



Shepherd's Staff

Welcoming *the* Stranger

Reflection



The Monthly Newsletter of Good Shepherd Lutheran Church

July 2026



Josh Brecht
Lead Pastor

Welcoming the Stranger Series - Holy Conversations

The past four weeks have been an incredible journey. Dozens of people came together each Sunday to explore scripture and God's heart for migrants and those who are vulnerable. People of different ages, backgrounds, and political perspectives sat together listening to one another with open hearts and minds. It was beautiful.



We may not agree on everything, but as we rooted ourselves in scripture, sought unity and understanding with humility, openness, and curiosity we discovered something remarkable. *We share far more common ground than we realize.*

A guest presenter from **Abide in Love STL** spoke about their work with those impacted by detention or deportation. We all see the headlines. We all hear the loudest voices. But beneath all the noise, we often miss the quiet questions of the families left behind.



When a person is detained how do they contact their family?

How does a family find their loved one if they are arrested by ICE?

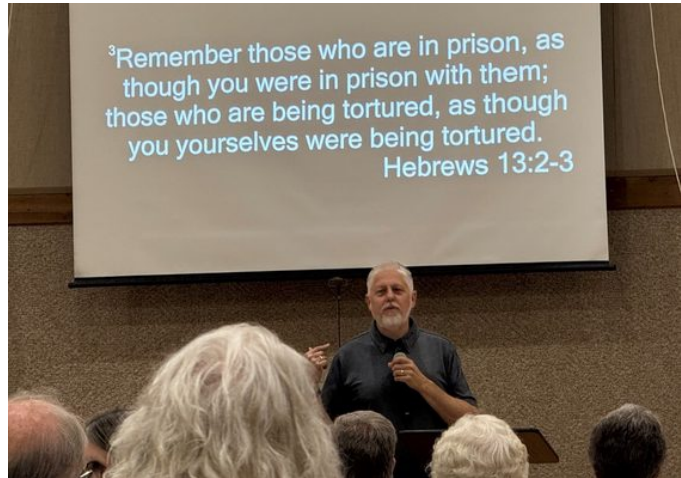
If someone is detained via a traffic stop, how do they get their documentation to show their status?

If a Spouse/Partner is deported, how will the remaining Spouse/Partner pay the bills and feed the kids?

If one parent is deported, and the other parent wants to move there to be together, how do they do that?

This is where Abide in Love STL steps in. They walk with families of those who have been detained or deported. They help them find and reconnect with their loved ones. They help feed families during the interim as they figure out what comes next. In short, they wrap around families with the love of Christ during an unbelievably difficult time. I am excited to begin working with Abide in Love personally, and there may be other opportunities for Good Shepherd to becoming involved in the future.

I am so blessed to serve in a church where we can come together to discuss challenging topics. Where the world so often divides, our unity in Christ draws us together. I am grateful to all who joined this holy conversation to help *me* learn and grow. It is together that we best discern God's heart for our shared mission.



In Christ, Pastor Josh



Ed Seuc **Outgoing Council President**

Dear Good Shepherd Friends:

Although my term as Council president ends, the "Edwardian" era continues with Ed Deitzler as the new president and I will support him and continue as a Council member. It has been very rewarding to serve in this role, which helps keep the wheels of the church rolling along. It was eye opening to realize the amount of activity, selflessness and energy that your ministry leaders & volunteers, Pastors and staff provide to make Good Shepherd what it is today.

It has also been a pleasure to work with and get to know more closely the council members who have served alongside me. They are deeply committed to the best interests of Good Shepherd. Together, we have worked to advance key initiatives, including the implementation of important safety protocols, and we remain committed to continuing these efforts in the months ahead.

The church's financial position has remained strong over the past several years, and the sale of the Hedgewood property has further strengthened our financial foundation. Another highlight was finalizing and implementing the Endowment structure and policies that will help members and Council build a promising future.

So, where do we go from here?

One of Council's key priorities will be to launch a congregation-wide process to more clearly discern our direction as a church community and organization. Guided by our consultant, this effort will provide opportunities for every member to share their voice, perspectives, and hopes for Good Shepherd's future in both the near and mid-term.

