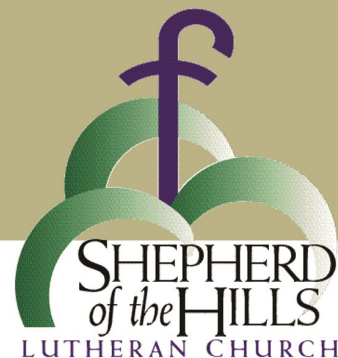


# Shepherd's Voice



February 2021

## ***“My Beloved”***

*By Pastor Scott Searl*

On Sunday, January 10 following the events at the Capitol on January 6 I suggested that every day is a good day to take a knee with Jesus in prayer. My suggestion was based on my interpretation of what Jesus was doing following his baptism by John in the third chapter of the Gospel of Luke. After John the Baptist's fiery proclamation that Jesus was coming with his winnowing fork in his hand to clear the threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his granary and burn the chaff with unquenchable fire, Jesus is found quietly praying. Hardly the anticipated action from John's previous description. One would have expected Jesus to come out with words ablaze and righteous anger aflame. Instead, Jesus is found humbly submitting to God's love, God's direction, God's will and God's voice... "You are my son, the Beloved, with you I am well pleased." Up to this point in the story Jesus has spoken no words and taken no actions. The only actions that would indicate God's pleasure is Jesus' submission to baptism and his posture of kneeling prayer.

I want to further suggest that what our souls need now, more than anything else, is healing, cleansing and purification. The last four years have brought further division, anger, hate and violence. These are toxic emotions that are as infectious as any virus. It is more than likely we have all been infected. I know I have been. I feel the weight of my soul under the anger of my voice and frustrations of every moment. And I wonder, how will my soul be cured of this disease? How will we inoculate ourselves and provide medicine for each other that will aid in our recovery?

A photo in a small corner of the New York Times gave me a clue to our healing. The photo was taken by someone at the Associated Press. It shows Rep. Andy Kim, D-N.J., cleaning up debris and personal belongings strewn across the floor of the Rotunda after protesters stormed the Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021, in Washington. The photo was taken just after midnight. "I feel blessed to have this opportunity as a son of immigrants to be able to serve in Congress," he said. "Democracy to me is this place of opportunity that is affording me a chance to do something extraordinary." Kim said in an NBC interview with Claire Wang.

If it was good enough for Mr. Rogers who encouraged people in time of crisis to look for the people who are helping, it is good enough for me to notice someone in a silent posture of prayerful kneeling service. This is the image I will hold on to after all the fiery violent rhetoric and action of January 6. It is the image that inspires my soul's healing, because kneeling in service is something I can follow. I imagine that no matter what Rep. Kim's faith affiliation, the living hope that animates the world spoke to his soul, "You are my son, the Beloved, with you I am well pleased."

***Continued on page 2***

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

**Staff:**

Pastors	Scott Searl, Sherri Otto
Assistant/Visitation Pastor	Fred Jensen
Music Director	Emily Koski
Intern Pastor	Anne Schaefer
Faith Community Nurse	Kaye Wothe
Administrative Assistant	Shawn Wacholz
Building Manager	Blair Prax

**Church Council Members / Officers:**

President	Todd Biewen
Vice President	Julie Luers
Treasurer	Steve Hanneman
Financial Secretary	Ryan Erickson
Secretary	Adam Driscoll
Serve	Nate Lichty
Worship & Music	Julia Buteyn
Building & Facilities	Peter Barott
Learn	Open
Communications	Jill Miller
Care	Dave Cousins
LMCC	Open
Evaluation	Chris Polston

**Telephone & Voice Mail Extensions:**

Worship Times	1
Directions	2
Shawn Wacholz	11
Pastor Scott Searl	12
Pastor Sherri Otto	13
Intern Pastor Anne Schaefer	14
Blair Prax	15
Emergency Message Mailbox	24
Kaye Wothe	25

**Shepherd Online!**

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Pr. Sherri Otto	sherri.otto@sothchurch.com
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Blair Prax	blair.prax@sothchurch.com
Church web site	www.sothchurch.com



