



Shepherd's Staff

2020

HAPPY NEW YEAR

The Monthly Newsletter of Good Shepherd Lutheran Church January 2020



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It is a new year. It is a new decade. It is common for people to make New Year's resolutions and renew an attempt to live a better, healthier, or happier life. For us as Christians, this season is much, much deeper than that because we recall the new birth of Jesus. It is a natural time of reflection, and as we look at our lives retrospectively in 2019 and forward into 2020 it is important that we do this reflective work spiritually. How has God moved in the world in this past year? How has the Lord shaped my life, actions, and perspective in the last year? Where have I been obedient to Christ's calling and where have I resisted? In light of these reflections, in conversation with Jesus in prayer, what is God's vision for my life in the year ahead?

What new thing is God stirring up in you? What new thing is God stirring up in our church and our community? After all, God is the one who created and continually creates. God is the one who breathed life into this world and continues to breathe new life all around us. When the Spirit moves and God is up to something new, it is often quite different than how we typically think of newness. I think many of us

have this same habit. When we get something new, we often toss out the old, right? If it's a new material object we sell, give away, or throw out the old. If it's a new habit or practice we often leave the old behind, a discarded and less effective way of being so we abandon it. Let us never to speak of that ill-thought out plan for becoming vegan at which we failed spectacularly! (I'm looking at you, Josh of 2018.)

When God does something new, it is *in light* of the old. God moves in new ways with acute memory of, and sometimes even reverence for, the past. The memories and lessons of the past give shape and meaning to the future. We see this practice over and over again throughout scripture. In the prophets we see a recounting of history, both of God's goodness and the people's role (often failure) as God makes promises of a new covenant, a new day and a new way of being.

*I am about to do a **new** thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert. – Isaiah 43:19*

*For I am about to create **new** heavens and a **new** earth; - Isaiah 65:17*

*The days are surely coming, says the Lord, when I will make a **new** covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. - Jeremiah 31:31*

*A **new** heart I will give you, and a **new** spirit I will put within you; and I will remove from your body the heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. - Ezekiel 36:26*

Through the incarnation, God coming into this world in the person of Christ, we see the fulfillment of these promises from the past, and the Holy Spirit continuing to bring new life, new creation, new birth, and a new humanity!

*He has abolished the law with its commandments and ordinances, that he might create in himself one **new** humanity in place of the two, thus making peace, - Ephesians 2:15*

*So if anyone is in Christ, there is a **new** creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become **new**! - 2 Corinthians 5:17*

*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! By his great mercy he has given us a **new** birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, - 1 Peter 1:3*

The fullness of God's love for the world is revealed in a new covenant and a new

commandment. This covenant remembers the covenants of former times. This commandment embodies all of the law and prophets of old. The resurrected Jesus even bore the scars of the cross on his body, carrying the pain of the past even as moving into the new joy of the future.

*And he did the same with the cup after supper, saying, "This cup that is poured out for you is the **new** covenant in my blood."* - Luke 22:20

*I give you a **new** commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another.* - John 13:34

By looking back and remembering our past, we can see the power of God working in our lives. It is this memory and this assurance that opens us to whatever God has next. In this new year, as we re-tell, re-experience, and re-live God's ultimate act of new, becoming incarnate in Jesus Christ, how is God inviting you to something new in your life? Is it to grow spiritually in new ways? Is it to do ministry in a way you have never done before? God has a vision for your life and your work in God's kingdom in 2020. May we enter this new year prayerfully and with open hearts. May we journey together to help one another discern what new thing God is doing in us and our community. May we discover new ways to love one another as God has first loved us.

Through Jesus Christ who is making all things new,
Pastor Josh



Glenn Kraft
Council President

2020 Vision

Each new year we look forward. This year, the beginning of a new decade, we may look back over the past ten years and ask "where have we come from?" At Good Shepherd we have moved forward on many fronts and can claim a joyful enthusiasm for our work as church. So many members own their role as "member" as they bring life to mission work, worship, building upkeep, leadership and more. Over time, the word *membership* has evolved to connote duty or responsibility. For some, this may confuse the joy of contributing with a burden of duty. Instead, we may think of our membership at



Good Shepherd as one key way we live out our “discipleship”. As disciples, we see our church as a key vehicle for growing in faith and sharing God’s love. As disciples, we joyfully assist in small and large ways recognizing that we are needed and we need others in the body of Christ.

Thank you fellow members for living out your discipleship here. Please plan to attend our upcoming annual Congregation Meeting, Sunday, February 8th at noon (in the gym). At this meeting we will review several business issues, but we will also celebrate the commitments you have making in time and talents. As you consider your discipleship here at Good Shepherd, you will help to bring 2020 vision for our work this year.

Happy New Year!

Glenn
President

A "Wink from the Welcome Ministry Team by Elliott Haugen



Happy New Year! We should actually start January by continuing to say “Merry Christmas” because the twelve days of Christmas run from December 25th to January 6th. Most of us have forgotten the traditions of this extended Christmas, other than to sing about the possibility of 12 days of gifts.

Early Christians made wishes on each of the twelve days for each of the upcoming months of the year. Sure sounds like a call for New Year’s resolutions. We certainly have many possibilities based on countless commercial ads or suggestions from others about how we can improve our looks, health or personal life. However, we really only need to look to Jesus and the Bible for a simple, powerful guide for 2020:

You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hid. No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven. Matthew 5:14-15

As Children of God, we are blessed to have Jesus in our lives and as an inspiration, teacher, and model. On behalf of the Welcome Team, thank you for sharing Jesus through your attitude of gratitude. Your smiles, handshakes, and welcome wishes

are shining examples of the caring, healing, and support we share as we follow Christ, grow in faith and share God's love.

(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 welcoming ministry.)

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