

SOUTH HOLLAND

January | February 2025

Living



State of the Village 2024

VILLAGE OF SOUTH HOLLAND

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**BLACK
HISTORY
MONTH**
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The Village of South Holland celebrates
Black History Month this February!
View our visual displays throughout town
and at southholland.org.





Mayor's Coffee

**Thursday, March 13
7:30am**

**South Holland Community Center
501 E. 170th Street**

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State OF THE Village

LOOKING BACK AT PROGRESS
MADE AND FORWARD TO 2025
AND BEYOND

FROM THE DESK OF MAYOR DON A. DE GRAFF:

Dear Residents and Friends,

As I sit here and look at the snow canvassing our South Holland landscape, it's hard to believe we are again at the beginning of another new year. It wasn't too long ago that 2025 seemed a long way off into our future. As we turn the page on another calendar year, we are reminded of how time moves so quickly.

Yet, as it does, we in South Holland are grateful to be able to look back and see how far we've come as a unique Village. Why? I believe that by our emphasis on Faith and Family values, and prioritizing our "Coming Together" as a community, we are able to experience, even now, the beginnings of a bright Future of opportunity.

In this 2025 "State of the Village" issue, we're able to take a look over our shoulder to remember and appreciate our experiences and the growing relationships we've developed with each other during this very progressive past year.

With 2024 now in the rearview mirror, I am thankful to report that the State of the Village of South Holland is excellent! In fact, in my opinion, we have never been stronger and more united as a Village and as the Community of South Holland in our 178-year history!

South Holland has not only maintained our strong financial base, but we have built upon it by annually balancing our budget and doing so in a consistent manner that provides for the highest level of public safety and essential services anywhere in the Chicagoland region.

I am further thankful to report that we have developed what I believe is the strongest leadership team and employment base in our history as a Village.

Our strategic plan, "Coming Together 2030," has certainly played a key role in our progress as a Village, having now completed its second full year. As we enter year three, let's take a look back together at how, in 2024, we have come together for many memorable events and to share in remarkable progress. Not standing still for a moment, in this issue we will also look forward to some new opportunities, experiences, and facilities we are planning, allowing us to envision and get a little foretaste of the excitement that 2025 has in store for us.



Mayor De Graff and the Village Board of Trustees



Mayor De Graff and Deputy Administrator Pat Mahon pose at the custom South Holland sign with Mary Patchin and Kim Kisowski of Visit Chicago Southland.



New Waste Disposal Vendor, Homewood Disposal

NEW WASTE DISPOSAL VENDOR AND CARTS

Last spring, to best serve you as residents, the Village selected a new vendor for waste and recycling collection. The new vendor, Homewood Disposal, has provided consistently excellent service in the months since the switch and they are getting high marks from residents. In addition to getting a new vendor, all new carts were provided to every home. The previous patchwork of carts has been replaced by a unified appearance at the curb on garbage days. Thank you for your patience and cooperation during that transition.

CUSTOM SOUTH HOLLAND SIGN

The Village partnered with Visit Chicago Southland (VCS) to create a beautiful custom 3D sign for South Holland. A VCS grant covered the full \$15,000 cost. The sign made its debut at the Fun Run 5K in September, where it served as an attractive photo backdrop for race participants. It will return this summer and fall at various Village-wide events.

LEAD SERVICE LINES

The State of Illinois has mandated that all lead and galvanized pipes that bring drinking water into homes be replaced. It is estimated that about 800 South Holland homes have those lead pipes. The Village has received limited grant funding, courtesy of the Illinois EPA, to replace as many lines as possible. The average cost to replace a lead service line is \$10,000, but South Holland homeowners can have that cost entirely covered. This is a three-year program that began in 2024. More than 130 lead service lines have already been replaced. When homeowners are contacted by the Village, they are encouraged to sign up while the funding is available. The second year of the program begins in May of 2025. Visit gettheleadoutil.com for more information.

LOOKING AHEAD

FAMILY ATHLETIC CENTER

Plans are underway to build something exciting and new for South Holland youth and families. A Family Athletic Center will be home to a state-of-the-art facility with indoor turf fields for soccer, baseball, football, and more. In addition, there will be options for basketball, tennis, and pickleball. To be located in the heart of Town Center, across the street from Veterans Memorial Park, this Center will be a hub of activity and a space to invest in our youth for many years to come. It will be a special place to bring families and the broader community together around sporting activities. The groundbreaking is expected to occur in April.