**Pastor's Message continued from page 1**

You too are a beloved child of God with whom God is well pleased. Your sin sick angry soul has been healed and forgiven every day. Deeper healing can grow when you and I take small, sometimes quiet and unnoticed, actions of humble service. Likely our photo will never be in the New York Times. Yet, these things of God are also infectious, healing and far more powerful than any weapon ever devised by human hearts. The way ahead, the way of Jesus, the way of healing will be marked by prayerful followers of Jesus taking a knee to protest violence with humble acts of service and love for all. And when you kneel, be sure to take the words of God deeply into your soul, "You are my beloved, with you I am well pleased."

**President's Post continued from page 3**

from the Indigenous Native Americans to those who recently received their citizenship, from the African American to those whose parents came from Europe and every corner of the globe, from the wealthy to those struggling to make it, that this is our country. Teach us, oh God. Teach us to live in it, love in it, be healed in it, and be reconciled to one another in it, lest we miss your kingdom's goal."

Amen to That!  
Todd Biewen



## President's Post: Inaugural Words

By Todd Biewen , Council President

Presidential Inaugurals have a way of giving birth to words and phrases that have significance in American history. In fact, inaugural speeches often become more important and resonant many years after they were first delivered; it can take time to appreciate why the words were significant for our country. If you're

game, try matching the words below with the president who delivered them at their inaugural — Franklin Delano Roosevelt, Ronald Reagan, Abraham Lincoln, and John F. Kennedy.

"With malice toward none, with charity toward all, with firmness in the right, as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in, to bind up the nation's wounds..."

"Ask not what your country can do for you but what you can do for your country."

"This great nation will endure as it has endured, will revive and will prosper. So, first of all, let me assert my firm belief that the only thing we have to fear is fear itself..."

"Let us resolve that we, the people, will build an America, in which all of us, white and black, rich and poor, young and old, will go forward together, arm in arm...we are all Americans, pledged to carry on this last, best hope of man on earth."

Now, freshly off this year's inaugural on January 20, 2021, it's too early to know if any of Joe Biden's words will become words for the ages, to be repeated fifty years or a century from now, but here are some candidate phrases:

"This is America's day. This is democracy's day... America has been tested anew and America has risen to the challenge... democracy has prevailed."

Or:

"We must end this uncivil war that pits red against blue, rural versus urban, conservative versus liberal. We can do this if we open our souls instead of hardening our hearts..."

At inaugurals the star of the show is, of course, the newly-elected president. But there are always other talented orators, and I want to call out two in particular from this year's inaugural. Yes, I'd like to show them some love because they spoke with as much passion, truth and wisdom as anyone... and because we're not as likely to hear these words repeated in the future.

*Continued above*

## President's Post continued

Poet Laureate, Amanda Gorman

"...let us leave behind a country better than one we were left. We will rise from the gold-limned hills of the West. We will rise from the wind-swept Northeast where our forefathers first realized revolution. We will rise from the lake-rimmed cities of the Midwestern states. We will rise from the sun-baked South. We will rebuild, reconcile and recover in every known nook of the nation, in every corner called our country, our people diverse and beautiful will emerge battered and beautiful. When day comes, we step out of the shade, aflame and unafraid. The new dawn blooms as we free it. For there is always light, if only we're brave enough to see it. If only we're brave enough to be it."

And the closing prayer from The Reverend Sylvester Beaman

"As a nation and people of faith gathered in this historic moment, let us unite in prayer. God, we gather under the beauty of your holiness and the holiness of your beauty. We seek your faith, your smile, your warm embrace. In our common humanity we will seek out the wounded and bind their wounds. We will seek healing from those who are sick and diseased. We will mourn our dead. We will befriend the lonely. We will share our abundance. We will give justice to the oppressed, acknowledge sin, and seek forgiveness, thus grasping reconciliation.

