

**Shepherd of the Hills
Lutheran Church
2023 Annual Report**



What does growth mean to you?



As you are reading through
2023's Annual Report,
we hope that you will be able to see
how Shepherd's ministries and missions
helped us to Reach new heights together
in our ministries.



2023 has been a year of growth as we have continued to live into our mission to *Reach, Ignite, and Empower People for Jesus*.

The year began with stewardship conversations and a letter recounting those talks was sent out. Dave Webb gave a Temple Talk on January 15 leading up to our 2023 Annual Meeting. Many of you increased your giving and showed a significant level of commitment. We have been able to remain financially healthy as we maintained and increased ministries and sought to responsibly compensate staff.

In January and March, we held women's and men's retreats that were resounding successes. Participants experienced fellowship, restoration, and humor through sessions and games. Men explored contemplation with education and opportunities to practice for those interested in going deeper.

After nearly a 3-year break, we brought back prayer partners for the preschool and our congregation. We paired a caring adult from Shepherd with our preschoolers. This program allowed us to live into our promise of bringing a Christian-centered preschool to our youngsters and demonstrated that there is yet another loving adult in their lives and that Shepherd is a place that indeed cares for them as well.

Our summer youth trip took place in June. Four adults and nine youth headed out to Rainbow Trails Lutheran Camp for a week filled with mountain climbing, camping near glaciers, deep conversations around God and life, white-water rafting, cooking over fires, and long days driving to and from the camp. It was an amazing experience of faith formation and relationship building amongst one another and with God.

Shepherd hosted a Ukrainian mother and son, Switlana and Vadim, on their journey and settlement here in the United States. It was a long and complicated process for them to arrive here and we continue to hold them up in prayer as they continue their journey.

Holy Hammers supported a new build in St. Paul and a rebuild in Roseville this summer. Shepherd hosted meals onsite at the build.

Our Lenten offering went to Kidamali this year. We maintained and added to our scholarships for students. In addition, we supported the Kidamali congregation's general fund which supported a school bus for children who live further away from the school, and also repairs on homes.

With great excitement Lenten Mentors were back this year after a 3-year break. We were thrilled to be able to connect our youth with caring adults that can help enrich their faith and support them as they grow.

The Joy team shopped, organized, and prepared a marvelous Day of Service. We supported a multitude of projects from Bridging to Ralph Reeder, Camp Noah, Open Hands and more. We were excited to welcome a videographer/photographer from the ELCA Churchwide organization. Shepherd premiered in the God's Work Our Hands overarching promotional video. The crew interviewed Loni Baumgardner, Sam Hickok, Cullen Koepp, Pastor Renee, and Sister Tashina. We were excited to lift up the amazing ministry of God's Work Our Hands (what we call the Day of Service) across our church and into the world!

In September our new spiritual director, Sarah Cledwyn, joined us as we blessed and dedicated our labyrinth. This was the first of monthly gatherings with Sarah covered by the Lilly Grant.

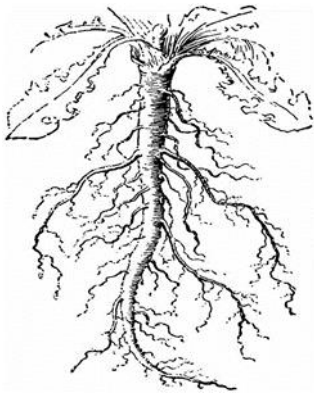
Staff had a visioning session in September to talk about what is going well at Shepherd, what might need more attention, and what could make our community stronger.

Our music and worship expanded gloriously this year under Shaun Halland's direction. Celebration Choir and JuBELLation blessed us with marvelous music. Song of Shepherd brought so many outstanding performances including organ students from St. Olaf College, the Lumina vocal ensemble, Bells of the Lakes, Minnesota Mandolin Orchestra, and a stellar All Saints themed hymn festival led by David Cherven, featuring his skills at the organ.

Looking back on the year, we feel blessed and inspired by the vibrancy of our staff and members. We are full of joy that we are able to care for each other and reach out to those in need. We are excited to see where God takes us in the year to come.

