



**Daily Devotions**

# **Building on Faith Daily Devotions 2008—2010**







Good Shepherd Lutheran Church

# Capital Campaign Devotions

**“Every house has a builder, but the  
Builder behind them all is God.”**

*- Hebrews 3: 4, The Message*

Day 1

1 Kings 6:14

### The Architect Almighty

*“So Solomon built the temple and finished it.”*

On a Sunday morning, this past summer, we were accompanied to church by some out-of-town guests. After services, we were passing through the glass doors leading to the street when one of our guests stopped on the sidewalk and pointed to the brass plates imbedded in the cement commemorating the birth and rebirth of the building we call Good Shepherd Lutheran Church. He said, “Well, I guess you will be adding the year 2007 soon.” And yes, we will! Who but the Almighty would have known back in 1969 that in 2007 we would again go through a second building restructuring? As is so ably detailed in 1 Kings, the sixth chapter, and again in Acts 17:24, God is the Architect and the Maker of all things. Only He knows what the future holds and what we need to do to achieve His plans for us, for our church, and for our community. We are given many clues, in the various books of the Bible, as to what and how we are to navigate through the twists and turns of life. Each of us has, at one time or another, found a passage that inspired us to do something or took us through a difficult period of our lives. Sandy and I have many, but one that seems to come to the forefront of our stewardship and spirituality is from Hebrews 13:16 “And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.” It is the sharing of His gifts to us that gives us pleasure and it seems that the more we share the more spiritual gifts we receive.

### Gordon Lamb

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Lord Jesus, and the Holy Spirit we thank You for all the blessings that You have bestowed on us. We thank You for the opportunity to serve Your church as it undergoes construction for this new stage of service. We ask that You endow us with Your special grace so that we may continue to do good and share with others and that our minds and bodies be focused on service to You, Your church and our community. Amen.

Day 2

2 Corinthians 6:16

### The Temple of the Living God

*“For we are the temple of the living God; as God said, “I will live in them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.”*

Paul uses a variety of metaphors in 2 Corinthians—a building, the body, a ship—to encourage unity within his Corinthian congregation. One metaphor popular in the New Testament but virtually absent from the Hebrew Scriptures is that of the body of the individual, or the corporate body of the faithful community, as the temple in which God dwells (cf. also 1 Corinthians 3:16-17; 6:19). In comparing the followers of Christ to a temple of the living God, Paul reinterprets the biblical notion of the divine presence from one that tabernacles “among” God’s people (Leviticus 26:11-12) to one that dwells “within” the Corinthian community. By receiving the Holy Spirit through baptism, the faithful have themselves become the sacred structure in which God dwells.

For Paul, the temple illustrates the reciprocal relationship between the community of believers and God, whereby the community is both blessed by the indwelling divine presence and obliged to maintain a fitting habitation for it. In his Corinthian correspondence, Paul uses the temple metaphor to encourage his fledgling congregation in its commitment to Christ. Whereas Paul writes from a position of weakness, in which he attempts to shore up a community beset by internal divisions and pagan distractions, Good Shepherd’s building campaign derives from a position of congregational strength, in which we seek to expand upon our foundation of Christian fellowship in outreach to others. The blessings that have enabled us to dedicate ourselves to this mission also oblige us to vigilance, so that united in Christ we may maintain a true witness to our faith.

Eric Sorensen

Prayer: Holy Father, bless us with compassion, wisdom, and initiative that we may engage in the world as a faithful witness to your Word.  
Amen.

Day 3

Hebrews 3:4

### A Piece of the Roof

*“Every house, of course, is built by someone—and God is the one who has built all things.”*

It was the last day of my visit to Finland with my cousin, Tuula. We had corresponded as teenagers in the '60s on my grandmother's suggestion, but did not meet until 2004. With much emotion, Tuula handed me a bulky, rectangular package. It was a weather-beaten pine shake from the roof of my grandmother's childhood church, replaced in 1979 after 200 years of service. It had been made into an artistic wall hanging with a wrought-iron outline of the church over the wood. Many of my Finnish cousins had a similar shake hanging in their homes. Our grandparents, who were brothers and sisters, worshipped in this church, which was built in 1779.

