



The Shepherd's Voice

September/October 2023

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PASTOR'S NOTE:

Greetings in the name of Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord!

Jesus said to them, "But who do you say that I am?"

Matthew 16:15

It is no secret that here in the United States, it seems that God has fallen out of favor. For those of us who have spent years, maybe lifetimes, trying to follow Jesus, this is hard for us to understand. We are confused by more and more people turning away from God, not attending church, and not actively participating in a faith community. And honestly, here at Good Shepherd, we still have many people who regularly attend worship and continue to actively participate in this faith community. This means that we are not feeling the cultural effect to its most significant degree, but that does not mean that we are not feeling it at all, because we certainly are.

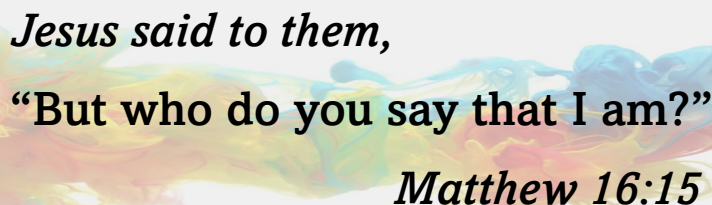
Now, there are a lot of reasons for our current cultural situation. Your counsel and visioning team has been wrestling with this as well, and not surprisingly, growth is one area of much discussion. There are no simple and easy steps for the road ahead.

However, I think that the journey may start here. A couple of Sundays ago, we heard Jesus ask two critical questions of his followers. Jesus was standing in a place where many people were worshiping many different gods, and he first asked the disciples, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?" And then he asked them the most important question, the question we said changes everything. He asked, "But who do you say that I am?"

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I believe this is the critical question. I believe this is the place where our journey back to a culture that is actively worshipping God, and actively participating in a faith community and doing ministry together - I believe the journey back to this place starts with whether we are willing to wrestle with and answer Jesus' question – “But who do you say that I am?” Our answer will change everything. I wonder if our culture today is afraid of this question? I wonder if each of us is afraid of this question?

I think many times our answer may be that God is a vending machine. Now, it is true that this is not found in Scripture anywhere. Jesus never says, “Let me be your vending machine.” The closest we may get to this is something like Jesus saying, “Ask, and it will be given you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened for you.” (Luke 11:9)



Jesus said to them,
“But who do you say that I am?”
Matthew 16:15

There is much to like about a vending machine Jesus. It does not require much from you. There is a glass partition that keeps you from getting too involved in conversation or in a relationship. You make your selection as to what you want from Jesus, and you place your request. And it is provided to you. This is where you get to say things like, God wants me to be happy. I just want to be me. I just want to be myself.

Perhaps, sometimes our answer may be, that Jesus is my friend. Throughout scripture, we hear of Jesus calling others friend. For example, when Jesus healed a man who was paralyzed that had been lowered through the roof of a house, it says, “When he saw their faith, Jesus said, ‘Friend, your sins are forgiven you.’” (Luke 5:20)

It is certainly true that in Jesus, God meets us where we are. And yes, we can ask Jesus for things almost as if he is like a vending machine. And yes, we can expect Jesus to be our friend. But both of these answers to who Jesus is requires little to nothing from us.

But long ago, the prophet Micah shared that God does require something from us - “To do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God.” (Micah 6:8)

Walking with God means that we are to be in a relationship with God. When Jesus invites us to follow him, he is inviting us into a relationship with him. And relationships require something from us.

It is through our relationship with Jesus, that, like Simon Peter and the disciples, we can come to answer Jesus' question of, “Who do you say that I am?” And also say to Jesus, “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.”

The Messiah was understood before Jesus' day to be the God-appointed king for the end of all time, and would also be known as the anointed one. By Jesus' time, it was understood that the Messiah would come and destroy the hostile powers here on earth, save all of God's people, and set up a new and glorious kingdom of God here on earth that would reign forever. The title of this One, this King, in addition to being the Messiah, Savior, anointed one, the title for this One would also be Christ.

The reason why our answer to this question from Jesus of, “But who do you say that I am?” can change everything is, if we answer that Jesus is the Messiah, the Christ, then our whole life must be oriented around him.

No longer will our vending machine Jesus be enough for us. Now we will see that Jesus is much more than just a friend. Now, we no longer get to live our lives to just be who we are. No longer can we say, “I just want to be myself.”

