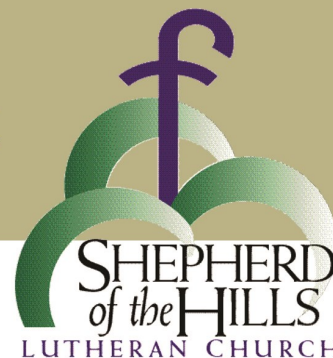


# Shepherd's Voice



April 2023

## “NEIGHBOR LOVING”

By Interim Pastor Susan Debner

We talk about our neighbors a lot in church. Have you noticed?

One of the things I have really appreciated about being an interim pastor with Shepherd of the Hills is how all this talk about the neighbors is also put into action: Meals on Wheels operates out of our building every week day keeping our neighbors fed and visited; Mental Health Connect is expanding its work in our community helping our neighbors access vital healthcare; and a family of 5 asylum seekers lives in our parsonage where they are safe and working toward a better life.

If you worship and serve at SOTH, you can probably extend that list for pages! The Annual Report bears witness to that. As you prepare for the Annual Meeting and a new senior pastor, I'd like to share a few neighbor-loving observations:

- **You are not the only lovers/givers/doers in the neighborhood.** There will always be more needs than can be met but there will also be more love-sharers than you might think. So, be as generous in sharing opportunities as you are in sharing responsibilities. Sometimes, the best way for a congregation to meet a neighborhood need is to set it down or let it go, which empowers other groups or individuals looking to step in. This is a nerve-wracking decision in the best of times, and even more so in 2023 as volunteerism wanes. The temptation to do more is one we learned from Pharaoh in the Bible: make more bricks! Working harder burns us out faster. Instead of welcoming new members for their uniqueness, we see them as next-in-line to do what has already exhausted us. Trust that the love you share with your neighborhood will grow and reproduce itself, especially when you get out of its way.
- **If you notice your needs going unmet, check on your neighbors.** The pandemic upended a lot of systems in the world, our communities and our individual lives. It's still hard to know what will return to the way it was before the pandemic and what will break down completely or break out in new and exciting ways. Grief, anxiety, excitement and curiosity have been careen through our days. Your new senior pastor will join you midstream of all this. SOTH has a marvelous history of healthy, vibrant relationships between the congregation and the pastors and staff, and I'm certain this will continue with your next senior pastor. If there are choppy days—and there often are—check if the choppiness comes from how new or different needs are being met. As noted above, it's difficult to be all things to all people, and sometimes the pain of what you miss is lessened

Pastor's message continued on page 2

**Shepherd of the Hills  
Lutheran Church  
500 Blake Road South  
Edina, MN 55343  
(952) 935-3457**

**Staff:**

|                          |               |
|--------------------------|---------------|
| Pastor                   | Sherri Otto   |
| Interim Pastor           | Susan Debner  |
| Music Director           | Open          |
| Administrative Assistant | Shawn Wacholz |
| Building Manager         | Blair Prax    |

**Church Council Members / Officers:**

|                       |                        |
|-----------------------|------------------------|
| President             | Adam Driscoll          |
| Vice President        | Don Wothe              |
| Treasurer             | Johanna Olson          |
| Financial Secretary   | Fred Jensen            |
| Secretary             | Open                   |
| Serve                 | Nate Lichty            |
| Worship & Music       | Karen Hofstad-Parkhill |
| Building & Facilities | Peter Barott           |
| Learn                 | Stephanie Nordin       |
| Communications        | Joe Palmersheim        |
| Care                  | Open                   |
| LMCC                  | Open                   |
| Evaluation            | Open                   |

**Telephone & Voice Mail Extensions:**

|                     |    |
|---------------------|----|
| Shawn Wacholz       | 11 |
| Pastor Susan Debner | 12 |
| Pastor Sherri Otto  | 13 |
| Blair Prax          | 15 |

**Shepherd Online!**

|                  |                                   |
|------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Pr. Sherri Otto  | sherri.otto@sothchurch.com        |
| Pr. Susan Debner | pastorsusan.debner@sothchurch.com |
| Shawn Wacholz    | office@sothchurch.com             |
| Blair Prax       | blair.prax@sothchurch.com         |
| Church web site  | www.sothchurch.com                |

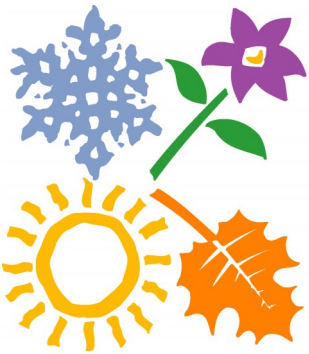
## Pastor's Message continued

by the joy of what others are discovering. Check on your neighbors: Are they finding joy or connection or comfort through the life of this congregation? SOTH has an impressive history of reaching out to new people and embracing the changes that come with growth. Lean into that history, it has served you well.

