



**Shepherd of Life Lutheran Church**  
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May 4, 2021

**Shepherd of Life Lutheran Church**  
**A New Approach to Sunday Mornings**

**INTRODUCING A NEW SUNDAY MORNING SCHEDULE**

**WHY CHANGE?**

+ When Shepherd of Life introduced a third worship service to our Sunday morning schedule we knew that it would limit the opportunities for Clergy led bible studies, but we made that choice because making sure we had room for growth was our number one priority.

+ Since then much has changed. The percentage of people in our country who are looking to the church to find meaning and community has dropped significantly. As a result, the number of visitors and new members has been steadily declining and our worship attendance has been plateaued for about ten years now.

+ In the past ten years we have also experienced a significant drop in our fellowship activities. This is due mostly to people's lives becoming busier and schedules getting fuller. As a result, we have noticed that it has also become harder now for our folks to remain connected, to nurture the kind of community and relationships that has long been one of our strengths and is also making it harder now for our newer members to meet people.

+ In short, because of a rapidly changing world, we feel that the time has come to try a new approach to our Sunday morning schedule, especially if it can help us to address the kind of challenges that are currently limiting the life, ministry and relationships in our church.

**THE NEW SCHEDULE**

This new schedule would feature Celebration Sundays once a month and would look like this.

First Service	8:30 AM	Traditional Worship with Liturgy
Sunday School	9:45 AM	For all ages including adults
Second Service	11:00 AM	Blended Worship, Less formal, Hymns & other music

(The 11:00 AM service will blend elements of traditional worship with many of the things we loved from the middle service. Foremost this will include a Children's Message and Children's Church during the sermon in the Fellowship Hall. Families will be reunited in time for communion.)

**BENEFITS AND BLESSINGS**

+ This new schedule will provide a huge boost to our Adult Education ministry by allowing us the ability to include classes led by Pastor John, Pastor Mark, Intern Pastor Jonathan, as well as some of our other gifted teachers.

+ By including all of our ministry staff and the media available to us in the fellowship hall we feel that we could easily double and maybe even triple the number of people who participate in Adult Education and other opportunities for spiritual growth.

## A BUILT IN TIME FOR MONTHLY FELLOWSHIP

+ This schedule would also feature a monthly cycle where instead of Adult Education, there would be a monthly celebration held between services that would provide all of us with regular opportunities to meet new people as well as catching up with longtime friends.

+ By including some of our existing traditions, while taking advantage of cultural holidays and already existing groups it would not be hard to create a schedule for the entire year. These monthly celebrations could include things like a Fiesta Sunday, Mardi Gras Sunday, a Western worship Sunday with barbecue, Men doing something for Mother's Day, Women doing something for Father's Day, a more robust day for "God's Work, Our Hands," a Christmas themed holiday celebration and more.

## THE TIMING IS PERFECT

+ Change is never easy, but the timing is perfect. During the past year we have seen our congregation's willingness to try all kinds of new things, especially when they were able to see how it could help our church to continue growing in our own faith, while sharing the Good News with others.

## ADDRESSING THE CHALLENGES AND CONCERNS

+ We know that some of our folks will have to choose a new time for worship and will require a modest amount of change for some, we also feel that the benefits, blessings and opportunities it will open up will make it very much worth the adjustment.

+ As we have watched the numbers and participation level in our congregation continue to slowly decline, we ask you to consider the key question that we have been wrestling with for several years now. Do we continue doing the same things or do we do give ourselves permission to try something new and perhaps in the process create some new energy and new opportunities for connecting people to each other and to our Lord?

+ After experiencing this new schedule for the remainder of 2021, the church council will create a time during our annual meeting for your feedback and a vote on whether or not to continue this two service schedule with monthly fellowship celebrations and pastor led bible studies.

## GOING FORWARD

We could not be more grateful for the tremendous amount of time and effort that our church council has put into helping guide our church through the ongoing challenges and difficulties of this pandemic. Their willingness to imagine an even better future feels like a gift from God.

There are two things that we would like to ask of everyone. Please hold tightly to the love that God has for each of us and the grace that we have been called to share with each other. Try to remember that we still have a lot of challenges ahead and that everyone is doing the best they can, which means that now more than ever your willingness to be patient and kind to one another will make all the difference in the world.

Thank you so much for your ongoing faithfulness, it feels like God is preparing us for an exciting new chapter in our life and ministry together. We invite your continued prayers for our world, our country, our church and the members of our council. Their contact information can be found on the next page and please know that they are open to hearing from you anytime along the way.

In the hope and joy we have received from Christ,

*Pastor John, Pastor Mark, Intern Pastor Jonathan*

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