



Shepherd's Voice

Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

~ Philippians 4:6-7

A Letter from Pastor Stoltenow

Be Transformed and Renewed in the Heart

As we enter the season of Advent leading to the celebration of the birth of Jesus, I encourage you to consider the awesomeness of what God has accomplished for us in our Lord Jesus Christ. All the promises of God through the Old Testament have come to fruition as we, once again, are reminded of our need for our Savior and make our way to the stable in Bethlehem to see the Babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. Martin Luther writes in his *Christmas Book*:

The virgin birth is a mere trifle for God; that God should become a man is a greater miracle; but most amazing of all is that this maiden should credit the announcement that she, rather than some other virgin had been chosen to be the mother of God. She did indeed inquire of the angel, "How can these things be?" ..and he answered, [Mary, you have asked too high a question for me] but the Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you [and you will not know yourself how it happens]. Had she not believed, she could not have conceived. She held fast to the word of the angel because she had become a new creature.

Even so, we must be transformed and renewed in the heart from day to day. Otherwise, Christ is born in vain. This is the word of the prophet, "Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given." (Isaiah 9:6). This is for us the hardest point, not so much to believe that he is the son of the virgin and God Himself, as to believe that this Son of God is ours. That is where we wilt, but he who does feel it has become another man. Truly it is marvelous in our eyes that God should place a little child in the lap of a virgin and that all our blessedness should lie in Him. And this child belongs to all mankind. God feeds the whole world through a babe nursing at Mary's breast. This must be our daily exercise: to be transformed into Christ, being nourished by this food. Then will the heart be suffused with all joy and will be strong and confident against every assault.

~Martin Luther's Christmas Book, Roland H. Bainton, Ed. Westminster Press, 1948, pg. 15-16

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Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church

7691 S. University Blvd.

Centennial, CO 80122

303-798-0711 ShepherdHillsChurch.org

Member News

Mid-Week Advent Dinners and Services

In preparation for our Savior's birth, on **December 3, 10, and 17**, Shepherd will host Wednesday soup suppers prior to our three Midweek Advent Services. Soup, salad, rolls and cookies will be served. Please sign up online to bring a crock-pot of soup (serving 10-12) for one or more Wednesdays.

+ 5:15pm meal service begins in the Parish Hall

+ 6:30pm worship with Children's Chat

Please join us for this opportunity to fellowship with other members and guests as we welcome in the Season of Advent and Christmas!



Help Deck the Halls for Our Christmas Party!

It's time to bring on the sparkle and joy! Stay after church on **Sunday, November 30**, from **12:15–3:30pm** as we transform our space into a festive winter wonderland. We'll have lunch provided, Christmas music playing, and plenty of fun and laughter as we decorate together. Whether you love hanging ornaments, fluffing garland, or just spreading good cheer—there's a spot for you!

You're Invited to Our Annual Christmas Party!

Join us at Shepherd on **Friday, December 5**, at **6:00-8:30pm** for an evening of joy, fellowship, and Christmas cheer! Enjoy heavy appetizers, live Christmas music, and festive drinks as we celebrate the birth of our Savior together. A Children's Christmas Party will take place separately in the Kids of the Kingdom Zone, filled with fun, games, and Christmas activities. Come dressed in your festive best and share in the joy of the season with your church family! "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men." – Luke 2:14.

Nametags?!?!? Why Are We Wearing Nametags?!?!?

Believe it or not, I don't have the Lord's memory! My family and I would love to call you by name and not just pretend we know it. I would guess that you feel the same way sometimes with people. That is why, along with improving our hospitality for guests (this is no small thing), we are introducing nametags. You will find going into worship services that there will be nametags available for you to write your name (or goofiest nickname) on. Please do so! We want to know your names! Looking forward to this holiday season with you all. :)
~Pastor Ben



Funeral

Erv Holle

Died: 11/8/2025

Service: 11/22/2025

Baptism

Isla Rose Harper

Born: 7/8/2025

Baptized: 11/28/2025

Daughter of Tyler Harper and
Jena Biondolilo

Granddaughter of Chris and
Kathy Biondolilo

Sunday School Christmas Program: Mary's Treasure Box

Join us for a special Christmas celebration presented by our Sunday School children on **Sunday, December 21** at the **10:45am** Contemporary Service. This year's program, Mary's Treasure Box, tells the Christmas story through the eyes of an older Mary, the mother of Jesus. As she shares the precious items she's kept in her treasure box, each one reveals a part of the story of Jesus' birth. Beautiful songs will be woven throughout, bringing the story to life in a touching and joyful way. Come support our children as they share the true meaning of Christmas through word and song!

