

Constantine and Yard Signs

Preaching at Bishop Jeff Clements's installation September 24, Elizabeth Eaton, the ELCA's presiding bishop, called out the false "prosperity gospel," which makes God "a cosmic ATM machine" rewarding faithful prayer with prosperity. She movingly reflected on how that false gospel fails to comfort us when we experience death and loss, from the death of our loved ones to the horrors of war and genocide.

Instead, our legacy as Lutheran Christians is the gospel of Jesus Christ, of God becoming a vulnerable human being, suffering, dying and rising for all people. The message that Christ has overcome death and sin on our behalf comforts us as we see death and sin in our lives and the lives of those we meet.

This month we observe the 499th anniversary of October 31, 1517, when Martin Luther posted 95 theses to ensure the true gospel's central place in Christ's church. But the church today should also remember February 313, date of the Roman Emperor Constantine's Edict of Milan.

For the centuries before the Edict of Milan, Christians were traitors. They did not approve of the mainstream worship of the emperors, and as a result they occasionally faced persecution and even death. The honored in the church (still reflected today in our calendar of commemorations) were the martyrs who shared in the suffering of their Lord, witnessing to the gospel of Christ even at the greatest cost,

The Edict of Milan started to change that. Suddenly, Christians were no longer to face persecution or death for witnessing to Christ. In contrast, Emperor Constantine began crediting the Christian God with giving him victory in battle, as though Christ was the strongest fighter among many gods. Soon, it was popular and advantageous to be Christian, and church membership ballooned.

While I'm thankful Roman persecution is past, right now the dominance of Christianity that Constantine started is unraveling. Suddenly it's not advantageous to be a Christian anymore. Sunday mornings aren't sacrosanct for businesses and sporting events, let alone the joggers and snooze-button-hitters among us. While once you might have assumed all your neighbors go to church, now you might fear that putting out a yard sign for your church singles you out for burglars!

In other words, following Christ today is not easy or normal, let alone popular. In preaching good news for the poor and powerless, we might be swimming against the current in a world bent on winning prosperity. But maybe following the one who says "take up your cross" was never meant to be easy. No wonder the gospel flourishes in places in the world and times in our lives when hardship and oppression are most daunting, places where Christ is still present with the love stronger than death.

† IN OUR PRAYERS †

Nevagay Abel, Don Abel,
 Kelsey Dolan, LaVon Downing,
 Bob Fritz, Stu Hoffman, Mary Ann
 Hopper, Lisa Jones, Doris Kampfe,
 Roy Kloweit, The Lund family, Kevin Persaud,
 Sherry Scheider, Ruby Watson, Dan Webber
 (friend of Bruce Solko), David Johnson
 (nephew of Dylene Freburg), Mildred
 Anderson (mother of Cheryl Erdmann),
 Robert Kibble (brother of Vee Kerley), Pastor
 Paul Garchow (friend of the Lund family), Lyle
 Solko, Don Johnson (friend of Lyle & Phyllis
 Nelson), Cortney Stevens (neighbor of Don
 & Neva Abel), Libby's son Noah (friend of
 Laurie & Mark Pellant), Kristin Haren
 (daughter of Adolph Wacker), Golda (friend
 of Bev & Adolph Wacker), Janet (Cheryl
 Erdmann's deaconess sister), Pam Welter
 (Bev Wacker's daughter-in-law), Vanna
 Turner (Graydon Anderson's sister), Judi
 Fields and our homebound church members.



(Please review this list and let either Pastor Scott or the church office know when a name can be removed).

Want to be a member of the body of Christ here at Shepherd of the Valley? Please speak with Pastor Scott after worship if you would like to be received into our community of faith on the Baptism of Our Lord, Sunday, January, 8, 2017.

Senior News**SENIOR LUNCH**

A trip to Edward's Orchard
 Tuesday, November 8
 Watch for more
 information on the kiosk.

Tea Time

The women of the Muslim
 Community Center and
 Women of Shepherd of the Valley

Saturday, October 1

2:00 pm

Moline Hall

Annual Fall Bonfire

at the Bailey's
 (8321 Blomberg Road,
 Cherry Valley)

Saturday, October 1

6pm to 9pm

Hot Dogs and s'mores will be cooked
 on the fire.

