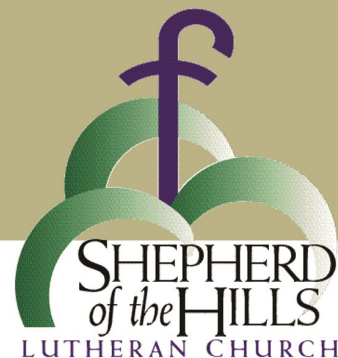


# Shepherd's Voice



May 2023

## “Hot Tubs, Cranes and New Furniture!”

By Pastor Sherri Otto

When Troy and I moved into our home in 2020, we thought it was great that we now had a hot tub on our deck! But after three years, we realized that we rarely used it. We put out an ad for a “Free Hot Tub”, as we just wanted to get rid of it. We had one condition, that the person would need to get a licensed crane service to remove it from our deck. (that’s how the previous owners got it there!) And you should have seen ALL the texts. “Free Hot Tub?? We’ll just come and pick it up today, carry it down your steps and be on our way!!” I don’t think half of them read that a crane needed to be involved.

Luckily for us, there was a nice couple that used a crane company often as he was in the tree removal business. And so, two Saturdays ago, the crane removed the hot tub from our deck. It was quite the sight, and you could say, I was a bit nervous as it went over our home, hoping it would not fall!

We had dreamed about what this space would now look like without the hot tub. Should we leave it open? No, let’s get some new deck furniture! We had always wanted one of those deck firepits. Let’s do that! We had researched and went to different stores, hoping to find the perfect new deck furniture, praying that it would all come together the way we imagined. It was the dreaming and the planning, that was both fun and exciting, but also a bit daunting. What if it doesn’t fit? Will the design work? What if we just don’t like it? How comfortable will it be? Will it go with the other loveseat that we already have?

Sounds silly now, but all of these things were running through our heads. Once we got the furniture, Troy, after reading the instructions, patiently put the pieces together and we now are enjoying our new furniture (if only it would warm up a bit!!)

This reminded me a little bit of how we are probably feeling right now as a church. Our space looks different, changes are happening, we are dreaming of different ways of doing and of being and we are looking forward to a new leader, which all can feel a bit daunting.

What if our new pastor changes things? What if things don’t come together, even with the new pastor, as we hoped they would? What if we don’t like them? What if things are uncomfortable? Will they go with the things that we already have? Same questions we had about our new furniture! Right?!?

Changes and transition are never easy, but with patience and love, studying the manual or instructions (Bible), and putting the pieces together carefully, it all comes together for the best possible area to enjoy each other, God’s creation and everything around us.

*Pastor’s Message continued on page 2*

**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	Chris Polston
Vice President	Steve Hanneman
Treasurer	Johanna Olson
Financial Secretary	Fred Jensen
Secretary	Open
Serve	Nancy Shaeffer
Worship & Music	Karen Hofstad
Building & Facilities	Terry Jensen
Learn	Open
Communications	Joe Palmersheim
Care	Lynette Kopperud
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

## WHO PAID FOR DINNER?

*By Interim Pastor Susan Debner*

At the start of Dinner Church way back in March, I invited people to sponsor all or part of a meal, so that every penny collected in the Wednesday worship offerings could go to our mission partner, Lutheran Disaster Response. The Council stepped up fast and first to cover one entire meal. It only took ten days to get all five Dinner Church meals completely covered! **Our gift to LDR was \$2,448!**

When I asked various Dinner Church donors if I could publicly thank them, each told me it was not necessary. You know what that means? On any given Sunday morning, you might be sitting next to someone who bought you dinner. Since you'll never be completely sure, I encourage you to see everyone at church through a generous lens!

Just imagine how much easier it is to share your name with someone new or ask them to share theirs (even for a second or third time) when you think you're meeting someone who just quietly paid for your dinner? Or perhaps they supported a project or a cause you also value? Given the extent of generosity at Shepherd, it is safe to assume that nearly everyone you meet is sharing something, somehow, somewhere—joining God's great work in our neighborhood. Amazing!

And, what exciting interactions these will be!