Shepherd's Governing Board

**Dave Webb, Chair; Sally Peters, Vice Chair; Elizabeth Kohen, Treasurer;
Joshua Koepp Secretary, Ellen Holmgren, Lynn Mears, Anna Grace,
Chriss Latterell**



Nurturing our TAPROOT

The Annual Report never fails to make me wonder how fast a year can go by. The process of writing this report requires space for me to pause and reflect on all that God has done and continues to do among and through our amazing Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church faith community. I am grateful for what this time of reflection reveals.

As a long-time pastor friend of mine said as we reflected together on the past year, “It’s a weird time in the church.” We laughed at this insight, but also both knew that there was wisdom in that statement. There is an urban myth that the word ‘weird’ comes from the German verb *werden*, which means to become or becoming. While that may not be an etymological fact, it is illustrative of how this past year has felt, nonetheless. Weird times often feel uncomfortable, but they can also become something quite incredible.

For me, 2023 was a year of emerging *werden*. A year of becoming and stretching, of regrouping and advancing..... all at the same time. It was a year of growth in new directions, staffing changes, reorganizing and reimagining how we will do ministry together in new and innovative ways. Growth and change are not always easy, but the process is solidly biblical as we do not have a God of stagnancy. God has always called God’s people to new places and new ways (and purposes) of being. God is always calling us to wonder *who* we are and *why* we are in this particular time and place.

We, as a staff, have been wondering about these same things. We spent some time together as a team this past fall in a visioning session that gave us an understanding that there is an overarching ministry focus of hunger justice emerging at Shepherd. We believe that this ministry direction will influence [who we are and why we are](#) as a Shepherd community. It is almost as if we are being called to grow a hunger justice ministry taproot that will anchor us so that we can be prepared to feed the other ministries that God is calling us towards.

A taproot is the strong central root that runs deep and anchors a plant in place and serves as the main source for nourishment of the system. A well-nourished taproot helps the whole plant to thrive and grow. Cultivating a taproot system is not always easy, as it involves moving old soil so that new things can grow. It involves waiting and wondering and an openness to how the Spirit is moving. Building a taproot system takes time, intentionality and vision.

RENEE PATTERSON
SENIOR PASTOR



We have seen a ministry taproot system growing here at Shepherd bringing evidence that God is clearly at work cultivating us and growing us in a particular direction. Our job is to trust the process, and each other, that things are growing and working even when we cannot perceive them.

We see God growing us as new people and young families joining us in worship, seemingly every week. We see it in members that have been here for many seasons stepping out in new ways and into new ministries. We see it with people offering so many creative ways to *unleash their talents* as we see how God can work through them in new ways to grow our taproot system of reaching out beyond our walls. Growth may be challenging, but in the midst of these weird and changing times, God is always faithful if we seek to follow with curiosity and patience. We are reminded of that in Lamentations 3:25, “The Lord is good to those who wait for Him, to the soul who seeks Him.” God is at work in us!

This Annual Report is simply a snapshot of how God is working in our midst as we wait and wonder and as we remain curious to *who* we are and *why* we are as a Shepherd community. I pray as you read this report you would be blessed in your faith and give God the honor for all that has happened in this place in 2023 and as we commit to growing our taproot of identity and ministry direction in the coming year. Also, continue to pray for the wonderful and committed ministry leaders as you read through their reports. Take the time to thank our ministry leaders for their service and continue to pray for them as the new year begins.

As we enter 2024, my heart’s desire and prayer is that we would be a community that seeks to be known for how we nurture each other and the world around us. That we are a community that seeks the well-being of our neighbors as we strive for justice for all people in God’s world. That we become a people of God so sure of our identity and our purpose that as we live into that identity it feels for us like the breath of God in our collective lungs giving us life and calling us out.

I am honored to be on this journey with you all as we work diligently for God’s Kingdom and wait faithfully to see what will grow.

In One Growing Peace, Pastor Renee

2023 IN REVIEW BY THE NUMBERS

214 Average Worship Attendance per Week

614 Individual Members **281** Member Households

13 Baptisms **12** First Communions **8** Confirmations

32 New Members **13** Funerals



Greetings friends,

Prayers this finds you all well and eager to dive into another annual meeting! We have had quite the year here at Shepherd of the Hills. While I ponder those things I hope to recap with you, one thread runs from event to event. None of these things took place in solo fashion. Meaning, not a single item on my list that I want to celebrate took place with only one person in attendance.

