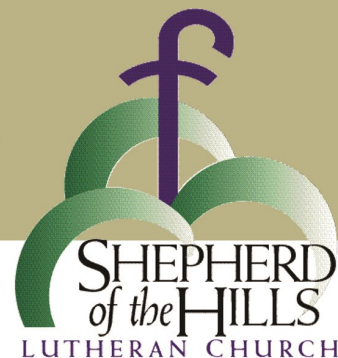


# Shepherd's Voice



February 2023

## **“How To Lead When You Don’t Know Where You’re Going”**

*By Interim Pastor Susan Debner*

This is the title of a book by Pastor Susan Beaumont, a church consultant, strategist and coach. She actually wrote the book in 2018 and it was published late in 2019, but it became a monstrous hit in 2020 as the pandemic rolled over us. That fall, Beaumont began offering classes and seminars on Zoom. The one I attended had over 300 registrants from around the world. We were assigned to small groups, and my group had a pastor from Australia, another from Canada, and two from the U.S. The whole world wanted to know how to lead when you don’t know where you’re going!

Even before the pandemic turned us on our heads, Susan Beaumont was thinking about the church as experiencing liminal time—literally, time spent lingering in the doorway, between an ending and a new beginning. On one side is the old way of doing things that no longer works, but the way forward is not yet clear. Liminal time is disorienting and often anxious, but Beaumont makes a case for lingering, listening and learning.

If I had been asked to sign up for disorienting, anxious times, I’m certain I would have said, “How kind of you to offer, but thank you, no.” I’m probably not alone in that? Beaumont re-frames these things from negative experiences to God-soaked spaces for self-discovery and growth. Thanks to insights like hers, I have found I love doing interim ministry—which requires me to enter liminal time again and again.

Here’s one key thing I have learned about liminal time: The more experience I get with it, the less frightening and worrisome it is, and the more interesting and intriguing it becomes. For most of my life, I believed anxiety and disorientation were solved by getting smarter about something or better at something. Neither of those approaches works very well in liminal time because we’re not sure what to do more or better. Sometimes, patience alone will reveal a next step, but often, in more complex situations, it takes more than endurance to move through anxiety.

What does help is looking patiently and deeply into the anxious places, while praying and talking with each other. We wonder together about the sources of our anxiety and try to name its many layers. Then, again with prayer and conversation, we work through what God has to do with us in this time, and we look around for where God is already acting and how God making space for us to join.

Shepherd, these are things you were already doing even before I arrived! They are faithful, hard and patient work—the kind of work that gets less worrisome the more we do it, and less wearisome the more we share it. So let me know if this resonates with you, and if there are additional ways or places we can navigate this liminal time together.

See you at worship, Interim Pastor Susan

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

**Staff:**

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

**Church Council Members / Officers:**

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

**Telephone & Voice Mail Extensions:**

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

**Shepherd Online!**

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



## WEATHER CANCELLATION POLICY

Have you noticed the snow and cold? ☺ It's that time of year again in Minnesota! Love it or hate it, sometimes winter weather impairs our ability to gather at church. Every effort will be made to worship each Sunday morning, but should there be a need to cancel or shift to online worship, the decision will be made by the pastors and/or the council president at least 2 hours prior to the start of worship (so no later than 7:30AM on Sunday morning). The same practice of giving 2+ hour notice for cancellation should be used for all SOTH events whenever possible.

Please check for email, text/phone messages and Facebook for notices. You may also reach out to a pastor or leader directly with questions.

Please note that if you do not feel it's safe to travel, you should stay home and join us online. When the weather clears—and it will—we'll look forward to seeing you back at church!



## PRESIDENT'S POST

### Thank you!

By Adam Driscoll, Council President

As described in our January 29 Annual Budget meeting, a surge in giving in December allowed us to end 2022 with a surplus, and for that I am extremely grateful. Thank you to the people of Shepherd, who have continued to make this place a vibrant house of worship and community of faith through a year of transition. While rising costs and uncertainty require us to be cautious stewards of the gifts you've given, your faithfulness continues to put Shepherd on strong financial ground as we move into 2023, seeking new beginnings in the form of a new called senior pastor, and all that can come with that transition. Thanks be to God for you.



