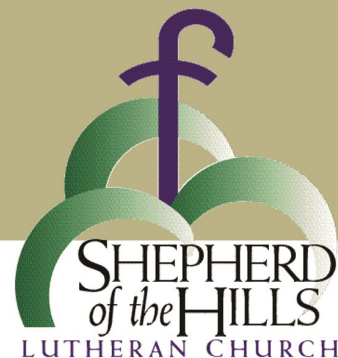


Shepherd's Voice



March 2022

"To Everything there is a season"

By Pastor Scott Searl

Dear Friends at Shepherd:

First, I am grateful for the past twenty years of my ministry and especially the last twelve at Shepherd of the Hills! I am proud of what God has done with us over these past many years. After leading through the stress of Covid, balancing school and work, and then the three months long difficult circumstances around the death of my father and the subsequent changes for my family, I need a break and some time to rest. I am resigning my position as your pastor effective at the end of June. My last Sunday at Shepherd will be June 26, 2022. I look forward to these next few months to say, "Thank you!" to each and every person here at Shepherd.

I am grateful for our time together in ministry. Personally, I need some time off this summer to rest and restore my soul after a difficult two years of covid leadership. I look forward to enjoying a Minnesota summer with my family. And with a few opportunities already on the horizon in fundraising and development work, I will look forward to whatever God has in store for me on my next adventure later this fall or early winter. I am certain God has good things in store for me and for Shepherd.

Second, for all the things that God has done at Shepherd I am so grateful. For all the baptisms, celebrations of life, care for members, learning how to worship on zoom, sermons and community engagements I am grateful. I am even grateful for all three capital appeals, building improvements, moving the sheep tapestry, the commissioning of all our new sanctuary art and lastly improving our parking lot. Most importantly I am so glad for the privilege to have walked alongside you in times of struggle and in times of joy and hope. Thank you for the honor of serving at Shepherd through all these wonderful opportunities. I believe that the family of faith at Shepherd is in a strong position for God's call for its future.

Finally, thank you for all your flexibility and commitment during these past two difficult years of the pandemic. Shepherd of the Hills is an amazing family of faith and God has an amazing future in store. Thank you for the gift of your relationships and love, I look forward to saying, "Thank you!" to each and every one of you! For everything, I am grateful!

In Christ,
Pastor Scott

**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:

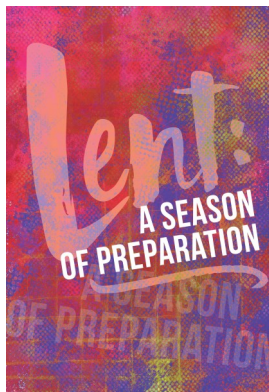
President	Adam Driscoll
Vice President	Don Wothe
Treasurer	Steve Hanneman
Financial Secretary	Ryan Erickson
Secretary	Christa Meland
Serve	Nate Lichy
Worship & Music	Julia Buteyn
Building & Facilities	Peter Barott
Learn	Stephanie Nordin
Communications	Open
Care	Dave Cousins
LMCC	Open
Evaluation	Chris 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!

Pr. Scott Searl	scott@sothchurch.com
Pr. Sherri Otto	sherri.otto@sothchurch.com
Intern Pr. Anne Schaefer	anne.schaefer@sothchurch.com
Shawn Wacholz	office@sothchurch.com
Kaye Wothe	kaye.wothe@sothchurch.com
Blair Prax	blair.prax@sothchurch.com
Church web site	www.sothchurch.com



JOIN US FOR LENT

Lent Devotional

We look forward to our Lenten journey this year with you and your family. Lenten devotionals were mailed out. We have additional copies in the office. Please let us know if you would like one mailed to your home. We hope you will choose to read these devotionals with your family.

Ash Wednesday - March 2nd at 6:30pm

Traditional Ash Wednesday service including the imposition of ashes.

