

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

MAY 2026

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Dickerman



**SHEPHERD OF THE GLADES
LUTHERAN CHURCH**

PASTOR'S PAGES . . .

Hello dear church! As I write this month's article I wonder how time can go so quickly. It seems like just yesterday we were welcoming our seasonal members back. And last week we had a wonderful "Until we meet again" brunch to say farewell. We have done a lot of amazing and wonderful ministry together this past winter while our seasonal members were here. We learned about our wonderful ELCA bible camps and the ways they share the Gospel with families and individuals. The "hatched, matched, and dispatched" model of the church is no longer working and our camp ministries are reaching many people who have not regularly attended church. We began a new ministry called "Eat, Pray, Love" dinner church to get to know our neighbors and to share in the breaking of the bread and the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We filled and distributed "blessing bags" to those in our community who were in need of assistance. We filled - and often overfilled - the food pantry cart every month to provide food for those in need through St. Matthew's House. We enjoyed the Paul Todd Jr. Christmas concert and an "oldies" concert by John Sherman. We held our annual bake sale and sold a lot of baked goods. Merlyn's baked goods are always the favorite! We went Christmas caroling at Lely Palms and Nikki Wykstra led us around to the residents' homes and knocked on their doors as we sang. We celebrated the work of the Sew-Sew quilting group and blessed quilts to be given to the shelters and anyone in the community in need of a quilt. We purchased and filled backpacks for school children and distributed them through Grace Place ministry. We also volunteered at Grace place and gave out backpacks and books to local residents. We celebrated baptisms, memorial services and even a wedding for members. We enjoyed monthly movie matinees. All this and more in just one season. So I guess I understand how time can go so quickly. Thank you for being active and supporting the ministry we share.



Ecclesiastes says there is a time for every matter under heaven. I am certainly grateful for all the ministry we do together in the name of Jesus all year long. Seasons come and seasons go, but the life giving Word of God never fails. (Luke 1:37; Isaiah 40:8) Sadly this winter season has also been one filled with grief as we have said our final earthly farewell to Beverly Adams, Merlyn Bowers, Janet Connell, Barbara Gega, Joanne Hogan, Marilyn Malinowski, and Nikki Wykstra. May they cheer us on from heaven, and may they rest in the beloved arms of Jesus. I have so many wonderful memories of each of these saints of God and their time at Shepherd of the Glades. I often say that we enjoy the blessings of our church because of those who have gone before us and laid the foundation. We currently have no debt on property and buildings thanks to the generosity of the saints who are now enjoying their victory in heaven. Although we have an investment fund from many who have now passed away that helps fund us financially during the lower seasonal attendance, we face some relatively serious challenges with a budget deficit for the last two years. This makes me think about and wonder what legacy we will leave for future generations that will help them transform lives through the life giving Word of God (as our mission statement says.)

What new and exciting ministry is God calling us to prayerfully consider that will help us grow? Is it time for a capital campaign for other property improvements that will help us

PASTOR'S PAGES (CONTINUED) . . .

grow spiritually and in our average worship attendance? We have been blessed with Mary serving as our director for discipleship for the last year. I believe it has been helpful for our spiritual growth and outreach. Should we consider continuing an additional paid staff position to help us grow both in attendance and spiritually? At one time Shepherd of the Glades had a new intern from the seminary serving the church each year. Is God calling us to continue to help equip future leaders of the church? Are we being called to grow through mission opportunities we may be missing and people we have not yet reached? In Naples, there has been an increase in population of over 8 percent since 2020, yet we have become stagnant in our growth. What new and exciting adventures is God calling us to explore? Please prayerfully consider what legacy you may leave for future generations, and also prayerfully consider helping us with our financial budget deficit as we enter into what has been a slower season. I look forward to hearing from you!

+Pastor Jeff

CARING CONNECTIONS . . .

