



Shepherd's Staff

Lead Like Jesus

SERMON SERIES

This Fall at Good Shepherd

Monthly Newsletter of Good Shepherd Lutheran Church

September 2025



Josh Brecht

Lead Pastor

Lead Like Jesus Sermon Series

Jesus was the greatest leader of all time. He started a movement over 2000 years ago that is still thriving and growing today. Sure, he had an added advantage. He had that leadership edge that he was ***the son of God***, but that is part of what makes his teaching and example of leadership so *incredible*. As Paul says in Philippians 2:6: *"...though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied himself..."*

Jesus never exploited his title but humbled himself to serve others. His goal was never to do it all by himself. The Jesus model of leadership was to teach, equip, and empower others to **do ministry**. This model of leadership he embodied was one that multiplied and spread, inevitably influencing others. Think about this:

Jesus had no worldly power.

Jesus had no wealth or official position of authority.

Jesus never employed violence or force to advance his agenda.

There is a crisis of leadership in our world today. Too many so-called leaders want to take the shortcut or find a quick fix for complex issues. In the absence of healthy, positive leadership we see opportunists seek to fill the void through force,

manipulation, or even taking advantage of others for selfish gain. In an era absent of good, healthy leadership, we often feel frustrated and powerless. But as Christians, we hold the most effective, transformative, and life- changing leadership textbook of all time: ***The Bible***.

God is calling each one of us to lead like Jesus in our own sphere of influence. Whether in our work, our school, our family, or our community, Jesus gives each of us the capacity to lead others and influence others for good.

This fall we are launching an exciting new sermon series called **Lead Like Jesus**, along with a bible study created by our Leadership Development Committee. Each week we will explore one of the key Christian leadership attributes Jesus models, showing us how to lead others in building the Kingdom of God. Together, we will learn to lead like Jesus in our daily lives to create a more just, kind, and compassionate world. If you have been wondering what you can do to make a positive impact in the world around you, this is it.

I hope you will join us this fall to grow in Christ, to be empowered by the Holy Spirit, and be sent out to lead like Jesus. Click on my picture here to watch a video and learn more.

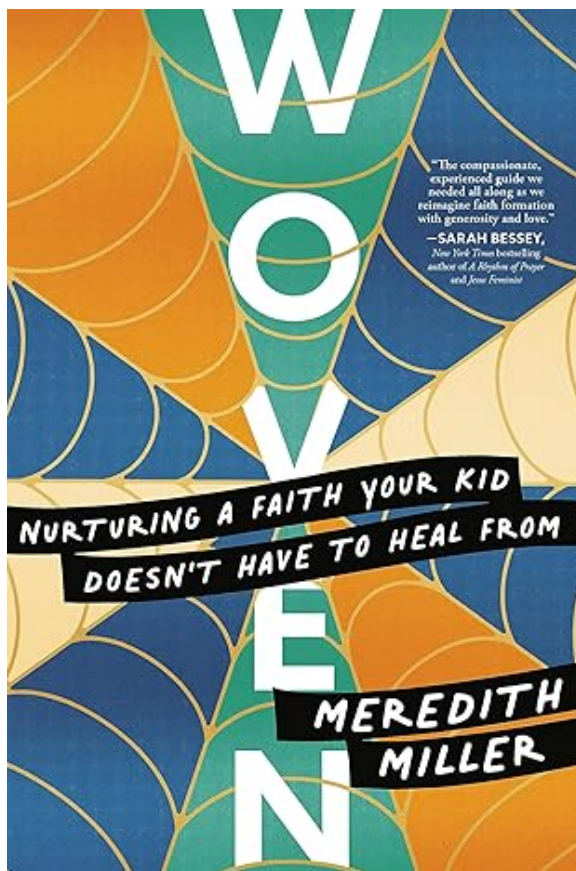
In Christ,
Pastor Josh



Faith Fertilizer

This month, Pastor Amy highly recommends the book “Woven: Nurturing a Faith Your Kid Doesn’t Have to Heal From” by Meredith Miller.

So many parents want to pass along their faith, but know that God is so much bigger than the list of do’s and don’ts they were taught about as children. They want to pass along a faith their child doesn’t have to heal from. Most Christian parenting books are ready with exact practices every family should follow in order to raise



obedient children. But what if obedience is not the goal of Christian parenting? What if it's our job as parents to instead help our kids get to know God and discover that God can be trusted?

Woven can help children anchor to who God is and have faith practices that are rich, textured, and all their own. Kids need space to explore the Bible, ask big questions, and even change their understanding of God and faith along the way. With *Woven*, families can nurture the kind of faith that can flex and grow, be broken and repaired. This is the sort of faith that can stand up to the life a child will live, the doubts they will encounter, and the questions that will come up along the way.



