

† The Rod and the Staff †

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

✠ September/October, 2025 ✠

Vol. 2025, Issue 5

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ASTOR'S CORNER

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

September is a month where we begin again some of the learning opportunities at Shepherd of the Hills. The Sunday School year for 2025–2026 will begin on September 7th. We will also begin our Confirmation classes and begin a brand new year of Bible Study sessions. The Word of our Lord is alive and available for all at Shepherd of the Hills. We also have other opportunities to experience the Word of our Lord—each week there is a daily devotion distributed to many members by e-mail and Daily Reflections on God's Word can be found Monday through Thursday at 7PM on Facebook and on our website. The Bible or the Word of our Lord is important to each one of us as children of God.

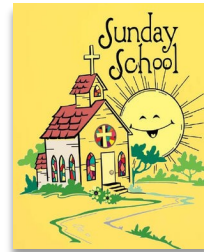
Shepherd of the Hills provides many opportunities to experience the Word of the Lord. Come and Hear His Word on a Sunday morning, and on Thursday morning at our Morning Prayer Service, come and read and discuss His Word in Sunday School and Bible Study. May the Word, the Bible be your favorite book in your life.

In Christ's Love,

Pastor Schlegel

Sunday School resumes on Sunday

September 7th 10:15 AM!



Everyone is invited to come and learn of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

We have Sunday School classes for all individuals from 3 years old through adults.

Please come and join us as we learn together.



We are celebrating Youth Month in the month of September. We are rejoicing in our Lord for all the many young people who are a part of our family at Shepherd of the Hills. During the month of September there will be envelopes on the table in the Narthex for our Youth Memorial Fund. This fund sponsors our youth to the National Youth Gathering. Please support our youth at Shepherd of the Hills.

This issue of The Rod and The Staff is given to the Glory of God

By Paul and Carol Balascki.

This issue of The Rod and The Staff is given in honor of the 25th wedding anniversary of Michelle and Jason Lesinski by Mom and Dad Gantz.



I AM THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE

Lamont Hontz entered into eternal rest on August 4, 2025. We commend Lamont into the hands of Almighty God. We offer our sincere sympathy to his family.



Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church gratefully acknowledges memorial donations given in memory of **Daniel Yakubcek** from Susan Avate and from Cheryl and Dennis Sommer.

Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church gratefully acknowledges memorial donations given in memory of **Lamont Hontz** from Sharon and Blair Stuart, from Rose Stuart and from Beth Marth.

Celebration
of the
Sacrament of Baptism



On August 3, 2025, **Harrison Joseph Schrupp**, the son of Joseph and Rebecca Schrupp, was welcomed into the Family of God through the Sacrament of Holy Baptism. We wish all of God's many blessings on Harrison and his family.

On August 10, 2025, **Sophie Claire Murray**, the daughter of Christopher and Taylor Murray, was welcomed into the Family of God through the Sacrament of Holy Baptism. We wish all of God's many blessings on Sophie, her family and her sponsors, Justin Selepe and Abby Selepe.

On August 17, 2025, **Keh'Lani Milan Bermudez**, the daughter of Arnaldo Bermudez Cruz and Shakira Jaquez, was welcomed into the Family of God through the Sacrament of Holy Baptism. We wish all of God's many blessings on Keh'Lani and her family.

On August 17, 2025, **Banks Greenly Fragnito**, the son of Bryan Reut and Gabrielle Fragnito, was welcomed into the Family of God through the Sacrament of Holy Baptism. We wish all of God's many blessings on Banks, his family and his sponsor, Emily Wehr.

On July 19, 2025, **Shane Austin Smith and Kerlly Stefania Barba Vasquez** were united as one. We wish Shane and Kerlly God's many blessings as they continue their lives as husband and wife.



On August 3, 2025, we welcomed **Shakira Jaquez** into our church family at Shepherd of the Hills.

We wish Shakira God's many blessings.



