



Shepherd's Staff



MAUNDY
THURSDAY
7:00PM



GOOD
FRIDAY
7:00PM



EASTER
SUNDAY
8 | 9:30 | 11AM

The Monthly Newsletter of Good Shepherd Lutheran Church

April 2022



Josh Brecht
Lead Pastor

Suffering – Endurance – Character – Hope

And not only that, but we also boast in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us.

- Romans 5:3-5

Paul was no stranger to challenges. He spent his early life with a fiery zeal for persecuting the first Christians, only to be transformed by Jesus on the road to Damascus. (Knocked off his horse mid-gallop to be precise!) After his conversion, he himself became the one to *experience* persecution at the hands of others. He faced opposition not only from Roman authorities, but from other religious leaders, and sometimes even the pain of disagreements within the beloved churches he planted. Yet through all the challenges, Paul seemed to hold fast to *hope*. He found joy and gratitude even from a prison cell.

We have been through a lot these past couple of years. We have experienced a global pandemic, discord in our nation, and now the devastating invasion of Ukraine. At Good Shepherd we are moving through a time of staff transitions and changes. Sometimes we may feel like crying out as the Psalmist did, "*how long O LORD?*" Yet somehow, amid all of this I feel deep gratitude. I am filled with a joyful, anticipatory hope today.

I am amazed at the fortitude and resilience of God's people, especially here at Good Shepherd. Through all the challenges, the hungry are still fed. The sick are still visited and the hurting cared for. Faith is being formed in our children, and the Gospel continues to be proclaimed!

If we look at the past season from one perspective, we may see loss, pain, and destruction. Yet, if we choose to look at the past season from a different perspective, through the *lens of God's love for the world*, we find that we may see something quite

different.

A pandemic reminded us how much we care for one another. It taught us to value community.

Discord awakened gratitude in me, causing me to invest more deeply in diverse relationships and listen with more patience and curiosity to others.

The violence unleashed upon the Ukrainian people opened the floodgates of compassion and generosity around the world, reminding us of our common humanity.

Staff retirements and transitions at Good Shepherd have allowed us to reflect on years of faithful ministry, filling us with gratitude and celebration.

In other words, as Paul says, suffering produces endurance. Endurance produces character, and character produces hope! Some days I feel a bit like the Israelites standing on brink of the promised land! Hopeful. Joyful. Worried. Excited!

We know that the troubles in our world still remain, but every strife is an opportunity for love. We know that the next few months of staff transitions at Good Shepherd will be challenging. There may be things that get missed and there may be things that have to wait, **but the Holy Spirit is moving**. I am confident that the God who called St. Luke's and Mt. Tabor to form all those years ago continues to guide Good Shepherd today. The God who led those who have gone before us to serve this community continues to lead us in service today. I am confident that our future will be amazing, because God who has brought us this far will be with us every step of the way.

And that, my friends, is the ultimate cause for our hope!

In Christ,
Pastor Josh



She Was Sent By God, Just for Me A Stephen Ministry Story

I was 26, newly divorced, living in a city far away from family and friends, and dealing with a lot of guilt, shame, and low self-esteem. Was I a total failure? Would anybody else ever want me? Was God condemning me because of my divorce? I started to go to a new church, hoping to make friends. I did, but still struggled, thinking my church friends were all perfect, happy, and full of faith, while I was flawed, gloomy, and full of doubts. I shared some of this with my pastor and he suggested a Stephen Minister.

When I first met with my Stephen Minister, I was worried she would judge and reject me once she learned about my past and got to know the real me. But she didn't—she was patient, loving, and accepting. I thought then, and still do now, that she was sent by God just for me.

We got together weekly; she'd ask me questions and get me talking and then listen as I shared my struggles and doubts. She showed me God's love even when I didn't feel it, and, over time, helped me see that, perhaps, I wasn't such a terrible person at all. I began to think, if she loved me, and God loved me, then maybe I could love myself too.

After my Stephen Ministry relationship ended, she and I remained good friends. A few years after that, I was remarried and had a miscarriage, and she was there for me again, providing the care and support I needed. Many more years have passed since, and we now live over a thousand miles apart—but still keep in touch. She will always hold a special place in my heart.

If you are dealing with any kind of difficulty, if you are struggling with faith questions or doubts, if you are wondering whether you are a worthy person, then I encourage you to call Pastor Josh (jbrecht@gslcelca.org or 636.391.6685) and ask about getting a Stephen Minister. It just might be that God already has a special one picked out just for you.

