

Shepherd's Voice

February 2022



"Living Water"

By Pastor Scott Searl

I usually love these mid-winter days when the air is cold, the snow is deep, and the sun reflected off the snow is almost blindingly bright. As I sit in my office with the sunshine reflected off that deep snow it feels warm and inviting. I like to be out downhill or cross-country skiing or even just walking down the path hearing the crunching snow. However, the last few mornings I've woken up feeling incredibly dry. Working out at the gym I couldn't drink enough water. Even at work I've noticed that I keep walking to the kitchen to grab a drink. I'm thirsty.

In the very familiar story for this coming Sunday a woman meets Jesus at a well and she too is thirsty. The story is often called simply, the women at the well. She's a Samaritan and some might recognize that the Jews and the Samaritans can be at odds with one another. And most unfortunately this woman often gets painted in a bad light. Taking the details of the story out of context and interpreted poorly, she is often seen as a woman of the night. But this is most likely quite wrong.

In fact, as we've pointed out in the story where Mary asks Jesus to do something about the lack of wine at a wedding, like Mary this is a woman of faith. She comes in the light, a good thing in the Gospel of John. She comes to the light! She comes to the light (Jesus) in the day light! In the noon day sun. She comes and has one of the longest and theological conversations with Jesus to this point in the Gospel of John. This is a woman of faith. It is possible that she has had a difficult life, possibly many of her husbands have died. But what is clear is she is not coming for forgiveness. Instead, Jesus engages her as someone of honor and curiosity and seeking. And what she is seeking is living water. Something to quench her thirst for hope, love, and healing.

While I realize that it's just plain dry in the winter. The air carries less moisture, and we even add humidifiers to our homes. It's more than just a drink of water that I'm looking for as well. It's been a season of feeling dry. We have been back online for worship. We've been seeing mask mandates reinstated. Our hearts are dry and weary. But what Jesus offers this woman is what we all need. It's interesting to me that at the end of the story the woman leaves her jar for water behind. She's been filled to overflowing and forgot her jar!

This is what Jesus offers all of us, living water. A body filled with grace, hope, even joy. He can give this because he is the light of the world, he is the water that flows. So as I look out and see the piles of froze water, and the bright light reflected, I am reminded of the gift of living water that God pours graciously over each of us and even the earth itself. Take a moment and look out your window. Give thanks to God for the gift of all that God has given to you. Even the snow. Even the dry air. Even the winter. Let God fill your soul with the water that flows up even into eternal life.

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RADICAL JOY SESSION with Joe Davis

Join Joe Davis (and friends) for a special concert opportunity (multiple dates in February!). Help support our racial justice consultant and friend Joe Davis. Details below!

The New Renaissance Presents: Radical Joy Session - Black History Month 2022

Groove to the soulful sounds of Joe Davis & The Poetic Diaspora from the comfort of your home - with a Black History Month virtual concert experience centering Black joy, Black love, and Black liberation. Back by popular demand, The New Renaissance's Radical Joy Session returns with even more powerhouse artists bringing you feel good vibes right on time!

The exclusive production features the freedom funk of Joe Davis & The Poetic Diaspora (Imani Waters, Traiveon Dunlap, Nii Adjetey Mensah, Ryan Bynum, Deevo Dee, and Omar Abdulkarim) with special guests, American Idol-famed singer-songwriter Ashley DuBose with children's choir God's Children and gospel legend Courtland Pickens directing the youth choir KNOWN.

It's sure to be a virtual concert like you've never experienced before!

For ticket and more information, go to: https://www.eventbrite.com/e/radical-joy-session-black-history-month-2022-tickets-239443039577



PRESIDENT'S POST:

Thank You

By Adam Driscoll, Council President

On January 30th, we will have had our annual budget meeting, where your church council offers our proposed budget for 2022, seeking approval from the congregation. This is one of the most significant ordinary actions that the

council and congregation make each year. But we know that the year that just passed was anything but normal, just like the year before it, and so far, our current year is a bit disconcerting as well.