- A.** Betty Ackerman, Janice Abelovsky
- B.** Carletta Bartholomew, Michelle Beck, Bill Beidleman, Rosalie Beidleman, Kayla Belzecky, Carol Bennecoff, Alana Bird, Marianne Blocker, Ann Borell, Jacob Braido, Angela Bressler, Sandra Bressler, Bonnie Brown, Janice Buckwalter, Pat Budd, Mark Buresh
- C.** Janice Campbell, Lisa Carl, James Caulder, Charles Church, Nick Cihylik, JoAnn Coppola
- D.** Nancy Dietz, Pierre DeRagon, Donna Detweiler, Vanessa Dotter, Kelly Durst
- E.** Kimberly Eastep
- F.** Beverly Fekula, Gloria Fischl, Donald Fister, Diane Flahart, Patrick Foran, Annie Frack, Paul Frack, Kay Fronheiser
- G.** Maxine Gantz, Ronald Gerlach, Teri Gerney, Sally Gibson, Jeff and Carol Gilbert, Amber Greiss, Rebecca Gross
- H.** Shelley Hanson, Mike Hart, Dot Hartman, Brandon Heichel, Al Herman, Betty Hontz, Barbara Horvath, Elsie Huber, Susan Huber
- K.** Alex Katana, Bill Kiefer, Scott Knauss, Kathy Koch, Gerald Koenig, John Kotze, Keith Kramer, Russ Kramer, Zoe Kuchera, Barbara Kuhns, Adele Kunkle, Bruce Kunkle
- L.** Scott Lazarus, Wayne Lazarus, Baby Lily, Haden Long
- M.** Shirley Mack, Dan Markulics, Heather Markulics, Diane Masonheimer, Mia McCleary, Denise Mensinger, Debbie Messinger, Carole Mickley, Richard Miller, Christopher Moakley, Mason Moriarty, Tara Morrow, Tiffany Moss-er, Kevin Moyer, CJ Murray, Russell Myers
- N.** Cathy Nelcoski, Ava Nolan, Aiyana Nederostek
- O.** Russlene Ouldcott
- P.** Barbara Pearlman, Mary Peters, Sandra Phillips, Karen Plesher
- Q.** Linda Quinn

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COMMITTEE PAGE

THE SERVICE TEAM



Whitehall Copley Hunger Initiative

- ⇒ Toiletry items: baby/adult diapers, feminine products
- ⇒ Soups: chicken noodle, tomato, vegetable, creamed
- ⇒ Breakfast items: oatmeal (pouches or boxes), pancake mix, syrup, cereal
- ⇒ Starches: macaroni and cheese, ravioli, Spaghettios, canned/boxed potatoes, 1 lb bag rice
- ⇒ Canned fruit: low sugar or light fruit syrup
- ⇒ Miscellaneous: gravy, peanut butter, spaghetti sauce (can/plastic jar), tuna, pet food

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

Visit our web page at www.sothlc-egypt.org or our Facebook page to find out what's happening at our church.

Our email addresses are pastor@sothlc-egypt.org and secretary@sothlc-egypt.org. Daily devotions are sent out by e-mail. If you would like to receive the devotions, please e-mail us. A Daily Reflection is posted on the church's Facebook page Monday through Thursday at 7 PM. It includes God's Word, a reflection, and ending in prayer.

THE FINANCE COMMITTEE Assistance Fund

Our Church has an Assistance Fund to help those in our congregation who need assistance. There are envelopes in the Narthex to give toward those in our church family. As we end the Summer and begin the Fall and Winter, the need is more prevalent. Please give so those in need in our Church Family may not go hungry or cold.

THE WORSHIP COMMITTEE **MORNING PRAYER:** Each **Thursday morning 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.

CONGREGATION COUNCIL

Tracy Tacker, President
 Jan Masonheimer, Vice President
 Melissa Sassaman, Secretary
 Drew Null, Treasurer
 Carl France, Financial Secretary
 Mary Lou Young, Witness
 Gary Easton, Support
 Tara Henry-Morrow, Service
 Lisa Kroboth, Youth
 Denise Smith, Worship
 Tara Henry-Morrow, Learning
 Dylan Rapchak, Youth Representative

