

Shepherd's Voice



September 2015

**THIS IS THE DAY THAT THE LORD HAS MADE.
LET US REJOICE AND BE GLAD IN IT:
*Spiritual Practices, Worship and Journeying with God***

By Pastor Joanna Mitchell

I pray the best when I am walking alone in the morning. There is something about the rhythm of a walk and greeting the new day that lends itself to prayers of thanksgiving, and prayers of healing and care for those I hold dear. Because of this I am often thankful for the bible verses that I have memorized or the stories that I know basically by heart. As I walk along at times I will pray the Lord's Prayer or meditate on the verse: Be still and know that I am God. I am not a huge fan of memorization for the sake of memorization. But I have realized that the simple verse that I have committed to memory accompany me on my walks. They speak the word of God to me even when I am far away from my bible. They help me when I am contemplating something important in my life or struggling to understand.

In the age of google and the internet it almost seems that we don't need to memorize bible verses anymore. If we want a verse about hope we can google it and voila—there it is. Or if we want a verse about sorrow—google! Thanks be to God! But sometimes when we are not searching for it God speaks his word to us through a simple verse of assurance that just pops into our head and can accompany us on our walk or car ride. I know at some of the more trying times in my own life, I have woken up in the morning filled with worry and stressed out and then the words will come into my head: "Surely I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord." Jeremiah 29:11. The unfortunate thing for me is I don't know this whole verse by heart, but I know it says the plans that God has for me are good, hopeful and filled with life. And so I will turn to my bible or to google and read the end of the verse. Oh yes, "For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope." This is a verse that I long to have fully committed to memory so that I don't have to rely on another source other than my brain and my heart to hear God's word of promise and assurance during these difficult moments.

This fall, we want to help people of all ages learn simple biblical verses that can accompany you on your journey. At the beginning of each worship service we will have a monthly verse that we will say together as a congregation. The verse will also relate to our readings in church and connect with our Spiritual Practices that we are focused on for the

Pastor's Message continued on page 2.

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

Staff:

Pastors	Scott Searl & Joanna Mitchell
Assistant/Visitation Pastor	Fred Jensen
Director of Music/Organist	David Surdez
Shepherd's Song Director	Emily Koski
Children's Choir Director	Kent Goodroad
Administrative Assistant	Shawn Wacholz
Custodian	Kevin Wicks
Parish Nurse	Kaye Wothe
Center for Service Director	Katy Yannitelli

Church Council Members / Officers:

President	Kathy Wiemer
Acting Vice President	Mark Schultz
Treasurer	Quinn Driscoll
Financial Secretary	Dan Orlopp
Secretary	Augusta Thrift
Service	Scott Koelsch
Worship & Music	Allie Jensen
Building & Facilities	Dave Wiemer
Learning	Shay Koski
Growing Relationships	Christa Meland
Caring	Jodi Sheldon Rogness
LMCC	Hilary Nelson
Evaluation	Jason Miller

Telephone & Voice Mail Extensions:

Worship Times	1
Directions	2
Shawn Wacholz	11
Pastor Scott Searl	12
Pastor Joanna Mitchell	13
Emily Koski	15
Emergency Message Mailbox	24
Kaye Wothe	25
Kevin Wicks	26

Shepherd Online!

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Pastor Joanna Mitchell	joanna.mitchell@sothchurch.com
Shawn Wacholz	office@sothchurch.com
Kaye Wothe	kaye.wothe@sothchurch.com
Church web site	www.sothchurch.com
Center for Service	www.hopkinsvolunteers.org

