



## My Gathering Experience: Alexa Spoerle, FLY Youth

My experience at the ELCA Youth Gathering, in July, was a once in a lifetime opportunity. My faith was strong going into the trip. It wasn't something I was particularly worried about. I was more worried about trivial things, like who would I room with? Sit on the bus with? What if I didn't have enough food? (Don't worry, it was plenty.) I went into a trip about my faith, but I wasn't thinking about it in the slightest.

But, God managed to touch me and remind me of why I should be there. Yes, being with friends is fun, and yes, the food was great, but nothing is more powerful than feeling God's presence with 30,000 others. Nothing is more powerful than seeing God's work done by your hands. Nothing is more powerful than hearing God's words uttered out of a friend's mouth. What was amazing about this trip was that I could experience God all while having so much fun. There wasn't a single moment where I was alone and it was awesome. I got to hang out with old friends and meet new ones. The memories I made on this trip are ones I will always treasure. The Gathering isn't just some youth group trip; it's a journey. One you can experience with both God and your friends by your side.



-Alexa Spoerle, FLY youth



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## Soil

Jesus said, "I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit."

This spring we built a raised-bed garden. Our whole family was so excited to get it ready, plant our vegetables and watch them grow! We went to the nursery, picked out our seedlings, placed them lovingly in the soil and waited. Much to our disappointment, they did not grow. Quite the opposite, in fact. They started to wither and some even died. We learned the importance of good soil. Gardening is always hard work, but apparently when you begin with a random mix of filler dirt instead of good soil, all of that work is fruitless. There's no way around it and no cutting corners. If you want to bear fruit, you begin with good soil.

Good Shepherd is a congregation that is filled with good soil. The resources, expertise, commitment, and servant-attitude of the people that comprise this congregation is a wonderful mixture that is like soil, primed and ready for a fruitful harvest! Over the past six months or so I have found myself stressed, worried, stretched thin, and questioning the fruitfulness of some of the time I (and many others) have been pouring into various projects. It can feel like there are SO many different activities, projects, events, and ministries happening all at once, many of which are just getting off the ground thus we are not yet seeing the fruits of these labors. I realized, however, that we are in an exciting time. Like any gardener knows, you have to till the soil, prepare the dirt and get the seeds planted. Then you water and fertilize, weed and watch. The harvest takes time.

I see so many ways in which we are getting this garden ready. "Project Horizon" is updating our database to help us connect, care for, and interact with one another and reach beyond our walls. "You Belong" is asking the crucial question, "who may not feel welcome here?" and following the model of Jesus to find ways to make space at the table for everyone. The "Mission Trips Team" is making plans to connect us to the global church. All of this in the midst of renovations and plans to keep our facility vibrant and ready for ministry. Projects like bathrooms and technology upgrades may not feel all that fruitful, but we must remember. Like any good garden, fertilizer and watering are not all that glamorous, but without them the fruit would never come! We have implemented new Connect Cards and the first week alone 16 families checked boxes to get more connected. We learned (and can celebrate) that 23 people prayed with someone outside of GSLC, 14 people served in the community, 19 talked with someone about their faith, 10 people invited someone to GSLC, and 30 read or listened to material that helped them grow in faith.

Jesus said, "You did not choose me, but I chose you. And I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last." Let us not grow weary of tilling the soil, planting the seeds, and watering the garden God has entrusted to us, so we can rejoice with our Lord when we begin to see the holy, kingdom fruit of these labors come into season.

Grace and Peace,  
Pastor Josh

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### **Those Evangelicals!**

At Good Shepherd, we are part of the ELCA, The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Over 25 years ago, several Lutheran denominations merged under what seems like a really good name. However, that first word, Evangelical is the Greek word for "Gospel" or "Good News". However that word has been increasingly associated with unwelcoming messages. For over a decade, when there is news from an Evangelical, I would pray the message was not riddled with judgement, guilt and shame. I'm not sure how we best convey this, but the theology of our ELCA is uniquely welcoming, forgiving and loving. On the Good Shepherd website, we state, "All Are Welcome. Seriously". So to me, the "E" in ELCA here means that here we welcome Everyone.

