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December 2023

Thoughts from Pastor Stites:

HOPE. JOY. PEACE & LOVE

Season's Greetings! We begin the wonderful Advent Season (the *blue* season) in preparation for Christmas, the grand celebration of our Lord's birth.

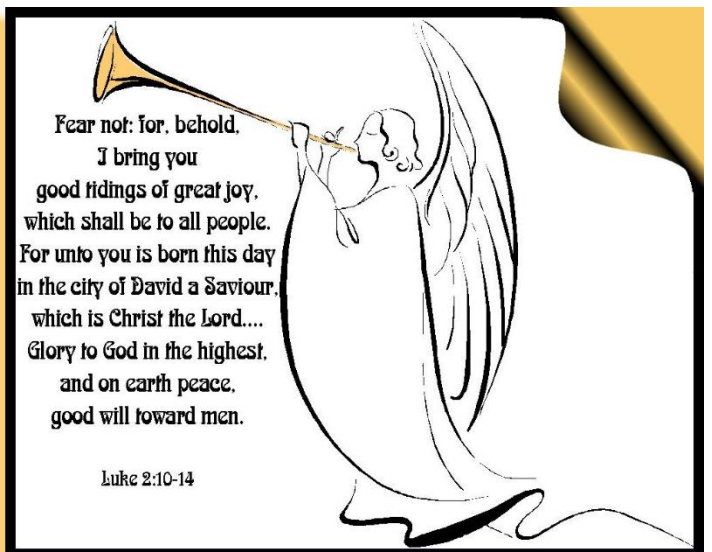
Now, since before anyone can remember, 4 words have been associated with this time of year: *HOPE. JOY. PEACE & LOVE*. Rather fitting since Jesus is our *hope*, *joy*, and *peace*, and HE IS the very definition of *love*! Every Christian rightfully already knows this.

But then this got me wondering, do those outside the Church understand this? We use these words in our proclamation of the Gospel, but how can they truly understand if they don't know what we mean? And as the culture today continues to change the very definition of words, do the words we speak have any meaning to the unchurched? Even more, I have to ask, as more Christians spend less time with God in Church, prayer and devotion, and more time listening to the "wisdom" of the sinful world, how many good Christians don't know the meaning of these words or why they are so celebrated this time of year?

So, I invite you to join us every Wednesday through the season of Advent as I examine the words, HOPE, JOY & PEACE. I will be looking into what the world thinks versus how God Himself uses these words to strengthen and uplift the faithful. Invite family and friends to join us so that others may hear the good news as well. But the greatest of these, LOVE, will be reserved for the love of God to be born.

As the angels declared that first Christmas, ***"Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!"*** (Luke 2:10-14)

Merry Christmas!
Pastor Jonathan Stites



Announcements & Upcoming Events

Phone numbers and addresses will no longer be published. Please use the church directory or call the church office @ 928-345-9694, if you need someone's number or address for an event



Online Services & Bible Studies

Sunday's Services and Bible Studies are available on our YouTube Channel. Just click on the following link: [Shepherd of the Hills Yuma YouTube page](#) or search "Shepherd of the Hills Yuma" on YouTube.



Women's Bible Studies

Wednesday, December 6th @ 7:30am at Bev Ferguson's*
Thursday, December 14th @ 9:30am at Dorothy Lenz's*
Wednesday, December 20th @ 7:30am at Goldie-Anne Engel's*
Thursday, December 28th @ 9:30am at Sharon Albery's*



Midweek Advent Services

Wednesday's, December 6th, 13th & 20th
11:00am & 7:00pm



Christmas Eve Services

Sunday, December 24th
9:30am & 7:00pm



Christmas Day Service

Monday, December 25th
@ 9:30am

Christmas Lunch TBD



LWML Christmas Luncheon

Saturday, December 9th @ 1:00pm

All women are welcome and bring a friend!

*see details on the next page



Choir Rehearsal

Tune up your voices! Choir rehearsals are on Wednesdays @ 6:00pm. Please join us for singing praises to our Lord and fellowship "making a joyful noise". See Sharie Jasper for details.



Next Monthly Meeting is on December 13th @ 12:00pm.

Thank you to everyone who participated in making our Craft & Bake Sale a success!



Your Invited To
The LWML's
Christmas Luncheon

Date: December 9th, 2023
Time: 1:00 pm

In Gathering: Ramen Noodle Package(s)

Gift Exchange: Tea or Coffee Cup

Please sign-up and let us know if you will be bringing guest(s).

Please bring Cup unwrapped. It will be placed in a paper bag at the door.



LWML's Annual Yard Sale

January 12th & 13th

Time to start decluttering your home.