We gathered with the Preschool for Prayer Partners. We took time twice a month to gather for Coffee and Bagels. Vacation Bible School (VBS) grew, and Music Camp returned for another summer after a break through COVID. Even our Talents Unleashed initiative did not take place with individuals acting alone. We as a Shepherd of the Hills Community seek to gather whenever we can. We cling to the promise of Christ's presence when two or more gather in Jesus' name. I am humbled to be a part of many of these gatherings and the sharing of life that happens here.

This past October we stepped into a place of bold trust in the promise of provision. We went into our general fund and pulled out twenty \$100 bills and placed them into envelopes. These envelopes were then handed out to those who were willing to take on the challenge of trying to grow this initial sum of money. This was our Talents Unleashed project. The impetus for our project was rooted in the Parable of the Talents. The Parable of the Talents teaches that individuals should use and multiply their God-given abilities, as illustrated by a master who rewards diligent servants and condemns one who hides his talent. It emphasizes responsibility and proactive engagement in one's abilities.

Simply put, we are invited to use what we have to grow the kingdom of God. We encouraged folks to do something with the money that would hopefully grow it into a larger sum of money that we would then, in turn, invest for good in one of our ministry partners. Here are the results of our Talents Unleashed campaign: Of the 20 envelopes offered, 12 were taken. \$1200 was initially invested in the community to grow, and what was returned was nearly \$4500! The sums were earmarked for places like Ralph Reeder Food Shelf, Open Hands in the Midway, and 21 Roots Farm, all of which feed bodies.

After a few years away we saw the Preschool Prayer Partners return. It took us a while to get folks organized as requirements have shifted since we gathered last and a more thorough background check to protect our kiddos and adults needed to be conducted. Once those things were in place, we kicked it off in February and didn't look back. The kids and their caring adult bonded over a chapel time together and then an activity immediately following, once per month. In these spaces our preschoolers found another adult who gave a darn about them. They could share space and time together and in that form community. When their time was done, they'd pray and be on their way. We are kicking off prayer partners again and if you would like to join in the fun, let me know!

BRICE BLOXHAM
ASSOCIATE PASTOR



VBS and Music Camp were both profound successes. Our numbers grew as we saw a return of Music Camp. When so many VBS curriculums focus on our personal relationship with God, we have opted to continue to go with the use of the ELCA's World Hunger curriculum, as it's an opportunity to expand the faith focus of our youngest from one that is wholly on ourselves and more toward our neighbor. Tweaks will be made for this summer to make it more engaging and age appropriate for the younger kiddos. If you have kiddos ages 3yr old by 9/1/23 – 5th grade completed we'd love to have them join us for the fun June 24 – 27. You may notice this is about a month earlier than normal as there are so many other youth trips occurring this summer.

Relational ministry is a vital component of what I am called into at Shepherd of the Hills. From visitation to children's ministry, I spend much of my time in the bookends of life. Curating spaces to gather is another of my beloved pastoral areas. From Coffee and Bagels and events like Trunk N' Treat, friends, you seek out spaces to be together. We are better when we're together, after all. Coffee and Bagels and Trunk N' Treat are just two examples of how these important opportunities not only sustain us but also grow our faith and sense of community. You should join us sometime!

Looking forward – I am happy to announce that our Men's Retreat will be returning March 15 – 17, back at the Good Ol' Days Resort in Nisswa. We have much to look forward to in the coming year. I look forward to serving with you.

Found with you, In Christ,
PB

Throughout this fall I have been writing some new Confirmation lessons and each month the Magnificat or Mary's Song continues to surface as an important piece. This comes from Luke 1 and is Mary's response when Elizabeth tells her that she (Mary) is blessed for having believed the angel of the Lord. And Mary said, 'My soul magnifies the Lord,⁴⁷ and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,⁴⁸ for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant. Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed;⁴⁹ for the Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is his name.⁵⁰ His mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation.⁵¹ He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts.⁵² He has brought down the powerful from their thrones, and lifted up the lowly;⁵³ he has filled the hungry with good things, and sent the rich away empty.⁵⁴ He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy,⁵⁵ according to the promise he made to our ancestors to Abraham and to his descendants forever.'