My grandmother was one of the siblings who came to America, looking for adventure. Like the strong pine shake, she brought with her a strong Finnish faith, gave it to her children, born in America, who gave it to their children, including me. As she built America, along with the huge wave of northern European immigrants in the early 1900s, she also lived her faith in the churches of northern Minnesota.

I remember her in that simple piece of wood, which now hangs in my foyer. It binds my faith across the generations to my ancestors who nailed that shake to the roof so long ago, as well as to my cousins a world away. It is a fitting symbol for me of God's continuing presence in His church on earth.

Linda Benoit

Prayer: Oh, God, as we begin to expand this structure of ours, let us understand that its materials are symbols of your presence and your purpose to continue this congregation beyond our generation into generations yet to come. May we sense a small part of your plan as we build your church. Amen.

Day 4

Matthew 7:24-25

### A Strong Foundation

*“Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock.”*

Early August 1995, my grandmother, cousin and I had arrived in Ukraine to visit my grandmother's cousin, Vladimir. Ukraine was just emerging from years under the iron fist rule of the communist Soviet regime. Vladimir, a Ukrainian Catholic priest, had not been allowed to minister to his community for years. The Soviets had banned the public practice of religion. Churches had been shuttered, fallen into disrepair and been used for grain storage in rural areas. A few days after our arrival, Vladimir took us to one of several churches where he preached. We were moved by the passion of the congregation and the sheer number of people packed into the sanctuary eager to hear the word of the Lord. We were also inspired by how quickly and beautifully the Ukrainian people had restored their houses of worship. The Ukrainian economy was difficult and most of the Ukrainian people struggled to make ends meet. Yet, the people put restoring their churches to the forefront of their priorities. They had been deprived of the ability to worship freely for years and when given the opportunity to express themselves religiously, they embraced it with fervor. The spiritual foundation had always been within them. Like the house built on the rock, the Soviet communist regime was never able to destroy the foundation the Lord built within them. When life is calm, our foundations don't seem to matter. But when crises come, our foundations are tested. Be sure your life is built on the solid foundation of knowing and trusting Jesus Christ.

Andrea Maples

Prayer: Lord God, thank you for giving us the strong foundation of your Word to build our lives upon. Help us to not only hear your words, but to obey them and to meet the challenges to which you call us. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Day 5

Proverbs 3: 5-6

### Following God's Plan

*“With all your heart you must trust the Lord and not your own judgment. Always let him lead you, and He will clear the road for you to follow.”*

The drama club's production of The Sound of Music was almost a disaster. Two hours before the curtain opened on opening night, we were putting finishing touches on 200+ costumes, the set was just being completed, and we were just learning the curtain call. This was just the beginnings of our problems. Without following the script, everything would have been a disaster and the show would have fallen apart. The same thing happens if you don't follow the script God has for you. God has a specific plan and a specific outcome for your life. You will forget a line or do something wrong at some point, but you need to get back on track and follow the plan as soon as possible. If you improvise too much and stray too far away from what's written in the script, the happy ending won't happen and the show will fall apart.

This brings me to one more important point. This summer, I did a drama workshop at camp. In one exercise, you had a partner who would lead you around the stage, but there were a few catches. You were only allowed to touch the tip of your pointer finger to the fingertip of the person leading you around the stage. You could not talk. There were obstacles in your way. You had to keep your eyes closed, while counselor tried to trick you into breaking the contact and opening your eyes by telling you that you were going to run into something or fall off the stage. The point of this exercise was to teach us that although we are spiritually blind, but that God sees all. We have to trust him to lead us and not let us run astray- in this case, run into obstacles and/or fall off the stage. We must also not let the Devil lead us astray from God and make us lose that trust.

Melissa Bowman

Prayer: Dear God, please give us the strength and courage to follow the plan you have for each and everyone of us. Please let us be impervious to the temptation of the Devil, but stay true to you so we can all have our happy endings. Thank you for caring and loving each and every one of us so much that you have a plan for us. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

### The House of God

*“<sup>1</sup>When Solomon had finished building the temple of the LORD and the royal palace, and had achieved all he had desired to do, <sup>2</sup>the LORD appeared to him a second time, as he had appeared to him at Gibeon. <sup>3</sup>The LORD said to him: ‘I have heard the prayer and plea you have made before me; I have consecrated this temple, which you have built, by putting my Name there forever. My eyes and my heart will always be there.’”*

