

# Shepherd's Voice April 2024



### An Earth Day Reflection By Laura Marx

Sister T invited me to share my thoughts on caring for creation and Earth Day. I was honored and hope that my passion for our Earth is catchy! As a teacher, I try to spread a passion for caring about Earth, as a family member and friend, I tend to drag folks out on adventures of hiking, waterfalls, canoes, and the like, and as a Shepherd member, I have had the joy of experiencing nature with the youth as well as enjoying the passion of our church's Care for Creation events and actions.

I reflected on the ELCA's Social Statement on Caring for Creation: Vision, Hope, and Justice as I pondered what to write about. What amazingness that we, as Lutherans, have Social Statements. And we, as Lutherans, have a social statement that reminds us that God made creation for us and assigned us as care-takers of it! I love this! So often caring for creation seems so hard. A quote from the ELCA social statement: "We are called to live according to God's wisdom in creation (Proverbs 8), which brings together God's truth and goodness. Wisdom, God's way of governing creation, is discerned in every culture and era in various ways. In our time, science and technology can help us to discover how to live according to God's creative wisdom." Hard, yes, but very empowering.

I think I tie Earth Day, creation, and God together in my mind because of several experiences I have had in the wilderness. I grew up camping and at the lake and surrounded by my Lutheran family who love nature. I worked at Wilderness Canoe Base in the BWCA as a young adult and got to bring a group of Shepherd youth there in 2016. Something about getting out in the wilderness



opens up our minds to really see God's creation as it was made and being away from the bustle of life allows us to reflect on ourselves in God's world. I found that somewhere between belting out "The Hills are Alive" with Nina Gourley, listening to Sam Magneson's long silly seagull stories, and watching these middle schoolers carry canoes heavier than Luke Welsh, there were amazing moments of closeness to God. I witnessed moments like this as a canoe guide long ago and still do today! When my kids were in middle school and high school, I attended several mission trips.

Sitting outside by the waterfalls and Lake Superior while in Duluth, something about that beauty and setting allowed kids to share and reflect on God in their lives. Lunchtime conversation, even with quieter or usually joke-telling kids, became reflective and raw. Nature just does that. The author Sigurd Olson reminds us: "In wilderness people can find the silence and the solitude . . . and through an experience of the eternal mystery, can give them a sense of the sacredness of all creation."

Happy Earth Day 2024! May we find time to look for a slice of nature this April and to remember that we are indeed the care-takers of creation!

### Shepherd's Governing Board

#### ... and His Spirit will gather them together.

~ Isaiah 34:16b

#### **April Worship**

We will have special music on Sunday, April 7<sup>th</sup>. A small ensemble of 16 singers pulled from the professional choir Kantorei will lead worship at both 8 and 10am that day. Kantorei is utilizing our space for rehearsals this spring and is providing this gift in return.

On April 21 we will be having a special worship service honoring God's Creation and Earth Day (that is officially celebrated on Mon Apr 22). We will hear from Tim & Leslie Kane about their trip to our mission partners in Kidamali, TZ to hear about what God is up to on that side of our planet. They will then offer a longer conversation opportunity on Tuesday evening Apr 23 at Shepherd.

#### **Sabbatical Preparations**

Plans for Pastor Renee's sabbatical leave are taking solid shape as she figures out who will do what in her absence. One of the fun components of the "What Weaves Us Together" clergy and congregational renewal grant is the commissioning of a resident artist to create a piece that represents our story and how we are woven together. Renee has partnered with artist Lisa (Skildum) Lenglet to draft and create ideas for this project. It will involve wall hangings that incorporate some of our written stories, Bible verses and the liturgical colors of our worship. Renee will be speaking about this in the coming weeks. The pieces will be created over the summer while Renee is gone and blessed in a worship service upon her return.

#### **Summer Choral Series**

We've also had enough interest to generate a summer choral music series. The Summer Singers will come July 27<sup>th</sup>. Lumina, a women's quartet, will be here on Tuesday, July 30<sup>th</sup>. The week will conclude with the Vox Nova Chorale, which is led by former Director of Music and Worship- Vicki Peters. They will perform on Saturday, August 3<sup>rd</sup>. All three of these programs will be free and open to the public.

