

THE VOICE



Miracle *mīr'ə-kəl*

noun

1. an extraordinary event manifesting divine intervention in human affairs
2. an extremely outstanding or unusual event, thing, or accomplishment

August begins with gospel readings telling of a few of the miracles Jesus did: Feeding 5000, walking on water, healing a Canaanite woman's daughter without even laying eyes on the girl. I like that John calls these "signs" rather than "miracles." Because Jesus is divine, it is not a big stretch for him to do all these things. I am sure that the people who were the recipients of these miracles, or signs, were not extraordinary human beings deserving of special attention of the Son of God. They were just people in need of something physical, and they were just people in need of knowing that they are beloved of God. Sounds like you and me!

The trouble we can get into with readings such as these is wondering why we do not get the miracle we desperately want. Sometimes we do get those miracles, and I do hope we see them for the signs they are. We do not always get our way though. Thankfully. Those "big miracles" of healing of bodies, minds, spirits, or relationships do not always happen the way we would like. It can be disheartening to recall those moments when we do hear about big miracles other people receive. We might wonder why God has chosen that person's wishes to be granted and not mine. This is why we can be troubled by these stories.

And still, miracles happen every day! They may not be the biggies, but rather little ones sprinkled around. Those little ones that continue to point like signs to Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Our family recently experienced a small miracle that has really stuck with me. While on vacation we became stranded in a small town in Arizona. We were waiting for our take-out and the woman at the register asked where we were from (I guess we looked like strangers—or just strange!) and how long we planned to stay. When we told her we were not sure about the latter she offered to drive us the next morning to a bigger town about a half hour away. This, after about a 90 second conversation! A miracle. We did not take her up on her offer, but I am still amazed that she even entertained the idea of taking two complete strangers into open country. This is the sort of crazy thing Jesus would do!

I hope that you are able to spot lots of little miracles, signs that point to the Giver, all through the day and that some of those big ones are aligned with God's will for you and others who may be impacted.

Blessings! Pastor Chris

You're invited

WORSHIP WITH US SUNDAY MORNINGS

Traditional Worship

In-person: 9:00 am

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

Our mission

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

SHEPHERD OF THE HILLS LUTHERAN CHURCH

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CHURCH COUNCIL

As we continue to receive much needed moisture, we are blessed with abundant crops and rich scenery in God's creation. As plant life and our gardens flourish, the parable of the mustard seed comes to mind—from the tiny seed, such a huge plant emerges. Those tiny seeds in the garden are producing an a nice crop of food for the table. The parable reminds us that huge things can happen as a result of a very small thing.

As we work to meet the budget, please remember to remember SOTH. Each of us is a mustard seed, but together our faith produces a field of blessings for others as we continue the ministries of SOTH.

Recurring contributions may be set up online by scanning the code with your phone camera or by the secure Vanco website: <https://secure.myvanco.com/L-Z5RF/home>, or mobile app invite code BBTCEY.

September will usher in the fall appeal for stewardship. Watch for announcements as we celebrate the missions accomplished through our giving and embrace God's guidance for the future use of our time, talent and treasure.

Peace of the Lord, Charlene Coulson, Stewardship



Honoring our Graduates

In May , SOTH recognized the achievements of Atalia Fisher, Blaine Putzer and Ryan Williams as they celebrated their High School Graduations.

We now pray for Blessings upon them as they venture into their next chapter.



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.

Faith Formation News August/September 2023

August signals the end to summer freedom of time as we return to the school year and new program year at our beloved Shepherd of the Hills. Although we have missed the regular gatherings with Sunday School and Confirmation classes, we were happy to send 11 of our students to RTLC this summer. Watch for the Rainbow Trail Sunday when these kids share their Spiritual and Recreational experiences with our congregation.

Milestone ministries will honor all returning to school by the blessing of the backpacks on AUGUST 13th!

On July 30th, several stakeholders met to discuss the best way to fashion our Sunday School/Children's Church program. When and how often can we meet? What curriculum can we use? We love God's children and desire to pass on the FAITH through Bible stories, scripture, prayer and song. How can we optimize attendance in this busy world of children's sports and other extracurricular activities? God's grace abounds and we NEED to gather with our children to share this unconditional love. Watch for emails that describe our new program year of FAITH FORMATION programs and then bring your kids and yourselves to our church to join in and share God's love!

