



Shepherd's Staff



FEED THE NEED STL 20TH MOBILE PACK APRIL 8-12

The Monthly Newsletter of Good Shepherd Lutheran Church

April 2026



Feed the Need - It's Almost Time

One Church. One Worship. One Mission.

Feed the Need STL • 20th Mobile Pack • April 12, 2026

For twenty years, something extraordinary has been happening through our congregation. It started quietly — a small, faithful group in the Good Shepherd gym, packing small bags with food, daring to believe that their hands could reach children on the other side of the world.

Today, the numbers take your breath away: **13.5 million meals** delivered to starving children. **41,000 volunteers** shaped by the experience of giving. A ministry born in our gym that outgrew our walls, spread to partner churches across St. Louis, and now thrives at Queeny Park.

This mobile pack all began at Good Shepherd. This April, we get to celebrate 20 years of faithfulness together — **all of us**, in one place, at one time, with one united purpose.

This Is Your Reminder — Have You Signed Up?

April 12 is just around the corner. If you have been meaning to sign up and just haven't gotten around to it yet — **this is your moment.**

This year's goal is **1.5 million meals** — the most ambitious goal in the history of this event. That number depends on people like you showing up. Every set of hands matters.

Every person who signs up moves that number closer to reality. Every donation makes an impact.

IMPORTANT: No Worship at Good Shepherd — April 11 & 12

There will be no regular weekend services at Good Shepherd on the weekend of April 11–12. Instead, we gather as ONE church!

Sunday, April 12 • 9:00am • Queeny Park

Worship together at 9:00am, then move directly into packing meals together (until 11:45).

What the Morning Looks Like

Picture it: hundreds of people from Good Shepherd streaming into Queeny Park together. We'll open in worship — lifting our voices as one church — and then, we'll walk right into one of the most hands-on acts of love you'll ever be part of. Row after row of tables. Bags of rice, soy, vegetables, and vitamins moving down the line. The sound of scoops and sealers and laughter filling the air.

By the time you leave at 11:45, you will have helped pack meals that **will save a child's life**. Your two hours will matter — for years to come, in places you may never see — because that is how God works through willing hands.

Everyone Has a Place

We mean it when we say everyone! Here's what you need to know:

Families with Young Children: Kids are welcome at this special 20th anniversary event! This is one of the most powerful things you can do to raise a child with a generous heart.

Can't Stand for Two Hours? No problem. Seated labeling and sorting tasks are available, and chairs will be throughout the packing floor. There is a meaningful role for everyone, regardless of physical ability.

Don't Wait - Sign Up Today

All-Church Pack — Sunday, April 12 | 9:00–11:45am

Worship together at 9:00 am at Queeny Park, then pack meals as one congregation.

All-Church Pack

Can't Pack? You Can Still Feed a Child.

If you are unable to be there in person, there is still a powerful way to participate. A financial gift goes directly toward purchasing the meal ingredients that fill those bags. Every dollar counts toward our goal of **1.5 million meals**.

GIVE ONLINE at: give.fmssc.org → **Feed the Need STL**

LEARN MORE at: feedtheneedstl.org

WANT TO VOLUNTEER BEHIND THE SCENES WITH SETUP, CLEANUP, OR WELCOMING?

Contact **Suzie Everingham** 314-413-1230 or FeedtheNeedSTL@outlook.com



Josh Brecht
Lead Pastor

Easter

It's Never Too Late

Time is a tricky thing. It can move way too fast. It can seem to stop altogether, feeling like the future we long for will never come. It can sneak up and pass us by and suddenly we feel like it is too late. God has an interesting relationship with time.

God loves to show up when ***we think it is too late.***

You look back over the years, or decades of your life and see so much time wasted. We see opportunities squandered. We see purposeless, aimless, fruitless busyness. Maybe you find yourself holding on to regret for all that you didn't do. And you think to yourself, "I've missed it. It's too late." It's never too late for God. It's never too late to live the life God created you to live.

We can look back at past mistakes; the times we have hurt someone or been hurt. The wounds never quite heal. The scars we try to hide. We let guilt and shame wrap themselves around our hearts, whispering the lie that it is too late for redemption. It's never too late for God. It's never too late for forgiveness, for grace.

That's the thing about the resurrection. It shows up when it is too late. Resurrection contains this immensity of hope precisely because it shouldn't be possible. It was too late. Jesus had died. Days had passed. Yet Easter proves to us that it is never too late for God to bring new life out of death. The resurrection is a once-and-for-all declaration and validation that it is ***never*** too late when God is involved.

The Bible is filled with stories of those who thought it was too late.