This is a song of hope in the midst of difficulty and struggle. A young girl, without knowing what would happen to her, steps into the calling God has for her to bring hope for all who are oppressed and downtrodden. It is the most selfless and strong thing I have ever heard of anyone doing. It is an Advent song in preparation for the coming of Jesus and a reminder of why Jesus came and what we as his followers are called to do in this world. It takes my breath away every time I read it and I encourage you to read it through a few times.

As this song has surfaced throughout my research and writing in preparation for Confirmation this fall, it continues to remind me of who we are as the people of Shepherd, and all that we have accomplished this past year and look forward to in the years to come. Though, I do not compare it as what she went through is beyond comparison; it does cause me to ponder. This has been our first full year without any COVID-19 shutdowns since 2020. We have been relearning what it is to be community together, what it means to be in person for everything while making hybrid and online options available, and how to venture back out beyond our doors to care for and love our neighbor. Our year started off with constitutional changes to bring us in line with Minnesota nonprofit and not-for-profit requirements, and also in line with the ELCA's model constitution that is updated every three years as the world and ministry continues to change.

During Lent we not only welcomed back Lenten Soup Suppers and Confirmation Lenten Mentors, but we also had Lenten Member Panels where 3-5 congregation members joined the youth each week talking about what they do in the world, how they are connected to Shepherd, and what they hope for our youth. It was an amazing experience of community building and fun. We also spent time during Lent as a congregation reading *Everyday Contemplative* and expanding our engagement in contemplative practices as a whole congregation.

During the summer we spent time reading about and exploring disability justice through a book study, community learning, ministry moment, and engagement with 21 Roots Farm (one of our ministry partners who accompanies individuals with differing abilities). We also had 9 youth and 4 adults venture out to the mountains of Colorado where we spent 4 days hiking, camping, and exploring the mountains around Rainbow Trails Lutheran Camp and one day river rafting. It was an amazing experience, and I am so grateful for the wonderful camps and volunteers that help make opportunities like this available for our young people.



This fall we kicked off with ReFuel meeting weekly and Confirmation continuing through our 4-week rotation system that continues to work wonderfully! We hosted our annual Confirmation and Peer Ministry Retreat at Gustavus Adolphus College with 22 youth and 10 adults spending 27 hours together learning and having an amazing time alongside one another. Our amazing volunteers continue to make our youth ministry the success that it is!

Our fall also included our annual Fall Day of Service with visitors from the ELCA churchwide offices there to observe, video record, and interview our congregation for the next God's Work Our Hand's promotional materials. It was a successful Day of Service altogether, but after a spring and fall without being able to find offsite projects and an increase in demand for such projects, we made the decision to host one Day of Service in fall of 2024. We will spend time the other months finding opportunities for service engagement beyond our doors and beyond Sunday mornings. Your Joy Team has been planning and preparing so be ready for all to come in 2024!

As fall months turned colder, we kicked off our fall book study with *Faith Unraveled* by Rachel Held Evens, a deep dive into exploration around the structure and foundations of our faith. We hosted a ministry moment that gave us focus to the connections between justice issues and supporting the work of organizations like Ralph Reeder Food Shelf, an example that binds us so deeply with the core of our identity as people of faith.

Mary's song proclaims that Christ has come to throw down the powerful and uplift the humble of hearts. It states that God has filled the hungry with good things and left the wealthy no part. This song is about a balancing of systems and making space for all as God's love is not something earned or strived for but simply is. We as people of God have spent this past year rebuilding our community and continue to do so through our wonderful Advent Wednesday evenings and other community gatherings of the like. This gives us the ability to step out into the world and live as God has called us to: loving and caring for our neighbor. We have had many opportunities to learn and grow alongside one another in this and many small tastes of what that can look like through Day of Service projects and more. This year has brought us back to where we were just before the pandemic came to light. We are a people bursting at the seams ready to spread God's love through how we live our lives and care for our neighbors, and I am so excited for all that 2024 has in store for us!