PRAYER LIST

Please keep the following people in your thoughts and prayers:

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

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

FINANCIALLY, HOW ARE WE DOING? . . .

PERIOD: Four Months Ended April, 2026

	Actual	Budget	Difference: Favorable (Unfavorable)
Operating Income	\$130,399	\$182,995	(\$52,596)
Operating Expense	\$131,872	\$141,128	\$9,256
Net Income (Deficit)	(\$1,473)	\$41,867	(\$43,340)

This is the first month where year to date expenses have been more than year to date income. Our expenses are well below budget, but our income is seriously below budget. Thank you fo 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 MARCH 9, 2026, COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

Members in attendance: Pastor Jeff Unga, Penny Morken, President, Bill Nicklay, Vice President, Scott Krenz, Treasurer, Mary Winsor, Director for Discipleship, Becky McDaniel, Gunar Strungs, Council Member, Sue Kautz, Council Member, Sandy Haberman, Council Member, Barbara Tommingo, Council Member
Call to order by President Penny Morken. Devotions by Sue Kautz. A motion was made to approve the minutes of the February 10, 2026 meeting. Motion Carried.

Pastor's Report: Pastor reported on the following attended meetings..SOTG Endowment committee, Caloosa Conference monthly meeting, regular communications with Pastor Orlando Ramirez of Inglesia Conexion and Pastor DJ of Eglise Baptist Church (churches that use Hanson Hall), required educational ZOOM meetings regarding Dinner Church ministry and meetings as necessary with groups that use Hanson Hall (HOA, NA, AA representatives).

Bible Study: Due to large attendance and space availability, the Wednesday am Bible Study continues to meet in Hanson Hall with approximately 16 people . Marcia Schacht continues to lead a women's bible study on the 4th Friday of each month. It is very well attended.

Ash Wednesday: Services and soup following worship were well attended - 91. Lenten midweek services are held in Hanson Hall. with an average attendance of 30-40 individuals with most staying for soup supper fellowship.

Memorial Services: Memorial services for Barbara Gega were held Monday, February 16, 2026, at 1pm. Thank you to everyone who attended and assisted with lunch/fellowship after the service. A memorial service for Virginia Jones, a non-member, will be held on Saturday, April 25th.

Baptism: Baptism for Adele Fuchs was held March 4th.

New member: A new member, Laurie Sullivan, was received by letter of transfer.

Oldies Concert: Thank you to John Sherman who helped with the "reunion" oldies concert which was well attended. John made a donation to the church from the proceeds of the concert.

Pastoral Calls - February: Congregational home visits (5), Home bound communion (3), Hospital/clinic/rehab visits (4), Hospice visit (0), Pastoral calls on friends of SOTG (1) and potential new member visit (1).

Holy Week and Easter schedule: Maundy Thursday service with Holy Communion will be April 2nd at 5:30 pm, Good Friday Tenebrae service on April 3rd at 7pm. Easter Sunday worship services (April 5) will be 7 am in the courtyard, 8:30 am and 10:30 am in the Sanctuary. Fellowship and children's Easter Egg Hunt will be between 8:30 and 10:30 services.

Parking Permission: Permission was granted for temporary parking in our church lot for one month to a local resident as he resolves an issue with his HOA regarding parking of a Chevrolet Colorado pickup. Permission given until April 9th when HOA meeting occurs. The church currently does not have a policy in place regarding temporary parking but does have a posted sign at our entrance indicating church property-private parking.

Director of Discipleship Report: Mary Winsor, Director of Discipleship reported to Council on her activities this past month which included attending weekly Bible studies at

COUNCIL CORNER (CONTINUED) . . .

SOTG, various committee meetings (Sew Sews, Evangelism Backpack meeting), participating in all 4 required Dinner Church ZOOM training sessions. Plans are in place to hold the first Dinner Church gathering at SOTG the last Saturday in April. Mary assisted the Pastor in conducting the midweek Lenten services using the Holden Evening Prayer service.