#### Fill the Truck

Pastoral staff are working on another Fill-the-Truck Joy Team event that is slated to happen at the end of April. This event was held last year and was very well received. We are once again seeking to hold this event at Cub in White Bear Lake in partnership with Ralph Reeder Food Shelf. The goal is to fill a U-Haul with items needed most by Ralph Reeder. People will be encouraged to head over after worship to help fill the truck!

#### **VBS/Music Camp**

Registration for summer 2024 VBS and music/worship camp, to be held 6/24-6/27, is live. Shaun is planning a Music Camp that focuses on the elements of worship rather than a program like last year surrounding Christmas in July. This model will help the kids understand what the different pieces of our liturgy look like and why we do them.

#### **Spontaneous Seniors**

Hopefully beginning in April, Pastor Brice will be organizing a Spontaneous Seniors Part Deux. This pop-up ministry from the early 2000s was organized by Jim and Mavis Merrell and Lloyd and Shirley Carrigan. Functioning much in the same way, this expression will be an opportunity to participate in real and intentional fellowship outside of the times of Lunch Bunch, and Sunday mornings. The plan would be to rent a bus and go to a different destination each gathering. Possibilities could include a tour or attending an art exhibit. Preliminary feedback is very positive.

Your Shepherd Governing Board, Dave Webb, Chair Sally Peters, Vice Chair Robb Clasen, Treasurer Joshua Koepp, Secretary Ellen Holmgren Lynn Mears Andrew Springhorn Chriss Latterell Pastor Renee Patterson



## In God's Creation: What Do You WONDER about?



Renee Patterson Senior Pastor pastorrenee@shepherdshoreview.org

I do not know who to give credit for this, but I love the saying, "The world does not lack for wonders, only for a sense of wonder." As I prepare for my sabbatical trip to Iceland, and all of the outdoor wonders that it beholds, I am reminded that beauty can be found in many unexpected places. Iceland is called the land of fire and ice, a place of volcanos and snowstorms at the same time. A place of raw nature and beauty and I am looking forward to the wonder of it, snow and all.

Oddly, I have found myself missing the snow that we are accustomed to here in Minnesota this winter season (not the driving...just the snow!) I rather welcomed the snowflakes that fell on a recent March Sunday morning as I drove into church. They shimmered as they fell, and it was a beautiful sight! It is all too easy to miss the wonder that is right in front of us. We have a tendency to squander the amazing wonders God offers us including snowflakes in the early morning sky. It seems that all too quickly we move on to other urgent things like National Penguin Day, Mother's Day, and the like.

Think of what we're missing if we bounce from one event to the next without even a passing glance at what surrounds us: the marvel, the wonder, the quiet shimmer of snowflakes in the early morning sky of our over-stimulated, over-medicated, under-appreciated, self-obsessed world.

My faith calls me to live differently. It calls me to slow down, to make space and time for the wonder of God and God's Creation that surrounds us in all this beauty. But it takes intentionality and focus to experience wonder and stand amazed. It takes time to notice the Love that is contained in a budding tree or in sprouting grass or a shimmering snowflake. It really takes time to savor Love, and God sends Love in all kinds of wonderful ways. It is a challenge for us to recognize this as 21st century earth dwellers.

We have places to be and things to accomplish. We're behind on several things and feeling guilty for not taking on more. We're anxious about much, confused about much, and frustrated about much in ourselves, our families, and our world. Days roll into weeks, roll into months, and we only celebrate when the calendar tells us to. But occasionally the snowflakes fall in the wee hours of the morning to reboot our wonder of all of this beauty. I believe it is our call to make space to celebrate God's Creation...often. For when we do, we experience that we have a God of renewal and (re)Creation. A God that makes things new all the time.