Whenever a house of God is built, it is a big deal. In Solomon’s time, building the temple in Jerusalem was the biggest story, or at least one of the biggest stories, of his life. This building project is such a big deal that there are multiple chapters preceding this passage that discuss the precise building plans, how things were built, where the different materials were acquired, etc. The temple was built from the finest wood and stone, and covered in the purest bronze and gold. Now, you may ask why they used all their best building materials for this one building, and the answer is that the Israelites wanted to give God a magnificent temple for His house. We must remember, however, that building such a temple also cost a lot. Solomon had tens of thousands of laborers working for many years to build that temple. Even today, when we have machines that can do much of the work for us, it still takes many people and a lot of resources to build a church. Solomon and all the Israelites understood that, and they gladly gave of their time, talent, and possessions to help fund the project. God saw what they did, and so He gave back to them. He consecrated the temple and promised to always be there for the Israelites. If we give back to the Lord what he has first given us, he will bless and reward us for that.

### Philip Meuschke

Prayer: Lord God, as we move forward with the building of our new sanctuary and ministry facilities, help us to find the means to support this project, so that your house will be a magnificent and holy place. We ask that you would bless our efforts and that you would dwell among us in your house. In Jesus’ name we pray. Amen.

Day 7

Matthew 7:24-27

### Building on the Rock

*“Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash.”*

We have all heard the parable about the wise man building his house on the rock and the foolish man building his house on the sand. As most children usually do, I often attempted to build sand castles when I went to the beach. Of course, as the tide came in, my creation was washed away with the waves. Last year, my family purchased a new home. We were excited to watch it being built – starting with the cement foundation and growing into a beautiful house.

As we build our new sanctuary and remodel other areas within our church, we must build upon a strong foundation. There will be a physical foundation for the new building which will be steady and secure. There will also be a stronger foundation made up of the members of our church and our faith in God and each other. We have shown “rock-hard” dedication and commitment as this project has blossomed from a vision into reality. Members have used their strong minds, bodies, and faith together to create something that will be structurally and spiritually sound and that will last for generations.

Joan Carlson

Prayer: Dear God, as the construction of our church begins and we see the physical foundation laid, keep us mindful that we are also building on the Rock and Foundation that you provide to us. Please help us to be strong to make this project a success and bring honor and glory to Your name. Amen.

Day 8

Revelation 3:20

### Open the Door to the Author of Your Life

*“Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in...”*

“Do something SIGNIFICANT,” the professor announced the first day of a graduate class. Each week the puzzled students wanted more detailed information. He always replied with the same response, “Do something SIGNIFICANT.” This professor encouraged each of us to examine our lives and relations with others.

God calls each of us in a variety of ways to do something significant. We will not all answer in the same way. Our stories will differ, but when we open the door he will be with us in our daily walk.

During the school years of 1922 and 1923 my mother, Gladys Olsvig, and her sister, Eleanor, spent the academic years with an aunt and an uncle in Minnesota. They had no children. The girls were in first and second grades and their parents had a large family. My mother used to tell stories about “Auntie” and “Uncle.” One of the highlights of the year in the Lutheran Church was the annual Christmas program. Each child memorized a recitation. My mother’s was “The Beautiful Story of Christmas.” The poem was very lengthy. However, the words were remembered “through the ages” as my mother, a country school teacher at age 18, continued to show her love to her own children by teaching the recitation to each of her five children. My mother “did something significant” by sharing that recitation with each of her children. The story in 2007 is as SIGNIFICANT as the message given in 1922. MORE IMPORTANTLY, God sent the message with the birth of Jesus in the manger. The closure of Mom’s recitation was, “Do you wonder this beautiful MESSAGE in my heart is REPEATED EACH DAY. O’er and o’er I MUST TELL IT TO OTHERS WHO JOURNEY WITH ME ON LIFE’S WAY!”

Vonnie Bennett

Prayer: Dear Lord, Help us to remember the message of HOPE that Christ brings to our lives. Help us to listen to the stories of others in their faith walks. Help us to reach out to the City of Gaithersburg and surrounding communities, the larger community of FAITH throughout the world, and those close in heart and mind. As we build this new addition to our church let us continue to be a “Beacon of Light” to others. In the name of our Living Lord who dwells with us each day we pray. Amen.