Pastor's Message continued

month. In September we will be returning to the book of Genesis and hearing once again the story of God creating our world. Our Spiritual Practice for the month will be Worship and our verse: This is the day that the Lord has made. Let us rejoice and be glad in it. Psalm 118:24. For the month of September we want to invite you to think about how you worship God, not just on Sunday morning but every day. What are small ways that you give thanks and praise for what God has made? We want you to take your worship bulletin home each week because within it we will have a Spiritual Exercise and questions for you to contemplate along with our memory verse. We want you to read through the worship service again and discuss with a friend or family member what are your favorite parts of worship and how do they speak to you. We want you to memorize the verse. Perhaps this verse will be one that you will walk with or drive with or say to yourself throughout the day as you dig up your garden, send the kids off to school, close up the cabin, golf another round or watch the leaves change from your kitchen window. Or perhaps this verse can serve as a reminder that when you are having a hard time getting out of bed in the morning and life seems difficult that this is the day that the Lord has made. Perhaps just remembering for a moment that each day is a gift can help you get through to the next one. Perhaps it can assist you in seeing God present in your day and help you find something to be thankful for.

Worship is an invitation to look beyond ourselves to give thanks and praise to God and to lift up our life and our world knowing that we have a God who loves us completely, knows us and is on this journey with us. Thanks be to God!

Pastor Joanna



PRESIDENT'S POST

By Kathy Wiemer, Church Council President

Gearing Up!!

Many of us have enjoyed summer vacations, family get-togethers and warm weather activities that may have taken us away from regular participation in church services and activities. The summer sermon series based on Acts and Hebrews were very engaging and interesting, so if you missed them, check out the new website (see below). It's always exciting to see what the

pastors, staff and ministry teams have planned for the coming program year at SOTH when September rolls around. Each Council Ministry team leader will be sharing some information and stories about upcoming initiatives and team members in the monthly newsletter.

Coming in September: SOTH Block Party and God's Work, Our Hands

Our annual Block party is almost here—be ready on the 13th after our 9:30 worship!! Enjoy great food, fun, entertainment and games for the kids!! Mark Schultz is leading the planning and several new activities will be included. Please invite friends and neighbors to join us for the extravaganza under the big white tent!! God's Work, Our Hands is coming on the 20th—please see the article by Scott Koelsch in this newsletter to learn more. Both of these events are wonderful ways to celebrate God's blessings with our members and surrounding communities.

Future Capital Projects

The Church Council is discussing possible opportunities for a future capital appeal to envision God's call toward Shepherd's future. This work is very important as we continue to care for our building and create a welcoming environment. P Scott and I hosted three sessions over the summer months to provide an overview of the projects under consideration and gather input from members. Some possible projects for this next appeal could include:

- Preserving our Sheep Tapestry and repositioning opposite the organ
- Commissioning new flexible, changeable fabric artwork for the front of the sanctuary
- Adding some new windows in the lounge/narthex area
- Renovating the main office
- Re-paving all parking lots

Thanks to those of you who joined us and gave your feedback. We are forming a team of members to begin considering some early stage design work and determining costs for the various possibilities. The Council will take this input and decide on the process moving forward. We will provide updates and additional opportunities for input during the fall.

Check Out Shepherd's New Website

One of our four strategic pillars is to use technology to allow our content to reach more people. Our new website is up and running, thanks to the hard work of the Growing Relationships ministry team led by Christa Meland in partnership with Ryan Adolphson (son of SOTH members Mark & Deb Adolphson), who brought the website concepts to life. You will be able to

Continued above

President's Post continued

see upcoming events, updated schedules for church services and activities, staff, Council and ministry team information and other useful information about Shepherd of the Hills. We hope you have already explored it but if you haven't, please check it out (www.sothchurch.com) and let us know what you think!!

Main Level Kitchen Remodel

The Admin and Facilities ministry team is updating the kitchen on the main level. It will include new flooring, cabinets, countertops and appliances. The plan is to keep disruption in that area of the church to a minimum during the remodeling process. We had hoped to have it completed before September programming but due to some delays, the work will be going on during September. We ask for your patience and understanding while it is being done.

Thanks for your continued support and prayers for your family of faith and your church council leadership. As always, if you have any questions or concerns about our life together please don't hesitate to contact me or any Council member.

TWO WORSHIP SERVICES BEGIN SEPTEMBER 27th

Our new worship schedule for fall is as follows:

- Starting Sunday, September 27,
- 9:00 am Contemporary Worship
- 10:30am Traditional Worship

At both worship services there will be a children's message and a kids' time. Nursery care is available at all worship services.