## MUSIC NOTES

Across the months of interim ministry, we continue to search for musicians to lead worship and choir at SOTH. When the Music Ministry position opened up last year, the Council and Personnel Committee determined to offer it as an interim position, recognizing that the new senior pastor may want to influence how the role defined and filled. We have not been able to find an interim music director. Consequently, a slate of substitute musicians has been cobbled together and our amazing choir is doing their best to manage through all the changes. Please be patient with the music ministry at Shepherd—the way things are right now is not how they always will be. If you have specific questions, concerns or ideas, please contact Pastor Susan.

## GREAT SOTH VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY

Did you know that the reason we enjoy being able to have communion each week is all because of volunteers? We have a small, dedicated volunteer group called the Altar Guild who do the preparation, set-up and clean-up for communion and also do chancel care at Shepherd. Three to four times per year, each person (or a pair) does this easy and rewarding, “in-the-background” work.

Anyone can do it, including a parent with a daughter or son of at least confirmation age. We'd love to have you join us—it's a wonderful, quiet way to serve!! Please contact Shawn ([office@sothchurch.com](mailto:office@sothchurch.com)), Sally Nash ([sallyanash@gmail.com](mailto:sallyanash@gmail.com)) or Kathy Wiemer ([klwiemer@aol.com](mailto:klwiemer@aol.com)) with any questions or to include your name as an Altar Guild volunteer. Thanks!!

## THANK YOU!

How do we begin to express our gratitude for what SOTH has given our mission this past year ...

- a beautiful working place to provide 28,000+ meals to those who need help;
- A wonderful space to welcome our many volunteers each and every day;
- And lastly, gratitude for all who help from your own members who volunteer several days each month and for those who provide Christmas surprises to everyone of our clients. We received notes from our clients and from their families thanking us for your gift.

It is a huge responsibility for us to be a positive mission shining from SOTH to our community!!

With thanks, Meals on Wheels (Dinner at Your Door)

## 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

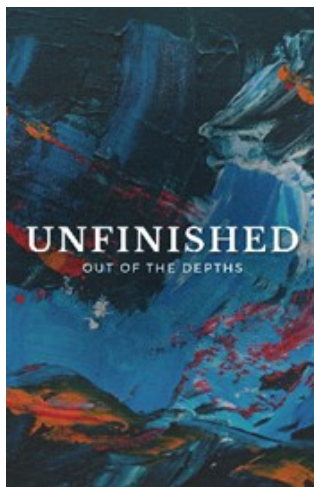
Sunday, March 5 at 7:00 pm at SOTH  
Book: "The Vanishing Half"  
by Brit Bennett

## WEDNESDAY AM BIBLE STUDY

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

## REMINDER FOR PARENTS TO MARK YOUR CALENDARS

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



## LENTEN SERIES at SHEPHERD

Jonah walks a Lenten path. Like all human beings, he is prone to wander from his Creator in favor of determining the shape and scope of his own future. This temptation is especially powerful when God calls us to take on risky ventures, travel to strange places, and confront things inside of us that prevent us from seeing one another as God does. God meets us in those liminal, Lent-like spaces when we find ourselves somewhere between trust and doubt, courage and fear, anger and empathy. Please join us as we walk through the book of Jonah this Lenten season.

Ash Wed., Feb. 22  
Lent 1, Feb. 26  
Lent 2, March 5  
Lent 3, March 12  
Lent 4, March 19  
Lent 5, March 26

Jonah 1 - God Calls and Persists  
Jonah 1:17; Psalm 139 - Intercepted and Redirected  
Jonah 2; Psalm 130 - God in the Depths of Chaos  
Jonah 3 - Obedience and Preservation  
Jonah 4 - Faithful and Unfinished  
Matthew 8:23-27 (cf. Mark 4:34-41; Luke 8:22-25)  
Jesus, a New Jonah

## DINNER CHURCH

### Wednesdays during Lent (all of March)

This year, our midweek Lenten worship will happen around the dinner tables of fellowship hall! Join us for shared meals, singing, conversations and prayer as we experience a new way to worship for the 5 Wednesdays of Lent. More details to follow soon.



