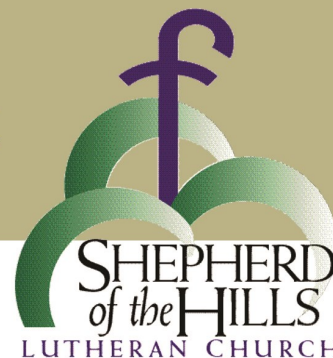


# Shepherd's Voice



December 2022

## **“Prepare Ye, Shepherd!”**

*By Interim Pastor Susan Debner*

Across the Sundays of Advent, we will hear “Prepare Ye the Way of the Lord” from the musical Godspell as our call to worship. It is a beloved piece for many, and an apt invitation for this season of preparing for all the ways God shows up in the world and in our lives. It’s also an excellent invitation for the congregation at this point in the call process!

As the Interim Senior Pastor, a lot of my work is focused on helping SOTH prepare for your next chapter of leadership. The Senior Pastor Call Committee has completed the Ministry Site Profile (MSP), which is one of the biggest steps in the process of calling a new pastor. The MSP is a 15 page document that describes a congregation’s situation, values and mission. It is used by bishops and pastors to determine who will be a great fit for the open position, and it took a lot of hard work to complete it. On Sunday, December 11, Pastor John Hulden will be here to review this document and listen to the hopes and dreams of the congregation related to the remainder of the call process.

After that, the next steps will be the quiet work of waiting for paperwork from candidates and determining who, when, and how to move into interviews. While the Senior Pastor Call Committee manages all of that, the congregation is encouraged to consider what else you might need to do to prepare for a new leader.

One way to evaluate that is through the lens of the ELCA’s **Wholeness Wheel** (see picture on page 2). When I was considering the call to be your interim pastor, one of the council leaders said to me, “We are committed to offering this position in a way that will make you whole.” I had never heard a church leader say something like that, but it was a powerful statement of this congregation’s values—and a reflection of our shared values as Church.

According to our **Wholeness Wheel**, we should be considering these areas of the community’s life at SOTH as we prepare for a new Senior Pastor:

- Social/interpersonal
- Emotional
- Physical
- Financial
- Vocational
- Intellectual
- Spiritual—which is the foundation and the heartbeat for how all these parts work together

***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:**

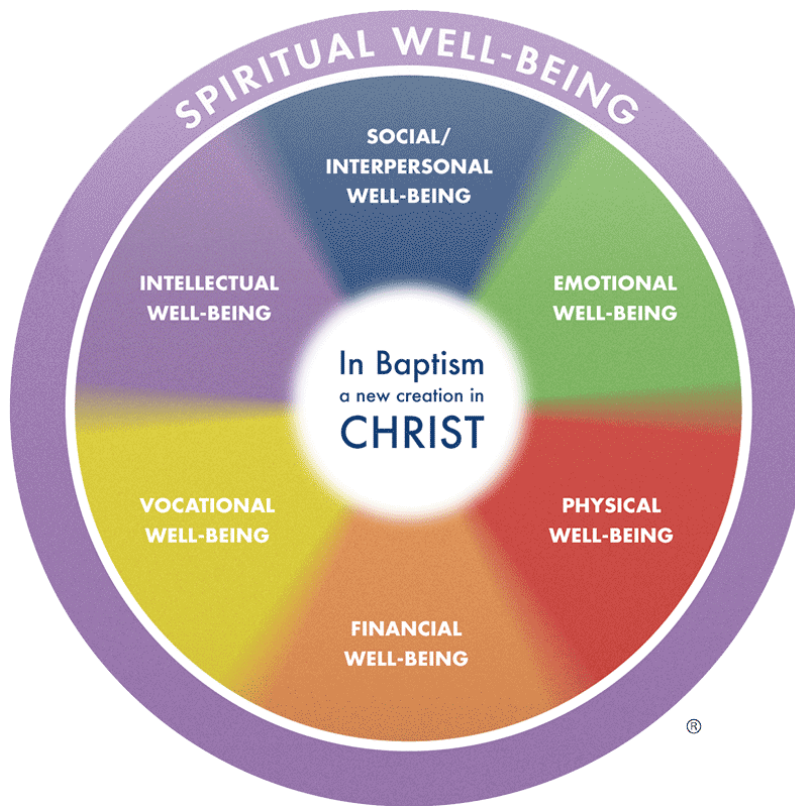
President	Adam Driscoll
Vice President	Don Wothe
Treasurer	Johanna Olson
Financial Secretary	Fred Jensen
Secretary	Open
Serve	Nate Lichy
Worship & Music	Karen Hofstad-Parkhill
Building & Facilities	Peter Barott
Learn	Stephanie Nordin
Communications	Joe Palmersheim
Care	Open
LMCC	Open
Evaluation	Open

**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**

In the coming months, take a few moments on your own and with any groups, committees or task forces at SOTH to ask how the congregation is doing in each of these areas. Are there strengths that need support? Are there problems, heartaches, vacancies or baggage to clean up or heal? What does it look like for the congregation to feel prepared for new leadership? Or perhaps the better question is: What does congregational wholeness look like at SOTH?

