

Shepherd's Staff

VOLUME 56 ISSUE 12

DECEMBER 2014

SHEPHERD OF THE VALLEY LUTHERAN CHURCH

A member of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

SHARING
GOD'S
LOVE

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CHURCH COUNCIL MINUTES

Please see
the latest

council minutes lo-
cated on the bulletin
board in the church
library.

Dear friends in Christ,

Another church year is drawing to a close and a new one is soon to begin. The first candle of our Advent wreath will be lit during worship on Sunday, November 30. The Advent season is a wonderful time of the year as we await the coming of Christmas when we celebrate Christ's birth once more. The church, in its faithful keeping of Advent, seeks to provide a haven of quietness, anticipation and joy for all those who come to worship. With Advent hymns and scripture readings, we seek to offer time and space in this season of waiting for people to prepare their hearts for the coming of Christ.

What shall we **do** during this time of waiting in our homes? Oh, we can **do** lots of things. We can decorate our homes for the holiday seasons. We can shop for gifts for all the special people in our life. We can start addressing cards to send to friends and relatives both far and near. We can write a special letter to include with our cards so others will know some of the important details of our lives. We can do some baking of Christmas goodies. We can attend events at school, church or in the community that will get us in the "Christmas spirit." There are so many things we can **do** in this time of waiting.

I'd like to suggest that in the midst of all of your **doing** this Advent season that you also take time just to **be**. I have always been drawn to the words of the psalmist of old, "**Be still, and know that I am God.**" (Psalm 46:11). What a gift awaits us in these words! Be still for a moment. Be still and be aware of the One who created you. Be still and take note of the world around you. Be still and see the people God has placed in your life. Be still and discover anew who you are and who God is calling you to be. Be still and pray. Be still and worship. Be still and give thanks. Be still. In the midst of the hectic pace of preparing for Christmas, take time each day to be still. It is the gift of Advent.

Waiting & watching with you,

Pastor Marilyn

OUR CHURCH FAMILY

In Our Prayers: Joyce Hunt, Nevagay Abel, and Stu Hoffman undergoing treatment for cancer, Anne Teed (Pearson), Bruce Pearson's mother under hospice care, Lisa (friend of Laurie & Mark Pellant) diagnosed with breast cancer, Mike, nephew of Anita Ralston (our custodian) diagnosed with leukemia, Layne Knight (friend of Carol Bailey) recovering from a heart transplant, Ruby Watson, Howard Gerke (friend of Carol Bailey) born 6 weeks premature with TORCH Syndrome, and all of our homebound church members.

Did you know ...?

Shepherd of the Valley has at least 33 members who are age 80 or older. I'd like to get to know this great group of the congregation better and hear your stories of life and faith. Therefore, I'm going to intentionally try to make a contact with all of you who have reached at least age 80 on or near the time of your birthday. If you are open to a personal visit, I'd love to stop by your home for conversation. If not, we can just visit by phone. I'll plan to start this new ministry during the month of December.

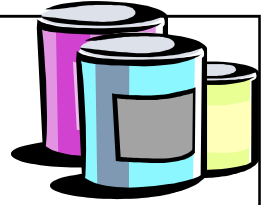
We try our best to keep our church records complete and up-to-date. However, we don't always have complete information on every single member. Therefore, if you don't get a call from me at the time of your birthday (and you are over 80), how about calling me at the church and letting me know? I'm always up for a visit!

Pastor Marilyn

Thank you from an election judge: "I would like to let you know how much I appreciate what you do during the election. It is very generous to have the food, water, & coffee for everyone. I also really appreciate your efforts to make people more comfortable towards the end of the night on November 4th."

Food Drive

For many of us the holidays are a joyful time to enjoy our blessings. The Food for the Needy Drive is one way to share those blessings with families who really need our assistance to have a happy holiday. This year, can you help? We will be partnering with the Salvation Army's "Food for the Needy Drive" until December 7th. Food items most needed are **Canned Fruits**, **Canned Vegetables** and **Canned Meats**. Please no glass jars or bottles or **outdated items**. Thank you for your generosity.



OUTREACH

Tutoring and Reading Opportunities



Rolling Green Elementary School, at 3615 West Gate Parkway, is in great need of adults willing to help their students in Reading (the kids read to you and you help out with sounding out words) and/or Math. Sessions can be any time during the day and typically run 45 minutes. If anyone interested in helping with math, training could/would be provided since the way they learn math now can be different from what was taught in the past. For more information contact Terri Woodcock or Kay Brindle.



"Warm Feet Mission" is once again collecting socks to be distributed to the homeless and underprivileged, many of whom are children. There will be a box in the Narthex through the middle of December for your donations. Thank you in advance for your support. Ann Honer



Library News: Be sure to check out Advent books from the table in Moline Hall. Later in the month there will be Christmas books available as well. We have a wonderful collection and hope you will enjoy reading them.