On **September 9th** GOD'S WORK; OUR HANDS provides an opportunity for us to serve by learning how to keep our local river clean! Diana Biggs and the River Watch team will be spearheading this service project onsite. We will meet at 10 am and test the waters (literally) of the Arkansas River and Grape Creek. We will also have a picnic lunch provided. Plan to join us.

The following day, we will meet again for a fellowship breakfast provided by the Faith Formation Team. We will describe the new and improved Children's Church program. Thrivent grants will provide food for this gathering.

Noisy Offering for the '23/'24 program year will start up again on **September 10th**. Students of the congregation decide which needed nonprofit agency will receive this donation. Spread the love by bringing in your spare change on that day.

Our Confirmation students welcome Brycen into the 6th, 7th and 8th grade classes. Taiya moves into the 9th grade year, when she meets with her mentor monthly. May God bless our Catechism and Children's Church programs richly.

Our team members are: Bobbie Anderson, Dianne Bush, Pastor Chris, Becky Romano and Dena Richter. Please keep us and our congregation in your prayers!

August & September Birthdays

Etta Corkill	8/1	Hazel Adolf	8/28	Marilyn Lange	9/9
Nicholas Romano	8/9			Wendy Schiferl	9/13
Jerry Barslou	8/9	Shirley Kramer	9/2	Brycen Minton	9/13
Donna Weskamp	8/13	Jon Runa	9/2	Gini Woltemath	9/14
Marty Waite	8/14	Joan Quick	9/3	Karen Varner	9/22
Cindy Giles-Thomas	8/24	Craig Scheer	9/3	Jordyn Sutton	9/23
Tucker Anderson	8/25	Robert Worley	9/8		
Bob Erickson	8/25	Sharon Salyer	9/9		
Bill Hall	8/27	Bobbie Anderson	9/9		

NEWS & NOTES

Dear Church Council and Congregation of Shepherd of the Hills –

I wish to thank all of you for sharing in the worship service celebrating my 55th Ordination Anniversary. I am grateful and glad you were able to mark this milestone with me. Thank you for the cards, gifts and well wishes. I am so happy to be a part of SOTH and to be able to continue in ministry. It is a real blessing to me. I am thankful to be able to be of service. It is a joy and privilege to remember you daily in my thoughts and prayers.



Yours In Christ, *Pastor Lois*



Thank you so much for your gifts, cards and well wishes in recognition of my high school graduation. Your generosity and support is greatly appreciated. I am excited to take these next steps in my life journey.

Ryan Williams

NEWS & NOTES

The Rocky Mountain Synod Assembly 2023

What happens at a Synod Assembly? There's worship, Bible study and prayer sessions, of course. There's also Synod business: budget reviews and votes, proposed Constitutional changes and memorials, and elections. During this Assembly there were votes for Synod secretary, representative to Synod Council for Metro West and a young adult.

Before, during and after all of this there is food and fellowship. This year's theme was Cruzando Fronteras (Crossing Borders) and our location was certainly the appropriate place for this theme. The delegates were divided into 20 groups for their border immersion experience. My group went to Sacred Heart where refugees and asylum seekers are being fed and housed. ~Diana Biggs



Here you see Bishop Gonia with lay people preparing food for the refugees and asylum seekers. We were also privileged to meet with some of the families from the shelter. They told us the stories of their journey and their gratitude for now being safe.



The refugees and asylum seekers assist with the meal preparation and serving since they are not allowed to work while awaiting their hearings. On the day we were there, we assisted with the work. My thoughts on this sacred experience: The faith and gratitude of the refugees and asylum seekers is amazing. Thanks that the Rocky Mountain Synod and the ELCA are deeply invested in helping the refugees and asylum seekers.

I wish I could do more: in volunteering and financially. The trauma these families, especially the children, have endured is beyond our comprehension.

What did we delegates learn?

We heard the Reverend Dr. David Vasquez-Levy discusses the historical background of immigration. Ruben Garcia from Annunciation House discussed his decades of work with refugees and asylum seekers. His commitment to helping includes having adopted six children whose parents were killed in Nicaragua.