Learning, Service and Fellowship

CIRCLE MEETINGS

Deborah Circle

New members are welcome!

Date: Thurs., Sept. 10
Time: 9:30 a.m.
Hostess: Norma Langehough
Location: Church Library
Bible Study: Members
Contact: Norma Langehough
(952) 996-0630

Lois Circle

Date: Tues., Sept. 8
Time: 7:00 p.m.
Hostess: Shirley Vold
Location: 5002 Diane Dr., Mtka
(952) 935-9350
Bible Study: Shirley Vold
Contact: Marge Bullemer
(952) 938-5078



GOOD COMPANY BREAKFAST

**A Group for All Ages
Friday, September 18 at 9:00 a.m.**

One of the favorite breakfast locations of the Good Company group is the special indoor porch room at the back of the Eden Avenue Grill and that's the meeting spot for the September 18 meeting at 9:00 am. The restaurant is located at 5101 Arcadia Avenue in Edina, just southwest of the corner of Hwy 100 and Vernon Avenue. All church members and their guests are invited to join us and please contact Barbara Felker at 952-929-2813 or dollroom@sprynet.com or just come to the special porch that morning.



**God's work.
Our hands.**

**GOD'S WORK. OUR HANDS
September 20**

Worship at 9:30am and Service Projects from 10:30 until noon followed by a congregational meal

On September 20th we will be putting our faith in action by serving our neighbors. After worship on September 20th a variety of service opportunities will be set-up for people of all ages to participate in. We will be doing anything from making a meal, to yard work, visiting people at Chapel View, helping with laundry at the local laundry mat, to praying for our neighbors and much, much, more. Please plan on joining us for this day of service. God's work, Our Hands is a national event of the ELCA in which all congregations are encouraged to serve their local communities.



LOAVES & FISHES Monday, September 14

Mark your calendar for our next serving date of Monday, September 14. We prepare and serve an evening meal at St. Gabriel's Church (1310 Mainstreet, Hopkins). We hope serving at a Hopkins location will make it easier for members of SOTH to help feed our community. Timing is as follows: 4:00 to prepare, 5:00 to serve and 6:00 for clean up. We are finished by 6:45. If you would like more information or are able to volunteer, please contact the church office.



CHURCH COUNCIL: Service Team Update

By Scott Koelsch, Council Liaison

What is the service team and what do they do? That's question I have asked myself recently being the newest member of the team. I am still learning exactly what all we do and are involved in planning. The newly designed church website has a great list of all the organizations in the community that Shepherd is partnering with to provide services. It gives a good flavor of where we are connected to the community around Shepherd. I love seeing pictures of people busy at service projects. Everyone seems to have a smile on their face and having fun when hard at work. I wonder why that is? Anyway, our service team has been hard at work for the last few months planning for God's Work. Our Hands on September 20th. I hope everyone will take time to participate along with us that day as we have many different projects planned for the event. I am amazed by the people on this team who have so many established connections to people and programs in the community. I learn a little more each month about what we do and I hope to not be the "new kid on the block" soon. We are always eager to listen to anyone who has ideas about new projects or partnerships to initiate. It is all about how we can put our faith into action and share God's love in our community.

Wednesday Evening Programs

WEDNESDAY PROGRAMS BEGIN SEPTEMBER 2nd

Community Meal starting September 2nd: will be served from 5:30-6:30pm. In September we will be serving chicken and beef tacos with chips and salsa.

We will have a community meal the first Wednesday of each month. If you know that you plan to attend please email Pastor Joanna Mitchell or sign up at the welcome center. You do NOT need to sign up to attend. The sign-up, however, will help us to estimate the quantity of food to make.

Wednesday Night Education from 6:30-7:30pm—for all ages!

1st Wednesday of the month: Cross-Generational Bible Study for people of all ages. Adults, confirmation students, high school youth, elementary students, parents are invited to learn and grow together. Meet in the Adult Forum Room with Pastors Scott and Joanna to learn about faith practices and the bible. Nursery care will be provided.