Day 9

Isaiah 56:6-7

## Welcome Home

*"I'll bring them to my holy mountain and give them joy in my house of prayer."*

"Home is where the Navy sends you." Anyone who spends any time in the military comes to realize that moving is part of life. A move every 2-4 years is common, and after a couple of moves it even becomes routine. First you must find a place to live, a church, and a good hair-dresser. There are always many choices in each category, but the goal is to find and build a home.

Luckily, the Internet and word of mouth, guide the decision process of finding a new place in which to worship, a place of comfort, a place of peace, a place like home. The word "home" is also very special to those who spend time away from their families, whether it is heading off to college or away for a deployment, or on an extended business trip. Home is the safe place, a place where you are loved (no matter what you do). Home is a place to take your dirty laundry – clothes that are cleaned at home are whiter and smell so much better. Home is where your favorite meal is prepared just for you, because you are special.

Church homes treat us the same way. They welcome outsiders into their congregation. Church homes help us through the process of forgiveness and reconciliation. Church homes provide the soul nourishing food of Holy Communion. Church homes provide us with a place to worship, a place to praise and sing joyful songs to our Lord and Savior. "Home is where God sends us."

## Ann Hasselbeck

Prayer: Dear Father in heaven, thank you for providing us with an earthly home where we can worship you with joy, wash out dirty laundry and find refreshing nourishment. Help us to expand our walls to better serve your people and welcome all home. Amen.

Day 10

Matthew 16:18

## Building

*“And I say to you that you are Peter and upon this rock,  
I will build My church and the gates of Hell  
shall not prevail against it.”*

My daughter wants to be an engineer – more specifically, she wants to build things. Given that college is now only one school year away, I have spent a lot of time in the last few months reading about the various types of engineering/engineers and the various structures built by them. While the differences are many, one thing they all share is the need for instruments and/or tools.

My online search for a definition of the word “build” turned up several options. Most were pretty predictable, but two caught my attention and brought my thoughts back to the choice we at Good Shepherd have made. That is, to “Build on Faith.” The definitions I liked were: 1) to increase or strengthen by adding gradually to; and 2) to develop and grow; to give form to. When I think of the reasons I believe in this building project, I think about strengthening what already exists here at Good Shepherd as well as giving form to new ideas and visions. I imagine that to do so will take more than bricks and mortar. I imagine it will take each of us becoming the tools and instruments that God needs and wants us to be.

## Terry Roder

Prayer (A Prayer of Saint Francis of Assisi): Lord, make me an instrument of your peace. Where there is hatred, let me sow love. Where there is injury, pardon. Where there is doubt, faith. Where there is despair, hope. Where there is darkness, light. Where there is sadness, joy. O Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console. To be understood as to understand. To be loved as to love. For it is in giving that we receive. It is in pardoning that we are pardoned and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life. Amen.

Day 11

II Corinthians 5:20a

## Can We Do It

*“We are therefore Christ’s ambassadors...”*

Don’t you just love how that sounds? It reminds us that we have the opportunity to accomplish the important job of representing our Savior. In this place, which He provided, we have the chance to work in His service.

Remember that commercial that asks, “What’s in a name?” Well, *ambassador* is a very impressive name, so it must have some major responsibilities to go along with it. As Christ’s ambassadors we are charged with a whole host of things we can accomplish. Are we up to the task; can we do it? You know what Bob the Builder says, “*Yes we can!*” Bob the Builder, in case you don’t know, is the cartoon character who subtly teaches our younger children that they can accomplish whatever they need to do if they just keep persevering.

As Christ’s ambassadors, we too must persevere. Our service might start with the tasks we do with ease like: personal prayer, going to church, attending Bible study. Then, we move on to jobs that are a little more challenging like committee work, home visits, and additional financial support. These tasks take a little more faith and time. And with each contribution we move ahead building on our foundation of faith. “*Can we do it? — Yes we can!*” We are Christ’s ambassadors.

