

It's 12:12pm Wednesday ~ Pause to Pray!

How many alarms or reminders do you have set on your Apple watch? On your phone? On a calendar? If you're like me, you have multiple ones that are "regular" reminders (*take vitamins!*) as well as the ones that pop up (*call dentist to change app't*). Maybe you have a spouse, sibling, or child you ask to help you remember something, especially if it's not a regular occurrence.

Sometimes, I make a reminder for myself to get into a habit. For instance, I have on my phone: "*pray for Godchildren.*" I keep the reminder on my phone for a certain time every day, because some days get hectic or I get involved in a project, but I want to remember my duty and privilege to pray for my Godchildren. My reminder is not set to make me feel guilty but rather to help me maintain this good habit.

Shepherd's 2025-26 theme is: **Praying with an Open Heart**. We can certainly pray anytime and anywhere, with a formal prayer or a "from the heart" prayer, praying for as short a time as it takes to say, "Lord, help!" or as long as we need to pour the contents of our mind and heart out to our Lord. Having a specific day and time to pray is also helpful! Below is one way we, as Shepherd's staff, want to encourage you to pray this year.

Every Wednesday at 12:12pm, set a reminder to pray. Why 12:12pm? Several reasons:

- + It's around lunchtime, which is a good time to pause for prayer.
- + Need a mid-week boost? What better way to lift our spirits than to talk to our Father?!
- + At least 10 Wednesdays a year we have extra worship services (Thanksgiving, Advent, Lent), so Wednesday is a natural day to remember a Godly activity.
- + Shepherd's staff meets together on Wednesdays, so we will be praying for you and with you!
- + If you have a lunch meeting or a lunch date, stopping at 12:12pm gives an easy opportunity to witness. For example: "That's my 12:12 prayer alarm. My church has a prayer theme this year, and we're all encouraged to stop at 12:12 on Wednesdays to pray. Is there something I can pray for you?"
- + **Romans 12:12** (12:12...get it?!) says: *Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer.* One might think: How can I be praying all the time? I'll never get anything done! However, the intended meaning of the phrase "be constant in prayer" is: **Maintain the habit of prayer**. Another way to put it is: Keep on talking with God!

Other PRAYER features for your learning and encouragement this year:

- Every Wednesday from 12-1pm this year the sanctuary will be open. Use this space at 12:12pm to **Pause to Pray**.
- The VOICE newsletter will have a monthly feature called: **Praying with an Open Heart for...**, where you'll find suggestions for a group of people to pray for (September is Students) and a short list of Scripture to meditate upon (and maybe even memorize!).
- Each month, a Shepherd staff member will share **A Way to Pray**. For example: The acronym ACTS is a prayer pattern: Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, Supplication.
- Watch the eblast and Announcements for **special prayer activities**, such as a neighborhood prayer walk.
- Every week, the **written Announcements** includes a prayer list you may use as an outline for your own or your family prayers.
- Join our **Seeking Him prayer group** every third Thursday of the month in the Atrium. It is led by Pastor Feldmann.
- Sign up for Shepherd's email **Prayer Chain**. Go to ShepherdHillsChurch.org, scroll to the very bottom of the page, and click on Eblast/Prayer Chain Sign-Up, or follow this link: [Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church : Sign Up to Stay in Touch](#).

Our Lord both commands and invites us to pray, and He promises that He will always listen and answer. May this year be a wonderful year of strengthening our relationship with our Lord and with each other as we Pray with an Open Heart!