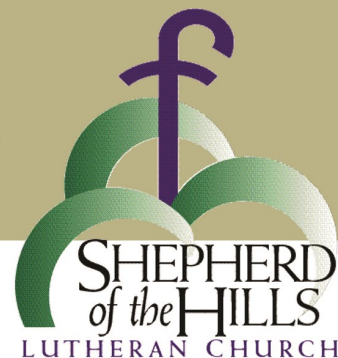


Shepherd's Voice



March 2024

“Share the Joy”

By Pastor Yolanda Denson-Byers

Beloved Ones:

Oh what great joy it is to anticipate the grand celebration of Jesus' resurrection from the dead. In every church I have ever served, Easter Sunday is a homecoming of sorts, where family members young and old return to the sanctuary singing hymns like, “Jesus Christ is Risen Today!”

How I love the precious Easter dresses and suits that we adorn our children with! I love the fullness of the choir and congregational singing! I love the euphoric feeling of joining with the universal church on Earth, and in Heaven, as we affirm, Christ is Risen, Alleluia!

As we prepare for Holy Week, the Great Three Days, and ultimately Resurrection Morning, I want to gently encourage you to make a special effort to invite at least one person to worship with you on Easter.

Do you have a new neighbor who may not yet know where to worship?

Are there children - or grandchildren - in your family who could benefit from a loving community of faith?

Is there a colleague at work who would be blessed by a welcoming and compassionate church family?

Do you know of a person who identifies as LGBT+ who may like to come to church, but isn't sure where it is safe to do so?

Easter is a grand day to invite anyone - and everyone - to church! It is when we are at our best with exemplary choral and instrumental music, life-giving preaching, and a sanctuary full of positive energy and overflowing love.

The joy of starting a relationship with a local church on Easter, is that few will know who is new, returning after a long absence, or here every week! Our new, and returning friends, can blend in as they imbibe the radical welcome of Shepherd on Easter - and every day!

Pastor's Message continued on page 2

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

Staff:

Senior Pastor	Rev. Dr. Yolanda Denson-Byers
Associate Pastor	Rev. Sherri Otto
Calvary Pastor	Rev. Wade Wacholz
Music Director	Patti Arntz
Administrative Assistant	Shawn Wacholz
Building Manager	Blair Prax

Church Council Members / Officers:

President	Chris Polston
Vice President	Steve Hanneman
Treasurer	Jean Wicks
Financial Secretary	Fred Jensen
Secretary	Kim Kelly
Serve	Nancy Shaeffer
Worship & Music	Karen Hofstad
Building & Facilities	Peter Barott
Learn	Lyn Kopperud
Communications	Joe Palmersheim
Care	Brittany Roeser
LMCC	Open
Evaluation	Open

Telephone & Voice Mail Extensions:

Shawn Wacholz	11
Pastor Yolanda Denson-Byers	12
Pastor Sherri Otto	13
Blair Prax	17

Shepherd Online!

Pr. Yolanda Denson-Byers	pastoryolanda@sothchurch.com
Pr. Sherri Otto	sherri.otto@sothchurch.com
Pr. Wade Wacholz	pastorwade@sothchurch.com
Shawn Wacholz	office@sothchurch.com
Blair Prax	blair.prax@sothchurch.com
Church web site	www.sothchurch.com

Office Hours:

Office hours:

Monday-Thursday, 9:00 am to 5:00 pm

Fridays, 9:00 am to 12:00 pm

Pastor Yolanda's office hours:

Monday, 9:30-5:30 (home office);

Tuesday-Thursday, 9:30-5:30 (SOTH);

Friday in Sabbath.

Pastor Sheri's office hours:

Monday-Thursday 9:00 am -5:00 pm (SOTH);

Friday in Sabbath

Pastor's Message continued from page 1

So, let's make it our duty, and our joy, to get out into the neighborhood and invite our friends, family, neighbors, and colleagues to this joyous celebration and if you have not been home to Shepherd in a while, please don't fret. I promise, we will welcome you just as we would, Christ Jesus. This is a judgment free zone --overflowing with love.

I cannot wait to share my first Easter with you at Shepherd of the Hills!
Praise God for the resurrection!

Because Jesus Lives,
Pr. Yolanda



GIVING: Thank you for your generosity to SOTH!
There are many ways to give:
TEXT "GIVE" to 844-503-1571
MAIL: 500 Blake Road South, Edina, MN 55343
Place your gift in the offering plate at church.



CALVARY / SHEPHERD TEAM UPDATE

By Pastor Wade Wacholz,
Calvary Lutheran Church

From the Calvary-Shepherd Team we say Thank You! We received a bunch of responses to our recent invitation to “dream” about future ministries for our congregations – so many faithful, heartfelt and genuine ideas we shared and as a group we were gladdened by the Spirit’s promptings in all the responses. The Team met mid-March to review and discuss all the responses and to begin to narrow the focus a bit, so that we could research additional information, develop some more detail, and work out ways to gather additional input.