Family Athletic Center Concept Sketch



RECORD-BREAKING COMMUNITY INVESTMENT

The Community Development Department issued over 1,500 building permits for property projects in 2024. That means residents and businesses invested an amazing \$29 million into their properties. That is an increase of 38% from 2023. These investments have a significant impact in maintaining the quality of the community. The most common permits issued were for roof work, fences, windows, paving, solar panels, and remodeling projects. Permits ensure that work is performed by licensed and bonded contractors to protect residents, and that it's done to modern safety and construction codes.

NOTABLE NEW BUSINESSES/EXPANSIONS

2024 brought exciting new developments in the commercial and business sector. Some of the notables include Unity Christian Academy (UCA), which opened its winter semester at its new campus in the former Holy Ghost facility at 170th and Cottage Grove. UCA transformed this campus into a modern high school facility for its growing student body. State Street Repair (which repairs lawnmowers, snowblowers, and other small engines....as well as sells a full retail line of outdoor power equipment) expanded into a building at 16545 State St after relocating from the former hardware store on South Park Ave. The Village welcomed La Quinta Inn at 610 Tollview Dr. This property received a full interior and exterior renovation in its transformation from a Clarion Inn.

PERMITS AND LICENSES NOW ONLINE

To increase convenience for residents and businesses, applications for building permits and various annual licenses can now be submitted online. This new online portal allows users to apply, pay, obtain documents, and check status from the convenience of their desk or portable device. It has already become hugely popular with residents, businesses, landlords, and contractors. You can visit elementsconnect.southholland.org or navigate to the appropriate license or permit division on the Village's website, southholland.org. For assistance with these applications, you can visit the Customer Service Center next to Village Hall.



PERMIT FEE VACATION

To make it more enticing for homeowners to engage in a remodeling or construction project, the Village held its first-ever Permit Fee Vacation in July 2024. This promotion waived permit fees for most remodeling and construction projects for owner-occupied homes. More than 40 projects were undertaken, saving residents a combined \$6,633 in permit fees. The Village looks forward to offering this Vacation promotion again in 2025, with a date to be announced soon.



LOOKING AHEAD

FAÇADE GRANTS

We're always looking for ways to enhance the appearance of our commercial corridors, and that effort is taking on new momentum with the Village's Building Façade Improvement Grant. Numerous businesses are currently going through the design and construction process to enhance the exterior of their buildings. Construction is underway at Continental Pancake House and at the coming Boost Mobile store, next to Aldi, while other businesses are finalizing designs. The Village has also rolled out a Landscape Improvement Grant for 2025.

TOWN CENTER MASTER PLAN UPDATE

There was a time when Metra explored a commuter train station in Town Center. The Village carefully planned for that project. Because Metra has turned its focus to repairing its existing system instead of expanding it, the Town Center plan is being updated to envision new opportunities. The coming Family Athletic Center will be an anchor for activity and will foster new exciting developments in the area. There will be infrastructure improvements as well. Watch for updates on this in the coming months.

ONLINE POLICE REPORTS

The Police Department has implemented a new convenience feature for residents with its new online police report program. This allows residents to file reports for incidents such as property damage, theft, and lost property from the comfort of their homes by use of a smart device or computer. These are reports that residents often need for submitting an insurance claim, and they don't necessarily require a police investigation. Once submitted, the user can print the report for their records. In addition to being convenient for residents, it makes it more likely that these types of incidents will be reported, leading to a safer community.

HIGH-TECH DRONE

Our Village has a long history of being proactive in implementing new technologies, especially in law enforcement. It's part of the reason that we remain a safe community. In 2024, we acquired a state-of-the-art drone specifically designed for police work. This advanced drone effectively serves as an additional first responder. We use it for high-priority calls in progress, locating missing persons, managing special events, capturing footage of traffic accidents to aid investigators in understanding the scene, and more. The drone can be deployed in under 45 seconds and can travel at speeds of up to 45 mph, enabling it to arrive at accident or incident scenes, sometimes ahead of our officers. Once on site, the drone operator can relay real-time information to first responders en route to the scene.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Our police officers and civilian staff have a strong commitment to staying connected with residents. 2024 was another great year for that. For example, the popular bi-annual Bingo event was held where seniors played Bingo, enjoyed a meal, and won prizes. The Police Department also hosted a back-to-school backpack giveaway, providing nearly 200 backpacks to South Holland students, preparing them for the incoming school year with important classroom essentials.