Celebrating and thanking God for this Creation is important for us. It reminds us of this gift that we have been given and of our mutual call to care for all of it. Join us on April 21 for a special worship service in celebration of God's Creation as we recognize Earth Day (Apr 22). Come enjoy a day when we will join our voices together in praise to God from whom all Creation and blessings flow!

In One Earth Loving Peace, Pastor Renee Hello Shepherd Folks,

It is so good to be back among you all after 12 weeks away on sabbatical! As you may recall from our November newsletter sabbaticals are about intentional rest to reconnect with oneself and God as a way to curb or avoid burn out and re-establish oneself with the vocation they are called into. I am beyond grateful to be serving a congregation where this is taken seriously, and I was given the opportunity to take this sabbatical.

During my time away I had a few intentional things planned to help facilitate rest and reconnecting with God and myself. I received a grant through the Deaconess Community to cover the costs of a weeklong trip to Belize with a group of women in ministry to spend time exploring, relaxing, and in programming focusing on the work of Tricia Hersey. Her online ministry is called The Nap Ministry and her book and programming materials are called *Rest Is Resistance*. It was an amazing

experience where I learned a lot, met amazing people doing amazing ministry, and was truly able to begin spending time simply being. This act of simply being is a goal of many contemplative practices and gives space to not only hear your own thoughts but to connect with God without the need to worry about what is next on your schedule. With that I also spent intentional time with a Spiritual Director where I not only did work around contemplative practices but also around making space for connecting with the Holy Spirit and myself in the midst of the busyness of life. My third intentionally planned thing was taking pottery classes at a local art institute. There I not only met some wonderful people but found deep connection with the ancient art of hand building pottery which is done in a similar fashion today as it was done in Biblical times and that fascinates me beyond words.

I was also able to have lots of time for plans less structured. From lunch dates with my grandma, reconnecting with friends and family, to beginning remodel projects on my entryway staircase, a road trip to Winnipeg with friends, and some spur of the moment trips to visit or travel with family, much of my time was filled with deep connections and great amounts of space to simply be. My favorite experience was when my sister had her baby in early March. I was able to be there without needing to work around scheduling, to meet my nephew Roran, and spend time with his big brother and their amazing parents celebrating this amazing new life.

I would love to share more, as well as hear updates on your life. Be sure to stop me when you see me and let's catch up! Again, so grateful for this amazing opportunity and so grateful to be back with you all!

Easter Blessings as we lean into this season of life and growth in both our church and calendar year!

Much peace, Sister Tashina









Sister Tashina Good Deacon 651.288.2261 sistertashina@shepherdshoreview.org

Ecclesiastes 3:20<sup>20</sup> All go to one place; all are from the dust, and all turn to dust again.

In the heart of a forest, amidst the rustling leaves and towering trees, a group of men from our congregation embarked on a journey of service and discovery during our recent Men's Retreat, tucked into woods of the Brainerd Lakes Area Confidence Learning Center. As the chainsaws screamed and wood split, we found not only a sense of purpose but also a profound joy in embracing our role as caretakers of God's creation.

At Confidence Learning Center, a haven nestled in nature's embrace and designed for people with developmental and physical disabilities, we were reminded of the inherent worth and dignity of every individual. In the midst of this serene setting, our service project took on new meaning. As we chopped and cut wood, not

merely as a task to be completed, it became a labor of love and solidarity with our fellow human beings. We learned of a camp whose purpose was to provide an outdoor outlet for everyone regardless of ability. From the use of golf carts to all terrain wheelchairs, few places remain inaccessible to everyone who comes to their plot of land seeking refuge in nature.

We met Andrew, a staff person who oversaw the volunteers that first morning. He told us we'd be cutting and splitting wood that had been felled during a storm a couple years previous. He told us that straight line winds came through and knocked over more than 500 trees, some so big they were just now beginning to dry enough to be split.

With coffee in hand, because coffee is always a must when retreating, we made our way to the sprawling piles. We started the splitter, fired up the chainsaws, and away we went. Smiles always present and sweat beading even in the midst of the brisk morning, we filled three pallets of wood and developed deeper community.

