barikmo
- April 14 Beverly Smith
- April 14 Lester Larrabee
- April 15 Gary Dieterichs
- April 16 Linda Salisbury
- April 17 Don Pryor
- April 17 Be Oppermann
- April 30 Lawrence Buettner
- April 30 Marjorie Oberst



APRIL ANNIVERSARIES . . .

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY TO:

- April 17 Linda & Bob Tidmore
- April 20 Stephanie & Daniel Bernabei
- April 21 Kim & Fred Hasse
- April 29 Karen & Harlo Peterson
- April 30 Diana & Steve Snover



RECEIVED THEIR VICTORY IN THE LORD . . .

Beverly Adams passed from this life to life eternal on Monday, March 16, 2026 in MN. No details are available at this time.

Nikki Wystra passed into the presence of the Lord on Monday, March 16, 2026 in Naples, FL. Her service will take place in Portage, MI during the summer.

PRAYER CHANGES THINGS . . .

Wow! This first wireless communication is wonderful. We can thankfully report the prayer requests have been granted in one way or another. God is always listening and wanting for us to draw closer with our most authentic self. Thank you to all who pray and those who share their concerns. I have found that the praying for others encourages a deeper relationship with the Creator. All are welcome to join in this journey. If interested please contact the office. Thank you to all the prayer warriors.

FUTURE HAPPENINGS AT SOTG . . .

The Fellowship Committee recently met to plan out activities for this season! So save these dates:

April 19, 2026 - 'Til We Meet Again Casserole Brunch after worship
Also to be scheduled is a movie event on May 3rd. So stay tuned.

HAPPENINGS AT SOTG . . .

After worship on Sunday, March 15th, our SOTG family not only enjoyed fellowship and coffee, but also stayed to put together a new supply of "Blessing Bags". "Blessing Bags" are what we call the bags of necessities we can distribute to homeless people when we cross paths with them in our daily lives. We welcome donations of "Blessing Bag" items or the funds to purchase these items, which include shampoo, conditioner, lotion, hand sanitizer, tissues, soap, floss, deodorant, tooth brushes, toothpaste, chapstick, washcloths, socks, band aids, bottled water, peanut butter/cheese crackers, granola bars, cookies, chips/pretzels/snack crackers, and feminine hygiene products.



AA & NA GROUPS . . .

Two Mixed AA Groups meet in Hanson Hall. One holds their meetings at noon on Mondays and the other meets at 7:30 p.m. on Thursdays.

Women's AA Group meets in Hanson Hall at 10:00 a.m. on the 1st and 3rd Fridays of each month.

Narcotics Anonymous (NA) Group meets in Hanson Hall at 9:00 p.m. on Saturdays.

If you or someone you know wishes to attend, please contact the office for more information.

REMEMBER THOSE IN SERVICE TO THEIR COUNTRY . . .

Staff Sergeant Adam Crown

Airman Corey Malinowski

Marine Tom McJilton

Army Sergeant Kendra Stofflet at Ft. Campbell Army Base, KY

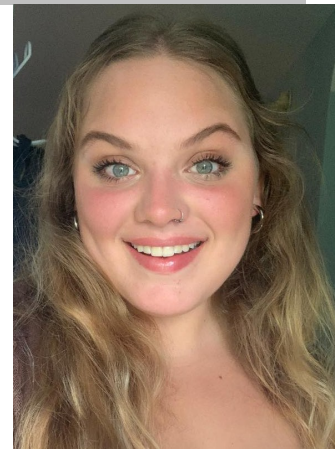
Warrant Officer Robert Stofflet at Ft. Campbell Army Base, KY

Lieutenant Sterling Payne, 205 Ming St. Warrensburg, MO



FROM OUR DIRECTOR FOR DISCIPLESHIP . . .

Hello SOTG! Happy April! This past month, we put together 120 Blessing Bags that are being given out to people in our Naples community who are in need. (See page 8.) This was the largest round of bags that we have done so far! I would like to thank all of you for your generosity regarding this project. Whether you have made a financial or supply donation, helped pack the bags, or are handing them out as the need arises, thank you! I hope that this project is one that will continue to live on in the years to come here at Shepherd of the Glades. Below is a Blessing Bag story from our congregation member Barbara Keller:



Our Congregation serves the Community:

“It was Thursday night late- March 19th. After the theater, Chuck and I stopped at a Wawa to pick up some food. I stayed in the car and Chuck went in, passing a homeless woman. She was sitting at a table outside the store. I noticed that she had a shopping cart with all of her belongings next to her. She had a blanket. So I thought she probably slept outside and it was windy and cold. She asked Chuck to buy her a candy bar. Chuck told her he would get something better. He came back to the car and picked up a Blessing Bag. That bag had a pair of socks. The woman put those on her feet immediately. She wasn’t wearing shoes.

We had just picked up two bags the day before. Mary Winsor told our congregation about blessing bags. Many people purchased supplies and many packed the bags. This is such a wonderful outreach program because Florida has many homeless people. I think about the word, “blessing”. It is a blessing that so many members of our congregation participate in this important project. When I got home, I realized Chuck and I could afford tickets to the theater and some wine before the play began. This woman has very little. She needs help from the community. We are part of a wonderful congregation which believes it is so important to serve the needs in our community.”