**Donations may be brought
to the fellowship hall
starting on Monday, January 8th.**



SOTH Evangelism News



Easy Evangelism:

There is always, always, always something to be thankful for.

December is an exciting month for almost everyone. It is a time of closeness to family, friends and neighbors. Many of us will travel this month to be with our loved ones. Let us not forget to share the Christmas story. Perhaps a children's book on the true meaning of Christmas could become an annual event with your grandchildren or other little ones in your life imagining this wonderous time. What a great time to share the story of Jesus's birth and maybe some songs. Jesus loves me, this I know, for the Bible tells me so.



Thank you to everyone that donated canned meals for "Right Turn for Yuma Veterans"!





Sent to Tell the Good News



The season of Advent has provided opportunity for us to reflect on God's great love for us fallen sinners that has caused Him to send His very own Son Who came for the ungodly, even for those who will never acknowledge His sacrifice and who reject His free gift of salvation. Along with the joy that we have in our Savior, especially at this time of the celebration of Jesus' birth, the knowledge that not all experience this joy brings a sorrow to us as it does to the heart of our Lord.

Just as God in His love sent His Son into this world to save the lost, so we are now sent to tell others of that love. The shepherds at Jesus' birth did not hesitate to tell others. *"And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had seen..."* (Luke 2:20). Like the shepherds, our joy and mission are to share the good news with all people that Jesus came *"to seek and to save the lost"* (Luke 19:10). By grace, we are invited to be participants who declare to the world how God has reconciled us to Himself through His Son. God makes His appeal to unbelievers through us, and, therefore, it is imperative that we share the Gospel, which is the life-giving truth. We are to preach and teach the Word of God.

God calls us to share our faith and to let His light shine brightly. You and I have something to share that is needed by others, and that is the Good News of salvation through Jesus Christ, Who came to us as a babe in a manger. In light of what Christ has done for us, we respond with a desire to serve and glorify Him. We are equipped and enabled by the Holy Spirit through His Word and Sacraments (2 Timothy 3:16-17) to be participants in His mission. We are the feet, eyes, ears, mouths, and hands who carry the message, who see the needs, who listen to the cries of those in need, who bring help to them, who tell them the message of reconciliation.

God's Word challenges us to use our time, talents, and money, so we can make an eternal difference in the lives of others. Because God is always with us, we can be faithful in our purpose to be God's participants in His mission to save all people.

May we all keep Christ as the heart of our Christmas and see Jesus as the reason for our joy. God's blessings on your Christmas worship and celebration with loved ones.

Have a blessed Christmas!

(From Ron Chewning – Stewardship Advisors)



To be reviewed and approved at the Council Meeting in December.
SHEPHERD OF THE HILLS LUTHERAN CHURCH
SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING
NOVEMBER 5, 2023

Attendees: Jon Weeks, Pastor Stites, Dick Koppe, Sharie Jasper, Pete Dryer, Kelly Hinrichs, Sue Cairns, Donna Urquhart, Kathy Richardson
President Weeks called the special meeting to order at 11:02 a.m.
Pastor Stites opened with prayer.

Trustees Report: As reported at the October 31 Council Meeting, Pete and other church members did meet with Susan Kern Ambrosi and two others at the Morner house on Thursday, November 2 at 9:00 a.m. and also went to the storage unit with them. They thoroughly went over the contents of both the house and the storage unit. Pete assured them that the Church is not looking to keep contents that should go to the family. The family said they'd like to wait until after the holidays to remove the contents which are Susan's inheritance. Pete explained that the contents need to be removed sooner rather than later. Pete shared with the Church Council a proposed letter to Susan Kern Ambrosi regarding the timing for property removal. Pete will get ahold of legal counsel to see what the legal timeframe is for removing the inherited items. When Pete hears from counsel regarding said timeframe, he will send the letter to Susan's attorney. Sue Cairns made a motion to send the letter to Susan Kern Ambrosi's attorney after speaking with the Church's legal counsel. Dick Koppe seconded; motion carried.

Sharie Jasper moved to adjourn. Sue Cairns seconded, and motion carried.
Jon Weeks adjourned the meeting at 11:22 a.m.
Pastor Stites led us with the Lord's Prayer.

To be reviewed and approved at the Council Meeting in December.
SHEPHERD OF THE HILLS LUTHERAN CHURCH
COUNCIL MEETING
November 21, 2023

Attendees: Jon Weeks, Pastor Stites, Dick Koppe, Brad Erickson, Sharie Jasper, Pete Dryer, Kelly Hinrichs, Sue Cairns, Barbara Koppe, Marcia Nichols, Donna Urquhart, Kathy Richardson
President Weeks called the meeting to order at 9:54 a.m.
Pastor Stites opened with prayer.

