



# SHEPHERD'S STAFF

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

Volume 59 Issue 12

DECEMBER 2017

## Hope for Facing Our Fears

As you read this, a new church year has once again begun with the season of Advent. The color of the season has changed to blue from ordinary green, our hymn numbers get lower (the advent hymns being near the beginning of the hymnal), we light the candles of the advent wreath to mark the four Sundays of Advent, and all of us become attuned to signs that December 25 is just around the corner. In a lot of ways, Advent brings a gentle contrast from what comes before.

But in our scripture readings there seems to be an alarming continuity from November to December. In fact, by the time we get to Advent, when we hear Jesus' warning to "keep awake—for you do not know when the master of the house will come" (Mark 13), we have already been hearing about "the day of the Lord" in passages (e.g., Amos 5, Zephaniah 1) that sound downright frightening as they warn about sudden change coming. It's as if the word of God is trying to unsettle us just as we're sated with turkey and thinking about Christmas lists.

And it's not just the lectionary (our schedule of scripture readings) that's unsettling us right now. Our attention has been drawn lately to the possibility of nuclear war with North Korea, to record hurricanes and wildfires, and to an alarming rise in mass shootings in this country. As if that weren't enough, an article in the current issue of the journal *BioScience* warns,

"To prevent widespread misery and catastrophic biodiversity loss, humanity must practice a more environmentally sustainable alternative to business as usual. This prescription was well articulated by the world's leading scientists 25 years ago, but in most respects, we have not heeded their warning. Soon it will be too late to shift course away from our failing trajectory, and time is running out." (<https://doi.org/10.1093/biosci/bix125>)

There is much in God's word and in God's world to make us feel afraid, overwhelmed, even hopeless.

This Advent let's face those fears. What if you made a list of what worries you, what you dread, what you're afraid to think about? What on that list is stronger than the God who created you and claimed you in baptism? What on that list can trump God's love for you in Christ Jesus? What on that list will outlast Jesus' promise that he is coming back in glory: "Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away" (Mark 13).

Jesus gives us the hope to light candles in the darkness. Neither grief, nor fear, nor death itself can overcome the light of the world. And to have this hope is to become open to the new creation God is bringing about around us and in us. We may see signs of this change around us, or it may come to us "like a thief in the night," but either way, Advent is here to remind us that *he is coming*. And his coming will bring joy to the world.

† IN OUR PRAYERS †

Intercessions: Nevagay Abel, Neva & Don Abel, Justin Abel, Alka David, Elizabeth David, Rose Mandera, Dyvone Freburg, Kelsey Hernandez, Stu Hoffman, Lisa Jones, Doris Kampfe, Kevin Persaud, Carline Talmadge, Alice Kundo, Annette Aken, Doris Dohlen, John Miller, Sally Schrader, Ken Barton, David Johnson (nephew of Dyvone Freburg), Phil Armato (Patte Lund's father), Mildred Anderson (mother of Cheryl Erdmann), Lyle Solko, Don Johnson (friend of Lyle & Phyllis Nelson), Carol Triplett (friend of the Smalley and Wacker families), LeAnn Dahl (daughter of Carol Dahl), Pastor Jane McChesney, Bill Wolf (father of John Wolf), Don Stinson (friend of Don & Neva Abel), Lois and Mike Virtue (friends of Scott & Sue Francis), June Cain (Synod bookkeeper), Krissy Haren (Adolph Wacker's daughter), Karen Nitz (mother of Kevin Nitz), Iona Reidlinger (niece of Linda Severson), 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).



The 4 year-old class enjoyed putting together their Thanksgiving items for the annual Thanksgiving dinner at school with their

family.

They did a great job singing Thanksgiving songs and doing the play about the pilgrims and Indians.

The 3 year-old class had a fun time cutting up fruit for the annual fruit feast party.

They also enjoyed singing about Thanksgiving.

