



The Shepherd's *staff*

THE NEWSLETTER OF HOLY SHEPHERD LUTHERAN CHURCH — SEPTEMBER / EARLY FALL 2023

433 MORAGA WAY, ORINDA, CALIFORNIA — WWW.HOLYSHEPHERD.ORG — (925)254-3422

LIFELONG LEARNERS!

Our congregation's mission is "Building Up Households of Faith" — starting with the person in the mirror!

The theme of this edition of our congregational newsletter is 'Education'. Sure, our newly reconfigured Preschool is up and running. Sure, our local schools are all back in session. Sure, our Lamorinda community is again launching fund drives to bolster the educational quality in our local schools. But that's not the sort of 'Education' we're talking about.

You see, when Jesus is introduced in each of the four gospels, one of the first titles that he is given is that of "Teacher". Before he is named 'Lord' — before he is called 'Messiah' — he is referred to simply as 'Teacher'. And those folks who follow him are called his 'disciples' — which is really a fancy way of saying "students of a particular teacher".

As you read through this newsletter, you'll notice a number of learning opportunities that await you this Fall. While 'Sunday School' opportunities await our younger children, and 'FaithBuilders' resumes for some of our youth members, adults are invited (and encouraged!) to remember that faith-education is for disciples of ALL ages! No one is too old or too young to learn from Jesus.

Let's commit ourselves to being lifelong learners! By finding a learning opportunity that works for you and joining in the conversation, you'll be living out your calling to be a disciple of the One who is truly the Good Teacher!

WEEKLY EVENTS SCHEDULE

We encourage you to join in!

Sundays at 9:30 am — In-person worship with Holy Communion happens in our Sanctuary

Sundays at 9:30 am — Our in-person worship services are "Live-Streamed" via our Facebook page @HSLCORinda.

Sundays at 10am — Sunday School for Kids happens twice-monthly following KidTalk. (Next class dates are Sept. 10 and Sept. 24!)

Sundays at 10:30 am — Coffee Fellowship takes place following our in-person worship service.

Sundays at noon — Our 'Worship Video' is up at www.holyshepherd.org.

Tuesdays at 7 pm — Our weekly 'Adult Ed' class meets online via Zoom.

Zoom Meeting ID: 861 5874 8710

Zoom Passcode: 94563

Giving Beyond Ourselves

Maui / Lahaina Wildfire Relief



Annually, in conjunction with our congregation's budgeting process, our Church Council makes a prayerful decision about how best to utilize your gifts in service to God's world. For the past 15 years, that decision has included a commitment to dedicate 10% of our Offerings to "Giving Beyond Ourselves". Those funds (roughly \$30,000 per year) represent our commitment to stewardship and

sharing. And they become a tangible expression of the love God calls us to share with neighbors both locally and globally.

In recent years, a portion of those funds have been allocated to our "Urgent Outreach" account, to be used to quickly respond as a congregation in times of great need. In the days immediately after the horrific wildfire that devastated the beautiful community of Lahaina, we were able to gift \$2000 from our "Urgent

Outreach" account to the ELCA church nearest the epicenter of that fire, Kihei Lutheran Church on Maui. Those funds, combined with other gifts from friends and members of our congregation, are now being used to support that local congregation's work in both recovery and restoration efforts.

As Kihei Lutheran's own Church Council President reported, "Our congregation is filled with aloha and love. This love has been especially shown this month with the outreach to our local communities as a response to the wildfires. Your donations have all been so gratefully received by our community. Our Community Outreach team will continue to minister to those who have been affected by the fires. We have established a dedicated Maui Fires fund for those monetary donations that have been received. The Church Council will be working together to oversee the distribution of these funds. Mahalo!"



Congratulations

(We apologize that a number of events on this edition's 'Birthday and Anniversary List' are belated, but we celebrate with you nonetheless! Congratulations, one and all!)



BIRTHDAYS

Jack Ch. — 8/2
Russ R. — 8/8
Diane O. — 8/9
Debbie S. — 8/11
Henry K. — 8/19
Yvonne Ts. — 8/21
John H. — 8/22
Julie H. — 8/23
Lynne D. — 8/24
Taryn L. — 8/24
Janine C. — 8/31
Anne J. — 9/2

Joy Ch. — 9/4
Ryan G. — 9/4
Reni Y. — 9/8
Barbara S. — 9/14
Diana R. — 9/15
Pam Sch-D. — 9/17
Steve S. — 9/18
Sally Ch. — 9/21
Robert Ch. — 9/29
Zachary K. — 9/29

ANNIVERSARIES

Kumars — 8/22
Merlins — 8/25
Eismanns — 8/30
Olsons — 8/30
Coburns — 9/22
McManamon &Humphrey — 9/25



For Healing

Yvonne G.
Louise H.
Henry K.
Ed Sz.
Donna Z.
DoLoris T.
MaryHelene W.
Judy B.
Judy H.
Bill K.

For Those Serving

Meghan and Brian P.
Peter K.
For Peace
Kristi L.
Marian McG.
DeLane R.
Marilyn N.
Diana N.
Doloris T.
Mark Z.

Please hold Doloris Timmons and her family in prayer upon the recent death of her beloved husband, Doug. Doug and Doloris had just returned / relocated to our community from the Calistoga area.

Education Opportunities Abound!