- The Hebrews were enslaved for generations, yet it was not too late for God's justice to break the bonds of oppression and lead them to freedom. (*Exodus 14*)
- Sarah and Abraham thought it was too late for them to have a child, yet God fulfilled the promise of Isaac. (*Genesis 18*)
- The people of Israel lived through exiles and Roman occupation, but it was never too late for God's salvation, and Jesus enters into the story.
- A woman was sick for 18 years, and Jesus brings healing. (*Luke 13*)
- A man was born blind and Jesus gives him sight. (*John 9*)
- The disciples saw Jesus die on the cross and thought it was too late. They knew he had been sealed in the tomb and then knew it was too late.

But then came Easter morning. Then came resurrection. This new life was not cheap life, it was not imitation life, but **real** life, **abundant** life, **death-defeating** life. The Easter story reminds us that it is never too late for God to do the impossible.

It's never too late to forgive. It's never too late to apologize.

It's never too late to start over, to turn your life around.

It's never too late to work on your marriage, or to reconcile relationships.

It's never too late to begin living the life Jesus has for you.

Whatever regret you have been holding on to, whatever guilt has been clinging to you, may this Easter be the moment you are finally able to let it go. May this Easter be the moment God shows up to make a new way, a new beginning. May this Easter be the moment we finally believe this beautiful truth; it's never too late for God.

Grace & Peace,
Pastor Josh



Varinia Espinosa
Pastor of Congregational Care

Finding Hope in Seasons of Loss & Change

Transitions are rarely easy. Whether you are looking toward the future or navigating the painful end of a chapter, you don't have to walk that path alone. I am offering Free Life and Loss Coaching sessions to our church family.



What is Coaching?

Coaching is a supportive partnership designed to help you move from where you are to where you want to be. It provides a judgment-free space to gain clarity, discover your inner strengths, and find a way forward.

How Can it Help?

Life Coaching: For when you feel “stuck”; want to grow spiritually, or are seeking a new direction in your personal life.

Navigating Life’s Ending Coaching: We often associate “end of life” only with passing away, but it applies to any significant ending. This coaching is for those navigating the loss of:

- o A loved one or a beloved pet.
- o A career or workplace identity.
- o A meaningful friendship or relationship.
- o A long-held dream or “the way things used to be.”

The Details

These sessions are confidential, compassionate, and offered at no cost. My goal is to help you process the “ending” so you can eventually find the strength for a new beginning.

Connect with me: vespinosa@gslcelca.org/ or directly in person at GS.

I am looking forward to connecting with you. Because I want to ensure everyone receives full attention and quality time, I have limited openings available for these sessions. Appointments will be scheduled on a first-come, first-served basis. If the current slots are filled, please don’t worry, you are welcome to join my **priority waitlist**, and I will reach out to you as soon as a new opportunity opens up.

Pr. Varinia has been trained by the ELCA Coaching Ministry, End-of-Life Coaching, Latam Coaching Network, and Team Coaching Global Alliance. She is an ELCA Coach. And she is certified as Life Coach, Professional Coach, Master Coach and End-of-Life Coach.

He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds.” – Psalm 147:3

Dig Deeper: A Weekend That Changed Us
Good Shepherd Men’s Retreat • February 27–March 1, 2026



As February turned to March, 32 men from Good Shepherd Lutheran came together for something truly extraordinary — **Dig Deeper**, a men’s retreat built on three days of authentic relationship, honest faith exploration, and a mutual challenge to live the lives Jesus has called us to.

Dig Deeper is a retreat that happens every couple of years, and this one did not disappoint. Our group made the trip across the Mississippi River to Camp Wartburg for an inspiring and transformative weekend. Some who attended have been part of Good Shepherd for decades. Others are newer to our community. Bringing different backgrounds, faith traditions, and life experiences, we gathered to learn and grow together in Christ.

“I truly enjoyed the retreat; it provided a great foundation for us to build fellowship, helping me get to know the men from my own service better while forming new connections with guys from other services.”

— **Scott**

Friday Evening: Stories That Shaped Us

Friday night, the men shared some of the most impactful moments that shaped their faith — stories about where they first encountered God in their lives. Each man brought an artifact, a meaningful object that opened a window into his personal journey. What followed were powerful, honest, and moving stories that set the tone for the entire weekend.

“I really felt the retreat was very worthwhile. It was great to get to know a few of the guys at church. Highlights of the retreat for me were the time for scripture reflection in

nature, and the bonfire sing-along. Really enjoyed the time where everyone shared an artifact and told a little bit about themselves. Those were some powerful stories.”

