



# Shepherd's Staff

The Monthly Newsletter of Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, August 2019



Join us at the Rally Day and Church Picnic on August 25, 2019!



**Josh Brecht**  
**Associate Pastor**  
[jbrecht@gslcelca.org](mailto:jbrecht@gslcelca.org)

## Director of Children and Family Ministries Update

We are so very thankful for the many years of fantastic ministry that Becky Howard has brought to Good Shepherd. So many families and children have been blessed by her dedication, love, and faithfulness to God and to the ministry of Good Shepherd. While we are preparing to say goodbye in October, we are also looking ahead to the future and prayerfully moving toward where God is leading us next. As such, we would like to share a brief update on the process and progress for staffing these ministries in the next season.

In conversation with the Good Shepherd council, we have formed a team of nine people (myself and eight members) who have been deeply invested in children's, middle school, and family ministry at Good Shepherd over the years. This team has taken time to review and update the position description, and then with council's approval, lay out and begin the process of searching and receiving candidates for this ministry. We have received a good number of applicants and are in the beginning stages of the interview process. We are optimistic that if all goes well in the coming weeks, we hope to be able to make a recommendation and have

staffing in place for a seamless transition when Becky finishes in October.

We know that children, youth, and families are a vital part of Good Shepherd and one of our core strengths. We recognize how important these ministries are not only for right now, but for the future of the church, as well. As such we invite you to pray for this process and for the team that is working diligently on your behalf. We continue to pray that God would guide this process and provide the right leadership for these essential ministries at Good Shepherd. Thank you for supporting our children and youth so faithfully. Thank you for your prayers as we seek God's leading together.

Grace and Peace,  
Pastor Josh

---



**Glenn Kraft**  
**Council President**

### **Our Journey, Together**

Each of us at Good Shepherd brings unique histories and values from our life experiences, through our interactions with others in the world and our journey in faith. We care about each



other, we love our church and we desire to honor God in all we do. As we journey through time, struggles and faith, we do so together. At Good Shepherd we are not alone; at least we don't have to be. We say all are welcome. We give permission to join in whether you are a member or not. Sometimes we ask, "please help out or step up and lead something?", but it's not required. We often ask for your opinions and concerns and then cannot honor them equally (since 1,300 people have varied passions). Overall, our church has many great strengths, which includes our theology of love, care for others and a desire to follow Christ together.

As we move through the warm months of summer and so many of you are

gone enjoying the summer, I would like to ask you to consider how might pick up an oar and row the Good Shepherd boat forward. Consider a small leadership or team role, Just email me your interest and I will accommodate. If you are not in a small group, consider joining one (contact Pastor Josh); this is a great way to really get to know others more deeply. If you seeking deeper understanding there are varied opportunities to grow in faith with others. And if you are enjoying the benefits of a full economy, a robust stock market or have earned a great bonus consider donating more regularly and joyfully to the operating budget. We are paddling well and the boat is steady, but joining those more active at Good Shepherd will add to your life in big ways.

The guilt is gone. There is no “you should” at Good Shepherd. You can contribute in so many ways. You can gain more than you give. You can find God in many big and small ways at church.

Let’s have some fun on the journey together.

Glenn  
President

---

### **A Message Created with You in Mind**

By Jen Wade, You Belong team member

When done well, a message should be created with the specific listener in mind. For example, we always know which group Paul was writing to in his New Testament letters because he would tailor his messages to address the particular concerns of that community. So I’d like to do the same. As we at Good Shepherd consider adopting a Welcoming Statement that would make clear our openness to including people of all sexual orientations and gender identities in the full life of the church, it seems like we should be careful to address each of you specifically, especially when we each have different experiences and feelings about this seemingly new idea.

And so, with you in mind, I have tailored the message that our You Belong team has been sharing.

The first message is, perhaps obviously, for folks who aren’t sure if Christian

churches, or even God, wants them around. Maybe you have been told before that your marital status, or sexual orientation, or gender identity (or anything else) exclude you from a godly community. If you are standing on this shaky ground, I hope you can hear us: God loves you just as you are, and you do not have to change one bit to belong here. God created diversity and the church reflects that.

