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Living in Hope

Greetings in the Name of the One Who Loves Us Best,

As I sit and write this final installment on our church staff, I am struck by the simple fact that there are not enough adjectives to describe the true GIFT that Pam Etheridge is to Shepherd of the Valley Church.

For those of you who do not know who Pam is, she is our Church Office Administrator. Simply put, Pam is the behind-the-scenes Empress who makes things happen.

From ordering ALL the essential items needed to run the church to making sure that the food insecure in our communities are fed, Pam is on it. Are you in need of brainstorming ideas for new ministry initiatives? Pam will help you. Have a question regarding how to get all this “new” church tech to work with your home tech? Call Pam. She will help you figure it out.

Pam has a plethora of spiritual gifts suited for the task of Office Administrator but the one that is most important to me is that Pam is KIND. She has a heart for mission. She CARES about the people who come into SOV. In the year and a half that I have been at SOV I have benefited from Pam’s kindness. I have grown from her guided questions. I have learned from her seasoned experience. I have been blessed by her. All of us are blessed because of her!

In His Service,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Pastor Effie". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Pastor Effie

Shepherd of the Valley United Methodist Church Vision Statement

We are Shepherd of the Valley United Methodist Church, a multi-generational Christ community seeking to sing God’s spirit into the world by inviting all, serving all, loving all.

Shepherd of the Valley United Methodist Church
604 Seven Mile Road, Hope, RI 0283
Hope, RI 02831

Worship and Church School
Sunday, 10:00 a.m.

Office Hours: Monday - Thursday, 9:00-12:00

Phone: 821-8217 • Fax: 826-7787 • E-mail: office@sovumc.org • Web site: sovumc.org

Rev. Effie McAvoy

"Giving Up" for Lent

We often talk about "giving up" something for Lent, usually in the form of a non-essential pleasure such as chocolate, dessert, alcohol, etc. However, these sacrifices can also be in the form of prayer, fasting, and giving. This Lent, let's think about the giving option. Think about how you can make your giving this Lent a spiritual practice versus the superficial "giving up" of something you can easily live without. Do this prayerfully, offering a gift to God and your church in remembrance of all Jesus "gave." In giving to SOV (where our 2022 budget is being balanced by shorting our mission shares), you will know that your gift will go to the greater church and the good we do locally and in the world. Make this the Lent you "give up" in a deeper, more meaningful way.

You can simply increase your regular giving by 10%, or here are some other ideas of how you can increase your regular gift for the six weeks of Lent: Add up the cost of that daily cup of coffee you buy at the local coffee shop or convenience store and give that amount to the church. Since some of our activities may still be limited by the pandemic, give the money you might have spent on going out, shopping, or other non-essential purchases. Or, throw your spare change, even singles, into a jar and make that your Lenten gift. Make your gift by writing a check to SOV, or by using the Lenten Fund on your Vanco account. Thank you for thinking about the Giving Option for this Lent this year.

CHURCH BREAKFAST

Saturday, March 19th
8:00-11:00 a.m.

Full breakfast for \$10.00 for adults,
\$5.00 children under 5

Reservations at:
[Breakfast Fundraiser](#)

Sponsored by SOV Trustees
Please see attached flyer for full information

Shepherd of the Valley 2022 Budget Commentary

The 2022 budget for Shepherd of the Valley (attached to this email) shows a deficit of \$30,000. Please keep in mind that we have had significant deficit budgets in three of the past four years. The pandemic has clearly affected our financial well-being. The number of families that give (and give generously!) to our church has diminished and it is particularly difficult to attract new members during these trying times. Consideration was given by the Church Council to further reducing our expenses, but it was decided that doing so would imperil our ability to grow membership as we come out of the pandemic. This budget will allow us to fund our pastor's pension, but does not permit us to make any payments toward our \$30,000 mission shares commitment (the non-pension piece) to the New England Conference. Any betterment of this budget will go toward Mission Shares payments. (Mission shares is our contribution to the larger church. Combined with mission shares from other churches, they fund mission projects at the local, New England, national, and international levels.)

