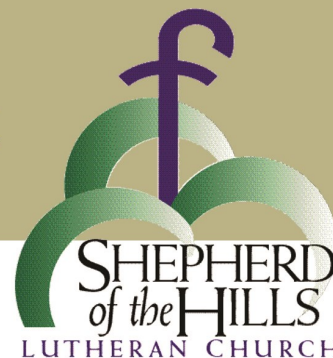


# Shepherd's Voice



June 2023

## **“A Season of Jubilee”**

*By Interim Pastor Susan Debner*

Congratulations, Shepherd, on the Holy Spirit's work among you as you overwhelmingly voted to call Pastor Yolanda to be your next Senior Pastor! This is exciting news, even as it leads to my farewell. I have been honored and delighted to walk alongside you through this time of interim ministry, and I join you in giving thanks and praise to God for all that comes next.

As you prepare for Pastor Yolanda's arrival on July 1, consider ushering in a “Post-pandemic Season of Jubilee.” I'm copying this idea from another pastor who, wisely, began declaring this in response to the number of people who say things like, “We haven't gone to church since COVID hit. Not only are we out of the habit, it's also a little embarrassing to return now.” What do you do in such a season?

Invite (back) any and all! Are you someone who fell out of connection with this (or any) church across the pandemic upheaval? Do you know someone who did? This is a wonderful season to declare broad grace and warm invitations to all who want to reconnect or connect in new ways. Don't wait for people to cross the building threshold before you welcome them, go find them and offer gracious invitations. The arrival of a new senior pastor is an outstanding opportunity for “come and see” conversations with others. Worship doesn't have to be the only point of connection, either. Encourage folks to join you for any aspect of SOTH's life and mission in the community. A couple of pro-tips for ramping this up: Consider regular and long-term use of name tags, and practice gentle, welcoming phrases like, “I'm so happy to see you!”

Please join us for worship on June 4 when we will bless and celebrate SOTH's graduates, and bless and celebrate the conclusion of this interim time. Paige and I are sad to leave you, but so inspired by all God is inviting you to join.

Every blessing,  
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
Interim Music Director	Patti Arntz
Administrative Assistant	Shawn Wacholz
Building Manager	Blair Prax

**Church Council Members / Officers:**

President	Chris Polston
Vice President	Steve Hanneman
Treasurer	Johanna Olson
Financial Secretary	Fred Jensen
Secretary	Kim Kelly
Serve	Nancy Shaeffer
Worship & Music	Karen Hofstad
Building & Facilities	Terry Jensen
Learn	Lyn Kopperud
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



## SENIOR GRADUATION RECOGNITION Sunday, June 4

Shepherd of the Hills would like to congratulate the following young people on their High School graduations! This is a great milestone in the lives of these students, and we wish them all the best in their future endeavors. We will be blessing them during worship on June 4<sup>th</sup> and celebrating with sweet rolls during the coffee hour to congratulate them in person. Please join us for this special time!

Dylan Ray Braun  
Julian Paul Carlson  
Marcus Andrew Carlson  
Jack Stanley Hanson  
Nathan Alexander Mizioro  
Rowan Michael Nordin  
Cameron Lee Scott



## FAREWELL AND GODSPEED TO PASTOR SUSAN Sunday, June 4

Please join us on June 4<sup>th</sup> for a time of thanksgiving as we send-off Pastor Susan as our interim pastor. We thank her for her guidance and support during our transitional period in the lives of this congregation and for her wisdom and respect for all she encountered. Thank you, Pastor Susan and Paige, for being a part of our community!!



## JUNE IS PRIDE MONTH

Do Lutherans celebrate Pride? Yes, we do! In a wonderful, wide range of ways—here are just a few links to examples, resources and food for thought around Lutherans and Pride:

This video greeting from Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NcDPIsh6k1c>

This article from Living Lutheran magazine:  
<https://www.livinglutheran.org/2018/06/beyond-the-rainbow-flag/>

This news story from an ELCA congregation in South Carolina:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=27BA4yvkD4M>

This fabulous, insightful YouTube series of “Clunky Questions” created by Reconciling Works (this is just one clunky question—several more videos are linked to this one!):  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KeJ8\\_umyMco](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KeJ8_umyMco)



## PRESIDENT'S POST

By Chris Polston, Council President

Hello everyone!

