



# Shepherd's Staff

## JOIN US CHRISTMAS EVE!

3:30pm: Contemporary

5:30 & 8pm: Traditional

- Communion & Candle Lighting at all Services
- Live Animals Outside 4-7pm

The Monthly Newsletter of Good Shepherd Lutheran Church

December 2025

## DECEMBER RESET

Preparing for God's Best  
in 2026

Discovering His plan, one  
day at a time

### December Reset: Preparing for God's Best in 2026

*Discovering His plan, one day at a time.*

December 1st, 2025

Today begins the final 31 days of 2025.

This is the time of year when many of us start thinking about New Year's resolutions, a season for fresh starts, renewed hope, and new beginnings. We sit down with a new calendar, pen or pencil in hand, or open a calendar app on our phones or computers, and we start planning.

But how many of us pause before writing anything down... and offer the new year to God first?

How often do we ask Him to lead us into a deeper understanding of who He is? To help us grow in our relationship with Him? To shape us into people who reflect more of Him and less of ourselves?

Yes, we are the ones living out our days, but wouldn't it be beautiful to trust our steps to the One who knew us before we were even created? Wouldn't it be amazing to discover His plan for our lives and to see ourselves the way He sees us? To learn new things about God and about ourselves that change us for the better? So here is the invitation:

***Let's discover this together.***

Over the next 31 days, we will walk through December with intention, reflection, and faith, preparing our hearts and homes for an extraordinary 2026. (Look for daily emails which will also be available on the Church app in the NEWS section.)

Each day this month, I will send a short message of encouragement and inspiration, something to guide your thoughts, strengthen your spirit, and support you as members of God's family and children of the Good Shepherd.

I invite you to take this journey with me. Let's seek God, grow together, and step boldly into the new year with purpose.

Proverbs 16:3 (NIV)

"Commit to the Lord whatever you do, and he will establish your plans."

A perfect reminder as we bring our plans and this coming new year to God first.

**Be Blessed,**

Joe Elvis

Director of Youth & Family Ministry

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## Christmas at Good Shepherd

Join us this season as we prepare our hearts and celebrate Jesus.

Advent Skits- new this year!

Sundays 8:50am, before 9:00 worship, and during 11:00 worship.

Christmas Cantata

Dec 13, 5:00pm • Dec 14, 11:00am

"The Heart of Heaven" with choir and orchestra.

Blue Christmas

Dec 21, 4:00pm

A service of prayer, comfort, remembrance, and hope on the longest night of the year.

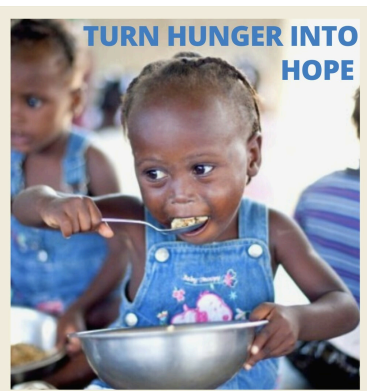
Christmas Eve

3:30pm Contemporary • 5:30pm Traditional • 8:00pm Traditional  
Communion, candlelight, livestream. Live animals 4–7pm.

Carol Sing

Dec 28, 10:00am

One service of joyful singing and celebration. (no service on 12/27)



### Feed the Need STL – Celebrating 20 Years of Packing Hope

This year marks a remarkable milestone: **20 years** of Good Shepherd Lutheran Church partnering with Feed My Starving Children to bring life-saving meals to children around the world. What began as a small youth event in our church building has now become the

**longest-running MobilePack in the United States**—a region-wide movement that has outgrown our building twice and now fills the athletic facility at Queeny Park.

Over these two decades, the impact has been extraordinary. By the end of our 20th Anniversary Pack, we will have provided **13.5 million meals**, enough to feed **37,000 children for an entire year**. More than **41,000 volunteer opportunities** have been created, and through our partnership with Operation Food Search, we have collected **15 tons of food** for local families. What God began at Good Shepherd continues to grow far beyond our walls.



Our 2026 goal is bold:

- **1.5 million meals packed (April 8–12, 2026)**
- **4,110 children fed for a full year**
- **\$475,000 raised**
- **6,000 volunteer opportunities**
- **3 tons of food collected locally**

And we're already on our way—**\$125,000 raised** and **1,900 volunteers registered**. Every 10 seconds, a child dies because of hunger. More than **9,000 children die each day**. A simple meal—costing just **29 cents**—can save a life. **\$9** feeds a child for a month, and **\$106** provides daily meals for an entire year. Jesus said, "*Feed my sheep,*" and this work is one of the ways we live out that command.

This Advent and Christmas, we invite you to make a year-end gift to support our 20th Anniversary Feed the Need STL MobilePack. It is an incredible way to teach your children or grandchildren about generosity, compassion, and honoring Jesus on his birthday! We have included a special Christmas Offering envelope, and gifts may also be made through the Good Shepherd app or online giving.

Thank you for your faithfulness, your generosity, and your persistent dedication across the years—even through lost wedding rings (found!), broken thumbs (healed!), tornado warnings, spoiled rice, melted air conditioning, and even COVID. Through every obstacle, you showed up. You stayed focused. You fed God's hungry children. Let's celebrate 20 years with the ultimate gift: the gift of life.

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## **Dig Deeper Men's Retreat**

**By: Marques Stewart**

At Good Shepherd, there are plenty of opportunities to meet and talk with people.



Usually when we ask each other, "How are you doing?" we get—and give—the same pat responses. But underneath those Sunday morning exchanges, I believe there's a real desire to know the men in this congregation beyond the "fine" and "can't complain" level.

The Good Shepherd Men's Retreat is an opportunity to dig deeper and connect in ways that just don't happen in other contexts. For me, these retreats were where I started getting to know certain guys and connecting with them in a real way that the Sunday narthex just can't offer. Whether it's playing games, working on a service project, or talking through a session together—some of the best conversations I've had with men in this church happened at the men's retreat.

What I've always appreciated about previous retreats was the diversity of guys who show up. Whether you're just starting out in adult life, chronologically gifted, come to one service, or worship online—there's someone for you to connect with. Young dads trying to figure out how to lead their families. Older guys with hard-won wisdom about staying connected to Jesus through decades of work and family pressure. Men wrestling with what it looks like to live out faith beyond Sunday mornings—in their neighborhoods, at their kids' activities, at work.

That connects directly to Good Shepherd's core mission: **Be known and know others**. Each of us—especially men—needs to be known individually and learn to know others so we can become the men God intended us to be. Jesus didn't just teach ideas; he created a whole new culture, a different way to do life together that pushes back against the division, isolation, and performance requirement for men that our world throws at us.

This men's retreat isn't about adding another event to your calendar. It's about investing in yourself, in the next generation, and in a community that sticks with you beyond this weekend. It's about starting—or continuing—the process of going beyond "fine," being truly seen, and getting equipped to share your faith and who you really are with our church and the world around us.

To sign up for the men's retreat go to the link below. Scholarships are available for those who need financial assistance.

[Dig Deeper Men's Retreat](#)

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# Good Shepherd

LUTHERAN CHURCH, ELCA

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