



Shepherd's Staff



THEOLOGY OF THE CROSS

LENT SERMON SERIES
March 9 - April 13

Monthly Newsletter of Good Shepherd Lutheran Church

March 2025



Josh Brecht
Lead Pastor

Theology of the Cross, Lent at Good Shepherd

This Lent we will journey through the Gospels in a series that explores the contrast between what Martin Luther called a “theology of the cross verses a theology of glory”. This was one of Martin Luther’s most profound theological concepts that helped to address the abuse of power that was happening by some in the church. This refocused God’s people back on the core of the Gospel: God’s *relinquishment* of power seen on the cross for the salvation of the world. In the Heidelberg Disputation of 1518 Luther wrote:

“20. He deserves to be called a theologian, however, who comprehends the visible and manifest things of God seen through suffering and the cross.

21. A theologian of glory calls evil good and good evil. A theologian of the cross calls the thing what it actually is.”

Luther explains:

“He who does not know Christ does not know God hidden in suffering. Therefore, he prefers work to suffering, glory to the cross, strength to weakness, wisdom to folly. These are the people whom the apostle calls, “enemies of the cross of Christ” [Phil. 3:18], for they hate the cross and suffering and love works and the glory of works... God can be found only insuffering and the cross.”

In other words, Luther rejected the philosophical notions of God being understood through power and glory and made the bold (and biblical) claim that the place we **see God revealed most clearly** is on the cross, suffering with us. Anything we seek to understand about who God is, and thus who Jesus calls us to be, must be viewed through the cross.

We have several special opportunities this Lent for you to experience God's grace and love this season.

Wilderness: A Lent Event

Sunday March 9, 12-1:15pm in Room 150

For all ages. Lunch provided.

Using music, poetry, conversation, and a hands-on creation of worshipful art, we will prepare ourselves to enter the wilderness of the season of Lent. Rather than fear or avoid the wilderness, we will enter with intention, curiosity, and courage, ready to see what God might have to teach us in this mysterious and sacred place.

[Register Here](#)

Prayer Around the Cross - Wednesdays in Lent: 11:00am

We will have a short worship and prayer service called "Prayer Around the Cross" each week. It will include music, a short reflection, and contemplative prayer with candles and a cross.

The After Party

Wednesdays March 12 – April 9 in Room 205

This video series/book study is an amazing project that the world needs today. A diverse group of Christian leaders have created the After Party to help Christians move beyond the polarization toward a better way of relating to one another rooted in our shared Jesus-centered values.

[Sign-up for the Class](#)

[Learn more about the After Party Project Here.](#)

Theology of the Cross – Sermon Series

As we journey through the Lectionary readings and biblical story this Lent, we will focus on how these stories connect with Luther's Theology of the Cross, and how this speaks into our lives and our world today. Each week we will provide resources for you, your family, or your small group to go deeper.



Ed Seuc
Council President

Good Shepherd Strategic Plan 2025

Dear Friends:

The busy period of preparing for and conducting the Annual Congregational Meeting is past us and we enjoyed a robust attendance, once again. Your participation and attention are very important and appreciated, as well. We are grateful for your enthusiasm at the meeting, and during every week of the year.

One of the items that I mentioned was the sharing of a Strategic Plan for 2025 and beyond. We feel it is important to outline a broad purpose and vision to our work and have it documented, while sharing it with the Good Shepherd community. This can be found by clicking the button below.

[Strategic Plan 2025-27](#)

Your Council continues to make progress on those critical projects while navigating how to respond as Church to situations happening in the world around us. We will continue to share updates of our work, and we thank you all for your faithfulness and support of God's mission at Good Shepherd.

Breathe: Women's Retreat Reflection

At the end of January, 45 women got together for a weekend to "Breathe" and reconnect with God, themselves, and each other. This time of retreat was full of joy, laughter, contemplation, rest, and community. We give thanks for, and celebrate the gift of this retreat as we hear from folks who attended:



"This experience helped me to know the women of our congregation in a deeper and more meaningful way. I felt known and was free to explore my faith and journey among friends."

“A wonderful weekend of renewal and deep connections and joy! I loved the people, the learning, the relaxation and the food. I can’t wait ten years for the next one!” – Jen Wade

“Being fairly new to the church it was so wonderful to meet and get to know members...Our church community is so important.” – Shirley Drury



“It was the pause I needed to focus on God, take care of myself and build deeper relationships with women at church. I’d encourage more women to join us at the next gathering or retreat!”

