

SHARING
GOD'S
LOVE

SHEPHERD'S STAFF

SHEPHERD OF THE VALLEY LUTHERAN CHURCH
A MEMBER OF THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA

Volume 59 Issue 2

February 2017

U-N-I-T-Y

I write this article in the midst of the annual "Week of Prayer for Christian Unity," the days fittingly between the commemorations of the Confession of Saint Peter and the Conversion of Saint Paul. Every year Christians of very different denominations around the world pray as our Savior prays to his Father that all followers of Christ "may become completely one, so that the world may know that you have sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me" (John 17:22–23 NRSV).

Especially this year, a desire for unity seems palpable well beyond the church. "Unity" was a watchword both for President Trump's inaugural address and at the subsequent Women's March on Washington. The President, for instance, directly quoted Psalm 133: "The Bible tells us, 'how good and pleasant it is when God's people live together in unity.' We must speak our minds openly, debate our disagreements honestly, but always pursue solidarity. When America is united, America is totally unstoppable." Whatever our ideas of or reasons for desiring unity, the desire for it seems universal.

But how is unity accomplished? Is it imposed? Negotiated? The history of our church and world has plenty of cases of both. The great ecumenical councils of the early church, though we profess them to be led to truth by the Holy Spirit, were also scenes of lively debate and compromise. The unity they achieved did not come without division—even violence—between the "orthodox" and everyone else. Achievements in political "unity" often have the same result: creating stronger bonds between the united at the expense of dissidents. At its worst, the desire for unity in both church and world yields isolated *uniformity*, churches or political entities turning in on themselves and viewing diversity as a threat. When that happens, our godly wish for unity becomes an idol.

But our Lord prays for and accomplishes a different kind of unity. Unity is his greatest desire, but he accomplishes it not by negotiating with us or by imposing it upon us, but by coming into our lives, in all our diversity, and giving himself *for us*, dying for all and rising for all. He achieved unity first by giving up every claim and privilege for the sake of humanity.

As Paul writes to the Philippians 2:5–11, this sacrifice and solidarity is the ground of Christian unity. Christ will have lordship over all because he first won salvation for all, and he won salvation for all because he first humbled himself for all. This is the unity we celebrate when we worship together, sharing in his same body and blood.

And it is the same unity we are called to extend to all for whom Christ died. Every day, in our families, our daily work, and in our community, we are called to seek unity in this way, the way of humility and solidarity, the way of the cross. When we do this, we let the world know who sent us, and who it is who loves them even as he has loved us.

† IN OUR PRAYERS †



Nevagay Abel, Don Abel, Kelsey Dolan, Judi Fields, Bob Fritz, Lois Grueneberg, Stu Hoffman, Lois Johnson, Lisa Jones, Doris Kampfe, Roy Kloweit, Kevin Persaud, Carline & Keith Talmadge, Ruby Watson, Anita Ralston, Dan Webber (friend of Bruce Solko), **David Johnson** (nephew of Dyvone Freburg), **Mildred Anderson** (mother of Cheryl Erdmann), **Pr. Paul Garchow** (friend of the Lund family), **Lyle Solko, Don Johnson** (friend of Lyle & Phyllis Johnson), **Kristin Haren** (daughter of Adolph Wacker), **Janet** (Cheryl Erdmann's deaconess sister), **Carol Triplett** (friend of the Smalley and Wacker families), **LeAnn Dahl** (daughter of Carol Dahl), **David Harris** (nephew of Kris Tukker), the **family of Deb Zandonatti, Caleb and Jacob Wood** (grandsons of Al and Phyllis Johnson, each serving in the military in Iraq), **Charlotte** (mother of Kay Brindle), **Steve Welter** (brother of Susie Smalley), **Mackenzie & Jake** (friends of Laurie Pellant), **Stacey Holder** (Sally Schrader's daughter), **Angie and Jordan Horvath** (daughter and grandson of Ann & Martin Honer), **Sally and Marcie Ramsey** (friends of Helen Swanson), **Pastor Jane McChesney, Maria** (Kris Tukker's daughter in law), **Ilse** (sister of Adolph Wacker), **Nancy Brandt** (sister of Kay Brindle), and **the Stubbs family** (missionaries in Tanzania).

(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 at Easter.

Library News



Tuesday, February 14-Library Work Day at 9:30 a.m.

Winter is still here-Check out a book and enjoy it with a cup of hot tea!

There are many new titles available. Pastor Scott recommends the comic book version of Martin Luther. It takes about one hour to read.

