

# ANNUAL REPORT 2018

Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church  
246 Woodport Rd, Sparta, NJ 07871

## Welcome to Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church

Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church exists to **welcome** people to faith in Jesus Christ; to **equip** us with the tools to make that faith work in real life; and then **send** us in service into the world in Jesus' name.

Shepherd of the Hills is a vibrant church which exists to give glory to God in Jesus Christ. We see ourselves as a center of Christian discipleship in the lives of individuals, families and congregations.

We are committed to:

- Worship as a dynamic experience of the presence of God through Word, Sacrament, music and Christian community;
- Welcome as an invitation to everyone to meet Jesus Christ no matter where they are on their spiritual journey of life;
- Empowerment as enabling individuals, couples, and families to discover the power of the Holy Spirit through faith active in real life;
- Growth as the opportunity to increase each person's confidence and joy in Jesus Christ through prayer, Bible study and through active service in our church, community, and the world.

## Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church 2018 Annual Report

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## PASTOR'S REPORT FOR 2018

Grace and peace be unto you from our Lord & Savior, Jesus Christ.

I've been trying to find the right word to describe ministry at Shepherd of the Hills in the last year. And the truth is there isn't just one.

The first one is **hope**. No matter how frustrated we've been with building repairs, how sad we've been to say goodbye to folks beginning new chapters of their lives, how concerned we've been with our overall finances, there's always been hope that Shepherd of the Hills will be a place of welcome, learning, and grace. It's something that gives me hope for the future of this ministry. We continue to be forward looking, leaning into the grief of goodbyes to dreams and family.

The second word is **engagement**. This one has been harder to describe and empower. The more we are engaged in loving God by loving all of God's people, more folks will resonate and be curious of who we are. It's not just about a beautiful church and great facility. How are we engaged in the community as God's people? And it's a question that asks us to reorient our lives against other norms. The good news is that it is happening – slowly and deeply.

I'm not going to try for a third. I think those are enough. We have a dedicated council that has tackled tough issues this year. I'm grateful for their willingness to dig into long awaited projects, to be a phone call away, and to encourage one another. I look forward to more ministry together with them.

And I continue to thank God for you and your witness to Sparta, New Jersey, and all who visit us on our website, Facebook page, and Twitter feed. Special thanks to the office angels: Barbara Nielson, Barbara Von Thun, Debbie Lockwood, Lynn Ernst, and Wendy Whipple. They show up weekly to keep the administration of the church moving forward and keeping me on task. Together, we engage in living Christ-filled lives and we hope for a future where God is known through us.

In Christ's service,  
Pastor Tina +

### PASTORAL ACTS FOR 2018:

#### Baptisms:

2-18-18 – Eric Benjamin Cole  
4-22-18 – Ryan Edward Murphy  
4-29-18 – Madilyn Celia Riedel  
5-20-18 – Emily Reese Polsin  
7-8-18 – Brayden Andrew Laird  
11-25-18 – Will Rose O'Hara

#### Confirmation of Baptism – October 28, 2018

Joseph Charles Krieg  
Laura Anne Johnson  
Hannah Estelle Pak

#### Marriage:

4-21-18 – Natalie Regine D'Amico and Brendan Thomas O'Leary – Shepherd of the Hills  
9-28-18 – Carly J Wolff and Robert John Gockeler – Shepherd of the Hills  
11-23-18 – Meredith Allison Feezer and Matthew Lawrence Gatzke – Shepherd of the Hills

**Funerals:**

4-17-18 – Irmgard Kaiser (mother of Diane Fitzpatrick)

11-17-18 – Rosalie M. Gietz

**New Members:**

Jason & Alison Ibaceta, Alex & Sophie

Thomas & Allison Deeney, Samuel & Calvin

David & Lindsey Henriques, Thomas & Emily

Randy Anderson & Julia Whitfield

**PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE 2018**

Another church year has flown by. In 2018 we continued to grow our mission with our partners. We continue our support of the Sparta Ecumenical Food Pantry, the Faith Kitchen in Dover and Project Self Sufficiency along with our tenant, Connect for Community. As part of our mission here at SOTH, we will continue to support these groups that are focused on food insecurity in our area. We are actively looking for more of our flock to become involved with the prep work and cooking that goes into serving the Faith Kitchen. We also commit to be a place where those who struggle with the disease of addiction can find the support they need in one of the 12 step groups meeting here.