— Bob

Saturday: Growing Deeper in Faith and Fellowship

Saturday was a full day. Members of Good Shepherd gave powerful presentations on investing in others, building authentic relationships, and living out faith with intentionality in everyday life. The day also included a service project at Camp Wartburg — a hands-on reminder that faith always leads to action. That evening, the men gathered around the campfire, singing hymns and worship songs, laughing, and sharing beneath the stars.



“The men’s retreat enabled me to develop my relationships with other men of Good Shepherd. I enjoyed the opportunity to work together on a service project for the Wartburg Camp, placing mulch on a playground. The retreat allowed me to take a break from the daily routine and reflect on God’s mission for me — to be intentional, caring, and thoughtful in my relationships with others. Developing relationships and investing in others is a thought that resonated with me, and I will carry it forward as a part of God’s mission for my life.”

— Richard

Sunday Morning: Legacy and Identity

Sunday morning, the men explored what it means to leave a legacy — what kind of impact they want their lives to have on the people around them. We closed our time together in worship, being reminded of the one true source of our identity and hope: Jesus Christ.

It is truly moving to witness the Holy Spirit at work in people’s lives. Watching men open up, grow closer to God, and invest in one another with genuine care is a gift.

Dig Deeper was not an ending — it was a beginning.

Want to be a part of it?- Join Us in Basecamp

The connections formed at Dig Deeper don't have to stop there. Every man at Good Shepherd is invited to jump in and experience real, meaningful relationships through **Basecamp**, our regular men's ministry. Whether you attended the retreat or are hearing about it for the first time, there is a place for you.

Basecamp Service Project

Saturday, April 25 | Painting Gym at LifeWise, St. Louis

9:00am – 2:00pm (lunch provided)

Sign up today — contact [Tim Sorensen](#) with questions.

Basecamp Service Project RSVP

Basecamp Hike & BBQ

May — Details coming soon!



A College Student's Faith Journey

My name is Carina Galloway, and I am a junior at The Conservatory for the Performing Arts at Stephens College in Columbia MO.

While being in college I found it hard to keep up with my faith. I started classes 7 am and ended my days with rehearsals going till 11 pm or later. I had no time. No time for

friends, mental health, and I thought no time for quality time with God. I struggled a lot, even when my schedule got a little easier I just simply didn't know what to do and would spend that time sleeping, relaxing, or doing homework. Now, I know those things are important as well! However, I still wasn't using my time as wisely as I could've been. Some of my close friends had been inviting me to Chi Alpha for a while and I always found an excuse to not go. This semester I realized how much I needed to go back to God, how much I needed community, how much I needed guidance. I finally decided to go to a service. To my surprise, I loved it!

Now, before I get much further, you're probably asking yourself "What is Chi Alpha?" Well, Chi Alpha is short for Christ Ambassadors, it comes from 2 Corinthians 5:20 "We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God." We are a campus ministry team with students from Columbia College, Stephens College, and Mizzou. We are led by a wonderful pastor, Elizabeth Gao. We have Monday night prayer, Tuesday night service, and Thursday Bible study. We also have a house where we all hang out any time of day and it is a community space for us where we can fellowship. The house is one of those places where you can just exist and not feel any pressure to be or do anything else. It is also a place where you can do homework, sing and dance, and just be around people who bring joy to your life. We have an amazing leadership team who helps us with everything we could ever need, and I am beyond happy to call this group of humans friends.

Now to get back to my story, on my first day there I was greeted and welcomed with open arms. I was put into a space that Jesus just pours out of. I had found everything I was missing. I have a community, I have people who guide me through life and life in Christ, and more importantly I have grown in my faith more than I can explain. After going to only two services I decided to go on spring retreat with them. To be completely honest I don't think there's enough words I could put together to tell you how much I loved it.

Chi Alpha's mission is to be disciples who create disciples. And that perfectly describes who they are. Since being part of Chi Alpha I have found an inner peace that I didn't know was missing. I have been sharing my faith with everyone and never once felt awkward about it. It's been amazing.

But by now you're probably asking yourself "ok...and? Why did I just read all of that?" And that's a good question, why did you? Why did I write it? Well, I know college is a hard time for people, honestly, people go through hard times all the time, and sometimes without realizing it we step away from God. I think it is important to know

that you're not alone. Someone once told me, "No one is too far gone to not see the path back to Christ." It couldn't be more true. Even when we feel lost, there is always someone with us. That someone is God. Through Christ you never have to struggle alone. That has been my biggest takeaway throughout my journey with Christ, I always have a shoulder to lean on, someone to walk the hard paths with me, and someone who simply "gets it". I would like to end this with one of my favorite passages, Isaiah 41:13, "For I am the Lord your God who takes hold of your right hand and says to you, Do not fear; I will help you."



Good Shepherd

LUTHERAN CHURCH, ELCA

Manchester, Missouri



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