Wednesdays in Lent - March 9, 16, 23, 30 and April 6 at 6:30pm

We will debut a new liturgy from Pastor Meta Carlson and John Hermanson this Lent. The liturgy is a blend of blessing, poetry and biblical stories supported by music written for meditation and reflection. The liturgy project was funded by Augsburg University and the Riverside Innovation Hub as part of our young adult ministry initiative.

Holy Week

Maundy Thursday on April 14th at 6:30pm with a celebration of first communion with a number of our families.

Good Friday worship at 6:30pm on April 15th.

Easter celebration on Sunday April 17th at 9:30am.

We look forward to journeying together with you in Lent. We look forward to a new liturgical experience on Wednesdays in Lent and finally the celebration of Jesus' resurrection on Easter Sunday!



PRESIDENT'S POST:

By Adam Driscoll, Council President

Dear Shepherd of the Hills Community:

I wish to start by expressing my sincere gratitude to Pastor Scott, for his 12+ years of serving our family of faith.

Thanks be to God that we have been blessed with his leadership, service, and effort over this time. As Scott indicates in his letter, he will continue to serve as Senior Pastor through June 26, and during that time, we'll have the opportunity to thank him and wish him well in his next endeavor.

Soon, we will be constituting a pastoral call committee to begin the work of identifying and calling our next Senior Pastor. Additionally, we have been in contact with the Minneapolis Area Synod of the ELCA, and will work with them to determine our needs as it relates to interim clergy, and in identifying candidates to fill the position.

During Scott's tenure, we have benefited from his deep knowledge of our church and the numerous tasks, both big and small, which need to be attended to on a daily basis to make this place run. To that end, as we work through this period of transition and beyond, there will be many ways in which we, the congregation, will need to take active ownership of a variety of these activities. This is an important opportunity to continue the momentum that we've built, and to set up our future Senior Pastor for success. During this time, I encourage you to reflect on the ways that Shepherd has impacted your life, and consider how you may be able to contribute during this important period of transition. I thank you in advance for your support during this key period of change for our congregation.

Sincerely,
Adam Driscoll
Council President



MENTAL HEALTH CONNECT EDUCATION

Self-Care for the Caregiver

Monthly sessions: 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>

HOPE, HEALING & GROWTH SERIES

**“Adverse Childhood Experiences”
Monday, March 14th @ 6:30 pm at
Bethlehem Lutheran Church Twin
Cities**

This event is free and open to the public! Featuring Ann Ellison, Interfaith Health, MHealth Fairview, Community Advancement. This event is part of the 2021-2022 Theme: “Hope, Healing & Growth”

**MENTAL HEALTH CONNECT
Mental Health Resources and
Education can be found on their
webpage:**

[http://www.mhconnect.org/
events](http://www.mhconnect.org/events)



WOMEN'S BREAKFAST

Date: March 12, 2022 at 9:00 am

Topic: Life Conversations: Boundaries

Speaker: Megan Vertin, LMFT

Description: The pandemic has once again created shifts in our boundaries. Megan Vertin, LMFT, will help lead us in a conversation exploring where our healthy new boundaries are, how to advocate for them while feeling ok about it.

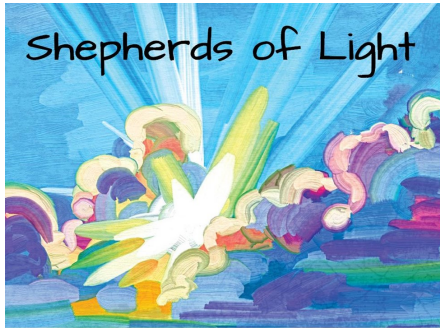


EXTRAVAGANZA 2022

Pastor Sherri and Pastor Anne attended the ELCA Youth Ministry Network's Extravaganza from February 11th through February 14th, which is an annual conference for children, youth and family ministry

leaders from across the US and Canada. It was a weekend plus, full of speakers, music, worship, conversation and connecting with others around different topics that leaders face.

