Good Shepherd Members Asked to Explore Their “Gifts of the Heart”

“Gifts of the Heart” is the theme of our stewardship emphasis this year. As one student at Luther Seminary put it, “Stewardship is not about what the church needs, but rather what you need to give.” Prayerfully consider your pledge of time, talent, or money and give from the heart.

To celebrate and give thanks for your generous gifts of time and money, the Stewardship Board is hosting The Dinner in Fellowship Hall on Sunday, October 3, following the 11:00 service. The Dinner will include an inspirational program and time to visit with other members of our congregation. We urge you to make a special effort to attend so that our community of faith can be complete.

The Dinner is free and will be catered by Famous Dave’s restaurants. The program will be over by 1:30. Reservations are important. Call 612-927-8849 or stop in the church office to reserve your place. Childcare is available upon request.

On Commitment Sunday, October 17, pledge cards will be brought forward during both services.

Mark Pitsenbarger

Future Offers Promise of Growth

“What’s new?” Often the standard response is “not much.” However, ask the question at Good Shepherd this fall and be prepared for a lengthy answer!

Many children’s classrooms have been remodeled, painted, and renamed as part of the start of Rotation Sunday School. This new experience of learning and teaching is not limited to our youth. Adults are also able to attend Fireside Fellowship and Lifelines to continue their faith journeys.

The Property Board is in the process of completing several maintenance projects. A new roof, a new boiler, and new landscaping are just a few of the significant improvements that are being completed.

The Befrienders program will begin soon; an initial group has attended training sessions. The Health Ministry Committee continues to offer on-going programs to improve everyone’s well-being.

Momentum for Mission is moving ahead as a Mission task force talks with congregation members gathering input about what our future focus and commitment will be. This effort will culminate in January 2005 when the congregation will have the opportunity to approve our commitment to a mission project.

While 2004 has been exciting, 2005 holds great promise. In addition to all of our new programs and opportunities, we will have a new Senior Pastor who will lead us, inspire us, challenge us and be a partner with us. Together we will uncover new ways to celebrate and share the Good News within, around and far beyond.

So what will you say the next time someone asks you “what’s new?” Think about all of the gifts Good Shepherd shares with its resources, hands and hearts, and how you are and can be involved in our rich multi-faceted ministry both within and outside of our congregation.
Assisting Ministers Help Serve at the Lord’s Table and Voice the People’s Prayer

Assisting ministers at Good Shepherd help with communion services by leading prayers and distributing communion.

During communion, the assisting minister usually distributes the wafers, working with one of the pastors to form a distribution team. The logistics and traffic flow for administering communion are easy to learn, and any momentary lapse is quickly remedied by a nod or a word of direction from the pastors.

Assisting ministers also lead several prayers during the worship service. One or two are short prayers printed in the bulletin and read as part of the liturgy for the season and the day. The longer Prayers of the Church are written by the assisting minister specifically for Good Shepherd’s service.

Preparing the Prayers of the Church is an important responsibility for assisting ministers, usually involving some advance thought and drafting. For new assisting ministers, the pastors provide useful guidance about structuring the prayers (including a gentle reminder that they don’t need to be mini-sermons). The main sources for the Prayers of the Church are the day’s scripture lessons and events and concerns in the congregation, the larger church, the country and the world. Checking with the pastors and the church office during the week prior to the service helps to make the prayers as timely and inclusive as possible.

Serving as an assisting minister deepens the experience of worship. One reason for this is preparation—reading and thinking about the day’s lessons before hearing them during the service increases receptiveness to the lessons and the sermon based on the readings. The chance to hear and view the service from the chancel—experiencing each component from a new angle—also gives the assisting minister a fresh perspective and a deepened appreciation of worship.

Serving as an assistant minister also deepens the experience of membership in the church. Distributing communion to members of the congregation provides a roll call of the saints at Good Shepherd. The succession of individual believers coming to the altar with shared faith is a wonderful overview of the body of Christ in our time and place.

It’s Riddle Time!

Q. How is an usher like a home-run hitter?
A. They both pass the plate.
Q. How is an usher like a bride?
A. They both walk down the aisle.
Q. How is ushering like a digital photo?
A. There aren’t any negatives!

Yes, ushering is a great service! Please volunteer for a crew. Remember, it’s only one month of every three, either 8:30 or 11:00 service. (It’s also flexible in case you need a Sunday off.)

Please call Kris at 612-927-8849 to say, “Yes, I’d love to!”

