

Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church
3920 North Victoria Street
Shoreview, MN 55126

October 6, 2020

Dear Fellow Builders of the Kingdom,

"His Master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; now I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your Master'" Matthew 25:21 (ESV). It has been said that God does not give churches visions that can be met by a single individual. God gives churches visions that require the entire Body of Christ working together if they are to be met. This could never be truer than in our identity of "Reaching, Igniting & Empowering people for Jesus Christ." It takes an entire community of faith to spread the Good News of the power of Christ's transforming love.

We have been thinking about this transforming love as we make our way into our fall stewardship conversations and our 2021 budget planning here at Shepherd. It is clear that we have all learned much from this pandemic, including how it has impacted our faith and how much community matters in our lives. Through this learning we came to name our stewardship campaign this year "20/20 Hindsight: What This Pandemic Has Taught Us." We will be launching it on **Sunday, October 18** as we share these learnings together.

In 2018, we ventured to expand our pastoral staff so we could better serve the community by establishing greater connections with our ministry partners and our church families. These connections happened through addressing the emerging needs in our surrounding neighborhoods, by having more time to spend with our elderly members helping them feel more connected and by establishing deeper connections with our preschool children and families. To make all this happen, we received gifts to cover this expansion for two years, with the goal of living into this staff expansion (and ministry initiatives) as a faith community. We were making progress towards this goal and had a financial plan to sustain our staffing. Unfortunately, COVID-19 happened.

COVID-19 has necessitated many changes. Having no idea what the immediate future held, the staff implemented many cost savings steps. We are grateful for our PPP loan which allowed us some breathing room and also allowed us to retain all of our amazing and hardworking staff. Despite all these efforts, we still have a financial gap as we budget for 2021 and beyond.

We are asking two things of you as we plan our 2021 budget, that you keep your regular giving at your 2020 level and prayerfully consider an extra gift above that level to support and maintain our current staffing needs. We are launching a special appeal to our faith community to raise \$73,000, allowing us to maintain our current level of staffing, and thus our long-term goals. Thanks to some generous forward thinking donors, we have already received HALF - \$38,000 of what we need. Today, we're asking you, beloved members of our

congregation, to join your brothers and sisters in Christ in matching this amount. These gifts will ensure we will be able to maintain our current church and preschool staffing. With the upheaval COVID-19 has caused for so many, providing this stability is a critical lifeline to the children and friends we care for each day.

We are writing to you to ask for your support. Would you and your family prayerfully consider an additional gift, above your normal pledge, to fill this remaining funding gap?

Will you help?

We have created a very easy to way to commit to this appeal on our website at sohsv.org\giving. There is one form for our "20/20 Hindsight" (this special appeal) and one form for your annual pledge for those that would like to make their yearly commitment. We are grateful for all of your amazing generosity! We are confident that God is already at work, making this happen for us and through us.

What you do makes our mission possible and for that we say THANK YOU! We are truly grateful for your involvement and invite you to join this challenge. We believe in what God has planned and ask you to prayerfully consider increasing your support of His mission among and through us. May we continue His Kingdom work together!

Praising God,

Your Shepherd of the Hills Governing Board