They attended general sessions and specific topic-related workshops to help them develop their leadership skills, learn new ways of reimagining children's ministry and discover innovative and creative ways to connect with our youth, children and families and each other. If you want to know more about their experience, contact Pastor Sherri or Pastor Anne. They would love to hear from you!



SHEPHERDS OF LIGHT

First Communion Instruction

March 5th 2022 ~ 9:30am to 10:30am

What an exciting time in the lives of our young people, to be able to learn about the Lord's Supper and to participate in it for the very first time. There are 19 students to date, ranging from

Kindergarten to Eighth grade that will be sharing in this sacred meal on Maundy Thursday, April 14th. As they do, they will be using chalices that they have made for this special time.

No matter what the age, holy communion is a gift given at your baptism and one that is freely given by God. It is not a reward for something you have done, but a gift within the community of God. We will be using a portion of *Fed and Forgiven*, which has age-appropriate material and teaches the students about this gift of grace and love. We are looking forward to this special time in the lives of our students here at Shepherd.

MARY'S YES CALLS US TO LOVE

On March 25, we remember the Annunciation, when the angel Gabriel visits Mary to tell her she is to bear the Son of God, and she says yes.

In *Wholehearted Faith*, Rachel Held Evans writes: "I am a Christian not because of anything I've done but because a teenage girl living in occupied Palestine at one of the most dangerous moments in history said yes — yes to God, yes to a wholehearted call she could not possibly understand ... yes to a vision for herself and her little boy of a mission that would bring down rulers and lift up the humble, that would turn away the rich and fill the hungry with good things, that would scatter the proud and gather the lowly, yes to a life that came with no guarantee of her safety or her son's. ... And through Mary's example, God invites us to take the risk of love."

SOTH BOOK CLUB

Book club at SOTH is open to all. 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., 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.



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)



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.

Staff Reflection

At Every Turn continued

#3. I need prayers, too! As a spiritual leader, I am usually the one who gets to do the praying for others, but as I begin the ending of my time in school, I could use your prayers of support. I have to write essays, sermons and massive applications that express who I am as a pastor and to where I feel called to lead. This is a ton of work that feels incredibly important. I would love for you all to say a prayer that I gain understanding of myself and find the right words to put down on these papers. Thank you!

Grace and peace!
Pastor Anne



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: I'm not a butterfly. I'm not a caterpillar either. There isn't a reality of being one way and then crossing some finish line to become something beautiful with new flight capabilities. But I am who I am... an ever changing and growing being that gains abilities and forgets some too; that gains new passions and sets others aside. While a cocoon sounds nice (amazing, actually) a lot of the time, the changes in me happen in subtle ways. Sometimes the changes feel sudden, but mostly they become evident over long, constant, regular living. My lesson this month is to trust myself in light of the growing and the dwindling, the blazing passions and the sputtering coals of fires gone out. To stay in touch with what's new and what no longer suits me.

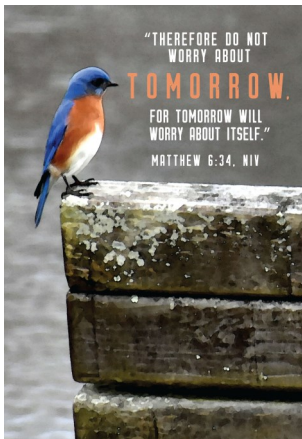
#2: Juggling things is my forced pastime. Being a mom, a wife, a stepmom, a homeowner, a daughter, a sister, an aunt, a friend, a neighbor (etc) all require something from me. And then you add full-time student and intern to the list, and it all adds up to what therapists might call "a highly stressful life." But it's a life that I love, and mostly, I love to give myself to these relationships.

But sometimes it gets to be more than just "highly stressful," and instead I feel like I'm holding on by a thread. Even though everyone of my commitments and relationships are positive, the stress and requirement on my time cause me to really feel overwhelmed.

