

† The Rod and the Staff †

A monthly publication of Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church, Whitehall (Egypt), Pennsylvania

† July/ August, 2024 †

Vol. 2024 Issue 4

PASTOR'S CORNER

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

On June 8, 2024, I had the pleasure of attending the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America Assembly. During the Worship time at the Assembly, we sang a song that is true for each one of us.

The song's refrain went like this:

"Mine is the Church where everybody's welcome. I know it's true 'cause I got through the door. We are a dazzling bouquet of every kind of flower. Jump in the vase, 'cause we've got space for more." (Bret Hesla)

How true these words are – we are accepted into God's Family. It does not matter what our sins are! God forgives us when we turn to Him and repent of our sins and each one of us are welcome to the Family of God – the Church.

Come and join us as we Worship this loving God who forgives and welcomes us in spite of our frailties and failures. Come and Worship with us. Jump right in!

In Christ's Love,

Rev. James W. Schlegel
Pastor

2024 NE Synod Assembly By Carl France

Saturday, June 8, Pastor Schlegel and I attended the Annual Synod Assembly of the ELCA in Wyomissing, PA. hosted by Atonement Lutheran Church.

The meeting was opened by the Atonement band that had guests clapping their hands for joy and jumping in place and in the aisles.

Bishop Christopher deForrest led a worship service that started with singing "All Are Welcome". Songs and prayers were displayed on several video screens. Communion was given at various stations throughout the sanctuary.

The theme for this year's assembly was "Hungry For Life-Together in Christ" "God's Work Our Hands." As God's children, God wants us coming together in unity sharing his love by helping and supporting others. Pastor Samantha Drennon spoke of the original inhabitants of North America with stories of transformation

Worship was followed by Plenary Session 1. The opening order was given along with announcements, introductions and a warm welcome. Nominations and voting of members to represent us at the ELCA National Assembly took place. Brief stories of transformation, "Gods Work, Our Hands" were given. Reports of the Bishop with reference and counsel occurred. A presentation ensued by Keynote speaker, ELCA representation Marie Anne Sliwinski, director of building resilient communities. 14 years experience in humanitarian and

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This issue of The Rod and The Staff is given in honor of my daughter Michelle Lesinski's July birthday. Love, Mom and Dad Gantz



Cont'd from page 1, 2024 Synod Assembly

development programs, she brings the ministries of ELCA together with Lutheran disaster responses to help fight and conquer world hunger.

Sliwinski spoke of world hunger and the struggle for existence along with how ELCA has been overcoming the battle for 50 years. So that the audience could better relate and visualize this presentation, she shared a slide show illustrating solutions for hunger. These pictures depicted some of the 64 countries where ELCA is making a vital difference. The United States is also included in the 64 countries.

During Plenary Session 2, a brief film of "50 Years of ELCA World Hunger" was shown. Reports of the Vice President and Synod Council were reviewed along with reports of the secretary and treasurer. A presentation of next year's budget and compensation guidelines were given.

Adjournment of this year's Assembly featured a closing worship and sending.



**9 AM, SEPTEMBER 1
BLESSING
OF THE BACKPACKS**



Please Keep in Your Thoughts and Prayers:

Don Afflerbach, Ronald Anglestein, Louis Albright, Carol Ayers, Bill Beidleman, Renee Beidleman, Alana Bird, Caitlyn Blocker, Ann Borell, Jacob Braido, Angie Breasure, Bonnie Brown, Janice Buckwalter, Dawn Carter, Verna Chandick, Beth Cherry, Charles Church, Jim Church, John Clark, Donna Cordier, Kay Deutsch, Nancy Dietz, Beverly Fekula, Gloria Fischl, Donald Fister, Bill Fonzone, Annie Frack, Kay Fronheiser, Maxine Gantz, Teri Gerny, Jeff and Carol Gilbert, Ethel Harakal, Brandon Heichel, Betty and Lamont Hontz, Barbara Horvath, Stephen Hunara, Becky and Kyle Jones and son, Adam, Alex Katana, John Kotze, Rev. Gary Langensiepen, Rev. Elizabeth Langensiepen, Scott Lazarus, Mary Kay Lewis, Diane Masonheimer, Lucy Messinger, Carole Mickley, Doris Miller, Richard Miller, John Mikovitz, Christopher Moakley, Keith Moyer, Kevin Moyer, Russell Myers, Cathy Nelcoski, Ana Nolan, Sandra Phillips, Andrew and Pat Randinelli, Scarlet Randolph, Chris Reardon, June Reifinger, Raymond Reifinger, Jean Reinert, Jan Reinik, Dee Renner, Steve Roman, Jean Roth, Kathy Roth, Tonie Rothdeutsch, Mary Royer, Ruth Saadi, Mike Saraceno, Irene Scherr, Gloria Schmidinger, Bonnie Schneck, Greg Scott, Helen Sefcik, June Sell, Dave Shaffer, Kenneth and Joan Shook, Jim Shope, Sue Sill, Sean Skelonis, Sherry Smith, Dave Spengler, Alison Steventon, Anne Stibitz, Rosemarie Thrash, Cathy Weave, Bill and Anna Weighknecht, Jennifer Wentling, Patricia Wong Chong, Donna Smith Wirth, Daniel Yakubecek, Mary Zader, Bob Zarrinski



HARVEST HOME, SEPTEMBER 22

Psalms 95:1,2,6

O come, let us sing unto the LORD: let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation.

Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving, and make a joyful noise unto him with psalms.

O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the LORD our maker.



YOUTH GROUP NEWS

On April 21, we hosted our **Penny Party**. We had over 100 people in attendance and made a profit of \$3,447.28! Thank you to everyone who donated food, money or items for the game. And a special thank you to those who came to play! We hope you had a great time!

The 5 youth members who will be attending the Youth Gathering in July, along with Lisa and Pastor, participated in the **Synod's pre-Gathering event** on April 27. They joined youth members and adults from around the Synod as we came together in workshops, games, escape rooms and other activities in preparation for the Gathering.

On May 17, 3 youth members came to help **build and create decorations for our Scuba VBS** program. They made coral, jellyfish, oysters and anemone and we can't wait to see them all over the church during VBS!

Our clothing drive ended on June 15. This was our largest amount of clothing and shoe bags ever! Thank you to everyone who donated and especially to everyone who helped us empty the rooms and load the truck. It was hot and heavy work, but we got it all done and had a good time in the process. We collected **11,695 pounds** and we made a profit of **\$2,288.45!!**

In just a few weeks, we will be leaving Pennsylvania and heading to the Bayou and **the ELCA Youth Gathering**. We are so excited to have the opportunity and can't wait to check out the swamps, enjoy beignets, and gather with thousands of other youth to explore how we are Created To Be-brave, free, authentic, disruptive disciples. Please keep Luke, Steven, Paige, Dylan, Grace, Drew, Lisa and Pastor in your thoughts and prayers as we finalize our plans and head to New Orleans the week of July 15-21!



Thank you for your support of the youth group. We are truly blessed to be a part of such a supportive and generous congregation!!



Come and join us in September as we restart our *Bible Study* programs.

On Monday, September 4th 10 AM
On Wednesday, September 9th at 10 AM

**Place the dates in your calendar
and come and join us.**



THE WORD OF THE LORD...

Summer— a time to relax, a time to rest, and a time to renew our relationship with our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Yes, a time to secure our relationship with Jesus. As we slow down our daily pace and as we reflect upon all our many blessings, may we take the time to strengthen our relationship with Jesus by worshipping Him and praising Him for all His many gifts.



Daily Reflection

Each day - Monday through Thursday there is a Daily Reflection on Shepherd of the Hills Facebook page as well as our website. Each day at 7 PM there is a presentation of God's Word as well a reflection on the Scriptural passage and ends in prayer. Join us each day. Weekly Devotions are available as an email. Please contact the church office if you would like to be added to this mailing.



Blessing of the Animals



September 8, 9 am

Please bring a lawn chair.



YARD CARE VOLUNTEERS NEEDED



Doesn't it feel good when you come to church on a Sunday and the church grounds look beautiful. Your help is needed. Sign for a two-week period to keep the church flowers beds, walkways and perimeter free from weeds as well as deadhead the geraniums. You choose the day and time you work during the two-week period you volunteer. Please sign up outside the church office or contact Gary Easton at 484-988-0520.



The July Times News Advertising is sponsored in honor of my granddaughter Abby's birthday by Rozelle Higgins.



SOTHLC Signs of Our Faithfulness		
<i>"For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also"</i>		
End of Prior Month (as of May 31, 2024)		
Monthly Stewardship Income: \$18,620		YTD: \$85,463
Monthly Operating Expenses: \$16,744		YTD: \$81,358
Stewardship Income includes Benevolence Envelopes:		
May \$344	YTD: \$1,787	(Budget for 2024—\$18,439)
May Electric \$537	YTD: \$9,314	
Capital Campaign Balance \$48,888		Pledge: \$34,950



Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church gratefully acknowledges memorial donations given in memory of Doris Weaver.

CHURCH COUNCIL



SUMMER MEETING—AUGUST 7, 7:30 pm

2024 CONGREGATION COUNCIL

- President: Keith Moyer
- Vice President: Tracy Tacker
- Secretary: Melissa Sassaman
- Treasurer: Colleen Ehst
- Financial Secretary: Carl France
- Learning Deacon: Lisa Kroboth
- Service Deacon: Tara Henry-Morrow
- Support Deacon: Gary Easton
- Youth Deacon: Drew Null
- Worship Deacon: Denise Smith
- Witness Deacon: Norma Hrozencik
- Youth Representative: Alivia Deemer
- Rev. James W. Schlegel, Pastor



COMMITTEE Update

THE SERVICE TEAM

We are collecting funds to help our own members of Shepherd of the Hills who may temporarily find themselves in need of assistance. “Assistance Fund” envelopes are in the narthex for your contributions to this worthwhile fund.