- **Upgrade the Golden Rule to Platinum.** The golden rule is to do unto others as you'd have them do unto you; the platinum rule is to do unto others as they'd want done unto them. It is a common mistake we've probably all made: You love being hugged, so you want to share love by hugging others, but if they feel love through acts of service, a hug will never mean as much as covering extra chores. To expect our neighbors to want the kind of love we're showing them is privileged. We've got to go platinum and learn what their love language is.

As SOTH gathers for the Annual Meeting, and eventually, to call, welcome and install a new senior pastor, my prayers will be with you, even once our interim concludes. I am witnessing so many wonderful works of God among you and from you, that I can't help but be excited for all God will invite you to join next!

With deep gratitude,  
Interim Senior Pastor Susan K. Debner



## PRESIDENT'S POST

### Annual Congregational Meeting Sunday, April 30 at 10:30 am

By Adam Driscoll, Council President

## ANNUAL MEETING

Make a plan to attend our upcoming Annual Meeting on Sunday, April 30 in person or by Zoom. During that time, we will reflect on 2022, elect new leaders for our congregational council, provide an update on the Senior Pastor call process, and recognize outgoing leaders. It is an important date on our shared calendar together, and I hope to see you there.

If you are interested in serving in a leadership role on our congregational council, it's not too late! Please contact Pastors Susan or Sherri, or let me know, and we can add you to the ballot. We can also take nominations from the floor.



## HOLY WEEK FOR CHILDREN

**Good Friday, April 7th at 4:00pm**

We invite children and their families to join Pastor Sherri as we experience interactive ways to help children understand the events of Holy Week between Palm Sunday and Good Friday. Please join us for this important time together. If you have any questions, please contact Pastor Sherri.



## EASTER EGG HUNT!

**Easter Sunday following worship**

Join us on Easter Sunday after worship for a Children's Easter Egg Hunt. We will gather outside the Church on the patio (by the flag pole) for an exciting hunt. If there is inclement weather that morning, we will move the egg hunt to Good Shepherd Hall.

## SOTH BOOK CLUB

Book club at SOTH is open to all. Please feel free to join us. For questions please contact Kaye Wothe at [kwothe@comcast.net](mailto:kwothe@comcast.net)

### Book Club Schedules

Sunday, April 16 at 10:45 am at SOTH  
Book: "Lessons in Chemistry" by Bonnie Garmus

## WEDNESDAY AM BIBLE STUDY

Come for Bible study, coffee, and fellowship! The Wednesday morning group meets at 9:30 am for coffee, treats and fellowship before they begin a Bible study. The Bible study begins at 10:00 am and is based on the following Sunday's sermon text. All are welcome.

## REMINDER FOR PARENTS TO MARK YOUR CALENDARS

5/17/23 Confirmation Banquet  
5/21/23 Confirmation Service  
6/19/23 thru 6/22/23-  
Vacation Bible School  
(More information coming soon!!)  
7/9/23 to 7/12/23  
Summer Festival Camp  
High School (9th – 12th)  
7/16/23 to 7/19/23  
Summer Festival Camp  
Middle School (6th – 9th)



## WHAT IS AMMPARO?

As the ELCA's AMMPARO contact at Shepherd of the Hills I occasionally receive social justice action alerts as well as notification of educational opportunities from both AMMPARO (Accompanying Migrant Minors with Protection, Advocacy, Representation and Opportunities) and the ELCA. The goal of these alerts is that Lutherans will communicate with their elected representatives about a particular piece of legislation or with a federal agency seeking the public's input on a proposed rule. Sometimes tips for those communications are also provided. These alerts are usually time sensitive due to votes in Congress or deadlines in the government's rule making process.

On February 23, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and Department of Justice (DOJ) proposed a new rule that would impose onerous new conditions on those seeking asylum. The proposed rule would disqualify certain migrants seeking asylum based on their manner of entry and transit to the U.S. southern border.