LOOKING AHEAD

In 2025, the Police Department has plans to enhance its community engagement by collaborating with community members who have loved ones with autism and/or other cognitive disabilities. Watch for details in the coming months.

As in years past, the Police Department will continue to set the standard within the south suburbs by utilizing new technology to keep our residents safe and to solve crimes. This year, we will continue this trend by acquiring new digital tools.





New Ambulance

NEW LIFESAVING TECHNOLOGY

Our commitment to life-saving technology continued in 2024, with the purchase of a new Zoll cardiac heart monitor, which continuously monitors patients' heart rhythm and automatically detects and records any irregular findings while en route to the hospital. This advanced monitor assists with resuscitation efforts when required.

FLEET ENHANCEMENTS

We added a newly refurbished ambulance to our fleet in October. This has become our second busiest ambulance, responding to over 2,400 emergency calls annually.

We purchased this vehicle new in 2015. Last year, it was sent out for refurbishment by the Osage Ambulance Company at a cost of \$170,000. If we were to purchase a brand-new ambulance, the cost would have been upwards of \$400,000, so we were able to save our taxpayers more than \$200,000.

The ambulance is filled with life-saving equipment such as the new Zoll Cardiac Monitor referenced above, a mechanical CPR device, and a battery-operated cot with auto-load, which provides patients with a smoother transition into and out of the ambulance.

INCREASED STAFF POSITIONS

In 2024, to keep up with the call volume, we have expanded our staffing. This increase ensures we are prepared to deploy a third Advanced Life Support (ALS) ambulance or an additional ALS fire engine as circumstances require.



New Fire Station Addition

LOOKING AHEAD

In December, the Village Board approved a much-needed expansion of Fire Station 1 at the municipal complex. The 3,000-square-foot addition will enhance classroom training areas, community outreach space, offices, living accommodations, and will provide a dedicated workout area to support firefighter health and safety. An additional garage and storage space will accommodate emergency vehicles and equipment, meeting current and future needs.

In addition, in 2025, we will advance plans for a state-of-the-art live-fire training facility. This facility will be located behind the Library and will serve as a regional hub for specialized training. Having a regional training center on our campus ensures that our personnel remain in the Village and ready to respond to emergencies.



New Fire Training Facility



PICKLEBALL COURT BENCHES

As the popularity of pickleball increases, the Village is committed to enhancing the amenities available at our pickleball courts in Paarlberg Park. This year, the Public Works Facility Maintenance Crew built and installed three covered benches outside the courts. These benches provide a comfortable, shaded spot for players and visitors to relax while waiting for an open court.

GATEWAY ENTRANCE PLANTINGS

In the Village's ongoing efforts to beautify the gateway entries into South Holland, we have added two evergreen groves along Route 6—at the railroad tracks near Vandustrial Lane, and at the entry sign at Woodlawn East, just off the expressway. The addition of these trees provides attractive greenery all year long at two of our most visible entry points in the village.

FLEET MAINTENANCE GARAGE IMPROVEMENTS

Following the opening of the new Public Works building on Rt. 6, the Village began remodeling the former Public Works garage into a new Fleet Maintenance Garage. This newly updated facility is where the majority of the vehicles across all departments are now serviced, making us much more efficient in managing all of these vehicles. The team of mechanics that work in this facility do amazing work and keep our fleet safe and well-maintained. As a result, we do not need to replace squad cars, dump trucks, pick-up trucks, etc., as frequently.

LOOKING AHEAD

One of the Village's Clean, Bright, and Beautiful initiatives for 2025 is to upgrade the façade of the railroad viaduct on State Street. This Spring, the Public Works Department will be pressure washing and painting the concrete, replacing the guardrail with decorative fencing, and upgrading the sidewalk infrastructure.

