

Shepherd's VOICE

SHEPHERD OF THE VALLEY LUTHERAN CHURCH

SEPTEMBER 2009

"My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me." John

SHEPHERD NEWS

Adult Ed Coming This Fall

"Tough Questions & Controversial Issues"

This new adult education series, taught by Pastor Zach, will begin on Sunday, September 20. It will be offered at three different times, for your convenience: 8:45, 10:00 and 11:00 a.m. in the Fellowship Rooms. We will be looking at questions like:

- ◇ Are all Non-Christians Going to Hell?
- ◇ Is God a Democrat or Republican
- ◇ Is the Bible Really True?
- ◇ And many more!

Please join us in this important discussion after or before your service of choice, or while your children are in Sunday School. And please join us as often (or as little) as your schedule allows.

For more information, talk to Pastor Zach at 651.436.8248 or by email at zthompson@shepherd-lutheran.org.

A Gathering for Our Greeters

If you have ever considered joining a greeter ministry team, now is a great time to do it! Greeter teams, and anyone interested in being part of a team, are invited to a pizza lunch and Greeter Huddle on September 13 after the 10:30 a.m. service. We will be doing some team-building, greeter training and praying! Let me know if you are coming (for pizza ordering purposes) or if you have any questions at 651.436.8248 ext. 31 or by email at jwurm@shepherd-lutheran.org.

Blessings,

Jill Wurm

ServeFest = Kindness

Mother Theresa once said, "Small things done with great love can change the world." ServeFest is about reaching another person with kindness. Kindness, in itself, is a wonderful gift but it is powerful when demonstrated to another in Jesus' name. When we approach others with a smile, a tangible item, or provide a service, hearts are softened, making room for the Holy Spirit. When we serve on a Saturday morning, we are not serving with our own power but with His. God works in mysterious ways. Demonstrating His love to another may cause that person to look in Jesus' direction! ServeFest meets at Shepherd every other Saturday from 10:30 a.m. to 12:00 noon. A schedule can be found at the Information Center, in the VOICE newsletter, or on the website calendar.



FROM THE PASTOR

Catching Up

For many people fall is a time for “catching up.” For instance, we enjoy “catching up” on news from friends whom we have not seen over the summer months because of vacations and family obligations.

For some, it’s time to “catch up” on work or projects that have been on hold due to summer slumps and time off.

For some, fall is the “catch up” time for paying off bills accumulated from vacations, back to school shopping and other activities.

For some, it’s a time to “catch up” on exercising and getting back into shape after a summer of not being able to keep a regular schedule.

As your pastor, of course, I want to encourage you to use this change of seasons to “catch up” on your spiritual exercising. It’s time to get back to those healthy habits of weekly worship, serving and nurturing activities such as small groups

and adult education opportunities. Let’s commit ourselves to making this “body of Christ” a Spirit-filled powerhouse that will do great things in the name of Jesus!

I am looking forward to an exciting fall season of “catching up” with you as we worship, serve, and grow closer to Christ and each other through the Spirit-powered ministries at Shepherd.

In Him,

Update on Church Finances

Some have asked how Shepherd is doing financially in light of the difficult economic times. We want to be sure that we are keeping the membership informed.

We are currently behind our projected giving. This is not unusual for the end of the summer, due to the typical drop in attendance. However, the lag is considerably more significant this year. We know that many

are facing personal financial challenges right now, but we trust that members will faithfully meet their pledges as they are able. We trust that God will provide as continue to serve Him.

Christian Crusaders

Pastor Steve will preach on Christian Crusaders radio on Sunday, September 20. You can hear this program in our area on KKMS / AM 980 at 7:30 a.m. or KLBB / AM 1220 at 8:00 a.m. Tune in for a powerful Gospel message from Pastor Steve, associate speaker on this historic radio ministry since 2005.

Ignite! Worship

At the Great Minnesota Get Together!

The Ignite Worship Band will be leading worship at the Crossroads Chapel at the Minnesota State Fair! Join us on Sunday, September 6 at 3:00 p.m. Bring your friends, food on a stick and your voices to lift in song together.