This is our benediction: that from these hallowed grounds, where slaves labored to build this shrine to liberty and democracy, let us all acknowledge,

*Continued on page 2*

# Staff Reflection

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## WAM

WAM is in full swing with grades K-2 meeting on ZOOM from 6:30 to 7:00 Wednesday evenings. Grades 3-5 join them at 6:50 and connect by sharing our highs and lows for the week. The older kids then continue with WAM until 7:30. WAM has been learning about the stories that you are hearing each week at church, from how Jesus picked his disciples to the Transfiguration. During Lent, the WAM kids will attend church on ZOOM with their families and many will be participating in the service each week, by reading prayers and scripture.

## Story Time

Story time will be happening for anyone ages 2-5, starting in February. (Dates and times to be announced). This will be an opportunity for the youngest of our Shepherd community to connect with each other for a time of music, story and prayer. If you are interested in joining our group, please contact Pastor Sherri at [sherri.otto@sothchurch.com](mailto:sherri.otto@sothchurch.com) or 612-251-1342.



## Will You Write Me a Story?

By Pastor Sherri Otto

I was completely shy in my younger years and never wanted to talk in front of a group. I was a listener, not a speaker. If I was at a big gathering and didn't know anyone, I would become a wall flower. I had this huge desire to talk, to join in on a conversation, but could never bring myself to do this. I really did not think anyone would want to hear what I had to say.

Now that I am much older and a lot wiser (that might be debatable!), I realize that everyone wants to be heard. I recognize that everyone has a voice and should use it. I know as I have always known that everyone has a story that they want to tell.

Our devotions for Lent this year is titled, "A story to tell" and it made me wonder about all of the stories that have been told here at Shepherd. About your history, your struggles, your successes, your gifts. This got me thinking that perhaps this might be a great way for me to get to know this community a bit better.

It seems strange that I have been here for almost a year and still have questions about the building, about families, about the rich history and traditions that you have had in the past. With this pandemic, it has been a bit harder for connections but even tougher to truly learn about each of you and your story.

So, I am asking you to do me a favor. During this time of Lent, will you write me a story? Will you tell me about a time here at Shepherd that brought you joy? Could you share with me a time of struggle?

Now writing it down may be more difficult for some than speaking it or it may be easier. But there is something about writing it down that makes it more permanent and meaningful, not only for the hearer but also for the writer.

This Lenten season, give yourself and me the gift of your story, in your own words and with your own heart. And know that I will not share these with anyone, unless you give me permission. Please send it to [sherri.otto@sothchurch.com](mailto:sherri.otto@sothchurch.com).

I want to hear from you. I look forward to reading your story.

Pastor Sherri



## Happy February!

By Intern Pastor Anne Schaefer

Greetings Church! What a gift you have been for me as I have begun this internship journey with you. The hospitality, welcome and love that you have shown has been a true blessing and has made me even more thankful to be part of this community.

Your warmth, new vaccines, new years...so many things to be grateful for, especially when we add them to the Christ Child born to us just weeks ago! It's strange to gather all this joy and launch into Lent - a season usually full of repentance, reflection and soul-searching. This is a true dichotomy of beauty and ashes.

The Church begins our Lenten Journey on Ash Wednesday (this year, that is February 17th), and we finish with Him Crucified in a tomb near Calvary. Easter Sunday dawns the new season of joy and celebration. While joy definitely comes in the morning, Lent is often seen as our nighttime, our darkness, our time of getting to know our humanity in our own barren lands.

People often express this experience by fasting from a specific food, activity or mindset. Giving up something that is comfortable touches on the idea of sacrifice while getting us in touch with our mere humanity and the fact that we need a Savior. The forty days of Lent are symbolic of the forty days Jesus spent in the wilderness. And while I'm certain that we each are navigating our own wildernesses, perhaps this year we can use this time to bring light to someone or something beyond ourselves.

Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it! (John 1:5)

Instead of a sacrifice of comforts this Lent we invite you to consider a sacrifice of resources - a blessing of your neighbors with your time, your energy, your money and your belongings. For these 6+ weeks Lent, let us grow in discipleship and serve God's people with random acts of our Savior's Love.

Get ready to receive a bingo card filled with ideas! You can pick up your card along with your ashes on Sunday, February 14th. The cards will also be emailed out and available on our website for you to print off. We will collect your completed bingo cards during Holy Week (details to come). I look forward to seeing the beauty that you create in the time between ashes and the cross.

