



Shepherd's Staff

The Monthly Newsletter of Good Shepherd Lutheran Church April 2019



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But, Good Shepherd is Already Welcoming...

As you should be aware by now, Good Shepherd is considering adopting a “Welcome Statement” that specifically names several groups of people that we welcome to be a part of our Good Shepherd community. This statement comes to us through the hard work and discernment of the “You Belong” group formed through last year’s Strategic Planning Initiative. The process will involve many more conversations and ultimately include consideration at an upcoming congregational meeting. The overall goal is to consider how we might become even more welcoming to groups of people who, for whatever reason, have not felt fully welcomed by the church in general.

Let me be clear: Good Shepherd is **already** an incredibly loving, accepting, and welcoming church. I frequently joke that we are a “Unicorn Church”—in other words, that we are uniquely special—our Outreach to the wider community, our quality of Christian education, our variety of worship opportunities, and especially our open and welcoming atmosphere toward our guests are qualities that sadly, many other churches lack. Good Shepherd is already a welcoming church. Many of our newer members testify again and again to this remarkable trait of our congregation.

Let me say it again: Good Shepherd is already a welcoming congregation. So why would we consider adopting an explicit Welcome Statement that simply affirms what we already know about ourselves?

Why? To put it simply, because not everyone in the wider community knows this about us. A Welcome Statement publicly affirms the fact that hospitality for all people is a powerful core value of this congregation. Sadly, all too many people

have been made to feel unwanted and unwelcome by the way that some churches have treated them. Good Shepherd is not like that. We value diversity and affirm that God's love is not a quality to be squandered only by the special few but offered freely to all. This is who we are; and this is what we believe; and this is an opportunity for us to be bold enough to proclaim it.

As we consider adopting this Welcome Statement, I encourage you to pray about it and ask God's help as we discern together how we might be most faithful in our welcome to others.

Pastor Rich



 **HOLY WEEK & EASTER**

Maundy Thursday	12 & 7PM
Good Friday	12 & 7PM
Holy Saturday	5:30PM
Easter Sunday	8, 9:30, & 11AM
Easter Breakfast	7 - 11AM
Shuttle on Easter	7:30 - 12:30PM



Glenn Kraft
Council President

Yeah! Spring is here!

At Good Shepherd we are springing forward on many fronts, and it's exciting. More and more members are enrolling in **Good Shepherd Connect** and there will be continuous improvement with this important tool to make sure we are even more connected. **Feed My Starving Children** is moving diligently toward a community pack in 2020 to bring more people and dollars to the annual pack to save even more lives. The **You Belong** team is launching a thought-filled Welcoming Statement while education, conversation and listening continues. Our **Capital Campaign** projects are also moving forward nicely. Despite the weather, it appears we will have pavement in the north parking lot very soon. The front roof area replacement is also underway and many other smaller issues are being addressed by our FMPC. Council did vote last month to delay the Sanctuary project due to very delicate timing issues and a sure need to be fully complete by October for Feed My Starving Children (next year, there will not be that parameter and we



will have the lead time to secure order and permits ahead of time). FMPC will set the schedule and finalized the plans for the Sanctuary, when feasible. We are also excited to welcome 22 **new members** this month!

And for our Pastor Amy, **new life** is truly evident. Oh my gosh! We will see (and hear), spring in a special way very soon.

As we move through Lent toward Easter, we see signs life everywhere. Praise the Lord! Glenn

The Stewardship of Lent

By Rob Peglar

We are in the midst of Lent. Of course, we generally understand Lent to be a period of self-examination, repentance, prayer, reflection, thought, and consideration of the events to come at the end of the season. Which is, of course, all true. But did you also know that Lent is a period of sacrificial giving? I'm not referring to refraining from chocolate or hamburgers for Lent, either – I'm talking about true sacrifice; giving something of great meaning to others - rather than a small gesture that is, after all, only about yourself.

So it has been over the centuries. We are reminded that the early followers of Christ, when fasting, considered the food they abstained from to be given to others in need, rather than merely refused. In that spirit, I challenge you to consider this – where do you see God working in your community – the people around you, not just at GSLC – changing the story for those in need? How can you, yes you, child of God, participate in God's work in your own community?

Personally, I spent time this week reflecting on this, and several things jumped out at me. I bet they will for you too. First, even though we are to render to Caesar what is Caesar's, as is said, if I am fortunate enough to receive a refund on my federal taxes, I'm happy to donate that to the effort of God's work in my community. I would urge all of you to consider the same. Second, as we have learned (and continue to learn), via temple talks and such, GSLC is reminding all of us of the numerous ways to contribute our energy and time towards God's work in our own parish and in the world – serving as worship leaders, as children's/youth ministry helpers, and so on. Yes, this involves some sacrifice on your part – after all, time is fleeting and we seem to never have enough of it – but every hour you contribute towards the work of God is an hour that is deeply satisfying and helps to continue to orient us outwardly. A great working definition of sin is 'to be turned inward' – thinking only of ourselves – and Lent is about repentance - turning around, changing of mind, literally 'to think differently after' (in the Greek, 'metanoia').

So, giving – being a generous and thoughtful steward – is, quite literally, an act of repentance. After you give your money, your time, your energy, and your heart to God, you think differently after. I know I do – there is nothing like (for example) cooking up a meal in the church's kitchen, for the purpose serving others. The last time I did this, I was literally sweating over the hot stove, and spent several hours in the kitchen – but it was all SO worth it. I felt wonderful afterwards, knowing that my own labor and sweat helped render God's work in my own community. I feel the same way every time I see my online giving notice. (By the way – online is a

wonderful and simple way to donate – check it out on the GSLC app). That little email confirmation makes me think differently after I read it, a brief respite from the normal craziness of the workday. I know my contribution is going towards the work of God. I hope you all feel the same way, especially during Lent. God bless you all.

A "Wink" from the Welcome Ministry Team by: Elliott Haugen



April is the month of showers, tax time and, most importantly, the arrival of Easter on April 21. We are comforted by the thought that April showers will bring beautiful May flowers and that we won't have to dwell on taxes for another year. During this month's worship services we will hear Bible verses and messages about the time leading up to and following the crucifixion of Jesus. One of those verses is about the stone (door) to the tomb being rolled away revealing that Jesus had indeed risen.

There are many verses in the Bible about doors and gateways; for example:

“Ask, and it will be given you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened for you. For everyone who asks receives, and everyone who searches finds, and for everyone who knocks, the door will be opened.” *Matthew 7:7-8*

“I am the door; if any one enters by me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture.” *John 10:9*

The wonderful painting of Jesus knocking at a door is a memory from my childhood and we now have a copy hanging in our home. It reminds us of many doors of our lives that provided opportunities or were obstacles. Not surprisingly, it is by walking through a doorway that changes us or our circumstances. We have found open church doors have allowed us to learn about forgiveness, comfort and grace. We are glad that Good Shepherd continues to welcome everyone through our doors, but the real reason being here is so all can hear the Word of God, experience Jesus' love, and share in the promise of resurrection and life eternal. Wonderful things happen when we welcome Jesus into our lives and others into our community of faith.

Note: A “wink” is a brief form of communications that implies a hello or friendly greeting. These Winks share thoughts and information about Good Shepherd's welcoming ministry.

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