



# 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 Oesch

## If You're \_\_\_ and You Know It, Pray to God!

*Philippians 4:6-7 ~ Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. 7 And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*

Dear Shepherd,

I have a confession to make. I am bad at praying! Yes, a pastor, YOUR pastor (hey, you Called me here) is admitting that he is "bad" at praying. Though, what does it really mean to be "good" or "bad" at praying? Is prayer really something that has a "good" or "bad" quality to it? Is that how the Bible talks about prayer? Read again the Philippians Scripture passage above. Instead of worrying if our prayers are "good" or "bad," I really think that God just wants us to pray. Ironically, these verses speak to the very thing that I worry about - are my prayers good? God says, don't worry, just pray. The same goes for you: Don't worry about how/why/when/where you pray, just pray.

God our Father wants to hear from us, *in everything*. That's pretty cool! For other religions, there is not a personal god that wants to hear about everything. Some religions have an impersonal god so people pray to the universe, the force, the air, etc. Other religions may have a personal god, but the god is mean. It may respond to their prayers with wrath. Or you may have to say a certain thing to the god so it doesn't get angry. So you better watch your words! This is not the case with the true God. Our Father delights to hear from us *in everything*. He sent his Son to die so we can have union and fellowship with Him. He loves us that much. He wants to listen. So don't worry, just pray.

Back to my original confession: I would like to pray more and pray more comfortably, confidently, authentically, and boldly. Admittedly, sometimes I shy away when I am

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**Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church**

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# Member News

## September 7 is Fall Kickoff Sunday at Shepherd!

A few quick details to help us prepare for this special day. **Praying With an Open Heart** is our 2025-26 theme. The Scripture passage to accompany the theme is **Philippians 4:6-7**. We will celebrate Fall Kickoff at all three services on **Sept. 7**. During the **9:30-10:30am Education Hour**, High School age-Adult classes will join in the **Gym** for a program based on our theme. Toddlers-8th grade will have special theme activities as well.

Watch for more details in the Friday E-blasts and Sunday Announcements!

What a privilege we have as Christians in the USA to **pray** freely to our Lord! What a blessing is His Word, filled with many **prayers** for us to study and learn (and memorize)! What a gift we have from the Holy Spirit, that we may **pray** directly to our heavenly Father through the merits of our Savior Jesus, knowing **our Lord ALWAYS listens and answers!**

## This Month, We Are Praying with an Open Heart for...Students and Teachers!!!

We pray for all students as they begin another year of learning. Jesus loves children and invites them into His Kingdom, holding up their faith as an example for us all. He also is interested in their learning. He especially wants them to know His Word, because it's there where they learn who their Savior is, why He came, how much He loves them, and the joyful task they have of telling others what they've learned.

We pray for teachers as they begin another year in the classroom or in the home. Scripture reminds us that teaching is a gift from God as well as a weighty responsibility. Not only do teachers impart knowledge as they facilitate learning; they are also tasked with modeling for their students what is right and wise.

The wonderful blessing from our Lord is that, for both students and teachers, He promises He will be with them, will give them His Peace, and will provide a safe place of rest for them.

Some Scripture to aid you as you **Pray with an Open Heart for students and teachers** this month: our theme verses: Philippians 4:6-7; Luke 18:16; Ephesians 4:11; Matthew 11:29; Isaiah 54:13; 2 Timothy 3:14 & 16; Philippians 4:9 & 11.

## Popcorn Prayers by Sina

Prayer doesn't always have to be lengthy and elaborate. Even a quick prayer out of the blue can keep your mind on things above. My home church was next to a main road and multiple times throughout the year we would hear sirens go by during worship service. Each time the pastor would pause the service, pray for whatever the situation might be to where the sirens were headed, and then continue with the service. As you go about your day, think about ways you can "pop up" and pray. Maybe it's thanking God for something you see, praying for someone who cut you off in traffic, or just asking God to hear Him more clearly. We all have moments in our day where we can offer up "popcorn prayers" like these:



- Thank you, Lord, for this beautiful sunset.
- God, please help me through this day.
- Lord, thank you for providing for me.

So in the month of September, try popping in some prayers throughout your day. Better yet, microwave some popcorn and say a few prayers as you wait for the popcorn to be done!