A retired US Border Patrol agent met with my border immersion group and shared some interesting information. All of the people now seeking refugee status or asylum have experienced being robbed, beaten, and sometimes kidnapped. When asked if these folks are drug dealers, he replied, "the last thing they want to do is make waves" His reply to whether drugs cross the border with the refugees, he said, "Drugs don't cross the border with asylum seekers. It's big business and would be an inefficient way for them to conduct their business."

Shepherd of the Hills Men's Fellowship and Bible Study Group

The meeting is open to all men of faith, meeting every Saturday starting at 8 am and finishing up at 9 am. Some stay later to continue the discussion, but those with a busy schedule know that at they are free to head out at 9. The cooking and meeting leadership is shared on a voluntary basis, with contributions collected to make the group fully self-supporting. We check our politics and controversy at the door, welcoming all brothers to grow in Christ and in fellowship with their brothers. With any questions, please contact Ian Forbes at iansteri@aol.com.

The problem (and power) of money

[Jesus told the rich man] "You lack one thing; go, sell what you own, and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me." When he heard this, he was shocked and went away grieving, for he had many possessions. ... [Jesus taught the disciples,] "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God."

– **Mark 10:21b-22, 25**

At a Bible study, a man of means asked, "Why does Jesus hate money so much?" His family saw their money as a good thing, and he earnestly wanted to understand why Jesus seems to speak negatively of wealth again and again.

In fact, Jesus talks about money more than nearly anything else. Interestingly, for all his talk about money, he never asks for it. And he never condemns it. Instead, Jesus warns us about the corrupting influence of money.

Wealth poses spiritual risks. Jesus teaches that money has the power to turn us inward – away from loving God with all our heart and loving our neighbor as ourselves. It confuses our values and direction.

All of us want full lives brimming with security, relationships, joy, peace and love – but money can ensure us none of those things. They are the fruits of loving God with ALL our strength and of loving our neighbor as ourselves. Wealth can get in the way.

That was the issue with the rich man in Mark 10:17-27. Deeply religious, he nonetheless worries about eternal life. The "one thing" he lacks, Jesus tells him, can be satisfied by selling what he has and giving to the poor. Generous giving would break the bond that money has over him and help re-center him on loving God and loving neighbor. Generosity is the spiritual prescription Jesus gives the rich man, and it's the one for us, too.

The primary goal of our church's financial stewardship should not be to fund the church, but rather to break the chains that money may have on our hearts and souls. By giving generously we can help the church, our neighbor and ourselves. We can learn what it is to be free to love God with all our heart and our neighbor as ourselves.

--**Rob Blezard**

August 2023

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
30	31	1	2	3	4	5
		1 PM Majong			9 AM Peace In Motion	
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
	9 AM Peace In Motion 9 AM Meals On Wheels	1 PM Majong 6 PM Council Mtg	1 PM Crafting for Christ		9 AM Peace In Motion	
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
	9 AM Peace In Motion	1 PM Majong			9 AM Peace In Motion	
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
	9 AM Peace In Motion 9 AM Meals On Wheel	1 PM Majong	1 PM Crafting for Christ		9 AM Peace In Motion	
27	28	29	30	31	1	2
Joint Worship in the Park with Christ Episcopal	9 AM Peace In Motion	1 PM Majong				

September 2022

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
27	28	29	30	31	1	2
					9 AM Peace In Motion	
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
	Labor Day / Office Closed 9 AM Meals on Wheels	1 PM Majong	6:30 PM Choir Practice		9 AM Peace In Motion	
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
Noisy Offering	9 AM Peace In Motion	1 PM Majong 6 PM Council Mtg	1 PM Crafting for Christ 2 PM Book Club 6:30PM Choir Practice	1 PM Book Club	9 AM Peace In Motion	
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
	9 AM Peace In Motion 9 AM Meals on Wheels	1 PM Majong	6:30 PM Choir Practice		9 AM Peace In Motion	
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
	9 AM Peace In Motion	1 PM Majong	1 PM Crafting for Christ 6:30 PM Choir Practice		9 AM Peace In Motion	

Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church

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

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