I can't wait to see you all greeting each other this way at church,  
Pastor Susan

### **Hot Tubs, Cranes and New Furniture continued from page 1**

I am praying every day for our Call Committee and all that is to come in these upcoming days. I pray that the Holy Spirit is moving in, around and through each of us as we gather in worship and show God's love in our community. And I pray for the pastor candidate, as they discern where God is calling them to be.

God is not a crane service, but God does hold each of us up, tightly in God's love, never letting us fall and gently sets us down where we are meant to be.

Blessings as we go on this ride together!  
Pastor Sherri



## PRESIDENT'S POST

By Adam Driscoll, Council President

"Societies grow great when people plant trees, beneath whose shade they themselves will never sit"

I am paraphrasing a bit, as the specific attribution and translation of this famous proverb is a bit varied, but as my term as Council President, and that of many others on our church council draws to an end, this is a concept I've considered a great deal lately.

It goes without saying that the past few years have been marked by transition and uncertainty. First with the global pandemic that changed our lives, and changed the way we engage with each other and with the world. Beyond the immediate threat to health and safety from the pandemic, it caused many of us to re-evaluate many aspects in our lives, and often resulted in people choosing to make changes. In our case, as we came out of the worst of the pandemic, our congregation experienced the turnover of a number of long-tenured, admired, and trusted friends and leaders, including our senior pastor.

Through all of this, our Church Council has sought to do the work to allow us to continue to love and serve our congregation, the community and the Lord during our present time of transition, while seeking to position this family of faith to continue to be a source of strength for generations.

When I agreed to take on this role, I saw it as an opportunity to give thanks to those members of our community who have put in the faithful work for nearly 70 years to put us in the position we are today, to be a force for good in our world. It is my hope that the work we have done in the past 2+ years may be looked upon similarly by those that come after us. Thank you to you all for trusting me to lead these past two years, and thank you to our Church Council, Personnel Committee, and numerous volunteers, both formal and informal, for your faithful service to this special place. It has been a privilege to get to say that I am a leader at Shepherd of the Hills.

God bless you, and God bless Shepherd of the Hills. May our trees provide shade to ourselves, our children, and to people whom we have yet to meet.

## WELCOME PATTI ARNTZ, INTERIM CHOIR DIRECTOR

Join us for worship on May 7 and offer a warm welcome to Patti Arntz, our new Interim Choir Director. Patti has a resume overflowing with training, skills, and experiences. She has degrees in organ performance, church music, and music education. She has worked in congregations as an organist, pianist and choir director; in public schools as a music teacher and mentor; and in community choirs as a singer, and director. In addition to her role with choir, Patti will accompany us in worship. We are delighted to have her join the staff at SOTH and invite you to get to know her.

## CONFIRMATION SUNDAY May 21

On May 21st, our youth will affirm their baptism through the rite of Confirmation. Please join us as we celebrate Cody Braun and Evelyn Palmersheim on this important day. Hold these youth and their families in your thoughts and prayers.



## Youth Worship Service – May 14th, 9:30am

Please come to SOTH on Mother's Day for a unique worship experience as students tell the story of Queen Esther! Totally led by our youth, this is something that you will not want to miss. Mark your calendars!!



## 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

**Registration is now open!**

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!!





## SOTH CALL COMMITTEE UPDATE

Happy Spring and Thanks Be to God from the Call Committee!

After many, many interviews and many, many hours of discernment, we are so pleased to share with you that we have extended, and the candidate has accepted our invitation to move forward in the call process. We are so excited and extremely grateful that she is

feeling called by God to SOTH!

What does that mean? It means that we are very busy making plans for our church council (both outgoing and incoming, due to the timing of everything) to gather with and get to know our candidate. Once we've gathered, there will be a vote by the council to decide if we bring our candidate forward to be voted on by the congregation.

By the time this newsletter is printed, we believe the council will have voted. If the Holy Spirit is at work as the call committee hopes, that means we will be gathering as a congregation to meet and vote on our next Senior Pastor. Please keep your eyes and ears open, check your bulletins, listen carefully on Zoom and watch your email for those details, so we can gather as a congregation to make this decision together.