 **Senior News**

SENIOR LUNCHEON-Tuesday, February 28 at Noon. Come and enjoy a barbecue sandwich, served with chips, dessert and coffee.

Following lunch, we will play a game or two of BUNCO.

Remember to sign up on the kiosk.

I Save the date

I Vacation Bible school



I June 19th - 23rd.

I Mark your calendars.



Pre-School

Shepherd of the Valley Pre-School Open House for the fall 2017-2018 year will be Wednesday, February 15 from 5:30 - 7:00 p.m. Call 815-397-5880 with questions.

2017 CRE Workshops

The 2017 event will focus on the 500th anniversary of the Reformation.

Keynote Presenter will be **the Rev. Dr. Winston Persaud**, Wartburg Theological Seminary Professor of Systematic Theology, The Kent S. Knutson & UELC Professor in Theology & Mission Director of the Center for Global Theologies. His keynote will be titled:

"Christian Witness in a Pluralistic World – Cross Cultural Challenges," which will bring insights from our Lutheran heritage and discuss ways in which we may respond to the contemporary crisis of defining and confessing the Gospel.

In addition to workshops from the keynote speaker and NIS Bishop Jeffrey Clements, other workshops feature topics including: Administration/Council/Treasurers, Education, Evangelism/Outreach/Hospitality, Global/Inter-Faith, Leadership, Social Justice, Spirituality/Prayer/Health & Wellness, Stewardship, and Youth/Young Adult/Family Ministry.

Sponsored by the Northern Illinois Synod Congregational Life Committee, the Congregational Resourcing Event (CRE) is one of this synod's finest yearly events. Church council members, teachers, musicians, staff, volunteers, and leaders – just about everyone in a congregation – can take advantage of this learning event to strengthen skills, gather resources, network with others, and discover new ways to enhance congregational and individual ministries. Come, experience and bring home new ministry tools.

The Congregational Resourcing Event offers many varied educational workshop selections for you, your key congregational leaders, and other interested congregation members. Many groups, agencies, and institutions have displays.

FINANCIAL REPORTS

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

	C & B Actual	C & B Budget	C & B YTD Actual	C & B YTD Budget
Income	\$17,177.54	\$16,326.67	\$186,296.90	\$177,200.00
Expense	\$17,321.53	\$19,107.85	\$193,398.34	\$192,742.00
Inc/exp	-\$143.99	-\$2,781.18	-\$7,101.44	-\$15,542.00
plus offsets	\$1,372.13	\$890.00	\$17,628.50	\$6,550.00
plus interest	\$0.71	\$0.66	\$7.92	\$8.00
Net income	\$1,228.85	-\$1,890.52	\$10,534.98	-\$8,984.00

C&B balance		12/31/16 \$6,995.57	11/30/16 \$5,827.17
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	Building Actual	Building Budget	Year End Actual	Year End Budget
Income	\$2,040.00	\$2,472.00	\$24,683.00	\$28,237.00
Expense	\$2,257.40	\$2,257.40	\$27,078.80	\$27,088.80
Net inc/exp	-\$217.40	\$214.60	-\$2,395.80	\$1,148.20

Building fund balance		12/31/16 \$18,165.25	11/30/16 \$18,322.65
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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 12/31/2016
 Balance on our mortgage - \$294,439.92

Attendance statistics average are based on the 4 weeks

January 1 - 22
 Average attendance - 60

Contributions average are based on the 5 weeks

December 25 - January 22
 Average weekly contributions:
 Current & Benevolence - \$ 3,297.00
 Building Fund - \$ 365.60

AROUND THE TOWN

COMING SOON:
LUTHERAN LAUGH-IN
FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 24, 2017

It's time for the blockbuster, biennial show that makes headlines.

Contact the RALM office immediately if you have a talent or know a group with talent. It can be professional quality or quirky fun.

This year's theme is movies.

RSVP to the RALM office, 815-962-4279, by January 30, 2017, with your talent ideas.

Tickets will be available at the RALM office soon.