The attached exhibit displays details for the 2022 budget including the projection for 2021 and actual 2020 data for comparison purposes. In 2022 revenues are expected to be about equal to prior year. Giving to the general fund is based on pledges and historical giving by those that opt not to pledge. Other revenue sources are expected to be consistent with recent history.

Expenses are budgeted to increase by \$13,000 over 2021. The most significant increases are for leadership of the music ministry and expense reimbursement (travel and professional development) for the pastor and Sandy, our Certified Lay Minister. There are a host of modest increases in a variety of expense categories that are contributing to the overall increase. Those increases are principally inflationary.

Upcoming Events

Women in Spiritual Harmony (WISH)

WISH is doing *Plenty Good Room*, A Lenten Bible Study Based on African American Spirituals by Marilyn E. Thornton with Lewis V. Baldwin. The product description is as follows: "African American spirituals have been called the earliest sacred music of the United States. Originating during the time of slavery and passed down from generation to generation, these songs transcend theological interpretations and offer deep spiritual truths.

Plenty Good Room is a Lenten Bible Study of six of these African American spirituals providing participants with an opportunity to reflect on the history and context of the lyrics. Take time to reflect on the stories, Bible readings, and songs themselves to deepen your knowledge and understanding of the past and to hear eternal truths through song. Spirituals include:

- *Ev'ry Time I Feel the Spirit*
- *Jesus Walked this Lonesome Valley*
- *Po' Mou'ner's Got a Home at Last*
- *Plenty Good Room*
- *Ain't-a-Dat Good News?*
- *Were You There?"*
-

The study will start either on March 2 or March 9 depending on when books are available to the group. WISH meets via Zoom on Wednesday from 9:30 to 11:00 a.m.

Wednesday Wisdom Seekers

The Wednesday Wisdom Seekers will be taking a break during Lent. Wisdom Seekers are welcome to join the Lenten Soup and Soul program until we resume our study after Lent.

Ash Wednesday

This year Ash Wednesday is on March 2nd. We have two options:

- Between 7:00 and 9:00 a.m., receive your ashes and communion in the parking lot without even getting out of your car.
- At 6:00 p.m. you are invited to come for a short service in the Hope Room with scripture, prayers, ashes, and communion.

Sign Language Choir Returns!

The Sign Language Choir will start meeting again on Sunday, March 6th, from 9:15 to 9:45 a.m. All are welcome to join!

Soup and Soul

Soup and Soul, our annual Lenten study program, will start on March 9th and run through Lent. We'll gather together (in person and virtually) at 6:00 p.m. to enjoy soup, bread, and dessert. We will be using the book *Good Enough* by Kate Bowler and Jessica Richie, available on Amazon, Barnes and Noble, or your locally owned bookstore. (If you wish to take part and cannot afford the text, please contact Pastor Effie directly.) This study will enable us to more fully



appreciate and engage with our Communal Worship Theme for Lent (see below). Here's the link to sign up to bring soup, bread, or dessert: [Soup & Soul Meal Signup](#)

Fellowship Time

Fellowship time is back! On the first Sunday of each month, starting March 6th, fellowship time will be held following worship. Please come for food and fellowship. To sign up to host, contact Sandy Knapp.



United Methodist Women (UMW)

The UMW will meet on Thursday, March 17th from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at the church. Our prayer and Self-Denial program is "Love, Justice and Service: Answering the Call". The program will educate us of the important work the lay Order of Deaconess and Home Missioners are throughout the world. A special offering will be taken to support the education and training of deaconesses and home missioners who work in ministries of love, justice, and service, as well as retired deaconesses. All women are invited to attend our meetings. You are welcome to bring a lunch.

Church Breakfast

The trustees will be sponsoring a church breakfast fundraiser on March 19th from 8:00 to 11:00 a.m. The breakfast will feature scrambled eggs, sausage, pancakes, home fries, fruit cup, coffee cake, juice, tea, and coffee all for the advance price of \$10.00 for adults and \$5.00 for kids ten and under. (Door price is \$12.00 for adults and \$5.00 for kids.) Reservations can be made online or by calling the Church Office at 401-821-8217.