BOYS AND GIRLS, come to Moline Hall on the first day of Advent, Sunday, November 30, to get a kit containing materials for you to make an Advent paper chain. You will be able to count the days until Christmas, the day we celebrate the coming of the baby Jesus. On Sunday, December 14, we'll be making a nativity scene you can decorate with stickers.

PRELUDE TO CHRISTMAS

begins at 6:30 p.m. on

December 5. We will sing Christmas Carols as we trim the trees. This will be followed by the annual Christmas Party. This is a family event so bring your family and friends. Sign up in the Narthex for both events.



The Giving Tree

Please help the less fortunate children of Rockford. The Giving Tree is set up in the narthex adorned with names of children that you can buy a gift for. Instructions will be with the tag. Please have all gifts delivered to the church by December 14th. If you have any questions please call Carol Bailey 815-222-4935.



November Church Council Highlights

- Approved scholarships for our three high school students attending Rockford Lutheran that will be paid out at the end of the semester.
- Decided to suspend the kitchen project until after the call process has ended. However, it was decided to update the wiring for Moline Hall and the kitchen in order facilitate funerals, the Easter breakfast and other events. Memorial funds will be used to cover the cost.
- Approved spending up to \$400 of Memorial Fund monies to have a custom built cabinet constructed for the new choir robes.
- Council reflected on favorable comments regarding our one worship service and stewardship celebration on Sunday, November 16.
- Heard that our 38-year old Rodgers organ is non-repairable. Researching potential replacement or other solutions.
- Affirmed the Outreach Committee's proposal to send an invitation to neighborhood families to attend our Christmas Eve service.
- Heard that plans for the Children's Christmas program are well underway.
- Gave consent to the Worship Committee to provide worshippers with individual candles to be used at the worship service on Christmas Eve.
- Heard that as of Sunday, November 16, 48 family units submitted pledges for 2015, totaling \$115,000 for the Current & Benevolence Funds and that 24 pledges were also submitted for the Building Fund, totaling \$21,000.

There will be no library work day in December. The next work day will be Tuesday, January 13th at 9:00 am.

Adult Education Opportunities

Adults, are you looking for an opportunity to dig into God's Word and engage in meaningful conversation with others about how faith and life connect? If so, come and check out what Shepherd of the Valley has to offer you!

We hold a Wednesday morning Bible study each week from 10:00 am – 11:00 am. This is a lectionary study which means we take a look at the three scripture readings that will be read the following Sunday at worship. A cup of coffee and a tasty treat are generally always available. However, what's even better is the great group of people and the lively conversations that we have as we wrestle with what the scripture has to say to us.

On Sunday mornings, we hold an Adult Forum from 10:45 am - 11:45 am. Upcoming topics for discussion are as follows:

- December 7 The Practice of Fasting
- December 14 Doorposts
- December 2 No class
- December 28 No class

Both the Bible study & the Adult Forum are held in Shepherd's Hall. Pastor Marilyn serves as the facilitator for both groups. **We'd love to have you come and join us!**



CHRIST IS BORN!

FINANCIAL REPORTS

Financial results as of October 31, 2014 and Year to date totals

	C & B Actual	C & B Budget	C & B Yr td Actual	C & B Yr td Budget
Income	\$13,250.97	\$12,060.00	\$146,667.91	\$146,637.00
Expense	\$17,036.98	\$15,080.77	\$184,371.94	\$163,527.61
Inc/exp	-\$3,786.01	-\$3,020.77	-\$37,704.03	-\$16,890.61
plus offsets	\$1,031.33	\$250.00	\$26,530.74	\$3,400.00
plus interest	\$0.72	\$0.42	\$7.41	\$4.16
Net income	-\$2,753.96	-\$2,770.35	-\$11,165.88	-\$13,486.45

	10/31/14	9/30/14
C&B balance	(\$5,274.86)	(\$2,520.90)

	Building Actual	Building Budget	Bld Yr TD Actual	Bld Yr TD Budget
Income	\$1,925.00	\$1,632.00	\$20,770.00	\$19,664.00
Expense	\$2,538.40	\$2,257.40	22,830.00	22,574.00
Net inc/exp	-\$613.40	-\$625.40	-\$2,060.00	-\$2,910.00

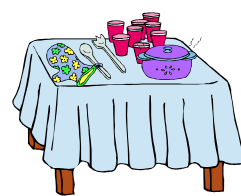
	10/31/14	9/30/14
Building fund balance	\$19,818.15	\$20,431.55

Please note: Financials run one month behind in the bulletin
 Also note: The second installment cost \$4600 and we have paid \$1344 of this bill as of 9/30/14
 Balance on our mortgage - \$319,320.27

Statistics based on the 4 weeks October 26– November 16

- Average weekly worship attendance: 112
- Average weekly contributions:
 - Current & Benevolence— \$ 3,193.25
 - Building Fund— \$ 522.50

SENIOR CHRISTMAS POTLUCK-The luncheon



will be held on Tuesday, December 9 at noon. Meat, beverage and paper products will be provided. Please bring a dish to pass.