In the laughter shared and the stories exchanged around the woodpile, we witnessed the transformative power of community. We found a shared and sacred space in our communal humanity and our desire to make a meaningful difference in the world. Together, we discovered that true joy is found not in isolation but in connection. Connection with one another and connection with the natural world that surrounds us.

Even in the simplicity of drying and decaying timber we are ever connected to the living and dying process. We remain inescapably reminded of this constant connection to creation and in doing so see our own part in all of that, stepping in and tending to what remains after a death in a system.

While our time at The Confidence Learning Center was limited to Saturday morning, it remains a consistent highlight of our time each and every year as we step in and help out where we're most needed. If you've ever thought about joining us, know we'd love to include you!







Brice Bloxham Associate Pastor 651.288.2264 pastorbrice@shepherdshoreview.org I love nature with the caveat that I usually enjoy it with lovely indoor options nearby. I'm not someone who camps. I'm not someone who fishes or hunts. I'm not someone who seeks out long nature hikes. I enjoy going to the lake but need indoor plumbing, electricity, wi-fi and air conditioning.

Despite my shortcomings, I find myself awed by God's creation. My mind immediately goes to nature when pondering God's creation, but God does far more than simply build the tapestry around which we live.

My faith is reinforced through creation in understanding that God continues to create to this day. We see evidence of God's creation wherever we go. New babies are born (and puppies)! Innovation continues to improve our world. We continue to evolve and grow as humans.

Life, of course, is busy and unpredictable. It can cause us to turn inward and forget to give thanks for the many blessings God bestows upon us. We don't often stop to take stock of what is happening around us and give thanks.

In my work, I encounter creation through new music and hymns. The hymn below, *In Sacred Manner*, was written 34 years ago by local poet Susan Palo Cherwien, who has since passed. Her words call us to stop and behold what may seem like the ordinary. I share these words as a call to action to sit up and take notice to what God continues to do. When we ponder the world around us, perhaps it causes us to be more mindful of how we treat God's creation.

In sacred manner may we walk upon the fair and loving earth, in beauty move, in beauty love the living round that brought us birth. We stand on holy ground. We stand on holy ground.

In sacred manner may we see the luminous and loving stars, with wonder and with awe behold their ever-new creative powers. The heavens show us God. The heavens show us God.

In sacred manner may we touch the suspirant and loving green, give honor and give gratitude for shade, for bloom, for gift unseen. The trees shall shout for joy. The trees shall shout for joy.

Soli Deo Gloria! Shaun Halland In sacred manner may we hear the pounding waves, the searing fire, the rushing wind, the singing night, the forest hymn, the loving choir. The morning stars shall sing. The morning stars shall sing.

In sacred manner may we live among the wise and loving ones, sit humbly, as at sages' feet, by four-legged, finned, and feathered ones. The animals will teach. The animals will teach.

In sacred manner may we walk upon the fair and loving earth, in beauty move, in beauty love the living round that brought us birth. We stand on holy ground. We stand on holy ground.

Text: Susan Palo Cherwien, b. 1953 Text © 1990 Susan Palo Cherwien, admin. Augsburg Fortress

Shaun Halland Director of Music & Worship 651.288.2254 music@shepherdshoreview.org



Being in nature tends to lead me to worship of the God that created the space I occupy. In the two creation stories in Genesis God gave humans dominion over the creatures of the sea, air, and earth and the plants and trees for food.

The word dominion is defined as sovereignty, control or dominance. I struggle with these definitions because to me they denote a ruler with a heavy hand. When God gave us dominion, he did not just hand things over and walk away. He was active throughout biblical times and remains active today in our lives.

The loving God that took a void and created sky, land, water, animals, vegetation, and humans declared all of that as good. By giving us dominion I believe He wants us to continue to keep all of that good. A better word for dominion in my book is stewardship. This word then makes me a caretaker of all He created.