Communications Survey

Thank you to all who responded to our Communications Survey. Your input will be very helpful as we look both at what we currently do and how well it works, as well as look to the changes and improvements we might make.

To summarize the results, you rated the Circuit Rider, weekly emailed announcements, and worship almost evenly as “very important” or “important.” These were distantly followed by meetings, word of mouth, social media, and the website. We noted that of major social media platforms, Facebook is used most often by respondents with YouTube second (perhaps because of streamed worship). We also appreciate your comments and will use those as we move forward. Of our respondents, 69.5% were 65+, 26.1% were between 41 and 65, and 4.3% were between 26 and 40.

We will be administering the survey separately to our Youth Group to solicit how this age group likes to be communicated with, and will most likely do a follow-up survey with the whole congregation this spring to gather additional feedback and ideas.

**CIRCUIT RIDER
INPUT DUE
MARCH 21ST**



Regular Events

Editor's Note: SOV has a number of regular meetings and events, listed below. Unless otherwise noted, these will occur via Zoom. All meetings and events are subject to current RI COVID regulations governing gatherings. If you have something you'd like included in this section, please email me at belllomb@cox.net.

Hannah Bell-Lombardo

- **Sign Language Choir**—Rehearsals will be held Sunday mornings at the church starting March 6th before worship from 9:15 to 9:45.
- **Sunday School**—Sunday School will be held during worship on all but the first Sundays of the month. Children will attend the first part of service with their families before being dismissed to class.
- **Communion Sunday**—Pastor Effie will be offering communion during worship the first Sunday of each month. If you would like to participate remotely, have some juice and some kind of bread or cracker which she will bless during worship.
- **Youth Group**—This group meets monthly from 6:00 to 7:00 p.m. at the church. It is open to those in middle through high school. See “Youth and Family Ministry” for details.
- **Knitting Ministry**—The Knitting Ministry meets the 2nd Tuesday of the month at 1:00 at the church, subject to COVID restrictions. See additional information on this ministry in this edition.
- **Women in Spiritual Harmony**—WISH meets Wednesdays from 9:30 to 11:00 a.m. via Zoom.
- **Wednesday Wisdom Seekers**—This group meets Wednesdays via Zoom from 6:30 to 8:00 p.m. This group will not meet during Lent, from March 2nd through April 13th.
- **United Methodist Women**—The UMW meets the third Thursday of the month from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.
- **Men's Fellowship Breakfast**—This group meets at 6:00 a.m. at the Phenix Square Restaurant. We will meet on March 11th and 25th.

Worship Information

- We have returned to in-person worship, guidelines and safety permitting. No reservations are required.
- The church building will open at 9:30 a.m.
- Masks will be worn while inside the church building.
Practice social distancing where possible.
- Follow the instructions of the ushers as you are seated at the beginning of service and again as they assist you in leaving the sanctuary.
- There are no printed bulletins—words and music are projected on the screens at the front of the church. You are welcome to print out and bring your own bulletin.
- Please do not congregate in the narthex or other church spaces either before or after worship. Visit with others outside.
- Fellowship time will be held the first Sunday of each month after worship. Come join us for food and fellowship.



Even though mask requirements are changing in many places, we will continue to wear masks.

WE at SOV want everyone to feel welcome, including our youngest members who have not yet been able to be vaccinated.

Worship will continue to be streamed on YouTube, and Facebook using the links below:

YouTube link:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCq6OxG9rThiQ9GeUqekdEjQ>

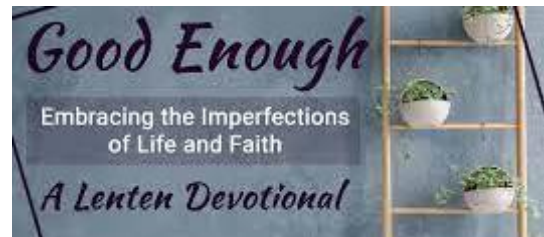
Facebook link:

<https://www.facebook.com/shepherdofthevalleyri>

Zoom will continue to be utilized for group meetings and studies, but not for worship. Contact Sandy Knapp for availability at sknapp719@icloud.com.