The third round of assembling the Blessing Bags will be held March 15. All the needed supplies have been ordered.

Mary will be attending the “Considering Your Call “ weekend at Wartburg Seminary in Iowa this month. She plans to attend Wartburg Seminary in the fall.

Committee Reports:

An **Endowment Committee report** was submitted by Gunar Strungs, chairman. The committee met February 15, 2026 and reviewed approved formal policies for the workflow, investing and application process for individual endowment grants. This year’s Endowment Fund fourth quarter end balance average is \$136,001. The committee decided to distribute a total of \$6000 from the Endowment Funds. This is a distribution of approximately 4.4% fund average. Grant award applications will be reviewed by the committee and that information will be forwarded to the Church council at their April meeting for Council review and approval.

Property Committee Report was submitted by Bill Nicklay, liaison Council member to the Property Committee. Landscaping of the church grounds with mulch may be put on hold. Additional physical assistance with the mulch project may be provided by members of churches that meet in Hanson Hall. A proposal/bid to paint the sanctuary and doors to the church was submitted to the Council for discussion. After discussion it was agreed that the project/proposal be referred to the Property Committee for any further action/recommendations.

Evangelism Committee Report was submitted by Sandy Haberman, Council liaison to the Evangelism Committee. Flyers regarding the Grace Place Backpack Project were distributed to the congregation after worship services. The project was generously supported by the congregation. Backpacks and school supplies have been purchased. A “Pack the Backpack” celebration will be held on Palm Sunday.

Sew Sew Group: Approximately 35-40 quilts have been finished this year. New members have joined the group which meets on Tuesday mornings.

Fellowship Committee Report was reviewed by Sue Kautz. The Fellowship Committee has been very busy with various activities such as Strawberry Sundae Sunday on February 8, making soups for Ash Wednesday Soup Supper serving 52 people. Various members of the committee along with congregation members provided setup and soups after each of the Lenten midweek services. Freewill offerings were donated to the Blessing Bags and Grace Place Backpack Project.

Committee Reports - Education: submitted by Becky McDaniel, Council liaison to Education Committee. Bible study is held every Wednesday led by Pastor Jeff. Women’s Bible Study meets the 4th Friday of each month led by Marcia Schacht. Sunday School is offered to all children during the Sunday worship service with lessons taught by Charlotte Wahlig.

COUNCIL CORNER (CONTINUED) . . .

Worship and Music Committee....Council liaisons Barb Tommingo and Brad Caulder. The committee will be meeting shortly to discuss Palm Sunday and Holy Week services. The committee will also discuss communion server and usher recruiting/scheduling options.

Local Missions: Non perishable food continues to be generously donated by the congregation. The food is blessed and delivered to St. Matthew's House for distribution on a monthly basis.

Treasurer's Report: the monthly financials were reviewed by Scott Krenz, treasurer. Income in February showed a budget shortfall due to slightly lower attendance and subsequent reduced offerings compared to the previous year. Investment Funds are now managed through accounts transferred from Truist Bank to Vanguard Brokerage Funds.

Memorial Fund Governance Structure. Memorial fund structure was discussed. Designated memorial funds are used for specific purposes as designated by the donors. Undesignated memorial funds are managed through the Church Executive Council. The current Memorial Fund balance is \$15,222. Motion to accept Committee reports made, seconded and passed.

Old Business:

The SOTG Safety and Security Policy Team has not officially met but is currently contacting our Synod for recommendations on policies, procedures , templates that may be helpful when designing SOTG guidelines.

Dinner Church project was reviewed. A core group of individuals from the congregation have been attending ZOOM planning and training meetings as per our grant award requirements. The first Dinner Church gathering is tentatively scheduled for the last Saturday in April.

Closing Devotions by Pastor Jeff.

Next Council meeting scheduled for April 14, 2026

NEWS FROM THE EVANGELISM TEAM . . .