First, we’d like to share some of our process. Our discernment has been guided by some parameters from the beginning. We know there are many worthy organizations in our community that deserve support and would benefit from additional financial resources. However, the intent of the Calvary Legacy Funds is not to make additional financial contributions (Calvary’s Legacy Fund has already approved distribution of nearly \$2 million to over 25 groups). Rather, this portion of the Legacy Fund has been earmarked for new congregation-based ministry initiatives.

On that front we heard suggestions about youth programs and family ministry; about upgrades to sound and technology tools for worship; about the parish nurse position; about various areas of faith formation/ education/community engagement such as creation care, gender justice, housing justice, violence prevention, skills training, evangelism, and mental health; and about alternative worship modes.

In considering those ideas we have kept a focus on our shared mission. At Calvary we talked in terms of “Worship, Welcome & Witness.” At Shepherd we’ve used “Loving God and Loving Neighbor in the Spirit of Jesus” as our language. The Team has also looked for ideas that reflect innovation and that best respond faithfully to the situation of the church in the 21st century – a time of significant change from what church has been in prior generations.

From what we have received thus far, the Team is looking to focus on three areas for continuing study, conversation, and evaluation:

Youth Ministry Collaboration. What collaborative partnerships could we develop with other neighboring congregations to share and grow faith in the next generation? Three sister ELCA congregations in Richfield are doing new ministry under the name RALY (Richfield Area Lutheran Youth) – what can we learn from them? What are others doing to innovate outreach to youth in our community? Is there the opportunity to plan

Continued above

New Ministries continued

events, mission trips, learning sessions or social gatherings that build robust faith and healthy relationships in young people of today?

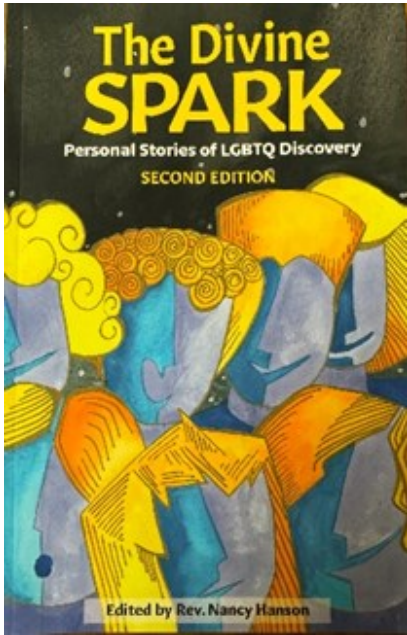
“Dinner Church/Messy Church.”

Shepherd has experimented the past two years with an intergenerational, casual dinner & worship gathering on Wednesdays in Lent. What could it look like to expand that experiment? Monthly dinner church or more often? Wednesday or Sunday evening or some other time? Music? Learning? Service Projects? Fun? Would doing “church” in a rather different way and at a different time meet a need, provide an outreach, and express Christ’s love more deeply or effectively than what we currently do?

Technology & Communication. Should we leverage some of the available funds to bring our sound, video, and communications equipment to the next level to enhance Sunday worship, virtual worship, and other sanctuary gatherings? We want to consider costs, effectiveness and impact that can be obtained so that we all see, hear, and understand each other better. And so that all who come into our sanctuary experience God’s Word of grace, love and hope as fully as possible.

Let’s keep the conversation going. Let us know what you think. What questions do you have? What excites you about any of these ideas? What do you feel called to? Who should we be talking to?

You can email Pastors Yolanda, Sherri or Wade, or reach out to any of the committee members (Becky Rorke, Bruce Nelson, Cindy Morris, Julia Buteyn, Steve Manacek, Adam Driscoll and Alyson Purdy) or leave a note in the basket on the Welcome Desk. Thank you again!



THE DIVINE SPARK

Wednesday, April 24th, 2024

6:00pm – Dinner

6:30pm - Program

“When you (or your loved one) hear a lawmaker speak against you, experience a classmate’s rude joke, feel parental or church disapproval, you might feel afraid and alone. The writers in this book want you to find emotional, social and spiritual health and wholeness.

You are not alone. We believe in you.”

Please join us on April 24th as we hear from Rev. Nancy Hanson about her new book, *The Divine SPARK, Personal Stories of LGBTQ Discover, 2nd Edition.*

We thank both Brian Henning and Pastor Yolanda for contributing their stories to this book.



LENT

Altered by the Spirit

Lent is often a time of self-reflection, spiritual discipline, commitment, and community. Congregations gather to sing the minor harmonies of the

way of Jesus on the road toward the cross. This Lent with Church Anew, we'll see the ways the Spirit alters our perspective, transforms our communities, and consistently blazes a trail ahead of us.

Our Series continues:

Sun., Mar. 3

Sun., Mar. 10

Sun., Mar. 17

Palm Sunday, Mar. 24

Disruption

God's Creativity

Alongside our Enemies

Victory

WEDNESDAYS IN LENT

Dinner church is a hit!!

We have been gathering each Wednesday in Lent, at 6:00 pm, for a meal and time of worship, song, prayer and conversation! The final dinner church will be Wed, March 20 before Holy Week commences on Thursday, March 28.