Lenten Worship Series

Our Lenten worship series is “Good Enough: Embracing the Imperfections of Life and Faith.” We live in a culture bent on definitions of a good life as continuous upward mobility—climbing ladders of prosperity with increasingly fabulous experiences that we can post to ever-more-likable social media accounts. We may comb the shelves of the self-help section in search of just the right formula to gain success. Perhaps we even gravitate towards spiritual leaders who promise great rewards if we only do “the right thing.” But life happens, right? Most times we are not moving upward but trying to repair the rung we’ve just slipped from. So what if we stopped climbing and started fertilizing, watering, and blooming right where we find ourselves? Welcome to a Lent of affirming a faith in which we are blessed, regardless, and where we can lean into embracing our “good enough” lives.



Help Wanted

Audio-Visual Ministry

If you are interested in the audio-visual side of our worship services are filmed, Mike and Sandy would love to show you how easy it is to run a Sunday service. If you think you would like to learn more or just come and watch how it works, contact Sandy Knapp.

sknapp719@icloud.com

Music Ministry

Share your music talents! The SOV choir continues to record in person (physically distanced) for upcoming worship services. If you would like to add your musical talents to the Sunday worship service, please contact Sandy Knapp sknapp719@icloud.com

Ministry of the Month: Knitting

Editor's note: SOV has many missions, groups, and ministries that may not be well known. Starting this month with the Knitting Ministry, we will be featuring one of these each month as our "Ministry of the Month." Many thanks to Linda Osborne for this article.

In addition, please see a special "Caring and Sharing: Knitting Ministries" section below which shows the different ways this group is touching our community.

*Hannah Bell-Lombardo
belllomb@cox.net*

The Knitting Ministry has resumed our in-person meetings, but have always continued knitting during the course of Covid. We recently sent along five packages to members on our visitation list with more to go out soon. Also the ministry has made numerous hats, scarfs, and pocket prayer shawls over the last couple of months.

We want to take this opportunity to thank so many people, some nameless. We often open our bins of completed projects and find new ones there lovingly made by 'knitting angels'. Thank you for your gifts of time and love. We can always use those beautiful, finished items to expand our ability to give them out. To all those folks who have dropped off knitting supplies including yarn, needles, and knitting books, thank you for thinking of us. We appreciate and use as much as possible! For the moment, because of your generosity, our stash of supplies is overflowing so we don't presently have room for any more donations. We will be sure to let you know when our cupboard is getting bare as all you gave has been so helpful!

Our meetings are on the second Tuesday of the month from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m. We would LOVE to have more join our group. It is a fun time of sharing as we sit and knit on our current projects. There is nothing like the admiration and tips from our fellow knitters to keep us motivated and enthused. Interested in joining us? Please email Linda Osborne at lrohello@verizon.net or Sue

Kizlinski at susankiz1130@gmail.com. We will be in contact with you.

Can't knit? We are more than willing to help you learn. We have some basic patterns as well as some more complicated ones.

We also want to thank Pam who is always more than willing to help. She prepares the room and makes new labels for us at almost a moment's notice. She faithfully kept track of us during Covid to create a contact list in case one was needed. Also thanks goes to Loxi Ellingwood who has generously agreed to deliver many of our items and also is a wonderful source of who is in need. Thanks also to Pastor Effie who has also delivered some of our packages. This is the most necessary step in our final projects and we so appreciate their assistance.

Many of us find knitting is a wonderful time for rest and meditation. It can have such a soothing yet connected effect on us. Give it a try, no strings attached (little pun there).

Caring and Sharing: Knitting Ministry

Veterans Affairs Thanks

On behalf of the residents and administration of the Rhode Island Veterans Home, I would like to thank Shepherd of the Valley United Methodist Church for your wonderful pocket prayer throws. What a lovely idea! It is people like you who make the holidays special for our residents. We appreciate your kindness. Many thanks for thinking of us. Take care and be safe.

Alyssa Boyle
Supervisor of Therapeutic Activities

Scituate Teachers

This year the Prayer Shawl Ministry joined with The Scituate Prevention Coalition and the SADD club to show love to the teachers at the Scituate High School and Middle School for the month of February. Their lovely knitted offerings were included in goodie bags of sweet treats and put in the boxes of the educators. This effort was a

means to render support to these community members who have had to work in increasingly stressful situations for the past 2+ years. (And if you hadn't noticed, the church sign was changed to promote that love for the teachers too!)