God meets us where we are at, but God does not leave us there. Jesus invites us to follow him, so we can be who God created us to be. This world tells us we should celebrate our self. That sounds fun. That is easy. It is clear why so many people say no to Jesus’ invitation to follow. What is not to like with our vending machine Jesus? It is good to know that Jesus is my friend that I can call on in times of need. And in the meantime, I just want to be me.

If our answer to Jesus’ question, “But who do you say that I am?” is “You are the Messiah, the Christ,” it means no longer do we live our life as a celebration of self. Instead, we live our life as a celebration of God. We no longer define ourselves, but we are defined by God, as part of the body of Christ.

The bottom line is, if we are striving to just be who we are, we do not need Jesus for that. However, if we are going to be who God created us to be, then, we will most definitely need Jesus, the Messiah, the Savior, the Christ, for this.

And as with any relationship, it grows as we spend time with one another, and we share ourselves with, and give of ourselves, to one another. The same is true with our relationship with Jesus the Messiah, Jesus the Christ.

I pray that each of us will continue to grow in our relationship with Jesus. You can do some of this on your own,

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doing things such as praying and reading scripture. I hope you will take part in many of the opportunities provided here at Good Shepherd to grow your relationship with God and with one another, such as participating in the various mercy and justice ministries we do together. Your participation in worship is important - it is where we hear and sing God’s word, where we confess that we are not

God, and that Jesus is the Christ. It is where we are fed and nourished by Christ’s body and blood. And it is where we share his peace.

And I sincerely hope that you and your family will take part in our other offerings here at Good Shepherd, such as our Christian education programs, including adult Sunday school. I also hope you will join in our eight-week group discussion on season one of The Chosen.

All of this is part of growing your relationship with Jesus the Messiah, Jesus the Christ. All of this is part of how you can answer Jesus’ question to you, “But who do you say that I am?”

Grace and peace

Pastor Ted.



Music and Worship

News & Updates

The Council and the Visioning Committee have decided to suspend the streaming of our Classic Worship because of low viewer attendance and volunteer participation, effective September 3rd

Worship 2.0 will continue to livestream at 9:00 am and recorded services will be available from our YouTube channel. The operation of Worship 2.0 is similar with or without the livestream logistics, so extra volunteers are not needed to continue this ministry..

Worship in the Park

September 3rd at 10:30 am

It's Labor Day Weekend – just one service!

Dad Perry Park, North Shelter House

Use the entrance off Harvard Rd, east of Monterey Way

Worship, then fellowship and picnic following!

Provided: Fried/baked chicken (free will offering), paper and plastic ware, water, and lemonade

Please Bring: A side dish or dessert to share, and your own table service if you prefer that to disposable

- Folding chairs or lawn chairs if desired
- Insect repellent if desired

There are restrooms, plenty of parking, electricity, playground equipment, nature trails and more.

In case of inclement weather—check our website, www.gslc-lawrence.org or call the church office, 785-843-3014, after 9:00 am for a change of venue.

If you would like to volunteer to help with the outdoor service contact Judy Heller, Thad Reist, or Megan Ebke. Volunteer opportunities consist of coordinating and transporting worship supplies, and playing guitar. If you would like to help with the potluck (set-up, cleanup) contact Kim Mosher, ktmos@yahoo.com or 785-218-0398.

Thank you to all our musicians who help lead our worship in the park: Megan Ebke, Huck Langford, Thad Reist, Ian Rhoades, Clark Russell, Alex Trujillo, and Walter Willmert.

It is greatly appreciated!



Reformation Sunday

We will observe Reformation Sunday on October 29th. We will also celebrate with our three confirmands who will be confirmed during Worship 2.0. The confirmands will also share their statement of faith during Classic Worship.

Please join us between services for cake and fellowship to honor our confirmands!