Like every year we have had a few hiccups when it comes to maintenance of our facility. By the grace of God and the help of many members of our flock, we have a roof over our head and a beautiful place to meet, worship and grow. We are very close to completion of revamping our heating system with the intent that we should be good for a number of years to come. We have weathered a cold winter, but we have done much better in snow removal cost. Great to say that we didn't exceed budget in this area.

We continue to be good stewards of our resources and control our spending. We have seen friends move on and new friends arrive. We are starting to regularly see new face, and it is our job to make them feel welcome so they return.

We celebrate the volunteers that have stepped up to help with our mission, those with their tool belt and wet vacs when the pipes break and the AC unit clogs and overflows in the office. And all the staff that volunteers to man our office and ensure that our doors are open and that our ministry in all its forms happens every day.

I thank all of you for the time and talents you give to our faith community every day. You are what makes SOTH great.

In Christ,  
John Seal, Church Council President

## TREASURER'S REPORT 2018

Income Statement	YTD January - December 2018				
	2017	2018	Var to	%	
	Budget	Actual	Actual	Budget	Variance
<b>Revenue</b>	<b>263,300</b>	<b>294,371</b>	<b>272,273</b>	8,973	<b>3%</b>
<b>Expenses</b>					
<b>Nurture</b>	2,500	3,917	2,862	362	14%
<b>Social Ministry</b>	1,800	2,942	993	-807	-45%
<b>Fellowship</b>	300	29,809	4,130	3,830	1277%
<b>General</b>	576	11,624	5,378	4,802	834%
<b>Admin</b>	25,000	19,024	51,400	26,400	106%
<b>Facility</b>	130,000	95,457	94,893	-35,107	-27%
<b>Personnel</b>	116,337	114,639	105,905	-10,432	-9%
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>276,513</b>	<b>277,411</b>	<b>265,561</b>	<b>-10,952</b>	<b>-4%</b>
<b>Net</b>	<b>-13,213</b>	<b>16,959</b>	<b>6,712</b>	<b>19,925</b>	<b>-151%</b>

### Comments - 2018 Year to Date Income Statement

YTD revenue includes non-contribution revenue consisting of insurance reimbursement of \$12,881 and Thrivent Choice of \$1,413

Nurture expense of \$574 for wreaths offset by income of \$624.

\$993 represents Soup Kitchen expenses for the year

Fellowship expenses for Fish Fry and Ocktoberfest are offset in revenue

Includes expenses for insurance and office supplies

Repairs & Maintenance \$38.3K; Snow removal \$ 5.7K; Benevolence paid \$6.0K

Mortgage Interest \$51.9K; Depreciation \$21.8K; Electric \$8.9K; Heat \$7.0K

Personnel expenses have been kept below budget

Control of expenses resulted in positive income despite below budget revenue

Balance Sheet	Year to Date			Comments - YTD Balance Sheet
	Open	Close	Change	
Cash	92,368	77,362	15,007	Variance is caused by decrease in revenue and increased spending in repairs and capital improvement projects
Food Certificates	0	5,345	-5,345	
Fixed Assets	569,913	548,121	21,792	Furniture and Fixtures are fully depreciated and have been written off
Construction Loan	1,254,580	1,222,207	32,372	
Liabilities	8,317	2,523	5,794	
Equity	-600,615	-630,827	30,212	Decrease in cash and asset value resulted in a decrease in equity