Thank you, Prayer Shawl Ministry. You continue to touch lives each and every day!

Outreach and Knitting Ministries Thanks

A great big THANK YOU to the Knitting Ministry for the wonderfully warm and cozy soft afghan, and to Loxi for delivering the gift! It is greatly appreciated! Thinking of all of you always.

Love and prayers,
Dennis Grenier

Caring and Sharing

Dorcas International Refugee Initiative

As our monthly mission project, we're still collecting items for Dorcas International's Clothing Collaborative & Refugee Resource Center. If you have donations, please bring to the church on Sunday or drop them off with Lois. Lois can be reached at loebrown9@gmail for more information.

Thank you from Sandy

Thank you! I am very touched by the love and support you having given me in my call to ministry here at SOV. The letters, cards, emails, and kind words will be held close to my heart. Blessings to each of you.

Your sister in Christ.
Sandy Knapp - Certified Lay Minister

Souper Bowl Thanks

Thank you for all for helping with our first Souper Bowl Sunday Fundraiser put on by the youth group! Huge thank you to Pastor Effie and Mary Hunter for cooking and shopping!

From Robert Firby (former pastor)

Recently you had a picture of the old pipe organ that someone visited in S. Carolina. It was rehabbed originally in 1970 when moved from Phenix UMC. The old Hope organ went to the

University of Rhode Island—not sure if it is still there.

Thanks for posting an old sermon of mine in your church history—delivered after I left when I was invited to preach at the N. Scituate Baptist Church because the driveway was being repaired.

Recently Nancy Clark sent me a copy of the service of Consecration from 11 July 1971. Fabulous! The Bishop JK Matthews, DS CD White, Catholic clergy and important church members. What a delightful 50 p memory.

Robert Firby
31 January 2022

Shut-Ins

We have a number of shut-ins who could use a phone call, card, note, or delivery. Contact Pastor Effie or the church office if you can help.

Socks, Mittens, Hats and Gloves Needed

The UMW will be collecting winter hats, mittens, socks and gloves for Project Outreach, a ministry closely aligned with Shepherd of the Valley. A large box will be placed in the narthex of the church. Thank you for your support!

Save Your Pop-Tabs!

Keep saving your pop-tabs (soda or soup cans, etc.), putting them in the box in the kitchen, for the Ronald McDonald house in Providence.

Magazines Needed

Please save your old magazines. AJ, one of our church children, relieves stress by tearing magazines and needs more given the increased tension of these times. Please bring your old magazines to the church. We will be sure to get them to AJ.

Food Insecurity

If you know of someone who is experiencing food insecurity, we can help! The only requirement for access to our food pantry is need. Food pick-up is usually on Wednesdays, but other arrangements can be made if needed. Food allergies and issues are accommodated. Call the office for sign-up. All requests are confidential.

Shepherd's Pantry

Thank you for your continued support of the Food Pantry. We need jelly, peanut butter, pasta and sauce. Gift cards to help with things like milk, fruit, and meat (or cards that can also be used for gas) would be greatly appreciated. Running low on boxes...omputer paper boxes are the ideal size.

Social Media

Social media sites, such as Facebook, are becoming an invaluable way to connect with others during this time of self-isolation and social distancing. To join, go to www.facebook.com/r.php, input the appropriate information, and click "Sign Up." Use the search function to find the Shepherd of the Valley page and follow what we're posting.

Subscribe to SOV's YouTube Channel

Please subscribe to SOV's you tube channel if you want to keep up to date when something is happening at the church.

- First open YouTube, then type "Shepherd of the Valley UMC" in the search box. You'll see the "Subscribe" button (see illustration below).
- Click on that, and then "Allow" in the drop-down notifications box.

There is no cost involved for you and you will not be added to any kind of list. All this subscription does is notify you when SOV has posted something. If you have any questions, feel free to contact Sandy Knapp



Shepherd of the Valley UMC

83 videos

44 subscribers



Youth/Family News

Family Sunday

The kids will be staying in church starting March 6th and each first Sunday of the month for Family Sunday.

