

News From The Pews

Shepherd of the Lake Lutheran Church—ELCA
Pastor Phillip Vickers

143 Chota Center, Loudon, TN 37774
www.shepherdofthelaketn.org
(865) 816-4756

January 2024

A Christian community sharing God's love with the world.

Sunday Worship
9:00 a.m.

In Person
and
Online

On the website:

Bulletins
Announcements
Sermons
Newsletters
Livestream

Church Council

Christine Elbert
President
Linda Schuessler
Vice President
Kandie Shubeck
Secretary
Cherie Oswald
Treasurer
Pauline Gorsline
Bob Bly
Members-at-Large

Office

Manager

Sandy Hagan
Shepherdofthelake13@gmail.com



Pastor Phil's Page

We had a wonderful celebration of the Advent and Christmas season here at Shepherd of the Lake. I want to thank everyone who participated in our Wednesday evening worship and soup suppers, all who assisted with worship in any way, and our office administrator Sandy for her extra work in this busy season.

We are excited to begin a new year here at Shepherd of the Lake with several new undertakings. Linda Schuessler and Susan Tisch have been working together as our outreach coordinators. They have been looking into how our Church participates in various ministries in our community. They have come up with a schedule that will lift up and celebrate a different outreach focus each month. This way, we will be educated and reminded throughout the year of all the different opportunities we have to be involved.



Pastor Phil Vickers



In January, our focus is Habitat for Humanity. Pauline Gorsline and I have met with representatives from this organization several times in the past year. Loudon County Habitat for Humanity brings people together to build homes, communities, and hope. They are a nonprofit, Christian housing ministry that works to eliminate poverty housing in Loudon County. They welcome individuals from any faith — or from no faith — who are willing to pick up a hammer to help improve the lives of families needing decent shelter. Most excitingly, they are working on a new build that will be sponsored entirely by communities of faith in Loudon County. We will be hearing much more about how we can plug into this effort in the month of January.

I feel very blessed to be beginning another year serving here at Shepherd of the Lake. Thank you as always for the opportunity to serve, and feel free to drop by the office if you have any thing you would like to talk about. Thanks be to God for bringing us all together as Church in the New Year.

JANUARY

Birthdays

3	Pauline Gorsline
3	Yvonne Stiehl
8	Ron Filbert
8	Sara Meilleur
10	Marjorie Porr
10	Jim Wuolukka
11	Carl Kirts
12	Susan Tisch
25	Tom Tisch
26	Sandy Arrowood



Mountain Views Article

Church- What's in it for Me?

My husband and I moved to E. Tennessee 25 years ago from New England. Although not retired yet, we looked forward to this move as a brand new beginning for the rest of our lives. Brand new beginnings aren't always what we think they're going to be when we start the journey. Our journey brought with it the best (or worst) of all ourselves, our plans and a sudden detour.

I left a church in Connecticut that had been a home to me for over 15 years. So many things had happened to me while I lived and worshipped with that congregation. My young daughter became a widow, my son left for college, both my parents died and I had to learn coping skills that did not include dependency on alcohol, food or people.

Most of my life had been spent wrapped and coddled by family, friends, and good luck. I didn't have any coping skills for dealing with the harsh realities that life often tosses at us. Where do you turn when you just don't know how to do it? Yes, there's professional counseling and advice from well-meaning friends, but at the end of the day, there you are - alone. For way too long a time, I tried to run and hide and pretend that I actually was able to handle reality by myself. Solitary prayer and a solo relationship with the Lord, just wasn't all of the solution and I sunk deeper, wondering where God was in all that mess.

My church family reached out to me and loved me when I couldn't love myself. They never judged or smothered, only showed compassion, friendship and God's love. I still had to make my own mistakes, but that's how we learn, whether it's English, Math or Life. The biggest thing that I learned was that we are not meant to live our lives alone. Belonging is being a part of a group where we are nurtured and can continue to learn and grow. Together we weather the storms of life and the joys that come with the rainbow.

My husband died sixteen years ago - not an event we ever thought our brand new beginning would take us to so quickly. I was so blessed to be surrounded by a loving Christian community. I was able to take a fork at the crossroads of my life with confidence that no matter what lay ahead, I was not alone. Today my church family at Shepherd of the Lake Lutheran Church in Tellico Village is one of the most important gifts I've ever received and we are such a gift to each other.