Thank you again for being a beautiful light to me and my journey of pastoral ministry! I'm so glad to be here!

Grace and peace!  
Pastor Anne Schaefer  
Anne.Schaefer@SOTHChurch.com

## Wednesday Night Speaker Series

**Date:** Wed., February 3, 2021 from 6:30-7:30 pm via Zoom

**Topic:** Covid Grief Kids and Adults  
**Speaker:** Meridith Kimmerle

**Description:** Meridith is a Grief Counselor who works in school districts in the metro as a Park Nicollet Employee. She will discuss COVID and Grief, for all ages especially in kids. In this pandemic time we have all experienced loss in many or all aspects of our lives. The longer it goes on the deeper and more widespread our grief becomes. Have you considered the impact this grief has on you? On your kids? Or other family members? How can we help ourselves and each other process our grief in healthy ways?

## SOTH Book Club

Book club at SOTH is open to all, male and female. Please feel free to join us. We have 2-3 copies of each book. All books will be available all year if you want to read ahead. Please read the book and return ASAP so another person can borrow the book for reading also. We try to get 2-3 readers to be able to read one copy.

For questions please contact Kaye Wothe, Faith Community Nurse at [kwothe@comcast.net](mailto:kwothe@comcast.net)

## Book Club Schedule

Sun., February 21, 7:00 pm,  
"Us Against You"  
by Fredrik Bachman

Sun., March 14, 7:00 pm,  
"How To Raise White Kids"  
by Jennifer Harvey

## Covid-19 update continued

Our priority during the pandemic has been to protect our neighbor, whether a fellow congregant or a staff member from this disease. The best way to do that is to practice the measures that we know work, get vaccinated, and wait until the prevalence of disease drops down to an appropriate level. Returning to church before the right time risks spreading the disease further and endangering lives. The current recommendation by the MN department of health is that indoor gatherings can include up to 2 households with up to 10 people. Outdoors people can gather with up to 3 households with 15 people. Following these guidelines, we are not allowing any groups, other than Meals on Wheels to gather in our facility. This includes WAM, confirmation and other groups who will not be meeting in person.

We love each other best when we respect the science around infectious diseases and refrain from gathering in person until it is safe to do so. Thank you for holding our family of faith in your prayers as we all negotiate this challenging situation.

The Return Team: Don Wothe, Jodi Rogness, Scott Edmundson, Terry Jensen, Blair Prax and Pastor Scott



## COVID-19 Update

The Shepherd of the Hills return team has been following the science and governmental guidance on how to best control the pandemic for a year now. I am going to take a few minutes to describe the situation. When infectious disease doctors talk about an outbreak of a certain

disease the terms that they use are *endemic* which is a disease that appears occasionally in the population, *epidemic* which is an outbreak of disease that is spreading rapidly through the population of a particular country or area, and *pandemic* which is a disease that is spreading rapidly throughout the populations of a wide area or large number of countries. Past pandemic's have included such disasters as the black death or Bubonic Plague from 1346-1353, the Influenza Pandemic in 1918-1919, and the HIV Pandemic from the 1990s up to the early 2000s. Death tolls world-wide from these Pandemics were 100 million from Bubonic Plague, 50 million in 1918 from influenza, and 36 million from HIV. The Covid-19 pandemic has taken at least 2 million lives over the past year.

We have been meeting monthly to make recommendations to the church on how and when we can gather again in person. The development of immunizations to the virus which causes COVID-19 brings hope that we can control the pandemic. Immunizations are only one of several tools which can help to minimize spread of this disease. The pandemics that I mentioned above killed millions each year for several years. For example, the Bubonic plague killed 15 million persons each year from 1346-1353. We must minimize the number of deaths from COVID-19. As in past pandemic's, while many patients survive the disease a predictable proportion of patients die from the disease. The key to preventing these deaths is to prevent the spread of infections.