Angel Tree Donations Due in Early December

Christmas Angel Trees are set up in the Welcome Center and Gym. We will be collecting items for the Salvation Army through **Sunday, December 7**. Please take an ornament and log your name on the sheet, indicating what gift you are donating. Attach the ornament to the gift bag and return it, placing it under the Angel Tree. Thank you for supporting families in our community this Christmas season.

Breakfast With Baby Serves 21 Families in November

On November 8, the Breakfast with Baby event served 35 children from 21 families. After a devotion in English and Spanish, parents shopped for clothes, diapers, wipes, and other available items. For the **December 13** event, **Size 4 and 6 diapers, wipes and Size 3T boys' winter clothes** are needed. Your contributions are a real blessing!

December Anniversaries



8 Mitch and Janet Seek, 35 years

30 Brad and Jodie Stoltenow, 42 years

NOTE: Don't see your anniversary listed? Please contact the front office to have your member information updated!

Member News

A Way to Pray

There's something about Christmas that seems to bring the whole world together. Even those who aren't Christian will gather with family/friends, bless others with gifts/food, and enjoy the gift of presence. When you're a kid the holidays can be even more magical (it might have something to do with not having to foot the bill or prepare everything)!

Have you heard the song "Jesus Loves the Little Children"? The first verse goes:

*Jesus loves the little children
All the children of the world
Red and yellow, black and white
They are precious in His sight
Jesus loves the little children of the world*

Matthew 19:14 says, But Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me. Don't stop them, because the kingdom of heaven belongs to people who are like these children." (ICB)

So, for December I thought I'd ask you to grab the markers and crayons and bring out your inner child (or have fun with it as an activity with your kids/grandkids as you gather for the holidays)!

PRAYING IN COLOR

After gathering your supplies (paper, markers, crayons, pens) here are two ways you can PRAY IN COLOR:

1. Decide what you'll pray for with each color. For example, blue could be for family, orange for friends, yellow for what you're thankful for, red for forgiveness, etc. Then go about and create whatever artwork you'd like! As you use each color in your drawing, pray for those different people/areas.
2. Pray for a specific person/thing as you draw each object. For example, if you drew a garden scene you might pray for your grandma as you drew a butterfly because she loved butterflies. Each flower you draw could represent a specific person or you could even write a person's name on each of the petals and pray for them. The sun could be a thanksgiving for Jesus and a rainbow could be thanks for all the ways God keeps His promises.

We serve a creative God, so enjoy tapping into your creative side while talking with the Lord! The thing I love about PRAYING IN COLOR is later when you display your artwork

you can look at the picture and remember the people/things you prayed for!

And for those who say you're not creative, there are lots of ways to be creative other than through artwork. Maybe as you cook the holiday meal, each time you create a dish you pray for a specific person. Ham—praying for your parents, potatoes—your kids, salad—your neighbors, rolls—friends, dessert—your coworkers, etc. And then when you sit down to eat and see the spread before you, you'll be reminded that God has heard your prayer for each of them. If you're a builder, maybe each nail you hammer in is a prayer for a different person. In whatever way you prefer to create, you can use that time to converse with God!

Praying with an Open Heart

This month, we are **Praying with an Open Heart for...those who are lonely** (especially those who are shut in or who are grieving a loss).

December is a beautiful time of year as we prepare for celebrating the birth of our Savior, Jesus. For those who are lonely, whether grieving a loss of a person or personal freedom (such as those unable to leave their home or room), mustering the courage to celebrate can be difficult – even heartbreaking. Our dear Lord has a heart for the lonely and has supplied us with many verses in Scripture to offer comfort and hope.