Across the seasons of Advent and Christmas, we are invited again and again into the holy cycle of waiting, preparing, and being made whole. It is a different experience for each of us, every year, and yet somehow resonates deeply and communally with us all. This year, there is a new and exciting layer to our preparing, as we pray and wait and watch together over the call process, and in all God invites us to join!

See you at worship,  
Pastor Susan



## PRESIDENT'S POST

### Actions and Intentions

By Adam Driscoll, Council President

We hear a good deal in the church about considering the situations of others, of "walking a mile in their shoes."

Having empathy for the situation of others is a core element of the grace with which we attempt to navigate

the world. How many of us have had that road rage moment, shouting at another driver for their reckless behavior, incensed by the danger their carelessness could have caused? How many of us have been the recipient of an angry honk (or even hand gesture?) of another motorist pointing out our errors? I have certainly been both of these people. In the first example, I'm often angry, and judging the other driver based on their actions. While in the second scenario, I consider all the additional context that only I know - I've had a long day, the kids were being rambunctious, I'm not familiar with this stretch of road, and so on. To me, this is an example of how we are quick to judge others based on their actions, while we tend to judge ourselves based on our intentions.

There are times when it is not the thought that counts, but the action, and it's important to remind ourselves of that. That phone call to a friend going through a hard time does not benefit them if you meant to do it, but never did. That difficult relationship with a family member that you sought to mend, but couldn't find the energy to address, remains frayed. Doing any of these things can be scary, and that's why they often stay in the "I've been meaning to" category. But while examining our actions may not always be easy, doing so can help us best show up in our world. May we all find the strength to see our good intentions reflected in our actions.

## ALL THINGS CHRISTMAS!

- December 4<sup>th</sup> Christmas Tea, 2:00pm
- December 10<sup>th</sup> Children's Christmas Program Practice, 9:00 am
- December 11<sup>th</sup> Children's Christmas Program, 9:30 am
- December 11<sup>th</sup> John Hulden, Assistant to the Bishop visit, 10:45 am  
*There will be a special craft for children to make in the Adult Forum Room while the parents attend this meeting.*
- December 14<sup>th</sup> Christmas party for Confirmation and SOL students
- December 18<sup>th</sup> Hope in the Darkness service, 5:00 pm
- December 24<sup>th</sup> Christmas Eve Worship 3:00 pm and 5:00 pm
- December 25<sup>th</sup> Christmas Day Worship, Hymn sing, 9:30 am



## HOPE IN THE DARKNESS

December 18th, 2022

at 5:00 pm

Christmas may not always be a "merry" time for people, especially when there has been a loss in your life. Loss of a job, loss of community or loss of a loved one can all become too heavy of a burden to carry alone, especially when everyone around you appears to be filled with holiday cheer. Many of us have faced such losses and our fear, anxiety and loneliness may become too hard to express or handle.

Please join us on Sunday, Dec. 18th at 5:00 pm for a special service, both at SOTH and on Zoom. This service is filled with music, prayer and a time for silent reflection, allowing you to grieve your loss and but also fill you with hope as we await the birth of Jesus.

If you have any questions, please contact Pastor Sherri at [sherri.otto@sothchurch.com](mailto:sherri.otto@sothchurch.com) or 612-251-1342.







## MEALS ON WHEELS

Calling all SOTH Members! Let's let our Meals on Wheels recipients know we're thinking of them this holiday season by donating small gifts that can be delivered along

with a meal.

There are many ways you can help:

- Buy and donate small, useful items such as large-print activity books, decorated hand or dish towels, notecards, candles, candy, etc.
- If you are crafty, donate handmade items like hot pads, dishcloths, towels
- Mail a check to SOTH made out to 'Meals on Wheels' with 'gifts' in memo line
- Kids can draw pictures to send with gifts

There will be a labeled plastic donation bin just inside the Meals on Wheels entrance to the church (on the West side of the church, opposite the little parking lot by the parsonage). It would be extra helpful if the gifts are wrapped with a post it note indicating what's inside. That door is open from 10-noon on weekdays so you can just pop by, drop it in the box, and be on your way. Donation deadline is Wed., December 15th. Thank you!