The vaccine will help us in two ways. First, the current vaccines decrease the number of persons who become symptomatic with COVID-19 when exposed by 94%. Secondly, those exposed who do get COVID-19 symptoms after immunization very rarely require hospitalization or die. Unfortunately, at this point we do not know how many of the people who have been immunized develop asymptomatic COVID-19 and if those immunized individuals can spread it to others. It is critical during the next few months that immunized people continue to do the key preventative measures which we know work. These measures include using masks, staying home when you feel ill, washing your hands, and social distancing.

Of particular concern for the return team has been the question of when we can gather together in person at the church. A time will come when everyone who desires protection has been immunized and the degree of infections in the community has dropped into the endemic level. It is at that point we will be able to return in person to church.



## What will it mean to offer shelter to an asylum seeker?

*Submitted by Paul Bohnsack*

We will be helping someone create a new life in the United States, someone who has lived through truly traumatizing situations. Our guest will be trusting us, strangers in a strange land, to provide support and guidance.

Asylum seekers (asylees) have developed survival skills that have helped them through very difficult situations - situations that most of us have never had to confront. Asylees are resilient and resourceful, they know exactly what is needed for them to survive another day, and they must be fully entrusted and empowered to make decisions for themselves. We must recognize their independence and self-determination and be flexible with their coping mechanisms without judgment. We must remember that they are capable of deciding for themselves how they want to move forward with their asylum case and in their new lives. Asylum seekers do not need parenting, protection, or discipline.

We come from a place of privilege that enables us to perform this service. Our power and knowledge of the society in which we live must be transferred over to the asylee we are welcoming. We need to see our guest as a friend who needs just a bit of help in learning and navigating many complex systems intended to confuse or trip him/her up, including local and federal laws.

We will not be trying to save our guest, or attend to that person incessantly, but rather this will be a journey walking along side of one another and offering guidance and support along the way. We will connect our guest to the resources needed to achieve the life s/he hopes to build here. We can advise the asylee of risks and realities. But the best outcome is that our guest can move on to living the life s/he came here to live regardless of whether it makes sense to us or not. Just because an asylum seeker may make different life choices than we would does not make those choices wrong. Asylees must be able to conduct themselves based on their own moral compass and judgment.

At the end of our experience as a sponsor, we are likely to learn more about ourselves, our privileges, our values, and the ways we have been conditioned in a country that values the experiences of some over others. Being open to understanding these differences and learning from them is ultimately the primary work that we will be doing as a sponsor. We should not be disappointed if the asylee doesn't share our enthusiasm, but hopefully the experience will be rewarding and we will earn a new friend as a result. There will likely be challenging moments that will make us question everything we know. It is okay for this experience to be

## *Asylum seekers continued*

challenging, and it is okay to struggle with parts of it. Becoming a supportive sponsor is a process, meaning that mistakes will be made, we will likely trip up, and feeling a little lost is relatively normal. It is important to recognize that this is a shared experience among adults - and whatever we are struggling with is probably reflected in similar ways by the asylee. While we will set expectations and boundaries, we will also be aware of power dynamics inherent in our relationship, and provide much-needed safe space for the asylee to care for himself/herself in ways s/he determines best. And finally, we should remember this journey as we engage with individuals different from ourselves in other situations.

(My thanks to Asylum Seekers Sponsorship Project and Ireri Bravo, Allison Beaufort, and Laura Coleman)

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

*Continued above*

# Mental Health Resources

## *The Ultimate Choice (2) continued*

The hardest parts of this are recognizing someone is having suicidal thoughts, sticking with them throughout the often exhausting battle and then trusting they are ok when they tell you they are. Or if the disease wins, the hardest part is the shock of the loss, cutting through the cultural stigma of death by suicide, finding care for everyone impacted throughout the often extended grief period (including yourself) and getting to a peace that passes understanding about the death.

Here are some hopefully easy to remember tips Living Works Faith shared with us.

First, the goal is to PROMOTE life, INTERVENE when help is needed, SUPPORT loss (this may be the losses that are driving the suicidal thoughts, or losses related to a failed suicide attempt or to a completed suicide). Talk about suicide and mental health struggles openly, this is how we are going to decrease stigma and increase people's ability to name their struggles out loud and get help.