If you are age 16-100, please give some consideration to joining our GSLC Classic Worship Choir. No audition is required, but choral experience is preferred. Rehearsals are every Thursday, 7-8:15 p.m. and 10:30 on Sunday mornings. The anthem is usually performed by 11:15 a.m. on Sunday, so even if you attend the 2.0 service, you could stay awhile longer and participate in the Classic Worship choir. If you want more information or have questions, contact: Judy Heller, heller-judyw@gmail.com, 785-843-9521 (leave a voice message, but NO text)



Worship Committee Chair, Kelley Witmer: kelley@wheatfieldtechnology.com, 785-760-0155

Music Minister – Classic Worship, Judy Heller: hellerjudyw@gmail.com, 785-843-9521

Organist/Pianist – Classic Worship, Thad Reist: tjreist@yahoo.com, 785-556-0333

Megan Ebke, Worship Leader – Worship 2.0: megan.ebke@gmail.com, 785-844-1830

Justice Matters Listening Sessions

Good Shepherd has a very strong presence in Justice Matters. We are a great example of a congregation that understands that the Lord want us to work for Justice.

You are all invited to participate in a Justice Matters Listening Session. Each fall we invite each and every one of you to join your Team Leaders, Collier Case, Steve Hillmer and Judy Pope. Some of you have already been contacted and have accepted our invitation to attend.

We will continue to work on Homelessness and Elder Care. We need to hear from you at our Listening Sessions what concerns you have for the City of Lawrence and Douglas County.

As Justice Matters prepares for our new cycle, please consider accepting the invitation you will receive. Come to one of our sessions even if you are just curious about what we do. I guarantee you will be blessed. Just ask those who are already Network Members. Let's increase our Good Shepherd Network Member participants. The Good Shepherd congregation has shown that it is a real Champion for Justice.

Stewardship Committee Updates

Greetings Good Shepherd faith community. The Stewardship committee continues to meet on the first Monday of the month. We have started to have a conversation around the planning of our annual Cottage Meetings. Cottage Meetings will be held in November, and you will have 3 opportunities to join one of the meetings that fit into your schedule. Our first 2023 Cottage Meeting will be held on **Friday November 10th @ 7:00 p.m.**, the second meeting will be held on **Sunday November 12th @ 3:00 p.m** and the final meeting will be **Saturday November 18th** at 10:00 a.m., so **SAVE THE DATE**. Cottage Meetings are a great opportunity to have small group discussions on the ministries in our congregation. All are welcome to join any of the three Cottage Meetings that will be held at the church. You will also hear from Pastor as he will be presenting the ministry plan, finance committee will present the 2024 spending plan. More information to come on how to sign up and other presenters that will be presenting at the Cottage Meetings in November. Don't miss this opportunity as we continue to do Gods work together in preparation for our 2024 Annual Congregation Meeting.

Have you seen the videos that we have been sharing at the beginning of church each month? If so, we hope that you have enjoyed hearing from some of our members as they have spoken about Stewardship. We plan to continue sharing videos of selected individuals for several more months as time allows. We hope that by sharing these videos with you, that you might hear or think of Stewardship in a way that you have not before or think of way that you can serve God and see how someone important in your life may have shared an act of Stewardship.

Peace, Stewardship Committee



Membership Picture Directory

We know that everyone is buzzing and looking forward to getting the new picture directory so we can get to know one another better. We are working hard to get that completed and hope to have that available to you soon. Stay tuned!

Kitchen Usage Checklist

The hospitality ministry team has developed a kitchen usage checklist to be used whenever the kitchen is used for an event, including midweek meals during Advent and Lent. This checklist will help users complete the tasks necessary to help keep our kitchen clean, orderly, and functional. It includes things like running the garbage disposal, turning off the coffee pot, and taking out the trash; these things sometimes get overlooked. For each event, someone will need to be the Responsible Individual to complete the form.

A red three-ring notebook will be placed on the kitchen counter and will hold the blank forms to be used. Completed forms should be placed on the church office counter. The form includes space to make any comments or notes to the hospitality team or to express a need for supplies or repairs. Please also remember to label and date any food, beverage or condiment that is left in the refrigerator or freezer.

Fourth Friday Fellowship

Fourth Friday Fellowship is an informal social group that meets several times throughout the year, generally on the fourth Friday of the month.

Mark your calendars for these upcoming events:

Friday, September 22--Gather at the India Palace restaurant for dinner and good conversation! Plan to meet there at 6:00. The address is 129 E. 10th Street, downtown.

Saturday, October 28--Oktoberfest at the Brooks farm! Please note the change of day and time. We will plan to gather at 4:00 (or whenever you can get there), and eat about 5:00. Brats, buns, and condiments provided; bring a side dish or dessert to share.

For more information about these and other events, contact Susie Brooks at :

sbrksks@aol.com, or 918-633-1973.