- Shared by a member of Good Shepherd

GSLC Endowment Funds Spread God's Love **By: Dan Engle, Endowment Fund Committee Chair**

The Good Shepherd endowment fund continues to spread God's love locally, nationally and across the globe. GSLC has been richly blessed and in response to God's enduring love, its endowment committee funds many grant requests each year that are submitted by members of our congregation.

In 2021, the endowment committee approved approximately \$58,000 in grant requests for a wide variety of needs. These included local food pantries and to assist with refugee resettlement efforts in St. Louis, special projects at Lutheran camps in Iowa, Illinois and Colorado; and new senior high room furniture. Globally, we funded the efforts of Feed My Starving Children; Lutheran World Relief, work in India's leprosy colonies, and school construction projects in Africa and Cambodia, among others.

Any member of the congregation can submit a request for endowment funding. The form to submit a grant request may be found [here](#), or you can call the church office for more information. The completed form should then be e-mailed to Dan Engle, the current chair of the endowment committee at dengle@thompsoncoburn.com for follow-up. The committee looks for involvement by the applicant with the charity that is to receive the grant and usually only funds specific special project needs, not day to day operating expenses of an organization. The typical grant size ranges from \$1,000-\$5,000 and is usually a one-time project specific funding.

In addition to Dan, the other current members of the endowment committee are Beth Anderson; Beckie Finland; Rebecca Hilleman (who is our council liaison); Steve Schilson; Tim Sorensen and Rick Hautekeete.

The committee welcomes grant requests at any time during the calendar year.

A "Wink" from the Welcome Ministry Team **By Elliott Haugen**

Readers of the "Wink" articles know that I often rely on the words and wisdom of others. In last month's message, I shared some of the



reasons our 17 newest members gave for joining Good Shepherd. They value worshipping together; faith formation opportunities; messages based on readings and teaching; a loving, supportive, caring and giving culture; friendliness; a positive value system; and that all are truly welcome here.

Did you realize that membership is a two-way street? They join us and we join them! Pastor Amy provided a great message about what it means to join this church when she welcomed our newest members. First, she emphasized that at Good Shepherd everyone is welcome to participate in its ministries and programs, regardless of whether or not they are members. Many have attended worship, Sunday School or other activities for years, but are not formal members – and that is okay.

But for those who chose to join Good Shepherd, Pastor Amy explained what that means. We believe membership is a mutual commitment to one another and to the mission of God that is unique to this time and place. We believe every member of Good Shepherd should be known by and know others. Every member is called to worship and pray, to do ministry, to grow spiritually, and to share their gifts. You are not joining an organization; you are committing yourself to God's mission here.

Commitment is a dual responsibility. Therefore, the people of Good Shepherd, by receiving these siblings in Christ, are asked to commit to helping them discover their unique calling, to be intentional about knowing one another and inviting their gifts into our common ministry. We will welcome them fully into this community of faith, pray for them, walk with them through joys and struggles, and help them discover their place within this body of Christ.

Our new members and the congregation responded to their expected commitments with "It is and we ask God to help us." Thankfully, we are supported in these promises, just as St. Paul wrote in his letter to the *Philippians (4:13)*: "For I can do all things through Christ, who gives me strength."



Feed the Need STL **By: Dianne Unverfehrt**

Help Save a Child

Have you given up something for Lent? If not, this could be the time to start. Give up your favorite daily coffee drink or your favorite restaurant meals. Donate the money you have saved to feed a hungry child. Our Lenten goal is to raise enough money to feed 140 children for a year! Only \$88 per child.

To donate, go to our Feed the Need STL website [Donate – Feed The Need STL](#) and credit your donation to the Lenten Challenge. Checks may be sent to Good Shepherd with Feed the Need in the check memo.

Visit our Facebook page: [Feed the Need STL](#). Like our page and share our posts on your own Facebook page. Share the mission of Feed My Starving Children.



Home Sweet Home Dresser Build

Last Saturday, 52 persons gathered at Home Sweet Home for a dresser build hosted by West County Lutheran Church. We want to extend a big thank you to the fifteen members from Good Shepherd who participated in this and those who also made financial contributions to the effort. It was really good to see the group in action and HSH was overwhelmed by the group. It was the largest they have hosted to date!



Stewardship Team Glenn Kraft, Chair

You Matter! Wow! What a first quarter! It's been a wild ride but we are excited to be renewed in our work together. The Trivia Night celebration was like a step back in time; as if that pandemic never happened. Of course, we may not be over it. It was just a nice experience to see so many of us together, enjoying fellowship.



As we move forward through Lent toward Easter we are so grateful to have a renewed focus in ministry. Your gifts of time, passion, ideas and money are experienced in abundance.

Thank you for all of your gifts. Your gifts matter in big and small ways.

The Stewardship Team