Education isn't JUST for the young, but our younger/youngest members and friends do have a place in the education life of our congregation. Key to that are the opportunities listed below.

Sunday School

Elementary and Preschool aged kids are invited to join in our twice-per-month Sunday School program. The Sunday School day begins with kids joining the rest of the congregation in worship up until the completion of KidTalk, at which time they're invited to join their teachers and classmates in the Center for Ministry for a learning time focused on making the stories of the Bible relevant to them. Older students who've completed Communion Instruction are then invited to return to the Sanctuary to share Holy Communion with their teacher and fellow students, while younger students are invited to await the arrival of their parents in the Center for Ministry at Coffee Fellowship time.

The tentative first trimester of Sunday school dates for 2023/24 are as follows:

September 10 and 24

October 8 and 22

November 5, 19 and 26

December 10

FaithBuilders

'FaithBuilders' is the name of our youth faith development ('Confirmation') program. This program is designed to create opportunities for students to ponder life's biggest questions, develop meaningful friendships, discover the adventure of faith, and have some "serious" fun. When parents and other adults ask us if Faith Builders is like "Confirmation Class," our standard answer is, "It's so much more than just that!" Students in the current FaithBuilders cohort have almost completed their journey through the Bible with Pastor John, and will be invited to affirm their faith later on this Fall!

Although the question of 'What is the right age for FaithBuilders?' varies by student, the curriculum is designed with Middle School and early High School aged students in mind. Knowing that kids' schedules can be so very crowded these days, we try hard to negotiate a schedule that can accommodate all of our FaithBuilders participants.

If you (or a student you know) would be interested in joining the NEXT FaithBuilders cohort, please speak with Pastor John or Elizabeth Humphrey (Council Liaison for Children, Youth and Family Ministries.)



Normally, the Sierra Pacific Synod (the consortium of ELCA churches in Northern California and Northern Nevada) gathers in Assembly each Spring to be about the shared business of the church. Due to the traumatic resignation of Bp. Meghan Rohrer at the close of last year's assembly (and the appointment of Pastor Claire Burkat as our Interim Bishop), a decision was made to postpone the 2023 Assembly to the Fall so as to allow some time for healing and 'normalcy'.

The 35th Assembly of the Sierra Pacific Synod takes place on the weekend of September 15-17 in Burlingame, CA. Our congregation will be represented at that gathering by our President Fred Schroeder, our Vice-President Joan Kiekhaefer, Donald Eismann and Bethany Valentine, as well as Pastors John Valentine and Pam Schaefer Dawson.

The gathering focuses on the theme "Broken, yet Whole," drawing on 2 Corinthians 13:11. This theme names our brokenness, while also lifting up the work of shared healing, ministry and restoration. As we hear in Paul's letter to the Corinthians going through conflict, "Finally, siblings, rejoice. Strive for full restoration, encourage one another, be of one mind, live in peace. And the God of love and peace will be with you."

The primary focus of the Assembly will be the election of a new bishop. The discernment process for the next bishop began at a series of Conference Gatherings in the Spring, and will conclude on Sunday, September 17th, with the final ballot for the election of a bishop. It is noteworthy that our own Pastor John Valentine was identified as a possible 'pre-nominee' for Bishop. As such, his name will be listed among the nine initial candidates for that burdensome and challenging role in our Synod.

We invite the Holy Spirit to be present with each of our six Voting Members (and all of those gathered) as together they work to discern whom it is that God is calling to serve as the next Bishop of our Synod.

ADULT EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES THIS FALL

'ZOOM' ADULT EDUCATION

It started as a way to stay connected with one another and God's Word during the dark days of the Pandemic, but it's become so much more than that!

Our weekly (Tuesday evenings at 7pm) 'Zoom'-based online Adult Education has become both a great learning opportunity and great connecting opportunity.

This conversational and devotional study opportunity focuses on the Scripture lesson read in worship the previous Sunday, and allows for reflection both on what the text 'means' and what the text 'means for us'.

Tuesday nights at 7pm on Zoom.

Zoom Meeting ID# 861 5874 8710

Zoom Password 94563

ACADEMIC BIBLE STUDY

Pastor John's "New Testament 101" Bible/book study resumed on September 6th following its Summer break! This twice-monthly study group — which utilizes N.T. Wright's hefty tome *The New Testament in Its World* as a conversation guide — helps participants to better understand the history, literature and theology of the first Christians. Academic Bible Study uses a 'hybrid' learning format, which means the course can be accessed in-person in our Center for Ministry building or via Zoom. For more information, contact class coordinator Bob Bauer at bobjbauer@att.net.

'New Testament 101' Fall Dates

September 6 and 20

October 18

November 1 and 15

WOMEN'S BOOK CLUB

The Women's Book Club has resumed their regular meetings on Saturdays at 10:00 a.m. in the CFM (our Center for Ministry building).

Besides discussing their current book, they sip warm beverages and nibble on treats. IF you're interested in joining, they'd love to have you. (Speak with Bethany Valentine or Juanita Gilbertson) for more information. Next up:

October 7th

First: Sandra Day O'Connor

by Evan Thomas

November 4th

Killers of the Flower Moon

by David Grann

December 2nd

Ordinary Grace

by William Kent Krueger

Holy Shepherd Lutheran Church
433 Moraga Way
Orinda, CA 94563