This is Chris Polston, in my first letter to this wonderful congregation. I am still awed that you have chosen me to be Council President, my gratitude is beyond words. Many thanks to our outgoing council members and a special THANK YOU to Adam Driscoll. He has been a constant fount of information to help me get settled into this role. To you, Dear Reader, my thanks for your commitment and resilience as we have all navigated a tumultuous year (or two!).

It is a BUSY time! We just had our congregational vote to call the Reverend Doctor Yolanda Denson-Byers as our new senior pastor. The Call Committee did some hard work and good work in selecting a candidate for us. As you see the call committee folks, please take a minute to give them thanks for their efforts. While I am happy to greet Pastor Yolanda and am excited for where we go with our new senior pastor, it is with sadness that I say "See you later" to Pastor Susan. I thank her for her pastoral leadership and work with us during her time here. Many thanks also go to Pastor Sherri, Blair and Shawn for their leadership over this time.

I am excited to be working with our new pastoral team and the new council this year. If you have an idea, thought, concern or comment, please take me aside. I look forward to what you have to teach me as we move into this new year with the momentum and purpose we have built over the past year.

With Gratitude,  
Chris Polston

## 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. Bible Study will continue to meet weekly in the summer.

All are welcome.

## Milestones continued

It's a wonderful way to pass things along and open up conversations. It's an excellent way to leave a legacy of what is important to you. It's an important way to show your love for those around you. I look forward to hearing from you on how your assignment went!

Happy June to each of you and I hope this summer is filled with milestones and wonderful events in your life!

May God bless you all!!  
Pastor Sherri



## MILESTONES

By Pastor Sherri Otto

In the dictionary, a milestone is defined as 1. a [stone](#) functioning as a milepost or 2. a significant event or stage in the life, progress, development, or the like of a person, nation, etc.

This year, 2023, is a milestone for both my daughter and me. Emily will be turning 21 on June 1<sup>st</sup> and I will be turning a “certain number” in July. Both of which are significant numbers in our lives. Both will involve celebrations, both will involve family and friends and both will involve some emotions about the ages we are turning.

As I reflect on my age now, I can't help but think about what I would have wanted my 21-year-old self to know. And so here are a few things that I came up with:

- Be yourself. Authenticity is needed in this world today.
- Don't worry so much about your appearance. The people that love you, love you for who you are, not for how you look.
- Be kind. No if's, ands or buts about this.
- Be brave. It's okay to fail and try again and again and again. Making mistakes and how we handle them are what makes us who we are.
- Love unconditionally.
- Tell people you love them. You never know when it will be the last time you see them.
- Ask for help. God did not create us to do this life alone. It's okay and it's worth it.
- When you least expect it, you will find what you are looking for.
- Stand up and speak up for others less fortunate.
- Find your passion and never let that go.
- Change is hard but often needed.
- Remember, God is always with you. Quit searching for love, acceptance and forgiveness from other sources.

I know these are not new ideas. I know people have said these time and time again. But when you start looking back on your younger years, there is wisdom in what we have learned. Wisdom that we can pass on to our future generations, wisdom that they may not want to hear now, but may need to hear later.

So today, I have an assignment for you. Write down 10 things that you would want to pass on to your children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren or anyone that is important in your life. And if you are younger than 30 years old and are reading this, write down things that you would want to have a conversation about with your own parents, siblings or friends. You have great wisdom to share with us as well!



## SOTH CALL COMMITTEE UPDATE

It is with equal parts excitement and gratitude that I greet you today to let you know that this will be the final installment from this call committee.

Thanks to all who attended our meet and greet with Pastor Yolanda. The turnout was fantastic! Those in attendance were able to enjoy pizza, veggies and dessert all while getting to visit with and/or listen to

Pastor Yolanda share more about herself and why she felt called to Shepherd of the Hills.