Youth Group

The Youth Group will meet once a month instead of every Sunday for planned activities. Keep an eye out in the circuit rider as well as your emails for each month's activity. In March, we will be going bowling!

Family Fun Night

Family Fun Night will be March 25th from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. Please bring your own dinner; beverages and dessert will be provided.

Palm Sunday Parade

There will be a parade during church service on Palm Sunday for the kids! Each kid will get a shaker or two to shake and shout Hosanna to celebrate!

Easter Egg Hunt

There will be an Easter Egg Hunt after church on April 10th. Please bring your own basket/bag (we will have extra if needed) and meet in Fellowship Hall with your adults after service

Office Notes

Church Event/Fundraising Calendar

We now have a master calendar to coordinate events, mission projects and fundraisers. Let Pam know your planned dates ASAP to secure your slot.

Address Updates

If you're new to the church, have moved or gone south for the winter, or gotten a new phone number or email address, please drop Pam a note (office@sovumc.necoxmail.com)

Announcements and Prayer Lists

Please have your announcements sent to Pam no later than Tuesday for the following Sunday. Announcements should be brief (expanded

versions should be sent to Hannah for the Circuit Rider.) Names for the Prayer List should also be sent to her with a notation for those who are long-term.

Zoom and Room Scheduling

Requests for use of the church's Zoom account should be sent to Sandy Knapp at sknapp719@icloud.com. Room schedules for small groups should be scheduled through Pam in the church office.

Fundraisers and Mission Projects

If you are collecting items or sponsoring a fundraiser, PLEASE let the church office know so your efforts are coordinated with and don't overlap other projects and fundraisers.

Church Council

Minutes:

January 24, 2022

Church Council members present via Zoom included Lisa Marciniak, Mary Hunter, Sandy Knapp, Beth Travers, Sue Dyl, John Lombardo, Mike Knapp, and Barbara Walz. Also present were Pastor Effie McAvoy and congregational members Rob and Marti Bower.

Sandy called the meeting to order at 6:33 where we started out by sharing our joys and concerns.

The new leadership report (copy available on request) was presented and unanimously approved. Committee members who served in 2021 were thanked. We still need a chair for Stewardship and a second lay leader.

John presented the budget (copy available on request), noting that the numbers had changed slightly from those presented to Finance in December as Howard Gay had revised the general giving up about \$2,000. Other revenue numbers are based on recent history and conservative projections on income from the Art Festival and Holiday Fair. On expenses, our mission shares

and insurance numbers are from the Conference, and compensation from Staff Parish Relations Committee. Utilities are higher due to expected increases in energy costs, and giving to local organizations was increased by \$25 each. Our program budget and miscellaneous expenses are based on recent history. The net result is a deficit of about \$34,000, some of which we can cover by not paying the non-pension portion of mission shares (about \$29,000). This would leave us with a \$1500 deficit. John noted that we did short 2021 mission shares in December ending the year \$8,000 short. We have exhausted our PPP money and have no other cushion except our \$5,000 reserve.

John noted that we need to maintain the expenses we have in order to grow, and that there is no meaningful way of reducing expenses without impacting church ministries. Effie raised concerns about the music program and our ability to continue with Delbert (current temporary organist and choir director). She also noted that the pastoral reimbursement amount (travel, education, etc.) is set by the Conference and can't be reduced. John agreed to put the \$7900 (\$4000 for Effie and \$3900 for Sandy) back in the budget. We also had a discussion on how music could be done differently given the current budget situation. It was suggested that Effie, Sandy, the choir, and the Worship Committee work together to examine alternatives. Effie and Sandy will do what is necessary without a choir director. A motion was made and seconded to approve the budget, with revisions, and was approved by majority vote.

In other business, we discussed how to get people engaged in digital worship, utilizing the chat function, etc. Sue requested that anyone with ideas on how to get people back into church once we return to in-person worship to please let her know.

Next meeting will be on 2/28 at 6:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Hannah Bell-Lombardo