Cash	December
<b>Operating Cash</b>	
Unrestricted	38,415
Capital Improve	18,327
Pastor Rhodes	8,727
A/V Fund	0
Kitchen Fund	0
Mortgage	11,892
<b>Total Operating</b>	<b>77,362</b>
Restricted Cash	
Christian Ed	0
Tractor	0
Youth	0
Food Certificates	0
<b>Total Restricted</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Total Cash</b>	<b>77,362</b>

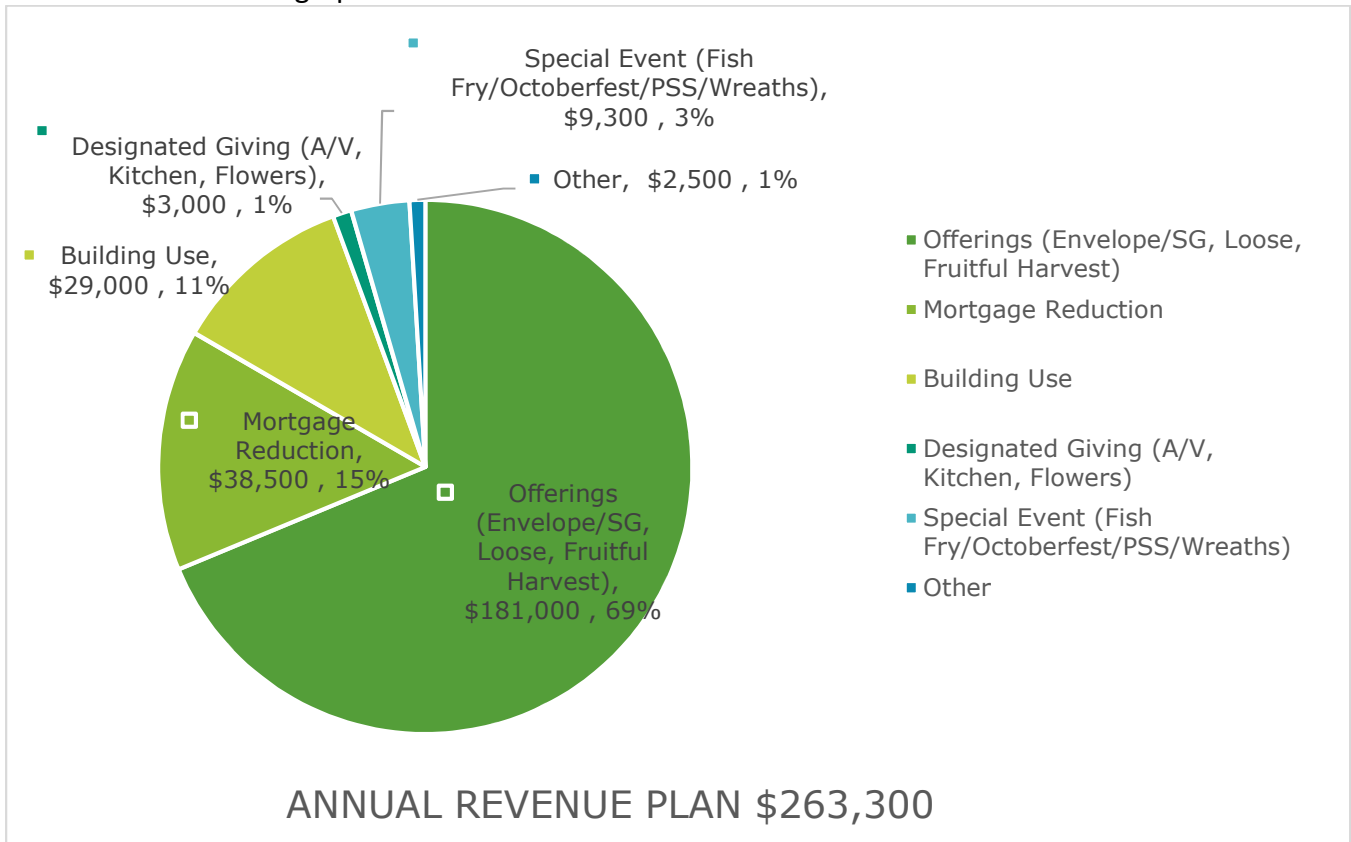
**Comments - Cash**

As of fiscal year-end, the Lakeland Bank operating account is fully reconciled.