## Breakfast With Baby Serves 16 Children in August

Breakfast with Baby is a SOTH ministry that meets the second Saturday each month. Families with children 2 years and younger and women 7+ months pregnant are invited to attend. On August 9, 16 children from 11 families were served breakfast. After a devotion parents shopped for diapers, wipes, clothing and other available items. For the **September 13** event, **boys' Size 3 & 4T clothes** are needed as well as **Size 6 diapers**. **\*PLEASE NOTE: We do not need any Size 1 or 2 diapers.**

## September Anniversaries

- 9/1 Charley and Mary Powers, 51 years
- 9/5 David and Angela Renner, 10 years
- 9/11 Jim and Nancy Lee, 48 years
- 9/18 Chris and Tina Skirde, 26 years
- 9/25 Tad and Carol Deering, 30 years
- 9/28 Michael and Nicole Spiers, 23 years
- 9/29 Paul and Nancy Mueller, 41 years



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



## Adult Choir ~ Save the Date!

Those of you ages 14-104 are invited to join the Shepherd's Chorale family in the sanctuary choir "loft" **Wednesday, September 17, 6:37-8:07pm** as we begin our Fall season! We practice most Wednesdays and sing about once a month in both Traditional services. Questions/Information? **Gail Black:** [gblack@sothfamily.org](mailto:gblack@sothfamily.org), 303-707-4364.

## DCE Ministry Changes

Adam Boggess, long-time Shepherd member, is preparing to become a Director of Christian Education (DCE). Shepherd of the Hills has been considered his practicum church since he enrolled in the DCE Program. What that means is we are to help prepare him as much as possible for his internship church! For many years Adam has helped in SHYP (high school) ministry. In order to provide Adam with broader ministry leadership experience, by request of the DCE program leaders, Adam will shift from volunteering in SHYP to other areas of ministry at Shepherd. Why is that?

- More than likely, wherever Adam does his internship he will also be doing children's ministry. This year with us, Adam will gain more experience in the elementary Sunday School level, giving children's messages and engaging more with families with young children.
- Adam will graduate with a master's degree. With this degree comes the expectation that Adam will have experience in leading adults, likely by teaching adult Bible studies.
- Adam is working full time outside Shepherd, finishing up classes to graduate, and doing AV work for Shepherd. By taking SHYP off Adam's plate, Adam will have more time to invest in other ministry areas.

Adam's current plan: September through December, after Fall Kickoff, Adam will serve in the Kids of the Kingdom Zone. He'll work with Jodie and the other teachers to observe and then teach the younger children. January through May, he'll go into 5<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> grade Confirmation with Sam Scheck, 7<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> Confirmation with Pastor Ben, and then teach some adult

Bible Studies. Adam's hope is to head to his internship church next summer! Once Spring of 2026 arrives and he'll be enrolled in the Internship 101 class, I'll come back to you with ways we can help further his readiness for internship.

Thanks for keeping Adam in your prayers as he makes big transitions over the next 10-12 months.

~Sina Williams, DCE

## ~From Adam

Over the past 12 years or so, it has been my privilege to serve with SHYP and get to know one part of Shepherd's ministries. While I will miss (and do miss!) working with SHYP, I am looking forward to learning about the other ministries at Shepherd and teaching the various ages over the next 10 or so months. I ask for your prayers, as I transition into these ministries. Thank you, Shepherd, for all the encouragement you have given me over the past 2.5 years!



## Gail's 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration!

*But we ought always to thank God for you, brothers and sisters loved by the Lord, because God chose you as firstfruits to be saved through the sanctifying work of the Spirit and through belief in the truth. He called you to this through our gospel, that you might share in the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. ~2 Thessalonians 2:13-14*

We, as brothers and sisters in Christ Jesus, are thankful for our Called servant, Gail Black, a firstfruit who has lovingly and selflessly served at Shepherd of the Hills for 25 years. While she has worn several different hats, she has always been the hands and feet of Jesus. We invite you to celebrate our beloved Director of Parish Music on **Sunday, October 12, from 4:30-7pm** in the **gym**. Shepherd will provide the dinner. You just be ready to party! Must RSVP (link to come) if you want food or a seat. In lieu of gifts, a donation in her honor may be made to The Mission of Christ Network or Alternatives Pregnancy Center. Questions? Contact **Sina**.

# Member News

## Bible Readings for the Month

### September 7 – 13<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost; Fall Kick-Off

*Lessons:* Psalm 1; Deuteronomy 30:15-20;  
Philemon 1-21; Luke 14:25-35

### September 14 – 14<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost

*Lessons:* Psalm 119:169- 176; Ezekiel 34:11-24;  
1 Timothy 1:5-17; Luke 15:1-10

### September 21 – 15<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost

*Lessons:* Psalm 113; Amos 8:4-7;  
1 Timothy 2:1-15; Luke 16:1-15

### September 28 – 16<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost

*Lessons:* Psalm 146; Amos 6:1-7;  
1 Timothy 3:1-13; 1 Timothy 6:6-19; Luke 16:19-31



## Usher Schedule for the Month

### September 7 – 13<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost; Fall Kick-Off

8 am Sanctuary – Heidi Dudley / Chuck Place  
10:45 Sanctuary –  
10:45 Gym – Jennifer Luckinbill / Sander Luckinbill