## SOTH CALL COMMITTEE UPDATE

We begin our corner of the February newsletter as we often do, in gratitude to our SOTH family. Thank you so much for the numerous and thoughtful recommendations for Sr. Pastor candidates!

All your recommendations have been submitted to the Synod. We now anxiously await meeting Assistant to the Bishop John Hulden to receive our candidate package. Once we have the names of potential SOTH Senior Pastors, the interviewing will

commence. We're all looking forward to this phase of our journey!

Please continue to pray for our team as we enter this critical and busy phase of meeting the candidates and thoughtful discussion that will lead us to the right next SOTH Senior Pastor.

## INVITATION TO MENTAL HEALTH CLASS

**Monday, February 27th, 6:30pm to 8:00pm**  
**Edina Community Lutheran Church**

God cares about our whole selves, including our mental health. Join the National Alliance on Mental Illness of Minnesota (NAMI) for a suicide prevention training, "Question, Prevent, Refer", on Monday, February 27 from 6:30-8:00pm. Just like CPR, QPR is an emergency response to someone in crisis. At this training, learn the three steps you can take to help prevent suicide. This is a free event and hosted in person by Edina Community Lutheran Church (4113 W. 54th Street, Edina). Please RSVP to Deacon Lauren at [Lmorsewendt@eclc.org](mailto:Lmorsewendt@eclc.org).

## MENTAL HEALTH SUNDAY

**Guest Speaker**

**February 5, 2023**

Please join us on Sunday, Feb. 5th as we will hear from Vicki Elliott, the director of Mental Health Connect during our worship service.

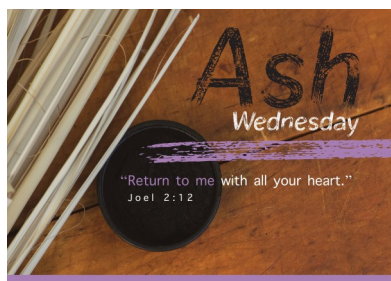
Vicki is an outstanding speaker, being able to develop the MHConnect program, connect with collaborative communities and supporters, and grow the organization in order to reach more people. After losing her oldest son Cole to mental health-related issues in 2018, she became passionate about providing support to people that have a mental health concern. We ALL have mental health and it needs care.

Vicki has an MBA degree and brings her organization and leadership background to MHC, along with a love of people and service. Some of her past-times include spending time with family, traveling, enjoying time with friends or trying out new healthy cooking experiments. She also serves as a Thrivent Advisor, the President of the St. Anthony Chamber of Commerce and serves on a grant committee at the Minneapolis ELCA Area Synod.

## THANK YOU SO MUCH

To Our Shepherd Friends,  
A huge “thank you” for all who sent  
get well cards, good wishes and  
prayers. It was all most appreciated.

God’s blessings to you all,  
Betty & Ed Edmundson



## ASH WEDNESDAY: February 22, 2023 6:30 pm Worship

By Pastor Sherri Otto

I’m sitting in my living room on a cold and snowy January morning and just turned on the fireplace to warm things up a bit. The dogs love it when I do this and they lay side by side, with not a care in the world, next to the fire.

I have my favorite yoga pants and sweatshirt on and am feeling rather cozy as the wind is whipping outside while the fire is burning warmly. And I start to think about Ash Wednesday. Now you may think, “Well, that’s weird!” Yep, it is! But as a pastor that is sometimes where our minds go! ☹️

So, I looked up what the ELCA had to say about Ash Wednesday and here is what I found. The text from the ELCA website is in *italics* and my comments are below that.