Through all of that, the congregation of Shepherd of the Hills has come through. Through your actions, we have continued to function as a family of faith hosting weddings, funerals, and fellowship; through your flexibility, we've continued to gather, in person and remotely; and through your robust financial support, we've remained healthy financially, allowing us to support our local small business community, continue long-standing support of local partner non-profits, and house an asylum seeking family in our parsonage. You did all of that!

I know many of us long for what we recall as normal, but as a credit to you all, the strength of our family of faith shines through in difficult times. Thank you for supporting Shepherd of the Hills, and I look forward to the things we'll do in 2022.

Education



MENTAL HEALTH CONNECT EDUCATION

Self-Care for the Caregiver Monthly sessions: begins January 27th at 6pm, offered the last Thursday of each month

A virtual monthly drop in group, Care/Support for the Caregiver. Each of these groups would provide community, support and an education topic. There will be a MHC Navigator, a therapist and our educator(Drew Brooks) at the meeting each month. Many of you are searching for help for a loved one, but you also need support too. MHC has resources, tools and a virtual time to share. This is another source of support for a growing population of caregivers. To register, go to https:// www.mhconnect.org/events

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



WOMEN'S BREAKFAST

Date: February 5, 2022 at 9:00 am
Topic: The Bible through Women's Eyes
Speaker: Intern Pastor Anne Schaefer
Description: Everyone has a filter

through which we see the world. This comes into play when we interact with our neighbors, listen to the news, and of course read the Bible. Come listen to and discuss how cultures and histories have strongly influenced the filters that female Biblical scholars have used to interpret and teach the Bible. Pastor Anne will lead this discussion on how women across the world have shared questions and concerns when it comes to religion and reading the Bible, but the answers we each gain are largely dependent on cultural context, race, and social class. All genders, levels of knowledge and experiences are welcome; trigger warning that violence against women is foundational to most women's perspectives and will be part of the presentation.

MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS SUNDAY

Date: February 6, 2022

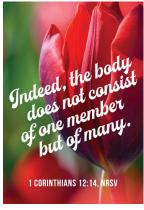
Speaker: Mark Anderson, Executive Director

Barbara Schneider Foundation

Topic: "De-escalation"

Description: Let's talk about de-escalation of a crisis. Crisis is part of life. De-escalation opens the door to recovery, healing and wellness of body, heart, mind and spirit. Physical health, emotional health, mental health and spiritual health are inter-related aspects of wellness for each of us. We become more whole when we reach out to support each other's journey through recovery, and healing to wellness.

Staff Reflection



GOOD MORNING, CHURCH!

By Intern Pastor Anne Schaefer

Or Good afternoon or evening...regardless of the time of day that you are reading this, YOU ARE THE CHURCH! We often get into the mindset that the building in which we worship is the church. And while I do agree that it is "a" church, it is not "the Church. You are. Paul teaches extensively about this in the New Testament, especially in one of his letters to the Corinthians (Look up the passages listed at the end of this article for more references.) For the sake of

space, I'll include three verses here:

"For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and we were all made to drink of one Spirit....Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it." 1Cor 12:12, 13 and 27

Paul is teaching the Corinthians (and us) that we are each individuals on our own, and we are also members of one body - Christ's. The "body of Christ" is common New Testament language for the Church - God's body on earth. When Jesus was on earth he had a physical, human body. Using his human body, he boldly expressed the love, compassion and grace of God. And God's work still continues in the world today, but now it is done through OUR physical, human bodies. We, the Church, are the body of Christ boldly sharing love, compassion and grace of God.

I love greeting you with "Good morning, Church" because I believe it reminds you of your identity. You are part of this great group of believers; a group that includes those in our midst as well as those outside of our walls, and even those who have come before and will come after we're gone. I like using this salutation as a loving welcome when we gather, and also as a confidence booster for who you are when you leave the building. You are the actual hands and feet of God in your workplace, your schools, the highway, the grocery store, online, and even your own home. Would those in your midst see Jesus in your words and actions?