### September 14 – 14<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost

8 am Sanctuary – Ava Havekost / Ryan Havekost  
10:45 Sanctuary – Sandy & Bill Griffis  
10:45 Gym – Kathy & Chris Biondolilo

### September 21 – 15<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost

8 am Sanctuary – Justin Hart / Zane Hart  
10:45 Sanctuary – Josh Hoener / Lindsey Jarvi  
10:45 Gym – Sue & Duane Feldmann

### September 28 – 16<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost

8 am Sanctuary – Chad Ropte / Kasey Ropte  
10:45 Sanctuary – Pam & Russ Robbins  
10:45 Gym – Jennifer Luckinbill / Sander Luckinbill



*We're here to  
Serve*



## Receptivity to Care

Most people are much more open to giving care than to receiving it. When a person is giving care, he or she is in a position of strength, stability, and authority. When a person is receiving care, he or she is acknowledging weakness, insecurity, and vulnerability.

As a result, countless people today who could really benefit from a Christian friend who would listen and care for them instead tough it out on their own. They remain the strong, silent type, or wear a smile across a face that is holding in a flood of tears. Society encourages this (particularly for men).

But God did not create us to be independent. We were created to be interdependent. God's Word is clear on this all the way back to Genesis: "It is not good for this man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him" (Genesis 2:18). The New Testament underscores this theme with more than 50 verses that contain the words "one another." These verses include admonitions such as "love one another," "encourage one another," "build up one another," and "pray for one another."

These verses say more than we are to love, encourage, build up, and pray for other people. The "one another" wording gives them a reciprocal meaning. It tells us we are to allow other people to love, encourage, build up, and pray for us!

If you find yourself now or in the future facing difficulties in life, don't succumb to society's norm of remaining strong and suffering alone. Talk to our Stephen Leader, **Ron Manuella (303-587-0001)** or **Pastor Stoltenow**.



## Mission Team Update – September 2025

### Tim and Beth Heiney - West Africa

Pastor Tim and Beth Heiney, LCMS missionaries, serve in West Africa. Pastor Tim provides leadership-training seminars throughout West Africa. Pastor Tim's role includes teaching, baptizing adults and children in various villages, and providing support to vicars in those villages. There is still a large Muslim presence that does inhibit the spread of the gospel of Jesus, but they and our church continue to pray that the Holy Spirit will open people's minds and hearts to the joy of salvation.

Several prayer requests from Tim and Beth:

- + Every Wednesday, Tim goes up on a hill overlooking their town and prays for the Maninka people. Beth writes: "If you can pray anywhere near 12pm CST, please join us then, or whenever you can! Tim will be on the hill praying with you."
- + Every Sunday, Tim visits the sick in the hospital. From Beth: "Blessings this LORD's Day! Pray for Tim as he visits the sick. Pray that they will hear the name of Jesus, and pray for healing."
- + A recent special prayer request from Tim and Beth: "We're hoping to get training in farming methods and other projects that can help open doors to the Gospel. Pray that God leads in what that would look like."



### Quilts & Kits: You Helped Us Fill Our Backpacks!

Our Lutheran World Relief Team sews school backpacks to be used in disaster relief here and around the world, and our goal was to fill 73 backpacks with needed school supplies. WOW, Shepherd! You more than met the challenge! Thank you for your generous response to our school supply appeal.

Those of you who would like to help with our ongoing project of putting together quilts for those in need, our next Ready, Set, Tie! date is **Wed., September 3**. We will tie quilt tops in **Room LL5** from **9:00am-noon**. You are welcome to drop in at any time.

For more information contact **Sharleen Jespersen** at [jesper417@yahoo.com](mailto:jesper417@yahoo.com).

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around people who seem to not want to pray. I think these are valid desires and concerns. I'm hoping that this year will help me. Oh, have I not said yet? This year our Early Learning Center (ELC) and Church theme is all about prayer! The theme is "Praying With an Open Heart" and is based on Philippians 4:6-7. Our ELC just had their first chapel this morning (led by yours truly and my musical wife, Amelia) where the kids heard Philippians 4:6-7, sang, "If you're happy and you know it, pray to God!" and learned that prayer is simply just talking to God. It was a fun kickoff to the year of prayer here at Shepherd! We will be planning and making available prayer activities, events, sermons, studies, etc., throughout the whole year. This will be an exciting opportunity for growth in following Jesus, specifically in regard to prayer. I personally look forward to growing more confident and comfortable in prayer

