



Shepherd's Staff

Wednesdays in Lent

Following Christ Marks of Discipleship

The Monthly Newsletter of Good Shepherd Lutheran Church

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Marks of Discipleship

Then Jesus told his disciples, “If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it. For what will it profit them if they gain the whole world but forfeit their life?” – Matthew 16:24-26a

Lent is a season we tend to lean into deeply. Before we arrive at the joy of the resurrection we know there is a season of struggle, suffering, and reflection that happens on the way to the cross. This invitation Jesus gives is more difficult than any other, and yet we know that stepping into this invitation holds the promise of a life of purpose and beauty beyond our wildest imaginings.

Each year during lent we hold mid-week worship services, and many of us engage in spiritual practices of prayer, scripture, or fasting throughout Lent as a way to help us draw near the cross. It is a time to slow down and reflect. Good Shepherd always seems to be a very busy place, with many possibilities and opportunities tugging at our hearts. While this is a beautiful expression of faith, it also can mean we often find ourselves, as a whole community, going in different directions. During this season of lent we want to invite you to take a deep breath, pause, and journey to the cross as one. In the midst of everything that is moving both here and out in our lives, we invite you to be still. For these 40 days, we invite you to abide in prayer and God's word together.

Our Lenten theme is “Following Christ: Marks of Discipleship.” Each week we will explore one of the six marks that are practiced in the life of a disciple: worship,

prayer, scripture, service, giving, and community. We are not called to just believe in God. We are not called to simply learn *about* Christ. Jesus calls us to follow him. Our mission at Good Shepherd makes this clear. We seek to follow Christ, grow in faith and share God's love. Therefore, we will examine what this life of discipleship looks like. What do disciples do? What practices and rhythms are present in the life of a disciple? What of these practices are present in our lives and where is the Spirit inviting us to learn and grow.

Throughout our 40-day journey we will have a passage of scripture to read and a ministry to pray for each day. Disciples pray daily and dwell in God's word, so we want to practice this together in Lent. Imagine if everyone in our faith community is reading the same holy scripture and praying for the same ministry each day! I believe we will experience a powerful and beautiful sense of unity in our mission as we embark on this journey together. We are invited to take up our cross and follow Jesus, but we do not go alone.



Glenn Kraft Council President

We can't help but chuckle when thinking of Dana Carvey's "Church Lady" bit on Saturday Night Live. In it, she (he) has many expressions which we laugh at as if it were in another church. The fact is, we as humans just can't help but be a little bit of that person, even as church members. Here at Good Shepherd, we do a really great job of accommodating so many wonderful ministries and finding our way through all the activities with little conflict. In the Dana Carvey skits, Church Lady often concludes when she observes dissent or some misbehavior with her phrase, "*could it be...SATAN?*" It's really funny, and you know it's so true.

One theme that resonates with me as I help to lead Council and move our ministry forward is that this church is not **My Church**. I can't even imagine what "The Church of Glenn" would look like or how well it would operate. It gives me great comfort to experience that most all of what happens at our church is motivated by pure initiatives through many members and staff. We have the energy to stay the course on so many fronts as we tear up the parking lot and install new software. We possess the openness to consider new ways to motivate leadership and the flexibility to accept new ways of committing time and talents. Our openness to bend our minds and truly think of those less fortunate, or who's life experience is not ours, is something we treasure. And as we move through the planning process and Listening Sessions for the sanctuary redesign it occurred to me that It is not **My Church, it is Our Church**. Although there is just no way to accommodate every person's desire to retain or change certain aspects of the redesign, with your feedback and the thoughtful work of the design team over these months, we will make improvements. This redesign will make a difference in our use of the sanctuary and in our sense of God's presence in worship.



We know that God is at the center of all of our work. So, I guess I need to correct my claim yet again. **It's Not Our Church, It's God's Church**. What a relief! God is here,

guiding our debates and struggles. We need not worry about a perfect launch of Good Shepherd Connect. It's quite possible some aspect of our new parking lot might crack. You may even really not like how the new seating feels on your back (although, we are planning on cushioned seats and backs!). But together, God with us, we will continue to move our ministry forward. *"Isn't that special!"*

Glenn

Cross+Generational Sunday Learning

Join us on this month's fifth Sunday, March 31, for a FAITH-5 cross+generational learning and fellowship event during the Sunday School hour. Sunday School classes from kindergarten through our adult learning groups will join us for this powerful time of community connection.

What's FAITH 5?

FAITH 5 connects church to home, faith to life, and adults to kids in a powerful way. The five steps of the FAITH5 are:

Step One: Share highs and lows of your day or week.

Step Two: Read a verse from your Bible together.

Step Three: Talk about how the verse relates to highs and lows. Unpack the verse a bit. What does it mean in your own words? How might it relate to where you are today in your highs and lows? Imagine the blessing that a conversation between a kindergarten and a chronologically-gifted learner might be!