During the work of the strategic planning last fall, we had robust conversations about what this means. Do we desire to grow at Good Shepherd? Why? Do we need more members or do others need Good Shepherd? If we say "All Are Welcome", yet have programming primarily for families, what is our message? In those meetings we discussed that it may be a bit false to randomly target a new group. We chuckled to imagine we target a new group by saying, "during this next quarter, we will make sure to join 25 new red headed Irish people." If they did come, what might they need? Green beer at Brews & Hymns? Their own special sermon at St. Patrick's Day? Will those Irish people make us feel less of something else?

I share a little about this debate to inspire you to imagine yourself being new to our church and maybe even a little different from you. For me, I grow when I meet people who have had a different life experience. It feeds me to appreciate new cultures, traditions and languages. When I learn more personally about life dimensions I had not considered, I am enriched (and sometimes can feel like my life has been a bit predictable). Our ELCA has an amazing theology and yet is one of the most homogeneous denominations in the United States (due in part to our northern European roots). We say "All

Are Welcome" and we do mean it. But, WHAT DOES THIS MEAN here at Good Shepherd?

Please join me in the struggle to bring those to our church who need and belong to Christ. You may ask "Who belongs to Christ?" The obvious answer is that we ALL do! Let us more boldly invite all and raise our awareness to consider additional programming to ignite relationships. I'm seeing a new day where when people say "Those Evangelicals!" it's standing in appreciation of how God's love is shared so beautifully. It can happen here at our church and that is Good News!

Glenn



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### God's Work, Our Hands 2018 Reflection - August 19



Good Shepherd hands, small and large, young and not-as young, reached out in love and kindness to help others. From 9 to 11 am, folks came together for a variety of service projects. In just a few short hours, amazing care was given to make or assemble these items:

- Chemo Care Kits were created for GSLC's Cancer Care Team and St. Luke's Chemo Center.
- Hygiene kits were assembled for Trinity Soulard's homeless outreach.
- Beautiful greeting cards were created for Project Boomerang's ministry

- to provide greeting cards for use by the men and women in the military.
- Prayer pillows were lovingly stuffed and sewn for those at Gateway 180 Homeless Shelter.
- Sandwiches were made for Trinity Soulard's Soup Alley food pantry.
- Wind chimes were created to share with those in Humanitri's Homeless to Homeowner program.
- Message bead bookmarks were created for our homebound members.
- A beautiful prayer blanket was created for Gabriella Heidorn, a young member at Good Shepherd, who is fighting cancer and undergoing chemo treatments.



Good Shepherd has long been a church willing and ready to reach out where there is a need for help and this intergenerational event was a wonderful example of this loving and caring community.

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## Men's "Father Figure" is now called "Basecamp"

In May of 2017, we tried a bold experiment. Several men from Good Shepherd started Father Figure, born out of a desire to connect with other Jesus followers and have a space to talk about what it means to be a man of faith in today's world. We gathered and shared about our fathers, about our experience of fatherhood ourselves (with all it's joys and struggles), and pray together to our heavenly Father. Many new bonds for forged and much meat was consumed. There was a growing sense that we wanted even more. There seemed to be a desire for a broader community of men (beyond just fathers, or fathers with young kids) to gather for prayer, learning, and serving. After much conversation, prayer, and discernment a new idea came forth: Basecamp.

Basecamp is a place where we tackle what it means to be a man in a society of

false narratives and a constant flow of toxic masculinity in our world. When we search the scriptures we find that Jesus is the ultimate example of strength, the very definition of courage. Here we have a place to gather with other men who seek to follow Jesus. Here we look into the Bible and pray with and for one another. We strengthen, support, and prepare one another to bravely go out into this adventure of life as men of faith, courage, and integrity. Join us at Basecamp.

We will launch on Sunday, September 16 at 5 pm. We will meet around the fire pit. There will be meat provided, and we invite those who are able to bring a side dish to share.

Come and seek the fire within, together.