MISSION CORNER

From Persecution in Burma to a New Life in Minnesota

"Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me." Matthew 25:40

Our congregation was recently blessed by the visit of the Karen Community to Shepherd of the Valley. The youth and adult choirs were inspirational and the colorful costumes and the children provided a fresh energy to our worship! And our members who served were pleased to see the eager consumption of "American" food and the delighted look on the children's faces as they received new backpacks and car seats!

During worship Eh Twa Dwe shared his powerful testimony of how his family fled persecution in their homeland of Burma. They survived a harrowing experience in the jungle, then made it safely to a refugee camp in Thailand. From there they emigrated to St. Paul and now live in community with hundreds of other Karen refugees, who have made

similar escapes from Burma. Through it all, their faith has sustained them and given them courage, peace, hope and direction.

Who Are the Karen and Why are They Refugees?

The Karen people are an ethnic minority in Burma (Myanmar), representing about 7% of that country's population. Burma is ruled by a brutal military dictatorship that has waged war on pro-democracy groups and has attacked the predominately Christian minorities such as the Karen.

Hundreds of thousands of Karen have been forced to flee their traditional homes. Many hide in the jungles of Burma for years to avoid the attack, killing, torture and rape of ethnic minorities carried out by military forces. When they run out of hiding places they flee to refugee camps along the Thai border. That has also been a difficult situation for the Karen. Though they are fed and clothed and receive an education within these refugee camps, they are not able to ob-

tain Thai citizenship. Upon graduation there is no place for them to go or jobs to be obtained. In 2006 governments around the world began to welcome the Karen people as refugees. There are approximately 1500 Karen people living in and around St. Paul, Roseville and Maplewood. More families arrive every month and literally hundreds more are scheduled to arrive before October.

Why Should We Help?

God calls us to welcome the stranger in our midst and to care for the hungry, the thirsty and the poor. We can put our faith into action and help restore lives! Consider giving your time, your friendship and/or your material resources to assist a family. When new families arrive in Minnesota they come with few, if any, household items. They have to furnish and supply an entire home, with limited financial resources. For more information on how you can help, please call the church office at 651.436.8248 or Kathy M. at 651.470.0310.



FOR KIDS ONLY



A Note from Christie

As we enter into another school year, I continue to be amazed by what God is doing here at Shepherd! Did you know that we ended the last Sunday School year with **667 students** enrolled? It was at the end of the year that someone made the comment to me that this is more students than a lot of our elementary schools have... yikes! This is God at work. Then we looked at our volunteers. Do you know that we had over 240 adults/youth volunteering just in Sunday School ministry? That's about a 1-3 ratio... again, yikes! This is God at work!

Jesus said to Peter in *John 21*, "Simon, son of John, do you truly love me more than

these?" "Yes, Lord," he said, "You know that I love you." Jesus said, "Feed my lambs."

God has given Shepherd of the Valley a huge responsibility and privilege to "feed His lambs."

Do you love Jesus? Is God calling you to be a part of Sunday School Ministry to *feed His lambs*?

Please talk to me or one of the Children's Ministry team, and we will help you find the place that best fits the gifts God has given you to *affect a child's life for eternity*.

In His Grip ~

Sunday School News

Sunday School Begins September 20! All children registered for the 2009-10 Sunday School year will receive a letter in the mail the **second week** of September with the details you will need to know as we begin a

new year together. Parents, please carefully read the policies included in the letter.

I haven't registered my child for Sunday School yet, what should I do? Blank registration forms can be found online or at any of the Information Centers. You may also email Dana at dlochner@shepherd-lutheran.org to have a form mailed to you. Please register as soon as possible, as classes are being formed.

New Bibles for First Graders

If you are in First Grade, you will be receiving a new Bible from the church! Pastor Zach and Christie will lead a Bible class on Tuesday, September 22 from 6:30—8:00 p.m. Students will receive their Bibles during worship the weekend of September 26-27. A letter about the class will be sent to you and your parents. It's awesome to be in God's Word!