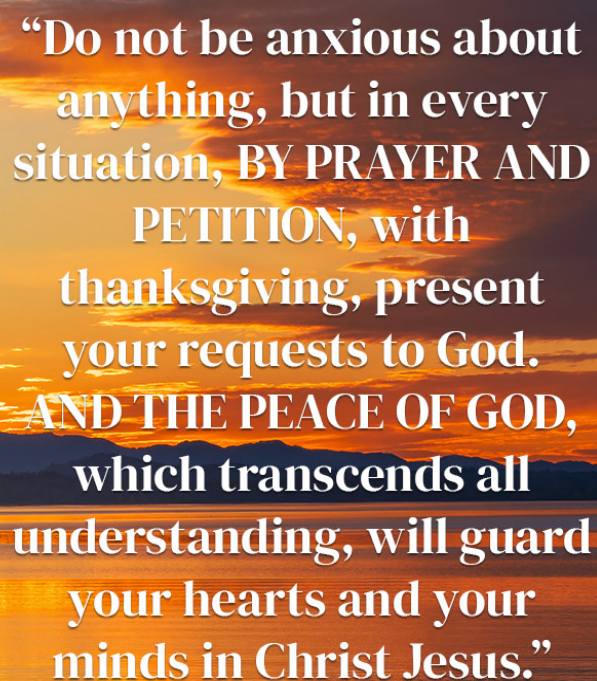
throughout the year. I also look forward to seeing how we will grow in listening to God and how God answers our prayers as we pray to Him "with an open heart."

The Lord's richest blessings to you as you pray. That's a blessing and a promise. God always guards our hearts and our minds in Christ Jesus with His peace that surpasses all logic and rationale, and He does this especially when we pray.

Looking forward to a fantastic first year (of many) of ministry with you! You are in my prayers. :)

Best,

*Pastor Ben*



**"Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, BY PRAYER AND PETITION, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. AND THE PEACE OF GOD, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."**

*Philippians 4:6-7*



Will you share your GIFT OF HOSPITALITY with this meaningful ministry?

Those who attend GriefShare may be adjusting to living life alone for the first time after a long marriage and finding it difficult to prepare meals or to eat alone. Others may lose interest in eating altogether as they grieve the loss of a loved one. Group meetings offer a place for connection and fellowship with a supportive community, where a bite to eat may be more appealing.

We provide light refreshments for two 13-week cycles of group meetings and for two special events during the year. Our lovely two-member team is graciously giving time to bake, shop, and set up the serving area for every meeting. The addition of one or two more team members would be helpful when Vicki and Lindsey are unavailable, so we can lighten the load for everyone.

Please get in touch with **Nancy Lee, Vicki Faas, or Lindsey Jarvi** for more details.

## 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 Teachers) 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](http://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!



## ELC

Our Early Learning Center had their back-to-school night, where students and their families met the staff, checked out their classrooms, and had a picnic supper with the ELC Board. School has begun with 58 students and a full staff, including two newly-married teachers!

Everyone is invited to join ELC staff and families in the **Parish Hall** on **Wednesday, September 10** from **7:30-8:30am** for "ELC Parents and Pastries." At 9am, YOU are also invited to attend the ELC weekly chapel in the Sanctuary!

## Youth

### Confirmation Orientation

All 5th–8th grade students and their parents are invited to our Confirmation Orientation on **Sunday, September 14** at **9:30am** in the **Colonades**! We'll share the vision for this year's program, introduce our mentors, walk through the schedule, and answer any questions. This is the first step in an exciting journey of growing in faith, building community, and exploring what it means to follow Jesus. Whether you're brand new or continuing from last year, please make plans to attend since this will set the stage for the year ahead.

### Family Ministry, Xtreme and SHYP Head to Kiowa

Family Ministry, Xtreme and SHYP will head to The Patch in Kiowa for fall-themed fun on **Sunday, September 21**. More details (time/cost) to come in Sunday bulletins, so save the date and keep your eyes open for upcoming information. Questions? Contact **Sina** for Xtreme/SHYP and **Jodie** for Family Ministry.



### September Dates to Remember:

#### SHYP

- September 7 (Sun) – No regular SHYP. Join the Fall Kickoff Picnic in the Gym at 12:15pm

#### Xtreme

- September 14 (Sun) – from 12:30 – 2pm in the Youth Room

#### Xtreme & SHYP w/ Family Ministry

- September 21 (Sun) – Travel to The Patch (in Kiowa). Look for bulletin announcements in September for time and cost.

#### Young Adults

- September 28 (Sun) – Lunch at 12:15pm. Meet in the Gym.

## 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](mailto:BOesch@sothfamily.org). For information about junior and senior high youth groups, please contact **Sina Williams** at [swilliams@sothfamily.org](mailto:swilliams@sothfamily.org). For information about Family Ministry, contact **Jodie Stoltenow** at [jstoltenow@sothfamily.org](mailto: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](http://ShepherdHillsChurch.org).



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The deadline for the October issue of the Shepherd's Voice is September 15. Please have all articles entered into the Communication Request system by this date.

**POSTMASTER**

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