2nd Wednesday of the month: Small Group Bible Study and Faith Formation: Confirmation, High school youth and Adults should meet in the Adult Forum room and then will break out into small groups. Also, meeting separately:

- ◆ WAM (in choir room)
- ◆ Faithful Parenting (in chapel)
- ◆ 7:30-8:30pm High School Hang out (in youth room)

3rd Wednesday of the month:

- ◆ WAM
- ◆ Faithful Parenting
- ◆ TED Talk: “Before I die I want to... “ Speaker: Candy Chang
In her New Orleans neighborhood, artist and TED Fellow Candy Chang turned an abandoned house into a giant chalkboard asking a fill-in-the-blank question: “Before I die I want to ____.” Her neighbors' answers ... surprising, poignant, funny ... became an unexpected mirror for the community. (What's your answer?)
- ◆ Nursery Care available

4th Wednesday of the month:

- ◆ WAM
- ◆ Faithful Parenting:
- ◆ Current Events and Faith: led by Pastor Scott and James Warden
See pages 10 and 11 of newsletter for discussion articles.
- ◆ Nursery Care available

5th Wednesday of the month

- ◆ Service Projects

WAM: Kindergartners through 5th graders are invited to participate in WAM (Worship, Art and Music). Each week kids will enjoy a time of singing and also participate in an art lesson that will relate to our lesson for the upcoming week.

Confirmation Orientation: Wednesday September 9th from 6:30-7:30 pm Parents and youth will meet in the chapel to discuss our schedule for the year, our expectations for confirmation and to participate in a faith activity.

Confirmation Retreat: September 25th drop off at 6:30pm and September 26th pick up at 4pm. More information will be coming soon.



MEN OF SOTH

Thursday, September 3

Did you know that one of the most important factors in a child's faith development is the participation of the father or a significant male role model? It's true, research indicates that warm, kind, faithful men play a key role in the determination of a child's future faith participation. With that in mind... come and discuss the future of men's ministry at SOTH on Thursday, September 3rd at 6pm at LTD Brewery in Hopkins. No RSVP needed. We'll talk about possible activities, gatherings, outings or the like.

WEDNESDAY MORNING BIBLE STUDY

Our weekly Bible study will resume on September 9. Come for Bible study, food, 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.

Worship

WORSHIP ASSISTANT SCHEDULE

DATE	TIME	LECTOR	COMMUNION PRESENTERS	COMMUNION ASSISTANTS	ALTAR GUILD	USHERS
Sept. 6	9:30	Ellen Levernier	R & G Morseth	R & G Morseth	N Broholm & J Luers	Lilly Team
Sept. 13	9:30	Scott Edmundson	K & J Wicks	K & J Wicks	K Vevele & J Wicks	Rinker Team
Sept. 20	9:30	Jack Hanson	F & J Ness	R & C Rinker	K Boucher & K Wiemer	Luers & Rinker
Sept. 27	9:00 10:30	Warren Wollenberg P or S Bohnsack	D & M Brubacher K Vevele & G Nash	L Kopperud & W Wollenberg R & N Shaeffer	M Bullemer & K Schultz	Luers Team Rinker Team

GREETER SCHEDULE

Sept. 6	9:30	Bruce & Hilary Nelson
Sept. 13	9:30	Peter & Alyssa Barott
Sept. 20	9:30	Doug & Ronell Raney
Sept. 27	9:00 10:30	Al Erdahl & Roland Toenges Milford & Norma Langehough

HOSPITALITY HOSTS

Alysa Horsman
Block Party
Tracy & Keith Anderson
Betty & Ed Edmundson



HOPKINSVOLUNTEERS

By Katy Yannitelli, Director

I Can Help!