Sign up on the poster on the kiosk in the narthex. Following the lunch, Lois Johnson and Linda Longardner will present a program, "The Music of Christmas" and we will sing Christmas carols.

YOUTH:

December 7th Meet at Alpine Lutheran Church at 6:00 pm for a night of GA-GA Ball, a Gingerbread House Decorating Contest, and other games. Just \$3 for pizza, pop and all the activities.

CALLING ALL MIDDLE SCHOOL AND HIGH SCHOOL YOUTH

Each Sunday morning at 10:45 am you are invited to the youth room for a forum led by Phil Smalley. Each week's topic takes a current event from the news & applies it to the scripture readings for the day. It's a great way to see how faith connects with daily life. Come join the conversation!



BINGO at Rosewood from 2-3pm:
December 7. Please come and help if you can!

CALL COMMITTEE NEWS

The Call Committee met on Monday, November 17th. The primary focus of the meeting was to review and continue progress on the Ministry Site Profile. We discussed how to involve members in the process and decided to place a survey in the December newsletter. Please look for it and help with your opinions. We request that the surveys be returned to the church no later than Sunday, December 14.

John Wolf,
Recorder

**SHEPHERD OF THE VALLEY PRESCHOOL**

The 3 year olds celebrated Thanksgiving with a fruit feast and the 4 year olds celebrated Thanksgiving with a program and a Thanksgiving meal.

Happy Thanksgiving

**Sunset...A New Bible Study for Women**

Might there be an interest in gathering with other women of the congregation for a Bible study after sunset? You know, at that time of day when life is supposed to slow down and you unwind from the day. It would be a time for connecting with other women, checking out God's Word together and figuring out how it can speak to our lives today. We have an active Wednesday morning Bible study at Shepherd of the Valley, but for those working outside the home during the day, this doesn't work out. That's why I'd like to offer another alternative time for a study.

The ELCA (Evangelical Lutheran Church in America) publishes a wonderful resource magazine for women called "*Gather*." The magazine has many good articles written by women for women. It also has a monthly Bible study in it. This year's theme is on "*Transforming Life and Faith*." If you think this study is something you may like to attend, please send me an e-mail (marilynghanson@yahoo.com) or give me a call at the church and let me know. If 6-8 women decide they'd like to attend, we'll get the study started in January, either on the second Monday or Tuesday night of the month, depending on the schedule of those who plan to attend.

Pastor Marilyn



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RETURN SERVICES REQUESTED

WE'RE ON THE WEB

WWW.SHEP61.ORG

Office Hours:

Monday-Thursday
 8:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m.

Church Council

Nevagay Abel, Youth
 Kay Brindle, Outreach
 Carol Dahl, Fin. Sec.
 Janette Erickson, Fellowship
 Chad Farris, Property
 Lena Lund, Youth
 Robert Maness, Finance
 Vicki Nitz, Preschool
 Sally Schrader, Christ. Ed.
 Phil Smalley, Treasurer
 Bruce Solko, Personnel
 Soc. Min., Vacant
 Bev Wacker, Worship/Music
 John Wolf, Stewardship
 Terri Woodcock, Sec.

Staff

Pastor Marilyn Hanson, Interim pastor
 Judi Fields, Sec.
 Lynn McWhirter, Accomp.
 Linda Longardner, Accomp.
 Phil Smalley, Treasurer
 Susie Smalley, Music Director
 Diane Kirkland, Bell Dir.
 Patte Lund, Christ. Ed.
 Carol Dahl, Fin. Sec.
 Peggy Wenstrom, Nursery Attendant
 Tabatha Scheider, Nursery Attendant
 Anita Ralston, Custodian



ADVENT & CHRISTMAS WORSHIP

(We worship each Sunday at 9:30 am)

November 30 – 1 Advent

Lighting of the Prophecy Candle

December 7 – 2 Advent

Lighting of the Bethlehem Candle

December 14 – 3 Advent

Lighting of the Shepherd Candle

Children's Christmas program during morning worship

December 21 – 4 Advent

Lighting of the Angel Candle

Christmas Cantata during morning worship

December 24 – Christmas Eve

Family Candlelight Communion Service

5:00 pm