May you feel connected and loved exactly as you are, and may the Spirit of Christ lead you as you represent Christ in the world!

Pastor Anne

More passages to read: Romans 12:5, Colossians 1:24, 1Corinthians 10:17, Ephesians 4:12, 5:23, Hebrews 13:3...what do these verses have in common? What is different about them? Feel free to let me know what you think!



BEYOND CANDY HEARTS AND ROSES

The first half of February seems dominated by pink and red, cards and candy. But people not in a loving romantic relationship can sometimes feel left out of the festivities. Of course, all people need love — and certainly love is not limited to the romantic kind. Author Leo Buscaglia, who became known as "Dr. Love" for writing about the topic, said, "Too often we underestimate the power of a touch, a smile, a kind word, a listening ear, an honest compliment or the smallest act of caring, all of which have the potential to turn a life around."

Jesus taught that loving one another is second only in importance to loving God (Matthew 22:37-40), and that when we love one another, God lives in us (1 John 4:12). There are so many ways to do that — beyond candy hearts and roses! But Valentine's Day is as good a reminder as any. From: churchart.com

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.

Meetings will be on Zoom. For questions please contact Kaye Wothe, Faith Community Nurse at kwothe@comcast.net

Book Club Schedules

Sun., Feb. 6 at 7:00 pm
"The Book of Longings"
by Sue Monk Kidd

Sun., March 13 at 7:00 pm "Think Again" by Adam Grant

Sun., May 1 at 7:00 pm "One Two Three" by Laurie Frankel

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.



WEDNESDAY SPEAKER SERIES

Our Wednesday Night Adult Education Speaker Series continues. We plan to meet on Zoom. All are welcome, kids and adults. Speakers start at 6:30 pm. We hope you will join us!

Date: Wednesday, February 2, 2022 at 6:30 pm on Zoom

Topic: Science and Religion Speaker: Greg Cootsona

Description: "Growing Spiritually in a Scientific Age"

We live in a world defined by science and technology, and sometimes it's hard to see how and where our faith fits. The amazing discovery is that science and technology can dramatically enhance our faith. Writer and theologian Greg Cootsona will address particular practices that create a scientifically-engaged spirituality through forgiveness, meditation, and gratitude

Greg Cootsona is an ordained Presbyterian Church (USA) pastor and a lecturer in

Greg Cootsona is an ordained Presbyterian Church (USA) pastor and a lecturer in Religious Studies and Humanities at Chico State University. He also co-directs Science for the Church, which resources Christian congregations as they integrate mainstream science into their ministries. Greg has written *Mere Science and Christian Faith: Bridging the Divide with Emerging Adults* and is active in leadership in many ways in this area.



RACIAL JUSTICE EDUCATION SERIES

Our education series on Racial Justice continues. Our speakers (David Scherer, Joe Davis and Justice Feldman) will help facilitate some strategic thinking and planning with our church council and staff. And they will be helping to lead us to new ways of thinking and being in the world both as individuals and as a family of faith. We hope you will make every effort to participate in this unique opportunity. We have much to learn about our history and ourselves.

Date: Sunday, February 20, 2022

Worship at 9:30 am and Education Hour at 10:30 am

Topic: "From Bystander to Upstander"

Speaker: Joe Davis and Dave Scherer, JUSTMove

Description: Dietrich Bonhoeffer once said, "Silence in the face of evil is evil itself". How do we move beyond the complicity of silence and learn how to stand in solidarity with those who are suffering? This session gives practical tools for allyship that help participants learn how to stand up with courage and work for God's justice.

Education Hour Topic: Bridging the Technology Divide: Closing the systemic racial gap in tech careers and tech access.

Guest Speakers: Guest speakers will be from the corporate space - leaders from Best Buy Corp (the Blacks in Tech Initiative), a professor from UMN computer science program, a leader from Microsoft corporation business development team.



FOOD TRUCK PARTY: ON A ROLL WITH GOD!

Vacation Bible School (VBS) June 13th – June 16th 9:00 am to 12:00 noon Mark your calendars!!