Greetings! We're wrapping up our summer with two new organizations under our belt,

several new volunteer opportunities, and a tasty fundraiser that you won't want to miss! We've added two wonderful organizations: St. David's Center and the Hopkins Historical Society. St. David's Center is an exceptional preschool, children's mental health clinic and pediatric therapy clinic—all under one roof. St. David's Center is in need of several volunteer groups and individuals to support their renovation and expansion by volunteering. Volunteer groups will assist in projects that will keep their renovation costs low and allow them to continue to provide exceptional service to their clients without business interruption. Since its founding in 1972, the Hopkins Historical Society has been dedicated to preserving the history of the Hopkins community. Hopkins Historical Society currently has two volunteer opportunities available: Museum Assistant and Event Assistant. Please visit our website, www.hopkinsvolunteers.org, for more information about these positions as well as many other opportunities.

And lastly, on Sunday, September 20th, stop in at PizzaRev in Hopkins to raise some dough for hopkinsvolunteers.org! You can dine in (or take out) anytime between 10am-10pm that day; just mention hopkinsvolunteers.org at the register and we will receive a generous portion of the profits. Enjoy their wonderful pizza while helping to support our mission! As always, thank you for your support and for getting the word out about us! Please feel free to contact me with suggestions for organizations we can help, or for any other questions or comments you may have.

September 2015

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2 5:30 Supper 6:30 Wed Programs	3	4 Office Closed at noon	5
6 9:30 Worship 10:30 Coffee & Fellowship	7 Church Office Closed	8 5:30 Executive Team 7:30 Lois Circle	9 9:30 Fellowship 10:00 Bible Study 6:30 Wed Programs 7:30 Chancel Choir	10 9:30 Deborah Circle	11 Office Closed at noon	12
13 9:30 Worship 10:30 Annual Block Party!	14 1:00 Staff Meeting 6:45 Shepherd's Song 7:00 Troop Meetings	15 6:00 Council Supper 6:30 Council Meeting	16 9:30 Fellowship 10:00 Bible Study 6:30 Wed Programs 7:30 Chancel Choir	17	18 9:00 Good Company Breakfast Office Closed at noon	19
20 9:30 Worship 10:30 God's Work Our Hands Service Event 12:00 Lunch	21 1:00 Staff Meeting 6:00 Troop Committees 6:45 Shepherd's Song	22	23 9:30 Fellowship 10:00 Bible Study 6:30 Wed Programs 7:30 Chancel Choir	24	25 Office Closed at noon 6:30 Confirmation Retreat	26 Confirmation Retreat
27 9:00 Worship 10:00 Coffee & Fellowship 10:30 Worship	28 1:00 Staff Meeting 6:45 Shepherd's Song 7:00 Troop Meetings	29	30 9:30 Fellowship 10:00 Bible Study 6:30 Wed Programs 7:30 Chancel Choir			

Summer Worship Schedule

April 26 - September 20, 2015

9:30 a.m. Worship

Regular Worship Schedule

September 27, 2015 - April 17, 2016

9:00 & 10:30 a.m. Worship





SUNDAY KIDS' TIME

Sunday Kids' Time begins on September 13th

during worship. During the kids' time children 3 years old through 5th graders will be invited to a special time of learning with one of the pastors. Kids will leave worship for 10- 15 minutes during the sermon. Kids will explore more deeply the bible lesson and other aspects of faith for the day in a kid-friendly manner. Kids will return to worship in time for Holy Communion.



NURSERY HELP NEEDED

Our nursery is a wonderful way in which we provide care and support our young children and their families. We want to have two people in the nursery to provide safe, well-managed nursery care. We are looking for new volunteers to help out periodically in the nursery. Please contact Pastor Joanna Mitchell if you are interested or sign up on the welcome center.

BLOCK PARTY

September 13 Fall Kick off and Block Party: Worship 9:30am and Block Party immediately following.

Please invite your friends and neighbors to join you for our fall kick off. We will have an amazing time getting to know one another and our neighbors at the Block Party. There are kids games, a foam machine, tons of great food and plenty of time for socializing. Come for worship or come for the block party. We just hope you will come join us!



