



Emily Horning

Director of Children & Family Ministry

This year's VBS kicked off on July 27 and the theme was "Splash! Diving into the Deep, Deep Love of Jesus." Each day had a different theme: When I have doubts (am worried, am scared, serve others, need help), Jesus loves us deeply! 100 kids from Good Shepherd, Building Blocks Preschool, and from outside our walls came every day to sing songs, play games, hear Bible stories, watch skits, make crafts, eat snacks, and do science experiments. Along the way they developed friendships and made so many connections with each other and with their leaders! And speaking of leaders, we had over 60 volunteers help make this week happen! From new middle school crew leaders to retirees, they helped in every aspect of each day.



We asked kids to write down their "God Sightings" and these were some of their answers:

- During story time (this got a lot of votes!), worship, singing songs, and while dancing
- Coming here and praying
- During games in the gym
- In the skits and during opening and closing services
- Everywhere, in life all over
- In the teachers' hearts and in my counselors
- During crafts



We asked volunteers where they saw God at work this week:

- I saw our youth stepping up and working really hard to support the campers who needed extra care.
- Kids went from bashful to loving on each other to helping each other- so heartfelt!
- Some kids had behavioral issues. I saw God using kindness instead of fear in dealing with these children. Emily Specker (Science) was so good with giving disruptive kids a job to demonstrate one of the experiments. I loved that response to behavioral issues. I think the children felt God's love from the helpers and volunteers, not just the words.
- Gene and Viki's dedication to creating amazing decorations!
- The rain was PERFECT for play - not too hard, but enough to create "creeks" across the parking lot. And despite kids trickling into the craft room one or two at a time all morning the room was amazingly quiet, with kids either focused on a craft or the movie. At the end of the morning the crew leaders magically gathered up their crews and headed up to the sanctuary. We had not a single child left asking where their leader was.
- I saw our youth stepping up and working really hard to support the campers who needed extra care.

VBS week is a mountain of work, but it is also a mountain of reward! We are blessed at Good Shepherd to have so many amazing youth and adult volunteers! Save the date for VBS 2027: July 26-30. We would love to see you there!



Josh Brecht
Lead Pastor

GIFTED

Discover. Discern. Deploy.

"Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone." - 1Corinthians

12:4-6



Beginning on **August 30**, we are embarking on an incredible journey. Here at Good Shepherd, we are going to walk through scripture to discover the spiritual gifts that God has given. God has given **you** specific, spiritual gifts for your unique calling in life. Together, God has given this community, Good Shepherd and abundance of diverse gifts to accomplish God's purposes in this time, in this place.

How do I discover the gifts the Holy Spirit has given me?

How do I discern why God has given me these specific gifts?

Once I understand my gifts, how do I deploy them in my daily life to be a part of God's mission?

Over the course of six weeks, we will explore the gifts named in the Bible, and the many other gifts that God gives. Our sermons will dive into these questions. Each week our **sermons** will be available afterwards on the website and wherever you get your **podcasts**, and we will have a **discussion guide** to help us go deeper.

This fall, we are also beginning our visioning and strategic planning process. This journey will help us to discern our gifts and purpose as a *congregation*, as well. The Holy Spirit is moving in our church and in our world. I am so excited to be on this prayerful journey of discernment and discovery with all of you! I cannot wait to see where the Holy Spirit leads us as a congregation, and where the Spirit leads you on your walk with Christ.

See you in worship!

Pastor Josh

RESOURCES

1. **“Gifts for You: Opening Your Spiritual Gifts”** from Women of the ELCA (Welca)

A great bible study *and* spiritual gifts inventory. You can use this personally or with a small group to learn more about Spiritual Gifts and discover yours.

2. **Weekly Readings for “GIFTED”**

August 30 –Why of Spiritual Gifts

Exodus 31:1-5, 1 Peter 4:10-11, 1 Corinthians 12:4-11

September 6 - What are the different spiritual gifts?

1 Corinthians 12:4-12

September 13 - Variety of Gifts

Romans 12:1-8 Luke 6:12-16, Matthew 10:1-4

September 20 - Body of Christ: Unity in Diversity

Philippians 2:1-5, Ephesians 4:1-7, 11-16, Luke 15:1-7

September 27 - Discovering your Gifts. Developing Your Gifts

2 Timothy 1:2-7, John 21:15-17, 20-22

October 4 - Discerning your calling. Deploying Your Gifts.

1 Corinthians 13, John 15:4-17



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