



*Shepherd's
Voice*

MAY 2022



What a Wonderful World!
*Unless you've read the
news lately*



Renee Patterson
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When it was suggested at staff meeting that our May newsletter theme might be “What a Wonderful World” I thought “what a great idea!” But then I thought this choice may cause you to wonder if I’ve read a newspaper, watched the evening news, or checked my Facebook feed lately. The world seems anything but *wonderful* just now, right? Internationally, nationally and even locally people seem too-easily disgruntled. A couple of weeks ago I was in a grocery store when an elderly customer became unhappy with the portion of food placed in his take-out container. He argued, then launched into a verbal assault against the young man behind the counter, who did nothing to de-escalate the situation. There was name-calling and language more peppery than the dish in question! I began to wonder why the whole world seems so angry these days.

As I pondered that encounter (and all the current worldly strife) I wondered if there has ever been this level of discord in the history of the world, but then the Book of Psalms reminds me otherwise. In fact, many of the Psalms offer an almost unrelenting account of trouble, threat, and danger. However, in the midst of a very long string of embattled psalms enters the prayer of Psalm 8, a song-prayer to God of unabashed praise. An interruption of all that psalmody troubled-ness that begins and ends with the same exclamation: “O Lord, our Sovereign, how majestic is Your name in all the earth!” Psalm 8 has been a favorite centering prayer for me as it speaks the truth about God’s world...it IS wonderful! In this majestic psalm prayer, we hear how God is so great that the whole cosmos: heavens, moon, stars, are the work not of God’s hands, but of God’s fingers...fingers!!

Anne Lamott says there are three essential prayers: Help. Thanks. Wow. Psalm 8 is a *Holy Wow* prayer. The kind, Lamott says, that is “often offered with a gasp, a sharp intake of breath.” Holy Wow means we are not dulled to wonder as we marvel at this wonderful world in which we have the privilege to dwell. Together, the psalmist and Anne Lamott are onto something that is not only essential to human life, but also to our life of faith. We spend so much of our time noticing what is terrible and terrifying in all the earth. Sizing up so much around us that does not meet our expectations. We spend so much time looking down at or across at our devices like TVs, smartphones, iPads and computer screens that feed us the latest news cycle all too eager to pronounce the bad news first and last and in between, too. When this happens our sense of wonder, of Holy Wow, is overtaken by a sense of foreboding, even despair.

I am quite certain that *that* is NOT the life God has called us to live, but instead to a life of wonder and all kinds of great Holy Wow-ing. Seeing the greatness of God amidst the moon and stars of space, we are called to wonder out loud with the psalmist, “What are humans that You (God) are mindful of them, mortals that You *care* for them?” That statement alone should bring about a Holy Wow in you.
What a wonderful world and God we have my friends!

In Continued Holy Wow-ing,
Pastor Renee

Shepherd's Governing Board

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

~ Isaiah 34:16

Easter

Our celebration of Easter and the resurrection of our Lord filled us all with gratitude and joy. Not only was it our first Easter celebration without restrictions since the start of COVID-19, it was also our return to coming forward for communion, which repeatedly brought both pastoral staff and members to tears. Always a musical showcase, this Easter featured many of our favorites, including Lift High the Cross and Toccata from Fifth Organ Symphony. We enjoyed meeting and hearing our new Director of Worship and Music Shaun Halland as he visited worship and we look forward to July when he will be joining our staff.

Worship and Music

Mark your calendars for May 22 and come to celebrate music! We will enjoy the gifts of several special groups and congregation members. The final song for both services will be "What a Wonderful World."

Spring Season of Service

Our Spring Season of Service is underway with opportunities on site and with our mission partners. If you're looking for service opportunities after May 1, the work with our Mission Partners is ongoing. You can find out more and sign up on our website at [Mission Partners and Service Opportunities](#).