NEW REGISTRATION SOFTWARE

To more effectively and efficiently serve our residents, we have implemented a new registration software for recreational programming. The user-friendly SmartRec system facilitates quicker Fitness Center check-ins and gives Fitness Center members easier access to their membership details. It provides a smooth registration process for those who sign up for classes and programs at the Community Center. To further improve residents' digital experience, we aligned the launch of the SmartRec system with the launch of our brand-new website, recservices.southholland.org.

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

In 2024, we implemented a new way to keep our guests and members abreast of all happenings at the Community Center, with our new monthly newsletter, SHRS Highlights. It features announcements, new and popular programs, employee highlights, and photos from our latest events.





GLASS BACKBOARDS/SCI-FIT BIKES

We further enhanced our amenities in 2024 when we replaced all of the basketball backboards, transitioning from steel to high-quality glass to improve the playing experience. Responding to feedback from our members, we also added two more state-of-the-art Sci-Fit bikes to the Fitness Center.

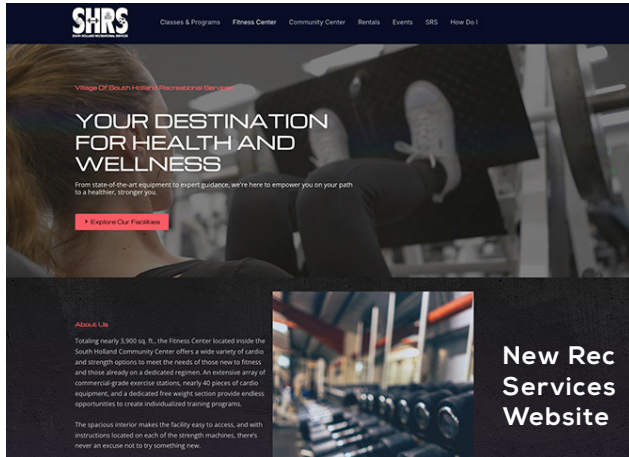
LOOKING AHEAD

NFL FLAG FOOTBALL

As a complement to our current Major League Baseball offering of Pitch, Hit and Run, this year we are partnering with NFL Flag Football to host a flag football league here in South Holland. NFL Flag will provide area youth in grades K-8 with an opportunity to learn the game, understand teamwork, and showcase their football skills. The inaugural season begins in March. Visit recservices.southholland.org to sign up!

PICKLEBALL CLASS/TOURNAMENT

The sport that's sweeping the nation is fully entrenched in South Holland. In addition to our outdoor pickleball courts at Paarlberg Park and our indoor courts at the Community Center, the Recreational Services Department has enhanced its pickleball offerings for 2025. This year we are hosting an instructional class for beginners, as well as a pickleball tournament for players of all levels.



NEW RECREATIONAL SERVICES WEBSITE

We recently launched an enhanced website for the Rec. Services Dept. that highlights all of the available offerings at the Community Center. This interactive site is vibrant and user-friendly, making it easier than ever to become a Fitness Center member, sign up for recreational classes and programs, rent a facility, and more. You can view the new website at recservices.southholland.org.

CT CONNECT EMAIL

As a part of the Village's Coming Together 2030 plan, we have created a quarterly email that shares the many stories of how South Holland groups and residents have 'come together' to form valuable partnerships and improve community life. Each of the five key groups in Coming Together 2030—churches, schools, businesses, service organizations, and neighborhood leaders—along with Village departments, are featured in the newsletter. If you'd like to receive the CT Connect, you can sign up by visiting southholland.org/comingtogether.



Winter Wonderland Fireworks



EVENT UPGRADES

The year 2024 was a successful year for Village events, many of which saw record-setting participation and new features! In June, the Village partnered with the South Holland Ministerial Association for its first Juneteenth event at Veterans Memorial Park. (This year's event takes place June 21.) The Fun Run 5K welcomed its highest number of participants yet, and guests at Winter Wonderland were treated to a special, quick fireworks display when Santa entered the park. We look forward to another year of connecting with the community through our special events.

