



History

Good Shepherd Lutheran Church

Woodstock, Georgia

In July 1987, Pastor David Osborne came to Woodstock, Georgia as a pastor/developer for the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA). Pastor Dave knocked on many doors in the Towne Lake Community, and by 1988, Worship services and Sunday School classes began in rented space at a local office park complex on Highway 92.

On December 11, 1988, "The Living Charter of Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Woodstock, Georgia" was signed by 131 adults and children and proclaimed:

We believe—that we are called and chosen by God and through faith accept Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior. Led by the Holy Spirit, we gather together to become the people of Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, and commit ourselves to: worship, praise, honor, and glorify God, grow in our personal understanding of Jesus Christ, share in the Good News of Jesus Christ with others, and responsively care for those who are in need. We promise—to faithfully support and participate in the life of Good Shepherd Lutheran Church through our time, talents, treasures, and prayers, so that we, the members of the Body of Christ, may demonstrate God's love in the world.

Good Shepherd Lutheran Church was officially recognized as a congregation of the ELCA on April 9, 1989. A Building Committee was formed to plan for a church building at the corner of Eagle Drive and Rose Creek Drive to include a sanctuary, fellowship area, classrooms, and administrative offices. The building was dedicated in 1993 and Good Shepherd Lutheran Church became a permanent presence in Towne Lake. The congregation grew, expanding our membership into Canton, Cartersville, and Acworth, and so did the need for more space. The building was expanded and dedicated in 1999.

In 2005, the congregation completed an intense Long-Range Planning Process, including the development of a congregational mission statement: *We are called, gathered and blessed to be a community and instrument of grace for all sheep of the Good Shepherd.* The mission statement has served us well and holds true today.

Our welcome statement shows our desire to be the light of Christ for all people, with no exceptions: *Good Shepherd Lutheran Church warmly welcomes people of any age, race, nationality, sexual orientation, life circumstance, and physical or mental capability.*

Our worship services have always provided God's grace to all through the Word and sacraments. While each is based on the Lutheran liturgy, we've embraced traditional organ music, bells, children's choirs, and a praise band.

The congregation has been blessed especially by our constantly expanding ministries. Programming for the children and youth includes baptism, giving of Bibles, first communion, confirmation, Sunday School classes, youth groups, youth Sundays, and mission trips. Outreach into our community has grown to include American Red Cross Blood Drives, the Encouragement Project, relationships with Child's Play Preschool and Carmel Elementary, Homeless Veterans, MUST Ministry, and Papa's Pantry.

As children of God, we recognized our call to care for creation too. Planted first in 2020, our Garden of Grace has grown to include seven beds, six apple trees, and blueberry bushes, allowing us to provide fresh vegetables to those in our community. We continue to recycle metals, electronics, pill bottles, eyeglasses, dental hygiene products, and much more.

The congregation has always encouraged education for all ages, with multiple classes on Sunday mornings and during the week, opening up the Bible for discussion and learning. Some of the classes have been going for 30+ years! We cherish the relationships that form as we share our lives and our faith. These relationships lead to providing care for each other in times of need and times of joy.

Many gifted pastors and deacons have served at Good Shepherd, each bringing their unique gifts for sharing the good news of Jesus with our members and our community. We are thankful for each. Our pastors include:

- Founding Pastor, Rev. Dave Osborne, 1987-2002

- Associate Pastor, Rev. Kari Parsons, 1998-2006
- Senior Pastor, Rev. Paul Baumgartner, 2006-2021
- Associate Pastor, Rev. Justin Lind-Ayres, 2006-2009
- Associate in Ministry, Deacon Michelle Angalet, 2006-2012
- Associate Pastor, Rev. Justin Ask, 2009-2016
- Pastor, Rev. Rosy Rivera, 2022-2023
- Pastor, Rev. Karen Boda, 2023-

From a vision of sharing Christ with the Woodstock Community, we have grown into a thriving community eager to serve all our neighbors and share the Good News far into the future.