Shepherd of the Hills invites you to this year's VBS: Food Truck Party, On a Roll with God!

Children from Pre-school to 5th grade are invited to roll with God as a parade of Food Trucks rolls into their neighborhood for the summer's biggest party! This VBS invites children and their friends to pray as Jesus teaches us in Matthew 6:11; "Give us this day our daily bread." These words serve as a reminder that everything we have comes from God — and that it's by turning to God in prayer that all of our daily needs are met.

Kids (or "Chefs") will learn from the food truck's Top Chef about the Daily Specials (Daily Learnings), which are lines from the well-loved prayer that teaches us to turn to God to meet our needs. We will have music, games, crafts and you guessed it... food!

We will be looking for volunteers for this exciting event early so that we can have training and background checks completed before the Food Truck rolls in! Contact Pastor Sherri or Pastor Anne if interested.



MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

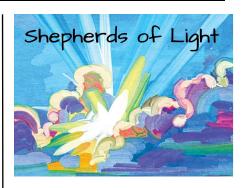
SUMMER FESTIVAL CAMP 2022 will be here before we know it! We have TWO separate adventures planned. Make note of the dates and grade levels for each week, and then mark your calendars in pen because you are not going to want to miss

this! Summer Festival Camp takes place on the campus of Gustavus Adolphus College. We will sleep in the dorms, eat in the cafeteria and play in the fields and pool! There are games and activities, singing, skits, talks, presentations and discussions...so much gets crammed into this time together. There really is something for everyone! This camp is only 3 nights/4 days, and the cost is lower than other camps (plus SOTH has funds available to help off-set this cost, so please let Pastor Anne or Pastor Sherri know if you'd like to know more about these funds). Check out https://summerfestivalcamp.com for more info. Registration and details to come via email. Friends are absolutely welcome, so spread the word!

July 10-13: Students entering grades 9 - 12

July 17-20: Students entering grades 6-8.

Cost is around \$270 per person (final amount not yet published)



NEWS AND IMPORTANT DATES

Sledding

February 6th after worship. Meet at Alden Park, 6750 Belmore Lane, Hopkins at 10:45 for a time of fun, fellowship and hot chocolate!

New Facebook Group!

Exclusively created for you, Shepherds of Light, to show off artwork, crafts, videos or anything you would want to share with your friends at Shepherd. If you need access, please contact Pastor Sherri or Pastor Anne.

1st Communion

March 5th, Instruction Class, 9:30am at Shepherd

March 12th, Chalice Making at Hopkins Community Education.

Two sessions for making your chalices: 10:00 to Noon, 1:00p to 3:00pm

VBS

June 13th to June 16th – Food Truck Party



CONFIRMATION WINTER RETREAT

February 25-27

It's retreat time for our middle school students!! Come join Pastor Sherri and Pastor Anne
February 25th through February 27th at Camp Onomia for fun, faith and winter festivities! Cost is \$115. We'll play lots of games, listen to great music, eat delicious food and make lots of memories as we build trust in Jesus! Check out CampOnomia.org for more fun facts. Email Pastor Anne for registration information: Anne.Schaefer@SOTH Church.com. Friends are welcome too!



MIDDLE SCHOOL CHRISTMAS PARTY RECAP

Middle school students plus a few awesome adult volunteers gathered together just before the holidays and sang Christmas carols through the neighborhoods while collecting food for ICA Food Shelf! We celebrated together afterwards with games, prizes and snacks! What a great group of students!!



AT EVERY TURN:

Insights from the Intern

By Intern Pastor Anne Schaefer

Welcome to my little corner of the world. As an intern pastor, I am learning a great deal about what it means to be called to ministry. Each month, I will use this newsletter space to reflect on the wisdom that has come my way. I will likely learn a great deal about God, the Church, this congregation, faith, myself and grace. Thanks for being part of my journey!