Children's Ministry Mission Statement

To unite with the family in connecting all kids to Christ, so they will know Him as their Lord and Savior, seek His Will for their lives, and share with others His Good News.



FOR KIDS ONLY

Adults and Youth Leaders Needed

As the 2009-10 Sunday School year quickly approaches, is God calling YOU to become involved in Children's Ministry? Below are opportunities for you to be part of this fun and exciting ministry.

At the 8:45 Hour

- ◇ **Six Shepherds** are needed: Guide your class through the morning and help students apply God's Word to their lives.

At the 11:00 Hour

- ◇ **Seven Shepherds** are needed: Guide your class through the morning and help students apply God's Word to their lives.

Both Hours

- ◇ **Helpers** are needed for each class.
- ◇ **Special Friends:** Assist a child with special needs through their morning.
- ◇ **Drama Team Members** for Preschool-Kindergarten or Grades 1-5. Bring the Word of God to life.

- ◇ **Music Leaders** to lead the opening music time with the Pre-K students at 8:45.
- ◇ **Lead Kids Connection Worship Team:** This includes a bi-weekly Wednesday practice and Sunday's worship time.
- ◇ **Substitutes** for Shepherds needed at both hours.
- ◇ **Security Team:** Man a Sunday School hallway entrance at the beginning and end of a Sunday school hour. A rotation of volunteers will be scheduled.
- ◇ **Shepherd Floater:** Check in on Sunday to see if there are any last minute needs for a volunteer.

Please prayerfully consider your involvement in this fun ministry and *affect a child's life for eternity!* We look forward to seeing the team that God is preparing to serve this year. If you have questions, talk to Christie or one of the Children's Ministry staff.

Welcome to Sunday School 3 Year Olds!

Are you 3 years old, or will you be by September 1, 2009? Then you are old enough to go

to Sunday School! Did your mom or dad register you yet? If not, forms are located at the Information Centers or online. To help you get ready for your first day, join us for a welcome hour on **Saturday, September 19** from 10:00-11:00 a.m. You will receive your Beginner Bible and get a feel for what Sunday School will be like. We can't wait to meet you! See you on September 19.

3rd Base... The Stop Before Home



Back in swing in October

This is an after-school program for 4-6 graders that offers faith, fun, food, and friends. It meets on Thursdays from 3:30-5:00 p.m. on the days that Stillwater school district is in session. Watch for more information to come. Permission slips will be at the Information Centers in mid-September. Fill out the front of the form, read the expectations and sign the form and bring it with you to the first 3rd Base in October. Invite a friend and join the team!



GROWING IN CHRIST

Adult Small Groups



Shepherd of the Valley's mission to "connect all people to Christ through nurturing, building friendships, and serving" is what small group ministry is all about. God created us for community, with Himself, and with others. In small groups, people make new friends, are supported and are encouraged and get to know Jesus better. They serve one another and often reach outside the group to help others, too. Doesn't this sound like something worth your time?

The Fall session for small groups **begins October 4**, with registration happening throughout September. Stop at the Information Center or check online for a list of groups and to register. New groups are highlighted. Groups meet all over and on different times and days of the week. Some have a specified focus while others do not. There is a group for everyone and no previous experience is required!

Not yet convinced or not ready to make the commitment? Two groups are providing an opportunity to visit. Then you can decide if it's a good fit for you before making the commitment to join. Both meetings will be in the Fellowship Room at Shepherd:

1. The **NewComer Group** will meet on Monday, October 5 at 7:00 p.m. Childcare is available.
2. The **Men's Groups** Information Breakfast will be on Friday, October 9 at 6:00 a.m.

I can't say enough about how I have personally been impacted through small groups. As a newlywed, I saw God-centered marriages modeled by my small group members and this impacted my own marriage. I experienced friendship and support as a young mother. I was cared for in times of crisis. I learned the joy of serving others and have made deep and lasting friendships. My faith has grown, and I am closer to Jesus. And I've gotten to share my friend, Jesus, with others in my group.