KNOWLEDGE VS. WISDOM: Before Google

By Emily Koski, Shepherd's Song Director

During the summer months, we occasionally venture outside the walls of SOTH on Sunday mornings to attend church with our parents. One recent sermon series presented by River Valley Church resonated with me and I'd like to share my takeaways.

The multi-week series is called "Before Google" and it was introduced with a discussion about the difference between knowledge and wisdom and where in the world we as a society found wisdom before Google. (I'll give you a hint – it's that big book we read from every Sunday!)

First, let me say that I love Google. I think it's a super go-to source for knowledge, which is facts or information. Type in "what year did the Titanic sink" and you're going to get 1912 pretty quickly. Amazing! I love it! The problem for me comes in when I start relying on Google for wisdom, the quality of having experience, knowledge and good judgment. I've found myself getting in the habit of searching for career or financial advice, how to be a good mom and wife, how to live a healthy lifestyle and instill those same values in my family, how to simplify, and the list goes on. Sometimes I find great nuggets of wisdom while reading blogs and comments, but let's face it. Mostly, there's a lot of noise, which can introduce even more uncertainty and unneeded stress.

So where did people go for wisdom before Google? The Bible, for one, is a blueprint for how to live our lives with advice on anything from parenting to finances (check out Proverbs and you'll see what I mean!). Another age-old source of wisdom is from those who know us best: parents, grandparents, friends, and, of course, God. The kind of wisdom and advice you receive from those sources is tailored to you, your personality, your gifts and abilities. Google can't give you that!

At Shepherd of the Hills, we talk a lot about the wisdom of our elders – those in our church family who have lived faithfully and who truly know the Bible – and we strive to provide opportunities to share and exchange that knowledge throughout the generations. One outstanding way to experience these connections is the upcoming intergenerational structure for Wednesday night education starting this fall. The first Wednesday of every month, we all meet together to eat and learn about our faith, and the other Wednesdays are spent in more intimate small groups where we can continue to learn about our world and from each other. I encourage you to attend, share and receive wisdom from other members of our church family.

Like I said, I love being able to do a quick Google search and gain knowledge in an instant, but I'm also becoming aware that knowledge and wisdom are distinctly different. Therefore, I'm making a commitment to myself to make connections with the Bible, God and those who know me best as my primary source for true wisdom.



RELEVANCE

By Kaye Wothe, Parish Nurse

Relevance is my word of the year (thanks to Pastor Hub who used it in an interview I did with him for my graduate studies). I love this word. It can apply to so many things and holds deep meaning for most people. As people, at any age, we strive to be relevant. It is the struggle of a toddler trying to get his parents' attention; the teenager trying to get noticed and discover who they are or are not; the young adult as they decide "what they will be when they grow up;" the parent trying to keep up with their peers, work cohorts and kids; at our jobs we are undoubtedly faced with deciding what our audience will find relevant and what will be determined to the leprosy of irrelevance; then the retired person who may feel like their current expertise about the subject that has been their life work is soon to be "dated;" and last the elderly person who is watching a fast changing world and may not be feeling a part of it.

Relevance is also something we consider heavily with each decision we make for ourselves and our kids in these days of excessive choices and corresponding busyness. Socially and relationally, relevance is an extremely powerful word. I have started to consider relevance as I consider how I treat others. Do I treat them like they are relevant?

What we find most obviously relevant often depends on what our experience of the time is. When I am feeling judged and not seen for who I really am, I find the story of the Samaritan woman at the well very relevant. When I am feeling like I was not good to my family and hoping they will welcome me back the story prodigal son is relevant to me. When I am wondering how God could ever love me, I am very glad to know Romans 8:38-39, ("Nothing can separate us from the love of God") as it's relevance gives me hope.

This year at SOTH we will be working on easy, meaningful ways for all of us to find spiritual practices that have relevance for us individually and as a community. Maybe it will be by memorizing some key scripture that can be remembered in a time of need and give us hope. Or maybe it will be to find more meaning in the stories of the bible so we can see God in our own similar stories. Or discovering the power of a daily 5 minute time of devotion and prayer that sets our day off in a better direction or ends our day with hope for a fresh start and new day when we wake. It might even be any one of the many community service opportunities we can serve at to move our faith into action. I invite you to find the spiritual practice(s) that are relevant to your life and faith. Talk to us about what those spiritual practices might be for you or how we can help you get started. It's life changing, it's very relevant!