Keeping Shepherd of the Valley up-to-date

Please be sure to let the office of Shepherd of the Valley know when you have a change in address, phone number or e-mail.

Become a Member

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, January 7, 2018 .



www.laundryloverockford.org

Laundry Love Rockford provides free laundry services to the needy on the 3rd Wednesday of each month at Charles Street Laundromat. Bob Black and Dave Musser will be here

on December 3 to tell us more about this ministry.

Please let the church office or Pastor Scott know if there are items you would like to see in the newsletter.



Christmas Potluck

SENIOR CHRISTMAS POTLUCK TUESDAY, DECEMBER 12 AT 11:30

Please sign up for one of the food items. Meat, beverage and table service will be provided. following the lunch, we will sing carols with Linda Longardner and play Christmas Bingo. Please bring a "prize" for the game. Men bring a man's gift, ladies bring a lady's gift.

PLEASE SIGN UP ON THE POSTER ON THE KIOSK.

Attendance statistics average are based on the 4 weeks  
 October 29 – November 19  
 Average attendance: 84

**FINANCIAL REPORTS**

Financial results as of October 31, 2017 and Year to date totals

	C & B Actual	C & B Budget	C & B YTD Actual	C & B YTD Budget
Income	\$14,792.01	\$13,525.00	\$146,119.65	\$146,450.00
Expense	\$14,038.19	\$15,282.75	\$160,114.73	\$158,557.37
Inc/exp	\$753.82	-\$1,757.75	-\$13,995.08	-\$12,107.37
plus offsets	\$337.28	\$250.67	\$9,442.80	\$6,101.66
Net income	\$1,091.10	-\$1,507.08	-\$4,552.28	-\$6,005.71



The Summerdale School Giving Tree is set up in the Narthex. If you would like to buy a toy and an outfit for a preschool aged student for Christmas, please take a tag and sign

your name on the list by the tree. Follow the directions given on the instruction sheet and be sure the wrapped and tagged gifts are at church no later than Sunday, December 17. Please call Carol Bailey (815-222-4935) with any questions. Summerdale Early Childhood Center would like to give their sincere thanks for your participation in this festive service provided to their students.

	10/31/17	9/30/17		
C&B balance	\$2,443.29	\$1,302.19		
	Building Actual	Building Budget	BLD YTD Actual	BLD YTD Budget
Income	\$2,195.00	\$2,234.00	\$22,146.00	\$22,334.00
Expense	\$2,257.40	\$2,257.40	\$24,779.00	\$22,574.00
Net inc/exp	-\$62.40	-\$23.40	-\$2,633.00	-\$240.00

	10/31/17	9/30/17
Building fund balance	\$15,572.25	\$15,484.65

Please note: Financials run one month behind in the bulletin  
 Balance on our mortgage - \$284102.10

**Our mortgage was just renewed for another 5 year term at an interest rate of 4.75%**



Would you be interested in being an Eucharistic minister?

Eucharistic Ministers share communion with

some of our homebound members. A team is made up of two people who are scheduled approximately every other month to visit and share Holy Communion.

If you are interested in this ministry please contact Pastor Scott or the church office.

Pastor Scott will be on vacation beginning December 25th and returning to the office January 2.

**Stewardship Committee**

Thank you to everyone that participated in our Stewardship Sunday, both with your pledges, your Time and Talent participation sheets and joining in our time of fellowship and food during the special hospitality brunch! Our time together as our church family is always special and it seems to take on added importance as Advent approaches. As this year is coming quickly to a close, please take time to prayerfully consider your participation at Shepherd of the Valley and your efforts to stewardship with your pledges. Thank you one and all for everything you contribute to the life of our church.



The church staff is looking for a person or persons to take responsibility of lowering the flag on the corner to 1/2 staff when necessary and then raising it again.

If you would be interested in serving in this ministry contact the church office.



