

THE VOICE



It seems like we just got the Christmas tree and all the nativity scenes, lights and whatnot taken down and put away and here we are talking about Lent! It seems that just yesterday we were preparing for the coming Savior and now we are thinking about repentance, suffering, death, and resurrection. Time sure does go quickly!!

The Forty Days of our Lenten journey begins on the day of love – Valentine’s Day. Ash Wednesday falls on February 14 this year and what a great time it is to begin this time of renewing our faith and our discipleship practices! The season of Lent can often be arduous with the giving up of something that is important to us. Really, Lent, like Valentin’s Day, is about love. It is a time to reflect upon Jesus’ sacrifice (Love) and our response to it and to him (love), as well as our need for a Savior.

The disciplines of Lent include self-examination and repentance, prayer and fasting, sacrificial giving and works of *love*. I am pretty sure that every year about this time I say something very similar to this: Lent is an excellent time to not only give up something that is not helpful to you or others, but to replace that something with a new and (hopefully) better habit that will strengthen your bond with God and others.

Self-examination is a great place to start. What am I currently doing with my time, my talents, and my treasure? How do these things nurture my relationship with God? How do these things help the neighbor? Is there room for improvement? Is there something to tweak or work toward completely discarding? Is there something I can add that will be beneficial to my walk with Christ and serving him? “Yes” is always the answer I come up with. Yes, there are tweaks, changes, and major shifts I could make. Starting small usually works best for me.

It can be as simple as setting aside a specific time each day to just be still before God, or reading a devotion, or 15 minutes of Bible reading and/or prayer, an extra few bucks in the plate or to another ministry doing good work in the world, or maybe an hour or two lending a hand to another person. These small things can be sustained and they will sustain you as well. They can be life changing.

If you desire to engage in the discipline of Lent, I encourage you to make changes to your discipleship that are sustainable and not something that you cannot wait to drop and “get back to normal!” on Easter morning. Find something you look forward to, something you find value in. Maybe something you can even grow to *love*!

I hope you will take advantage of this time of renewal! Ash Wednesday services are at noon and 7:00 p.m. on February 14. Midweek services begin on February 21 and continue every Wednesday evening through March 20, 5:00-6:30ish. The study portion will be at the tables during the dinner hour, and worship in the sanctuary at 6:00. Maundy Thursday is March 28 at 7:00 p.m., and Good Friday is March 30 also at 7:00 p.m. Offerings collected during the weekday services will again go to ELCA World Hunger.

*Blessings,
Pastor Chris*

SHARING GOD'S LOVE

Opportunities to make a difference through the giving of your time, talent, and treasure



LIVING NATIVITY

Thank you to everyone who participated in the 25th year of the Living Nativity. Over 50 people were involved in one way or another, before, during and after the presentation nights. Visitors and members donated \$551.10 along with 79 pounds of non-perishable food benefitting Loaves & Fishes Ministries.



SHARING GOD'S LOVE

Opportunities to make a difference through the giving of your time, talent, and treasure

Valentine's Day / Ash Wednesday Mashup

Because Valentine's Day and Ash Wednesday fall on the same day this year, February 14th gives us a real clash of messages! As stewards of both our personal lives and our greater world, what can we make of a day that, on the one hand says sweetly, "I love you," and on the other hand says sternly, "Remember you are dust, and to dust you shall return"? How should we observe a day with such disjointed messages? Putting them together, we can come up with some interesting responses.

Ash Wednesday tells us that our lives are finite and fleeting, a truth woven throughout the Bible. Psalm 103:15 says our lives are like the grass that flourishes and then is gone. Ash Wednesday also reminds us that we are in the hands of the creator God who decreed that our earthly lives begin and end in dust.

And although our culture revels in romantic love, the Bible gives us a wider vision of love that we can aspire to: love through care and concern for the world, for creation and those around us. Putting the two messages together, we know there is no delaying our call to love our neighbors as ourselves (Mark 12:31) and to provide for the least among us (Matthew 25:31-46).

With wars raging in Ukraine and Gaza, refugee crises across the globe and Covid on the rise (to name just a few problems), perhaps this can be the year you can send a "Valentine" someone who needs not only love, but food, medicine, shelter and clothes. Many reputable church charities would gladly use your contribution to help the neediest. Who are the people in your church and community who need your love and your care? How can you, both individually and congregationally, love and assist them?

The diverse messages of Ash Wednesday and Valentine's Day give us a prime opportunity to grow in faith, love and discipleship – while there's time.

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FAITH FORMATION

The Faith Formation team's mission is to encourage, guide, and support lifelong learning of God's Word for all ages so that we may grow in knowledge, service, and love towards God and all people.