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## The Joyful Steward

Joy. Grammatically speaking, joy means a state of happiness or a source of delight. In our August temple talk, Rob Peglar talked about Stewardship's fall theme - "Expand the Joy." Rob started by showing a picture of a child holding a balloon, then in our science lesson for the week, he explained how a balloon and the Ideal Gas Law is a visual representation of expansion. The balloon starts empty, fills up and becomes an object that brings joy to those around it. His message went on to challenge us to "expand the joy" at Good Shepherd from a regular party balloon, to a hot air balloon, to potentially even the blimp as we share the joy and abundance God has given to us.

Still thinking about this as I was leaving church, I saw a boy playing with a balloon in the Sunday School hallway. I asked him if he liked balloons, and if they made him happy. He replied, "Yes!" Then I asked him what he was going to do with the balloon. He said, "I'm going to find my brother so we can play with it together." How amazing is that? Without hesitation, he decided to take something that brought him joy and purposefully share it with someone else. It was such a simple moment and comment, but at the same time, profound.

So, as adults, how can we share our joy, and expand it to those around us? How can we nurture relationships with our friends, family, the world, and even with God, by spreading delight to those in our lives? What if we finally write that letter to our grieving friend? Or listen to and pray with someone struggling in their life? What if we buy our child or grandchild that balloon they've been eyeing in the store?

If you feel comfortable sharing your "Joyful Steward" actions, there is a place to talk about how we live out our faith on the new Connect cards. We'd love to hear all the ways each of us can share and expand the joy we've been given.

Christina Kling-Garrett  
Stewardship co-chair



## Wellness Ministry

Wellness. It's something that we all want in our lives, but sometimes it is the thing that gets pushed aside first when life gets busy. God cares a great deal about our wellness. In

Deuteronomy 12, we hear that God's commandments were given to us for our wellness ("...so that it may be well with you..."). God cares about our financial, physical, social, emotional, intellectual, and vocational well being, because they affect our whole selves and our relationship with God, others, and creation.

As part of the Strategic Plan, Good Shepherd has formed a Wellness Team, to help nurture the whole lives of our members and community. After getting some input, we are excited to share our first steps, moving forward. In the summer survey, the biggest request was social wellness, and specifically some fellowship opportunities to foster healthy community.

To that end, the Wellness Team will be hosting a GSLC Game and Healthy Potluck night on Saturday, September 22nd, from 5-8pm, in the gym. Playful communities are healthy communities, both emotionally and socially, so we invite you to come with a board or card game to play with some new or old friends, as well as a healthy snack to share (to nurture our physical wellness, too!). Please bring a small card with your snack recipe on it, and folks can snap pictures of any recipes that they want to take home for future use. This is an open house event, so come when you can and leave when you must!

Stay tuned. We are also planning a yoga class and Facebook community for those who want to share wellness opportunities around the area or create their own grassroots groups for those who share interests (such as walking or hiking groups, mindfulness practices, or healthy cooking ideas). We hope to see you on the 22nd!



**You Made Their Miracle Possible - A true story from the Feed My Starving Children Staff**

"You are the God who performs miracles; you display your power among the peoples." - Psalm 77:14.

The young mother was frantic. She had no food left. Her twin babies Francis and Rose were suffering. One stared, eyes vacant. The other cried constantly. Their hair was brittle

and falling out. They were listless. They were going to die if she couldn't find help. She took Francis and Rose to a health clinic near her village in Uganda, where she learned they were extremely anemic and undernourished. At 3 years old, each weighed about 15 pounds, half of the typical weight for kids their age. They weren't babies, but they still looked like babies.



The twins were so sick the clinic couldn't treat them. They referred the mother to the national hospital, about 200 miles away. She was horrified.



One day she heard a few people in her village talk about children who were becoming healthy after visiting Feed My Starving Children food partner African Children Today (ACT). A neighbor told her they had "medicine" for children like Rose and Francis. She rushed there and begged our partner to

give her twins "the miracle medicine the children eat!" ACT realized she was asking for MannaPack Rice.

Thanks to your compassion, ACT had FMSC meals on hand and gave them to the mother to cook at home. Within three months, Francis and Rose gained significant weight and energy! Their hair started growing back. Their mother was immensely relieved to see them improving so quickly.