Rev. James W. Schlegel, Pastor

Prayer List– Continued from Page 2

R. Scarlet Randolph, Barbara Rapchak, Corey Rapchak, June Reifinger, Reynold Reifinger, Jean Reinert, Aida Reinhard, Debbie Reinhard, Jan Reinik, Betty Remaly, Wayne Remaly, Dee Renner, Austin Roth, Toni Rothdeutsch, Mary Royer, Carolyn Ruch
S. Ruth Saadi, Johnny Sabo, Michael Saraceno, Nancy Scheidt, Irene Scherr, Gloria Schmidinger, Bonnie Schneck, Michael Schwentner, Joan Sears, Corey Seese, Helen Sefcik, June Sell, Jim Shope, Joan Shook, Carol Siegel, Grace Siegel, Sue Sill, Sean Skelonis, Denise Smith, Leroy Smith, Sherry Smith, Grace Smith, Helene Sterner, Jerry Stewart, Donna Strawbridge, John Strawbridge
T. Rosemarie Thrash, Susan Trumbauer
U. Paul Unger
W. Cathy Weaver, Bill Weighknecht, Jennifer Wentling, Jim Wick
Y. Malachi Yool
Z. Mary Zader, Bob Zarrizski
The Family of Lamont Hontz



Our Harvest Home service is September 21st. We are looking for mostly non-perishables. (These can be brought to the church any time before the 21st.) We will be putting a list on the Kiosk for fresh items that we are looking to use to beautify the sanctuary.

There will be someone available to receive perishables Thursday the 18th from 6 to 8 PM, and Saturday the 20th from 8 to 11 AM. Please mark (name or initials or put a note in if they are bagged) any fresh items you would like to take back home with you. These fresh/perishable items will be available to pick up after the 9 am service on the 21st.

If anyone is interested in helping to set up the display, please contact Denise Smith 610-554-4500.



To acknowledge the important role that pets play in people's lives, **we will have a special service to bless these important animals September 7 at 9 AM.** This will take place on our front lawn. (Remember to bring a lawn chair.)

All animals are welcome, provided they are friendly and under physical control (leash, harness, bridle or crate).

In case of inclement weather, we will meet in Fellowship Hall.



- ☺ **to Donald Gantz, Diane Masonheimer and Tammie Tacker** for donating their July Thrivent Choice Dollars.
- ☺ **to all who donated life-saving blood** during the July 2nd Whitehall Lions Club/Miller-Keystone Blood Drive.
- ☺ **to those who donated their time and/or baked goods** to the July 15th Community Meal.
- ☺ **to DBMT Transport** for their generous donation of bottled water.
- ☺ **from Pastor Schlegel:** *Thank you for all the cards, well wishes and prayers I received when I broke my foot. May God richly bless you.*
- ☺ **from Jim Shope:** *I would like to thank everyone at Shepherd of the Hills for all their prayers during my recent hospital stay and recovery. Thank you, Pastor Schlegel for all your visits to the hospital and Fellowship Manor. A very special thank you to the Prayer Shawl Ministry for the beautiful prayer shawl.*
- ☺ **from Whitehall Lions Club to Church Council:** *for allowing the Whitehall Lions to host a Miller-Keystone Blood Drive at your church on July 2nd... We ended with 20 units of life-saving blood! And because each unit can potentially save up to 3 lives, this is enough to save up to 60 lives! Thank you to everyone who participated!*
- ☺ **from Whitehall-Coplay Hunger Initiative:** *Thank you, as always, for your generosity in providing food for those in need in Whitehall and Coplay. And thank you for holding a free Community Meal on July 15th.*



As the children begin a new school year we will bless their backpacks. Please bring all backpacks to our worship service.

BLESSING OF THE BACKPACKS AUGUST 31ST AT 9 AM

Pastor Schlegel will be on vacation **September 14-20**. If you are in need of pastoral care during that time, please contact the church office.



"O GOD OF CREATION, THANK YOU FOR THE AUTUMN SEASON. THANK YOU FOR COOL, RAINY DAYS AS WELL AS DAYS WHEN THE SUN SHINES WARM UPON OUR SKIN. WE EMBRACE THE SCENT OF FRESHLY FALLEN LEAVES OUTSIDE AND THE AROMA OF PUMPKIN SPICE WAFING THROUGH THE STORES AND OTHER PUBLIC PLACES. THANK YOU FOR THIS GLORIOUS TIME OF YEAR. AMEN.



Join the Choir



We are trying to get a choir together to sing for the November and December holidays.