Parking Lot Worship Resumes

Outdoor summer worship last year was a hit for young and old alike. Children enjoyed playing on the lawn and the young at heart participated in the sun, shade and air-conditioned vehicles. On May 29th, come with your lawn chairs and blankets for the 10:00am service. Gathering time from 9:00am-10:00am will be outside as well.

Board Member Profile: Joshua Koepp

Sarah and I found Shepherd of the Hills in 2008. At that time, Braden was 2 years old with Cullen on the way. We came to Shepherd looking for a faith community that was small enough to make meaningful connections and large enough to offer a dynamic family program.

We connected right away with a small group of other parents with young children. As our children have grown, we have been blessed over and over by the love and ministry our boys received from Shepherd staff. Personally, Sarah and I both appreciate the welcoming spirit at Shepherd and the opportunities to serve both in our congregation and the community. Shepherd continues to feed my faith with opportunities to connect and deepen like Bagels with Brice, men's retreats and contemplative practices.

Q: Tell us about your service in Scouting?

Braden asked to join Cub Scouts in first grade, and I signed on as a Den Leader and then Cub Master for Pack 634. My career up until that time had been with children and families, but I had recently begun teaching at Minneapolis College. Scouting gave me a chance to continue working with youth, and I quickly realized I'd never seen a program as well developed as Scouting. Now, as Scoutmaster for Troop 9401, I enjoy camping with the boys and helping the scouts learn to lead their own program. It's an honor to guide some of the finest young men I've ever met toward lives of character and service.

Q: What's your favorite potluck dish?

I like meatballs and can never pass up the bars on the dessert table.

Your Shepherd Governing Board,

Dave Webb, Chair

Deb Kohen, Vice Chair

Elizabeth Kohen, Treasurer

Joshua Koepp, Secretary

Lynn Mears

Anna Grace

Sally Peters

Kristen Goligowski

Pastor Renee Patterson

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was in the beginning with God. ³ All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being ⁴ in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. ⁵ The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

⁶ There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. ⁷ He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. ⁸ He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. ⁹ The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.

¹⁰ He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. ¹¹ He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. ¹² But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, ¹³ who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.

¹⁴ And the Word became flesh and lived among us. —John 1:1-14b



Sister Tashina Good
Deacon
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Hello Good People of Shepherd,

Christ is risen, he is risen indeed, Alleluia! Spring is upon us and all the new life that bursts forth in this time is on the cusp of said new life. Just yesterday I was listening to the rain hit my window at home and upon opening the window it was the most amazing smell of fresh creation coming into being. Nothing quite like a spring rain to get one feeling in the mood for the season of Easter (which lasts until Pentecost on June 5th for anyone who is interested).

One of my all-time favorite scripture texts is the first 14 verses of the Gospel of John. It speaks to what Christmas and Easter mean to us as people of Christ. This crazy yet amazing concept is that our God took on flesh and shines a light in our lives that no darkness can overcome. That when Jesus came into being in the God/human form he was “What has come into being, in him is life, and the life was the light of all people.” It brings me back to the creation story in Genesis when God created everything with just a word here and a breath there. This is a truth that we hear and know but do not often take the time to think about: that everything in creation, from the greatest cosmos to the smallest micro-organism, bursts forth with life through God the creator’s desire for creation to be, through the breath of the Holy Spirit, and through the very existence of Jesus. It’s almost overwhelming to think about.

Yet, when you intentionally wake up early to watch a sunrise, or when you pause to watch a caterpillar crawling across the sidewalk, or when you hear the sound of the ocean against the shore, or when you catch a whiff of spring rain in the air there is something deep inside you that can feel this is the handiwork of God placed there for you to enjoy. Or perhaps it is placed there for you to wonder in awe or to bring a moment of calm within the chaos of your everyday journey. Scripture boasts of a wonderful world God has made for us to tend to and enjoy, to live in and experience.