There will also be hot apple cider and snacks.
 Bring chair bags for seating.

**Fleece Blankets**

Thank you to all who participated in
 making 33 fleece blankets for
 Rock House Kids.

**Crop Walk**

Shepherd of the Valley will join in the fight
 against hunger by participating in the **CROP
 Hunger Walk on Sunday October 16th**. We
 would like to have a group of Walkers represent
 us and raise money for the Rockford Pantry
 Coalition.

Please join us by signing up to be a Walker or to
 support our Walkers with a financial dona-
 tion. The walk begins at The Riverfront Museum
 Park, 711 No. Main St. Registration is at 1:00
 and the walk begins at 2:00.

Our church is having a Reformation 500 Bookstore!

The 500th anniversary of the Reformation is fast approaching! Do you want to learn more about Martin Luther, his writings, and their impact on Christianity? Do you want to reflect on the ongoing impact of the Reformation today? Stop by our Reformation 500 Bookstore to shop for engaging books on the Reformation for readers of all ages and interests! Save up to 50% plus receive free shipping on all Bookstore titles.

Stop by the ***Display Table***
on ***Sundays, October 16, 23 and 30, 2016***
between 9:30 and Noon

to get fascinating books on the Reformation for you and your family.

Our Bookstore is sponsored by Augsburg Fortress, the publishing ministry of the ELCA. The books will include bestselling biographies like *Luther the Reformer* as well as an atlas of the European Reformation, a graphic novel for young readers, and primary sources from The Annotated Luther series.

Library News

HAVE YOU READ A GOOD BOOK FROM OUR LIBRARY LATELY?

JOHN WOLF READ
"THE BOYS IN THE BOAT"

HERE'S WHAT HE SAID:

"Wonderful historical true story of a man's journey to compete and win a Gold medal in Germany for 'Hitler's Olympics.' I especially enjoyed the family's story of struggle and triumph through very hard economic times in America. Very in depth story of the man and his journey. I would recommend the book wholeheartedly."



Preschool News

Thank you to the Smalley's and the Wacker's for helping clean the courtyard before preschool started.

We have a very active 3 year old class this year that are in the process of learning school rules. Tears have come to an end.

The 4yr old class visited Valley Orchard and enjoyed a tour, apple & donut tasting and a hayride to pick their own apples even though the skies opened up to pouring rain.



Election Day at Shepherd of the Valley

Tuesday, November 8, 2016.

Help is needed to provide cookies for the hospitality table to give out to our voting neighbors at Shepherd of the Valley on Election Day.

Cookies can be brought in starting Sunday, November 6th through Tuesday, November 8th, labeled "election" and put in kitchen off the library.

We also need members to make coffee and replenish the cookie tray throughout the day.

Please indicate on the signup sheet in the narthex if you can bring in cookies and/or help during the day at the hospitality table.

Give an hour (or two) for this chance to welcome people in the area to our church. Thank you in advance to help make this a successful outreach day to our neighbors.

Church Directory

Mark your calendars for October 14-15 and November 11-12 for picture days at Shepherd of the Valley.

Information on how to schedule your appointment will be coming soon.

**Youth Connect****Hay Ride**

WHEN: Sunday, October 9th
4:00pm – 7:00 pm

WHERE: Anderson's Farm -
7339 E. Wildwood Rd.,
Stillman Valley, IL

WHO: All youth (middle & high school) & their friends

WHAT: Bonfire, food, games, hay rides, Worship around the campfire etc..

Cost: We are simply asking for donations from youth groups (a couple dollars per student) if you can; otherwise it is free.