The second message is for folks who are very uncomfortable with this new Welcoming Statement idea. It is not something you would like to consider and discuss at this time, and it may feel destabilizing for our community to be talking about it now. If you are standing on this shaky ground, I hope you can hear us: God loves you just as you are, and you do not have to change one bit to belong here. God created diversity, and the church reflects that.

The third message is for everyone else. This group still has a wide variety of understandings, beliefs and information. For this group, our message is this: Let's grow and learn together! Let's pick up a new language of respect together. Let's practice telling our own stories and listening to each others' stories with Grace by our side. Let us dig into the Bible together and find out what it says about the design for our most intimate relationships with God and with each other. What is it about gender, or race, or family status that makes us who we are? These are really some of the questions we come to church to grapple with anyway, so let's take some time to dig in and do the work now so we can be a warm welcome for all who walk through our doors. Though this time can be a period of growth and change for you, remember that this change does not earn God's acceptance. God also loves you just as you are, and you do not have to change one bit to belong here. God created diversity and the church reflects that.

Now that I have carefully crafted these messages, I am starting to realize... maybe what we each need to hear is not as different as I thought.

*You Belong is a strategic action team of Good Shepherd, tasked with engaging the congregation in a period of dialog, learning and discernment with the goal of spreading a sense of belonging to groups who have been historically excluded from the wider church, including people of all sexual orientations and gender identities. Check out what we have been up to! [goodshepherdlutheran.com/members/](https://goodshepherdlutheran.com/members/) (case-sensitive password:*

## Filling the Silence

by Jill Thompson

I have been a student of racial justice. I have benefited from some great teachers who taught about paths that lead to justice. One of the most important things I've learned from them was the role of silence in oppression. One historic example of silence really stood out to me and helped me understand the role of silence as no other. It was the story of Ida B Wells. I learned that Ida B. Wells was a famous journalist who called out the silence by calling on the white women to find out where their husbands were going on the nights when African Americans were lynched. The wives had some ideas about where their husbands were but kept silent about it. Ms. Wells said their silence was complicity. All of a sudden, I learned how silence connected with other parts of our history and how in the silence, noise can fill the empty spaces.

When there is silence, noise will fill it:

*The noise of prejudice*

*The noise of lies*

*The noise of misinformation and misdirection*

*The noise of hate*

*The noise of fear*

*The noise of death.*

I recognized that when there is silence, noise will fill the space and that good people, well-meaning people will miss the silence of:

*Native peoples fleeing their lands,*

*Jewish neighbors disappearing to death camps,*

*Japanese neighbors being shuttled into internment camps,*

*LGBTQAI being violated,*

*Black and brown people being lynched.*

It was hard to face my own innocence and naïveté regarding the role of silence and our history.

Then I personally experienced the role of silence and the stress of being targeted. I was a member of a congregation where there was silence. As a result, one person felt the freedom to try to “out” me to others. She felt the freedom to stalk me while in church. This went on for weeks.

Everywhere I went in the church she felt free to follow me. She filled the silence with ‘noise’ about me. Fortunately, there were those when told this, ended the silence and told her to stop. But because the congregation did not have a welcoming statement, I was not sure I would be supported. I didn’t really know who was safe. The lack of a statement left room for the noise to fill the silence.

I’m proud to be a member at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church because this welcome statement could end the silence, ends the complicity related to racism, sexism, heterosexism, ageism, to name a few. It ends the silence about who is welcome and who is not. If you have a unique family structure, you are welcome here. If you have a unique God-given culture, you are welcome here. If you are differently abled physically or mentally, you are welcome here. If you live at the margins economically, you are welcome here. If you live at any margin, you are welcome here. The silence is ended. It follows the way of Jesus, our Savior who ended the silence many times and in many ways. He says we are welcome in his kin-dom. We are welcome.

While I have felt very welcomed here, I will never feel fully *safe* here until the silence is filled with clear and resounding welcome, for me and for all those that our society and some faith traditions have viewed as “other.”

Grace and peace to you as you prayerfully decide whether to fill the silence or leave room for the noise. And I hope we will all see this as a beginning of filling the silence, not the end.

---

Visit our Website

STAY CONNECTED