And there's the Big Revelation it's not all about what I get. As a member of a caring church community, I've learned that fulfillment can be found in knowing that I too have gifts to bring and share. I've discovered a joy that cannot be found in the loneliness of any mind-numbing substitute that I might try to use to get by. God works through his people, my family - What a blessing!

Claire Moxim lives in the Kahite neighborhood of Tellico Village with her two rescue dogs and a grandson. She is active in UT's H.A.B.I.T. (Human Animal Bond in Tennessee) program and has visited schools weekly with her RUFF READER dogs, Wally and Alice. Alice currently visits residents at NHC Holston Hills. Claire serves on the board of the Good Shepherd Center in Madisonville and is an active member of Shepherd of the Lake Lutheran Church in Tellico Village.



OUTREACH



Rohobot's Changed Life!

By Jamie Morris

Last February, I had the pleasure of meeting Rohobot while in Sidama, Ethiopia. She was kind enough to show me how she collects water each day for her family. She carefully skimmed the top of the muddy stream in an effort to collect water with the least amount of debris. When I asked her if she knew a well was coming to her village soon, she was confused, and completely unaware a well was coming to her village. Oh how my heart ached for her, but I was also hopeful because I knew her life was about to change in ways she couldn't imagine!

This is what she had to say.....

“I did not know we were receiving a well. I have been traveling to get water a few times a day. The water makes us sick, but we have no other option.”



Below is a photo of Rohobot showing us how she now collects water for her family thanks to your generous support!

Last month, Rohobot had this to say....

“Now everything has changed, and we are very happy that we have clean drinking water in our village. May God bless all those who funded and built the water project for us.

Drinking clean water has saved us from getting sick; it also saves us time and money.

Thank you very much, now we have a healthy life.”



Christmas Day Dinner

It was a delightful day when 27 church congregants and people from the Tellico community came together to celebrate Christmas Day at So+L. Ham and Turkey were provided and everyone brought a side dish to complement the meal. After the meal we had some fun with some ice breaker questions that were in the *News From The Pews* in the December newsletter. Julie Hawk wore her clever Christmas sweater that actually lit up like a Christmas tree. As you will see in the photographs, we had a lot of good fellowship, fun, and food (our tummies were full)! Thanks to all that helped in putting this dinner together (red table cloths with dinner napkins, and candy canes). Perhaps it should be an annual event on Christmas Day??





RECURRING EVENTS

So+L has many recurring activities throughout the month. They are on our website should you wish to check them out and just maybe participate. See below what's happening! Go to the website and select:

GET INVOLVED then COMING EVENTS.

Wkly.	Al-Anon Meeting	Mon	10:00am
Wkly.	Women's AA Meeting	Mon	11:30am
Wkly.	Yoga	Tues	9:00am
Bi-Wk.	Dream Study Circle	Tues	2:00pm
Wkly.	Bible Study	Wed	10:00am
Wkly.	Yoga	Thurs	9:00am
Mthly	Card Making Ministry	2nd Thurs	10:00am
Mthly	Fiber Arts Ministry	2nd Thurs	10:00am
Mthly	Women's Fellowship	3rd Thurs	11:30am
Mthly	Men's Fellowship B'fast	3rd Sat	8:30am

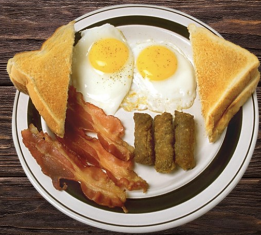


SAVE THESE DATES

January 5	11:00am	Joyce Mincks Funeral followed by reception.
January 10	10:00am	Bible Study Begins
January 10	7:00pm	Let Us Pray
January 17	12:00pm	Women's Fellowship Pizza & Bunco
January 20	8:30am	Men's Fellowship Breakfast
January 27	5:30pm	Dinner for Six or Eight
January 28	10:15am	Congregational Meeting
February 3	2:00pm	Roger Madson Funeral followed by reception

Men's Breakfast

Join us for
food, faith, and
fellowship



Saturday, January 20 at 8:30am
Friendship Hall

Join the men for coffee and breakfast items of your choice as they fellowship together.

Go to SignUpGenius and make your reservation and select the food you plan to bring. It will be a great time to socialize.

Men's Fellowship: Men's Fellowship Breakfast
(signupgenius.com)

For questions, email Howard Kastner (howardkastner285@gmail.com) or call Sandy in the church office 865-816-4756



Women's Fellowship

Save The Date

Come and join us for these fun events!

January 17 Noon Pizza & BUNCO

February 14 11:00am Lunch at Aubrey's

Invite a friend!

