



Shepherd's Staff

Coming this Fall -

5pm Saturday Evening Worship
Begins September 9!

The Monthly Newsletter of Good Shepherd Lutheran Church

September 2023



Josh Brecht
Lead Pastor

Dear siblings in Christ,

Words cannot express how grateful I am for the incredible gift of sabbatical that you have given me this summer. My time with family (both immediate and extended) was a great blessing. My time with the Lord was not only restorative, but transformative. I have cherished this time of learning, rest, and renewal, but I have also missed my faith community at Good Shepherd and I am excited to be back! I want to take this opportunity not only to thank you, but to share my sabbatical experience with you.

In June, our family stayed here in St. Louis, and I was able to do a lot of reading, bible study, and time in nature for prayer, silence, and solitude with God. July was our time for travel. We spent time with family in Iowa, and then did a big East-Coast trip to connect with family and friends there. We were able to see so much of the north-eastern part of the country, and help our kids gain a deeper appreciation of our history. We visited Delaware, Philadelphia (including the Liberty Bell and Independence Hall). Then off to New Jersey and New York City, where we were able to visit Trinity Church, One World Trade Center, Ellis Island/Statue of Liberty, and the 9/11 memorial. We went up to Boston and walked some of the Freedom Trail, and Black Heritage Trail. From there we went to Acadia National Park (Maine), then White Mountain National Forest (New Hampshire), and finally to Niagara Falls (Canada).



Over the course of the summer, I have read many books and a lot of scripture. I really enjoyed reading 1 & 2 Samuel, and 1 & 2 Kings along with some commentary and

history to gain a broader sense of biblical story. I also read all the Epistles along with Dietrich Bonhoeffer's classic, "Life Together" to create a simple bible resource on Christian Community. I spent time praying through Psalms, reading the Gospels, and creating a list of memory verses to accompany our Lectionary readings.

The most transformative books I read were "Strengthening the Soul of Your Leadership" by Ruth Haley Barton, "How to Pray" and "How to Hear God" by Pete Grieg. These books showed me how to pray in richer, deeper ways. I learned to pray in new and different ways. They helped me to see the indispensable need for sabbath, solitude, and silence in our relationship with God.

Many mornings, I would fill my coffee mug to the brim, still steaming with that freshly-ground coffee smell. I would lace up my hiking boots, still carrying dust from the last trails, and hit the road. With these books and a bible in my backpack, I would find a new Missouri trail to explore. As the sun's warm rays danced through the trees, and the breeze whispered around me, I would walk, pray, and listen. I would walk with the Lord until I found a good spot to sit, read, and spend time in prayer. God's heart is to spend time with each of us. To listen, to share, to just be. May you find that sacred time and holy space, create that regular rhythm where you can rest in the presence of God.



Jill Thompson
Council President

Council Updates

Your GSLC Council has had a busy summer! Council continues to meet monthly throughout the summer. In June, we thanked those rotating off the Council: Past-President, Robert Fingland, Treasurer, Troy Larsen, FMPC Liaison, Gene Unverfehrt, and Paul Davis who helped the Council fully develop our action tactics for the strategic plan. We are grateful for their thoughtful service to GSLC!

In July, we spent time providing orientation and welcoming new Council members, Bill Ericson, Amy Fulbright, Marcus Raymond and President-Elect, Ed Seuc. We were grateful to Mike Kelley for providing an orientation to the work of the Facilities, Management and Planning Committee (FMPC). He also provided the Council with an overview of long-term facilities projects to assist the Council in preparing fiscally for those projects.

At each of its meetings, Council monitors the progress of our strategic plan. We are pleased at the progress made towards achieving our Foundational Plans. The Leadership Development Committee, Bret Spoerle, Chair, began meeting to develop our leadership training sessions, which are scheduled for September 20 and October 1. Our staff has continued to work to make sure members feel they belong and are seen. Their efforts advance our efforts around member engagement. As you may be aware, this summer the team working on Service 2.0 recommended to the Council the development of a long-term, in-depth relationship with LifeWise. You have probably seen announcements regarding opportunities to engage with this important organization.

Council has had a task team comprised of Robert Fingland and Gene Unverfehrt that has been working with staff, FMPC and Building Blocks to look at opportunities to increase our building safety and security. The Manchester Police will be providing a training for Building Blocks staff this month. We plan to have Council and other

groups receive information about that training in the future.

Ongoing work of the Council includes monitoring the budget through income and expenses statements. Lanny Schnipper, our treasurer works with Jennifer Makowski, Accountant/Communications Coordinator, to make sure we are doing well fiscally. In addition, Council continues to monitor our advancement of our four focus areas: Children, Youth, and Family; Belonging; Spiritual Growth and; Service.

We encourage you to talk with Council members and/or staff to find out ways you can help us advance our plans throughout the coming year! Thank you for making GSLC the wonderful community it is!

Jill Thompson

Emily Horning Children & Family Ministry Director

Vacation Bible School Reflection

From July 31 to August 4, eighty-eight children took part in VBS, with thirty-three kids from Good Shepherd and fifty-five kids from the community! The theme for 2023 was Compassion Camp: What Every Living Thing Needs. Each day focused on the essentials: shelter, food, water, air, and community- with faith building, crafts, yoga, snacks, fun, and games! On Thursday we hosted a Family Night, which brought many non-Good Shepherd families in to watch the kids show off the songs they'd worked on all week. On Friday, we celebrated the end of VBS with tons of water fun, courtesy of West County EMS! We had a fantastic week of learning about God's Creation, and we are especially thankful for the nearly sixty volunteers who made this awesome week happen!