Maybe you are lonely and understand personally how this feels when others are celebrating. Maybe you are joyful and excited for this month! Regardless of your circumstances, carrying the lonely to God in prayer is a gift we all can offer. We also have the privilege of opening our hearts to the Holy Spirit's prompts to be Jesus' hands and bring a hug or open a home, offering comfort from Christ to another. "God sets the lonely in families" (Psalm 68:6a). May we be the family who responds with loving service to relieve loneliness!

Some Scripture to aid you as you **Pray with an Open Heart for those who are lonely** this month: our theme verse: Philippians 4:6-7; Nehemiah 8:10; Isaiah 40:31, 41:10; Psalm 23:3, 34:18, 42:5 & 11, 55:22, 119:50 & 76, 147:3; Matthew 28:20; John 16:33; Romans 12:12, 15:4 & 13; 2 Corinthians 1:3-4; 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18; Hebrews 10:24-25; 1 Peter 5:7; Revelation 21:4.

Jesus Door-2-Door (JD2D) Outreach

On **Saturday, December 13**, our church will lead a local outreach event - Jesus Door-2-Door - a 1-day local outreach program started in the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. It consists of a religious canvassing survey done by two church members – one who gives the survey as the other records information on provided forms. It's respectful - there is no arguing. If people don't want to talk, they are thanked for their time and left alone. The Gospel is shared with anyone who will listen.

A person who has done the survey before will be here for the event to provide instruction and answer questions prior to conducting the survey.

Any congregation member who is in 6th grade or older can participate. If you can't join in, your prayers for this effort are greatly appreciated. If you have questions or want to sign up to participate, please contact either of our pastors or **John Hoener** at **303- 619-6828**. You can also sign up on the Shepherd website.



It's time to spread the word!

The number of men and women in our Shepherd Family who have taken part in GriefShare continues to grow. These are people you know who have made the brave decision to join one of our 13-week sessions. In a GriefShare group, they have grown in understanding of grief and begun the healing process as they walk with Jesus and each other.

If you or someone you know has lost a loved one and can't figure out the next step, we would love to help you begin to navigate the journey.

Keep an eye out for someone wearing A badge like this one, and then ASK!



Join us for a taste of GriefShare at
"Surviving the Holidays"
Saturday, December 6, 2025
10a.m. - Noon in the Atrium
Register: GriefShare.org/Holidays

The New Year brings new events on **Saturdays 10am - Noon** in the Atrium:
January 10, 2026 - **"Loss of a Spouse"**, a 2-hour seminar especially for those grieving the death of a husband or wife. Register: GriefShare.org/Loss

January 17 - April 18, 2026 - Our next 13-week series of groups will meet.
Register: GriefShare.org

CHRISTMAS FESTIVITIES

FUN FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY

Where: 2401 S. Tarryall Way, Franktown

When: Saturday 6 December, 130-330pm

Please RSVP by the 1st of December by texting or emailing Sharron at 720.237.1235 or thesonandreinsranch@gmail.com, space is limited so RSVP early!

What: **Bring Christmas cookies to share!** (Optional... not required for attending!)



Come and enjoy the following:



Cozy fire

Live Christmas carols

Hot chocolate, cider and treats

Relaxing in the festively decorated barn

Decorating the dogs because they don't like to be left out

Learning more about the ministry of The Son and Reins Ranch

The fun and unique opportunity to decorate a HORSE for Christmas!!



Donations are appreciated but not required

Member News

Bible Readings for the Month

December 7 – 2nd Sunday of Advent

Lessons: Psalm 72:1-7; Isaiah 11:1-10;
Romans 15:4-13; Matthew 3:1-12

December 14 – 3rd Sunday of Advent

Lessons: Psalm 146; Isaiah 35:1-10;
James 5:7-11; Matthew 11:2-15

December 21 – 4th Sunday of Advent

Lessons: Psalm 24; Isaiah 7:10-17;
Romans 1:1-7; Matthew 1:18-25

December 24 – Nativity of Our Lord ~ CHRISTmas Eve (3, 5, 7 pm)

Lessons: Psalm 110:1-4; Isaiah 7:10-14;
1 John 4:7-16; Matthew 1:18-25; Luke 2:1-20

December 24 – CHRISTmas Eve Vigil (11 pm)