The American Immigration Council says of the proposal that, "People will be forced to navigate this process at the end of a grueling journey to the United States, with potentially lethal danger awaiting them at home if they fail."

Unfortunately, the deadline for comments on this rule was March 27.

AMMPARO also announced a live webinar about child labor in agriculture on March 28. The 300,000 to 500,000 estimated children who work in agriculture are the least protected workforce in the US by law. Labor laws protect and prevent children from working in factories or offices but allow children as young as 12 to legally work unlimited hours on farms outside of school with parental permission. The webinar was to teach ways one can take action and help make a difference for farm worker families.

If you would like to receive notice of these opportunities in advance, please provide me with your email address so I can add you to the notification list.

Thank you for your continued interest and caring for the strangers in our midst.

Paul Bohnsack  
952-891-5677  
[bohnsackps@frontiernet.net](mailto:bohnsackps@frontiernet.net)



## SOTH CALL COMMITTEE UPDATE

Thank you for your continued prayers and support of the Call Committee's work. Similar to February, March was an active month for us. We were thrilled to receive five more candidate names from the Synod and we completed a first round of interviews with them. All candidates have strong educational backgrounds along with solid and varied pastoral experiences. After significant discussion and discernment, we are working to set up second interviews with our three top

candidates. This is a busy time of year with Lent, Holy Week and spring break schedules to juggle, but we are getting there!! Throughout this Call process, we continue to listen to one another and ask for the Holy Spirit's guidance as we seek our next Lead Pastor of Shepherd of the Hills.

We appreciate your patience and trust in our work. Please continue to keep us and all candidates in your prayers. As always, we are happy to discuss any questions or concerns you may have.

The Call Committee -Brittany Roeser, Alyssa Barott, Johanna Olson, Louis Nelson, Kevin Wicks & Kathy Wiemer

## DINNER AT YOUR DOOR

Dear Shepherd of the Hills,  
There will never be enough words or ways for us to express our appreciation for your generosity. The space you have shared with us for storage, packing, parking and gathering, along with its upkeep and maintenance has enabled us to be a consistent and reliable source of nutrition to so many of our neighbors in need. Your generosity of spirit and service has been so warm and unwavering in our mission to provide a human connection with our clients, and has overflowed to include our volunteers and our staff. Please accept this contribution as a token of our appreciation for your continuing to partner with us.

With joy and gratitude,  
All of us at Dinner at Your Door  
(Meals on Wheels)



## THREE ... TWO ... ONE

By Pastor Sherri Otto

Three years ago, on March 1, 2020, I started here at Shepherd of the Hills as your Associate Pastor. And shortly after, the world shut down and COVID was upon us. Fast forward to today, it has been quite an adventure... full of transitions and trials, of joys and sorrows, of wonderings and willingness, of stepping outside of ourselves and coming together as a community. Three years ago, we were forced to look at ourselves and each other differently and find new ways of making connections and new ways of being church.

Three years ago, Shepherd continued, with Easter, Confirmation and Christmas, although in a new and unique way. It wasn't perfect, but God was present in the midst of it all.

Two years ago, COVID was still hanging around although things started to open up and the hope for "normalcy" was in the air. We started gathering for in-person worship, masked for the safety of all until it was deemed safe. Gatherings were happening more frequently, however cautiously but Shepherd continued to forge ahead. We celebrated Easter and Christmas and God was present.

One year ago, COVID was still looming, and we learned that Pastor Scott would be leaving us. We had no idea at that time of the transitions that would take place. Our Community Nurse Kaye Wothe, after much discerning, felt it was time to retire and our Music Director, Emily Koski, stepped down, wanting to spend more time with husband and 4 children. The Council leadership during this time was extraordinary and helped keep everything and everyone together as one community.

This has truly been an exhausting, exciting, invaluable, invigorating, humbling and holy time in the life of Shepherd of the Hills. People have stepped up when asked, stepped out of their comfort zones and have really come together in old and new ways.