Thank you all again!

Until next month,

Mary

April 2026

Happy Easter! And Happy Spring!

Check out the below online items and more at your Thrivent Member Network website.

APRIL 14, 2026 | 12:30 PM- 1:30 PM ET

April Market and Economic Update presented by Thrivent

Markets are moving, economic signals are evolving, and energy is back in focus. Join us for Thrivent's Market & Economic Update—a 60 minute live virtual event featuring insights from Thrivent investment leaders who will share perspectives on current events, inflation, interest rates, and shifting market behaviors. You'll get practical guidance to help you feel more confident navigating today's markets, including: • The state of the U.S. economy, including consumer confidence, inflation, and employment trends • Interest rates and the Fed: where policy expectations stand and why they matter • Special guest John Groton with an outlook on energy, oil & gas.

RSVP: <https://bit.ly/April26MarketUpdate>

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Online Article: 6 common investing mistakes & how to avoid them

Investing has become easier than ever, with many options available at the click of a button. But that doesn't mean investing effectively is a no-brainer.

It's important to learn about potential investment mistakes and the tried-and-true strategies you can use instead to get ahead in your investing journey and reach your financial goals.

We're surrounded by investing advice—from fads on social media to family members and friends swearing by get-rich-quick schemes. With all the noise, you need to know how to filter out the flawed approaches. Here are investing strategies to avoid and smart steps to take instead.

Go to: <https://bit.ly/6InvestingTips>

MONTH AT A GLANCE . . .

APRIL, 2026



SUN	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
			1 9:00-10:00 A.M. BONE BUILDERS 10:30 A.M. PASTOR JEFF'S BIBLE STUDY	2 MAUNDY THURS. 5:30 P.M. WOR- SHIP 7:30-8:30 P.M. AA MIXED GROUP	3 GOOD FRIDAY 9:00-11:00 A.M. WOMEN'S AA GROUP 7:00 P.M. TENEBRAE SERVICE	4 9:00 P.M. N.A. GROUP MEETING
5 EASTER SUNDAY 7:00 A.M. SUNRISE SERVICE 8:30 & 10:30 A.M. EASTER LIVE STREAMING WORSHIP	6 9:00-10:00 A.M. BONE BUILDERS 12 NOON AA MIXED GROUP	7 8:30-11:00 A.M. SEW-SEWS	8 9:00-10:00 A.M. BONE BUILDERS 10:30 A.M. PASTOR JEFF'S BIBLE STUDY	9 7:30-8:30 P.M. AA MIXED GROUP	10	11 9:00 P.M. N.A. GROUP MEETING
12 SECOND SUNDAY OF EASTER 9:30 A.M. LIVE STREAMING WORSHIP	13 9:00-10:00 A.M. BONE BUILDERS 12 NOON AA MIXED GROUP	14 8:30-11:00 A.M. SEW-SEWS 6:00 P.M. CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING	15 9:00-10:00 A.M. BONE BUILDERS 10:30 A.M. PASTOR JEFF'S BIBLE STUDY	16 7:30-8:30 P.M. AA MIXED GROUP	17 9:00-11:00 A.M. WOMEN'S AA GROUP	18 9:00 P.M. N.A. GROUP MEETING
19 THIRD SUNDAY OF EASTER 9:30 A.M. LIVE STREAMING WORSHIP UNTIL WE MEET AGAIN BRUNCH	20 9:00-10:00 A.M. BONE BUILDERS 12 NOON AA MIXED GROUP NEWSLETTER SUBMISSION	21 8:30-11:00 A.M. SEW-SEWS	22 9:00-10:00 A.M. BONE BUILDERS 10:30 A.M. PASTOR JEFF'S BIBLE STUDY 2:00-3:30 P.M. GRIEF SUPPORT	23 7:30-8:30 P.M. AA MIXED GROUP	24 10:00 A.M. WOMEN'S BIBLE STUDY	25 5:00 P.M. DINNER CHURCH 9:00 P.M. N.A. GROUP MEETING
26 FOURTH SUNDAY OF EASTER 9:30 A.M. LIVE STREAMING WORSHIP	27 9:00-10:00 A.M. BONE BUILDERS 12 NOON AA MIXED GROUP	28 8:30-11:00 A.M. SEW-SEWS	29 9:00-10:00 A.M. BONE BUILDERS 10:30 A.M. PASTOR JEFF'S BIBLE STUDY	30 7:30-8:30 P.M. AA MIXED GROUP		

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Naples, FL 34113

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Current Resident or

**This Parish Paper is from:
Shepherd of the Glades Lutheran Church
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Naples, FL 34113
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**Sunday Worship Service: 9:30 a.m.
Office Hours: Monday - Friday: 9:30 a.m.- 5:00 p.m.**

**Pastor Jeff Unga, Pastor [cell phone: 641-529-2479]
Mary Winsor, Director for Discipleship
Megan Cianflone, Director of Music
Penny Morken, Council President
Deanna Colbert, Administrative Assistant to the Pastor
Lynn Dickerman, Administrative Assistant to the Pastor**