Thankfully, I am learning about self-care practices and the value of being quiet in prayer. With God, there is no pressure to say the right thing or be in the right place or time... I picture God just sitting with me in the silence, helping my heart to slow back down and my breaths to deepen. There is no talking in these prayers to God. Only listening. And they give me the ability to stand back up and keep up the juggling act for yet another day.

Thanks be to God.

Continued above



LET GO, LET BE, LET COME

By Pastor Sherri Otto

I attended the 2022 ELCA Youth Ministry Network's Extravaganza last weekend and my track session was on Reimagining Children's Ministry. Our speaker was Dr. David Csinos and one of the slides he presented was this:

"We need to 'let go' of long-held assumptions, many of which we are hardly aware of. We then need to 'let be,' to not rush or push, but maintain a posture of receptivity. In that posture of heart, we can 'let come' and see what new possibilities emerge."

Brian McLaren, "After the Maps Change." In Faith Forward

This is a power-filled statement as it not only applies to working with children and families, but we can each use it in all areas of our ministry and life here at Shepherd.

To "Let Go" is freeing and can change our perspective as we truly look at our assumptions. When I hear these words "let go", I imagine myself opening my arms with my fists closed and then releasing my clenched fist as I let go of my assumptions.

For our church today, it may be the fact that we assume that people are not in church because of X, Y and Z. Or we may assume that things will go back to "normal" (whatever that is!) when the pandemic is over. These assumptions don't help us come together but can sometimes build up barriers. We don't know until we hear peoples' stories, until we listen, and we take in what is happening in other people's lives, that we can start to understand. Then we can truly "Let Go" and open our hearts to the Spirit.

Once we let go of these assumptions, whatever they may be, we can move to the "Letting Be." For this I imagine bringing my hand to my heart and resting it there as I listen to my breath.

Let things settle in your bones without trying to fix things, without trying to make things happen, without trying to push and tug and force people to do things that they may not be comfortable or ready to commit to. Be open to the possibility that things may never go back to the way they once were. Now this may be the hardest piece to do. For we want to see movement and change for a better tomorrow. But this process takes time. Breathe it in.

This third section, the idea of "Letting Come", is so exciting for in this process new things are created and formed, emerged out of the creativity of individuals within a congregation. I imagine circling my hands around each other while bringing them up above my head with both hands extending up to praise God.

Let Go continued

In this, we are free to try new things, free to fail and to thrive, free to fall down and to dance, free to face challenges and to be better than before. This is where the Holy Spirit works and moves in each of us, yes each of us, for we are all here to do ministry together.

I pray that you try these actions along with this model to help us in our future together at Shepherd, for there are many changes in store for us. Some will hold grief, some will hold surprises, some will hold traditions and transformations. But in it and through it all, let us never forget the one who holds us always and forever, Jesus Christ, our Lord.

May you let go, let be and let come in your life today and may God grant you love and peace in all that you do.

Peace,
Pastor Sherri

Reflections of Lent continued

items like dust, bread, cross, coins, shoes, oil, coats, towels, thorns and stones. I suggest you read through the Holy Week scriptures, all the gospel books (Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, lots of people prefer the Mark version starting with chapter 11) that have the passion story. Or, consider favorite or important life scripture verses from your life and consider what object in your day reminds you of that verse. What items in your life remind you of the Lenten journey? Why? How do the items Duffield suggest connect to your reflections during Lent? I encourage you to put a word for each week of Lent up in a place where you will see it each day as a reminder to consider its connection to this season of reflection, confession, renewal and hope.