As we look ahead, you all might recall that I will be starting 2024 out on sabbatical returning in mid-March. I am so grateful for our amazing volunteers and staff who are keeping all the areas of youth ministry, outreach work, and more moving while I will be out. I am also looking forward to all we will be doing upon my return. Diving deeper into social justice work, attending the ELCA Youth Gathering, building connections with our sibling congregation's new pastor, and so much more!

Thank you for the privilege it is to be your Deacon and to serve in this amazing community! I am so grateful for each and every one of you.

See you in church,
Sister Tashina



SHAUN HALLAND DIRECTOR OF MUSIC & WORSHIP

I have now been on staff here at Shepherd for 18 months. In this past year, I have worked hard to deepen relationships with both the staff and community of Shepherd of the Hills. I am absolutely thrilled to be doing this work in this community and continue to feel welcomed, supported and championed. It truly is an incredible working environment, and I am quite content in my work/life balance that this community provides. Highlights of my work over this past year include the following:

As shared in my interview, I believe my primary responsibility is the care of the worship and music life of the congregation. Ensuring that we are a congregation that worships with our full beings is of the greatest importance to me in this work. Working alongside a creative pastoral team, I believe we continue to bring our very best worship to God on a weekly basis.

We continue to offer worship that utilizes different musical genres, led by our beautiful organ as well as our Praise Band. We aim to expose both of our worship services (8:00 and 10:00) to the wide variety of expressions that music allows. I hope to continue to expand our repertoire of worship music to reflect the world around us and not just the music we've grown accustomed to over the years.

Serving to lead our worship are the ensembles of music volunteers that give so generously of their time to lead worship and provide music that uplifts the blessings of God. I am so grateful to our Praise Band, Celebration Choir, JuBELLation Bell Choir and Liturgical Singers for the hours of time spent preparing and leading worship with me.

I'm particularly proud of the growth of our Song of Shepherd series this year, with ten programs planned between Sep '23 and May '24. Up till now, we have been perhaps a hidden gem in terms of music performance spaces in the Twin Cities. My goal has been to shine a light on Shepherd as a venue for the finest Twin Cities musicians to share their gifts here. And the results have been positive with many new faces in our building remarking on the wonderful space we have. Your continued support, both in attendance of these events and financial contributions will allow this ministry to grow even further.

So many volunteers that don't lead musically ensure that worship happens on a weekly basis. Our Altar Guild, ushers, lay readers, sound technicians and communion servers all serve as volunteers. I'm so grateful for their willingness to serve and would encourage more to become involved in these vital ministries so that we all share the load.

I am grateful to work alongside a staff who respect my work and love to work in a collaborative style. Your pastoral team is the finest I've ever worked alongside (and I've served several churches). Pastor Renee, Pastor Brice and Sister Tashina are the ultimate servants of this community and give of themselves above and beyond to ensure folks feel connected here at Shepherd. Our office administrative team (Allyson and now Sigrid) provide the vital support needed to do the ministry of the church. I am grateful for their work to make my job that much easier. And we are so gifted with an incredible preschool program, led by Jilene so beautifully. The highlight of my week is doing music with our preschool students, who are spoiled by a wonderfully balanced program led by Jilene.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve. I absolutely love the work I do and am so lucky to serve in this community. I look forward to continuing to build upon our successes and finding new ways to engage our community through worship and music.

Soli Deo Gloria!
Shaun Halland

JILENE YLONEN PRESCHOOL DIRECTOR



Preschool is an outreach ministry of Shepherd whose mission is to *Reach, Ignite and Empower People for Jesus*. The preschool was formed to reach out to the community by providing a quality preschool education program within a Christian environment for children ages 18 months - 5 years old and their families. This past summer we were able to open the opportunity for elementary students to join us again; Ms. Shari lead a group of kindergarten - 5th graders.