To be a caretaker I have to consider maintaining and protecting that for which I have been given responsibility. In other words, I have to take care of it. History tells us that over time we as humans have not been the best stewards of the earth we reside in. The industrial revolution was a great thing but it also created toxins that have harmed the land and the sky.

The excess garbage we create has found its way into the water sources of this earth in various forms. And of course, the use of fossil fuels and urban sprawl all add to the issue. If you asked 10 different people the best way I could be a better steward of this earth you would get 10 different opinions on the subject that make you feel you are not doing enough. With that said, we all have areas in our life where we can shore up our care for the earth and the environment.

The one thing that has really spurred me on to be better is having an attitude of gratitude. I need a daily reminder that everything I have is a gift from God. When I say everything, I mean everything – and not just the material things. Yes, we may have cars and money and houses and toys. But how often when you see something beautiful do you thank God for the beauty and the eyes to see it?

What about when you get up in the morning, do you thank God for the new day ahead, with feet to stand upon and fingers that move? When you are grateful for something you go the extra mile to care for it in a manner that works best for you. I know for me I am thankful for God's creation and my functioning presence in it. As I go through my day I try to care for God's creation in a way I can. It might not be how others do it but it is my way and done with gratefulness. Go and be a good steward in your part of the world God has created!



Allyson Thiele Director of Operations 651.288.2255 Operations@shepherdshoreview.org

## Join us this Summer!

Summer registration along with registration for the 2024-2025 school year is now open. Please spread the word and invite families to come in for a tour.

> Full Day Toddler Classes: 18 months-32 months 31 months-3 years

> > Preschool Full Day: Full

Full Day Pre-K Classes: 4-5 years

Half Day Preschool Classes: 33 months-5 years

As we begin our new year of registration, I am reminded of our Preschool Mission Statement "to Reach, Ignite, and Empower children for Jesus Christ." We are blessed to work with new students and their families each year. We encourage them to do activities on their own, we challenge them to do new things, and we offer them new opportunities. If you are looking for preschool or know someone who is, please stop by for a tour.

In February, we began prayer partners with our preschool full day classes. They have loved the opportunity to get to know their prayer partners and do fun activities with them! We are so grateful to all of you for participating in this program with us!



Jilene Ylonen Preschool Director 651.288.2256 preschool@shepherdshoreview.org



NEW Parent's Morning Out

This summer we are going to offer Parent's Morning Out on Friday mornings from 8am-12pm. The cost per session, per student is \$30.00.

> Ages: 18months-5 years old

> > Dates: June 14 and 28 July 12 and 26 August 2 and 16

Each Friday will be a fun theme with activities, crafts, games, and songs.





# **Song of Shepherd**

### Save the Date for upcoming Song of Shepherd

### Thursday April 11 at 6:30pm

Former Shepherd of the Hills Organist and Director of Music and Worship, Joe Trucano will present an organ recital on our beautiful C.B. Fisk Organ.

Joseph Trucano, a Minneapolis based musician, serves as the Organist & Ensemble Director at <u>Westminster Presbyterian Church</u> and is the Artistic Director of <u>Skål Chamber Collective</u>. Prior to this, he was the Director of Music and Worship at Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church, Associate Producer of American Public Media's nationally broadcast <u>Pipedreams</u> program, and curator of Minnesota Public Radio's Pop Up Classical series.

Joe holds a Master's of Music Degree in Organ Performance & Literature from the Eastman School of Music in Rochester, NY where he was the recipient of the James B. Cochran award for excellence in performance. Prior to that, he attended Concordia College in Moorhead, Minnesota where he studied organ, cello and conducting and was the first student in Concordia's history to be awarded the prestigious Senior Honors award and orchestral appearance on two instruments (cello and organ).



**Recent Song of Shepherd March 14** 



# **Fill-A-Truck**

### Help Support Ralph Reeder Food Shelf

On Sunday, **April 28th, from 9:00 AM to 12:00 PM**, at the White Bear Township Cub Foods on Highway 96, we will again work to fill the truck with food items for the Ralph Reeder Food Shelf. A list of the requested food items will be available a few weeks before the event and in the bulletin the day of the event.