Go to SignUpGenius and be a participant.

Women's Fellowship: Women's Fellowship (signupgenius.com)

Women's Fellowship Committee

Communications Team Mission Statement

“To provide support to church staff, committees, and ministries to develop, implement, and maintain a dynamic communications system that supports the overall mission and strategic plan.”

*“A Christian community sharing
God’s love with the world “*

Beginning in January we will be doing digital advertising with the News-Herald (Connection) enabling us to have more exposure in the community. This is new technology for So+L. You will see our ad pop up on your television, desktop, tablet, or mobile with a 15-30 second ad on various networks (weather, FOXNEWS, CNN, HGTV, ESPN, etc.).



ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

Sunday, January 28, 2024

10:15am

- ◇ ELECTION OF COUNCIL MEMBERS
- ◇ PROPOSED 2024 BUDGET
- ◇ OTHER BUSINESS

SIGN UP

www.shepherdofthelaketn.org

Select Worship

- ⇒ Sunday Servants
- ⇒ Coffee Fellowship
- ⇒ Flower Calendar
- ⇒ Men’s Fellowship
- ⇒ Women’s Fellowship



Contribution Envelopes



Your 2024 tithe and offering envelopes will be in the Narthex until January 15, and after that please pick them up in the church office Monday through Friday from 9am-3pm.

Christmas Caroling—ACT Group Home

Look at these happy faces while caroling at the ACT group home. Not only were our choir members having some fun with the Christmas music and performing for the clients at the group home, but with the help of Santa and So+L, they delivered gifts to each of the four residents.



BACK BY POPULAR DEMAND SAVE THE DATE!

WHAT: Dinner for Six/Eight
WHEN: Saturday, January 27, 2024 at 5:30 PM
WHERE: Various homes of Shepherd of the Lake Members

Pastor Phil had Covid and many of you were out of town, but those of us who participated had a lovely evening of good food and fellowship. It's a great opportunity for old and new members to come together and get to know one another a little better. Sharing a meal together is just so conducive to conversation!!

Once again, we will be looking for hosts who would be willing to serve up the main course of their choosing in their home. The rest of you who sign up will be assigned to a host and informed a week before the dinner where you will be dining. Your host will ask you to contribute some part of the meal, either dessert, appetizer, side dish or salad. It is all up to the host. This need not be a fancy dinner - the point is getting the gang together!!

This is not a couple's event - this is an evening with your church family so don't be afraid to sign up if you are a single! And newer members - this is a great way to get to know your church family a little better!

This will be a perfect way to spend a cold January evening with friends!

Stewardship Toolkit for January 2024

2024: Your year for abundant living

Many Christians think of “stewardship” only in financial terms, but money is only one of the gifts God entrusts us with – and it’s usually the one we value less than our gifts of time, relationships, faith and health.

Make 2024 your year for holistic stewardship - and abundant living – by taking steps to care better for ALL the gifts God entrusts to us, including our finances. Here are tips.



- ⇒ **Health:** Get a physical and ask your doctor to help you to form a strategy for better living. For most of us, the plan would include eating better, exercising more and practicing wellness.
- ⇒ **Relationships:** We not only share love and joy with family and friends, but also turn to and rely on them in times of trouble. Care for your relationships with honest and frequent communication, get-togethers and sharing. Renew and repair relationships that need it.
- ⇒ **Time:** Are you just mindlessly counting the hours and days? Take charge of your time by planning events and activities that enrich your life. Plan for health and relationships.
- ⇒ **Faith:** No matter where you are on your discipleship journey, all of us can draw closer to God and open ourselves more fully to the Holy Spirit. For 2024, commit to regular worship, prayer, Scripture reading, devotions, service and other faith practices.
- ⇒ **Money:** Get your finances in order. Consider the 10-10-80 plan, budgeting your income to save 10 percent, give away 10 percent, and living on 80 percent.

God has given us so much. Stewarding the most important aspects of our lives can bring us into the life of abundance that Jesus promises us in John 10:10.

--Rob Blezard

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[Click here](#) for a complete and up-to-date bio for Pastor Blezard.

General Stewardship Resource Websites

Stewardship of Life Institute– Headquartered at United Lutheran Seminary, this site has a trove of resources in areas of congregational and personal stewardship. (<https://www.stewardshipoflife.org/>)

ELCA Stewardship Resources– Our denomination’s deep well of materials. (<https://www.elca.org/stewardship>)

The Episcopal Network for Stewardship – Solid resources! (<https://www.tens.org/>).



