



# The Shepherd's Voice

## May/June 2026

### PASTOR'S NOTE:

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

*“Let no evil talk come out of your mouths, but only what is good for building up, as there is need, so that your words may give grace to those who hear.”*

Ephesians 4:29

*“The good person out of the good treasure of the heart produces good, and the evil person out of evil treasure produces evil, for it is out of the abundance of the heart that the mouth speaks.”*

Luke 6:45

You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.

The 8th Commandment

*“We are to fear and love God, so that we do not tell lies about our neighbors, betray or slander them, or destroy their reputations. Instead, we are to come to their defense, speak well of them, and interpret everything they do in the best possible light.”*

Martin Luther's explanation of the 8th Commandment

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Words matter. As Christians, we know this well. We have a sacred text. Our God spoke creation into being. The Word was in the beginning, and that Word became flesh in Jesus Christ. It is the reality that most all people know that words matter.

Recently, much attention has been given to the words we use and how they shape our culture and climate. In light of recent assassinations and assassination attempts, that attention has only increased. People are thinking, if not more carefully, at least more frequently, about language and its consequences.

You have seen this. Words are used to justify actions, to label others, to elevate or to tear down. None of this is new, and none of this is meant to be a political statement. It is simply an observation: words matter.

But the point here is not only that words matter in general. It is that *our* words matter—yours and mine.

Perhaps, like me, you heard growing up: “Watch your mouth.” My parents did not allow me to deflect by pointing to what others were saying. The focus was simple and direct: *watch your mouth*.

That same focus is reflected in Scripture. The Apostle Paul tells us to speak words that build up and give grace. Jesus teaches that our words flow from what fills our hearts. God commands us not to bear false witness. And Luther reminds us that this goes beyond avoiding lies - we are called to defend, speak well of, and interpret our neighbor’s actions in the best possible light. With that in mind, I offer a few simple thoughts for your consideration.

**Tip 1: Start local.**

Pay attention to your own words and choose them wisely. Invest your speech primarily in those closest to you - your family, your friends, your neighbors. Speak with God. Speak with people you know. Be intentional. Meaningful communication happens best within real relationships.

**Tip 2: Be specific.**

Generalities leave too much room for misunderstanding. Say what you mean. Speak truthfully and from the heart. At the same time, tend to your heart - fill it with good treasure: gratitude, thanksgiving, and the gifts God has given you. When the heart is full of grace, good words will follow.

**Tip 3: Define your terms.**

Many words today function as shorthand or code - terms like “extremist,” “progressive,” “authoritarian,” and others. The challenge is that people often use the same word but mean very different things. Take the time to clarify what you mean so that your words communicate clearly rather than confuse.

**Tip 4: Be cautious with media—especially social media.**

Social media connects people, but it is rarely “local.” More importantly, in that space, you are often the product. What matters most there is not your words, but your attention - your clicks, your time, your engagement.

Jesus reminds us that the mouth speaks from the abundance of the heart. What we take shapes what comes out. You might remember the saying, “You are what you eat,” or “Garbage in, garbage out.” The same applies here. A steady diet of online content will influence the words we speak and the attitudes we carry.

Studies have even shown a correlation between heavy social media use and an increased acceptance of harmful ideas, including violence. While many factors are involved, the pattern is worth noting. Less consumption often leads to better health - spiritually, emotionally, and relationally.

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**Tip 5: Beware of new terms and qualifiers.**

New phrases can appear suddenly and spread quickly. When they do, pause and ask questions. What does this term mean? How is it being defined? Who is defining it?

For example, we are all familiar with “free speech,” a foundational right. But newer terms like “hate speech” raises important questions. How is it defined? Who decides? When does disagreement become something else?

Similarly, phrases like “speech is violence” deserve careful thought. Speech can certainly *lead to* harm, but speech and physical violence are not the same thing. Confusing the two can lead to dangerous conclusions.

As we move into the coming months - into summer and another election season - remember this: words matter. The words of others may frustrate or anger us, but as followers of Jesus, we are not given permission to respond in kind.

God tells us to watch our mouths. Jesus tells us our words reveal our hearts. The Apostle Paul calls us to speak words of grace—words that build others up.

And we have something better to say than anything the world offers. We have Good News - the Good News of Jesus Christ. God’s Word, the Word made flesh, dwells in your heart. It is a Word full of grace and truth. That is the Word that matters. Let that be the Word we share.