Trustees Report: Pete Dryer updated the Council on the Morner Estate issues with Margaret's daughter, Susan. Various correspondence with attorneys was shared, copies attached. The meeting with Susan, her son and other gentlemen at the house and storage unit was reviewed. Pete stated that he told Susan that it is not the church's intent to keep any inheritance that is due to her. Dates for the family to pick up items in the house, December 8, and in the storage unit, December 15, were sent to her. We are waiting to hear back from Susan on these dates. On the Estate, the cash involved should be out of probate by the end of February. Other Trustee issues handled during the month included: outside lighting to be upgraded to LED, Taylor Parking Lot- they will bring Pete a bucket of the parking lot coating for repairs, and samples of posters advertising SOTH services were shared- these will be put up at RV Parks. The new sign is done and waiting for County approval. Pete stated that of the \$20,000 donated for the sign, \$4,000.37 is left. Pete made a motion that \$4,000.37 be put to use on getting the building fascia fixed. Sharie Jasper seconded; motion carried.

Secretary's Report: Minutes from the October 31, 2023, meeting were reviewed. Sue Cairns moved to accept the October 31, 2023, Minutes. Marcia Nichols seconded. Motion carried. Minutes from November 5, 2023, special meeting were reviewed. Sharie Jasper moved to accept the November 5, 2023, Minutes. Sue Cairns seconded. Motion Carried.

Treasurer's Report: Treasurer's report for October 2023 was presented. Sharie Jasper stated that there was nothing out of the ordinary in the report. After review, Sue Cairns moved to accept the Treasurer's Report for October 2023. Pete Dryer seconded. Motion carried.

Pastor's Report: Pastor stated that he has been busy preparing for Christmas season. Pastor will focus on the message of Hope, Joy, Peace, and Love and what they mean, and how they can be used to spread the gospel. He further commented that he was happy with Friendship Sunday. The Evangelism Committee did a good job of planning for this special Sunday. He sees this continuing going forward. Jon Weeks commented that he likes choosing one Sunday out of the year to hold Friendship Sunday.

President's Report: President Weeks stated that Shepherd of the Hills has the best organist in the country. In saying this, he stated that he has received a comment that the music needs to be more upbeat. Pastor said that he picks the hymns out according to the Message. Any concerns about the music should be addressed to Pastor.

Vice President's Report: Brad reported that the Nominating Committee has not heard from anyone about additional nominees.

Elders Report: Dick Koppe reported that he made 23 calls during the month to members. He also reported that Pete Dryer has resigned as an Elder and that Mike Yelland is coming on as a new Elder. His installation will be on Sunday, November 26, 2023. Dick stated that while the Elders held a meeting, the wives met with Barbara. Barbara shared that in answering a phone call that was for Dick as Elder, the lady on the other end said she was glad Barbara had answered because she was uncomfortable talking to a man. Barbara noted that this may be a way for the Elders' wives to assist not only their husbands but the congregation. Pastor addressed some issues. He said that this will be a trial period to see what works. This will start after the new year. In general, it is a good idea. Barbara noted that this is not mandatory for all Elders' wives; only those who wish to participate. Dick said they are still looking for another Elder.

Evangelism Report: Marcia Nichols reported that the committee felt that Friendship Sunday had been a success. The remaining "Jesus is my Rock" stones will be used by Pastor and the Elders when they are making calls. If Elders would like, she can paint more for them. A specific Sunday will be designated annually for Friendship Sundays. Marcia also commented that people need to be reminded about the donation jar in the back of the church for the Yuma Food Bank. Sue and Rob Cairns had previously done a promotion "Each One, Give One". The Evangelism Committee will focus on the Yuma Food Bank when the collection for Right Turn for Veterans concludes at the end of the month. Marcia also suggested that a one-time ad featuring our Christmas season services be placed in the Yuma Sun.

Stewardship Report: Sue Cairns advised that the 2024 giving envelopes will be available in December.

Administrative: Kelly stated that her new winter hours of 7:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. are working well. She is currently working on our Facebook page. It is almost ready, but she is having trouble deleting the "unofficial" page which was put up by Facebook. To eliminate church hall scheduling conflicts, Kelly is going to put up a large calendar in the Fellowship Hall to be used for scheduling all church hall events.

Old Business: The Annual Budget Proposal for 2024 was reviewed in detail by line items. Adjustments were made as needed. In reviewing the organist's salary, Dick Koppe brought up that Sharie does not receive a paid vacation and pays for a substitute out of her salary. After discussion, Marcia Nichols made a motion that the church pay for two Sundays a year to cover for a substitute organist. Dick Koppe seconded, and motion carried. The next item discussed was Pastor's salary. Dick Koppe reported that the Elders had approved a 4% increase in Pastor's salary to \$62,000 annually. The revised budget total was \$258,290 which is less than \$1,000 more than the 2023 budget. This budget will be presented at the upcoming December 17th Voters Meeting.