Happy 15th Anniversary Pastor Ted!

August 16th marked the 15th anniversary
of Pastor Ted's Ordination!

Join in as we will celebrate at Worship in the Park, September 3!



Thanks, Summertime Coffee and Fellowship Providers

The hospitality ministry team would like to thank all those who provided wonderful and tasty hospitality this summer with treats during our summer fellowship time between worship services:

Thank you, Cathy and Collier Case, Gary and Maria Sanden, Judy and Jerry Pope, Molly and Monte Soukup, Monica and Dennis Rethman, Annamae Ahlstedt and Earl Henderson, Michael and Elizabeth Hemme, John Wachholz, Kim Mosher, and Faith Friesen



Green Pastures Preschool

Hello from the preschool!!

It's been an exciting summer for our preschool! We got a grant from the state that allowed us to get new bathroom flooring, paint for the bathrooms, a completely updated playground and some new items for the preschool! We are so grateful for this money and hope that it will be a blessing to our students and attract more families to both the preschool and the church in the future. We had an ice cream social to break in the new playground this summer and it was a huge success! There were so many preschool families and church members there, it made me so happy to see this loving community all together. I think everyone who attended had a lot of fun!

It's almost time for our school year to start and we are getting into full prep mode to welcome our families to the preschool. Teachers have been doing their continuing education hours and I've been touring some new perspective families. One of our teachers, Ms Fernanda, welcomed her third child this summer- baby Natalia! We also are excited to welcome a new face to our teaching staff- Laura Haggerty. She has been a Green Pastures Mom for several years, served on the board, and now will be a wonderful addition to the preschool.

I want to thank the church for their continued support of the preschool. Our families are growing in love and hopefully we are helping all our students lay a good foundation for learning. I'd also like to thank Cathy, Collier and Ann for their continued help and support on the preschool board. It's going to be a wonderful year!

Day Beck

The Chosen



Pastor Ted and Kim invite you to join them for an informational gathering on Sunday, Sept 10, at 4:30 pm to hear about the popular series *The Chosen*.

***The Chosen* depicts the life of Jesus and his followers in a new and exciting way.**

To help us prepare for space and treats, please sign up in the narthex or notify the church office that you plan to attend.

After hearing about the show, you may wish to join Pastor Ted and Kim each week as together, we journey through Season 1. Participants will watch an episode each week on their own and then gather on Sunday evenings to discuss and go deeper into the episode and the scripture that is brought to life in the episode.

The Chosen is the first ever multi-season series about the life of Jesus. Creator/director Dallas Jenkins created the first season, which was released in 2019 and remarkably, the show is funded through crowdfunding as people pay it forward so others can watch. *The Chosen* creators expect to produce seven seasons that cover Jesus' three-year ministry, His death and resurrection, following the New Testament narrative. Season 4 is expected to be released in early 2024.

Where can you buy a ruler that's three feet long?

At a yard sale?

Did you hear about the garage sale at the boat-house?

I heard it was quite an oar deal!

What do they say about a minimalist's yard sale?

Not a whole lot!



I went to a garage sale the other day, they had a radio with no volume control.

I just couldn't turn it down!

Let's have some fun together...

at the GSLC Garage Sale Fundraiser, Saturday, September 16.

**Much help is needed for a successful event.
Here's how you can help:**

Pray for good weather on the day of the sale (seriously, please).

Bring your boxes and bags of smaller sale items to church:

Sep 10 after worship

Sept 11 -13 from 9 am - noon

Or, Call the office to arrange an evening drop off:

Sep 14 from 2-6 pm or,

Sep 15 from 10 am to 5 pm.

Provide baked goods for the bake sale—sign up in the narthex or call the church office.

Suggestions: Whole pies or cakes, rolls, bread; muffins, cookies or brownies individually wrapped or bagged in packages of 3 – 6; individually bagged snack mix are suggestions.

Sign up in the narthex or call the church office to help sort/price; set up, work the sale, clean up

Come to the sale and buy things – we will have toys, clothes, housewares, tools, furniture, gardening items, home décor and so much more!

Pray for good weather on the day of the sale

Please contact one of the garage sale planning team members with questions or if you need assistance with your sale items. Kim Mosher, Wally and Marilyn Resner, Mary Ricke, Ann Nichols, Jill Whetter