LOOKING AHEAD

The Communications Department is undertaking several new projects to better engage with residents and to enhance community life overall. We are creating materials for new residents so they have all of the info they need at their fingertips; assembling an anti-litter campaign to keep our streets clean, bright and beautiful; and embarking on an exciting new public art project! Details on all of these ventures will be shared over the coming months. Visit southholland.org/intheknow to stay updated on these and other Village announcements.

My Reflections

FROM
MAYOR DON DE GRAFF



As your Mayor, Village Board, and Administration, we are all so very thankful for the opportunity to serve our great Village of South Holland, Illinois. It's clear from this issue that we have shared many memories from 2024, and that there's much more in store for us to look forward to in 2025.

South Holland's "Coming Together 2030" strategic plan has a mission that is designed to create ideas to serve each other. Its method is to identify more and more ways to connect and communicate with each other. As we connect with the intent to serve each other, we are

becoming even more motivated each time we meet to enhance each other's lives and to enrich the lives of all of our fellow South Hollanders.

That's what being a true community is all about and that's who we are in South Holland! After these initial two years of serving and connecting as a community, we're off and running.

There's a reference in the Bible that shares the recipe for success, not only for a newly growing church but for how people of like mind and similar values can be built up into a successful community.

Hebrews 10:24-25 serves as a meaningful theme for us as we continue our mission to serve each other, to connect in meaningful ways, and to enhance each other's lives into true community:

"Let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near."

Henry Ford, the well-known American industrialist and pioneer, was attributed these meaningful words, which also serve as a recipe for progress and our success as a community:

"Coming together is a beginning,

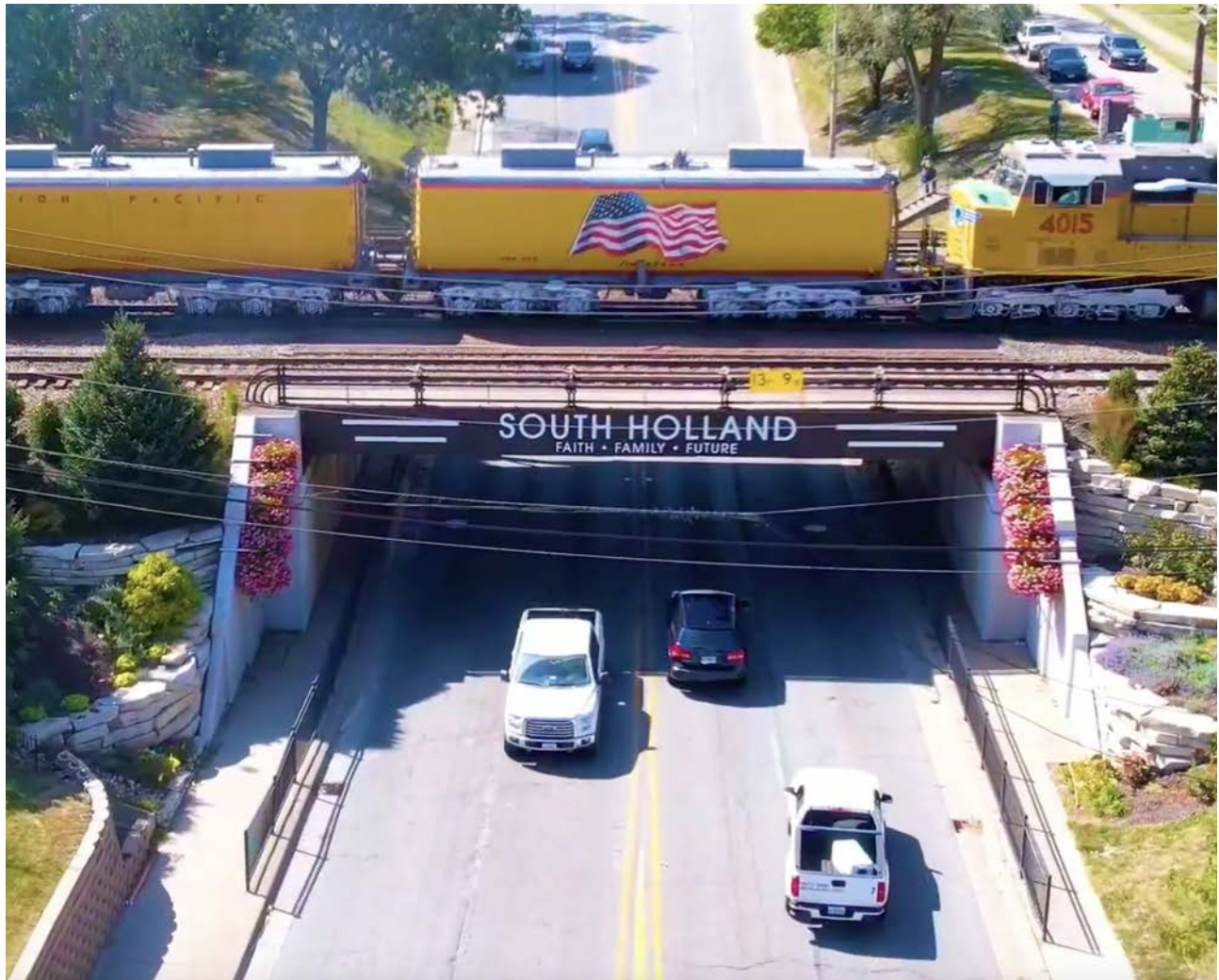
Staying together is progress.