The Evangelism Committee would like to thank everyone who made the Grace Place Backpack Project an overwhelming success. Thanks to your wonderful generosity, we were able to purchase seventy five (75) backpacks and fill them with needed supplies for the upcoming school year. Grace Place is a faith-based, nonprofit neighborhood education center located in the community of Golden Gate. The Center teaches literacy, language, and life skills to at-risk children and their families. The filled backpacks will be distributed to identified children in grades K-12 during a special literacy celebration event held at Grace Place prior to the start of the 2026 school year.

A heart filled "THANK YOU" to all who participated in the "Packing of the Backpacks" project this year.

Penny Morken and Becky McDanel,
Evangelism Co-Chairs and
Sandy Haberman, Church Council
Liaison



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 MAY BIRTHDAYS TO . . .

- | | |
|--------|--------------------|
| May 1 | Louise Kalbaugh |
| May 2 | Lori Cook |
| May 3 | Keith Scamehorn |
| May 3 | Donia Mrozek |
| May 7 | Cindy Tillman |
| May 9 | Bonnie Brisky |
| May 10 | Ben Pletsch |
| May 10 | Sandra Haberman |
| May 12 | Paul Smith |
| May 12 | Larry Tommingo |
| May 19 | Betty Baker |
| May 19 | Gary Salisbury |
| May 21 | Lynn Karle |
| May 23 | Marlene Grzywinski |
| May 25 | Sandy Lofthouse |
| May 26 | Nadine Kelly |
| May 26 | Karen Peterson |
| May 27 | Virginia Madison |
| May 28 | Thomas Knotek |
| May 29 | Stephanie Bernabei |

MAY ANNIVERSARIES . . . HAPPY ANNIVERSARY TO:

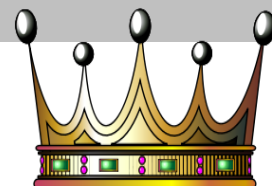
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|--------|--------------------------|
| May 3 | Arvin & Kathie Danielson |
| May 3 | Rich & Becky McDanel |
| May 4 | Jay & Ardelle Berthe |
| May 5 | John & Suzanne Yuhaschek |
| May 7 | Gary & Bobbie Ramsey |
| May 10 | Larry & Charlotte Gulden |

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.

RECEIVED THEIR VICTORY IN THE LORD . . .

Joanne Hogan received her victory in the Lord on Wednesday, April 8, 2026 at the Arlington. A service celebrating her life and witness will be held at Shepherd of the Glades on Saturday, May 16, 2026 at 11:00 a.m.



Merlyn Bowers received her victory in the Lord on Wednesday, April 15, 2026 at Avow Hospice. A service celebrating her life and witness will be held at Shepherd of the Glades on Saturday, May 9, 2026 at 11:00 a.m.

HAPPENINGS AT SOTG . . .

On Sunday, April 19, 2026, SOTG held the annual “Until We Meet Again” Brunch! Thank you, Fellowship Committee, for this great event! We will miss our northern church family. Don’t forget that you can still stay connected by watching our live streaming Sunday church services!



Also on Sunday, April 19th, our Sew-Sew ladies displayed the many quilts they have constructed to give to St. Matthew’s House and the Shelter for Abused Women & Children. Pastor Jeff blessed all the quilts before they were dispersed.

Sew-Sews in photo to right, listed left to right: Jean White, Marlous Prickett, Suzi Geddes, Becky McDanel, Deana Fossey, Marie Schaeoler, Mary Winsor, Carol Henry, and Myrka Gonzalez.