The bank accounts for Christian Ed, Tractor, Youth, and Food Certificates were closed out in December and the balances transferred into the Unrestricted General Operating Account.

**FINANCIAL SECRETARY'S REPORT 2018**

Here is a contribution graph from FY 2018:



The congregation continues to faithfully provide much of the needed revenue to support the daily functions of Shepherd of the Hills. While we had planned on revenue of \$263,300, we actualized \$258,000, for a revenue short fall of \$5300. Thank you for your commitment to the congregation.

We also have been working on a conversion of our church management software, which will make the financial and discipleship operations work in a more efficient manner. We've been working hard to have this functioning by January 1, 2019. Your prayers for a successful software turn over are welcome and appreciated.

## **2018 PROPERTY REPORT**

After coming on to the Church Council I inherited several interesting and crucial problems that had to be addressed. Almost immediately I was faced with a septic system that not only had to be pumped but had to have extensive pump repairs. With help, we triumphed and are in good shape for the foreseeable future.

I also inherited problems with leaky roofs, heating, air conditioning and plumbing. I am happy to report that most or all of them have been solved. The problems with the plumbing are being addressed and will be hopefully corrected in the near future as our plumber has been very busy with customers that have no heat problems.

We rented a lift and changed all lights in the Sanctuary as there were many that had given up the ghost. Also several ceiling tiles that were stained from previous leaks that had been fixed.

Looking ahead we are hoping to fix the stairs and roof over the doors on the Hunters Lane side of the church. We are also investigating the possibility of curbing along the parking lot on the Hunters Lane side of the church and dealing with fencing that is rotted and falling down in the back part of the property.

I would like to thank all the individuals that have helped me thus far, and it is my strongest hope that these individuals will continue to help me with suggestions and assistance with the repairs that we have to make in the future.

Respectfully submitted,  
Robert Kapral  
Property Manager

## **NURTURE GROUP ANNUAL REPORT 2018**

### ***Worship and Music***

The 6 p.m. Sunday evening service, which presents another weekend worship time for families, continues to have a small but steady following. The Evangelical Lutheran Worship hymnal, 2006 ed., is now being utilized at all services thanks in part to a generous donation of a member of our congregation.

Our fall worship theme, "The Gospel According to Mr. Rogers" coincided with the release of the Academy Award nominated documentary, "Won't You Be My Neighbor."

The Advent family workshop was revived this year on Dec. 2 including a meal, crafts and worship.

### ***Christian Education***

Several children attended the Middle School Retreat at Crossroads Camp. First Communion was given to three children on May 13, Mother's Day. Many thanks to Denise Roberts who has served as teacher of this program for several years. CJ and Jeff Behling & Stephanie Bolich continue to serve as Faith Formation teachers, and Lynn Ernst coordinates the First Friday gatherings as well as assisting with the confirmation class. During Lent, the confirmation students participated in skits during our Wednesday evening worship. We are most grateful to all who serve as Christian educators here at SOTH.

We are also thankful to all who assisted the Robinsons as they guided the children in the planting and harvesting of the community garden. The produce was joyfully accepted by the Sparta Ecumenical Food Pantry who reported that their clients were so appreciative of the fresh, home grown veggies.

On June 17, we honored five students during High School Senior Recognition Sunday. "Flat Jesus" was again duplicated and families were encouraged to take him along on their vacations. Photo documentation of his travels can be found on our bulletin board.

Confirmation of three students was held on Oct. 28, Reformation Day.