Grace and peace,

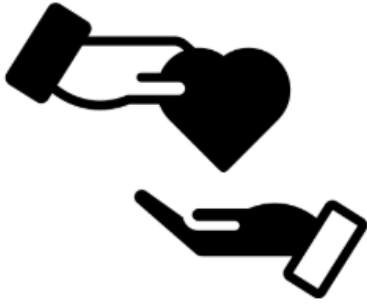
Pastor Ted

# JUSTICE • MATTERS



Good Shepherd was well represented among the hundreds that attended the Nehemiah Action Assembly in April. We continue to advocate for faithful implementation of A Place for Everyone regarding Ending Chronic Homelessness. We will monitor implementation closely and support a fair evaluation of the pilot program of Tenant Right to Counsel as part of APFE. We learned from the Elder Care Workforce that new CNA trainings will begin locally this May with students already enrolled.

Nurse Family Partnership is a proven solution to Youth Trauma. It is an evidence-based, nationally recognized program serving first-time, low-income mothers, with over 40 years of research and replication in 40+ states. Specially trained registered nurses provide 25-30 home visits on average from pregnancy through a child's second birthday. Heartland Community Health has committed to work with Justice Matters in getting this program in Douglas County. Everyone in attendance was asked to sign a letter to be sent to the KDHE Secretary. We are asking her to meet with Justice Matters to identify funding and a clear path to launch NFP as soon as possible.



# Social Action Committee

In March and April, SAM participated in 2 activities:  
LINK and LCM food drive.

On Saturday March 7th we provided food for and served at LINK. Nine people worked either the set up & serve shift or the serve & clean up shift. At the committee's follow up meeting, we agreed that having 10 or 11 would work best. We had plenty of food and even had some casseroles left over. The ice cream & toppings were a big hit and some people used the strawberry or chocolate sauce in their milk!

In April we had another food drive for the LCM/Westwood House food pantry. This time the emphasis was on snacks for them to use during finals, but other items were provided as well. Once again, this drive was very successful.

Watch out for announcements for our upcoming projects:

June – Family Promise – provide meals

July – JAX – food collection drive

September – LCM/Westwood start of school year food drive

October - Family Promise – provide meals

November/December – Ballard Center Xmas adopt-a-family gift drive

If you would like to be a part of the committee, please reach out to Ann Nichols at [koalahawku@gmail.com](mailto:koalahawku@gmail.com) or call/text her at 785-865-3433. We strive meet once a month (typically 6:15-7:00 on 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday) for about 30-45 minutes.

# THANK YOU!

We had so many willing hands this year to accomplish the behind the scenes work to make our Lenten season and our Easter celebration so special. Thank you to everyone for your help. Here is just one example of a tedious job being accomplished much more quickly with Munchers and with many helpers (did you know that the palms we use on Palm Sunday need to have dust, dirt and other bits removed before we can wave them?). Thank you!



# Music and Worship

## UPCOMING MUSIC & WORSHIP CALENDAR!

Sunday, May 10th Sixth Sunday of Easter; 2026 graduate recognition

Thursday, May 14th Ascension of Our Lord

Sunday, May 17th Celebrate Ascension of Our Lord

Sunday, May 24th Day of Pentecost (wear red)

Sunday, May 31st The Holy Trinity, First Sunday after Pentecost

Sunday, June 28th Reconciling in Christ recognition

\*You can see the entire **GSLC calendar** on our website – [gslc-lawrence.org](http://gslc-lawrence.org)

## GOOD SHEPHERD CHOIR

**GSLC Choir** rehearsals are on Thursdays, 7:00-8:15 pm.

The last Sunday choir will be singing before summer break is May 31st. New members are always welcome! Contact María Gonzalez for more information or to be added to the email list. Worship and music contacts are listed on the following page.



## THANK YOU

Thank you to everyone who helped make our Lent and Easter seasons meaningful this year: singers, instrumentalists, altar ministry, worship volunteers, food preparers, and all who contributed in other ways.



## WEAR RED FOR PENTECOST

Pentecost is 50 days after Easter – this year May 24th. Pentecost is the birthday of the church and a celebration of the coming of the Spirit.



## SUMMER MUSIC

During the summer months, while choir is on 'vacation,' we would like to encourage the congregation to share their musical gifts in the 11:00 am Classic Worship service. We have many openings for preludes, offerings and postludes, either for soloists or small groups. Let Thad know (785-556-0333 or [tjreist@yahoo.com](mailto:tjreist@yahoo.com)) if you're interested in playing or singing.

Kelley Witmer—Worship Committee Chair, [kelly@wheatfieldtechnology.com](mailto:kelly@wheatfieldtechnology.com) 785-760-0155  
Maria Dominguez Gonzalez, Music Minister – Classic Worship, [mariadg@ku.edu](mailto:mariadg@ku.edu), 785-917-8756  
Thad Reist---Pianist/Organist, [tjreist@yahoo.com](mailto:tjreist@yahoo.com) 785-556-0333

# Hospitality Committee

## Summer Sundays Are Back!



### Coffee & Connection

Make the most of your Sunday mornings this summer, June through August, with a relaxed time to gather between services. Enjoy a cup of coffee, a few treats, and meaningful conversation with familiar faces and new friends alike. Whether you're coming from Worship 2.0 or heading into Classic Worship, you're invited to pause and connect.

