



Shepherd's Staff



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“I Am the Resurrection and the Life” – John 11:25

This weekend is All Saints Day, which is a natural time to think about death and resurrection. There's no denying that these past few months have been a hard season in the life of our church. We have held a sort of cold-war peace for a long time. We have quietly agreed to not discuss divisive things, including this very challenging issue about which many of us hold such deep and differing convictions. We often say Good Shepherd is our “church family,” and just like any family the longer you ignore the tension that hangs in the air, the more difficult it becomes to deal with. There is no question that this has been an extremely emotional and difficult conversation. In fact, I would dare to say this is the most difficult theological question that this church has ever wrestled with. It is certainly the most challenging theological question of the church in my lifetime.

So today we find ourselves rolling through intense emotions. Some are rejoicing and filled with gladness because a church, *our church*, has finally dared to say that LGBTQ+ persons are fully included in the life of the church in *every* way, after a lifetime of experiencing limits, exclusions, and judgement by Christians and Christian churches. Others are filled with confusion and sadness because this theological precept we were taught by our parents and faith leaders from the time of our birth is now being called into question and we don't know what to do with that.

My prayer is that we would be patient with one another.

My prayer is that we could be kind and gentle with one another.

My prayer is that we would love one another, as Christ has loved us.

This is a season of roller-coaster emotions. People we know and love who have been part of this community for years and years have left. Some people we know and love who have been pillars of this community for decades are struggling and wondering if this is a place they want to stay. And in the same moment we have new people coming to worship whose eyes light up with joy seeing a church they had hoped could exist but had never actually seen before: a church of radical inclusivity.

What we had hoped would be a season of celebration and rejoicing has become far more complex than that. Right alongside the thanksgiving are feelings of mourning, anger, and loss.

But Jesus never said this road would be easy. He never said we had to agree with one another. He called us to love one another. He said, "Take up your cross and follow me."

I realize that there is fear and uncertainty floating in the atmosphere right now, as we wonder what the future holds. The church we knew even a few years ago is starting to look and feel different because of who is here, who isn't here, and the new financial reality in front of us. What do we make of this crossroads at which we find ourselves?

There are two ways we can interpret the present moment.

The first is to give in to sadness and despair. To see loss and mourn what was, because it certainly looks like the future may be different than the past. We can interpret this moment as the death of something, the end of something.

The second is quite different. We can choose to interpret this moment through the cross. It has been challenging. For some it has been painful. For others it has been two years of toil and labor working to love those who think differently than me. At the end of painful seasons God has this habit of bringing new life. If we interpret this season as something **we** did, then it makes sense to fear loss and mourn. However, if this is something **God** is involved in, and we have indeed been obedient to God's leading for Good Shepherd, and continue to love one another in all of our unique differences, then we can trust, even **expect** that the best is yet to come.

Good Shepherd has had some wonderful, incredible and beautiful days in its long history. These are things to celebrate. God has been faithful through times of plenty and times of want, and has worked through Good Shepherd to accomplish phenomenal ministry. It may look and feel like the best is behind us, but if God is moving among us,

then the best is certainly yet to come.

God is one who consistently does the impossible. We believe in a God who brings the dead back to life (John 11)! This is a God who takes a mustard seed and turns it into the tree of life (Matthew 13)! This is a God who takes people enslaved for 400 years and frees them from the mighty hand of their oppressor! When God's people are trapped with their backs against the Red Sea and an army of death in front of them, God parts the waters to bring them into a new future (Exodus 14)!

Our Lord Jesus has power over death and life, and is one who even after death on a cross, bursts forth from the Easter tomb with new life for the world. Jesus is Lord of our lives. Jesus is Lord of this congregation, and it is because of God's persistent habit of doing the impossible that I believe that the best is yet to come.



Glenn Kraft
Council President

Peace of the Lord

When we share the peace, I experience a connection that is unique in worship. We actually touch each other, look into each other's eyes and say, "Peace be with you." Sometimes, I'm not sure if I'm wishing for you to have peace or for me to feel peace in saying those words.



In my life experience, I have too often understood peace to be something I earn. So I work hard, do my part then, if there is time, I can feel peace. Peace is somehow the exhale of life when all is good. Peace is available when everything is right. As a middle child, peace was when everyone in the family was happy. Lately, I wake up each day thinking about our church. I know that we all seek to regain a zeal for ministry and to not feel brokenness and pain. We also seek to motivate each other to live in joyful ministry. Yet, that path is unclear.

Perhaps I need to start my day with "peace". Jesus says, "Peace be with you". I believe God desires for us to have peace even as we experience difficulty.

So I encourage us all to share the peace, even if not at worship. We must start our day in peace and live in the joy of God's desire for each of us to know his love. We can trust that God has already made peace available to each of us.