### ***Adult Education***

The Wednesday lunchtime Bible study for adults continues to be an excellent opportunity to study selected books of the Bible.

The Summer Sunday Bible Study for adults based upon the book, Honoring our Neighbor's Faith, was most interesting and well attended.

Our Tuesday evening faith book group has been renamed, "Faith and Life reading group." This group read and discussed, Present Over Perfect: Leaving Behind Frantic for a Simpler, More Soulful Way of Living by Shauna Niequist.

### ***Thrivent and Amazon Smile***

Although traditionally not a function of the Nurture team, I have assumed the role of Thrivent Congregational Coordinator, and am pleased to report that four \$250. Thrivent project grants have been received this year. Many thanks to all who contributed to the Feed NE18 food drive which resulted in a \$500.00 Thrivent grant for Connect for Community and over 700 items for local food pantries! In addition, Thrivent members of the congregation designated \$1,413.00 Choice dollars for use by our congregation.

In addition to iGive, donations can now be given to SOTH when shopping at smile.amazon.com. Many thanks to everyone who supports these revenue producing programs.

Wendy M. Whipple, Nurture Coordinator



## FELLOWSHIP ANNUAL REPORT 2018

### ***Fish & Chips Dinner – March 3, 2018***

Another successful event with 188 attending the event. However, attendance was down 24 from last year. This could be due to the timing of the event, which varies each year according to the Lent schedule. This year's event was moved up due to early Easter and St Patrick's Day falling on the weekend.

The donation to our outreach efforts came to \$1,784, which was down \$316 from the previous year. Again, our gift basket raffle was very successful, raising \$500 or 28% of dollars raised

### ***Oktoberfest – October 13, 2018***

This was a successful event and 71 people attended (which was 9 down from last year)

The proceeds from this event support our Thanksgiving Outreach – which concluded with a donation of \$731. The gift basket raffle was very successful, raising \$220, which was 31% of dollars raised for the outreach donation.

### ***Overview***

The events would not have been successful without the support of Barbara & Jack Robinson, Solveig & Ed Schunk, Bill Davis and Samantha Valtos. Thank you very much!!!

Great thanks to Barbara and Jack Robinson for leading the charge around town to secure donations for the gift basket raffles.

Future events would be possible with support from members of the congregation. These events are time consuming to plan and complicated to run. Support from others would make more events possible.

Expanded participation from the community would also expand our outreach mission. Get the events on your schedule early and invite a friend or neighbor.

Thanks for your support!

## SOCIAL OUTREACH REPORT 2018

**Trinity Faith Kitchen:** Our commitment is to provide a lunch meal for the 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday of each month We have struggled with volunteers to prepare the meal and sandwiches and always welcome folks at 6 PM on the Tuesday evening before the 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday.

The same can be said of our every other month commitment on the 1<sup>st</sup> Saturday. The youth continue to help with the Friday evening preparation. We could always use hands to serve at the Faith Kitchen on those Saturdays.

Thank also to Barbara Osborne for coordinating these dates and servant hands.

**Thanksgiving Outreach:** Working with Project Self-Sufficiency, we provided a week's worth of meals for twenty families in the greater Sussex County area. Thank you for your donations of money, turkeys, and time.

**Sparta Ecumenical Food Pantry:** We continue to collect food for the pantry, with a specific focus on the summer lunch meal program during the summer months. The food pantry is always in need of volunteers to staff the pantry when it is open as well as donations to purchase food in order to fill in the gaps. Shepherd of the Hills also needs to provide a contact person willing to attend the monthly meeting of the SEFP board.

**God's Work, Our Hands Sunday:** This past September, we focused our efforts on our furry friends in need. Kathy & Brian Walsh, representing Wrapped in Love – NE, came to share their experience in providing blankets, toys, and other homemade items with us. We had groups making bandanas, blankets, & toys. Some folks went to OSCAR to help prepare for a busy Sunday visit/adoption day.