My prayer for you, dear friends, is that you are able to pause and live in one of these moments today, even if for just a brief moment. Let the sun warm your face, go for a walk, pause while heading out to your car or the bus and take a deep breath in. Let the wonder and awe God has placed in creation stir you and may you know it was made this way **JUST FOR YOU!**

See you in church,
Sister Tashina



Brice Bloxham
Associate Pastor

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Happy May dear friends,

As I write this newsletter on April 21st the sun is shining and clouds have abated for the time being. Here's to hoping the trend continues into May.

For the last couple of months, I have been participating in a cohort through the synod. The Second Act Cohort is made up of 12 pastors and deacons from the St Paul Area Synod who are in their fourth – tenth years of ministry.

This two-year cohort is meant to provide a sense of sustainability in ministry, dive into scripture as a group led by Old Testament professors from Luther Seminary and St Thomas, build on spiritual practices, and engage with a mentor.

At the most recent cohort gathering, we discussed “awe” and how we experience it in our worship settings. We used three texts from the book of Ezekiel. The passages observed spoke about how the people saw God,

engaged with our creator, and the temple in which God dwelt. In these selections, we read about God's departure, absence, and return to the temple. Ezekiel is a prophetic book speaking through visions to a people in exile. While we do not have to worry about God's absence in our worship spaces, it did excite some thoughts I've had recently.

It's confession time, I am seldom emotionally moved in worship. It could be because I'm callous, but I think it has a little more to do with the fact that in worship I am thinking about what is coming next. If we find ourselves at the onset of the service, then scripture and children's message roll in next. But if it's after the sermon, then prayers are coming and I need to make sure what I have scrawled out will do... or if I need to add to them after hearing of needs before the start of worship. As a worship leader, I'm expected to be ready for the next thing in worship, anticipate any potential disruption and see how it can be mitigated so the best possible worship experience is provided for the congregation I'm called to serve, Shepherd. Something happened to me not too long ago in worship.

On Good Friday, I was planted in the front row where I typically dwell, seated to the left of Dave Nord our reader. He and Pastor Renee were reading about Jesus' last hours. They offered up a beautiful setting with intentional silence for reflection, then a verse sung by Elsa Keeler standing next to Jean Johnson at the piano. Truly, remarkably beautiful. I was sitting there taking it in. Then something happened. I ended up getting distracted by something and it took me to mental preparations of Easter, roles and responsibilities and whatnot. Out of nowhere I was startled back into the moment in a way that I hadn't been in the entirety of the service. Jack Anderson was in the back and offered his voice to the first verses of, “Were You There When They Crucified My Lord.” I was teleported from my pondering to this moment and that space and left in tears when we sang, ‘Oh sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble.’ I snapped out of my own thoughts and was brought back to the moment, and the stark reminder of why we were gathered there that evening: the weight of that time for us as sinners and knowing Christ's death was a direct result of our own shortcomings. I was rendered to a state of emotion that I don't typically experience.

Awe is an elusive thing I think for us. We get caught up in our day to day and are sometimes not able to take the time and space we need to witness the amazing things that our Creator has done for us, to truly appreciate our beloved communities. We are a part of a “wonderful world” set aside for us to use as we care for our neighbors. As you go throughout May, may you find spaces of awe that surprise you.

Found with you, in Christ,

PB

Good morning, beloved Shepherd family!

This month's newsletter page is written by one of our own – Jennifer Gravdahl. As you may know, Jen grew up at Shepherd and now is involved with the music ministry here. I asked her to sing a solo on May 22 – “Celebration of Music Sunday” – and she sent this letter.

This is her love letter to you – for the community, the support and the love God sends powerfully through this congregation.

Thanks, Jen – and thanks, Shepherd!