REFLECTIONS OF LENT USING EVERYDAY ITEMS

By Kaye Wothe, Faith Community Nurse

I have been pre-gaming my Lenten devotions because when I get to Lent, I want my devotions to be spot on, and I like to be able to recommend

devotions to others I care for and others in ministry as needed. This year, besides the one we send out or offer at SOTH, I also am loving one called, *Lent in Plain Sight: A Devotion of 10 Objects*, by Jill Duffield. In this devotion book, the author uses common objects in our everyday living each week as the focus of scripture and devotion. I learn best using more of my senses, so having the devotion be focused on something I see often in my day helps me dwell more in the words of the devotion and brings me more strength for the day. The author appropriately starts week one with dust, where Ash Wednesday starts us. The second week is bread, a comforting and sustaining part of our diet which we also consider the body of Christ when at the communion rail. My favorite quote from that week is:

“Jesus does not ask of us that which we do not have. He instead receives what we offer, takes, blesses, uses, and multiplies our five loaves of less-than-gourmet bread, the two fish we caught after hours of fishing, our ability to pray, our adeptness with numbers, our knack for sewing, our passion forwards, our joy in writing notes to people. All we need do is to be like the boy, to bravely step forward in the middle of intimidating circumstances and offer to Jesus whatever we have on any given day. Jesus takes it from there.”

The author walks us through the origins of bread. We till the field, we plant the seed, and we pray, trust and hope for wheat to grow. We harvest again with hope. The wheat is gathered and ground. The baker assembles the bread, praying the yeast will rise, the flour has good flavor and texture so that the grain enhances the bread. The oven must be right, the timing managed with care. The finished product gently allowed to rest and cool. So much of this is done in trust, and is out of our hands. Only God can keep the ground fertile, grow the wheat, provide the sun and rain required. God guards the harvest, cares for the farmer, the processor, gives us the tools and knowledge to make it into bread. We just need to do our diligent part day after day, trusting God will do the rest. This resonates with so many of my life experiences. In my work as a nurse, I could give the chemo, or other medications, but I was not the one who healed. As a parent, I could put my kids in places with good schools, faithful communities of faith, and other caring communities, but I had to trust God to do the rest. Most days, I was terrible at the trusting part. The pandemic again reminded me, I can only do (and it is important to do...) the day-to-day “gardening,” or labor of caring, for my neighbor and myself, but I have no additional control. Accepting that is hard and is humbling every day.

This is my reflection of one of Duffield’s devotions focused on bread. I encourage you to look each week for things in your everyday life that remind you of your Lenten journey. Jill Duffield, the author of *Lent in Plain Sight*

Continued above



**IMMIGRANT
MINISTRY**

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Thanks to your wonderful support the Magomedov family continues to assimilate into American culture. Akhmed is enjoying morning preschool so much that he is eager to wake up in the morning and get ready for school! Just like American kids he rides the bus (which actually stops at his house). There are 3 tutors working with the family on their English skills 4 days a week. The family also had a fun trip to Como Zoo recently.

Pat Strong of our congregation has taken on the role of dispatcher for the driving needs of the Magomedov family. Basically, anyone learning of a driving need will contact Pat and she will then arrange for drivers, enter the information in the ACT-TC master calendar, and confirm the appointment with Artur. Thanks, Pat, for filling this important position on the support team!

The ACT-TC coalition needs volunteers for 3 more roles. One is to organize social activities with the family. This is a challenge during COVID, but the family wants to widen its circle of visitors. Contact me if you are interested in helping in this role or if you're willing to invite them to a "safe" event.

The second volunteer need is for a fundraiser—someone with experience in this area or who has ideas for assuring a steady stream of funds to pay for ongoing bills (mainly legal and medical).

Speaking of bills, Murad (2) is getting orthopedic braces and will eventually need heart surgery. Lastly, we need a volunteer to keep track of the medical expenses and to ensure we are getting the discounted pricing to which the family is entitled. While ACT-TC is doing some of this and learning as we go, it would help to have one or two knowledgeable people dedicated to this task.

The Magomedov family has been working with an attorney who specializes in assisting asylum seekers. She will be the guest speaker at the regularly scheduled ACT-TC meeting March 3rd at 11:00 AM. If you are interested in attending and learning more about the immigration process and our work with the Magomedovs, you can join this meeting using the following Zoom link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89664269303>

ACT-TC continues to be amazed and overwhelmed by the generosity of your contribution of housing and other gifts for this journey with the Magomedovs. Thank you.

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

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

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