How do you do this?

TUNE IN to what the person is saying and doing. Are they down, not engaged, giving away items of value to them, talking about a future without them in it, have big swings from sadness to lightness, are doing things that are excessively risky, increased substance use, or changes in behavior are some of what to watch for.

***Continued on page 9***



## **The Ultimate Choice**

By Kaye Wothe, Faith Community Nurse

January 20th, 2021 was my nephew's 29th birthday. We had a ZOOM gathering of 15 family members to celebrate him. He was not there. He died by suicide on March 18th, 2020.

All of that week, not for the first time, I lived in fear that someone close to him would be triggered to die this same way. Anniversaries, especially the first year, can have a strong pull that way. I spent a lot of time on

the phone that week texting and talking to people to make sure they were ok, that they had a plan of how to get through the week, had plans to be with people each day and that they could tell me they had no plans to hurt themselves. I prayed each day for discernment, clarity, mercy, forgiveness, grace and love for each of us on ourselves and with one another. There were tears behind my eyes and an ache in my chest that is hard to describe, but always there for the loss of Garrett. I replay conversations when he would call me or I would call him. Always ending with the same question, how did I miss it?

Three to four people out of 100 have consider suicide each year. That means when we are in worship at SOTH there are approximately 6 people who have had or are having suicidal thoughts. As a nurse, someone very aware of mental health/illness and who can name well over a dozen suicides in my lifetime of people around me I have studied this, taken short classes, read books, walked with families, and reflected on it for many hours.

In January Pastor Sherri and I were blessed to take an all month class hosted by Luther Seminary and taught by the staff of Living Works Faith, a group devoted to suicide education all over the world. I have over 20 big tablet pages full of notes. Each week's homework took me over 6 hours. The instructors were the most informed people related to suicide I have ever meet. I am so grateful.

SO, what is important to know:

Suicide is not a sentence to hell. The person who dies by suicide is not a murderer. Our God is gracious, merciful, forgiving, sees our pain and knows our hearts. As we are reminded in many places in the Bible, my favorite being Romans 8:38, NOTHING can separate us from the love of God. (FYI, suicide is not a new thing, there are several recorded in the Bible). Do not misunderstand, God wants His children to thrive, to hear a call to live so we work to promote life whenever possible.

I think of suicide like any other illness where we lose the battle with the disease and the person dies. Though with suicide it is never deemed terminal, if we are aware of the struggle we never give up, we keep fighting and inviting in more help along the way.

***Continued above to left***



## *The Ultimate Choice (3) continued from page 8*

ASK them directly if they have plans to hurt themselves or are suicidal. Asking will NOT create the idea for them. This has been studied many times and been proven not to add to the risk. Asking them names it, talking about it decreases stigma and hopefully allows them to confess their thoughts or to let you know they are not suicidal. Either way allowing you to walk with them in getting resources and having an active plan to work with them in getting help.

STATE the SERIOUSNESS of suicide to them. If when you ask them, “Are you thinking of hurting yourself? Do you have thoughts of suicide?”, if they say yes, then directly name that suicide is serious. Often the victim is in such a state that they have lost sight of this obvious fact. We feel that very few people if given a second chance would die by suicide, it just becomes in their mind the only option. Naming it is serious reminds them of the obvious and that you see it that way too.

CONNECT with them. Do not leave their side until you are sure they are safe. This will be hard and mean you let other things go for a bit. A life is priceless, in these cases we get one chance often, this is your priority now. Have resources you can call to help as you can not do this alone. Where to begin? Right there with them call the Suicide hotline and let the crisis intervention counselor talk to the person in crisis. Call your or their pastor/clergy/ faith community nurse. Call other friends or family that the victim will allow. Seek emergency care through the ER, Urgent Care or a Doctors office. Engage a therapist naming the emergency to the person who you talk to at therapist office as they can direct you further knowing the nature of the emergency. Call Mental Health Connect, while they are not emergency providers they can add services for the long haul of care needed. Each of these contacts will have more resources.