Campers and Families - serving breakfast on February 4th! Come and partake of a meal together as siblings of Shepherd of the Hills! The kiddos and their adults will be there to serve and fellowship. This is also the Sunday our entire congregation is invited to attend the SEMI ANNUAL **church meeting**. We will be looking at the 2024 Budget for Shepherd of the Hills and giving thanks to God for carrying us through 2023, another year of being His hands and feet in the community and world.

March 3rd Fellowship Breakfast is another one served by the Cracked Pots! This group feeds us all with tasty yet healthy foods, collecting free will offerings for the Camperships again and certainly appreciating all of us who contribute to funds so all kids of SoTH can attend!

Created To Be is the theme for RTALC camp for summer 2024! We already have quite a few campers signed up for RTALC this summer.

Living Nativity 2023 - Many thanks to our **kids**, and **ALL** who assisted in the recent Living Nativity! Angels, Shepherds, sheeps, cookie bakers, soup & chili cookers, etc. you gave a blessed gift to our community.

Holiday Hoopla (aka Cookie Bake In) - oh what fun we all had in meeting in the kitchen and fellowship hall to bake a great variety of Christmas cookies! Having the adults there to guide our young ones made the party that much more fun! Thanks to all who contributed in any way.

Noisy Offering in December netted over \$240 for our Angel Tree recipients.! Thanks to Sarah Anderson and her helpers for providing their time and energy in shopping for our ANGEL kids and families. Bless you!

Confirmation Time occurs on Sundays whenever a student is present! (except on the 1st Sunday of the month because of Fellowship Breakfasts). TIME: approximately **10:10 until 10:50**. Becky, Dena, Pastor Chris and Pastor Lois commit to these Catechism meetings and miss seeing the kids when they are absent. Everyone might consider looking at worship notes during church. After the benedictions, we get a snack and meet to share our understandings of God, the Bible, worship or whatever the students need to explore. **Fellowship and Faith Sharing grows here!**

Kids' Fellowship needs adult leaders! It is scheduled to meet every Sunday where we have LEADERS and STUDENTS. Because of those conditions, it has been fading away. Pastor Chris always invites our children to come to the altar for a children's message when kids are in worship. Shepherd of the Hills loves all children! Please pray about this ministry.

Milestones are not for young ones only! Our team desires to recognize special events in your life with the blessing of our church family, often during worship time, but not only. If you have a milestone to report, please let Pastor Chris or Dena Richter know.

NEWS & NOTES

Ruth Circle meets next on Thursday, February 8th, at 10:00 a.m. This will be the second of a four-part Winter/Spring 2024 Bible study: “Scripture and Nature: Teachers of Faith” by the Rev. Sara Olson-Smith.

February’s lesson is entitled **Creatures: Our siblings in praise and trust.** Jesus invites us to consider the birds, but we’ll get to know biblical critters beyond the sparrows. We’ll look at biblical animals (some adorable, some terrifying) from ravens and lions to a big fish, paired creatures on the ark and that sneaky serpent in Eden. Stories of human and animal interactions in Scripture help to reorient our relationships with the non-human world, while pulling us into deeper trust in God.

March’s lesson is **Rivers: Springs of life and hope.** Together we’ll journey from the rivers in Eden to the prophetic springs in the desert and from Jesus’ baptism at the river Jordan to the crystalline river of life in Revelation. We’ll discover how rivers are sites of healing, restoration, identity and imagination.

Come enjoy learning, discussion and fellowship. All women of SOTH and their friends are invited. We continue to collect cereal for Mercy Today Ministries. Please bring some if you’re able.

SOTH Mission Team Lenten Project Ash Wednesday, February 14th, marks the beginning of Lent. SOTH’s main focus during Lent is on hunger, both locally and worldwide. We will be collecting nonperishable food items for either a local school or organization based on their current needs. Wednesday night offerings are always donated to the ELCA World Hunger Appeal. We hope the congregation will continue to support projects like these in which SOTH attempts to be “the hands and feet of Christ” and share of our abundance with our communities. Please watch the Thursday emails for details.



Walleye Fish Fry is February 17th. If you haven't made your reservations yet, let Clarence Ver Sluys know so he can call to see if space is available.

The Son's of Norway Frokost will be Sunday, April 14th, at 2:00 p.m. Due to limited space, please make your reservation no later than March 3 with Clarence.



SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
28	29	30	31	1 3pm VITA	2 9am Peace in Motion	3 8am Men's Breakfast
4 Semi-Annual Meeting: <i>Budget</i> Fellowship Breakfast by Camp families	5 9am Peace in Motion 9am Meals on Wheels 6:30-8:30pm Orchestra	6	7 9am VITA 1pm Crafting 2pm Book Club 5:30pm SOTH Study 6:30pm Choir	8 10am Ruth Circle 1pm Book Club 3pm VITA	9 9am Peace in Motion	10 8am Men's Breakfast
11 <i>Noisy Offering</i>	12 9am Peace in Motion 6:30-8:30pm Orchestra	13 7pm Church Council	14 Ash Wednesday 9am VITA 12pm Ash Wed Service 7pm Ash Wed Service <i>No Choir</i>	15 3pm VITA	16 9am Peace in Motion	17 8am Men's Breakfast
18	19 9am Peace in Motion 9am Meals on Wheels 6:30-8:30pm Orchestra	20	21 9am VITA 12:30pm Soil Sisters 1pm Crafting 5pm Lent supper/study 6pm Lent worship Choir following worship	22 3pm VITA	23 9am Peace in Motion	24 8am Men's Breakfast
25 2pm Camera Club	26 9am Peace in Motion 6:30-8:30pm Orchestra	27	28 9am VITA 1pm NAMI 5pm Lent supper/study 6pm Lent worship Choir following worship 7:30pm RGP Chorus	29 3pm VITA	1	2

LENTEN SCHEDULE

ASH WEDNESDAY SERVICES

February 14, Noon and 7:00 pm

WEDNESDAYS, FEBRUARY 21 - MARCH 20

Supper & Study, 5:00 pm

Lenten Worship Service, 6:00 pm

HOLY WEEK SERVICES

March 24 — Palm Sunday, 9:00 am

March 28 — Maundy Thursday, 7:00 pm

March 29 — Good Friday, 7:00 pm

March 31 — Easter Sunday, 8:00 am & 10:30 am
(Breakfast in between services)





SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
25	26	27	28	29	1 9am Peace in Motion	2 8am Men's Breakfast
3 Fellowship Breakfast by "Cracked Pots"	4 9am Peace in Motion 9am Meals on Wheels 6:30-8:30pm Orchestra	5	6 9am VITA 1pm Crafting 2pm Book Club 5pm Lent supper/study 6pm Lent worship Choir following worship 7:30pm RGP Chorus	7 10am Ruth Circle 1pm Book Club 3pm VITA	8 9am Peace in Motion	9 8am Men's Breakfast
10 <i>Noisy Offering</i>	11 9am Peace in Motion 6:30-8:30pm Orchestra	12 7pm Church Council	13 9am VITA 5pm Lent supper/study 6pm Lent worship Choir following worship 7:30pm RGP Chorus	14 3pm VITA 6:30 pm FCCCA	15 9am Peace in Motion	16 8am Men's Breakfast
17 2pm Historic Society	18 9am Peace in Motion 9am Meals on Wheels 6:30-8:30pm Orchestra	19	20 9am VITA 1pm Crafting 5pm Lent supper/study 6pm Lent worship Choir following worship 7:30pm RGP Chorus	21 3pm VITA	22 9am Peace in Motion	23 8am Men's Breakfast
24 Palm Sunday 2pm Camera Club	25 9am Peace in Motion 6:30-8:30pm Orchestra	26	27 9am VITA 1pm NAMI 6:30 Choir 7:30pm RGP Chorus	28 Maundy Thursday 3pm VITA 7pm Worship Service	29 Good Friday 9am Peace in Motion 7pm Worship Service	30 8am Men's Breakfast
31 Easter 8am Worship Breakfast 10:30am Worship	1	2	3	4	5	6

SOTH STAFF

Christine Hjelmstad	Pastor
Jill Boxdorfer	Office Administrator
Dena Richter	Faith Formation Director
Gerry Willis	Music Director
Leslie Woodhull	Violinist
Cheri Chiaro	Accompanist
Andy Fisher	Audio-Visual
Barbara Runa	Treasurer
Barbara Knicely	Financial Secretary
Teresa Burdick	Custodian
Caroline Barnhardt	Grounds Maintenance

SOTH COUNCIL

Charlene Coulson	President
Brad Putzer	Vice President
Linda Freed	Acting Secretary
Barbara Runa	Treasurer
Jon Runa	
David Salyer	

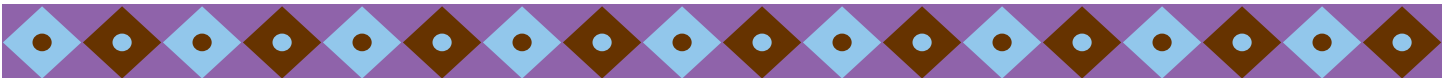


Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church

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The Voice is published bi-monthly to keep you connected to Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church. Newsletter announcements can be submitted to sothoffices@gmail.com by the 15th of the month. If you no longer wish to receive the church newsletter, please inform the church office via email listed above or by calling 719-275-6797. Thank you!



You're invited

Worship with us each Sunday morning, in-person or online.

Traditional Worship
9:00 am

[youtube.com/
@sothservices1386/streams](https://www.youtube.com/@sothservices1386/streams)

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Office Hours:
Mon-Thurs, 9am-1pm

Our mission

Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church is a reflection of God's love and grace. Our mission is to grow in faith and love, connect with community, and share and serve with compassion.



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