

THE VOICE



The holidays are in full swing now and we are busy! Lots of cleaning and cooking, visiting and shopping...lots of preparations are going on. We can get caught up in the hustle and bustle, and much of it fills us with joy. Some of it sucks all the joy out of us.

My prayer is that the joy wins out over that which is difficult. This time of year can be tricky for some of us. Even in the life of this congregation we have recently said goodbye to people

who have moved on to other places. And at the same time we are getting to meet lots of new people who have come to our congregation recently and we are excited to get to know them better! If this is your first Voice newsletter— WELCOME!! There will be a session of Exploring SOTH if you would like more information about the congregation and ministries on December 10 after worship. We will also “officially” welcome new members on December 17 during worship.

On December 21 at 7 p.m. we will once again have the opportunity to acknowledge all these mixed emotions the holidays can stir up in us. The Longest Night worship makes space for all the feelings we might be experiencing this time of year. Even if you are longing for a time of slowing down and a more calm style of worship and not experiencing grief or loss, this is a welcome respite from the holiday frenzy. I hope you are able to take part in this meaningful worship time.

The last month of 2023 and the first month of 2024 are times to take stock of the previous year and look with hope to the next. The themes of death and resurrection are quite potent this time of year, at least for me. One thing our faith can teach us is that resurrection always wins. We always have reason to hope. No. Matter. What.

The Christ Child is come and will come again. The joy his birth brings is not overshadowed by the death he will endure. Emmanuel. God is with us. This is the eternal promise we are given and God makes good on it every moment. No. Matter. What. Thanks be to God!

Advent, Christmas, and Epiphany Blessings!
Pastor Chris

You're invited

WORSHIP WITH US SUNDAY MORNINGS

Traditional Worship

In-person: **9:00 am**

Online: youtube.com/@sothservices1386

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.

SHEPHERD OF THE HILLS LUTHERAN CHURCH

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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.

RTLCL Sunday occurred on November 12 with Dave and Nellie leading the music! The kids sang, prepared and delivered their thanks and favorite experiences that they had at RTLCL, summer of 2023. Thanks to Becky and Rick Romano for serving as Camp ambassadors for so many years. The slide show brings the kids' fun to our sanctuary and it's special to see them on the screen!

Our campership fund sent 10 students up the mountain and plan to send as many students who desire to go during the 2024 season. The faith building experiences last a lifetime.

Milestones recognized include Tucker Anderson getting his driver's license. How blessed it is to watch our youth grow into young adults. ALSO, the baptism of Judah Keller happened on November 5, 2023! We welcome him into our church family - what a blessing!

Confirmation 'class' Time convenes Sundays (except on 1st Sunday of the month when Breakfast is served) right after worship - around 10:15 for about 30 minutes. Students in 6 through 8th grade complete worship notes during the service and that is the 'springboard' for our faith talks in the youth room. Brycen Minton attended RTLCL confirmation weekend camp!

We look to have a time for all of our kids to gather during the upcoming holidays - to do whatever brings us joy together!

Kids' Fellowship (FKA Sunday School) continues to meet in the Library for about ½ hour right after worship - on all Sundays except when we have Fellowship Breakfasts. Kids and leaders grab a snack and then talk about the lesson they received during the Children's message in worship. The age range is 4 years through 5th grade.

Noisy Offering was designated for Camperships for November.

The Living Nativity scheduled for Friday, Dec 8th and Saturday, Dec 9th needs YOU! Come and play a part, help to dress, be a support person, welcome folks off the street, for this is Shepherd of the Hills gift to our community for 25 years. This commitment of all ages of our members highlights and gives our children an opportunity to dramatize Jesus' birth. Our energy goes to this Pageant that replaces the Sunday morning 'children's program' that the Sunday has presented in past years.

My new year's resolutions resemble reflections and hopes wrapped in a prayer on New Year's Eve. I light the Advent and Christmas candles and I ponder these with our God. God's grace and love are everlasting, from age to age. Have a blest 2024.

SHARING GOD'S LOVE

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



Rediscover Advent for a Holy Christmas

In accordance with Jesus' promise, we wait for new heavens and a new earth, where righteousness is at home. Therefore, beloved, while you are waiting for these things, strive to be found by him at peace, without spot or blemish.

2 Peter 3:13

With fighting in Israel and Ukraine, political gridlock in the U.S., worsening climate change around the world and other deep problems, 2023 is ending on a sad note for humanity.

