

# GENEROSITY MATTERS

A Stewardship & Generosity Update from Good Shepherd Church

## FROM KATHY PEART *CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER*

As we close out the year, I want to share some perspectives on how I've been inspired throughout the unique year of 2022 at Good Shepherd and talk briefly about elephants in the room, or rather, the church.

It is not often a church has 3 (out of 3) pastors leave in the first 3 months of a year. While other churches may have retrenched, retracted, or hunkered down, we did not! Just as we have with other tests of our faith, boldness and trust in God are how Good Shepherd faces challenging circumstances! Less than 2 months after the pastoral departures, we presented a budget at the Annual Meeting that included a \$330K+ shortfall. While some questioned the wisdom of such a plan, the congregation stepped out in faith, trusted in God's provision, and voted to approve that budget without cutting ministry or staffing.

Even though giving has been down recently, we continue to be a community of faith, serving a community of believers, in the manner of Acts 2...

***"They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. Every day they continued to meet together...and ate together with glad and sincere hearts..."***

I personally have seen the faith, fellowship, and heart of believers offering their time and possessions in service to our church. This summer Good Shepherd had one of the biggest Vacation Bible School programs (350+ kids) in the greater Naperville area. In addition to our amazing staff, we needed over 200 volunteers to make VBS a success, and I was one of them! But here's my God-sighting in that fellowship... There were 2 brothers, fraternal twins, in my small group the entire week. They were my line leaders, craft helpers, toy engineers, and snack cleaner-uppers. We had a great week, but I never saw them again after VBS... until First Communion weekend. When the boys first recognized me, I was thrilled to receive their big smiles and high-fives. Later, I was even more delighted when I saw them race up the Sanctuary aisle to hug their grandparents, then joyfully guide them to front-row seats for First Communion. Clearly, the boys felt at home, safe, and well-loved in our Good Shepherd community.

This could not have happened without your faith, boldness, and generosity. Giving to the church is more than just keeping the lights on, painting the walls, or replacing the projectors - it's about community, family, and providing for each other during both great times and challenging times.

Those elephants I referred to earlier? Their names are fear and doubt. Fear comes from the loss of the familiar and the pace of change. Doubt comes from uncertainty, lack of clarity, and lack of confidence that God always has a plan. Fear and doubt make people weary so they adopt a "wait and see" response. Thankfully, God doesn't "wait and see" before He gives grace. And Jesus doesn't tell us to "wait and see." He tells us to "go and do."

Together, we are going, doing, and serving in the name of Jesus! While we wait on God to bring us our new pastors, we choose to be bold, moving forward in faith, trusting in God's provision through you and your generosity. Please consider being bold with your resources, giving to God through Good Shepherd as we invite everyone to walk together in the calling of Christ for a life of eternal impact.

**Blessings to you and your families this Christmas season!**

## WAYS TO GIVE to Good Shepherd



Set up or modify recurring online giving at [goodshepherd-naperville.org/giving](https://goodshepherd-naperville.org/giving).



Text GSHEP to 73256.



Bring cash or check to worship, or mail a check to:  
Good Shepherd, 1310 Shepherd Drive, Naperville, IL 60565.



To maximize asset-based gifts, talk to your financial advisor about gifts from Donor Advised Funds, Qualified Charitable Distributions, IRAs and Stock Donations.

**All gifts must be received or postmarked by 12/31/22 to claim as a 2022 tax deduction.**

# THE BLESSINGS OF GIVING: AN INTERVIEW WITH THE VANDERBLOEMENS



Luke & Heidi have been at Good Shepherd since early 2014 with their two children, Julie (Junior) and Mark (Freshman). Luke and Heidi have led in Children's and Middle School Ministry and have inspired their children to serve as Student Leaders in our congregation and beyond. Additionally, Heidi and Luke have been invested in small groups at Good Shepherd as well as regularly serving in our local community at Feed My Starving Children (FMSC) in Aurora.

## How did you come to Good Shepherd?

While attending another church in Naperville, we met a woman working at the other church while a member at Good Shepherd. After several conversations, we inquired why she stayed a member at a church she couldn't attend on Sunday due to her work commitment. Her response, because "I love my church." She obviously was and still is a member at Good Shepherd. That level of commitment was not something our previous church inspired in us, so we decided to come for a visit and never left.

*"...we continue to extend our giving in faith and over our nearly twenty years of marriage, God has never let us down, but has exceeded what he has provided to us."*

## What has inspired you to give and how has that evolved over time?

Our friends, Mike and Dorothy Woods gave a witness at our church when we lived in Denton, Texas. That year they decided to make the jump to tithe fully. That act of faith served as an inspiration for us to be more intentional with how we gave. We now plan our giving every year to ensure that we are being good stewards of God's generosity while continuing to grow in our generosity. Part of our plan is always reserved for the "unknown." This gives us the flexibility to also give when we are inspired to do so.

## Why do you consider Good Shepherd Church a good investment of your time and resources?

There's too many examples really to share. Mostly we see it in our children the last few years. They have really taken off in their own faith life, leading and participating and wanting to serve without us. Being Workcamp leaders was impactful to see the faith in the students and how they praise Jesus and mean it. It's more than just that part of it though. The church has never given us a reason to doubt that our dollars go towards good service. We see time and time again, through different communications all the good that Good Shepherd does here at home and across the world. We have complete faith that the church and its leadership are being good stewards of the gifts God has provided for the church to use in His name.

## What would you say to encourage someone on their journey of generosity or who is newer on the giving journey?

There have been countless times where we've worried about that next bill or the unknown. We even had a time where we went from two full time salaries, to Heidi working 20 hours a week at church and Luke searching for work. God and our church family provided more for us in those times than we deserved and continues to bless us today in his generosity. As Paul says in 2 Corinthians 9:6 "...whoever

sows generously will also reap generously." So, we continue to extend our giving in faith and over our nearly twenty years of marriage, God has never let us down, but has exceeded what he has provided to us.

## MISSIONS IMPACT & RECAP

In 2022, Good Shepherd stepped up to fill a need and became a regional collection site for Lutheran World Relief. Our Good Shepherd Team, led by Jayne Reishus, warmly welcomed 22 local area churches as they dropped off donations the first weekend in October. The result was 672 boxes of tangible love for our neighbors in need around the world.

- 1,520 quilts (200 sewn by Good Shepherd members)
- 1,991 personal care kits (1,500 created by Good Shepherd)
- 393 school supply kits
- 1,029 baby care kits
- 25 fabric kits

Together we continued to share the hope and love of Jesus. We have shipped over 400 shoeboxes around the world through Operation Christmas Child, we have provided essential items to local families in need through Bridge Communities, and we have brought joy to residents at DuPage Care Center and children in foster care with Lutheran Social Services by providing holiday gifts this season! Each one of these acts of generosity allows the receiver to see God's immeasurable love through us.