P.S. How are these questions like Lisa, Rick, Chris and Jonathan?
A. They’re all Riddles!
Shepherd’s Kingdom Comes to Good Shepherd

This fall a new Sunday school model has been introduced. The rotation model is designed to better engage children in the Bible stories and concepts presented. Children experience the stories through art, drama, music, video, games, cooking and geography, as well as other means. Students spend four to six weeks on a story, spending each week at one rotation. This concept is based on the multiple intelligences theory of learning.

So many people have been involved in getting this off the ground—many people who have not been involved in Sunday school in the past. Each class has teachers who are with them every week during class time, no matter what kind of learning model the children are experiencing. In addition, a large number of people have volunteered to assist on a short-term basis—as actors in The Oa-sis Theatre, as supervisory chefs in The Market Place, as storytellers in the Storyteller’s Study, and in many other roles. Barbara Senness and Laura Stein have been invaluable with curriculum planning and room design. Be sure to visit the rooms on the lower level and see the great designs!

“Shepherd’s Kingdom” describes the Sunday school program for children in grades one through six. The preschool will retain a single classroom structure at this time.

Adult education is taking on a new look as well and is following the same curriculum as Shepherd’s Kingdom. This is designed to foster communication in the home as parents and children have the opportunity to discuss the same stories.

A Few Of My Favorite Things

One of the things I most look forward to every Sunday at Good Shepherd is spending time listening to fellow members talk about their faith and how it impacts their lives in such unexpected and often miraculous ways. Some of these conversations happen with people I know well, but other times I learn profound things during adult ministry events from people who I just met or know little about.

With these kinds of experiences in mind our Board of Adult Ministry has enhanced both of our Sunday morning programs in an effort to provide our members more ways to connect their faith with each other in meaningful ways. Our new programs are a continuation of Good Shepherd’s rich heritage of not only educating minds, but also filling our hearts with joy as we learn more about each other and the world in which we serve.

LIFELINES
Learning Together. Growing Together

We’ve seized the opportunity presented by the new rotation Sunday school model and developed a curriculum that incorporates speakers, discussion groups, and interactive experiences to enhance our spiritual growth and take our learning to a whole new level.

Join us in Fellowship Hall at 9:45 a.m. each Sunday. We will begin with 15 minutes of fellowship followed by 45 minutes of learning.

FIRESIDE FELLOWSHIP

Lessons for Life

A small group discussion opportunity that uses each Sunday’s Bible lessons as the springboard for conversation that will draw Scripture into the context of everyday life. Fireside Fellowship is a great way to learn how others interpret and apply Scripture in their daily lives. It’s also a wonderful way to get to know other members!

Join us in Room 102, also known as the Fireplace Room just outside of Fellowship Hall at 9:45 a.m. each Sunday.
Who Are the People in Your Neighborhood?

If you have spent any time at all watching Mister Rogers’ Neighborhood, you can instantly sing back the response to that question: “They're the people that you meet, when you’re walking down the street. They’re the people that you meet each day.”

A Walk with the Magi. On a cold, windy January day earlier this year, I joined a group of people in the Saint Paul Area Synod, where I work, for “a walk with the magi” around the neighborhood of Christ Lutheran on Capitol Hill with the Rev. Susan Tjornehoj, pastor of this inner city congregation.

For almost two hours we walked the streets to discover the Christ child in the neighborhoods of Frogtown and Mt. Airy. We stopped in at two homes and listened to stories from members of Christ Lutheran. We saw the variety of housing, and we saw the ethnic markets, restaurants, and small stores owned by Hispanic, Vietnamese, Jewish, and other merchants who have opened up businesses in the neighborhood.

What’s up in this neighborhood? Good Shepherd’s neighborhood extends into southwest Minneapolis, St. Louis Park, and Edina. What are the businesses like? How many kinds of housing do you see? How are the streets laid out in relation to our church? What differences do you see in income levels? Education? Racial and ethnic make-up? Are there young families? Single adults? Older adults? Do people walk to businesses or must they drive? Are there natural boundaries or traffic barriers to getting to Good Shepherd?

What does this mean for our outreach efforts? It’s a fact: we are no longer living in a churched culture. So, for starters, it means that we are going to have to work a lot harder to grow. It means that hospitality needs to be ingrained into the life of our congregation. During worship. During the education hour. At meetings. All the time. Hospitality is the foundation of our life together in Christ.