Prayer Ventures—January

- 1** Give thanks and praise to God, for we have been redeemed through the undeserved gift and sacrifice of Jesus Christ that liberates us from darkness, hopelessness and bondage to sin.
- 2** Pray without ceasing for an end to the conflicts and humanitarian crises in the Middle East, Ukraine, South Sudan and other countries. Ask God to make us instruments of peace, reconciliation and justice in the world wherever there is turmoil and suffering. Pray for the vital work we do together through Lutheran Disaster Response, ELCA World Hunger, Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service, Lutheran World Federation, Church World Service and other partners.
- 3** “Praise the Lord from the earth, you sea monsters and all deeps, fire and hail, snow and frost, stormy wind fulfilling his command!” (Psalm 148:7-8). Pray for the Spirit to stir our sense of awe for all that God has created and for God’s boundless love for humankind.
- 4** *Human Trafficking Prevention Month* Pray that we will work together diligently to prevent sexual slavery, forced labor and commercial sexual exploitation, including online forms of trafficking. Pray for our communities of faith to be safe places of refuge, respect, care and support for victims and survivors of human trafficking, especially young people of all genders and gender identities.
- 5** Give thanks that God leads us to the light and truth of Jesus Christ — God’s Son, the promised Messiah — when we might wander aimlessly in despair, longing and chaos.
- 6** Last year there were over 40,000 gun deaths in our country, including suicides (gunviolencearchive.org). Pray for an end to these senseless deaths and the resulting trauma, grief and anguish that spread through our communities and nation. Ask God to lead us out of hopelessness and inaction and to renew our commitment to end gun violence.
- 7** *Baptism of Our Lord* Let us give thanks for our baptisms, which marked us as loved and forgiven children of God and welcomed us to a life revitalized and guided by the Spirit. That same Spirit descended upon Jesus during his baptism and accompanied him throughout his life on earth.
- 8** Pray for the 340 new-start congregations and communities of faith under development in the United States and the Caribbean region, which welcome all God’s people, share Christ’s love and provide spiritual and physical sustenance.
- 9** What would happen if we awoke and greeted each day with this prayer and invitation to God: “Make me to know your ways, O Lord; teach me your paths. Lead me in your truth” (Psalm 25:4-5).
- 10** Remember and give thanks for our siblings in Christ who have gone before us, and for those living among us today who help reveal the mysteries of God’s grace and the redemptive work of Jesus Christ.
- 11** Thank God for the ELCA’s special relationship with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), a full communion partner since 1997. Pray for the church, its members and its leaders, that together we will find strength and resources for the work of sharing the gospel and serving our neighbor.
- 12** Lift up prayers for our neighbors and siblings in Christ who suffer poverty and hunger, oppression and violence, and who are alone and without advocates. Pray that we will look to God to deepen our understanding of justice and peacemaking and to guide our relationships with our neighbors in need.
- 13** Pray for the ELCA’s Future Church: God’s Love Made Real initiative, which aspires to a welcoming, thriving, connected, sustainable church and envisions a world experiencing the difference God’s grace and love in Christ make for all people and creation.
- 14** Pray that we will respond daily to Jesus’ invitation to follow him and will learn, serve our neighbors in need, share the gospel and invite others to experience God’s love, forgiveness and truth in community.
- 15** *Martin Luther King Jr. Day* Give thanks and praise for siblings in Christ, such as Martin Luther King Jr., who risk everything to proclaim God’s love and concern for all, stress the inherent value of our neighbors as children of God and awaken us from indifference, inactivity and hesitation to do God’s difficult work in the world.
- 16** “I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; that I know very well” (Psalm 139:14). When we doubt ourselves and question our value, remember and give thanks that God created us and knows us inside out, including our quirks, gifts, needs, questions and complexities.

