



Shepherd's Staff



The Monthly Newsletter of Good Shepherd Lutheran Church

May 2021



Josh Brecht
Lead Pastor

What's Next?

As vaccinations continue and many aspects of our communal life slowly return, we have an opportunity to pause and reflect, and to prayerfully ask what comes next?

In many circles (in the Church and elsewhere) wise leaders are asking questions like, "what did we learn from this? What has started that we should keep in the future? What can we leave behind?" A life of discipleship is a life of listening, learning, and reflecting on those Kairos (God's time) moments that break into our lives and disrupt our routine, those moments where God grabs our attention to teach us something new. If ever there was a *collective* Kairos moment for the Church, it is the past year!

As we ease back in to more of the ministries that had paused or pivoted over the past year, I want us to also reflect on what we have learned and let that guide us into what God has in store next. Some things may eventually look the same as pre-pandemic, but perhaps some should look different.

What have we learned over the past year?

Communication - Without in-person gatherings we quickly learned the importance of increased and clearer communication, which is a skill we hope to continue into the future.

Social Media – We utilized Facebook not only for worship, but for video devotions, and mid-week reminders of the bible verses and sermon lessons we heard in worship. We found that these tools reach far beyond just the people of Good Shepherd!

Video – We learned how to record and livestream worship in engaging ways. The value of this was even greater than we anticipated, reaching friends and family, those who might be homebound, and keeping people connected to Good Shepherd who

have moved across the country!

We learned the value of relationships and being together in the same physical space, but we also learned how to remain connected virtually, or by inviting members to make phone calls and reach out to our entire congregation. We learned the beauty of outdoor worship and singing praise to God in the midst of God's creation. We utilized adult mentors for our Confirmation students, building relationships and giving our youth more role models in their faith. We learned that we can continue to care for those who are in need in varied and creative ways.

So what comes next? What do we keep? What do we leave behind? What has God taught us through this Kairos moment? It is my hope and prayer that we would all take time to reflect, pray and discuss these questions in the coming months.

Jesus tells us in John 15, *"I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit."* It is only in faithfully abiding in Christ, listening to God's leadership, and being open to whatever pruning God has for us, that we can become truly fruitful, becoming more fully the people, and the *church*, that God has created us to be.

Grace and Peace,

Pastor Josh

A Thank You from Wartburg Theological Seminary

Good Shepherd has long supported Wartburg Seminary students through the generosity of our congregation's Thanksgiving offering - an example of how we live out our Mission of Sharing God's Love. Wartburg is one of only eight seminaries that prepare future church leaders within our synod and also has the highest percentage of graduates who serve in parishes including our very own Josh and Gail Brecht. As part of the service team, I have had the privilege of coordinating our annual effort to support seminary students in need. Even though this year was difficult for all students, through a combination of our offering and Local Benevolence funding, we were able to continue this effort.



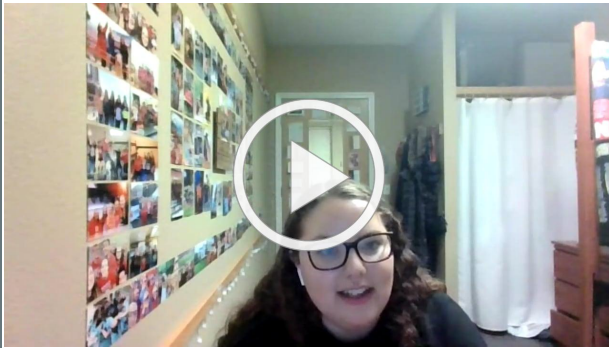
I wanted to pass on a heartfelt thank you from a senior seminary student who received funds to help pay for unexpected medical expenses for his wife's diagnosis and treatment of endometriosis. This condition was also contributing to infertility and they had been struggling to start a family. Not only did the needed surgery go well, but they are expecting their first child this summer! In his thank you note, the Wartburg student shared,

"We are beyond grateful for your support and deeply humbled by our generosity," and for *"continually making a difference for the students of Wartburg Seminary with your Thanksgiving mission support."*

On behalf of the Service Team, thank you for all the ways you support our ongoing service projects and the many ministries of Good Shepherd.

David Franz

Good Shepherd College Student, Hannah Molskness, Preaches at University of Nebraska!



Hannah Molskness, a former youth at Good Shepherd, and current college student at the University of Nebraska, recently preached at her Lutheran Campus Ministry worship service. It is an incredible sermon, which you can watch here.

We are thrilled to hear how Hannah continues to grow in her faith, follow Christ, and share God's love with the world. What a gift she is, and what a gift to know that you all helped shape her faith formation. Thanks for sharing the Good News with us, Hannah!

HAPPY 50th Wedding Anniversary Dennis and Ruth Mall – June 5, 2021

In Honor of their **50th Wedding Anniversary**, Ruth and Dennis Mall will match donations given up to \$5,000 for Feed My Starving Children. Please go to www.feedtheneedstl.org to donate. Thank you.