PLEASE put into your phone contacts numbers like:

Hennepin County Crisis line: 612-596-1223 adults/ 612-348-2233 kids under 17

National Suicide Hotline: 1800-273-8255

Crisis Text Line: 741741 (or [www.crisistextline.org](http://www.crisistextline.org))

Trevor Project: 866-488-7386 (Specific for LGBTQ)

Farm and Rural Hotline 833-600-2670

Veteran Crisis Line: 1800-273-8255

Mental Health Connect: 612-312-3377 ([navigator@mhconnect.org](mailto:navigator@mhconnect.org))

Also 911 and SOTH (952-935-3457)

For more information on suicide I strongly encourage you to look at [www.livingworks.net](http://www.livingworks.net)

One of the most known and beloved scripture verses is Psalm 23, part of which is:

***Even though I walk through the darkest valley,  
I will fear no evil for you are with me;  
your rod and your staff they comfort me.***

*Continued above to right*

## *The Ultimate Choice (4) continued*

God is with us, in our happiest days and our darkest days, in pandemics and all times.

Keep calling God into your life, into your days, into your heart. Call on God for others too, knowing sometimes you have to carry their faith for them until they can hopefully hold it again. I pray we can see one another, like Jesus saw the woman at the well (John 4), and act in love bravely called by God. God bless the memory of all who we have lost to suicide and the life of each and every survivor.

Praying for My Eyes to be Open, My Heart to be Healed, for God to be my Strength and for Peace,  
Kaye Wothe  
Faith Community Nurse



*“Love  
each other  
as I have  
loved you.”*  
JOHN 15:12, NIV



# Mental Health Connect Resources & Education

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mental  
health  
connect

We help open doors

**MENTAL HEALTH CONNECT**  
Mental Health Resources and  
Education can be found on their  
webpage:  
[http://www.mhconnect.org/  
events](http://www.mhconnect.org/events)

## Let's Connect Thursday Thursdays, 8:00-8:45PM

"Let's Connect" is a virtual community. We meet together via Zoom for a time of connection and discussion about how our week has been, how we're feeling, and we will share resources, encouraging one another. 2020 has brought us many unexpected challenges - isolation, working from home, layoffs, missing friends and family, stress and uncertainty are just a few of the concerns we are experiencing. We NEED each other and a community to safely discuss life. If you have been longing for a group to connect with, like many of us have, join us each Thursday, beginning July 30th. A trained facilitator will lead the conversation. Free! All welcome! No registration necessary.

## Monday Night Mental Health Speaker Series

Monday, February 8, 2021 at 6:30 pm via Zoom

**"Recovering In Spite of Oneself: A Way Toward Healing"**

Featuring Rev. Melissa Hensley PhD, LISW, Associate Professor of Social Work, Augsburg University

A Virtual Zoom Meeting

Melissa Hensley is an Associate Professor of Social Work at Augsburg University. She is also a person living with bipolar disorder. Dr. Hensley's professional experience includes community mental health and housing/homelessness services. Her volunteer experience includes working with the NAMI affiliate in St. Louis, Missouri, and with the NAMI Hennepin County affiliate.

Learning Objectives

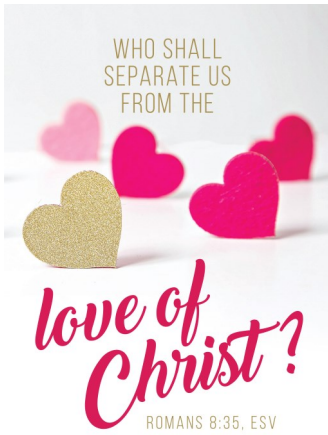
1. Participants will be able to identify personal strengths that can help them achieve recovery.
2. Participants will identify and strategize to overcome barriers to recovery they are facing.
3. Participants will generate a list of skills that they can use to promote recovery and healing.

Go to [mhconnect.org/events](http://mhconnect.org/events) for the link to the Zoom meeting.

We hope you can join us!