## children's program



## SHEPHERDS, SHEEP and a SAVIOR

### Shepherds of Light Christmas Program

December 11th, 9:30am

Come see as the lowly shepherds and their smelly sheep, (who nobody wanted to be around), receive a visit from an angel! Even though these shepherds had been at the bottom of the social ladder in Bethlehem, God

chose them to be the first ones to see the Savior! This is their story - what they heard and what they saw that marvelous night when God came to live among them.

## CHRISTMAS TEA DECEMBER 4

Women of Shepherd, you are invited to join us for the return of our Annual Christmas Tea, Sunday December 4th at 2:00. We will be entertained by Overdressed Duo. They are excellent musicians! The cost is \$8.00 per person. The sign up sheet is in the Narthex at the Welcome Desk. Please sign up today!! We would love to have the MEN of Shepherd volunteer to serve tea/coffee and dessert! Please contact Dave Wiemer if you feel so moved!! Feel free to contact me or other committee members if you have any questions, Karen Hofstad. Ellen Levernier, Johanna Olson, Quinn Driscoll, Renee Quinn and Jean Housh

## CONFIRMATION SCHEDULE CHANGE

There will be NO CLASS on DECEMBER 7. Pastor Susan will be out of town for a family commitment that week. Join us for class on November 30, and for the Christmas Party on December 14.

## SOTH BOOK CLUB

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

### Book Club Schedules

Wed., December 7 at 7:00 pm at SOTH  
Book: "The Measure " by Nikki Erlick

## 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.



## SOTH Call Committee Update December 2022

Exciting news from your Senior Pastor Call Committee... the Ministry Site Profile (MSP) is complete and submitted to the Synod! We have SOTH's pastor wooing document ready to go and approved by the Council. Thanks be to God!!! The entire team is extremely excited, but probably no one more so than Kevin Wicks.

**What** does this mean for everyone at SOTH? It means it is time to gather with Assistant to the Bishop John Hulden (Bishop Ann is on sabbatical) for a listening session. We want to hear from you!

**When:** Sunday, December 11th immediately following the Children's Christmas Program service (10:45 AM give or take a few minutes)

**Where:** SOTH or on Zoom <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/6662114485>

**Who:** Our entire congregation and Pastor John Hulden (there will be fun activities for the kids to engage in during the listening session, so please don't hesitate to stay)

**Why:** As taken from literature posted on the Minneapolis Synod website: "This meeting is an opportunity for the congregation and the bishop to have a conversation about self-perceptions of the congregation, and perceived needs as the congregation searches for a new pastor. The bishop will listen carefully, ask probing questions and become more familiar with the congregation. Knowledge gleaned will be brought back to the Call Process team in order to find the persons who are the best match for the congregation."

We look forward to seeing and hearing from you on December 11th!

Speaking of hearing from you, we are FINALLY revealing the details regarding your input from the survey you took in the fall. Here are the top ranked responses we received from the 95 participants who shared the gifts they want our next Senior Pastor to possess:

Gifts	Points
Preaching	347
Building a Sense of Community	146
Administration	129
Youth and Family Ministry	111
Teaching	108
Spiritual Formation and Direction	94
Care and Nurture	90

There was a point system, since we had you rank your responses, so your first priority received 5 points, your second 4 points, third 3, etc.

We used these top priorities to help us complete both the Top Five Ministry Tasks and Gifts for Ministry sections of the MSP. We are so grateful for your help!

## MENTAL HEALTH CONNECT: Supporting Youth Mental Health Series

Pastor Sherri was blessed to be able to attend all four sessions on this important topic. There were 4 different speakers, each bringing new information and resources to the table. The discussion about mental health and teens, and the tools and resources that were given was incredible. She has listed just a few help line numbers and websites you can use and share. If you have any questions or want additional information, please do not hesitate to call, text or email Pastor Sherri. Thank you Mental Health Connect for this free training and for all you do in our community!!

24/7 Crisis Text Line | Text 'MN' to 741741

Suicide & Crisis Lifeline | 988  
Trevor Project Lifeline (LGBTQ+ specific) | Text START to 678-678 or Call (1-866-488-7386)

[www.changetochill.org](http://www.changetochill.org)

[www.hellobrightline.com](http://www.hellobrightline.com)

Mental Health Connect, 612-MHC-1220 text or call.

Email [Navigators@mhconnect.org](mailto:Navigators@mhconnect.org)

# Staff Reflection

## Continued from below

Hope... a very powerful word and one that is found at the heart of Jesus.

