

# April 2016

# The Staff

## **The Newsletter of Shepherd of the Glen Lutheran Church**

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**Sunday Worship & School 9:30 AM**

By next month this time, I'm hoping that I'm going to be able to show you some new baby pictures—my sixth grandchild is due in April. There are plenty of us here at Shepherd of the Glen who know the joy of being grandparents (and we do all have pictures—just ask any of us to show them off!). At this point, what I know about this grandbaby is that he is a boy, he has strong determined kicks, and, from the looks of my very pregnant daughter, he's going to be a big, sturdy kid. He'll probably be a red head, since my daughter, her husband, and his big sister all have red hair. I can imagine holding that new baby in my arms and I can picture him—but I also know that no matter what, and no matter which number grandchild this is, I'll still be taken by surprise at just how much the reality of him being here will knock my socks off.

Now, I've done this grandmom thing before so it's not like I don't know what's coming—but I just know that when once again, when I'm holding the spankin-new child of my child, my heart will be as astounded at the miracle as the first time I held a grandchild ten years ago. It shouldn't be a surprise at this point, but I know it will be when I see him.

The Bible tells us that Jesus' followers were astonished when they saw him after his resurrection. It shouldn't have been a surprise, but somehow it was. He had told them repeatedly that he would rise from the dead, but despite knowing, they didn't believe until they met up with him.

We have a faith that based on surprises! That's exciting—we never quite know what God has in store except that we know our loving God always cares for us. But at the same time, it's not comfortable—we like to be able to know we can count on results or a predictable path. But the Christian life has never been that way.

For the past few weeks, we've been engaged in a study of Acts to help us envision what the future of Shepherd of the Glen will be and will be quite literally writing the next chapter. We've

studied the experiences of those first apostles who got started as a sect of Judaism in the temple in Jerusalem **and** those apostles who started up a mission church in Glenwood. One group began 2000 years ago, with tongues of fire on their heads as they gathered, the other just 40 years ago, holding services in a school.

Neither group of apostles had a nice, neat “manual” to go by. They hit a lot of challenges along the way as the culture changed, people had to move, traditions became cumbersome or impossible, and old ways of life they had become comfortable with morphed into something unfamiliar. What it meant to be a follower of Jesus had to adapt to changes that were sometimes embraced eagerly and sometimes forced upon them. There were challenges from without and from within. The good news about Jesus spread not from a series of successes but in fits and starts, and often as a result of what looked like tremendous setbacks or catastrophes. There were surprises both welcome and unwelcome. But God was always at work.

Jesus’ crucifixion took his followers by surprise—they thought they had found the conquering messiah described in scripture—but he died like a common criminal. Then three days later—he showed up alive and again took them by surprise. Just when they thought they had their religion, their place in the world, even life and death figured out, they were taken by surprise. God is a God of ever evolving re-creation-- and of surprises-- and I think faith is more about waiting expectantly for what God will do next than about knowing what will happen next. What will happen here next? We can’t know the future, but I think we can count on God surprising us. It seems to be God’s MO.

Meanwhile, we keep walking forward in faith. We gather, we pray, we serve, we work together and most of all, we remember that we are a people who know that God loves us enough to send his son to live and die along with us and powerful enough to bring life where you’d never expect it—where it surprises you!

Many of us have heard that familiar story of the empty tomb and the risen Christ for many years and we know it well. But my prayer for you this Easter season is this: that no matter how many times you’ve heard the story or how well you know it— may it surprise you this year. I pray that it astounds you and just knocks your socks off.

Surprise! Christ is risen! He is risen indeed, Alleluia!

Peace to you, my sister-and-brother apostles,

*Pastor Susan*

## Church Council Meeting held on March 15, 2016

The meeting was called together with prayer and a reading from *Reclaiming the "L" Word* by Kelly Fryer.

Minutes from the February 9, 2016 meeting were read and approved with meeting date change to March 15.

### Financial Reports:

The **Financial Secretary's report** was distributed.

For the week ending February 29, 2016:

Pledged Envelope Offerings:	\$10,750.15
Actual Envelope Offerings:	\$10,462.00 (97.3%)
Loose Offerings	\$306.00 (year to date)
Building Fund	\$200.00 (year to date)
Gifts and Memorials	\$1,540.00 (as of February 29)
	\$3,165.00 (as of March 13)
Miscellaneous Donation	\$1,134.54 (Boy Scouts)

The **Treasurer's report** was distributed.