We will sing on the Sunday before Thanksgiving, November 23, 2025. Rehearsals will be on Wednesday November 5, 12 and 19th from 7:00 to 7:30 PM. We will sing again on the Sunday before Christmas, December 21, 2025. Rehearsals will be on December 3, 10 and 17th from 7:00-7:30 PM. We will meet in the choir room. No previous choir experience is necessary; all are welcome. Hope to see you then.

Any questions, call Margie Nelcoski 908-399-5707.



COME AND JOIN US! LEARN THE WORD OF THE LORD

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

Monday, September 8 at 10:00 AM

Wednesday, September 10 at 10:00 AM

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

Back-to-School Blessings

-  Remember to stick close to Jesus this year through prayer and reading your Bible.
-  Color your school year bright by letting the light of Jesus shine through you.
-  Write HisStory in your life this school year by doing what Jesus would do and making wise choices.
-  Use this notebook as a Gratitude Journal. For each day of school, write down things you are grateful for.
-  Use the bookmark to mark your favorite Bible story or favorite verse.
-  Use this Back-to-School Prayer Journal to write out your prayers to God.
-  Enjoy this sweet treat and remember that Jesus makes your life sweet!

SOTHLC Signs of Our Faithfulness

"For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also"

End of Prior Month (as of July 31, 2025)

Monthly Stewardship Income:	\$13,125	YTD: \$120,145
Monthly Operating Expenses:	\$17,856	YTD: \$125,059
Stewardship Income includes Benevolence Envelopes:		
July	\$613	YTD: \$2,825 (Budget for 2025—\$19,399)
		YTD Paid \$4,850
June Electric	\$394	YTD: \$6,909
Capital Campaign Balance	\$78,374	Pledge: \$34,950

The monthly Treasurer's Report is available at the top of the stairs.

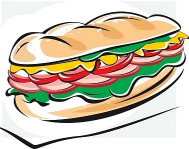
Several Ways to God's Word

We are offering several ways to God's Word. Monday through Thursday at 7 PM there is a Daily Reflection on the Church's Facebook page which includes God's Word, a reflection, and ending in prayer. We also have a Daily devotion via email, which is sent out almost every day. If you would like to receive the email, please contact the church office.





There will be a **youth group meeting** on September 7 at 11:30 am in Fellowship Hall. Any youth in their second year of confirmation or older should attend. Parents should plan to attend for the first hour. Lunch will be served.



Hoagies will go on sale on September 14. The cost is \$6 for a hoagie and \$4 for a sandwich. Delivery will be October 5 after the service.

Our gift card sale will begin October 5. Order forms will be available on the table by the stairs. They should be filled out and turned in with a check by November 30. Or you may go to www.raiseright.com, log in and use the code **L9A248FA33862** to order online. All orders must be received by November 30 and they will be ready for pickup by December 14.



Our nut roll sale will be held October 19 with a delivery date of November 16. We are waiting for confirmation from Country Cottage about prices and flavors, which will be determined in September.

To order hoagies and/or nut rolls or to have a gift card order form mailed to you, call Lisa at 610-533-0161 or email sothlcyouthgroup@gmail.com.



Beginning June 23rd and running through June 27th, 17 children and 23 volunteers participated in TRUE NORTH VBS. They did some cool experiments. They learned that we can trust Jesus when we wonder, when we feel alone, when we feel powerless, when we need hope and when we need help. They ate an assortment of Northern Lights/ Alaka themed snacks and played some fun and wet games. They watched for God and shared their God sightings. Overall, TRUE NORTH proved to be a fun and educational experience!

The children were asked to bring in an item for donation and change every night. These generous children brought in

notebooks, pencil cases, stuffed animals, markers and colored pencils and glue sticks which will be donated to Operation Christmas Child and Kid's Peace. They also raised over \$104 in loose change. This will be sent to Operation Kid to Kid, who will distribute it to provide warm clothes and blankets for children in North America

Thank you to all the parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, friends and neighbors who brought the children every night to attend TRUE NORTH. Without you, we wouldn't be able to have a VBS program.

Thank you to everyone in the congregation who donated food items, supplies or money towards the VBS program. Your support of this program is greatly appreciated.

And most importantly, a huge thank you to the volunteers who came every night to help, teach, guide and have fun with the kids. Without you, this program would be impossible!!

We hope everyone involved had a great time and we hope to see everyone next year, June 22-26, 2026, when we head to...