Our dedicated staff provides learning opportunities that will prepare children for a successful start in kindergarten and beyond. Weekly activities include pre-math skills in counting, number identification, patterns, one-to-one correspondence and math vocabulary. Language and pre-reading skills are built with the use of stories, letter identification, sounds, and story sequencing. Activities that enhance creative expression through various art activities and dramatic play are also included. Our children enjoy playing outside on the playground, running on the hill, sledding on the hill, playing Mountain, Island, Stream downstairs in the big room, and much more.

Highlights from 2023

Full-Day Program –This year our toddler program doubled in size; we now have room for 14 toddlers. We also opened a young preschool classroom for 7 students. This classroom is intended for our older toddlers and our younger preschool students as a bridge between the toddler and preschool programs.

Summer Preschool Program – We were able to offer both full-day and half-day options this summer for children 18 months - 5th grade. We enjoyed Chapel Time, going to Waldoch Farm, having Wargo Nature Center out and learning about butterflies, water day activities, and visiting the Bell Museum.

Christmas Program – This year our preschoolers shared the story of *Christmas in our Jammies*. This story was shared with family and friends along with members here at Shepherd. We were very grateful to all the volunteers,



ALLYSON THIELE DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS



Well, I have officially been in my position as Director of Operations for one year now. Wow, that went by fast. I feel I have a handle on some things and then there are those events that happen and you find yourself turning around in a circle and realize you still have a lot left to learn. With God's grace I will continue to learn and grow in my position.

Below is a list of highlights from around the church home we call Shepherd of the Hills:

Changed from Cash Basis accounting to Accrual Accounting for financial reporting

We were not awarded the FEMA grant and have decided we will not pursue applying for that grant in the near future

Signed a contract with CSI OnSite for our IT needs

Applied for Employee Retention Credit funds.

In August we received our first quarter credit and are awaiting receipt for the remaining 6 months of funding from the IRS

Had to have repairs on the dishwasher, freezer, and garbage disposal

Have a new organ bench due to a generous donor

With Ritesh Patel's help we successfully negotiated a final payment for Securitas and closed this long-standing issue

Fix-It team now meets on the same day as Lunch Bunch (2nd Wednesday of the month) so the team can help set up tables for meal time

The accessibility ramp by Door G was leveled out and a new ramp was placed on the east side by the garage. Lynn Kapaun headed this project. Some costs covered by specific donations

Looking at the potential of getting solar panels installed on our roof. Many things to consider. Most importantly, we would have to replace our current roof (14 years old) before placement of panels could be considered

Wes Frank built new wooden benches to replace the old ones around the fire pit. Thank you Wes!

Finally settled with Comcast and their subcontractors on the hole in the back yard due to improper fiber optic cable installation. Wallraff Electric completed the cable work which required a day of all power being shut off to the building.

We also received funds for landscaping where the hole was but any of that work will be done in 2024 after dirt has settled over the winter. No more orange fencing in the back yard!

We obtained CD's through Old National bank

Thank you to our Property Team members who focus on our native gardens and outside spaces. There is A LOT of work that goes into maintaining and improving those areas

Our Sanctuary HVAC unit gave us trouble over the summer. It would not turn on when it was scheduled to in the app. Schadegg and Minnesota Controls both spent many hours trying to figure out the issue

Gathered a few estimates to determine what it would cost to have our parking lot resurfaced. This is something to be put on our wish list

Had strike plates replaced on Door A

The Labyrinth was dedicated on Sept. 10. Restoring the grass around that project will continue in 2024

The dumpster enclosure was reconfigured and rebuilt under the direction of Lynn Kapaun and Pete Evanson. Much appreciated.

Church Mutual, our property/casualty insurer, informed us that due to their tightened risk calculations they would no longer be insuring us. After much work we now have a new insurer but the cost has almost tripled

We said goodbye to Maria Miller, Office Admin, as she moved away. Thank you to Cathy Springhorn for filling in until we were able to hire Sigrid Nord. We are excited to have her as part of the staff

Gardens and grounds were cleaned up and prepared for winter

The 2024 budget was prepared and submitted to the Governing Board

We have a dedicated group of gentlemen that meet monthly to fix things around the building. Thank you to Chriss Latterell for leading that team.

I have a great group of people on the Property Team but could use a few more bodies on that group. I am blessed to have encouraging people surround me and help make my job more manageable.