Looking forward to the year of learning and growing in faith,
Kaye Wothe, Parish Nurse

P.S. Challenge: tell me what your word of the year might be and why?



CAREGIVER SUPPORT

Calling all caregivers!! We want to welcome you to join us for our monthly caregiver support meeting here at SOTH on the second Monday of each month at 2:30pm in the chapel. Please join us as we talk, learn, share, care, consider God's word and pray together. Talk to Kaye Wothe, parish nurse, if you have questions.



WITH THANKS

To all my friends at SOTH, Thank you so much for all your prayers that lifted me up during my chemotherapy for ovarian cancer. I am pleased to share that I have completed treatment with minimal side effects and for the last several months, there has been no evidence of residual cancer. I now consider myself a survivor and I look forward to whatever life has to offer me! "For mortals it is impossible, for God all things are possible. - Matthew 19:26"
Gratefully, Jan Strathy

WE'RE HIRING

Shepherd of the Hills is hiring a part-time Children's Ministry Coordinator. We are looking for someone who loves God, enjoys children, is able to teach, lead music and is a team player. If you know someone who would be an asset to our SOTH Team please direct them to our website: www.sothchurch.com/about/openpositions for a full-job description and information on how to apply.

Current Events and Faith Topic

CURRENT EVENTS AND FAITH CONVERSATIONS

This fall starting Wednesday, September 23 at 6:30pm Pastor Scott and James Warden (a member of Shepherd of the Hills and former reporter for the Hopkins Patch) will be hosting conversations on current events. James will write a news article outlining the issue from a reporting point of view, and Pastor Scott will write a pastoral brief with the same topic in mind. This month we will be focused on Police, Violence, Jesus and Community. Give both articles a read and come prepared to discuss on September 23rd at 6:30pm. All are welcome, and we hope you will join in these sure to be lively and hopeful conversations.

Police, Violence, Division and Community continued

long history of healthy community relations and still wind up with an officer who makes a mistake. In either case, police may respond to criticism with a heavy hand or with restraint.

Recognizing these distinctions is a vital part of moving beyond toxic argument to the kind of healthy debate that leaves communities stronger. These controversies certainly aren't going away on their own. Policing is a job that both threatens officers with danger and tempts them to violence. It's only by coming together that we can find a balance that minimizes both.



POLICE, VIOLENCE, DIVISION AND COMMUNITY

By James Warden

Since the death of Eric Garner in July 2014 and Michael Brown one month later, killings by law enforcement officers have hit the news with alarming regularity. Over the past year, we've added the names of Tamir Rice, Eric Harris, Walter Scott, Freddie Gray and others.

The Washington Post estimates that 607 people in the United States have been "shot dead" by police so far this year. The Guardian counts 723 people killed by police during the same period; incidents range from gunshots to unknown causes of deaths while in custody. The truth is nobody knows the exact totals since data collection is notoriously bad.

Not all of these deaths generated controversy, but a handful have led to the worst civil strife in decades. Ferguson remains a scene of protests more than a year after Michael Brown's death led to images of tear gas and flames on cable news. Baltimore saw violence after Freddie Gray died while in police custody. There have even been protests in the Twin Cities that shut down Interstate 35W and disrupted Mall of America shopping.

Feelings about these protests are closely aligned with how people feel about the incidents that sparked them. On one side, defenders of police say officers have just seconds to make life and death decisions. Many of those killed were engaged in criminal activity at the time of their deaths or tried to resist legitimate arrests. Michael Brown, for example, was seen stealing cigarillos before his death and is accused of attacking the officer who shot him.

On the other side, activists organized around the Black Lives Matter movement say the killings are proof that police respond more violently to people of color. Some argue that increasingly militarized police escalate confrontations they could defuse. In South Carolina, Officer Michael Slager has been indicted for murder after video showed him shooting an unarmed man named Walter Scott while Scott was running away.