Wild Earth Church

Be outside • Connect with the Sacred

Amy Stewart

Pastor of Discipleship

“But ask the animals, and they will teach you, or the birds in the sky, and they will tell you; or speak to the earth, and it will teach you, or let the fish in the sea inform you.” – Job 12

During my Sabbatical, I spent most of my time outside. In doing so, I realized that my faith is most alive in nature. I found healing, deep connection with God, a sense of purpose, and belonging, as I was reminded that I am part of nature too!

I also read “Church of the Wild: How Nature Invites Us into the Sacred” by Victoria Loorz, and found that I am not alone. Wild Spirituality is a movement that emphasizes the interconnectedness of spirituality and nature, encouraging our turn to a more embodied and relational way of experiencing God. It involves actively engaging with the natural world, recognizing its inherent sacredness, and fostering a sense of belonging within the larger web of life.

Throughout Scripture, God connected with folks through the natural world, and spirituality was often tethered to the land more than buildings. Abraham looked to the stars, Moses engaged with a burning bush, Elijah listened to the wind. Jesus and John the Baptist were both launched into their callings from the wilderness. Jesus solidified his identity in the water and went to the mountains to pray. He often taught his disciples on the open water. Again and again, faith happened in the natural world, but for many reasons, Church has migrated more toward buildings. Celtic Mystics and other Christians have called to Church over the centuries, reminding her that the heartbeat of God is in creation.

With this in mind, I am starting a regular outdoor gathering called Wild Earth Church (WEC) on Tuesday mornings in September. What might you expect from a Wild Earth Church gathering? This time of sacred listening might include things like Scripture and other readings, prayers, listening prompts, sauntering in nature (or staying in your seat if that fits your comfort or mobility level), and optional communal reflection. You might consider bringing a chair, comfortable clothes and shoes, a water bottle, and a journal if you'd like. All ages and ability levels are welcome (there is a short walk down the hill). While this offering comes from within the Christian tradition, folks of all faith backgrounds are welcome.

Here are the details:

September 2, 9, 16, 23, 30 (Tuesdays)

6:30-7:30am

New Ballwin Park (329 New Ballwin Rd)

We will begin at the pavilion by the parking lot and move together down the hill.

Can't wait to see you outside!

Pastor Amy

Singers Needed for Christmas Caroling Events by Dave Hentchel

Do you enjoy singing songs? You are invited this Christmas season to join us in singing Christmas songs in harmony for communities connected with Good Shepherd. We are forming an ensemble of singers who will practice arrangements of a half dozen common Christmas carols. Ensemble members will then break into smaller groups to entertain at informal church meetings, charitable outreach programs and local festivals selected by church leaders.

Hello, this is Dave Hentchel. I'm a regular at Good Shepherd and have sponsored this Christmas Ensemble in the past at Grace Chapel, an unaffiliated Evangelical church in Massachusetts. We'd get just six to ten singers from the church, assisted by four or five barbershop quartet singers,

Singers were given special recordings of each song for their voice part and came to three informal rehearsals to practice, with a gold-medal friend of mine there to coach us. We sang at several church events: a Celebrate Recovery group meeting, a family

movie night, a town Christmas street fair, a nursing home memory unit and in the lobby before the regular Christmas Eve services.

The appreciation we received in each case warms my heart to this day, and the singers spoke glowingly of how much they enjoyed it and how they'd also grown in their singing skills. The church staff appreciated having the flexibility to add a little entertainment to their regular activities.

Anyone is welcome to join, there is no audition. You will be coached in four part harmony by an experienced barbershop quartet and provided with excellent learning recordings, so you don't have to be able to read music.

For more details, contact David Hentchel:

Email davehentchel@gmail.com, phone/text (617) 803-1193



**Celebrating Two Years In
Partnership With LifeWise StL
By: Gary Klopff**

It's now been just two years since Good Shepherd announced LifeWise StL as the local service organization selected to partner with at a more significant level. This was done with an intent to provide opportunities to increase the engagement of our congregation in local service, grow our understanding of need in the community, and build close relationships not just with the agency itself, but more importantly with the people they serve.

LifeWise began as Kingdom House back in 1902. Over time, the organization evolved and adapted to meet the needs of their participants with changes in the community. Priorities shifted away from crisis service transactions to an increased focus on an individual's overall well-being. Reflecting this change, the agency was renamed to LifeWise StL in 2019. Today their model is based on educational programming coupled with individualized and supportive coaching. LifeWise offers services for all ages from infants to seniors. Participants in their programming take an active role in bettering their futures – with the name LifeWise conveying what they're about – "helping people at every age live wisely."

During the past two years, Good Shepherd has partnered with LifeWise in many ways.