We are in the season of Advent... a time where we wait for Jesus. It's a story for Christians that has been told a thousand times over and one that I never get tired of. For it is this child that I find my hope... my hope to be a better person, to live a better life, to be a better neighbor to those I know and to those I will meet. To know that things will get better, even when the road is long and rough. To know that I am never truly lost, because Jesus has shown me the way. To know that I am not alone, even when I feel forgotten.

Jesus is my hope and my strength. My rock and my salvation. In God, I put my trust.

I know things haven't been easy at Shepherd in the past few months. I know that there is still grief and pain in this transition. I know that we wonder and worry about the future. But I also know that our hope is in Jesus and Jesus will not leave us. We are a strong community with hopes and dreams to still complete in our church, our community and the world. Dream big by remembering the past, being passionate for the present and having hope for the future.

I look forward to the hope we find together in the Christ Child and am filled with love, joy and peace as we celebrate Jesus' birth together in community.

Happy Advent and Merry Christmas friends! May the hope of this season remain with you all!!

Pastor Sherri



## HOPE

By Pastor Sherri Otto

My husband and I were invited to the Vikings game a few weeks back by my sister and brother-in-law (yes, it was the one where they lost 40 -3!). I had never been to US Bank Stadium, so I was super excited to be there. I even dug out my old Vikings sweatshirt, one that I had bought some 30 years ago at the Metrodome and wore it proudly!

Our seats were in the end zone about 17 rows up from the field. The atmosphere was alive! People were excited, everyone decked out in their purple and gold or in their blue and silver (Cowboy fans!). Everyone waiting for the game to start, hoping that their beloved team would come out on top. As we watched the First Quarter, the Vikings fell behind 10-3. And it only went downhill from there. I yelled and screamed a few times, but after a while, I just quit. It felt like no matter what the Vikings did or didn't do, they just weren't going to pull ahead.

So, I took in the stadium. I looked around, watching the players, the coaches, the referees, the cheerleaders and the fans. I wondered how many were first-time attendees like me, and how many people had season tickets. I wondered who was there with their kids and how much money was being spent. I wondered who was sitting in the seats way up high and the seats closer to the field. I wondered about those in the suites and about all the advertisements that were being displayed in lights. It was a lot to take in.

I leaned over to my sister and said, "Look at all of these people! I wonder... if the baby Jesus was born in the middle of the field, would they stay and watch him grow, or would they get bored and go home?" She looked at me and laughed, probably thinking I was crazy for such a thought.

As I came home that night, I began to wonder about my question I shared with my sister... about the crowd and baby Jesus. And I began to imagine if Jesus was there, would we have set off fireworks for him or have fake snow fall down from the ceiling, have a special cheer for him or play music in honor of him. Would the crowds have stared silently at this miraculous child? Or would they cheer and shout and sing songs of joy?

Some strange thoughts, I know. But sometimes, as a pastor, you go to that place and try to see Jesus in a crowded stadium, a busy mall, a full gymnasium or a congested freeway. You look for places that most people would never think that Jesus would be. A homeless shelter, a jail cell and a park bench where there is heat coming through a city street vent.

In every one of those places there is a feeling of hope. Hope in what is to come next, hope in the things that can change, hope in a better way and better life.

Continued above



## IMMIGRANT MINISTRY

### UPDATE

By Paul Bohnsack

Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service, the nation's largest faith-based nonprofit dedicated exclusively to serving and advocating for refugees, asylum seekers, and other vulnerable immigrants in the U.S., announced November 14 it received a \$15 million gift from billionaire philanthropist MacKenzie Scott.

The donation is the single largest contribution Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service has received from an individual donor in its 83-year history of welcoming and empowering children and families from all around the world. It comes on the heels of the historic Afghan refugee resettlement mission, Ukrainian refugees fleeing Russia's invasion of Ukraine, and record arrivals of asylum-seeking children and families at the U.S. southern border.

"This unprecedented and timely gift will make a monumental difference in the lives of the most vulnerable refugees and asylum seekers as they strive to achieve their own American Dream," said Krish O'Mara Vignarajah, President and CEO of Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service. "We are extremely grateful to MacKenzie Scott for this recognition of our decades-long legacy of service. Her support represents a transformational opportunity to expand innovative programming and reimagine how the U.S. welcomes new Americans."

The nonprofit organization will use the funds to accelerate groundbreaking projects intended to transform immigration services, including trauma-informed mental health care and the expansion of its holistic Welcome Centers for asylum-seeking families. The record-breaking gift will also support the group's New American Cities workforce development program, and reinforce Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service's unique capabilities to care for unaccompanied children through foster care programming and other community-based services.