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

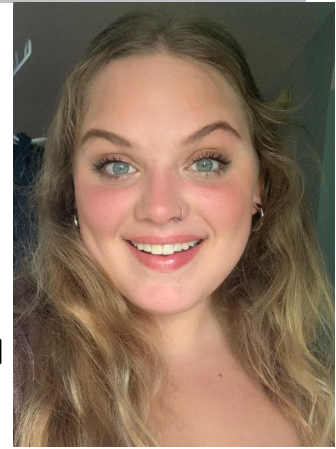
Warrant Officer Robert Stofflet at Ft. Campbell Army Base, KY

Lieutenant Sterling Payne, 205 Ming St. Warrensburg, MO



FROM OUR DIRECTOR FOR DISCIPLESHIP . . .

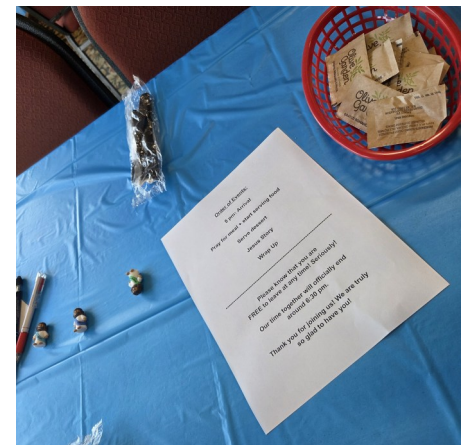
Hello SOTG! Happy May! I know I say this in almost every newsletter, but wow! Time is flying by. It is so hard to believe that we're already in May this year. As our snowbird season comes to a close, I am feeling so grateful for what a lovely start to 2026 we have had. Speaking of seasons changing, I have another change to bring to your attention. As many of you know, I have decided to start seminary at Wartburg Seminary in Dubuque, Iowa, this fall. In preparing for this life change, I plan to end my time here at Shepherd of the Glades at the end of June. I hope these next two months will continue to be filled with joy, connection, and learning as I prepare to return to the classroom as a student once again. As a student of experiential learning this past year, I am excited to continue my academic pursuits toward rostered ministry.



Now, I would like to use the remainder of my newsletter to highlight our new Dinner Church ministry. As many of you know, our church applied for a grant through our Florida-Bahamas Synod to start a Dinner Church. In my February newsletter, I went into more depth on the "Why?" behind it, and at the end of April, we hosted our very first Dinner Church! The evening began with welcoming participants as they entered, encouraging all to find somewhere to sit and chat with those around them. Once ready to start, we welcomed everyone again and prayed for the food. Everyone went through the line, shared a meal and conversation for a little while, and then dessert was served. After dessert, Pastor Jeff led the volunteers in a skit that emphasized God's love for ALL people, tying it into the scripture chosen for the evening. Then, the tables were given a set of a few debrief questions that they had time to answer and discuss. All of the tables had great discussions, and a few people even shared with the whole group. Afterwards, we said a prayer and cleaned up. It was a wonderful evening, and many expressed their excitement to come back next month and/or invite someone to come along. As I wrap up my time here at Shepherd of the Glades and as some seasonal members return north, we will be looking for more volunteers to keep this blossoming ministry growing. I thank you all for your excitement and responsiveness as we continue to be the hands and feet of Jesus in our community!



Until next month,
Mary



**Come join us in May 2026 at these
South Florida Events to show our appreciation for YOU!**
Discounted tickets are available NOW.

MAY 22, 2026 | 6:00 PM – 10:00 PM ET
Annual Celebration of Membership at the Miami Marlins | Miami, FL
LoanDepot Park, 501 Marlins Way, Miami, FL 33125

As a purpose-based financial services organization, we come together each year to celebrate the countless ways you—our members—inspire generosity and help improve people’s lives and communities. Join us for a special Annual Celebration of Membership at the Miami Marlins, where we will gather to reflect on the impact we have made together and look ahead with gratitude and purpose. Register today to join us as we celebrate the generosity and impact of Thrivent membership!