Thanks be to God.
Glenn
President



Beginning my Journey Through Seminary and Candidacy by: Lexi Swain

Hello, GSLC friends! I am so excited to share with you what I have been up to recently. Since graduating from Wartburg College last May, I have moved out to Denver, CO and have begun the Master of Divinity program at Iliff School of Theology. I felt the call to attend seminary during my last semester at Wartburg when I was taking my senior religion capstone class, Church in the Modern World. This class gave me many opportunities to explore the ways God is working in the world today and develop my own theology and spiritual identity. I realized I wanted to continue to have these experiences in the classroom, and after expressing that to my professor, he encouraged me to think about seminary, I gave it a lot of thought, and after visiting Iliff, I knew that it was the place for me. Now that I am a month into my first quarter at Iliff, I can say that I am so happy that I followed my sense of call to come here. I am always being challenged through my coursework, and I love being part of the community here, which is rooted in social justice and inclusivity.

Along with starting seminary, I have also started the candidacy process towards ordination for word and sacrament in the ELCA. I am currently on track to be entranced into candidacy this December. A big part of the candidacy process involves having a relationship with an ELCA seminary, so since Iliff is not an ELCA seminary, I am exploring my options for affiliation. This means that I can still be a student at Iliff while developing a Lutheran confessional understanding through one of the ELCA seminaries. Right now, I am looking at Wartburg, Luther, and Pacific Lutheran as ELCA seminaries to affiliate with.

Another very important component of candidacy is the relationship between the candidate and their home congregation, and I am so thankful for the support I have received at Good Shepherd as I begin this process. The candidacy process, especially for candidates who do not attend an ELCA seminary, is a very complex process, and it means a lot to me that the community at Good Shepherd is walking alongside me as I go through it. I am very thankful, and I look forward to keeping you updated on my journey.



Join us on November 16, 3:30 - 5:00 pm to hear guest speaker Dr. Kenneth C. Haug, author of *Cancer—Now What?*

Dr. Haug will speak on “**Navigating the Cancer Journey: Insights from a Psychologist, Pastor, and Husband,**” in our sanctuary. A book signing will follow the presentation and question-and-answer

period. You are invited to attend and encouraged to invite others who would benefit from this presentation.

Kenneth C. Haugk is a psychologist, author, pastor, and teacher. He received his Ph.D. in clinical psychology from Washington University and his M.Div. from Concordia Seminary, both in St. Louis, Missouri. A member of the American Psychological Association, he has served as a clinical psychologist and has taught psychology and leadership at several universities and seminaries.

Dr. Haugk is the founder and Executive Director of Stephen Ministries in St. Louis. He is the author of a number of books, including *Don't Sing Songs to a Heavy Heart: How to Relate to Those Who Are Suffering, When and How to Use Mental Health Resources, Christian Caregiving—a Way of Life*, and *Speaking the Truth in Love*, and has published widely in psychological journals and popular periodicals. He is a frequent conference and workshop speaker.

When Ken's wife, Joan—a registered nurse, university professor, and mother—was diagnosed with ovarian cancer, they began a three-and-a-half-year battle against the disease. Together, they navigated the medical, emotional, relational, and spiritual challenges that can come when dealing with cancer.

Bringing together his personal and professional experience, Ken wrote *Cancer—Now What?* as a resource people can give to help others address the challenges of cancer. He conducted research with thousands of cancer survivors, their loved ones, and medical professionals, incorporating their wisdom and expertise into the book.

Good Shepherd members Joel Bretscher and David Paap are colleagues of Dr. Haugk. Joel is the Program Director of Stephen Ministries, and, after 31 years at Stephen Ministries, David retired as Program Director Emeritus.

Good Shepherd's Stephen Leaders and Stephen Ministers are hosting this special event and will be serving those who attend in number of ways—as greeters, ushers, at the book-signing, and sharing information about Good Shepherd's *Cancer—Now What?* Ministry.

A "Wink from the Welcome Ministry Team by Elliott Haugen



Happy Thanksgiving! What? Already? We don't officially celebrate Thanksgiving until the 28th, but it is never too early to start your "I'm thankful for ..." list. Sharing your thankfulness is a wonderful blessing, but it is possible because someone performed an act of love, kindness or caring for you. Jesus taught us to love one another, not expecting their thanks, but because they are children of God too. That

is why we support Feed My Starving Children, Pumpkin Patch, Bells and Brats, and our shared education, music, and service programs.

Romans 12:13 “**Contribute to the needs of the saints; extend hospitality to strangers.**”

Good Shepherd is full of welcoming and caring people who were originally strangers, but are now part of our church community. So please invite a friend, neighbor or colleague to worship with us or attend our programs, activities, and special events. Also remind them of the next new member information session. This two-part orientation is on Sunday, **November 17** (noon) and **November 24** (9:30 am).

“Heavenly Father, we gather, not as strangers, but as members of your family. We are blessed to have been welcomed by those who reflect your teachings, love, and caring. Continue to awaken, lead and sustain us as Good Shepherd continues to be a welcoming place of people, passion, and prayer. Amen”

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