New Business: n/a

Sharie Jasper moved to adjourn. Sue Cairns seconded, and motion carried.

Jon Weeks adjourned the meeting at 11:32 a.m.

Pastor Stites led us with the Lord's Prayer.

On Sunday, December 26th Mike Yelland was installed as our new Elder.



On November 9th the new crosses, made by Cal Richardson, were installed on our new sign.





Thanksgiving Day at Shepherd of the Hills





FRICKEL, Garold	12/02
KUHL, Jan	12/02
HUNT, Larry	12/13
MICHEL, John	12/20
EICHELKRAUT, Ron	12/22
ANDERSON, Charles	12/23
KUEBLER, Ora	12/26
LENZ, Dorothy	12/31



December Anniversaries

KOCH, Maurice & Diane (44)	12/01
KAISER, Gary & Linda (57)	12/03
VAUGHN, Dale & Betty (62)	12/10
GRAHAM, Debbie (48)	12/19
ELLEGE, Steve & Sharon (46)	12/31



FOOD BANK

November
\$169

SEASON TOTAL
January - December
\$2306

Every man shall give as he is able, according to the blessing of the LORD your God which He has given you. Deuteronomy 16:17

Stewardship Corner

Christmas is about giving. When we give, it is a joyful experience. Jesus said, *"It is more blessed to give than to receive"* (Acts 20:35). As God gave, so do we give. One of the best gifts that we can give Jesus is to allow Him, through God's grace, to use us as channels of His love to others. To be His channels, we must always be on guard so we don't fall prey to the commercial trap and the materialistic ways of our society. We must stay focused on the most indescribable gift, the gift of Jesus. When we give gifts to our friends and family this Christmas, may we always remember the birth of baby Jesus Who came to us as our Savior wrapped in swaddling cloths lying in a manger.

Treasurer's Report for November 2023

General Fund

Offerings Received: \$18,907

Offerings Needed: \$21,458

\$2,551- short

(The Offerings Needed per month is the Annual Budget divided by 12)

Fiscal Year to Date 2023

Offerings Received YTD: \$175,463

Offerings Needed YTD: \$236,038

\$60,575- short

December 2023 at SOTH

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Sunday's Online Service available after 1:00pm click on following link: Shepherd of the Hills Yuma YouTube			Wednesday's Online Bible Study – click on following link: Shepherd of the Hills Yuma YouTube			
					1	2
3 8:15am Adult Bible Study 9:30am Worship w/Communion 10:30am Fellowship 5:00pm Sunday Night Cards	4 9:00am Quilting for Charities	5 8:00am Men's Bible Study 9:00 Elders Mtg.	6 7:30am Women's Bible Study @ Bev Ferguson's 9:30am Adult Bible Study 11:00am – Advent Service 6:00pm Choir Rehearsal 7:00pm Advent Service	7	8	9 1:00pm LWML Ladies Luncheon
10 8:15am Adult Bible Study 9:30am Worship w/Communion 10:30am Fellowship 5:00pm Sunday Night Cards	11 9:00am Quilting for Charities	12 8:00am Men's Bible Study 10:00am Council Mtg.	13 9:30am Adult Bible Study 11:00am – Advent Service 12:00pm LWML Monthly Mtg. 6:00pm Choir Rehearsal 7:00pm Advent Service	14 9:30am Women's Bible Study @ Dorothy Lenz's	15	16
17 8:15am Adult Bible Study 9:30am Hymnfest w/Communion 10:30am Voters' Mtg. 5:00pm Sunday Night Cards	18 9:00am Quilting for Charities	19 8:00am Men's Bible Study	20 7:30am Women's Bible Study @ Goldie-Anne Engel's 9:30am Adult Bible Study 11:00am – Advent Service 6:00pm Choir Rehearsal 7:00pm Advent Service	21	22	23
24 Christmas Eve 8:15am Adult Bible Study 9:30am Christmas Eve Service 10:30am Fellowship 5:00pm Cards – cancelled 7:00pm Christmas Eve Service	25 Christmas Day 9:00am Quilting for Charities - cancelled 9:30am Christmas Day Service Christmas Meal TBD	26 8:00am Men's Bible Study - cancelled	27 9:30am Adult Bible Study cancelled 6:00pm Choir Rehearsal – cancelled	28 9:30am Women's Bible Study @ Sharon Albery	29	30
31 New Year's Eve 8:15am Adult Bible Study 9:30am Worship w/Communion 10:30am Fellowship 5:00pm Sunday Night Cards Mite Box Collection						