Jean Johnson
Interim Director of Music and
Worship
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From Jen Gravdahl:

When I was a little girl I had a lot of ideas about what I would be when I grew up. An author. An astronaut. Far and away the craziest dream I had was that I would be a singer. This was crazy because I believed I had WAY worse than average stage fright. When I would try to perform music in public, I would shake so badly that it would be visible and people would comment on it afterward. Which as you can imagine really helped the whole shaking situation in future attempts. It wasn't until after I started singing at Shepherd that I would learn that I don't actually have greater than average stage fright. In fact, I have normal stage fright and an attention tremor that is aggravated by adrenaline.

I've told you before that when I was asked to do this, I initially said no. It is only by the grace of God, the love of this congregation, and a series of miraculous events that I managed to learn to use this gift and I continue to sing in front of the congregation today. I received amazing love and support from my shepherd family. You have been the hands and feet of Christ for me. I experienced Christ's hands lifting me up and carrying me when you lifted me, when you carried me. I experienced Christ's love in every thank you, every kind word, every prayer. I felt Every Prayer. Especially in the first year. I can never thank you enough for this gift that you have given me. I can't imagine my life without this now. I can't imagine never getting to sing in this band with my daughter.

Later this month I will be singing a song called Look What You've Done by Tasha Layton. When I heard this song for the first time. I knew I had to sing it for you. The refrain goes like this:

*Look what You've done, look what You've done in me
You spoke Your truth into the lies I let my heart believe
Look at me now, look how You made me new
The enemy did everything that he could do
Oh, but look what You've done*

God has done so much work in me. He is always working in each of us. And most of it goes unseen. But this work up front in the band is very visible. While I am singing this song and giving you a tangible demonstration of just one thing that God has done in me Through All Of You, I invite you to think about what God is doing in you right now. Who is He using to do it? Who is carrying you? Praying for you? Encouraging you? Who is God's hands and feet for you today?

Love, Jen

“What a Wonderful World...”

As I began to think about this month’s Voice newsletter theme, my first reaction was that it really isn’t a wonderful world right now. Let me tell you why that was my initial thought and how that has changed.

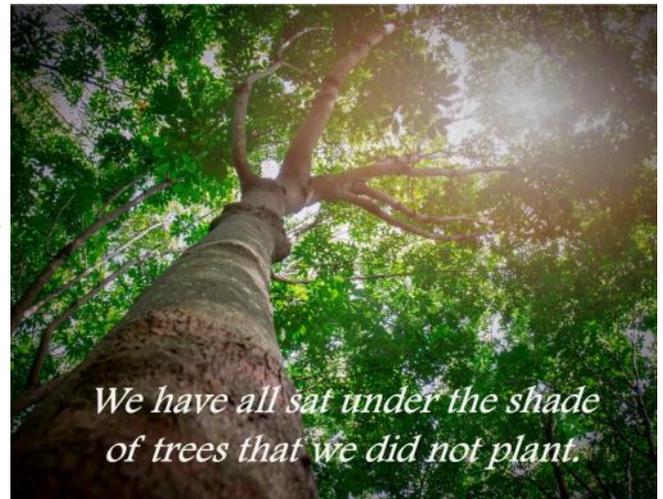
See, a war ravaging Eastern Europe and people being displaced, hurt, victimized, and killed is horrific to me. The current state of politics and the lack of empathy for each other hurts my heart. The lack of respect for our environment, and more not being done more quickly to remedy so many issues also causes me much angst. So, I begrudgingly started to compose this article.

The pastoral team helped me to see some of the good and wonderful things at Shepherd in this current moment: We have a hardworking staff that is dedicated to furthering Shepherd’s mission, a preschool that is joyous with little ones that enjoy learning, and a facility and grounds that are something to be proud of. Touching on that latter one of Shepherd’s building and grounds, have you visited our space lately?

We have an amazing backyard that is the perfect place for mediation and prayer. The rain gardens and their surrounding areas are a special project maintained by many volunteers. We have bees, butterflies, hummingbirds, an occasional fawn and a 14-point buck that all enjoy these grounds too. I encourage you to take some time to enjoy the wonderful environment that surrounds this community and perhaps find a new location for you to gather your thoughts.