*Sweetheart
Jazz
Dinner*

Saturday February 11, 2017
PLACE: ZION LUTHERAN CHURCH
925 Fifth Avenue—Rockford, IL 61104

*Fellowship/Angelic Organic Learning Center
Presentation 5:00 - 6:00 p.m.
Elegant Buffet Dinner 6:00 - 7:00 p.m.
Keynote Speaker Bishop Jeffrey Clements
Entertainment 7:00 -8:00 p.m.*

Cost is \$25.00 per person.
\$200 for a Table of 8
Reservations :contact Ruth
Fairchild
815-494-2821 or 815-961-7296



MUSIC BY JODI BEACH & JIM MCDOWELL

SPONSORED BY ZION OUTREACH



*Valentine
Roast Beef
Dinner
& Silent Auction*

**Saturday, February 11
5:00pm**

Cost: **\$12** per person

*See Cynthia Gaffney or a
Choir Member for tickets*

*This is a fundraiser to benefit the
Music & Worship Program*

*Come Help Us
Raise
Money*

Salem Lutheran Church
1629 South Sixth Street
Rockford, IL 61104
815-965-5131

Save the Date!

Tuesday, Feb. 28, 2017



Please continue to support this
great event!

**Tickets on sale
February 1st**

All you can eat

Swedish Pancakes

9:00 AM to 1:00 PM

Trinity Lutheran Church
Anderson Hall

presented by

Trinity House, Inc.



Pastor Chuck Olson is again offering a Barnabas Caregiving Orientation on Sunday, February 19 from 3:30 - 5:30 p.m. The orientation will be held at The Villa at P.A. Peterson, 13411 Parkview Ave., Rockford, IL. This orientation is free. Register by leaving Pastor Chuck a text, voicemail, or email at 815-342-6064, drchuckolson@hotmail.com.

Barnabas is a simple, fun caregiving program connecting caring people to those most benefitting from caring people,. Last year Barnabas volunteers logged 1373 visits at The Villa.

It's Back Again —
Trinity's Garage Sale



SAVE THE DATE
DATE
Saturday,
April 8th

SOUNDS FROM THE SANCTUARY

FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH
2016-2017 CONCERT SERIES

AUGUSTANA COLLEGE CHOIR



FRIDAY, FEB. 17 - 7:30 PM

Founded in 1931, the **Augustana College Choir** has established a tradition of excellence in performance of acapella choral literature.

Under the direction of Dr. Jon Hurty, the Choir has performed in New York City's Carnegie Hall, Orchestra Hall in Chicago, and numerous times in Sweden as well as throughout Europe, Asia, and the United States.

225 South Third Street, Rockford
Celebrating 160+ years of witness and service to the community
in the heart of historic Haight Village
815 962 6691

Freewill offering



Are you bored?

Join us for GAME NIGHT
Sunday, February 26, 2017
5-7P.M. at St. Mark Lutheran
675 N. Mulford Road

Middle and High School Youth and friends Invited!

If you have a favorite board game BRING IT! Please tell your youth leader or pastor that you are interested.

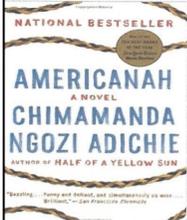
There will be a "chips buffet" along with subs and soda. Please share this on fb and instagram.




Katie's Choice Book Club

Thursday February 9
10 am

Americanah
by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie



Ifemelu and Obinze are young and in love when they depart military-ruled Nigeria for the West. Beautiful, self-assured Ifemelu heads for America, where despite her academic success, she is forced to grapple with what it means to be black for the first time. Quiet, thoughtful Obinze had hoped to join her, but with post-9/11 America closed to him, he instead plunges into a dangerous, undocumented life in London. Fifteen years later, they reunite in a newly democratic Nigeria, and reignite their passion—for each other and for their homeland.

*"Cerebral and utterly transfixing ... Unforgettable."
The Boston Globe*

*A knockout of a novel about immigration, American dreams, the power of first love, and the shifting meanings of skin color ... A marvel!"
NPR*

*"Brimming with lush detail, unflinching emotion and wry humor ... an absorbing love story but also a multi-layered meditation on learning to belong to one's own life. An intricate novel for an intricate process."
Chicago Tribune*

Katie's Cup coffeebar
Corner of 4th Avenue and 7th Street
No reservations necessary.
All are invited as we engage in conversations about books of interest to you!
Books available for purchase at Katie's Cup or bring your own copy.

Next: *Still Life* by Louise Penny • Thursday, March 9, 10 am



Shepherd of the Valley Lutheran Church (ELCA)
2715 S. Mulford Road, Rockford, IL 61109
Phone: 815-399-5503 E-mail: svlcsecretary@att.net
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

LOVE is patient,
is kind.

It always **protects**, always **trusts**,
always **hopes**, always **perseveres**.

LOVE NEVER FAILS

1 Corinthians 13:4.7-8