Christmas is a time to think of others. The Salvation Army food collection barrel is in the narthex. Please bring non-perishable items to share with others who don't have as much.



Social Ministry

**Social Ministry**

Thanks to Thrivent and all those who donated and helped with the fleece blanket making. We have 36 finished, beautiful and warm blankets to deliver to Rock House Kids!"

Thank you to all who contributed for the pizza party for Rock House Kids. We were able to purchase pizza for the Rock House Kids for Monday (November 6<sup>th</sup>) and for the teen group on Tuesday (November 7<sup>th</sup>). The kids were thrilled.

**SAVE THE DATE**

**FAMILY CHRISTMAS CAROLING**

**DECEMBER 10**

On Sunday, December 10<sup>th</sup>, the Fellowship committee will be hosting a Christmas Caroling event to our homebound member. We will begin at 1:30 p.m. from the church and return around 4:30 p.m. Please look for the signup to participate in this rewarding time of spreading the Christmas gift of songs. We will need singers and drivers to caravan the group. Any questions, please contact Janette or any member of Fellowship.

**Blue Christmas**

Christmas is a time of joy, but for many of us it is also a time of sorrow. This time of year we may feel more deeply the loss of loved ones, the loneliness of Christmas without family, or simply the "holiday blues." But God's love and healing is for us in all seasons. Experience this healing at a "Blue Christmas" service of prayer and healing at noon on Wednesday, December 20.

**Faith Forum**

Join us in Shepherd Hall (down the hall from the office), 11:00-11:45 A.M. most Sundays for Faith Forum (a.k.a. Adult Forum). Each month we'll follow this pattern:

- \* 1st Sunday of the month: Together in Faith (informal coffee and conversation in Moline Hall)
- \* 2nd Sunday of the month: Living Lutheran (discussing last month's *Living Lutheran Magazine*)
- \* 3rd Sunday of the month: Connecting the Faith (how our faith matters in the world)
- \* 4th Sunday of the month: Deepening the Faith (topics to deepen our roots in the faith)



Order your poinsettia plants by Sunday, December 3. They are \$9.50 each. Sign up in the Narthex or call the church office.

First Lutheran Church announces its

## 59th Annual Lucia Celebration

Saturday, December 9

9 am - noon



Traditional Kaffe Kalas  
with  
Santa Lucia  
Candy Boy & Girl

Crafts, "treasures," & homemade bakery  
plus Tabor Lutheran's Swedish Korv!

*Holiday Concert at 10 am in the sanctuary  
Music Academy of Rockford students*

225 S. Third Street, corner of Third & Oak  
in the heart of Rockford's historic Haight Village  
815.962.6691



## BREAKFAST with SANTA

Saturday, December 16th  
9am to 11am

In the Gym at:

**Gloria Dei Lutheran Church  
4700 Augustana Drive**

Come visit with Santa and enjoy a continental breakfast with juice and coffee. There will be pictures with Santa and Christmas Caroling at 10am. Make sure to enter our FREE drawing for one of three \$25 gift Cards to Toys R Us!

Please bring a donation of one non-perishable food item per child. Food will be donated to Emmanuel Lutheran Food Pantry serving the Mid-Town Rockford Neighborhood.

## Family Musical Advent Celebration



Presented by Our Savior's WELCA

Thursday, December 14 at 6:30 PM

Our Savior's Lutheran Church  
3300 Rural Street, Rockford, IL

Come hear the sounds of the season!

Music performed by talented OSLC families, with dessert following in the Social Hall.

All are invited to this inspiring musical celebration anticipating the birth of Christ. Free-will offering taken.

Please reserve seating with [shaverpam@gmail.com](mailto:shaverpam@gmail.com) or call the church at 815-399-0531.

Salem Lutheran Church  
Annual  
Swedish Christmas Dinner

When  
Thursday, December 7, 2017  
6:30pm

Featuring  
Salvation Army Band

Join us for our traditional  
homemade Swedish dinner

Cost  
Donations: **\$15.00**

Call Pastor Bill @ 815/721-2550 or  
the Church Office @ 815/965-5131  
**Get Your Tickets Now!!**

Merry Christmas!