Lessons: Psalm 98; Isaiah 9:2-7;
Titus 3:4-7; Luke 2:1-20

December 25 – CHRISTmas Day

Lessons: Psalm 2; Isaiah 52:7-10;
Hebrews 1:1-12; John 1:1-18

December 28 – Holy Innocents

Lessons: Psalm 54; Jeremiah 31:15-17;
Galatians 4:4-7; Matthew 2:13-23



Usher Schedule for the Month

December 7 – 2nd Sunday of Advent

8 am Sanctuary – Heidi Dudley / Chuck Place
10:45 Sanctuary – Sandy & Bill Griffis
10:45 Gym – Ron Aukamp / Milo Samson

December 14 – 3rd Sunday of Advent

8 am Sanctuary – Chad Ropte / Kasey Ropte
10:45 Sanctuary – Josh Hoener / Lindsey Jarvi
10:45 Gym – Kathy & Chris Biondolilo

December 21 – 4th Sunday of Advent

8 am Sanctuary –
10:45 Sanctuary – Tina & Chris Skirde
10:45 Gym – Wayne Johnson / Charley Powers

December 24 – Christmas Eve

3pm Sanctuary – D'Wayn & Dave Stone
5pm Gym –
7pm Sanctuary – Bruce Boggess / Chuck Place
11pm Sanctuary – Paul Rodeck /

December 25 – CHRISTmas Day

10:00 Sanctuary – Heidi Dudley /

December 28 – Holy Innocents

8 am Sanctuary – Bruce Boggess / Chuck Place
10:45 Sanctuary – Pam & Russ Robbins
10:45 Gym – Sue & Duane Feldmann

Ministry Opportunities

Priscilla Circle serves meals for families after funerals and memorial services. If you are interested in being part of this circle as a helper or to bring food for these occasions, please contact **Sandy Garberding** at RSGarb@comcast.net or **Kay Stolzenbach** at gkstolzenbach@comcast.net.

Loving Meals Ministry

When someone in our Shepherd family has surgery or becomes ill, help with preparing meals may be needed. If you or someone you know could use help with small meals on a short-term basis, please contact the church office at **303-798-0711** and you will be contacted by one of our meal coordinators.

Contemporary Service Altar Setup/Cleanup Team

This setup/cleanup team takes turns preparing the altar for the Contemporary services by filling candles and setting out the altar ware on Sunday mornings. After the service, things get put away. It doesn't take much time and there are no meetings to attend. To be a part of this team, please contact either **Mary Powers** at powersworld@live.com or **Luanne Reimer** at reimer.luanne@gmail.com.

The women of **Altar Circle** prepare the chancel area in the Sanctuary for the traditional services. Communion preparations, changing paraments, filling candles with oil and vacuuming are just a few of the duties performed before services. On Communion Sundays, there is cleanup after the services. We get together for a meeting once a quarter and enjoy fellowship, a devotion and treats! We're always looking for women to help with preparations and Communion cleanup. The work is shared among our members so it isn't a big commitment of time. Even if you don't want to come to the meetings, please consider assisting with Communion cleanup after the services. Contact **Luanne Reimer** through email at reimer.luanne@gmail.com.

Used Eyeglasses and Hearing Aids

Another 30 pair of eyeglasses have been collected and delivered to the Lions Club, to be distributed to those in need throughout the world. Since 2010, Shepherd has donated 1,879 pair of eyeglasses. Several hearing aids were also collected and given to the Sertoma organization. Place any eyeglasses and hearing aids in the designated basket in the Sanctuary Welcome Center Cry Room. Thank you! Your contributions are a blessing to many!

Missionary of the Month – December 2025

Rev. Dr. Jonathan and Deaconess Cheryl Naumann-Dominican Republic

The Rev. Dr. Jonathan and Deaconess Cheryl Naumann serve the Lord through the LCMS as missionaries in the Dominican Republic. As the Latin America and Caribbean regional chaplain, Jonathan provides pastoral care to LCMS missionary families in over 10 countries. He also teaches future Latin American pastors at the DR seminary. Cheryl administers the Dominican Republic Mercy Center, teaching women to share the Gospel and carry out acts of mercy. She also assists with the diaconal work in mission congregations and facilitates the Spanish translation and distribution of Lutheran resources to LCMS missionaries and churches.