Your participation will be essential. We will need your support, your time, and your honest feedback. As we look ahead, it is important that we gain greater clarity about our shared values, the current realities of life at Good Shepherd, and the needs of our households. This understanding will help us develop a thoughtful strategy that serves our congregation well into the future.

A formal introduction to this planning process will be shared in the coming months, and we look forward to embarking on this journey together.

Thanks again for your support and have a blessed and peaceful summer.
Ed

Your Gift, Your Legacy: Seeing the Endowment Structure in Action

Good Shepherd Endowment Committee

In our last newsletter, we introduced Good Shepherd's updated endowment and giving structure — a framework designed to help every member direct their gift with clarity and intention. We heard from several of you that the concepts made sense on paper, but you wanted to see how they might apply to real giving situations.

Below are four scenarios that illustrate how different members might use the structure. The names are fictional, but the situations reflect the kinds of conversations our Endowment Committee is ready to have with you.

SCENARIO 1

Margaret, a longtime member honoring her late husband

Margaret's husband, Harold, spent thirty years volunteering on Good Shepherd's property and grounds. After his passing, Margaret wanted to make a gift in his memory — something that would make a tangible difference right away. She had \$2,500 to give and wanted it used for building needs, not held in an investment account.

GIFT DIRECTED TO:**Reserve Fund (spendable)**

- Capital Reserve Fund

WHY IT FITS:

Because Margaret's gift is under \$5,000 and she wants it used for current facility needs, the Capital Reserve Fund is the right fit. Her donation goes to work immediately, supporting the building and grounds Harold loved.

SCENARIO 2**David & Linda, planning their estate**

David and Linda have been members for over twenty years and are updating their wills. They want a portion of their estate to benefit Good Shepherd in perpetuity — specifically to support worship, music, and the programs that have meant so much to their family. Their planned gift is \$25,000, to be directed upon their passing.

GIFT DIRECTED TO:**Endowment (permanently invested, \$5,000+)**

- Operations and Ministries Endowment

WHY IT FITS:

An endowment gift ensures their contribution is never spent down. Each year, a distribution from investment returns flows to operations and ministries — sustaining the programs they love for generations of Good Shepherd members to come. Completing the Special Gift Designation Form now locks in their designation so their wishes are clearly documented.

SCENARIO 3**The Kowalski family, passionate about community outreach**

The Kowalski family has always been active in Good Shepherd's outreach ministries and has supported a college student pursuing seminary training. When they decided to make a \$10,000 endowment gift, they couldn't choose between outreach and scholarships — so they didn't have to.

GIFT DIRECTED TO:**Endowment (permanently invested, \$5,000+)**

- Service & Scholarships Endowment — or split, e.g., 60% Service & Scholarships / 40% Operations & Ministries

WHY IT FITS:

The Special Gift Designation Form allows donors to divide an endowment gift across multiple funds by percentage. The Kowalskis can direct every dollar exactly where their hearts lead — and adjust the split however they see fit.

SCENARIO 4

A major donor exploring a transformational gift

A member who has experienced significant financial success wants to make a transformational gift to Good Shepherd — one large enough to potentially endow an entirely new area of ministry not currently identified in our fund structure. They are interested in exploring options that reflect a specific vision, with customized terms for how the gift is invested and distributed.

GIFT DIRECTED TO:

Possible Gift Option (\$500,000+)

- ▶ Custom structure — determined in consultation with leadership

WHY IT FITS:

Gifts of this magnitude open the door to possibilities beyond the standard fund structure. The Lead Pastor and Endowment Committee Chair work directly with the donor to design an arrangement that honors their vision while aligning with the church's mission and governance. Conversations are confidential and without obligation.

Ready to explore your own giving scenario?

No two members' situations are alike, and there is no minimum level of generosity required to begin a conversation. Whether you're considering a gift today, updating your estate plan, or simply curious about how the structure works, the Endowment Committee would be honored to talk with you. Special Gift Designation Forms are available in the church office.

Please reach out to Steve Boyer, Endowment Committee Chair, at 308-440-0500 or sboyer59@gmail.com, to schedule a confidential conversation.

A note on your regular giving: This endowment structure is entirely separate from Good Shepherd's annual stewardship campaign. It is not a replacement for — and has no effect on — your weekly or monthly giving pledges. We encourage every member to continue honoring those commitments as the vital, ongoing foundation of our congregation's ministry.



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