Our theme is "God Is Still With Us" and we will dwell in the following stories:

Jesus in the Wilderness

A Blind Man is Healed

Mary, Martha and Lazarus

Calming the Storm

Jesus Shares His Last Passover

Jesus in the Garden

We look forward to this special time together, as we prepare our hearts for the Easter Celebration!!

MORNING WORSHIP DURING LENT

Wednesdays at 10:45 am

For our beloveds who do not drive at night, or who wish to have a more traditional Lenten Service, SOTH's pastors will be leading Holden Evening Prayer immediately following AM Word on Wednesday (WOW). Bible Study will be Wednesday from 10-10:45am, with Holden to follow. Please join us!



WORD ON WEDNESDAYS!

10:00 am and 6:30 pm

10:00 am: 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.

6:30 pm: Evening WoW is on a break during Lent. We will resume on Wed., April 10. Meet at SOTH for weekly Bible Study, led by Pastor Wade. Each week, we will discuss readings from the coming Sunday's Worship. No prep – just come and walk together in the Word!

IMPORTANT DATES!

March:

Mar. 9	Men's Breakfast
Mar. 28	Maundy Thursday First Communion
Mar. 29	Good Friday Children's Good Friday event
Mar. 31	Easter Sunday

SOTH BOOK CLUB

Book club at SOTH is open to all. Please feel free to join us. Please contact Alyssa Barott for questions or more information (apbarott@gmail.com)

Book Club Schedules

April 14, 2024

Miss Benson's Beetle
by Rachel Joyce

May 19, 2024:

Lady Tan's Circle of Women
by Lisa See

June 2024 (date TBD):

The Horse
by Geraldine Brooks

Aug 2024 (date TBD):

Demon Copperhead
by Barbara Kingsolver

SHEPHERD OF THE HILLS TELEVISION BROADCAST

Residents in Eden Prairie, Edina, Hopkins, Minnetonka and Richfield can watch Sunday Worship on Comcast Channel 14 and CenturyLink Channel 8110.
Sundays at 9:30 pm
Wednesdays at 3:00 pm
Thursdays at 8:30 pm

Children, Youth & Family

WEDNESDAY NIGHT LENT SCHEDULE AT A GLANCE

6:00-7:00 pm Dinner Church
Confirmation
7:00-8:00 pm Choir Rehearsal
7:00-8:30 pm Senior High

Summer Festival Camp

High School - July 7-10
Middle School - July 14-17

Upcoming Dates for Children and Parents

March 10 at 9:30am
Tapestry in worship
March 17 at 9:30am
No Sunday School due to
Spring Break
March 24 at 9:30am
Palm Sunday
March 28 at 6:30pm
Maundy Thursday with
First Communion
March 29 at 4:30pm
Good Friday Service for
Children
March 31 at 9:30am
Easter!!
Easter Egg Hunt after
worship!

Upcoming Dates for Confirmation Students

April 10 at 6:30pm
Class Resumes
April 21 at 9:30am
Youth Service for all ages
May 8 at 6:30pm
Last day of Confirmation
May 15 at 6:30pm
Confirmation Banquet
May 19 at 9:30am
Confirmation celebration!



MARK YOUR CALENDARS!!

VBS 2024 CAMP FIRELIGHT

JUNE 10—13

9:00 am to 12:00 pm

A SUMMER CAMP ADVENTURE WITH GOD

Join first-time camp counselor Sam and Lu (short for Lumen), the lightning bug, and learn to face your fears while trusting in God.

Kids will learn ways they can connect with and put their trust in God whenever they are afraid, challenged, or called to do God's work in the world and share the Good News of God's love through Jesus Christ.

HOLY WEEK FOR CHILDREN

Good Friday, March 29 at 4:30pm

We invite children and their families to join Pastor Sherri as we experience interactive ways to help children understand the events of Holy Week between Palm Sunday and Good Friday. Please join us for this important time together. If you have any questions, please contact Pastor Sherri.

SUMMER FESTIVAL CAMP

Mark Your Calendar!

High School - July 7-10
Middle School - July 14-17

SERVE TEAM

During the month of March, we will be collecting baby items for the non-profit, Sojourner. They help victims of domestic abuse and serve more than 1,000 survivors and their children each year through their shelter and community-based services. They would appreciate donations of diapers/Pull Ups in size 5 and larger, unscented wipes, bibs, and infant/baby soap or shampoo. They ask that all donations be new, full size items and not travel size.

Please place your donations in the Donation Center baskets or on the shelves, if possible. We will try to collect them each week to keep the entry into our church looking good. Thank you so much for your care and generosity.



Easter & Holy Week at Shepherd of the Hills

Easter Sunday is an especially exciting time at Shepherd and we want you to be a part of it. Join us for a morning of music and celebration that the whole family will enjoy. Come and experience the miracle of Easter: the power of God's love to bring hope and joy to our lives!

HOLY WEEK

Palm Sunday	March 24	9:30 a.m.	Palms & Passion Reading
Maundy Thursday	March 28	6:30 p.m.	Holy Communion
Good Friday	March 29	4:30 p.m. 6:30 p.m.	Children's Activities Tenebrae Service

EASTER

Easter Sunday	March 31	9:30 a.m. 10:30 a.m.	Celebration Worship Easter Egg Hunt
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