Thank you for blessing me.
Allyson Thiele



JOY TEAM SUBMITTED BY LONI BAUMGARTNER

The Joy Team continues to help people serve others in our community. We work with Shepherd members who work at nonprofits to identify their most urgent needs and then build an activity or project around the need. Our goal is to have an activity or collection project each month.

This year Shepherd people have worked/contributed to Ralph Reeder Food Shelf, Bridging, Open Hands Midway, Blessing Tree, 21 Roots Farm, Rice Street Gardens, Crisis Nursery, Camp Noah, Paracords, thank you notes for police and firefighters in our community, singing at care facilities, grounds cleanup, clothing for veterans, and so much more.

Shepherd people continue to amaze us as to how generous they are with their time, talents, and donations. Well done!!!

Special thanks for our Day of Service events. It's a great time to share a meal, work together on projects, and get to know others in our community.

A special shout-out to people who have submitted Thrivent grants for Shepherd projects/events. Again this year, we have received over 100 grants at \$250.00 each, which helps to support all of the ministries in our fabulous Shepherd community.

There are always opportunities for people to help. Please let us know if you've identified a community need or can assist this ministry with your time or talents.



KIDAMALI PARTNERSHIP SUBMITTED BY TIM KANE

This year we provided scholarships to ten students who went to three different schools. Our Lenten offerings this year were used to replenish our scholarship funds.

We raised \$14,021 in offerings; thank you all for your generosity. We now have enough in our account to cover the remaining schooling for our current students.



Pictures of the students who are receiving scholarships. First picture: Mtera School – Faraja Tweve, Aron Luvanda, Joshua Myumbiwa, Junior Kiswaga. Second picture: Pommern School – Bryan Nkenja, Bless Kyando, Godlove Mwageni, Meshack Kisoma. Third Picture: Image School: Elizabeth Kibiki



This year brought the retirement of long-time Kidamali Pastor John Kisoma. A special retirement service was held for Pastor Kisoma recently with Bishop Gaville in attendance. We sent a recording of a blessing we had done for him at our services.

We look forward to the coming year when Shepherd members Tim and Leslie Kane will travel to Kidamali and visit with our partners in person.

OPEN HANDS MIDWAY OUTREACH SUBMITTED BY MARGE SALSTROM

Offering free programs to the guests that Open Hands Midway serves takes considerable financial resources. As a small non-profit organization, it is sometimes hard to raise awareness of the good work they are doing in the community. With that said, we hope you will consider financially supporting Open Hands throughout the year. We would like to ask you to spread the word about what we do at Open Hands Midway so others may know about us and consider supporting us as well. All of our programs are free of charge to the guests that are served.

2023 Volunteers Do Amazing Work with Open Hands

- Faithful volunteers who give of their time each and every week to serve at our meal and food shelf programs
- Faithful volunteers who pick up food at Kowalski's Market Grand Avenue store each week for our meal programs
- The chef who continues to amaze us with his culinary skills, ability to make such delicious meals that our guests enjoy, his generosity and his great personality
- A grant awarded from BIZ Recycling to begin the composting process of all food waste and food scraps
- A grant awarded by Neighbors United Funding Collaborative to purchase a new upright display cooler for use during our meal programs
- **Bell Lumber and Pole Company** for providing a challenge match of \$12,500.00 on Give to the Max day
- A successful Give to the Max day campaign which raised \$4,643.00!
- M Health Fairview who provided nurses to hold **FREE** flu shot vaccine clinics in September and October
- M Health Fairview who provided **FREE** monthly blood pressure checks for our guests
- Sponsors who supported our 1st Annual Community Night of Light - Feeding our Neighbors in Need event on Friday, December 1
- Countless individuals who purchased a light or lights in honor or remembrance of someone special to adorn our tree of light.
- Minnesota United Soccer Club for holding a 'winter wear' drive for us the week of December 4-8

The Open Hands website has an entire page dedicated to ways you can support their work and mission:

openhandsmidway.org

Shepherd is committed to providing volunteers to prep and serve meals to Open Hands. All volunteers need to sign up online at least one week in advance.

Go to the “ministries” page of our Shepherd website at **sohsv.org** and select the Open Hands Midway option to access the sign-up to volunteer.