Feed My Starving Children Lenten/Easter Challenge Thank You

Due to your amazing generosity, you have surpassed our goal of feeding 120 children. We have raised enough money to feed over 150 children a nutritious MannaPack meal every day for an entire year. What an amazing response to such great need.



Many thanks from all the Feed the Need STL committee members. Your generosity touches our hearts.

St. Louis Thanks You!

The Reverse Plate Offering during Lent was a huge success! The Service Team is very pleased to share with you the results of the collections that occurred, and some information about the people who were helped!

God's Helping Hands - God's Helping Hands is a small, grass-roots organization in The Ville neighborhood of north St. Louis City. They have hosted a hot meal on Sundays (pre-Covid) and operate a food and clothing pantry for community residents. During Covid, they shifted to providing food boxes to families and seniors in need. They requested donations of food and detergent. You can see we collected quite a lot!





Cindy Kraft got involved with God's Helping Hands because she was "inspired by the agency's commitment as a small organization to a mighty goal that can be transformative for their community. We are community with our neighbors in The Ville, and I am grateful for Good Shepherd's generosity during our Lenten Reverse Plate offering to support this vital

ministry."

Fisher House - This non-profit provides a home away from home for families with loved ones who are being treated at the VA Hospital or other hospitals in the St. Louis area. They requested kitchen gloves, storage bags, disinfectant spray, paper napkins and shower cleaner. Sandy King delivered our donations. She said this was her favorite part of the Lenten reverse offerings.



Sandy is pictured with Vanniecia and George of Fisher House. In her words, "Vanniecia and George were so appreciative. enthusiastic, and caring. Another favorite part was being at a drive-by and seeing the enthusiasm and smiles of our members" as they dropped off donations for Fisher House.



Nurses for Newborns - Their simplified mission is - Savings Babies. Strengthening Families. As Dave Hawkins explained, "They send specially trained pediatric nurses to the homes of pregnant women or parents with infants who face medical, social or environmental risks. At the home visits, the nurses conduct assessments and put together a plan of action with the infant's caregiver to ensure the

baby's health, safety and optimum development. They help parents access external resources as needed, including infant materials such as diapers, formula, etc. (supplied by donors such as Good Shepherd) and whatever is needed to promote the health and safety of both the mother and child. Services are provided as needed and may be provided for up to two years. Metrics have shown the program to be exceptionally successful." They requested diaper wipes, baby lotion, baby shampoo, diapers and formula. The pictures show what Dave delivered to them.

St. Patrick's Center - This non-profit is located in downtown St. Louis and provides various programs, such as sustainable housing, employment and healthcare, to people who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. The items they requested for us to collect were all purpose cleaners, bleach, detergent, dish soap, sponges, paper towels and toilet paper.



David Franz delivered an amazing assortment of things to them and had this to say about the experience: "I imagined the joy and relief this offers so many who are in need of this support, and am so grateful for our members doing our part to help those in need. I wish others could have seen the surprise when I pulled up to the St. Patrick Center delivery dock and we unpacked two large bins full of the items they requested. Their smiles reflected the joy they felt knowing the hope they would be bringing in a tangible way to those in need."

Tiny House Concert

Good Shepherd has supported the Tiny House project for over 3 years - funding via Local Benevolence. Jill Thompson and Donita Bauer, both from Good Shepherd, will participate in the concert, as noted in the attached flyer..



Pictured above are the three tiny houses being built in North St. Louis by a collaboration of nonprofit organizations. The two houses on the left are now occupied by folks who used to be homeless. Tiny Houses, STL needs \$13,000 to complete the 3rd house. Please contribute on their Go Fund Me page ([gofundme.com Tiny Houses STL](https://www.gofundme.com/TinyHousesSTL)). Join us live on May 1, 2021 from 7-9pm (CST) for the Tiny House Concert, an online opportunity to learn more about homelessness, discover ways to get involved and hear some great music!

Streamed live on Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/jim51ford>) and [You Tube \(Good Trouble, St. Louis Music\)](#). View Flyer [here!](#)

A "Wink" from the Welcome Ministry Team

Welcome to May! This month is full of days for remembering – from May Day (celebrating the return of spring), through Mother’s Day (recognizing the value and love of mothers in our lives), and to Memorial Day (honoring those who have died while performing their military duties). Paul in his letter to the Romans (12:10) reminded us to:

“love one another with mutual affection; outdo one another in showing honor.”

May is often a time of planning for family gatherings, class reunions, and homecomings. What feelings do you remember from those get-togethers? There are usually several common and shared feelings; regardless of the time elapsed since being together:

1. Central, mutual focus that frames the shared relationships and experiences.
2. Immediate rekindling of bonds, friendships and memories.
3. Tangible sense of caring, love and interest in each other. Inclusion of those new to the relationships, e.g., spouses, partners, and children.
4. Joys of renewal and remembering that minimize past differences.
5. Anticipation of more togetherness, communications, and shared involvement.

The recent restarting of in-person worship services at Good Shepherd generated all those feelings for me and possibly others. The power of the Holy Spirit was indeed present and will continue to guide us to invite, welcome and engage all in our shared faith journey.

“For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.” Matthew 18:20

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