Miranda Oliver
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Shepherd has many revenue streams besides offertory giving? Some of the other avenues of income are: preschool tuition and registration fees, facility use rentals, fundraisers, grants, stocks, and required minimum distributions (RMDs) from retirement accounts.

How can one support Shepherd financially?

- Mail in your offertory envelopes
- Give [online on our Giving Page](#)
- Text To Give - Simply send a text with the word GIVE to 651-412-7495 with the amount you would like to contribute.
- List Shepherd as your beneficiary
- Transfer Stock to Shepherd

With any questions regarding giving, please contact [Miranda](#).





Jilene Ylonen
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This month's theme of "What a Wonderful World" got me thinking right away about what a wonderful world it is here at Shepherd's Preschool each and every day, with this amazing group of children and their families. Every day the excitement they show as they come into the building is contagious! They are excited to share with us the Twins game they attended, to see their friends, be the first here, find out what we're having for lunch, to play outside, show us their new stuffy, or share with us their BIG news.

We as teachers experience the world of excitement that our students experience every day. They love watching the birds outside the classroom windows, they enjoy making art projects and discovering a new skill they learned, they enjoy playing with new sand toys in the sandbox, watching the ducks in the pond, going for nature walks and finding new treasures. They LOVE experiencing and celebrating God's world around them!

May spring be filled with excitement for you all
as you witness God's creation waking up all around us!



Youth Ministry

@Shepherd

Stay informed via
Instagram: @youthshepherd



ReFuel in May

ReFuel will be hosting a Lock-In on May 20 9am-May 21 8am as our May Gathering. All 9th-12th Grade youth are welcome to join in the fun as we close out this school year

- We will have pizza
- We will have movies
- We will have a service project
- We will have fun!
- You CAN stay up all night.
- Friends are welcome!



Confirmation in May

6:30-8pm Wednesday evenings at Shepherd

FOCUS: Daily Prayer

4 Lesson with Parents

11 Small Groups

18 End of the Year Party

Join us July 17-23 for Summer Youth Camp!



Shepherd Youth

SUMMER CAMP 2022

JULY
17-23

Sun 10am-12:30pm Mon-Sat 8:30am-5pm
A Day Camp for 6th-12th Grade Youth.
Cost: \$100 | VBS Support Team Only: Free



Engaging in: Peer Ministry Leadership Training, Multicultural Youth Justice Cultural Training, Shepherd VBS Support Team, Service-Learning Events, and Fun Outing Activities.



ADULT *Faith* FORMATION

**Stay Tune For
These Updates
Coming Soon:**

- Fall Women's Retreat
- Upcoming Book Studies
- Summer Forums regarding Shepherd Constitution Changes at our 2023 Annual Meeting

Weekly Bible Study:

Wednesdays at 1 pm IN PERSON in the Narthex and 6:30pm via Zoom or IN PERSON in the Youth Room on the lower level. Join us to discuss the upcoming scripture text and learn together.

SHEPHERD OF THE HILLS PRESENTS

POUR THEOLOGY



SHORE96 6:30-8pm

May 19 - June 16 - July 14

**JOIN US FOR A TIME OF AGENDA FREE CONVERSATION
AROUND THINGS YOU'VE ALWAYS WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT
THE BIBLE, CHURCH, OR GOD.**

**APPETIZERS AND GOOD CONVERSATION ON US
ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES ON YOU**



"I see trees of green,
red roses too
I see them bloom for me and you
And I think to myself...

*What a
wonderful
world!"*

-written by George David Weiss
and Bob Thiele (1967),
performed by Louis Armstrong



**Mark your calendars for May 22!
Come to Shepherd to celebrate our
Wonderful World through music!
We will enjoy the musical gifts of
several special groups
and congregation members.
See you there!**



**Free and Open To All
Rain or Shine**

**Landscape Revival:
Oakdale**

**Saturday
June 4, 2022**

9 am - 1 pm + Food truck!