“It was so neat to see women from all generations and stages of life interacting. I am so happy I was led to this church home many years ago.” – Dena Hull



“God’s Grace and Love is alive and well in the hearts and minds of the women of Good Shepherd. I now know how to find God in my breath, use it to comfort me and pray. I have learned how to listen to my body to tell me how to rest and rejuvenate myself. I have made some lifelong friendships! I can’t wait until the next time we’re all together!” – Cindy Nichols

“I left the retreat feeling refreshed, rejuvenated, and fulfilled with the new/deeper relationships that were formed.” – Karla Schmid

“The retreat was a surreal experience. We were able to form real bonds with one another, learn more about our inner self and spend some real time with God.”

“GSLC is blessed to have compassionate and soulful women as part of our church family. If laughter is the best medicine I am the healthiest person on earth!” - Nancy Stelmachowicz

Leadership Development Committee

The Leadership Development Committee is here to help the congregation develop their leadership skills and identify the right people for leadership positions at Good Shepherd. If you would like to develop your leadership/people skills, or have leadership experience to share with others, please engage in some of our events:

1. **LDC Leadership Book Club** – We will begin with “Servant Leadership” by Robert Greenleaf and apply the book to our Key Leadership Attributes. First session is **March 25 at 7pm in Room 108** where we will review Chapters 1-3 (pages 1-146).

2. A **Bible Study** on the key Leadership Attributes will be released shortly.
3. Wondering where you can contribute to GSLC’s mission? An organization chart for the congregation has been developed to show all we are doing and the many different opportunities for each of us to contribute. It is posted in the Narthex. Don’t be shy reaching out to the contact to find out more information— **you make a difference! You have a place (or two or three!) at Good Shepherd!**

Organizational Chart

If you have any questions, comments, or ideas? Feel free to contact Bret Spoerle (spoerle@gmail.com) or Paul Davis (paultdavis@hotmail.com).

What is the Nominating Committee?

Have you ever wondered how Council members are selected at Good Shepherd? Or other leadership roles in the congregation? Some ministry teams appoint someone to lead who is gifted, passionate, and present for that ministry. Some roles are appointed and approved by Council, but candidates for positions on the Council and a few other

Good Shepherd
LUTHERAN CHURCH, ELCA

KEY LEADERSHIP ATTRIBUTES



committees are nominated by the Nominating Committee and approved by a vote of the congregation.

The Nominating Committee consists of six voting members of the congregation, two of whom are outgoing Council members. The Nominating Committee currently includes Jan Thompson (Council Secretary), Milt Blood, Lori Klopf, Eric Lindgren, Cathy Putz, and John Webb. As the Nominating Committee, they are responsible for finding leaders to fill positions on the Congregation Council, Endowment Team, and the next Nominating Committee. The committee considers names from all members of the congregation and any recommendations from the Leadership Development Committee. Candidates are then reached out to by the Nominating Committee to prayerfully consider the opportunity to serve and engage in meaningful and exciting work to guide the future of Good Shepherd. The Nominating Committee submits a list of candidates to Council in the spring, and then the congregation has the opportunity to approve these leaders at the June congregational meeting.

Serving as leaders with the Council, the Endowment Team, and the Nominating Committee is just one of the many ways God calls us to use our gifts to do ministry through Good Shepherd. We are grateful for the leadership God has blessed us with here, and look forward to the Holy Spirit's leadership as we begin our nominating process.

If you have any questions, wish to nominate someone, or feel called to volunteer, please contact a member of the committee or [Pastor Josh](#).

The gifts he gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ. - Ephesians 4:11-12



Feed the Need STL – MobilePack April 9-13, 2025

By: Josh Brecht

In 2004, we bought our first house in Brooklyn Park, MN. I was serving in my first job in a church as a Youth Director at Roseville Lutheran Church. We had a large confirmation ministry and twice a year we would load up middle schoolers in minivans with parents and mentors and make the 20-minute drive from Roseville to Brooklyn Park (suburbs of Minneapolis/St.Paul) for a night of service. It was the highlight of the year, and all our kids loved to participate. This was my first exposure to the life-changing ministry of Feed My Starving Children. I had no idea I had purchased my first home only *two miles* from the first site of Feed My Starving Children!