Working together is success!"

I'm thankful that we are working well together after two years of remarkable progress. With God's help, we will continue to plan, meeting together on a regular basis to keep South Holland the very finest community in the Chicago Southland region.



Don A. De Graff
Mayor



WHAT'S HAPPENING AROUND SOUTH HOLLAND



SNOW ORDINANCE

Please be aware of the Village's snow ordinance, which states that vehicles shall not be parked on any street if snow reaches two inches or more. This helps us plow the streets effectively and efficiently. When shoveling snow in a driveway, we recommend depositing the snow to the right side (when facing the street) to minimize plows from blocking you in.



ICELESS SKATING RINK

The South Holland Iceless Skating Rink is open for the 2025 season, in a new location! It is now located at the west pavilion at Veterans Memorial Park, where there is a covered roof overhead and plenty of parking. The rink is constructed using panels of synthetic ice. Skates are required and can be rented on-site. Everyone who rents skates will receive a coupon for a free hot chocolate at SoHo Sweets! The rink is open Fri 3-8pm, Sat-Sun noon-8pm (hours subject to change due to weather or holidays). For more information and rental pricing, visit southholland.org/skatesoho.



EMERGENCY ALERTS

Are you signed up to receive emergency alerts from the Village? We encourage all South Holland residents and business owners/managers to sign up for Smart911 Emergency Alerts. With it, we have the ability to place thousands of phone calls per minute (to both landlines and mobile phones), and to send out texts immediately. You can also fill out a profile on your household so that first responders can help you faster in an emergency. Visit southholland.org/smart911 for more information and to sign up.



FLOOD PREVENTION RESOURCES

It may be frigid outside now, but the rainy season will be here before you know it. Use this time to be proactive about flood prevention! The Village has many resources to assist residents in the prevention of flooding and the protection of your property. You can visit southholland.org/floodprotection for information, resources, and ways the Village can help you in the event of a flood. For more information, contact the Community Development Department at 708.210.2915.

OUT AND ABOUT

FACES FROM EVENTS AROUND THE VILLAGE

MILITARY TRIBUTE

South Holland veterans were honored at the 10th Annual Military Tribute, which took place at the Community Center. The veterans were treated to brunch, live music, and a moving ceremony that honored those who have honorably served our country.



OUT AND ABOUT

FACES FROM EVENTS AROUND THE VILLAGE

WINTER WONDERLAND

Children and adults filled Veterans Memorial Park for South Holland's Winter Wonderland. The evening began with a tree lighting, followed by visits with Santa, an iceless skating rink, train rides on the South Holland Express, kid crafts and activities, trolley rides through town, and much more!



OUT AND ABOUT

FACES FROM EVENTS AROUND THE VILLAGE

RIBBON CUTTINGS

The Village celebrated the opening of two new ventures in South Holland. State Street Repair, at 16545 State St, expanded into the new facility, offering small engine repairs and a retail line of outdoor power equipment. Visit Chicago Southland opened a new Visitor Information Center inside the Chicago Southland Lincoln Oasis. The impressive, state-of-the-art display provides content and resources pointing to destination spots throughout the Chicago Southland.