Please continue to pray for our team, our council, our church, and our candidate as we hope that the Holy Spirit is working through each of us to get us to where we are being called to be (together with our new SOTH Senior Pastor).

Again, Thanks Be to God!!! Amen.

## 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.



## **MENTAL HEALTH CONNECT Stories of Hope Fundraiser Thursday, May 11 at 8:00 am**

Mt. Olivet Lutheran Church will host Mental Health Connect's 5th Annual Stories of Hope on Thursday, May 11, at 8 a.m. MHC provides resources, appropriate next steps, and a road map when the path seems blurry. It collaborates with 37 faith communities that have a reach of 80,000 people, and provide education to reduce stigma. The organization's Navigation Line is free and confidential, providing support and direction, utilizing more than 100 trusted local resources. Support from Stories of Hope will provide critical resources to support the mental health of our community.

Purchase tickets for the Stories of Hope Fundraiser on line at <https://www.mhconnect.org/findmhc/2023/5/11/mhc-stories-of-hope-fundraiser>

## **DRIVING IMPROVEMENT CLASS AT SHEPHERD Thursday, May 18 from 1:00-5:00 pm**

55+ Driver Improvement Program (4-hour refresher course)

The Driver Improvement Program offered by the Minnesota Highway Safety and Resource Center is open to the public and is taught by a certified instructor. By utilizing the most up to date research in the field, participants will be provided the latest information in regards to driver safety, new laws, and vehicle technology.

Persons age 55 and older who complete the course qualify for a ten percent discount on their auto insurance premiums. For more information or to register for a class near you, visit [www.driverdiscountprogram.com](http://www.driverdiscountprogram.com) or call toll free, 1-888-234-1294.

## A HISTORY OF LIRS - OVER 80 YEARS OF WELCOME

(For more information see this link: <https://www.lirs.org/80-years-of-welcome/>)

For 80 years, **Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service** (LIRS) has offered welcome and hope to more than half a million refugees. Since 1939, LIRS has transformed lives, with the support of people like you, to welcome the most vulnerable to the United States — from sea to shining sea. Together they have supported, equipped and empowered these new Americans, while advocating for policy that protects all of God’s children.

### 500,000 REFUGEES RESETTLED

#### 1939 LUTHERAN ROOTS

The New York-based National Lutheran Council (NLC), founded in 1918 to respond to such post-World War I needs as immigration and refugee resettlement, sets up a Welfare Department with an office for the “rehabilitation and placement of Lutheran refugees.” It helped 522 refugees in its first year of operations.

Following the immediate aftermath of WWII, LIRS resettled 30,263 Displaced Persons from Germany and Eastern Europe.

#### 1956 Help for Hungarians

#### 1959 Crisis in Cuba

#### 1972 Expanding Our Welcome

Ugandan dictator Idi Amin expels some 75,000 citizens from the country, 2,000 of whom are accepted into the U.S. as “parolees”. LIRS resettles 600 new arrivals as a result.

#### 1975 Vietnam

#### 1980 100,000 and counting

In 1980, LIRS hit the 100,000 mark in refugees resettled since World War II. In the same year, the American Homecoming Act granted U.S. admission to 10,000 Amerasian children fathered by U.S. citizens. The year also witnessed the passage of the Refugee Act of 1980, which created a permanent and systematic procedure for the admission of refugees of special humanitarian concern to the U.S.

#### 1990s Conflict in The Balkans

#### 2000s Sudan, Burma, Tibet, Bhutan, Afghanistan & Iraq

#### Today The Lutheran Welcome Endures

After 80+ years of welcome, LIRS and its partners continue answering the call to sponsor and support immigrants and refugees with open doors, open arms, and open hearts—including through an enhanced focus on the Long Welcome and the Empowered Living Experience, which go beyond traditional resettlement to help New Americans not simply survive, but thrive.

**For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink,  
I was a stranger and you welcomed me.**

**Matthew 25:35**

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

Return Service Requested

Non-Profit Org.  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
Hopkins, MN  
Permit No. 132

Dated Material