In my six years in the Twin Cities as a Youth Director, I took groups of kids to the Brooklyn Park FMSC warehouse every year to pack meals and learn about this ministry. I was even able to volunteer on my own on some of my (rare) days off. I fell in love with the ministry.

As God's call in my life took our family to Iowa for seminary, Wisconsin for internship, and then South Carolina for my first call as a pastor, FMSC fell out of my life. Imagine my surprise when I got a call in 2016 to interview at a congregation that hosted the single largest FMSC mobilepack in St. Louis! Like a neon sign, God drew my attention to Good Shepherd.

Today, the St. Louis pack has grown far beyond what it was in 2016. All previous records were broken in 2024 when we packed 1.25 million meals with over 5,000 volunteers.

This spring, we have the chance to once again break those records, and ***you can be a part of it!***

The need for food aid around the world is greater than it has ever been. With geopolitical conflicts, changes, and uncertainty, millions of people have been displaced by wars and supply chains disrupted. The need is greater than ever, so our response must be greater than ever. Jesus has called us to care for the poor, to welcome the stranger, and to feed the hungry.

When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Feed my lambs." –John 21:15

Join us this April. Invite a friend, a neighbor, a family member. Alone, we can do some good, but it is ***together*** that we can truly make a world-changing impact.

Feed The Need STL Pack Goals

Pack 1.25 million meals

Mobilize 5000+ volunteers

Raise \$380,000 (the funds needed to reach this goal)

Collect 4 tons of food for Operation Food Search to serve our local neighbors

Good Shepherd's Goals

Goal #1 - Mobilize 200 volunteers for a Youth & Family Pack Shift

On Wednesday, April 9 (6:00-8:15 pm), 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.

Youth & Family Pack Shift Registration

Goals #2 - Mobilize 300 volunteers for an All-Church Pack Shift

On Friday, April 11 (6:00-8:15 pm), FTN will reserve 300 spots for GSLC to fill. Imagine, 300 people from GSLC **ALL** serving together! It will be an amazing vision of God's kingdom, and a fantastic opportunity to invite your friends to join!

All Church Pack Event Registration

Want to sign up for a different date/time to pack? Visit FeedtheNeedSTL.org for more opportunities to serve.

Peace,

Pastor Josh

A “Wink” from the Welcome Ministry Team

By: Elliott Haugen

Welcome to March – a month of new beginnings! Believe it or not, spring is coming and so is the budding out and greening of the world around us.



Many of us look forward to being outdoors more and some will enjoy a much-needed spring break. But we will all get to experience Lent and preparing our hearts and minds to celebrate Easter and its promise for our future.

Some attending Good Shepherd may discover a new stage in their lives by joining our congregation. We are helping these potential new members learn more about Good Shepherd and its programs and activities by offering an orientation/information session.

Please assist them and our Welcome Ministry Team by sharing the following:

- Part 1: March 2 (noon – 2pm, room 205, with lunch and childcare)
- Part 2: March 9 (10 -11 am, room 111)

Those interested in joining will be welcomed at worship services on Sunday, March 30.

“Welcome one another, therefore, as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God.” Romans 15:7

Note: A “wink” is a brief form of communications that implies a hello or friendly greeting. It is also source of thoughts and information about GSLC’s welcoming ministry.

A “Thank You” from a Wartburg Seminary Student

Every fall, Good Shepherd collects donations to support students at Wartburg Seminary who have unexpected medical costs. Seminary is a time of transition where finances are usually tight, and this long-standing tradition at Good Shepherd has helped many, many students over the years as they follow the call of Christ to serve the Church. Thanks to your generosity, students like this are able to overcome these obstacles and focus on serving the Church. Thank you!



Dear Members of Good Shepherd Lutheran Church,

A simple letter could never express how much gratitude I have for the scholarship you have now gifted me twice. Chronic illness has been a major barrier to my success in seminary - physically and financially. Once again, you have helped lessen that burden. Thank you for this gift! I believe I shared that my need for this scholarship was for a wrist surgery that had a few complications. I am happy to report that I finally graduated occupational therapy!

Plus, the timing of your scholarship hitting my bank account could not be better. I finished my coursework at Wartburg in January, and I am near the end of the first call process. This money is going to help make it possible for me to take a break between working at my current church and starting my first call, which will be an additional ~~add~~ to my health. Thank you so much for this unique gift with abundant gratitude, Paige



Good Shepherd

LUTHERAN CHURCH, ELCA

Manchester, Missouri



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