The contribution comes amid a period of historic activity at Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service. In the past year alone, the refugee nonprofit resettled approximately 14,000 Afghans following the U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan. The organization is also assisting Ukrainians and Venezuelans displaced by ongoing crises in their homeland, as well as refugees from around the globe, including those from Syria, Burma, and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

"This is a win-win mission..." concluded Vignarajah. "We can live up to our legacy as a ... country welcoming of immigrants, and we can position communities to benefit from the economic and cultural contributions our newest neighbors are poised to make....they need our help and we need theirs."

Paul Bohnsack  
bohnsackps@frontiernet.net  
952-891-5677

### MEN'S BREAKFAST

December 10 at 8:30 am

Calvary would like to again invite the men of Shepherd to join us for our December Men's Breakfast gathering. The date is Saturday, Dec. 10th, at 8:30 a.m. We will have a light breakfast (McDonald's sandwiches, coffee, juice) and as always, keep it casual and informal. It'd be great to have your company again! (Btw, rumor has it that Steve Grams is organizing a January gathering at SOTH – so look for more on that soon.) The address is 6817 Antrim Road, Edina, MN. RSVP via email to [pastorwade@calvaryedina.org](mailto:pastorwade@calvaryedina.org) (so we can get enough food!) See you there!

### TURKEY BINGO 2022

Many thanks to all the Turkey Bingo & Bowling helpers and participants for your generous support at our Turkey Bingo Event on Nov. 6. Shepherd of the Hills will be donating \$1,510 to the ICA Food Shelf from the event.

### CONSECRATION NOTE

Thank you to all who completed their promise card for our annual stewardship appeal. Thank you! If you haven't yet completed your card, please do so today. If you need a new card, they are available at the back of the sanctuary or contact the church office. Thank you for your gifts that support our mission, ministry and life together!

### 2022 CONTRIBUTIONS

All contributions for the year 2022 need to be received in the church office by noon on Friday, Dec. 30, 2022 in order to be entered on 2022 giving statements. Any contributions received after this time will be posted on 2023 statements.

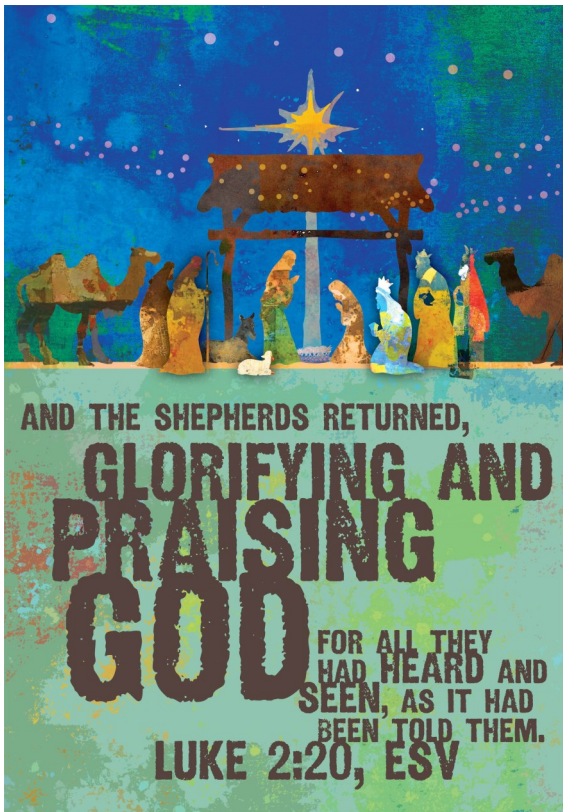


Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church  
500 Blake Road South  
Edina, MN 55343

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Dated Material



**You're Invited to  
Celebrate Christmas at  
Shepherd of the Hills**

**Sunday Advent Worship at 9:30 a.m.**

November 27  
December 4  
December 11  
December 18  
December 18

*Hope: God of all hope, shine your light  
Peace: May we seek peace  
Joy: Children's Christmas Program  
Love: Let us share God's love with others  
Hope in the Darkness (Blue Christmas) 5:00 pm*

**Christmas Eve Worship**

December 24  
  
December 25

3:00 p.m. Candlelight Service  
5:00 p.m. Candlelight Service  
  
9:30 a.m. Hymn sing

*Christmas is a season of welcoming—a time to welcome the stranger, welcome the newborn, welcome the near and dear. Yearly, we invite Christ to come fresh into our hearts, to lighten our darkness, heal our wounds, and restore our souls. We welcome you to join us as we celebrate Christmas this season.*