### Host a Sunday

Help keep the coffee flowing! Hosting is simple—brew the coffee and bring a few light snacks. You can sign up on your own or partner with others to share the fun. Check the entryway for the schedule and details.

### Support as a Sponsor

**Can't host?** You can still take part by sponsoring a Sunday. Your donation allows the Hospitality Team to take care of everything for that week. **Questions or ideas?** Reach out to the Hospitality Ministry Team—we'd love to hear from you and help you get involved.



# Hospitality Committee Continued

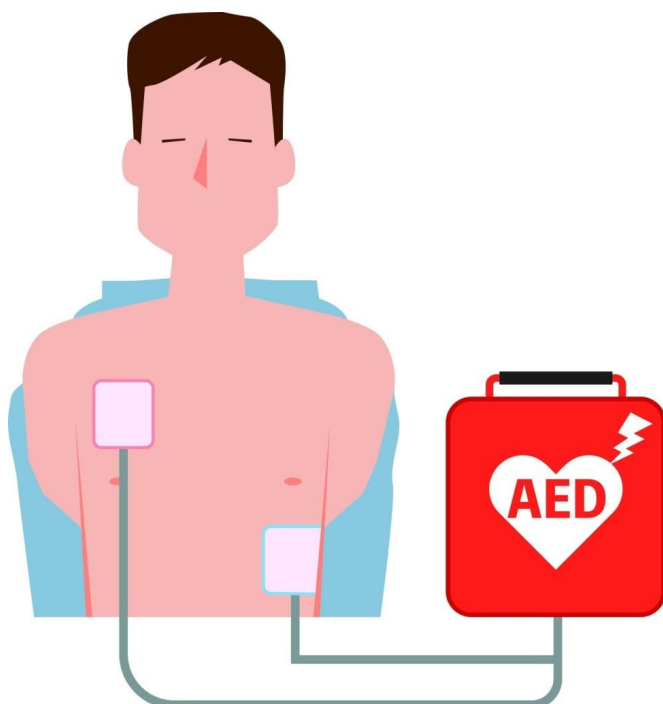
The Hospitality Ministry Team is pleased to share that a new Automated External Defibrillator (AED) will soon be installed in the entryway of our building. This addition is part of our ongoing commitment to providing a safe and prepared environment for everyone who gathers here.

An AED is a portable medical device designed to help in the event of a sudden cardiac arrest. It works by analyzing the heart's rhythm and, if necessary, delivering a controlled electric shock to help restore a normal heartbeat. AEDs are designed to be user-friendly, with clear voice prompts that guide you step-by-step, making them accessible even for those without medical training. In an emergency, quick action can make a life-saving difference. Having an AED on-site means we are better equipped to respond while waiting for emergency services to arrive.



We'll be sharing more information soon about opportunities for CPR and AED training, so that anyone who is interested can feel confident knowing how to respond in a critical moment. Curious how an AED works? Take a few minutes to watch this helpful overview video and become more familiar with this life-saving tool.

AED Training Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cTxAOBn5pVQ>



# Following Jesus: Love Your Neighbor Vacation Bible School

**July 11 9:00 – 11:30 am**

We're looking forward to a meaningful and fun-filled morning at this summer's one-day Vacation Bible School! Kids ages 3 through 5th grade are invited to explore the story of the Good Samaritan and learn how small acts of kindness can make a big difference.

With our theme, *"Following Jesus: Love Your Neighbor,"* children will discover practical ways to care for others, be a good friend, and reflect Jesus' love in their daily lives. The day will include a variety of engaging activities, such as:

- Energetic music and singing
- An interactive Bible story
- Creative craft time
- Snacks to enjoy together

It's a wonderful opportunity for kids to grow in faith while having fun and building friendships. Be sure to invite the kids in your life—children, grandchildren, and friends—to come be part of this meaningful and memorable day!



# Green Pastures Preschool

Hello from the preschool!

Our school year is winding down with lots of fun end of the year events. Every year it seems to come quicker and quicker! We continue to try and grow God's love in our students and their families. Our students are wrapping up the school year and there is lots of excitement in the air. The kids are loving the warmer weather and being back outside for longer times. We have had lots of mystery readers and special guests this spring. We welcomed back our meteorologists, Kirsten and Dave, for weather week. We had successful parent teacher conferences and the Seabury art students returned with their art collaboration pieces to give to the kids. We are looking forward to our upcoming field trip, Caterpillar and Butterfly Tea Party, Field Day and Graduation Ceremony. Thank you to the church members for their continued support of the preschool! Our little school is doing well and I can see our families truly becoming a community of friends. As we prepare to say goodbye to our graduates (always hard on me) and I get excited to greet our new families next year!