Leadership Development Bret Spoerle

What is Effective Christian Leadership?

You are all invited to the kick-off event of the Leadership Development Committee (LDC): What is Effective Christian Leadership? We are all Leaders during our lives. Come explore with us and take this opportunity to enhance your leadership skills. These skills are useful for all interactions with others. This event will provide an opportunity for you to influence future event content and the direction of the LDC as we strive to improve leadership skills within GSLC. Food will be provided at each of 3 repeated sessions: Wednesday 9/20 6:00-7:30 and 7:45-9-15; Sunday 10/1: 10-11:30. Sign-up for one of the sessions below. Contact: Bret Spoerle (tvspoerle@gmail.com) with any questions.

[Effective Christian Leadership Event Sign-Up](#)

Stewardship Team Rock Foster

Remember September

I'm Rock Foster of the stewardship committee and former treasurer. I wanted to take an opportunity to remind everybody of the terrific solo Lanny did a few weeks back of "September" to remind all to please remember continued financial support through the summer. As a stewardship committee member and former treasurer, Lanny, and I both know contributions slow through the summer and by September we are usually "behind". We hope and pray they will pick up in the fall and all will be ok, but there is always anxiety as we wait. So, remember September and help Lanny relieve some stress and maybe at the end of the year we might be able to convince him of another solo of "Celebration".

Stewards of Grace: A Generosity Story

Christina Kling-Garrett

In July, Pastor Amy preached on Matthew 13 commonly known as the "Parable of the Sower." In this story, a crowd had gathered around Jesus when he begins to tell them several parables, one being about a sower who goes out to sow his seeds. When you read the parable, it can feel like the farmer just went out and tossed the seeds around fairly haphazardly - some were thrown on the path where the birds ate them, some fell in between rocks and sprouted but quickly withered in the heat, some grew but were soon choked by weeds, while others fell on "good soil" and produced varying amounts of grain. This text produces lots of interesting question on faith, so I encourage you to go re-watch the July 16th service to hear her sermon in full since I am only going to touch on a small part of it.

In the beginning of her sermon, Pastor Amy compared each of our faith journeys to soil, and how faith, like soil, is a living thing. It constantly changes, and even if we think our faith is rooted in "good soil" the harvest might not always be as fruitful as we had hoped, or as we need it to be. Her sermon was particularly heartfelt, especially when she talked about the "bird-filled" seasons of our lives. As my eyes teared up, I glanced around the church, and noticed that I wasn't the only one moved by Pastor Amy's words.

I sat reflecting on this sermon for days (ok, it's been weeks) and began to chat with friends about how it's possible to care for our own "soil" while also being available to those around us when their "soil" needs tending. One friend mentioned how Good Shepherd has been the constant for her in her seasons of storm. She said that no matter what the situation, she has "never felt judged," but rather "has always been met in my hard spaces with someone actively seeking to lighten the dark spaces and lift the heaviness by simply being present in it with me." Wow! What a beautiful statement on how we can show grace and compassion to those when they need to feel loved.

Stewardship means different things to different people. Among church communities, the most common definition of Stewardship is tithing and the three "Ts" – time, talent, and treasure. However, the word steward means someone who takes care of passengers on a ship, plane, or train, a caretaker who provides hospitality, but it can also represent someone who protects and upholds values, like a guardian.

I am struck by the idea of how being a steward partnered with the more traditional Stewardship roles can build a thriving community of faith. Good Shepherd has so many amazing teams who shepherd people through every season of their lives with grace and love - from the beauty and hospitality shown to members through our flower ministry and visitation team, to those who need pastoral care or support from

a Stephen Minister, these relationships can deepen the faith of the people needing care and to those that provide the care. It truly is a symbiotic relationship.

At the end of her sermon, Pastor Amy challenged us to ponder who tends the soil not only in our lives but in the lives of others. How can we walk alongside one another with support and grace while also being open to leaning on those around us during our tough times? How can the Holy Spirit move within you to be a steward to those around you and help tend the soil? I'd love to hear your thoughts on how you can spread grace and compassion by being a steward in your world. Amen!



Welcome Team "Wink" Elliott Haugen

Happy September! Did you miss the Wink article the last few months? Well, it is back with some good news and a continuing request for your support.

Good Shepherd has experienced the wonderful involvement of people who have recently joined and are exploring our programs, activities, and groups. Similarly, there has been an increase in the number of visitors who have worshiped with us and are interested in learning more about Good Shepherd's opportunities to follow Christ, grow in faith, and share God's love. This good news results from your invitations, welcoming, and inclusion of these believers.

During September, you will see and hear reminders about the upcoming information sessions for those who may be interested in learning more about Good Shepherd and possibly joining our faith community. So, please note the following and inform and invite any visitor you may meet at church; in your neighborhood, school or work; or as new friends.

Part 1 of the next new member session is at noon, Sunday, September 17 (room 205); attendees will meet pastors and staff who will answer their questions. Part 2 is at 10 am, Sunday, September 24 in the Fireside Room. If anyone is interested, tell them to note that on a Connect Card or contact the office or me.

As the apostle Paul reminded us in Romans 15:7:

"Therefore welcome one another as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God."

**To access your Good Shepherd Connect "member profile",
click the button below:**

[Good Shepherd Connect Profile](#)

Weekly Services Sunday 9am (traditional) & 11am (contemporary)
goodshepherdlutheran.com | 636-391-6685 | [Calendar](#)