We also appreciate the terrific turnout both in-person and on Zoom for the congregational vote on May 21st. I know there were several that changed plans or popped on Zoom despite conflicts to be there. Thank you!

SOTH overwhelmingly supported the committee's choice voting to call the Rev. Dr. Yolanda Denson-Byers to serve as our Senior Pastor. The constitutional bylaws state we needed a 66% approval vote to call. The May 21st vote far surpassed that margin with over 93% approving. By the numbers, we had 112 vote and of those 105 voted yes, 4 voted no and 3 abstained.

Please continue to pray for Pastor Yolanda as she prepares to join us in Shepherd's ministry in early July.

Keep your eyes out and ears open for details regarding Pastor Yolanda's installation which is currently targeted for September.

The call committee leaves you with our deepest gratitude as you entrusted us to grow in faith and wisdom as we worked together to find our next senior pastor. It has been an honor and blessing!

Your 2022-2023 SOTH Call Committee,  
Alyssa Barott, Brittany Roeser, Johanna Olson, Kathy Wiemer, Kevin Wicks and Louis Nelson



## WELCOME PASTOR YOLANDA!

The Reverend Dr. Yolanda Denson-Byers hails from St. Louis Missouri where she grew up on the Mississippi river and underneath the arch.

She graduated from Wesleyan University with a double major in Religious and African-American studies. She earned her Master of Divinity Degree from Harvard University with specialty in preaching and worship, religious education, and pastoral care and counseling. Finally, her Doctorate of Ministry was earned in the field of Congregational Mission and Leadership from Luther Seminary in Saint Paul.

Pastor Yolanda has been in Ministry for the last 27 years. She has pastored congregations in Connecticut, Massachusetts, and Minnesota. In addition to pastoring churches, she has served as a campus minister and hospice chaplain.

Pastor Yolanda is married to Tasha, who is the love of her life. They have five children ranging in age from 23 years to 21 months. In her free time, she loves to travel, read, write, hike, camp, and sit in the grass barefoot.

# Events

## HAPPENINGS IN HOPKINS/EDINA

### Family Story Time

June 1, 2023, 10:30 AM Join the Hopkins Library for Family Story Time every Thursday!

### FREE Movie Night - Hopkins Community Cinema

June 6, 2023, 7:00 PM @Hopkins Center for the Arts

You're invited to Free Movie Night. Hopkins Community Cinema's theme of 2023 is 'The Power of Neighborhood.' Join in and watch a movie that the community voted to screen.

### Farmer's Market at Centennial Lakes Park

June 8 – Sept. 28, 2023, 3:00 PM - 7:00 PM @Centennial Lakes Park Hughes Pavilion, Edina

### The Sunset Series Outdoor Concerts - FREE

June 15, 2023, 7:00 PM @ Downtown Park

Hopkins Center for the Arts is pleased to present the 2023 Sunset Series. From local favorites to emerging new talent, the Sunset Series is a showcase for great talent from all genres. Bring a chair and some friends!

### MN ROOTS - A Juneteenth Community Gathering

June 17, 2023, 4:00 PM - 7:00 PM

Honor Juneteenth with MN ROOTS at the Hopkins Center for the Arts!

### Juneteenth Celebration

June 19, 2023, 4:00 PM - 8:00 PM @Maetzold Amphitheater, Edina

Live music from Carolyne Naomi, Tre. Charles and Smash Jazz, 4-8 p.m.

### MN Food Truck Festival - Hopkins!

June 24, 2023, 11:00 AM - 9:00 PM

One of the Twin Cities most popular & delicious events – The Uptown Food Truck Festival will be on Hopkins Mainstreet between 11th and 8th Ave.

### June is PRIDE month

Pride Month is an annual celebration of the many contributions made by the LGBTQ+ community to history, society and cultures worldwide.



## VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

### Hero Hotline:

### Called Together to Serve God!

June 19 – 22

9:00am to Noon

Registration is now available on our website at [www.sothchurch.com](http://www.sothchurch.com)

Sign-up sheets are also available at the SOTH Welcome Desk. Bring your friends!!