1629 South 6th St.  
Rockford, IL 61104  
815/965-5131



**All Aboard!**

**Trains are on their way to Katie's Cup!!**

**Saturday, December 16**  
**9 am - 4 pm · 502 Seventh Street**

"Hands-on" opportunities for kids of all ages to experience a huge model train and trolley set-up, including a look back in time to what Seventh Street was like in the 1930's - 60's when trains would stop here!

Free admission.  
 Trains and trolleys provided by the Rock River Valley Division of the National Model Railroad Assn., Inc.

**Katie's Cup 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday Concert Series Welcomes**

**TRINADORA's HOLIDAY FROLIC**

[www.trinadora.com](http://www.trinadora.com)

Holiday rock, country, jazz, Latin, Celtic, and more - all with a **Midwest Americana** twist. Vocals, keyboard, harmonica, ocarina, guitar, concertina, bass, & more.

**Celebrate the winter holidays with music.**

**7pm Thu Dec 14th**

Jannie Nelson & Ron Holm

Featuring the music of **Patsy Cline** and **Roy Orbison**

**502 7th St**  
**Rockford, IL**  
**(815) 986-0628**  
[www.katiescup.com](http://www.katiescup.com)

**Free Admission**  
 Donations to musicians gratefully accepted.



**Katie's Choice Book Club**

**Thursday**  
**January 11**  
**10 am**

**Britt-Marie was Here**  
 By Fredrik Backman



Britt-Marie can't stand mess. A disorganized cutlery drawer ranks high on her list of unforgivable sins. She is not one to judge others—it's just that sometimes people interpret her helpful suggestions as criticisms! But hidden inside the socially awkward, fussy busybody is a woman who has more imagination, bigger dreams, and a warmer heart than anyone around her realizes. When Britt-Marie walks out on her cheating husband and has to fend for herself in the miserable backwater town of Elog, she finds work as the caretaker of a soon-to-be demolished recreation center. The fastidious Britt-Marie soon finds herself being drawn into the daily doings of her fellow citizens, but most alarming of all, she's given the impossible task of leading the supremely untalented children's soccer team to victory!

"A heartwarming story about a woman rediscovering herself after a personal crisis. . . . Fans of Backman's will find another winner in these pages."  
 —Publishers Weekly

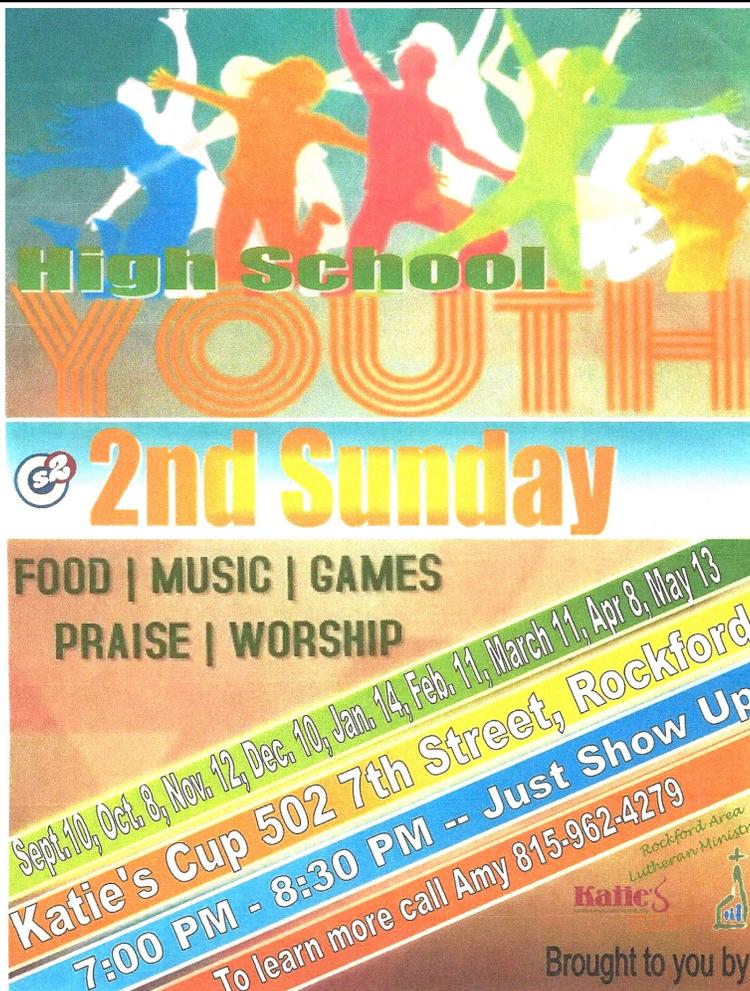
"Britt-Marie's metamorphosis from cocoon to butterfly seems all the more remarkable for the utterly discouraging environment in which it takes place."  
 —Booklist