Lesson #1: You cannot call people too often. When I first arrived at SOTH, I had a tough time understanding my role in regard to expressing care and concern for the people in our community. Each time that I would think to call someone, I'd hear of another pastor who already called them. This made me feel like I should not call them because I do not want to bombard people with too many phone calls. As it turns out, I learned that this is not a normal reaction. Except for an emergency or a major life event, people don't seem to mind when they get multiple messages of love and care from their multiple pastors. Apparently, you can't love someone too much in this way.

#2: The Spirit sometimes works like a translator, and she does much of her work in the fractions of a second between the words leaving my mouth and the words entering people's ears. There have been a few times where I said something that felt very mundane or straightforward and yet people have said they felt encouraged or challenged. The Spirit is good like that—making sure each of us hears what God wants us to hear. My lesson in this is to trust the Spirit while I prepare to preach or teach. She may guide my words as they swirl around my mind, or she may guide and transform those words as they settle on my listeners. I pray that we each are open to the Spirit's influence.

#3: Happy 1 Year Anniversary to me! Thank you, SOTH, for being such a nurturing and supportive congregation to me over this past year! I'm thankful to have another 6 months with you.

Grace and peace!
Pastor Anne

Staff Reflection



PERMISSION GRANTED

By Pastor Sherri Otto

Seventeen years ago, our mom was diagnosed with breast cancer. My dad had died two years earlier and so this was exceptionally hard for our mom not to have him with her during this time. After the surgery, it was recommended that she have both chemotherapy and radiation treatments.

I took off work for her first chemo treatment, driving down from Burnsville to pick her up and drive her to

the appointment in Red Wing. I wanted to do something for her, feeling helpless for what she was going through, so I bought her new pajamas and a robe as I thought this would somehow comfort her.

I was happy to find out that I could sit with her as they hooked her up to receive the chemicals and wondered what she was thinking as this went into her body. I didn't bring it up as I did not want to upset her as she was putting on a good front of being the strong Norwegian woman I knew and loved. She was just about ready to open my gift when my phone rang.

It was Bob stating that our daughter Emily had gotten hurt at day-care and he was on his way with her to the emergency room. He said she was okay but that they needed to check her out to see if there were any internal injuries. My heart was racing, my head spinning, but somehow, I managed to tell him to call me when he gets any updates.

As I set the phone down, my mom said this, "Go. Your daughter needs you." I thought to myself, "But you need me too, mom! Right?"

My mom knew exactly what I was thinking and repeated herself again. "Go Sherri. Your daughter needs you. I will be fine."

And so, I listened to my mom. I drove faster than the speed limit to get to the ER and when I arrived, I saw my beautiful two-year-old, sitting on the bed, eating a Freeze pop.

My mom knew the importance of being with my child and gave up her own needs for that of someone she loved and cared about. She gave me permission to leave, a permission that I was not willing to give to myself.

This act of love reminds me of our God who understands our need for permission. We don't always know what the right thing is to do and sometimes we can either ignore a situation or stay in it too long. I believe God works through people, like my mom, every day in their ordinary lives to give us guidance, love and yes, even permission.

What is it today that you need permission to let go of, to leave or to stay put? How can the people around you help in giving you this permission? Who do you turn to when tough choices or decisions need to be made?

Permission Granted continued

Our God is here for you and so are we, to love you, care for you, forgive you, restore you and give you permission to be the amazing person that God created you to be.

Today, receive this blessing:

When you are on a rough sea May it be calmed for you When you are in a dark place May it be lightened for you When your path has been lost May it be found again for you When the view is obscured by cloud

May it be cleared for you When you need permission

May the God' Spirit move within you*

And when you feel alone Know I will be there for you.

Iain Tweedale

*Added on by me

Peace, Pastor Sherri

Faith Community Nurse

The Darkness continued

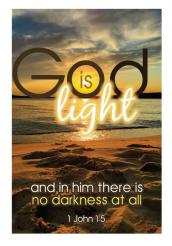
fingers, the temperature and taste of the food is accentuated when your eyes are not pre-tasting it. When I am forced to move around in the dark, I have to use other senses to make each move.

When I am in dark times emotionally, I am forced to slow down, spend some time getting grounded, step back and adjust my perspective. I may have to finally work through an old injury I caused or I experienced.