**NEW LOCATION
Oakdale Fire Station #1
5000 Hadley Ave N,
Oakdale**

**Landscape Revival:
Shoreview**

**Saturday
June 11, 2022**

9 am - 1 pm

**Shepherd of the Hills
North Parking Lot
3920 Victoria St N,
Shoreview**

See reverse for maps; for more info go online to

tiny.cc/OAKDALE

&

tiny.cc/SHOREVIEW

Shepherd of the Hills

Spring 2022
Season of Service
April 24 & May 1



Some photos from our Season of Service Kick off on April 24th





Exciting News from the Love Your Neighbor (LYN Ministry)Team!!!

In looking back over my notes, I realized that I first wrote this article for a summer newsletter in 2021 when we had resumed some of our LYN Ministry activities.

Unfortunately we had to stop all our services for a while ***BUT (drum roll please!)*** we are so excited to let you know that our LYN Ministry opportunities have resumed!!

We are once again providing transportation to medical appointments, errands, meals and sharing the sacrament of Holy Communion.

Our plan is to resume Lunch Bunch on Wednesday, June 8th.

What does that mean for our church family??

If you need rides to a medical appointment...

If you need a few meals while recovering from surgery...

If you can't get to Sunday worship services and you would like to receive the sacrament of Holy Communion...

If you need a little help with grocery shopping or running errands (picking up prescriptions, etc.)

If you have a request that's not listed....

Just call ***Joan Kapaun (651-491-8046)*** or ***Mary Evanson (651-766-6851)*** to talk about how a LYN member can serve you.

If you already are a caregiver or if you would like to know more about our ministry, just call ***Joan Kapaun (651-491-8046)*** or ***Mary Evanson (651-766-6851)*** to talk about how you can serve our Shepherd family. Thank you!

Twin Cities Habitat for Humanity & Holy Hammers.

Members and friends of Shepherd continue to be involved in building several homes in the St. Paul area.

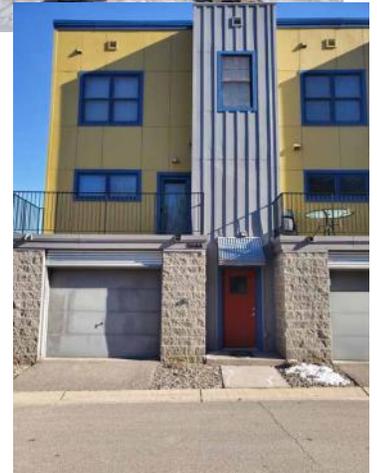
Holy Hammers Habitat for Humanity Project for 2022:

The Holy Hammers coalition of churches is helping build affordable housing again this year. We will be working on two projects sequentially. The first is finishing up a new home already underway and the second is the rehab of an existing home.



Dates: April 25 – May 20 (weekdays)
Time: 8:30 AM to 3:30 PM – Home Building
Location: 1297 Woodbridge St, St. Paul
Build Type: New Construction - finishes
Map: <https://goo.gl/maps/Ept9THG7pyynJXcW9>

Dates: May 23 – July 1 (weekdays)
Time: 8:30 AM to 3:30 PM – Home Building
Location: 564 State St. Unit A, St. Paul
Build Type: Rehab
Map: <https://goo.gl/maps/bB3Ar1E6et6qab4N8>



Registration:

Registration at the online site will be open for any Holy Hammers volunteer to sign up for any day in the project. **However, we encourage volunteers to try first to sign-up for one of the days assigned as a focus day for your congregation if one of those works with your schedule.** That way folks are more likely to find others they know at the site and will help us distribute volunteers evenly across the project.

The focus days for Shepherd are:

May 16, May 27, June 29* (*Women only)

Contact Pete Evanson for more information.



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@Shepherd of the Hills Church
Shoreview Minnesota



Our App