Here are some of the highlights of this past year:

- Vacation Bible School with Calvary Lutheran
- Students going to Summer Festival Camp
- Pastor Susan Debner joining us as the Interim Pastor
- God's Work our Hands with Calvary Lutheran
- Joint Thanksgiving service with Calvary Lutheran
- Turkey Bingo (my first time!)
- Moonlight Madness (6th thru 9th grade all-nighter!)
- Christmas program put on by Shepherds of Light students
- Christmas decorating of the church
- Christmas Tea (my first time!)
- Mental Health Connect and Lutheran Partners in Global Ministry speak
- Bodybuilding Dinner Church during Lent
- Women's Breakfast
- Men's Breakfast

## Three ... Two ... One continued

Several other areas of ministry have kept me busy, including hymn picking and worship planning, Learn Team meetings, baptisms and funerals, attending text study each week, going to Conference meetings, Bishop's Theological Retreat, Synod Assembly and have recently taken on the responsibility of being the Interim Dean for the Crosstown Conference.

There are several joys that I have experienced this past year with the students:

- Leading the Shepherds of Light on Wednesday evening as we learn about God's word, sing songs, play games and create amazing crafts!
- Gifting the 3rd Graders with their new Bibles along with a class about how to use their Bibles was a highlight as the students asked great questions!
- Having the students sing during worship and look forward to continuing that as the year goes on.
- Chalice making and First Communion coming up soon!
- I was honored to be asked to be a part of the Eagle Scout Court of Honor and very proud of all of their hard work, and especially the work of Rowan Nordin as he created a new banner for our Sanctuary. We have been truly blessed by his talent and give thanks to God for all those who are leaders in this Scout Troop.
- Meeting with outside agencies and connecting with those in our community is a goal for me in the coming year. In the past few months, I have had meetings with several individuals. Among them are Ann Beuch from Blake Road Corridor Collaborative, Anne Hope from My Health for Teens and Young Adults and Mary Peterson from Lutheran Partners in Global Ministry. I also attended a four-part series from Mental Health Connect that dealt specifically with youth.

Personally, this has been a difficult but growing year for me. And in all of it, God was and remains present. I was very grateful to get away for a relaxing vacation to San Diego with my husband and thank the staff for all that they did while I was gone. Thank you to Shawn, Blair and Pastor Susan for the laughter and teamwork that it takes to do this call.

I look forward with great joy to the next steps in our ministry together and am truly excited about the call process and the anticipation of who will be our next pastor and my colleague. I also look forward to our new council members, the Youth Service on May 14th and our students' Affirmation of Faith on May 21st. There is much to look forward to and much to celebrate in the life of Shepherd of the Hills!

Three...two...one...here we go! For God's work does not happen without you. And I thank each of you in this community for all that you have been and all that you have done this past year. You are God's hands in a world that needs God's love. Thank you for showing this to all who you meet.

In Christ,  
Pastor Sherri

## Butterfly Pretzels

Celebrate being a new creation by making this fun spring snack.



### What you need:

- 45 miniature twist pretzels (to make 20 butterflies)
- Cookie sheet covered with parchment paper
- Light cocoa and multi-colored Candy Melts (available at craft stores)
- Disposable decorating bags
- M&M's, Skittles, sprinkles, cinnamon drops, etc.

### What you do:

1. Break five pretzels into pieces for antennae.
2. On cookie sheet, arrange pairs of whole pretzels as shown.
3. Melt Candy Melts in microwave, separating colors into different bags.
4. Pipe melted brown candy down the center to hold pretzels together, making a head and body. Press on two pretzel pieces for antennae.
5. Pipe other melted candy into the pretzel holes.
6. Add M&M's and other decorations into melted candy on the wings. Let cool. Enjoy!

Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church  
500 Blake Road South  
Edina, MN 55343

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## Easter & Holy Week at Shepherd of the Hills

Easter Sunday is an especially exciting time at Shepherd and we want you to be a part of it. Join us for a morning of music and celebration that the whole family will enjoy. Come and experience the miracle of Easter: the power of God's love to bring hope and joy to our lives!

### HOLY WEEK

|                 |         |                        |   |
|-----------------|---------|------------------------|---|
| Palm Sunday     | April 2 | 9:30 a.m.              | Palms & Passion Reading                   |
| Maundy Thursday | April 6 | 6:30 p.m.              | Holy Communion                            |
| Good Friday     | April 7 | 4:00 p.m.<br>6:30 p.m. | Children's Activities<br>Tenebrae Service |

### EASTER

|               |         |                         |  |
|---------------|---------|-------------------------|--|
| Easter Sunday | April 9 | 9:30 a.m.<br>10:30 a.m. | Celebration Worship<br>Easter Egg Hunt |
|---------------|---------|-------------------------|--|