That's a good reason to rediscover Advent this year. Lost amid the nonstop commercialism of Christmas, Advent is the church's traditional season of careful preparation and waiting – two things our instant, “have-it-now” culture abhors.

If we don't prepare our hearts and minds for the miracle of Jesus – Emmanuel, God with us – how will Christmas be anything more than just another secular shopping season? How can we expect the arrival of Christ to give us strength, courage, insight and wisdom to deal with these troubled times?

Embracing Advent helps us to be good stewards of the Christmas season by reminding us that it's not about Santa Clause or shopping or parties, but by the miracle of God arriving in human form to save us from ourselves.

Here are some ways to rediscover Advent:

- * Find – and follow – an Advent devotional.
- * Increase your disciplines of prayer, scripture reading and worship.
- * As much as possible, hold off celebrating Christmas until December 25.
- * Remember we need Christ to live fully as God intended.

Advent prepares us to receive Jesus with a full and joyful heart, to live in the abundance Jesus promises.

--Rob Blezard

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Thank you to everyone who baked, bought or did both for the Mission Team's bake/food sale held November 12th. Your generosity enabled SOTH to donate **\$420** to Fremont Elementary School in Florence.

Your ongoing support for our projects is greatly appreciated.



SHARING GOD'S LOVE

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



The Living Nativity is scheduled for **Friday and Saturday, 12/8 & 12/9, from 5 to 7:30 p.m.** Much help is needed. Even if all the “character” positions have been filled, there is so much work that goes on before and after the event. Please check the signup sheet on the old altar in the Narthex to see where you can help. Be a part of this wonderful outreach that reminds visitors of “**the reason for the season**” during this, the 25th anniversary of the event. If you have questions, contact Pastor or Carlene Coulson. Thanks!



ELCA Good Gifts offers a unique way to put meaning back in Christmas shopping. Catalogs are available in the Narthex. Americans spend over \$300 billion on Christmas shopping each year. Consider substituting one traditional gift with one from the ELCA Good Gifts catalog. There are great gifts for those on your list who have everything and might appreciate a “non-traditional gift” that will benefit others less fortunate. **Place orders online at www.goodgifts.elca.org.**



Ruth Circle meets Thursday, **December 14th, at 10 a.m.** This month, rather than a regular lesson, it is an Advent devotional titled “God’s Topsy-Turvy Kingdom” (God is turning a world torn apart by conflict right-side-up). Come enjoy learning, discussion and fellowship. We continue to collect cereal for Mercy Today Ministries. Please bring some if you’re able.



NEWS & NOTES



Third Annual Oratorio On November 18th and 19th the Shepherd of the Hills choir joined with The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints Ward Choirs, St. Michael's Episcopal Church Choir, and the USAFA Cadet Choir to present "As Foretold," an oratorio written and directed by our illustrious choir director, Gerry Willis. The choir was accompanied by the Royal Gorge Philharmonic Orchestra.



On Another Note I am preparing this Newsletter from my new home in Wenatchee, WA which derives its name from the **Yakima Indian wenachi**, meaning "river flowing from a canyon." The rivers being the Wenatchee and Columbia. It's best known as the "Apple Capitol of the World"! I can attest to some of the most unusual varieties I've had the pleasure of tasting.

Miss everyone at SOTH and wish you all a blessed New Year ahead and a wonderful Christmas with family and friends.

Kind regards, Sheila



December 2023



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
26	27	28	29	30	1	2
					9 AM Peace In Motion	8 AM Men's Breakfast
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Advent Stewardship Breakfast	9 AM Peace In Motion, 10 AM Budget <i>PC Vacation Ends</i>		6:30 PM Choir Practice		9 AM Peace In Motion 5-7:30 PM Living Nativity	8 AM Men's Breakfast 5-7:30 PM Living Nativity
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
Advent Noisy Offering	9 AM Peace In Motion 9 AM Meals On Wheels 10 AM Stewardship pledge results	11 AM CC Walkers & Hikers Christmas Party 7 PM Council Meeting	10 AM Prayer Warriors 1 PM Crafting for Christ 2 PM Book Club 6:30 PM Choir Practice	1 PM Book Club	9 AM Peace In Motion	8 AM Men's Breakfast 9 AM Mohr/ Micheli Wedding
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
Advent	9 AM Peace In Motion		6:30 PM Choir Practice	7 PM Longest Night Worship Service	9 AM Peace In Motion	
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
Christmas Eve 9 AM Worship 5:30 PM Christmas Eve Service	Office Closed 9 AM Meals On Wheels		1 PM Crafting for Christ 6:30 PM Choir Practice		9 AM Peace in Motion	
31	1	Notes				
10 AM Joint worship at Christ Church						