*Ash Wednesday is the Wednesday of the seventh week before Easter and the first day of Lent. The day is named for the practice of imposing ashes, a practice that many Lutheran congregations have found to be a very meaningful part of the Ash Wednesday liturgy. The early Christians adopted the use of ashes from Jewish practice as an external mark of penitence.*

*Using ashes as a sign of repentance is an ancient practice, often mentioned in the Bible (e.g., Jonah 3:5-9; Job 42:6; Jeremiah 6:26; Matthew 11:21).*

*Ashes symbolize several aspects of our human existence:*

- *Ashes remind us of God's condemnation of sin, as God said to Adam, "Dust you are and to dust you shall return" (Genesis 3:19).*  
We will be saying these words “Remember that you are dust and to dust you shall return” as we mark the sign of the cross with ashes on a person. I would like to invite you to think about a different way of saying this. “Remember you are Loved and to LOVE you shall return.” Perhaps, for some, it takes away the reminder of our sinful nature. However, for me, it lifts up the hope that we find in God who loves us completely and in Jesus, who showed us this love and for the Holy Spirit who remains with us to love until our final days.
- *Ashes suggest cleansing and renewal. They were used anciently in the absence of soap. Even on Ash Wednesday, this most penitential day, we receive ashes in the form of the cross, the same symbol placed on our bodies with water in our baptism. Even in this ashen mark of death, we anticipate the new life of Easter.*  
We are studying the book of Jonah this Lenten season and in it is a myriad of serious theological themes, humorous stories and ironic happenings. Even as we put the ashes on our heads or hands on Ash Wednesday, we are reminded of the same action which was placed on our foreheads at our baptism. Ashes and water. Death and new life. Repentance and forgiveness. Opposites and yet connected.

## Ash Wednesday continued from page 6

- *Ashes remind us of the shortness of human life, for it is said as we are buried into the ground or as ashes are placed in a columbarium. "We commit this body to the ground; earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust".*

Ash Wednesday does remind us that we will not and cannot live forever on this earth. It can be scary to think of and we may want to run and hide, just as Jonah did. But God wants us to live an abundant life, trusting in God and truly knowing that this life is not the end because of Jesus Christ.

- *Ashes are a symbol of our need to repent, confess our sins, and return to God.*

God's calling can sometimes lead us to people or places that are disturbing or uncomfortable. It is understandable in these situations that our first instinct is to flee. Thankfully, God's kindness and faithfulness mean that our "no" or our "running" has no impact on God's unshakable "yes" to us in Christ. When our faithfulness waivers and leads us to flee, God pursues us to the ends of the earth. Thanks be to God!

Please join us for this important time together in community as we learn, pray, commune and place ashes on our bodies, remembering that we are renewed and cleansed, loved and treasured and that God will never leave us, in life and in death.

Peace,  
Pastor Sherri

## ASYLUM WORK CONTINUES

By Paul Bohnsack

As of mid-January, ACT-TC is busy furnishing a home in St. Paul for a new asylum family. The home is the main level of a duplex. The lot has a big yard for children to play in and it is located near public transportation and services important to those making this transition.

The second floor is being rented by a family from Nigeria sponsored by St. Paul-Reformation Lutheran Church. The duplex was purchased by a member of that church and her sisters for renting exclusively to asylum seeking families at reasonable rates. The current family is looking forward to meeting their downstairs neighbors. As of this writing we do not yet know who that will be.

ACT-TC is grateful for your continued support of time and gifts to this vital ministry. If you have not already done so, you may try this link to contribute items: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10cod4baca72ba5ff2-help1/119183534#/>  
For questions, contact Susie Baker at [bakersusie@me.com](mailto:bakersusie@me.com) or 612-801-9276 (cell)([signupgenius.com](https://www.signupgenius.com))

On behalf of ACT-TC  
Paul Bohnsack  
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[bohnsackps@fro](mailto:bohnsackps@fro)

[ntiernet.net](http://ntiernet.net)

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

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"nothing  
will be able to  
separate us  
from the love of God  
in Christ Jesus our Lord."  
Romans 8:39