RALPH REEDER FOOD SHELF OUTREACH SUBMITTED BY SUE OLTMAN

This past week, Shepherd of the Hills Church people delivered 489 pounds of food to Ralph Reeder Food Shelf and 248 toys plus 29 gift certificates in response to our annual Joy Christmas tree.

The Ralph Reeder Food Shelf and Community Resource Center is a Community Education program of the Mounds View School District. It was established in 1982 to provide a food and basic needs connection for any school district family. Our church is known for its generosity to Ralph Reeder, and that is thanks to all of you, Shepherd members and volunteers.

Putting 3 meals a day on the table has become more difficult for many people in the USA. The USDA found that hunger rose sharply in 2022. 44.2 million people lived in households that had difficulty getting enough food to feed everyone, up from 33.8 million the prior year. These families include 13 million children. This has occurred as food and housing costs have risen sharply.

It is difficult to put a face on those numbers, but I remember hungry kids in my classrooms when I was teaching. They had a harder time engaging in class, staying awake, and getting along with peers. I learned to keep granola bars and fruit snacks in my desk to tide kids over until students could eat lunch.

Thank you, Shepherd of the Hills, for sharing and caring about your neighbors.

Sincerely,

Sue Oltman



LYN MINISTRY

SUBMITTED BY JOAN KAPAUN & MARY EVANSON

“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself.” Luke 10:27

Mission Statement: To serve our neighbors (*members & non-members*) during times of unexpected physical life changes, to provide friendship, support, and assistance with non-medical needs.

Love Your Neighbor (LYN) caregivers do what someone would do for a friend...they are members of Shepherd of the Hills and volunteer to serve others by offering assistance during times of need.

We are excited to report that we have added some new members to our LYN Ministry team. If you are interested in learning more about LYN Ministry please feel free to contact Mary Evanson or Joan Kapaun.

We continue to remember those friends who are unable to come to church with a small monthly themed goodie bag that is delivered to them by some of our transportation volunteers.

Our caregivers assist people with services such as: meals, transportation, errands (groceries, prescriptions), visits, writing notes and sympathy cards and sharing the Sacrament of Holy Communion.

A huge thank you to all the volunteers that continue to make LYN Ministry happen!



	Transportation	Communion and/or visits	Errands	Note Writing	Phone Checks	Monthly Treat Deliveries	Lunch Bunch	Meals
Dec 2022	5	16	0	28	30	42 Christmas gifts	28	0
Jan 2023	6	7	0	29	43	16	25	0
Feb	2	4	0	28	28	16	30	0
Mar	2	7	0	27	27	16	29	0
Apr	1	11	0	25	25	Delivered 43 Easter Flowers	24	3
May	5	9	0	29	45	16	27	0
June	4	14	3	28	55	16	25	0
July	3	8	1	28	45	17	25	0
Aug	4	21	0	28	45	16	29	6
Sept	3	14	0	30	46	15	30	2
Oct	4	9	0	27	45	14	27	0
Nov	2	11	0	31	45	14 Also 30 gifts for Dec.	28	7

HOLY HAMMERS OUTREACH SUBMITTED BY PETE EVANSON

Holy Hammers™



Our first project this year was a rehab in Roseville. The house was made available to Habitat as part of a larger city-wide program to make affordable housing more readily available by purchasing homes that would need work in order to be placed on the market. This allowed the owner to move sooner into a different home with the work done by our volunteers vs a flipper.

The house had good bones but needed extensive upgrades to bring it up to modern codes. Insulation was added, the kitchen remodeled, and drywall fire barrier was added to the garage. Some exterior updates were needed as the three-season porch had fallen into disrepair. Like last year, we also were asked to wrap up items on a new house build to meet a planned closing date for the new family. So, a big thank you to all of our skilled helpers. We hope to continue again in 2024.

Holy Hammers also has the tradition of providing lunch for our workers. This year we used a Thrivent grant to feed 2 crews (about 25 people). Thank you to our lunch providers.

Lastly thanks to all of Shepherd for the support of this ministry as it has a lifetime impact on the lives of the families that move into the homes.







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