*The Monday Night Mental Health monthly speaker series is free and open to the public. The series is a collaboration between St. Joan of Arc Catholic Community and Bethlehem Lutheran Church. During this season of COVID-19, these sessions will be available using Zoom Webinar.*

*When we return to meeting in person, each session will begin with supper at 5:45pm, followed by the program from 6:30-8:00 pm. Participant certificates for 1.5 hours are available for mental health professionals and students.*



## The LOVE Month...One Simple Valentine for All

By Kaye Wothe, Faith Community Nurse

The answer to what love is changes throughout our lives. When we are babies, whether we are aware of it or not, love is being held, fed, loving eye contact, having our basic needs met and having a loving stable primary relationship. As toddlers, these same markers of love continue along with a safety patrol, primary playmates who answer our basic questions and begin to teach us basic social life skills. As we grow, mature and age, what our love needs are and how love is

defined by us evolves into an evermore complex thing, often gaining some definitions unique to who we have become, what we have experienced and what our life circumstances are.

As an empty nester with four unmarried “kids” in their 20s, I have become increasingly aware every year since their births how individually I love them. What I wished for them feels like it started out as the same list: happiness, healthy in mind, body and spirit, resilience, faith, basic needs met with relative ease, loving relationships, etc. Ever since they began to develop and show who they are as unique individuals, my love had to adapt and change to love who they were becoming. In order to do that, I needed to spend time with them, observe them, listen to them in order to know who they are. This all sounds like I was so insightful and smart as a parent. I was not. This is retrospective knowledge. I tried to listen, observe and know who they were every day, but I did not always do that well at it. I was busy driving, cleaning, volunteering, working, planning, living and not always listening without distraction. I would say I was rarely listening without distraction actually. When I did listen, I often tried to rescue them, a common nurse issue. I thought I could multitask and listen, no one can, it turns out.

I attended ECFE (Early Child Family Education) classes for years and was, you guessed it, on the ECFE board VOLUNTEERING! I owned more books on parenting than anyone I know, I generally knew what they said, but I never had time to read them cover to cover. Today, if I wrote a parenting book, it might only be one page, even one sentence. It would say simply to listen without distraction or judgment, with an open mind. Respond with lots of, “How was that for you?” “How did that make you feel?” “What do you think you should do about that?” “What do you think your options are?” “I am so sorry that happened.” Sit down, look them in the eye, listen without rush. If looking each other in the eye is too hard, get in the car together and drive somewhere so you can talk without eye contact. Have rituals or a phrase that signals it is time to have a focused talk that either they can use to get your attention or vice versa. This should not be a threatening phrase, something super-emotional, but instead inviting. In the end you love them each the same amount but individually for who they are, for their weaknesses and their strengths. After all, likely many of these weaknesses and strengths are in your shared DNA at some level.

These same rules of love can work in other parts of our family and friends. My parents were very different from each other; I loved them for who they were. I am not pretending I did not struggle at times with who they were, I did. But I loved them for it, too. My siblings, in-laws, cousins, aunts and uncles, nieces and

## The Love Month continued

nephews, grandparents, friends, all of them I love for who they are. I also can mightily struggle with who they are. I am trying to listen, working not to judge but to listen for what I can love, respect, or for a perspective I did not appreciate even if I do not agree with it. Some days I do better than others.

As we start Lent, we are reminded of the incredible grace-filled love of God to offer His Son for our sins. We are reminded to pray, which is to talk but also to listen, to listen for God’s discerning voice and call for our lives as we grow and change, and as the world around us changes. Our faith practices act to remind us of this love, too. A simple daily devotion shared at dinner (make sure you get the free ones we are giving out), attending the brief Wednesday night worship, giving up something or intentionally doing something good throughout Lent, praying not only about our own sins but praying for our peace and understanding with our enemies that we might be less divided, be mindful to truly listen to others and more.

So how can you show LOVE to all the ages and stages of those in your life? I suggest it would be to listen without distraction, without multitasking, without judgment, without preparing to respond, without interruption and with only seeking to understand with an open mind and heart. Listen with a “prepare to be amazed” attitude, as Celeste Headlee says in her TED talk. Wishing you love of all kinds this month and every day of your life!

Beginning to Walk the Road of Lent with You,  
Kaye Wothe, Faith Community Nurse

*Continued above*

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