

## Good Shepherd in Ministry

### Monthly Prayer for our Church

*Join us by including this in your daily prayer time  
and at all church gatherings.*

Creator God, as we journey through this season of Advent, may we prepare our hearts to receive Christ anew. We await to encounter the story once again of how, through Him, you came to dwell among us. Stir in us hope that does not fade and peace that steadies our being. By your Spirit, shape our lives with compassion, justice, and joy so that your concerns and desires for this weary world become ours. Empower us to be light and beacons of your hope and love. In the name of Christ, our Emmanuel, Amen.

**The Church Office will be closed from Dec. 25th through Jan. 2nd.** For urgent needs, Pastor Lisa will be available via email, text, and phone.

### **Join us for the first Sunday of Christmas on December 28th!**

Wear your Christmas finest: ugly sweaters, Santa hats, reindeer antlers or whatever makes you get into a Christmas-y spirit! Worship will be informal and, like all the best family gatherings, filled with fun and games.

**Help Undecorate!** Willing hands are needed as we take down our Advent and Christmas decorations and prepare for our next season. Join us Monday, January 5th at 6:00pm. Pizza dinner provided.

### **New Office Hours Begin January 2026: M - Th, 9 am - 2 pm**

As we strive to be good stewards of the church's time, resources, and staff, we've noticed our office hours are rarely needed on Fridays. Beginning January 1st, the office will be open Monday to Thursday. Individuals and groups can still access the buildings on Fridays, just as they do during other non-staffed times. If a need arises, such as a special event or circumstance, arrangements can be made for staff to be present.

### **Read Through the Bible in a Year**

Pastor Lisa invites you to join her in reading the Bible in 2026. You can do this on your own or join her for an informal weekly online group discussion with a brief video reflection. Weekly time TBD, and you will be free to join as you are able throughout the year. Additionally, an optional companion book will be available. Express your interest via the Connection Card or email Pastor Lisa at [lisabarbery@vaumc.org](mailto:lisabarbery@vaumc.org).

**2026 Offering Envelopes** are labeled and available on the glass table by the exit door in the Gathering Space. If you don't find yours, please indicate so on your Connect Card or contact the church office.

**Serve as a Lay Reader in 2026.** Join our rotation of Scripture readers for worship by indicating your willingness on your Connect Card. All ages are welcome!

**Northern Virginia District Training Day** will be at Floris United Methodist Church on January 17, 2026. We invite you to participate alongside many of our Church Council members and other leaders. Full information, including session descriptions, can be found at [novaumc.org](http://novaumc.org).

**Tonight: Caroling at Neabsco Boardwalk, 5 pm - Good Shepherd UMC,** led by the choirs, will be caroling for the community. Come, sing along, and bring a friend! We will conclude at 6 pm.

### **Christmas Eve Services**

5:00 pm Good Shepherd: an intergenerational service  
10:30 pm Handbell Concert at Bethel UMC  
11:00 pm Woodbridge Collaborative Service at Bethel

**December 31st: Watch Night Service, 11pm** - Join us in a service of reflection, prayer and song as we close 2025 and begin 2026.

**By December 29th: Christmas Offering** - Our annual Christmas Offering will support our Pastors' Benevolence Fund (formerly known as the Pastors' Discretionary Fund), which provides emergency assistance to individuals within our church family and the broader community. Over the past year, this assistance has included rent, utilities, medical bills, funeral costs, meals after surgery, and more... To contribute, designate your cash or check to "Pastors' Benevolence Fund" and place it in the offering bags, or choose "Pastors' Benevolence Fund" when giving online.