Step Four: Pray for one another's highs and lows, for our church family, and for the world. Simply talk to God, thank Jesus for the good, and ask the Holy Spirit for guidance in specific problems.

Step Five: Bless one another. Trace the sign of the cross on one another's forehead or palm as a reminder that you belong to God and to one another. Please join us as we consider how we all benefit when the wisdom of an elder meets the wonder of a child!

The Stewardship of Lent By Christina Kling-Garrett

Lent is quickly approaching and like I do every year, I find myself thinking about the habits and traditions that those closest to me practice. Every year my mother-in-law gives up chocolate, my best friend gives up social media, and my family's Friday nights revolve around a Fish Fry.

When I was 12, I questioned my dad about why I had to give something up for Lent. Did it really matter if I didn't drink a Coke for 40 days? Did something that I could give up at any time of year really bring me closer to God? Did not eating that Cadbury egg really create a solid foundation for my love of the church? After (dozens of) years of struggling with, "Why should I do this? Does this really matter?" I decided, that for me, while sacrifice and abstinence are important parts of a Lenten practice, if I combined that with something else, with something that pushed me, usually outside my comfort zone, that is when I could strengthen my

relationship with God.

My son made a Lenten prayer pillowcase when he was in second grade and every year he gets it out. It's full of a seven-year-old's drawing of a man with ashes on his forehead, a rosary, a cross, a fish, and a host and chalice. But it's also filled with these words – "Do kind things. Repent. Pray. Almsgiving."

The last few years, those are the virtues I've been focusing on - prayer, repentance, almsgiving, and doing good deeds. Why? Because none of them are easy for me, and neither was giving up the Diet Coke. My challenge for you this month is, in a season intentionally set aside to reflect on our relationship with God, how can you challenge your inner steward this Lenten season? Will you pray more? Attend more worship services? Give to those less fortunate? Or something else? I'd love to hear what you decide.

Feed My Starving Children

This Lenten season we challenge you to work as a family to save starving children's lives !

You will be supporting the Feed My Starving Children 2019 Mobile Pack that will be held at GSLC for October 16th-October 20th. The Mobile Pack # is 1910-068AU.

Feed My Starving Children is committed to feeding God's starving children hungry in body and spirit. The approach is simple: children and adults hand-pack meals specifically formulated for malnourished children. The meals are shipped to food distribution partners who distribute them to children in greatest need around the world. For more information please go to mpstl.org.



Feed My Starving Children Lenten Challenge: How Your Family Can Help Feed a Hungry Child

1. Place a bowl, jar or fun container on your kitchen table.
2. At each meal, each family member places a quarter in the bowl. Each quarter provides more than one full meal for a child.
3. Continue to do this throughout Lent.
4. At Easter: count your quarters and write a check to : Feed My Starving Children, note the Mobile Pack #1910-068AU on the check. Bring your checks to GSLC or mail to: Carrie Wiggins, Feed My Starving Children, 555 Exchange Court, Aurora, IL 60504.
5. Celebrate the fact that you and your family saved many children's lives.
6. At \$2.00 per day for the 40 days of Lent (total \$80.00), your family will have provided enough meals to feed one child for an entire year.

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

Thanks be to God – It is almost spring! The cold, stormy winter has kept us indoors more than we may desire. However, it may have provided opportunities to read, talk to each other, play games, and even catch up on things. I've enjoyed playing hide-and-seek with our grandchildren. Of course, I get to be "it" - the seeker, while the kids hide. Young children enjoy being found sooner, rather than later and they may even give out sounds to let you know they are still out there. Older children are harder to find because they have the more complicated hiding places. For me, the occasionally reluctant seeker, it takes some effort to find them. However, it is always rewarding to see the smiles on their faces when they are found. The worst result is when I give up seeking.



You are probably asking what does this have to do with Good Shepherd's welcome ministry? Well, scripture certainly helps us understand the importance of "seeking", e.g., Luke 11:9-10:

"So I say to you: Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened."

Our personal journey to seek a relationship with God should also extend to those around us. Often members (new and even long-time), friends, and visitors, although not hiding, may want to be sought and found too. We are a wonderful, vibrant faith community, but it also takes a Spirit-led, proactive welcoming, inviting and inclusive effort to help build meaningful connections and relationships with God and each other. So - "You're it!"

Lastly, please watch for opportunities to invite visitors to attend our next new member orientation. Part one will be held on Sunday, March 3 at noon in room 205 (lunch and childcare will be provided.) Part two will be on Sunday, March 10 at 9:30 am in the Fireside room. Those wishing to join will be welcomed at the 9:30 service on Sunday, March 24. (Always encourage visitors to complete the Contact Card so we can seek out and communicate with them.)

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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