Inevitably, conversation quickly breaks down as each side paints a caricature of the other. Shooting victims become thugs. Police became fascists. The pattern is the same even though each particular case is unique.

Finding consensus is especially tough because separate issues often congeal into one muddled mess. The truth is, there are typically three discrete questions at the heart of controversial police shootings:

- Did police handle the specific incident appropriately?
- Was their response to public protests proportionate?
- Was policing prior to the incident fair, just and equitable?

The answer to one question doesn't necessarily have bearing on the others. Officers may handle a specific incident appropriately but still have a history of policing in a way that erodes trust. Conversely, a department may have a

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FEAR, VIOLENCE, JESUS AND COMMUNITY

By Pastor Scott Searl

One of the interesting bits of being human is our built in sense of fear. I assume our sense of fear is an evolutionary trait we developed to help keep us alive! For example, fear of the unknown can keep us alive when we are faced with a multiplicity of choices. Is this a safe area for me to enter? Is this a safe plant for me to eat? Is something following me? Is this person approaching me safe or do they wish to do me harm? For most of human existence, fear played a powerful role in helping to keep us safe, alive, and motivated.

However, as most of us are aware, fear can also be debilitating, and destructive. Fear can prevent us from making important and needed changes in our daily choices. Fear can block our ability to interact with people whose culture, traditions, religion or ethnicity are different than ours. Fear can keep us from taking risks that would be beneficial to us and/or our neighbors. Fear can also end in violence; physical, emotional, spiritual, mental or verbal. Fear can plug our ears, block our hearts from experiencing compassion, and cloud our minds from making clear decisions.

Fear is also one of the reasons that Jesus ended up in trouble, and ultimately killed. Jesus' actions often made people fearful. He ate with people of different cultures and religions, even blessed them and loved them. He visited with people who were considered dangerous because of the diseases they carried. He praised people from other faiths who acted in congruence with the will of God. He challenged the "status quo" of power, politics, economics and religion. Jesus' actions and words often forced people to confront the things that made them most fearful.

And yet, when confronted with fear, or the subsequent violence, Jesus always responded in love. When confronted with the fear-filled physical violence of death, Jesus responded with outstretched arms, absorbing the violence and the fear with humility, compassion and grace. When he then came back from the dead, he responded to those who had abandoned him, denied him and even those who in a fear filled rage took his life, with, "Fear not." How does Jesus' response to fear influence your daily life at work, home, play, politics, and the multiplicity of choices that we face every day? Or, in what ways does Jesus make you uncomfortable? Does his life in any way cause you to reflect critically on your own?

As we begin our series this fall James and I choose to begin with a discussion of police violence, race, and our current pervasive sense of division. We hope you will read his article also in this newsletter and reflect on your point of view, your feelings, and your heart's reaction to the events that have unfolded. We also hope you will come and discuss your perspective with us on Wednesday, September 23 at 6:30pm. We hope you will read my brief pastoral reflection, and prayerfully consider how your faith impacts your point of view. We hope you will then gather with others in our family of faith, in God's house, with Jesus and our conscious as guides, to offer our collective thoughts as we too live in a diverse community of religions, ethnicities, police, and cultures.



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SHEPHERD OF THE HILLS BLOCK PARTY

Coming September 13th!

Our annual block party is scheduled for Sunday September 13th following the 9:30 am Worship. The festivities will begin at 10:30 am and run until 12:30 pm.

Entertainment!

- Music

Activities for kids of all ages!

- “New” Video Arcade, Bounce house, the popular foam machine (bring a towel), and more!

Food!

- SOTH will provide hot dogs, and smoked brisket along with water, lemonade and coffee for everyone!
- We asked that everyone attending bring a dish to pass. (Example: pasta salad, salads, relish, chips, dessert, etc.)

Save the date of September 13th.

Bring a dish to pass, and invite a friend or neighbor to attend and enjoy the fellowship.

We will see you on the 13th!!!!