It means that we must be outward focused, serving members and non-members alike. And it means that we must be open to change—to be uncomfortable sometimes—finding ways to tell the story of Jesus in new, meaningful ways.

And a good way to begin is to learn who are the people in our neighborhood.
Youth Serve in Appalachia & Minnesota

Once again this summer the junior and senior high youth from Good Shepherd donated their time and volunteered their energy to serve others both near and far.

For a week in July, four van loads of senior high youth and leaders traveled to volunteer in the home repair ministry known as the Appalachian Service Project. We spent a week in the hot Kentucky sun, serving the families of this area through sometimes simple home repair, sometimes very difficult, massive renovations to make their homes warmer and safer.

The youth from our church not only met expectations, but blew them out of the water. It is impossible here to describe the amount of commitment, enthusiasm, humility, compassion, sincerity, devotion, and whole heartedness our youth took into this experience. We shared a center with 50 other volunteers, and without a doubt our youth set the pace for our week together. They embodied service in action with compassion.

Our junior high youth also had a long weekend of serving others this August, traveling to the Simpson Shelter in Minneapolis, serving Habitat for Humanity in St. Cloud and Bemidji, as well as other service projects. The unique part of the junior high trip was that none of them knew where we were going. They signed up knowing only that they would be giving four days of their summer in service.

Good Shepherd Houses Families

Families Moving Forward (FMF) is a unique organization that collaborates with host churches to house homeless families for one, three or four times a year. With the guidance of FMF, the host churches set up bedrooms, eating areas and play/fellowship areas to help give our families a comfortable home environment in which to spend the week. They come to us each night for dinner and stay until the next morning when they return to the day center. At the day center they are helped with job and housing searches by a dedicated staff and group of volunteers.

Although we cannot change lives in a week’s time, we can lend a helping hand. Many families just need a little time to save some money for a down payment on an apartment or a house. Approximately 75% of the families who come through our doors find housing in the first 45 days in the program. That would not be the case without the help of the host churches. We would be unable to provide that helping hand without the commitment of volunteers who provide invaluable services such as buying supplies for the week or sharing their time. We have opportunities for everyone—young families, youth, seniors. Please stop by the table in the narthex prior to host week and match your talents and experience with FMF tasks.

At Good Shepherd we have been given a fantastic opportunity to perform the type of work we read and hear about in the scriptures. So many times our volunteer and monetary donations are faceless. FMF volunteers come away with a sense of accomplishment and pride after getting to know the people they are helping and hearing and seeing their gratitude.

Our involvement in Families Moving Forward provides us with great benefits. Along with other hands-on ministries that we at Good Shepherd sponsor, we show our children and our community the fabric of our congregation. With God’s grace and your help we will continue to improve the lives of those less fortunate than ourselves with our time, our energy, and our spirit.

Good Shepherd Builds Through Service

We at Good Shepherd continue to work with members of Lake Harriet Methodist to build a new home each summer. Ford Motor Credit and Edina Community Lutheran Church were also partners for our two weeks.

Some days we worked alongside the members of the Somali-American extended family who will become the owners. Right now they are all crowded into a tiny two-bedroom apartment. When finished the house will have 4 bedrooms and 2 baths with room for expansion in the basement. The neighborhood is also starting to look better, because the act of fixing up or building one new house always encourages other homeowners to make improvements.

We appreciate the efforts of everyone involved, especially those who prepare and transport the food and snacks to the site. On behalf of all the people working on the home site thank you, thank you, thank you!

We don’t know yet when the dedication of the home at 3446 Penn Ave. North will take place, but this is always a joyous event and a great opportunity to see the finished home. Everyone is invited to attend.

There is a large need for this type of affordable housing in the metro area, but the biggest constraint faced by Habitat for Humanity is the lack of land upon which to build these marvelous homes.
We connect with each other and befriend each other in good times and bad with prayers, encouragement, and support.

What are the gifts given at Good Shepherd that have touched your life?

After 36 years at Good Shepherd, I honestly don't know where to begin! First communion, confirmation, our wedding and two baptisms are a good start! But I think the greatest gift is to see the genuine excitement of our church family as they watch our girls grow. How cool is that?

Ty Tallakson

GIFTS OF THE HEART

Community

Befrienders Offer Help to Good Shepherd Members

Good Shepherd is embarking on a new ministry, Befrienders. Befriender Ministry will have an impact on the entire life of the congregation because it empowers lay people for ministry. Those trained for Befriending ministry meet people where they are in life's challenges, listening, supporting, and caring. The Befriending relationship can vary from a couple of conversations to regular visits for months or years depending on the needs of the individual. It is a one-on-one ministry consisting of visits, phone calls, conversations at church, at work, and in the community. Being part of this ministry enhances faith formation, nurtures the current caring and welcoming faith community, and increases one's effectiveness in reaching those in need both inside and outside our church community.