If you have questions or need help getting connected to a small group, please visit me at the Information Center, or call or e-mail me at church. I would love to help you get connected this Fall.

Blessings,

Kristen

Women's Retreat

"Come to the Fountain"

A one-day, on-site retreat is scheduled for Saturday, September 12 from 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. Kristi Brooks Olson is our featured speaker. The topic is "Come to the Fountain." When you come to the fountain, you'll find nourishment, refreshment, cleansing and community. The day includes main sessions, breakout sessions, lunch and snacks. Space is limited so please register by September 1. Registration forms are available at the Information Centers or online. The cost is \$40.00.



YOUTH IGNITED!

Confirmation Small Group / Jr. High Ministry Leaders

Inspire a Faith and Make a Difference!

We are currently seeking small group leaders and substitute leaders for confirmation small groups. **Senior High students:** you are also invited to join us in making a difference in the lives of our junior higher. Opportunities include assisting in Confirmation small groups or sharing your gifts and talents in other junior high ministries. If you would like to learn more about this exciting ministry, please see Kim Schmidt.

ParentLink

Parents – we would like to send you a great free e-mail resource called *ParentLink*. This is a monthly e-mail that is intended to help you connect with and understand your teen. Relevant information on topics such as: dating, social networking, and sharing your faith with your child are included, along with a monthly SOV Jr. High Ministries calendar and description of

events. If you would like to receive this, simply e-mail Kim Schmidt at kschmidt@shepherd-lutheran.org.

Sr. High Small Groups



In a Small Group at SOV, you'll get to know other teenagers who are dealing with a lot of the same things you are. It's a safe place for you and your friends to ask questions, learn about who God is, and to understand just how much God loves you! We meet in a home near you on Sunday nights throughout the year from 6:30 – 8:00 p.m. beginning October 4. All 9th – 12th grade students are invited to join a group! Registration will be on Sundays, September 20 and 27. All students will need to register – even if you were in a group last year. There's a group waiting for you!

Calling all Seniors!

If you are a senior in high school, there is a new adventure waiting just for you at the

Senior Summit starting this fall! This adventure will have you hiking trails that will challenge you and help you to develop a deeper understanding of what it means to follow Christ in high school, into college, and for the rest of your life. In both a large and small group setting we'll dig into topics like forgiveness, other religions, self image, tough questions, and purity. Senior Summit is open to all seniors and will meet on Sundays throughout the school year beginning October 4 from 12:15–1:30 p.m. at SOV. Look for more information at the Open House / Registration on September 20. Join our fan page on Facebook under “Senior Summit.”

Senior High Adult Leaders

The All Leader Meeting is set for Monday, September 21 from 7:00 – 9:00 p.m. at SOV. Please plan to attend this meeting. If you are unable to be there, please email Hailley Leverty at hleverty@shepherd-lutheran.org.



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MARK YOUR CALENDAR

September 2, 9, 16, 30	Kid's Worship Team
September 9	Gr. 7 & 8 Parent / Student Opening Confirmation Night
September 9, 16, 23, 30	Grade 9 Confirmation
September 16, 23, 30	Grade 7 & 8 Confirmation
September 12	Women's Retreat
September 12, 26	ServeFest
September 19	SOV Book Club
September 19	Prayer Shawl Meeting
September 20	Senior Summit
September 20	Senior High Sm. Group Kick-Off

Saturday Worship: 5:30 p.m.

Sunday Worship: 9:00 and 10:30 a.m.

Our Mission: To connect all people to Christ through nurturing,
building friendships and serving.

Shepherd of the Valley Staff

Pastors: Steve Kramer,
Zach Thompson

Children's Ministry: Christie Cotner,
Keri Aldridge, Dana Lochner, Darla
Ostrand

Special Needs Ministry: Tammie
Proue

Youth Ministry: Kim Schmidt

Small Group Ministry: Kristin Lagus,
Jill Wurm, Maria Paulsen

Ignite! Coordinator: Donna Bennett

Administration: Dick Wagenknecht,
Kim Hanson

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