- Backpacks and school supplies have been collected for Back-to-School events each August since 2023. Through our donations and onsite volunteering, we've helped over 1000 youth start their school year with excitement and the tools needed to succeed in the classroom. (*LifeWise StL Back-to-School*).
- LifeWise StL Holiday Market events were supported in 2023 and 2024, and Good Shepherd's "Christmas in September" event begins soon to collect new household items, clothing, and age-appropriate toys for this year's Holiday Market. These and other donations from the community are made available for participating LifeWise families to purchase during the event at a minimal cost. Just last year alone, these donations - along with on-site support for the event - helped bring joy during the holiday season to the 175+ families who participated. (*LifeWise Holiday Market*)
- Good Shepherd members have also found many other opportunities to volunteer in support of LifeWise StL. These include participating in the LifeWise Freedom School Read Aloud Summer Literacy program (*LifeWise Freedom School Read Aloud*), completing "service-to-go" projects at church by our youth, as well as doing project work on-site at LifeWise (with fence-painting by the Basecamp Men's group being one of the projects done!).
- Entirely new for us this year was our introduction to the Urban Forum programming offered by LifeWise. This programming is designed to increase awareness and understanding of issues faced by those living in poverty. In early May, Maggie Lohmeyer from LifeWise ran a workshop at church for representatives of several groups from across Good Shepherd. Everyone completed an online poverty simulation as homework beforehand. Then once together at the workshop, this experience was discussed as a group. Plus, more was learned about the dynamics of poverty in the St. Louis region along with the LifeWise programs offered to help in addressing the many needs. All who participated came away with a greater understanding of what it must be like to live in poverty, with the poverty simulation alone prompting many thoughts and emotions. (*LifeWise Urban Forum*)

It's been an exciting two years learning about all the programs LifeWise StL offers and seeing the impact they have from where we've been involved. With so many available opportunities, we look forward to further growing our partnership. If you'd like to learn more or get involved, visit their website (*LifeWise StL*), pick-up hand-outs and brochures available at the LifeWise display in the narthex, or contact Gary Klopf (gary.klopf@gmail.com) or Tim Sorensen (Timothy.Sorensen@gmail.com).

The Flower Ministry at Good Shepherd by Dale Naas

The Flower Ministry is carried out by an enthusiastic group of volunteers who seek to serve our community and glorify God. It is made up of two separate ministries, each with its own



responsibilities: the Bouquet Ministry and the Decoration Ministry.

The Bouquet Ministry goes to work every week after the last Sunday service. Volunteer members rearrange the altar flowers into several smaller bouquets and put them into donated vases. A prayer card is added to each new arrangement.

Each arrangement is delivered to a recipient as an offer of support, love and hope. These bouquets may be given in times of illness, grief or personal crisis, or in recognition of a joyous event as well as giving thanks for a special service to the Church. Sometimes they will go to someone who is homebound, just to show that Good Shepherd is thinking of them.

Five or more small to medium-sized vases are needed every week for this ministry's mission. That equates to about twenty every month or two hundred and forty every year! If you have any clear glass vases lurking on a shelf or hiding in the garage, they can be recycled for good by bringing them anytime to Pastor Varinia's office.

Separately, the Decoration Ministry goes to work decorating the Altar space during Easter, Pentecost, Thanksgiving and Christmas celebrations. After the celebrations, these plants are delivered by Committee members to homebound individuals or to those who otherwise are not able to attend regular services. Typically, this time commitment is limited to delivering one or two plants at a holiday time.

There is no minimum time commitment to participate in either ministry. Some folks can only help a couple of times a month, while others can help diligently on a weekly basis. Whether you have a passion for arranging flowers or would just like to serve the Good Shepherd community in decorating the altar, serving on either ministry could be a fulfilling way to use your talents and gifts in service to God and others.

Members receive initial instruction and ongoing coaching in the floral arts while enjoying a warm group atmosphere of fellowship and care.

Please email Pastor Varinia at vespinosa@gslcelca.org for more information or to join this wonderful ministry!

A Wink From The Welcome Ministry Team **by Elliott Haugen**



Welcome to September and the start of fall activities. One of those was a recent leadership workshop that introduced Good Shepherd members to opportunities to support our worship services. I was pleased to see how many were interested in being greeters at the main (north) and east (Costco) entrance doors. Greeting is a short, but meaningful interaction for members, visitors and those greeting. A “good morning”, “we are glad you are here”, or “welcome” can make a difference in someone’s day. In eleven years of being on the Welcome Team, I have heard many say that it was great to be genuinely greeted, welcomed and acknowledged by people they met here. So, please continue our welcoming tradition, and sign up to be a greeter (the new online signup process is really easy). Perhaps you were once a Good Shepherd visitor and know it can be difficult to restart one’s faith journey at a new church. Therefore, please invite visitors or potential new members to learn more about us and our programs at this fall’s information sessions:

- Part 1: Sunday, October 19 (Noon – 2pm, Room 150, with lunch and childcare)
- Part 2: Sunday, October 26 (10:10 -10:50am, Room 111)

Those interested in joining will be welcomed at our worship services on Sunday, November 9, 2025. However, we always want everyone to feel part of Good Shepherd, whether or not they are members.

“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 also provides some thoughts and information about GSLC’s welcoming ministry.



Good Shepherd

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Manchester, Missouri



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