Pray for Jonathan and Cheryl as they serve in the Dominican Republic. Ask God to protect them as they travel and do the work He has created for them to do, and pray that God will increase the faith of those whom they serve in Latin America.

Stephen Ministry Trains “Angels” on Earth

In the course of two tumultuous years, Kathy Sansom experienced five major stressful life events. After her husband died of cancer in 2002, she married a childhood friend. The marriage soured quickly and was annulled. In the midst of it all, her mother died, and Sansom moved to a new city. “When I moved to the Houston area at the end of 2003, I was totally exhausted—emotionally, physically, every way you could think of,” says Sansom. “I was in a new city and didn't know many people. My Pastor suggested that I start seeing a Stephen Minister. It was great! She would call and check on me and pray for me. Basically, I'm a very happy person, but having a Stephen Minister helped me over a very rough time.”

Kathy's pastor says that “We're a 3,000-member church, so the ministers can't possibly provide one-on-one care to every single person. But a Stephen Minister can be there for someone who's in the midst of a life challenge so they don't have to walk through the valley alone.” “The difference between talking to a good friend and talking to a Stephen Minister is that a good friend still can be judgmental and have a tendency to want to fix things. But that's not really what you need during a difficult time,” Sansom says. “You don't need someone to tell you what to do because, in your heart, you know. You just need someone to listen.”

If you would like to have the listening ear and Christian care of a Stephen Minister, please call **Ron Manuella (303-587-0001)** or **Pastor Stoltenow**.

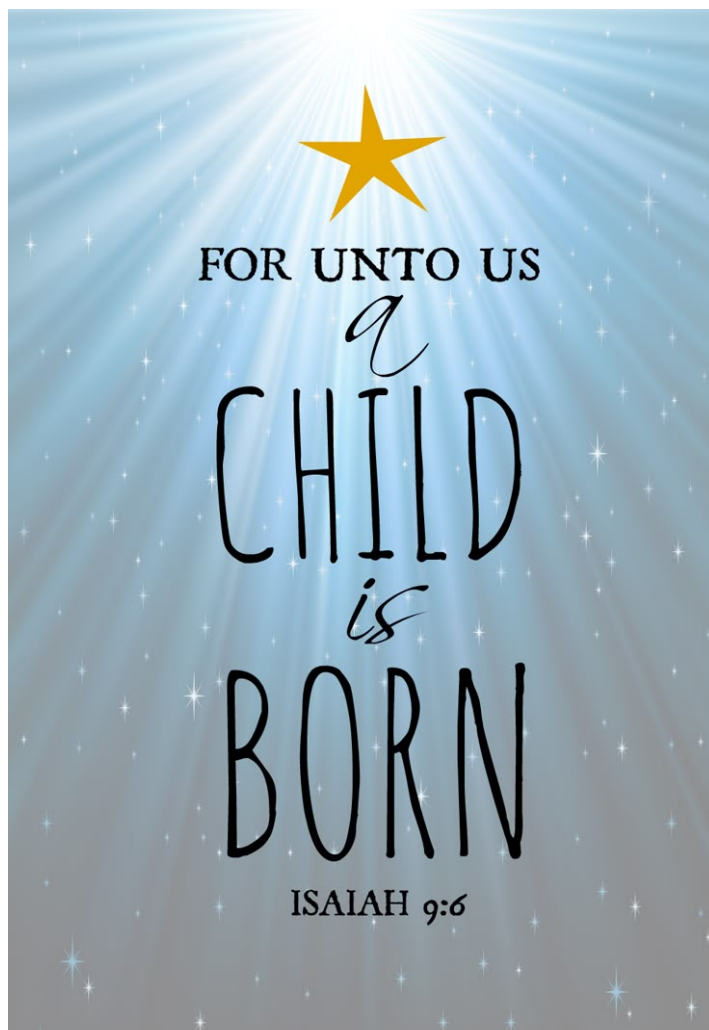
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The theme for Advent this year at Shepherd is "Praying with an Open Heart" based on Philippians 4:6-7 which has been the theme of the year in our congregation. We will focus on three characters from the Scriptures: Mary, Zechariah, and Simeon. We will see how the Lord worked through these three people and how they prayed and sang with open hearts when the unexpected happened.