FAITH IN

Motion

A DOUBLE GRACE BEGINNING 5 WAYS TO APPROACH CHANGE IN 2025

By Elder Phyllis Neuman Brown of Free Spirit Ministerial Worship Center

Are you one of the millions of people who aim to make and fulfill resolutions each year? Well, you are not alone. This year I want to challenge you to approach the new year differently. As humans, we always want to have a fresh start to correct or reset various areas of our lives. At the beginning of each year, we seek opportunities to embrace new ideas, renew our purpose, and set plans for the future. 2025 is unique because biblically, the number 5 represents grace. Thus, the number 25—5 squared—is grace upon grace, or double grace. John 1:16 says, "From out of his fullness we have all received grace upon grace." Double grace is God's unmerited, unearned love and favor that will empower you to let go of old patterns and embrace new possibilities.

We have been experiencing many challenges and obstacles in the world. Some of these challenges may have affected us personally, or they have impacted our communities or our world. We will need to strategically navigate through these times more than ever before. We are reminded in Hebrews 4:16: "Therefore let us approach the throne of grace with confidence and without fear, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need." We will need God's double grace as we journey through this year.

The Bible describes at least 5 different categories or expressions of grace: saving,

sanctifying, strengthening, sharing, and serving grace.

1. Saving Grace

This grace is extended to sinners to influence them to turn to Christ. If you have not accepted Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, this grace is for you.

If you have not been living as a dedicated Christian and have slid back into sinful activities and behaviors, recommit your life to Christ. We should double down on saving grace by building our connection and relationship with the Lord and by becoming more active in witnessing to others about the redemptive power of Jesus.

2. Sanctifying Grace

This grace purifies us and separates us from the world. We need sanctifying grace to set ourselves apart from worldly lusts, pride and other forms of temptation. Worldly desires are enticing, so we need double grace to effectively walk the narrow path of righteousness.



Elder Phyllis Neuman Brown

3. Strengthening Grace

With the many situations and circumstances we battle each day, we need the enduring, sustaining strength of the Lord to empower us through every test. We must double down with Holy Ghost resolve, which reassures us that we are more than conquerors through Christ Jesus.

4. Sharing Grace

As a community of believers, we must be willing to not only share the Gospel of Jesus Christ with others but also the blessings that the Lord has given us to help meet the needs of others. This year, we should prioritize caring for the sick and shut-in, meeting the needs of the poor, and encouraging the brokenhearted.

5. Serving Grace

We are to be helpers one to another. If we are not already involved, we should be serving the community, serving in our local church, and serving in organizations that aid those in need. In times when it is easy only to be concerned about ourselves, this year serves as a call for us to extend a double portion of serving grace.

So, as we begin a new year, be encouraged to make a resolution, embrace a new mindset, and establish a purposeful plan to be a living epistle, a walking example of God's double grace. We can each impact this world by implementing the above five expressions of grace in our lives. Let go of the old patterns and embrace new possibilities by allowing double grace to radiate in and through you so you can display the characteristics of God and accomplish great things in 2025.



JOIN THE SOUTH HOLLAND
FIRE DEPARTMENT FOR

COFFEE WITH FIREFIGHTERS

9:00AM
1ST SATURDAY OF EVERY MONTH
FIRE STATION 1 (43)
16230 WAUSAU AVE

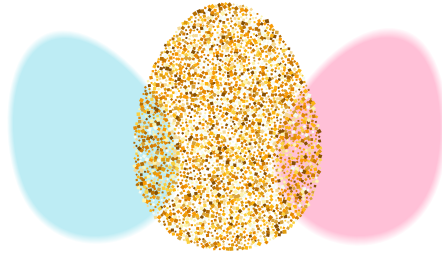


The Village of
South
Holland
Faith, Family,
& Future

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LOCAL POSTAL CUSTOMER

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Easter EGG HUNT

SATURDAY, APRIL 12 • 11:00 AM

**Veterans Memorial Park
500 E 160th Place**

FREE to kids ages 1-10 years

Children are divided into five age groups and will hunt for eggs filled with candy. Bring a basket or paper bag to collect your goodies.

Learn more at southholland.org



southholland.org