"Warm and satisfying."  
 —People

**Katie's Cup coffeebar**  
 Corner of 7th Street and 4th Avenue  
 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: *Invention of Wings* by Sue Monk Kidd • Thurs., February 8, 10 am



### ATTENTION CONFIRMATION STUDENTS

Confirmation on Sunday, December 3 will be from 4-5 at Alpine Lutheran.

At 5:00 we will join with other junior and senior high school students for the annual advent party.

There will be food and games from 5-7. Bring \$3 to cover the cost of pizza.

Confirmation will resume the regular schedule December 17 at Alpine Lutheran.

### Youth Survey

Tony Fiorenza is planning to remodel the youth room for his Eagle Scout project and would like your input. The survey is in two parts. Please follow these links and complete and submit both parts. <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/BPPDQG5> <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/B6NWLRM>

### Nursery Assistant

The schedules for December, January & February are on the Doodle website. Follow these links:

December: <https://doodle.com/poll/sm8i7p96z9hiefm9>

January : <https://doodle.com/poll/5fxnhb643ark2u54>

February: <https://doodle.com/poll/ky5yvbzb8dv59xz6>

Please feel free to check as many Sundays as you might be **available** for, even if someone else is available then, too. Checking more does not mean you will appear on the schedule more, because no matter how often you are available, Judi tries to share responsibility among as many people as possible when the schedule is put together.

You must have completed a background check to be available to help in the nursery. If you haven't completed one, see Pastor Scott for a form.

Thank you for being willing to help in the nursery doing your part to help to keep our children safe. Your hospitality is making a difference Sunday after Sunday.



Shepherd of the Valley Lutheran Church (ELCA)  
2715 S. Mulford Road, Rockford, IL 61109  
Phone: 815-399-5503 E-mail: [svlcsecretary@att.net](mailto:svlcsecretary@att.net)  
On The Web: [www.shep61.org](http://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 - Carol Bailey  
Vice-President - Sherry Scheider  
Secretary - Vicki Nitz  
Treasurer - Phil Smalley

### Congregation Council

Carol Bailey, Christian Education  
Janette Erickson, Fellowship  
Vicki Nitz, Preschool  
Sherry Scheider, Worship/Music  
Zane Smalley, Youth Ministry  
Kris Tukker, Social Ministry  
Peggy Wenstrom, Personnel  
Don Wiese, Finance  
John Wolf, Stewardship  
Outreach  
Property

### Staff

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



**CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE**

WORSHIP SERVICE WITH  
COMMUNION  
9:30 AM

WORSHIP SERVICE WITH  
COMMUNION  
BEGINS AT 5:00 PM

SPECIAL MUSIC BEGINS AT 4:30 PM