Befrienders Ministry supplements the Care Team Ministry (already in action at Good Shepherd) which is specifically for those members who, because of changes in health status, need assistance and support to continue to live as independently as possible while staying connected to their church. Caregivers work in teams of two to four people who usually alternate weeks, visiting people, helping with transportation to medical appointments, sharing a meal, or providing respite help for a family caregiver.

Befrienders requires 18 to 20 hours of training provided by Lutheran Social Services Befriender Ministries. The training equips participants with tools of greater self-awareness, active listening, an understanding of honoring sacred space and reflection that enables them to be effective in this ministry. The initial training is followed by bi-monthly meetings that deal with training on specific topics such as grief issues, stress, aging process, depression, abuse, and other challenges.

Currently five individuals are being trained as Befrienders: Debbie Anderson, Bruce Bouta, Shirley Brandt, Mary Quello, and Tom Randall.

Empowering Couples

Ministry Enriches Marriages

Couples often find it difficult to devote quality time to their relationship amidst the demands of work, family, paying bills, laundry, etc. It is easy to go days or weeks without really checking in with each other. Although a couple may share the same space and live in the same house, the realities of daily life can impede intimacy and connection for couples.

Twenty couples have participated in Empowering Couples ministry over six monthly gatherings in order to build, improve, and energize their relationships.

In each session, an opening introduction addressed a particular topic. Following each introduction, couples were given an opportunity to discuss their relationship strengths, growth areas, and how they could build a stronger and more satisfying relationship. Child care was provided so couples could have at least one hour a month of undivided time.

Six topics were covered through the course: The Path of the Strong, Communication, Conflict Resolution, Managing Finances, Spiritual Beliefs, and Personal, Couple, and Family Goals.

Phyllis Bruce

WIN A PRIZE!

Find the following hidden musical terms in this ad:

- alto
- flat
- key
- note
- clef
- key
- sing
- duet
- largo
- staff
- ear
- lento
- tenor

Please take ten or so minutes to think about the following: Choir members are altogether fun people. They make you feel that you have talent or at least you're not embarrassed (and often flattered). It may be due to their regular goal of service - they just affirm that weekly. Could your bicycle find the way to church on Wednesday Night? Rehearsals are 7:00 to 8:30. Director Rossin gladly will give you your prize when you appear.

Jay Rudi

Coffee on the plaza provides time to see friends.
WORSHIP: We gather in public worship to learn to live in God’s abundant grace and to go, share God’s love in the world.

On an annual basis $201,041 or 22% of the total expenditures goes to accomplish this outcome. Examples of means: Preparation for and the offering of weekly and special (Advent, Christmas, Lent) worship services, funerals, weddings, devotions including the choirs, bulletins, worship materials, candles, plus...

LEARNING: We learn to know Jesus and to live in God’s abundant grace. We are equipped and empowered as disciples of Jesus Christ to carry out Christ’s work in our daily lives.

On an annual basis $175,491 or 19% of the total expenditures goes to accomplish this outcome. Examples of means: Rotation Sunday school, small groups, lifelong learning, confirmation classes, learning opportunities for all ages, retreats, curriculum, speakers, and other resources.

WITNESS AND SERVICE: People without a faith community join us in experiencing Christ in a grace-filled hospitable community. Needs of people outside of Good Shepherd are met through acts of service and kindness.

On an annual basis 36% of unpaid staff (volunteers) and 37% of the total expenditures $201,311 goes to accomplish this outcome.

Examples of means: Hospitality, visits, conversations with our guests, signs, yellow pages, articles in newspaper, new members classes, equipping people to share their faith and invite others; Minneapolis Area Synod and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Meals on Wheels, Families Moving Forward, Plymouth Youth Center, Lutheran Social Services, and many others.

COMMUNITY: We connect with each other and befriend each other in good times and bad with prayers, encouragement and support.

On an annual basis $201,311 or 22% of the total expenditures goes to accomplish this outcome.

Examples of means: Communication, pastoral care, health, socializing, friendship, shared life together, building community, connecting people, parish nurse, visitation pastor, etc.