RSVP: <https://bit.ly/Marlins2026>

MAY 29, 2026 | 5:00 PM – 7:00 PM ET
Annual Celebration of Membership at the Planetarium | Bradenton, FL
The Bishop Museum of Science and Nature, 201 10th St. West, Bradenton FL, 34205

As a purpose-based financial services organization, we come together each year to celebrate the countless ways you—our members—inspire generosity and help improve people’s lives and communities. Join us for a special Annual Celebration of Membership at the Planetarium at The Bishop Museum of Science and Nature, where we will gather to reflect on the impact we have made together and look ahead with gratitude and purpose. Register today to join us as we celebrate the generosity and impact of Thrivent membership!

RSVP: <https://bit.ly/Planetarium2026>

No products will be sold at our events. For additional disclosures, see [Thrivent.com/social](https://thrivent.com/social).

We help Christians find financial clarity, enabling lives full of meaning and gratitude. All are welcome to attend our free virtual events. Feel free to share these events with your friends and family.

Want to know more about Thrivent?
Call Thrivent Financial Associate David Contessa at (239) 300-5139.

MONTH AT A GLANCE . . .

MAY, 2026



SUN	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
					1 9:00-11:00 A.M. WOMEN'S AA GROUP 9:00 A.M. NEWSLETTER	2 9:00 P.M. N.A. GROUP MEETING
3 FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER 9:30 A.M. LIVE STREAMING WORSHIP	4 9:00-10:00 A.M. BONE BUILDERS 12 NOON AA MIXED GROUP	5 8:30-11:00 A.M. SEW-SEWS	6 9:00-10:00 A.M. BONE BUILDERS 10:30 A.M. PASTOR JEFF'S BIBLE STUDY	7 7:30-8:30 P.M. AA MIXED GROUP	8	9 11:00 A.M. SERVICE FOR MERLYN BOWERS 9:00 P.M. N.A. GROUP MEETING
10 SIXTH SUNDAY OF EASTER 9:30 A.M. LIVE STREAMING WORSHIP	11 9:00-10:00 A.M. BONE BUILDERS 12 NOON AA MIXED GROUP	12 8:30-11:00 A.M. SEW-SEWS 6:00 P.M. CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING	13 9:00-10:00 A.M. BONE BUILDERS 10:30 A.M. PASTOR JEFF'S BIBLE STUDY	14 7:30-8:30 P.M. AA MIXED GROUP	15 9:00-11:00 A.M. WOMEN'S AA GROUP	16 11:00 A.M. SERVICE FOR JOANNE HOGAN 9:00 P.M. N.A. GROUP MEETING
17 SEVENTH SUNDAY OF EASTER 9:30 A.M. LIVE STREAMING WORSHIP	18 9:00-10:00 A.M. BONE BUILDERS 12 NOON AA MIXED GROUP	19 8:30-11:00 A.M. SEW-SEWS	20 9:00-10:00 A.M. BONE BUILDERS 10:30 A.M. PASTOR JEFF'S BIBLE STUDY 2:00-3:30 P.M.	21 7:30-8:30 P.M. AA MIXED GROUP	22 10:00 A.M. WOMEN'S BIBLE STUDY NEWSLETTER SUBMISSION	23
24 DAY OF PENTECOST 9:30 A.M. LIVE STREAMING WORSHIP	25 9:00-10:00 A.M. BONE BUILDERS 12 NOON AA MIXED GROUP	26 8:30-11:00 A.M. SEW-SEWS	27 9:00-10:00 A.M. BONE BUILDERS 10:30 A.M. PASTOR JEFF'S BIBLE STUDY	28 7:30-8:30 P.M. AA MIXED GROUP	29	30 5:00 P.M. DINNER CHURCH 9:00 P.M. N.A. GROUP MEETING
31 THE HOLY TRINITY SUNDAY 9:30 A.M. LIVE STREAMING WORSHIP						

Shepherd of the Glades Lutheran Church
6020 Rattlesnake Hammock Road
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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Email: sotg6020@gmail.com**

**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**