February Envelope income: \$5,464.00

Year to date total income: \$12,390.54

Year to date expenses: \$10,018.91

Gifts and Memorials donations were from family and friends of Herb Becker. Linda K. has sent tax reporting statements to all non-SOTG donors. SOTG donations will be reflected in their annual giving statement.

Financial reports were accepted as given.

Additional information (Linda Krause):

Resource Book—the Resource Book is being completed. Eventually it will contain all of our contacts and contracts/service agreements with vendors and other pertinent Church information.

The Profile and Call Committee met with Linda Chinnia on March 14. Linda Krause is the Chair. The committee will be meeting weekly.

**Board of Christian Education:**

A Coffee Fellowship was held on March 6. The next Coffee Fellowship will be on April 3. We are at the beginning stages of organizing a Prayer Shawl group. Anyone interested in knitting or crocheting is invited to join the group to make Prayer Shawls. Please see Peggy Handler for more information.

All slots for Sunday School help with the lessons have been filled.

**Board of Trustees Report:**

Dennis replaced a light dimmer switch.

We continue to receive a bill from Verizon. Tim K. has contacted them and they will remove the charges.

**Board of Deacons Report:**

Hymn Selection—Alice C. has completed the list of Congregational favorite hymns. Hymn selection will be from this list which Alice C. will keep up to date. Hymns are selected approximately 1-2 months in advance in order to give the organist time to prepare the hymns.

The Deacons continue to investigate the possibility of hiring a Church Secretary. Dennis Hunt prepared a spreadsheet which detailed an estimated annual cost for a Church Secretary at various salaries.

Anne, Alice and Linda K. have been working very hard to organize tasks such as the Bulletin, hymns, weekly Worship Leaders, etc. to ensure seamless worship services to the congregation.

We brainstormed some possible task streamlining ideas.

**Pastors Report:**

Pastor Susan continued the Bible Study/Visioning Acts 29; the Lenten suppers at Smokin' Hot; and sending out the Weekly Hello. She met with various local church leaders (St. Andrews, Calvary) to discuss possible collaborative ministry; she will soon be going on the rotation of pastors at the St. Dymas prison ministry in Sykesville; and continues to meet with members and make Pastoral Care visits.

Pastor prepared for and conducted funeral service for Herb Becker. Prepared for and gave Gavin Hein First Communion.

The Synod Assembly will take place on June 2-4, once again in Ocean City. We can send two delegates to the Synod Assembly. Please let Pastor Susan know if you are interested in being one of our delegates.

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**Many thanks** to all who participated in the **Acts 29 Bible Study!** We write our “Acts 29” chapter on March 20 after worship—but it is, by definition a work in progress. Please “reply all” to the next weekly e mail hello to share your ideas on where our church has been, where we are, and where God is calling us to go.

A big **THANK YOU** to all who donated canned food, cash or backpack for our **Route 1 Lenten project.**

**Sunday April 10:** This second Sunday of Easter features one of the most important scriptures in the New Testament: the Apostle Paul’s Damascus Road experience, where he encountered a bright light and a whole new direction for his life. At the time of the sermon, I’ll be asking you to share your “Damascus Rd.” experiences—a time when God set you in a new direction. Yes, Lutherans can give testimonies! Please read the second reading for the day ahead of time (Acts 9:1-20). It’s exciting stuff—you won’t want to put the book down after verse 20!

## **LOOKING AHEAD**

**Sunday May 1:** We will welcome **Deacon Doug Wittich to speak with us about the ministry of the Order of St. Stephen.** “Deacon” has many definitions—and we have wonderful, dedicated “deacons” here. This is a distinct and growing ministry of the ELCA where lay people are consecrated to the Order and formally set aside for ministry with many of the same functions as ordained pastors. This ministry is both ancient (described in Acts ch. 6) and very new. Since it’s a “first Sunday Fellowship” time, you will have the opportunity to ask Deacon Wittich about the OSS and their ministry.

### **Prayer Shawl Ministry**

You are invited to share Jesus' love through your participation in a Prayer Shawl Ministry at Shepherd of the Glen. We will be crocheting or knitting shawls with prayers for the recipient as we are crafting the shawl. The shawls will be given to persons who can benefit from the warmth of the shawl for comfort and healing.

A group will meet to begin and/or work on crocheting or knitting shawls once or twice per month. Members will take their shawl home to work on it between meetings. If you would like to participate but don't know how to crochet or knit, basic instructions can be taught during a meeting. If you are interested please see Linda Hunt or Peggy Handler

NOTE-To be successful the group will need a supply of soft washable yarn. If you have leftover yarn we would welcome donations.