Dark times in our culture, like pandemics, force us to see the world from a different position. We all had to stop racing around, which gave us a chance to review our priorities, blessings, choices, etc. Dark times culturally that show up in our division as a nation of peoples forces us to get in one another's shoes a bit and consider why we come up on opposite sides. Or, if our sides are really opposite, maybe we have different approaches to solve the same concerns? As much as I have been frustrated with those who opted out of vaccination, if I really think about why each of those people feels that way, I can see, many times, what is driving it. Even if I still do not think it is rational, I can at least empathize.

As Lent begins in early March, consider how you will enter those 40 days to befriend the darkness. Be more mindful about what is good about the dark. What in your internal darkness needs to be worked through? What do I need to confess in my darkness and work through, grow from? I am working on this by trying/listening to an app called Ritual or trying new things like this. I am looking at Lent devotions already, trying to embrace the darkness.

Continued on page 11



The Darkness

By Kaye Wothe, Faith Community Nurse

This time of year, I find myself thinking a lot about darkness. I am a person who loves to be outside and loves daylight. The hours of darkness combined with the cold (which somehow adds to the darkness) can be overwhelming. When Lent rolls around, I always think, "Of course, Lent... more darkness, called to darkness, but at least a darkness that will carry us to the light of spring."

For some of us, we do what we can to escape darkness. We travel to sunny places, we get our

seasonal affective disorder salves out, maybe a special lamp, we find our comfort items and indulge in them. But I wonder, what is so bad about the dark? Can I embrace the darkness and see what is good there? Is the dark only bad and the light only good? Or is there a duality here that I can appreciate, learn from and add to my wellbeing (mind, body and spirit)?

First, I have to ask myself, how does the dark impact me? Does it physically scare me? Why? Does it emotionally dent me? Why? Can I re-wire my response to it?

Additionally, the re-wiring of my response is recognizing what my negative reactions to the dark is, and what the positive value the dark is. As people of faith, historically we have associated the dark with the devil. Maybe we have overassociated dark as only bad and light as good (I hate typing this as I am aware how this could be interpreted in terms of race. This is NOT my intended correlation, but I am aware it has VERY likely historically played out in our literature and it has impacted us subliminally, sadly).

I have physically been afraid of the dark since childhood when my older brothers assured me the bogey man lived there. Even after realizing the bogey man was not a real thing, I went on to assume bad things existed in the dark. Then as a young adult female, I felt less safe when in dark places alone. As I got older, the dark is scary because it is a place where I am likely to trip or bump into things that injure me. Mentally and emotionally when I cannot sleep in the dark of night, I have to work hard for my thoughts to not be extra negative in the exhaustion and disorientation of the darkness of the day's end. When we refer to depression, grief and other struggles with our mental health, we often label them as dark times because this description gives us a common reference point of understanding and allows us to avoid the real diagnosis so we can continue to honor the stigma of mental illness.

What is good about the dark? I know from working night shifts, I sleep/rest much better in the dark. Rest is good for all areas of our wellbeing.

Only in the dark can I appreciate the wonder and beauty of the moon and stars.

The dark forces me to use my other senses more, else I rely on my sight too much. When we use our sight too much, we tend to make judgments entirely based on what we see. We risk "judging a book by its cover." Try eating a snack in complete darkness. It forces a more mindful experience. How the food you eat feels to your



A PICTURE IS WORTH A THOUSAND WORDS

I'll let these do the talking this month.

Artur, Naida, Akhmed (in maroon shirt) and Murad (in green shirt) Magomedov.

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





The Darkness continued from page 10

Even trying things, like eating in the dark or being mindful about how the dark impacts me and pushes me to places I might not otherwise experience but it is important for me to consider. Journaling is an especially good way to work through times of darkness. Tell me how you are embracing the darkness now? Also, how are you preparing for the long days of Lent? I would love to hear from you.

Exploring the Darkness with You with New Eyes,
Kaye Wothe
Faith Community Nurse
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