Jerry Hoffman

WITNESS AND SERVICE: We engage in the mission of the church to bring Christ to the world in a variety of ways: by sharing our faith, by creating a sense of belonging, by providing opportunities for gifts of time and talent. Examples of means: Volunteer work at the local church and community agencies, such as Meals on Wheels, Habitat for Humanity, Rocking Readers, and others; Minneapolis Area Synod and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

On an annual basis $151,396 or 17% of the total expenditures goes to accomplish this outcome. Examples of means: Volunteer work at local agencies, such as Meals on Wheels, Habitat for Humanity, Rocking Readers, and others.

WITNESS AND SERVICE: The largest percent of the congregation’s expenditures go for the staff. However, the staff equips and supports the people for mission and ministry. This includes pastors, program, office, music, and custodial staff.

GIFTS OF THE HEART: The following chart portrays how the money spent for utilities and upkeep for the building and property provides space for mission and ministry. Percentage of use was determined by taking the square feet of space used for a particular purpose times an approximate number of hours that space is used over a year. For instance, space for outreach includes: Exultate, Families Moving Forward, Over Coffee, Edina Chorale, university classes, etc.

There are many unpaid staff (volunteers). It has been written that the value of an unpaid staff member averages $15.25 an hour. We have estimated how many hours have been contributed.

They have been contributed for INREACH mission and ministries as teachers, crafters of prayer shawls, courtyard gardeners, singers in the choir, ushers, coffee servers, cookies and hot dishes preparers, care givers, etc.

They also have contributed many hours for OUREACH in such ministries as Meals On Wheels, Habitat for Humanity, Rocking Readers, Families Moving Forward, etc.

You ask how many hours. Well, at the Sunday, October 3, 2004, 12:15 dinner, a prize will be given to those who come the closest to guessing the number of unpaid staff hours that are contributed annually. Just what is your guess?
**OUR SELVES**

**Scripture:** John 15:8-16a

In prayer we offer “what you have first given us—our selves...” Not the selves we wish we were, but the selves we are. Though we are burdened and perplexed with fears and worries, temptations, and doubts, we are divinely created, gifted with a unique combination of talents and qualities.

That gift is most precious which comes from within. Giving of ourselves with constancy and compassion is the most difficult kind of giving. But when we offer our very selves, God’s Spirit can transform the gift into a sign of God’s love. When we offer our selves with joy and thanksgiving, God can make of us signs that others can see, believe, and so have life in Jesus’ name.

**Questions**

1. Recall one of the most meaningful gifts of self someone has given you. What was it? What made it so precious?
2. Identify three gifts (such as mechanical, musical, or cooking ability) and three fruits (such as patience or kindness) God has given you. Remember, identifying God’s gifts with gratitude and praise is not arrogant. It is giving credit where it belongs—to God!

**OUR TIME**

**Scripture:** John 13:12-15

Jesus always found time to serve with love. Just hours before his arrest he did a remarkable thing. With a bowl and towel in hand, he knelt at the feet of each of his disciples, one by one, and proceeded to wash their feet. With so little time before his death, Jesus made serving a priority. He demonstrated to his disciples the reason they had been entrusted with the gift of time: to serve others, and so become signs of God’s gracious love in a world with little time for love.

The more hectic one’s life becomes, the more important it is to budget time the way we do our dollars. Worship and work, family and exercise, serving and household chores all must be apportioned time in our lives, but in what proportion?

The answer will vary.

**Questions**

1. What resources can contemporary Christians draw upon to live at a more steady, serene pace? Seek “tips” from other participants.
2. Helping other people can be spontaneous, but what guidelines might a Christian use in deciding a proportionate share of time to set aside for structured service to others?

**OUR POSSESSIONS**

**Scripture:** John 6:5-14

Our food, our homes, our family heirlooms, our tools, and our money all are entrusted by God to our care. Someone may protest, “But I’ve worked hard for everything I’ve got! It’s mine. I’ve earned it!” But what is the source of the inborn abilities, the opportunities, the health and determination to pursue them? All we have, in one way or another, is a gift from God who first entrusted us with our selves and our time, as well as our possessions.

Setting aside a proportion of one’s income “off the top” becomes a doubly significant gift. For the giver, it is a down-to-earth expression of their response to God’s gifts of life and love in Christ. For the recipient, it is a sign of God’s love through us.

**Questions**

1. What guidelines can help you determine what proportion of income individuals offer for God’s work in the world?
2. What is your goal for proportionate giving? What is your plan to move toward your goal?