***Thanks Good Shepherd for the outstanding support you have provided for this event coming up in October. We have a few openings to pack, so check our [website](#). There is a sign-up sheet in the Narthex for parking lot helpers & greeters, or you may sign up [here](#). We are half way to meeting our goal of \$190,000 so continue gathering your quarters and dollars; each meal is only \$.22!***

## CANCER Now What?

MINISTRY

Here's feedback - edited to protect confidentiality- from a person who gave *Cancer-Now What?* to a family member:

"At a recent family birthday party, I saw my uncle who was recently diagnosed with esophageal and liver cancer. I had given him a copy of *Cancer-Now What?* shortly after he received the diagnosis. He thanked me for giving him and his wife the book. He said it has been very helpful because there's so much practical information in it. My uncle said he is following many of the recommendations in the book. It's helping him understand the process of chemotherapy that he's undergoing now. I am very thankful that Good Shepherd makes this book available, and I'm grateful I could share it with my uncle and aunt. It's really helping them."

Has someone you know, a family member, friend, neighbor, coworker, sports or exercise partner, been diagnosed with cancer? You can give them practical help in facing the many facets of dealing with cancer by a copy of *Cancer-Now What?* He or she will be grateful to you-and you'll be grateful for taking the opportunity to help.

Please visit the *Cancer-Now What?* display in the Narthex.

1. Take a book-free of charge-and fill out a card with your name and contact info and place it in the provided envelope.
2. Give the book.
3. Pray for the person. Care for the person.
4. Share your story or feedback with [David Paap](#) or (636) 893-4893.



As you know the Service Team helps to organize many service-related activities within the church. The Holidays are fast approaching, so please check the bulletin for more information.

The Food Bin for September will help St. Trinity Church in South County. The items they are requesting are: canned soups, canned pasta sauce, jelly and tuna fish (again NO glass containers).

Monthly Benevolence Fund: Each month the Service Team has a theme which helps the selection of recipients for that month's Benevolence Fund disbursements. The theme for August was Health. The Team researched agencies in the St. Louis area and we were able to help: Crudem Foundation, Nurses for Newborns, Casa de Salud, and Volunteers in Medicine West County Clinic (Islamic Foundation). The team also allocated funds for the Missouri Veterans Endeavor.

One of the agencies we supported in August was Casa de Salud. This organization opened in January of 2010 with the intention of filling a significant void in accessing care for the immigrant community of the St. Louis region, especially uninsured Latinos. Casa's founder and chairman, Bob Fox, enlisted the help of St. Louis University, which provided the building that Casa still operates today. Casa's main services are providing primary care for illness and injury, mental health counseling, case management, care coordination and home visits.

The Service Team will meet again on Tuesday, September 4 at 7:00 p.m. - please join us, we are always looking for new members to join this worthwhile ministry.

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# A "Wink" From the Welcome Ministry Team

## by: Elliott Haugen



Welcome to our newest members! In August, 22 adults and 8 children joined Good Shepherd; two other children were already members through baptism and four children plan to be baptized in the future. Check out the Welcome bulletin board (across from the Narthex coffee pots) for pictures of all the members who joined in 2018. Another orientation/information session is scheduled for November 11 and 18.

Last month I wrote about how each of us can be a blessing to others in our congregation and others can be blessings to us. This month I compare some thoughts of current members with those of the new members. I asked long-time members what they were looking for in a church and they gave reasons like free parking, priority seating, name tag, personal mail box, offering envelopes, newsletter, and the password to the "Member Access" web site. Just kidding about all those answers!

I did, however, ask the new members what they were looking for in a church - and see at Good Shepherd (thanks to you). Their expectations include: meaningful worship service, welcoming/open environment, shared values, concern for others (including community outreach, social justice issues, and inclusiveness), foundation of faith for the family and children, and educational and service opportunities for children. Please continue to welcome these wonderful new members and include them in your conversations, activities and prayers.

Note: A "wink" is a brief form of communications that implies a hello or friendly greeting. Watch for future Winks with thoughts and information about Good Shepherd's shared welcoming ministry.

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*Following Christ, Growing in Faith, Sharing God's Love*



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