Cost is \$20.00 per family. Any questions, contact Pastor Sherri

## VOLUNTEERS NEEDED FOR VBS

We are looking for volunteers to help with Vacation Bible School on June 19th – June 22nd, 9:00am to noon. If you have a passion for singing, dancing, art, games, food and fun, please contact Pastor Sherri. This will fill your spirit, we promise!!

## SUMMER FESTIVAL CAMP

The greatest summer camp experience!

Relevant and engaging teaching.

High-energy inspiring worship.

Intentional and immersive environments.

Friends. Food. And SO MUCH FUN. And bring your friends!!

What more could you want in a summer?

High School Camp: July 9-12th

Middle School Camp: July 16-19th

If you have not received an email from Pastor Sherri with the registration form, please contact her. For FAQ's about the camp, please go to <https://summerfestivalcamp.com/faq/>

Pastor Sherri will also need one more adult to chaperone with her during these days. Please let her know if you are willing to be a chaperone or if you have any questions about what this entails. We will also be asking for drivers, depending on the number of students we have. Thanks!!



## Where do all the Quilts go?

We know that our Shepherd Quilters work hard all year making quilts. We know that at the end of the quilting season (usually end of May) they put quilts out on display on the pews during Sunday service. But where do all the quilts go? This year our

quilters made 133 large and 68 baby quilts.

We have about six to eight locations that receive these quilts throughout the year.

One location is Reach & Restore. They're an outreach center here in Hopkins that gives out items to people coming out of shelters, homeless, people in need. One family that came in was a mother with two young children. They had come from a shelter and had just the clothes they could carry. They were getting their first apartment. They filled out a form with items they need. One of the items was bedding. A supply of Shepherd quilts had just been received. They pulled two quilts for the kids. The (ten-year-old) daughter – Disney Princess, the (eight-year-old) boy – Fire Trucks. They told the kids that these were their quilts and they were taking them home and didn't have to give them back. Both the children cuddled those quilts with the biggest smiles and never put them down. When they were leaving, the girl came up and put her arms around the staff member's legs and said, "Thank You – You have a good day!"

Sojourner is a woman's shelter for domestic violence. They are coming with whatever they can carry as they leave an abusive situation. Getting a warm quilt to curl up with, to feel warm and protected means a lot. Also, during the holidays, residents and referrals from their abuse counseling center (youth to seniors) can come in and pick out items for a gift basket.

Move Forward is a teen outreach center in Hopkins. It provides resources for teens coming from abuse, homelessness, low income. In December, one teen came in and said he had just been kicked out of his house. He was staying at a friend's, in his garage. He needed something warm. He left with two quilts.

Methodist Hospital always has a need. The Birth Center: received a dozen baby quilts. Most had winter themes. They came in handy during the holidays. The Cancer Center: these quilts stay with them during their surgery, treatments, recovery and go home with them.

The Melrose Center: is for eating disorders including anorexia, bulimia, binge-eating disorders.

Chaplain wrote: "I gave one of the quilts to a 14-year-old girl who was here for several weeks, and it was the first she'd ever spent nights away from family. My hope is that when she sees her quilt, she will remember how many people (even ones she will never meet) care about her."

## Quilts continued

Chaplain wrote: "In the chapel, a man who was dying, he married his sweetheart. A beautiful quilt was their wedding gift."

Nurse wrote: "I gave one of the quilts to a family whose mother/wife was dying and she was a quilter. The family liked how it brought color to the room."

Nurse wrote: "A young woman who felt isolated in the hospital during a long stay, she could not name anyone who brought her care or comfort to her life. I gave her a quilt for comfort. Right away she put it over herself and fell asleep."

A Dignity Walk: A young man died and had donated his organs was being taken from his room to the OR. The staff on the floor, doctors that cared for him and family, line the hall. The parent hugged the quilt as they accompanied the gurney to the OR.

During the winter when patients were being admitted and the wait was long and cold – they were given quilts.

These quilts were not Shepherd's, Reach & Restore's, Sojourner's, Move Forward's or Methodist's – they were for the clients/patients to keep them warm, give them comfort and to know that someone is always thinking of them.

Quilts continued above

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

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