- 17** Pray for youth and family ministry leaders and volunteers gathering for the ELCA Youth Ministry Network Extravaganza 2024 in New Orleans, that the Spirit will renew their faith, affirm their gifts and equip them to surround young people with God's grace and mercy.
- 18** Ask God to renew and strengthen our resolve to end hunger and poverty and to address their root causes in our communities and the world. Promise to listen carefully to our neighbors in need so that we can work together to find appropriate, effective and sustainable solutions.
- 19** When we are united with Christ, every aspect of our life and being — spiritual, physical and social — is impacted. Pray for the Spirit to help us stay faithful to the ways of God and the example of Christ and to reclaim us when we give undue value and attention to things that distract us.
- 20** Remember in prayer individuals and families who are homeless. Pray for congregations, community ministries, social service organizations and local and state governments that are working to develop effective, creative and sustainable housing, shelter and care for our neighbors.
- 21** Jesus Christ *is* the good news of God's grace and mercy at the heart of our baptism and faith. Give thanks and praise God for this amazing promise and gift!
- 22** Pray for Lutheran outdoor ministry leaders as they recruit young adult staff for summer ministries. Pray that young adults will respond to these leaders' invitation to share their faith, gifts and leadership abilities with campers of all ages, abilities and backgrounds.
- 23** There's a bit of Jonah in all of us when we question God's wisdom and mercy and balk at doing what God asks of us. Promise to be attentive and responsive to God's work and to trust that God's boundless love and forgiveness are for all people, including ourselves.
- 24** Give thanks for the ELCA Foundation, which helps us to fund God's work in the world, now and well into the future.
- 25** *Conversion of Paul* Give thanks for God's presence in our lives and for the work of the Holy Spirit, which changes our lives and the world.
- 26** Pray for the Deaconess Community of the ELCA, a diverse group of sisters in Christ who courageously proclaim the gospel, work for justice and healing, and serve all people.
- 27** *Lydia, Dorcas and Phoebe, witnesses to the faith* Pray that when we share the story of God's love and activity in the world, we will remember women in the Bible who professed their faith in God, served as leaders in the church, shared the good news of Jesus Christ and cared for neighbors in need.
- 28** Praise God that Jesus was born human and knows what our life entails, and that Jesus is the Son of God, revealing the immeasurable power, love and mercy of our Creator.
- 29** Remember in prayer those who serve in law enforcement in our communities and nation. Give thanks for the many ways they care for our well-being. Pray for their safety and ask the Spirit to nurture their wisdom, compassion and impartial judgment in the exercise of their responsibilities.
- 30** "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; all those who practice it have a good understanding" (Psalm 111:10). Give thanks that, in this verse, fear isn't something negative, threatening or worrisome but instead means awe and respect for God and God's ways, which enable us to practice wisdom, compassion and justice throughout life.
- 31** Pray for leaders and organizations gathered at the Lutheran Services in America Disability Network Winter Meeting in Phoenix, that the Spirit will inspire and guide their work as they empower people with intellectual and developmental disabilities to lead their best lives in society, the church and the world.

Women's Fellowship

Women's Fellowship Wednesday, January 17



Pizza & BUNCO starting at 12:00 noon; \$10 to help cover costs of pizza, salad, & soft drinks

Join us for a fun kick off to the 2024 Women's Fellowship gatherings.

Go to SignUpGenius on our website to add your name to the list.

Hope to see you there!



Kiddie Kingdom

On Friday, December 8, with several cars loaded with gifts, we headed for Kiddie Kingdom in Philadelphia. Upon our arrival, the children were waiting patiently. Steve Dormer with his radio announcer voice along with Eileen read "*Twas the night before Christmas*". A few minutes later, Santa Claus arrived with a present for each child. Pictures of each child were taken with Santa. After all the gifts were distributed, there was a party with cookies and juice. Music began playing and Susan Tisch danced with the children. Wish we had taken a video of that!



Each child also received a \$5 McDonald's gift card. These children also like jigsaw puzzles, so several were purchased from The TV Library. For the Christmas party, we provided candy and tins of popcorn.



↑ A BIG thank you to our Outreach team for organizing the block painting event, and to those that participated from our congregation painting blocks and bags for Kiddie Kingdom. Many of those pictures of the congregation were in the December *News From The Pews*.

← Gene Yeager provided the blocks and Donna Navratil designed the bags. Donna and Christine Elbert sewed a variety of fun fabrics to finish each bag. The older children received the block bag. Thank you once again, to our congregation for their support of this Outreach program. **Sandy Arrowood & Penny Hatt**



Bible studies & small groups

LOOKING AHEAD TO 2024...

Bible Study Opportunities

Wednesdays, 10am, beginning January 10,
Bible study with Pastor Phil Vickers
will meet in Friendship Hall,
we will continue the second half study of
the book of Romans.

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Small Group Book Study

Watch for more information or contact
Lillestolens or Schuesslers.

**If you have any questions
call the church office 865-816-4756.**

February Newsletter

**NEWS FROM
THE PEWS**



JANUARY 28