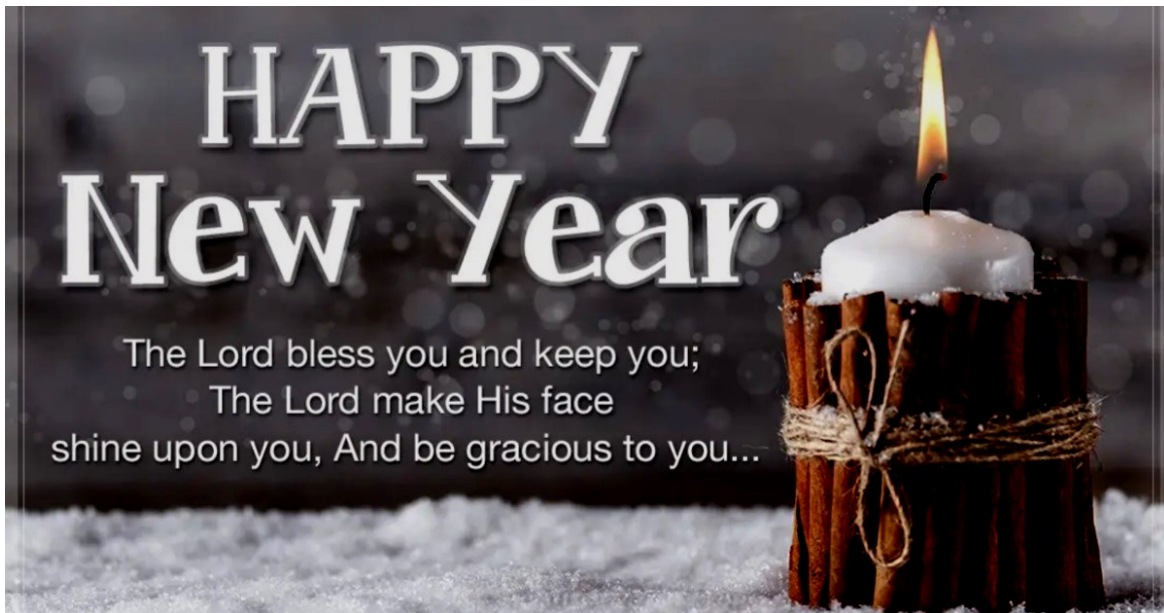




Shepherd of the Hills
Lutheran Church

January 2024

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
31	1 New Year's Day 9am Peace in Motion	2	3 7pm Choir	4	5 9am Peace in Motion	6 Epiphany
7	8 9am Peace in Motion 9am Meals on Wheels	9 1pm Befrienders 7pm Church Council	10 1pm Crafting 2pm Book Club 7pm Choir	11 10am Ruth Circle 1pm Book Club	12 9am Peace in Motion	13 8am Men's Breakfast
14	15 MLK Day 9am Peace in Motion 10am Stewardship	16 1pm Befrienders	17 7pm Choir	18 6:30 FCCCA	19 9am Peace in Motion	20 8am Men's Breakfast 9am Centering Prayer Workshop
21	22 9am Peace in Motion 9am Meals on Wheels	23 1pm Befrienders 6:30 Worship Team	24 9am VITA 1pm Crafting 7pm Choir	25 3pm VITA	26 9am Peace in Motion	27 8am Men's Breakfast
28 Semi-Annual Meeting: <i>Budget</i>	29 9am Peace in Motion	30 1pm Befrienders	31	1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10



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 sothnewslettersubmission@gmail.com by the 15th of the month.

If you no longer wish to receive the church newsletter, please inform the church office at 719-275-6797 or sothoffices@gmail.com

SOTH Lutheran Church Staff	
Christine Hjelmstad	Pastor
Jill Boxdofer	Office Administrator
Bobbie Anderson	Youth Ministry & Administrator
Dean 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

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Barbara Runa	Treasurer
Jon Runa	David Saylor