Cub Foods will have a display in the middle of the store with most of the needed items, some at reduced prices! Volunteers will be in the store and near the truck to collect your donations. Cash donation buckets will be available at church and at the store. Refreshments will be provided.

Please consider participating in this event. Donate your time, money and/or purchased food. We need assistance at Cub Foods and also at Ralph Reeder to help unload the truck at approximately 12:30-1:00 PM on Sunday. A sign-up sheet will be available in the narthex.

This is a fun event that means so much to those experiencing food insecurity. Invite your friends and family to join us in this great event!







Mounds View Public Schools

# Fill-A-Truck and Stock-The-Shelves



April 28th 9AM-12PM at Cub Foods in White Bear Lake Filling Ralph Reeder's Shelves!

# **Holy Hammers Spring**

### We need you!

### Join us for the 2024 Holy Hammers with Habitat for Humanity Build

The build is a duplex in Roseville. The build starts on April 15 and goes through mid-June. Shepherd's focus days are April 29 & 30 and May 16 & 17. Any open day is available if these focus days are not available to you. This is an amazing opportunity to connect with our mission partner and help do our part towards ending homelessness in the Twin Cities. Sign up here: <u>https://tchabitat.volunteerhub.com/vv2/lp/holyhammers</u>

You will need to update your waiver if you have helped before as these are being updated in 2024. Reach out to Sister Tashina or Pete Evanson with any questions.

# Holy Hammers<sup>™</sup>





Holy Hammers is celebrating 25 years!







# Youth Camp Registration 2024

Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church Youth Summer Camp June 23-28, 2024 Sun, June 23 11:15am- 12:30pm Mandatory Training

Monday-Friday 8:30am-5:30pm A Day Camp for 6th-12th Grade Youth (2023-2024 school year) Cost: \$100 VBS Support Team Only Cost: Free

### <u>Sign up & more</u> info HERE



-3rd ReFuel -10th ReFuel -17th ReFuel -24th ReFuel iames Food

Fun &

More

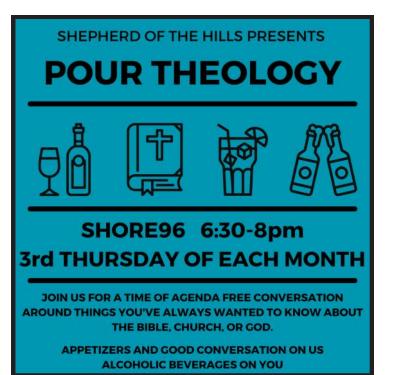
| 6:30- | :30- All 9th-12th Grade Youth Are Inv<br>Friends Are Welcome! |   |
|-------|---|---|
| 8pm   | Wednesdays  | Find us on Instagram:<br>@youthshepherd |



Project Week -24 - Presentation of Projects

-26-27 - Spring Retreat





### Weekly Bible Study:

Wednesdays at 1pm in room 238 and at 7pm on the back deck or in room 238. Join us to discuss the upcoming scripture text and learn together.



Mark your calendars for our fall Women's Retreat at Luther Crest Bible Camp November 8-10, 2024. More information coming soon!

Photos from our Men's Retreat—March 15-17, 2024



# **Help for 21 Roots Farm**

### **Upcoming Service Opportunity**

21 Roots Farm is located on a 21 acre farm in Grant Township. It is home to goats, alpacas, donkeys, cows, chickens, barn cats and a pig along with an apple orchard and gardens.

They provide agricultural activities for youth and adults with developmental disabilities.

Join us **Saturday, May 4th from 9AM-1PM** as we get the farm ready for summer. We will have a variety of projects for a variety of interests!

Some projects could include garden prep/planting, brush clean up, painting and some cleaning.

All ages are welcome! Wear comfortable clothes that you do not mind getting dirty.

Please RSVP by emailing the at 21rootsfarm@gmail.com so we can plan accordingly. The farm is located at 10361 110th St. N. Grant, MN 55082.

#### We hope to see you then!











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