FINANCIAL REPORTS

Financial results as of August 31, 2016 and Year to date totals

	C & B Actual	C & B Budget	C & B YTD Actual	C & B YTD Budget
Income	\$12,619.67	\$12,446.67	\$122,679.02	\$119,168.33
Expense	\$15,700.72	\$15,267.28	\$130,604.99	\$125,470.40
Inc/exp	-\$3,081.05	-\$2,820.61	-\$7,925.97	-\$6,302.07
plus offsets	\$2,189.21	\$950.00	\$13,314.32	\$4,720.00
plus interest	\$0.65	\$0.67	\$5.22	\$5.34
Net income	-\$891.19	-\$1,869.94	\$5,393.57	-\$1,576.73

C&B balance	8/31/16	7/31/16
	\$1,893.07	\$2,688.01

	Building Actual	Building Budget	Bld YTD Actual	Bld YTD Budget
Income	\$1,735.00	\$2,456.00	\$16,638.00	\$18,453.00
Expense	\$2,257.40	\$2,257.40	\$18,049.20	\$18,059.20
Net inc/exp	-\$522.40	\$198.60	-\$1,411.20	\$393.80

Building fund balance	8/31/16	7/31/16
	\$19,149.45	\$19,672.25

Please note: Financials run one month behind in the bulletin
 Also note: The second installment cost \$4600 and we have paid
 \$1504 of this bill as of 8/31/2016
 Balance on our mortgage - \$298437.52

Attendance statistics average are based on the 5 weeks

August 28—September 25:
 Average attendance - 78

Contributions average are based on the 4 weeks

July 24 - August 14 :

Average weekly contributions:
 Current & Benevolence - \$ 2914.80
 Building Fund - \$ 457.00

**Mark your calendars to join us for
Movie Night**

War Room

The Power of Prayer When In War

Sunday, October 23rd at 4:00 PM

Join us on Sunday, for an inspirational afternoon. From the award-winning creators of Fireproof and Courageous comes *War Room*, a compelling drama with humor and heart that explores the power prayer can have on marriages, parenting, careers, friendships, and every other area of our lives.

Please bring your friends, family and neighbors for this powerful movie. Feel free to bring your own beverages. Popcorn and child care will be provided from the church. A signup sheet will be in the narthex.

**Rockford Area Lutheran Ministries
Trivia Night**

Friday November 4

6 pm doors open, 7 pm play begins
\$ 15.00 per person

Sign up as a table of 8 or individually
(See kiosk for more information)

Our Savior's Lutheran Church
3300 Rural Street, Rockford

Trivia night supports these RALM
ministries:
Beccas's Closet & The Park Players

**Katie's Cup Presents:
Music on Thursdays . . . on Seventh!**

A fall music series at Katie's Cup

October 13:
Derek Luttrell
Justin Gates
The Lone Canary
Trinadora

November 10:
Jazz: Groove Hotel

December 8:
Bluegrass: Andnerlik & Church

Doors open at 6 pm. Concerts begin at 7pm.
Free Admission.



OCTOBER 2016

SHEPHERD'S STAFF

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Shepherd of the Valley Lutheran Church (ELCA)
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On The Web: www.shep61.org.
Office Hours, Monday - Thursday, 8:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

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RETURN SERVICES REQUESTED

Officers of the Congregation

President - Janette Erickson
Vice-President - Kay Brindle
Secretary - Vicki Nitz
Treasurer - Phil Smalley

Congregation Council

Carol Bailey, Christian Education
Kay Brindle, Outreach
Janette Erickson, Fellowship
Chad Farris, Property
Amy Kellogg, Youth Ministry
Robert Maness, Finance
Vicki Nitz, Preschool
Laurie Pellant, Social Ministry
Sherry Scheider, Worship/Music
Bruce Solko, Personnel
John Wolf, Stewardship

Staff

The Rev. Scott Benolkin, Pastor
Judi Fields, Secretary
Linda Longardner, Organist
Phil Smalley, Treasurer
Susie Smalley, Music Director
Patte Lund, Christian Education.
Carol Dahl, Financial Secretary
Anita Ralston, Custodian

Trunk or Treat 2016
Sunday, October 30th
3:00pm to 4:30pm

Shepherd of The Valley's church parking lot.

Invite family and friends to come in costume to trick or treat among the decorated and spooky cars.

Hot chocolate, cider, and popcorn provided.

Cost? One can non-perishable food item per child to be donated to a local food pantry.

Want to decorate your car and hand out candy?
Sign up sheet in the narthex to enter your car.

For more information contact Janette Erickson.