You are invited to Shepherd at 5:15pm each Wednesday for a soup dinner followed by Advent worship at 6:30pm in the Sanctuary.

Blessings!

Dr. Brad Stoltenow



Special Worship Schedule for Winter 2025-2026

In an effort to give you ample opportunity to plan for Special Worship Services at Shepherd, the Elders have put together a list for you! If you have any questions, you may contact **either pastor** or our head elder, **Don Matern**. We look forward to spending these festival times of worship with YOU, our church family!

Advent Services

Wednesdays, December 3, 10, 17, 6:30pm

~Evening Prayer Services, with Children's Chat
Fellowship Supper in Parish Hall, 5:15pm

Sunday School Children's Program

Sunday, December 21, 10:45am

~Contemporary Service

CHRISTmas Services

Wednesday, December 24, 3pm & 7pm: Christmas Eve

~Traditional Candlelight Service (no Communion)

Wednesday, December 24, 5pm: Christmas Eve

~Contemporary Candlelight Service (no Communion)

Wednesday, December 24, 11pm: CHRISTmas Eve Vigil

~Traditional Candlelight Service with Communion

Thursday, December 25, 10am: CHRISTmas Day

~Traditional Service with Communion

New Year's Eve & Day NO SERVICES

The Epiphany of Our Lord

Monday, January 4, 2026, 7:00pm

~Traditional Service with Communion



ELC

WANTED: Sweet Treats!!!

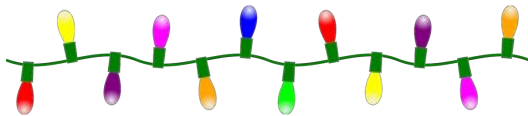
Would you like a way to bless the families of the ELC? We're looking for people who can provide cookies, brownies, Rice Krispie treats...any sweet treat that can be eaten easily without a fork for the Christmas Program reception on **Thursday, December 11**. If you're willing to provide a batch or two of a sweet treat, please contact **Sina** at swilliams@sothfamily.org or **707-326-8666**.

Please bring your sweet treats to the church office by **5pm** the day of the ELC Program. You are invited and welcome to stay for the Program at **6pm**.

Youth

Xtreme and SHYP Youth Christmas Party

Fifth through twelfth graders will join together for an Xtreme and SHYP Youth Christmas party on **Sunday, December 14**, from **4-7pm** in the **Youth Room**. Food, drinks, games, and a gift exchange will all be included! Bring a \$10-\$15 wrapped gift if you want to participate in the gift exchange. Questions? Contact **Sina** at swilliams@sothfamily.org.



December Dates to Remember:

SHYP

December 7 (Sun) – NO SHYP youth group at 12:30. Instead, combined Christmas Party next Sunday.

December 28 (Sun) – NO SHYP Bible Study at 9:30am

Xtreme

- **December 14** (Sun) – No Xtreme at 12:30. Instead, combined Youth Christmas Party from 4-7pm in Youth Room.

Young Adults

- **December 28** (Sun) – Young Adult brunch, meeting in Youth Room (NOT Atrium) from 9:30-10:30am

Youth Group Notes

Shepherd of the Hills' **Spiritual Formation Plan** encompasses your child's spiritual formation from the womb all the way to when they leave the nest after high school. It is age appropriate and designed to assist your children to mature as Lutheran Christians so they may take a joyful stand for Christ.

For specific information about Shepherd's Confirmation Program, please contact **Pastor Ben Oesch** at BOesch@sothfamily.org. For information about junior and senior high youth groups, please contact **Sina Williams** at swilliams@sothfamily.org. For information about Family Ministry, contact **Jodie Stoltenow** at jstoltenow@sothfamily.org. You can also find specific youth information and upcoming events online under either the Connect tab or the Calendar tab at ShepherdHillsChurch.org.



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Shepherd's Voice is the monthly newsletter for the church family at Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church
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The deadline for the January 2026 issue of the Shepherd's Voice is December 15. Please have all articles entered into the Communication Request system by this date.

POSTMASTER

Send Address Changes to:
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7691 S. University Blvd.
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