



# Shepherd's Staff

## Happy New Year!

Monthly Newsletter of Good Shepherd Lutheran Church

January 2024



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**Lead Pastor**

### **Resolutions. Pipe Dreams or Spiritual Transformation?**

A new year almost always comes with the infamous “New Year’s resolutions.” You know the routine.

Step 1: Make big resolutions to implement major changes to better your life.

Step 2: Try to implement changes in January with moderate, then declining success.

Step 3: Feel bad that you have not kept up with \_\_\_\_\_.

Step 4: Give up and fall back to life as usual.

I know. I’ve been there. We’ve all been there. I cannot tell you how many times I’ve told myself this (ridiculously unattainable) tall tale: “I will get up at 5:30 am 5 days a week and go running!”

I don’t like running.

I *really* don’t like being awake at 5:30 am.

Do I need to tell you how this goal turned out?

*What if this year, you created a New Year’s resolution that is not a pipe dream, but a commitment that actually leads to transformation?*

Seems crazy right? But hang with me here. I (the guy who failed at every running plan) now workout 4-5 times every week and...I love it. AND... if I *don’t* workout I feel totally off. I miss it. What changed? Three things: habits, identity, and purpose.

One of the first books I couldn’t wait to dive into on sabbatical this summer was James Clear’s **“Atomic Habits.”** He outlines the power of tiny habits that build over time, like compound interest. Clear lays out both the brain science of habit forming, and simple, yet powerful, tactics for building (or breaking) habits. For example, **“Habit Stacking.”** This is connecting a *new* habit (something you want to start doing regularly) to an

*existing* habit (something you do daily).

Every morning (remember how I hate early mornings?), I wake up to get my kids to school. Therefore, I must drink coffee. I wanted to ensure I spent time in the Word and prayer every morning, so I began to “stack” this habit onto my routine.

A) Get kids breakfast B) Drink coffee + (stack new habit) C) Read bible and pray.

This came fairly easy, but consistently working out was much harder. This required another revelation: the difference between **setting goals** and **forming identity**. James Clear talks about this [HERE](#). When we set goals, we only focus on the outcome. But if we start with our *identity* and *purpose* there is a much stronger chance of success. So rather than saying: “I will exercise 5 days week” (outcome), one should say, “I want to be a healthy person” (identity). As I read through this book, I was *amazed* at the parallels to how Jesus formed his disciples!

In following Jesus, we are given both *identity* and *purpose*.

When Jesus first called the disciples, he gave them a new identity and a new purpose. The years that followed where a daily rhythm of forming and shaping this identity and purpose, building new habits (starting small, then growing) that completely transformed who they were. For example:

In **Mark 1:17** Jesus said to them, “Follow me ( *identity*) and I will make you fish for people (*purpose*).”

In **John 15:16**, Jesus said, “You did not choose me, but I chose you ( *identity*). And I appointed you to go and bear fruit (*purpose*).”

John writes in **1 John 3:1** “See what love the Father has given us, that we should be called children of God; and that is what we are.”

*How is Jesus forming your identity in this new year?  
What purpose is God infusing into your life this year?*

What spiritual practice is the Holy Spirit leading you to build into a new habit?  
Perhaps God is inviting you to dwell in God’s Word daily?

Maybe there is a new depth of prayer you feel called toward?  
Is 2024 the year Jesus is inviting you to recommit to worshipping regularly?  
Perhaps the Spirit is stirring your heart toward generosity of your time or resources?

Whatever new habits you feel led to commit to in 2024, may they begin with the identity and purpose you have been given by our Lord Jesus. May God’s Spirit lead you to your best year yet!

In Christ,  
Pastor Josh

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## **Feed the Need STL – Mobile Pack 2024**

One of the highlights of our year is the annual Feed the Need STL mobile pack through Feed My Starving Children. **Thousands** of volunteers gather to pack life-saving meals that are sent all over the globe. For us, compassion grows as we think seriously about the injustice of hunger in our world. For those who receive this food, hunger is a daily reality. For us, the mobile pack is a few hours of fun, fellowship, and meaningful work. For the tiny hands that next touch this bag, it is literally a life-saving gift. Stop for a moment, close your eyes, and think about this.

### **When you pack a meal, a child's life is saved.**

It is that impactful and that simple. Feed the Need STL saves children's lives. The need is as great as it has ever been. The continuing global challenges in the wake of COVID-19, wars and crises, and extreme weather have all contributed to stalled progress on the fight against world hunger. According to World Food Program, 45,000,000 kids suffer from severe malnutrition each year.

This is why Feed the Need STL has set ambitious goals for 2024. We believe God is calling us to respond to this need and provide a record-breaking 1.25 million meals this April. The ambitious, God-sized goals for the 2024 mobile pack are:

- Pack 1.25 million meals
- Mobilize 5000 volunteers
- Raise \$380,000 (the funds needed to reach this goal)

Good Shepherd, this is our single largest opportunity to make a phenomenal impact. We have some God-sized goals for GSLC to support this dream.

#### **1. Youth & Family Pack - Mobilize 200 volunteers**

On Wednesday, April 10, we will sign up as a group, inviting all our youth & families, not only to join us, but to invite at least one friend to come, as well.

#### **2. Good Shepherd All-Church Pack - Fill one entire shift, 500 volunteers**

With the pack at Queeny Park, a single shift can utilize *500 volunteers*. On Friday, April 12, FTN will reserve an entire shift for GSLC to fill. Imagine, 500 people from GSLC ***all*** serving together! What an amazing picture of God's kingdom, and an amazing opportunity to invite your friends to join us!

We hope you will sign up for one (or both!) of these group packs, and utilize this incredible opportunity to invite your friends and neighbors to join this generous, joyful, and life-changing ministry.

Registration opens to the general public on February 26, but pre-registration is open now for our GSLC groups packs!



**Dig Deeper Men's Retreat**  
**February 2-4, 2023**  
**Camp Wartburg, Waterloo, IL**  
**Cost: \$120**

The Dig Deeper men's retreat is back at beautiful Camp Wartburg! A chance to go beyond a handshake and form deeper connections with others from GSLC, through learning, fellowship, and service. This year's theme focuses on equipping us to live as followers of Jesus in today's world.



Men's Retreat Registration

[Good Shepherd Connect Profile Click Here](#)

Weekly Services Saturday 5pm (casual) and  
Sunday 9am (traditional) and 11am (contemporary)  
[goodshepherdlutheran.com](http://goodshepherdlutheran.com) | 636-391-6685 | [Calendar](#)