Reach out to those in need—Support the Food Pantry—list of needs

- ⇒ Pancake mix and syrup; Soups: vegetable, chicken noodle, chicken rice and tomato
- ⇒ Cereals: all kinds; Pasta: rotini, farfalle, frisilli, penne, and elbow (no spaghetti)
- ⇒ Crackers: saltines, Ritz, cheese crackers

Toiletries They are in need of shampoo, toothpaste, bars of soap and deodorant. Second Harvest supplies the Food Pantry with the many food needs, but does not include toiletries.

We are also collecting soap and shampoo for the ministries of *Pathways and Daybreak*.

Please reach out in God’s love to those in need. *God’s Work, Our Hands*. Please place your donations on the table in the narthex.



THE WITNESS COMMITTEE

The church has an e-mail. Our e-mail address is pastor@sothlc-egypt.org Each day there will be a devotion of scripture and prayer sent from the church via e-mail. If you have access to e-mail and would like to receive the weekly devotion, please e-mail us your request with your address.

THE WORSHIP COMMITTEE

Morning Prayer: Every Thursday at 9:30 AM . We are meeting in the church sanctuary to pray to the Lord. Come and join us as we gather together in the House of our Lord.



A special thank you to the volunteers who planted the geraniums and did the mulching. Thank you to all who purchased geraniums. Our church grounds look great!

To Norma A. Hrozencik and Robert G. Klock for donating their May Thrivent Choice Dollars to SOTHLC.

From Maxine Gantz: My church family is so thoughtful! I would like to thank everyone for their prayers, cards and visits during my recent knee replacement surgery. A special shout out to the Prayer Shawl Committee Ladies who made the beautiful shawl and to our Pastor who brought it to me.

From Diane Masonheimer for all the prayers and the beautiful Prayer Shawl she received.



CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR 2024 GRADUATES

Andrew Baer graduated from Parkland High School..

Evan Easton graduated from Parkland High School.

Steven Hanson graduated from Whitehall High School and will be attending L.C.C. and majoring in psychology.

Jessica Kroboth graduated from Lebanon Valley College with a doctorate in Physical Therapy.

Luke Melicharek graduated from Parkland High School.

Brent Moyer graduated from Easton High School.

Crystal Desch (Reinert) has achieved a Masters Degree in Accounting.

Tristan Thomas Reinert graduated from E. Stroudsburg University.

Tori (Victoria) Tully graduated from Lehigh County Technical Institute May 29 and Whitehall High School June 3.

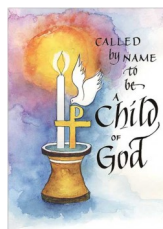
Troy Tully graduated from Universal Technical Institute on December 8 and is employed as an Auto Technician at Bethlehem Ford.

YOU HAVE LEARNED MUCH AND GROWN GREATLY. MAY GOD GUIDE AND DIRECT YOU TO A BRIGHT AND BLESSED FUTURE.



On June 9, 2024, we welcomed **Rev. Manuel Stivers** into our church family here at Shepherd of the Hills.

We wish Rev. Stivers God's many blessings.



*On May 26, 2024, we welcomed **Lucy Alexis Murray** into our church family by the **Sacrament of Baptism.** We wish God's many blessings on **Lucy, her parents, CJ and Taylor** and her **sponsors, Zach and McKayla Hill.***

On May 19, 2024 we joined in celebration with **Grace Sophia Smith** who affirmed her baptism.



May 24, 2024 Wyatt Matthew Fritz and Nicole Marie Dodge were united as one. We wish Wyatt and Nicole God's many blessings as they continue their lives as husband and wife.

The SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHERS of Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church are recognized for their year of faithful dedication to the youth of our church. The efforts of these individuals helps to insure the future of our church.

THANK YOU TO OUR TEACHERS:

- | | |
|-------------------|--------------|
| Lisa Kroboth | Paige Tacker |
| Steven Hanson | Tracy Tacker |
| Tara Henry-Morrow | Hunter Weiss |
| Carla Myers | Kay Weiss |



No experience necessary. All lessons and guides are provided. All you need is a willingness to share God's love with our children. See Lisa Kroboth if you are interested.



July 28—10:15 AM under the pavilion at Egypt Community Park.

The service will be followed by our picnic at noon.

The church will provide the hot dogs. Please bring a salad, dessert or casserole to share. REMEMBER to bring chairs and something to drink.



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Pastor Schlegel will be in New Orleans, July 15-21, at the ELCA Youth Conference. If you need Pastoral Care, please call the church office.