

Shepherd's Staff

LifeWise StL
Life Skills for Better Futures



The Monthly Newsletter of Good Shepherd Lutheran Church

July 2023

Local Service Partnership Update By Kyle Butler

Over the past year, the Local Service Partnership team has been working to select a local agency for Good Shepherd to partner with at a more significant level. The intent in doing this has been to provide

opportunities to increase engagement amongst our congregation in mission and justice ministries, to grow in our understanding of the dynamics of need in our community, and to develop a closer relationship both with the agency itself and most importantly, the people they serve. Selecting a partner is no easy task as there are a number of deserving agencies in our community each doing important work. The team took this responsibility seriously! Over many meetings, the team developed criteria, visited local agencies, and assessed the viability of each for such a partnership. Following this process, I am excited to announce that the team has chosen LifeWise StL as our local ministry partner!



So who is LifeWise StL? LifeWise is an organization founded in 1902 and known for much of its history as Kingdom House before changing their name to LifeWise in 2019. With their change in name, they have also undergone a shift in their mission, changing their focus from simply stabilizing people in poverty to a more holistic and transformational program. You may have heard the popular saying: "Give someone a fish, feed them for a day. Teach someone to fish, feed them for a lifetime." This saying speaks to the power of education as a way to transform someone's life and help them move out of poverty. Following this idea, LifeWise has put education at the center of their work (hence the "Wise" in their name). LifeWise offers services for all ages: an early childhood center and summer reading programs, a teen academy, economic and mental wellness programs for adults, and senior companionship and resiliency programs. Participants at LifeWise have not only had their immediate needs met, but

have also been able to make truly life-changing steps forward, like buying a house for the first time, becoming debt-free and starting a savings account for the first time, acquiring the skills to get a job, and much more.

Our team is excited about LifeWise for many reasons, with their great variety of programs offering numerous opportunities for Good Shepherd members to get involved. No matter your age, skill set, or interest there is a way that you can help! They also offer many opportunities to educate ourselves on the needs of others, the dynamics of poverty, and how we can best serve those in need.

How can you get involved?
We expect our partnership with LifeWise to be a long-term project which will grow over time. However, even in the next few months there are ways for you to plug in! In July, we will be collecting backpacks as part of a back-to-school event LifeWise puts on every



August. You can either bring a backpack or purchase one at church on July 16th and 23rd. Just \$5 will purchase a new backpack for a child in need! On September 9th and 10th, we will have several service opportunities with LifeWise and other organizations as part of “God’s Work, Our Hands” weekend, so mark these dates on your calendar!

Many other opportunities will be coming soon, so please be in prayer for LifeWise, the people they serve, and for our new partnership together. More information about LifeWise can be found at their website (<http://www.lifewisestl.org>). If you have any questions or would like to get involved, contact Kyle Butler at theokyle@gmail.com.

Stewardship Team

By Robert Engle

Offerings – July 2023

I recently noticed my kids paying attention to the offering plate at church. Every week I let the offering plate go by without adding anything – I rarely write checks and do all my giving online via the Good Shepherd app (usually late at night after the kids are finally asleep). I asked my son, age eight, whether he knew that I donated online. Not surprisingly he did not. My wife and I decided we needed to change things. I wanted my kids (that son and his younger sister) to know that supporting their church financially is important. We decided we would have dollar bills for them to put in the offering plate each week.

Prior to that decision I rarely visited a bank – a real world brick-and-mortar bank – but I have done it a few times now in the last few months. It’s impressive how fast one dollar bills get used up at a rate of two per week. I am not sure the bank tellers are thrilled when I pull up and ask for a large number of one dollar bills. However my kids love having those dollar bills to put in the offering tray each week. The greater concept of giving and stewardship might be a few years beyond them, but I hope to have started them down a good path.

A recent daily Bible study I read had this verse:

*Parents make known to children your faithfulness.
Isaiah 38:19*

In the wider context of the verses around it, the pronoun “your” refers to our heavenly parent, but if read a different way, it seems to me to be a good reminder of my responsibilities to my family here on earth.

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