And we need not fear; He is always there to guide and strengthen us. As we set off to do His work, a plan evolves from thoughtful and prayerful consideration. Christ’s ambassadors come together to consider what He would have us do. We pray about it, an idea grows, we outline the details, and we move ahead to show our faithful obedience as ambassadors for Christ. *Can we do it? Yes we can!*

## Carol Fountain

Prayer: Thank you, Heavenly Father, for providing us with such important work. Serving as your ambassadors, let us be mindful of your presence in our lives to guide and support us as we strive to do our part as Christ’s ambassadors. Amen

Day 12

Jeremiah 29:11-13

### Semper Gumby!

*"...I know what I'm doing. I have it all planned out—plans to take care of you, not abandon you, plans to give you the future you hope for. <sup>2</sup>"When you call on me, when you come and pray to me, I'll listen. <sup>13-14</sup>"When you come looking for me, you'll find me. "Yes, when you get serious about finding me and want it more than anything else, I'll make sure you won't be disappointed."*

Sending our last child off to college this year filled us with mixed emotions. Having launched one child three years ago we thought we were prepared. Even so we found ourselves with questions for which we did not have the answers.

Thankfully, there is an internet email group for the parents of the incoming class at our son's college. The motto for all the parents at this school is, "Semper Gumby!" which means, "Always Flexible!" We have often used this motto to express humor and a sense of giving in to the unknown as well as in times of frustration and great anxiety when answers aren't available as fast as we want them.

Here at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church I've started to use the term more and more as we enter into the serious construction phase of our building project. I've used the term with great banter and a sense of accepting the many unexpected events that arise each day. I've also used it to keep from crying with frustration when things seem to be going wrong at every turn of my day.

God has been using Jeremiah to remind me, and each of us, that even when things seem to be going in the opposite direction we think they should, He is in control. He has plans for our future and wants us to turn to Him with all our frustrations, anxiety, hopes and dreams. God knows what He is doing, He knows His plans for us.

Carolyn Miller

**Prayer:** Thank you Lord, for your presence and patience with me as I seek your will for my life. Amen.

Day 13

Romans 1:17

### Building on Faith

*“The just shall live by faith.”*

The above-listed Bible verse launched the Protestant Reformation. After Martin Luther studied this verse, he reached the fundamental insight that the essence of Christianity lay in a living faith, and not in the petty rules by which he had been formerly attempting to live. Luther’s original insight of justification through faith became the underlying principle, not only for the Lutheran Church, but also for the hundreds of other Protestant denominations that have followed in the wake of the Reformation.

The dynamism of Protestantism for the past 500 years has been based on the ceaseless search for original principles, as revealed by the Bible. This search has led, in turn, to the reliance on the Bible as the original source of authority on matters of faith and morals. Luther was not only a pioneering translator of the Bible, but also a passionate reader of the Bible. He is reported to have said that, “Any day in which I do not spend two hours reading the Bible and in prayer is a day lost to Satan.”

In modern times, Luther’s reliance on daily Bible-reading and prayer as central to the Christian experience has been the driving force behind The Gideons. This non-denominational Protestant group distributes around the world each year--and completely free of charge--70 million Bibles. Many millions of these Bibles go to the Third World. In many African villages, Gideon Bibles are the only textbooks available in the local schools.

In conclusion, the dynamism that Luther unleashed 500 years ago in returning the Church to its original idea of a faith-based religion—and to the Bible—is still alive today, all over the world.

Paul Rood

Prayer: Bless the people who live by faith, and who witness to you at home and overseas. Amen.

Day 14

1 Corinthians 3: 10-11

### Firm Foundation

*“For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ.”*

Having been to the Gulf Coast of Mississippi and now working in New Orleans, Louisiana, I have seen the destruction and devastation caused by Hurricane Katrina. Driving around the neighborhoods, we see tons and tons of debris, damage to houses, parks, schools and churches. We see stairways that lead to nowhere and we see slabs of concrete where houses used to be. These slabs are the foundations of homes where memories were made. It was the image of those bare foundations that stuck in my mind the most. The foundation is the first thing that is laid in the construction of a house, and it is the last thing still standing even when a hurricane has blown away everything else. Not only can you build on a foundation once, but also because it is so sturdy, you can re-build on a foundation. Without a foundation, a house is not stable. It has nothing to rely on to hold it up; it has only the ground beneath it.

When we don't recognize that Jesus Christ is the foundation of our lives, we all too often rely on the world and all it offers, to hold us up. The things of this world do not even come close to the power and might of Jesus. When all is lost in this world, Jesus is still with us, holding our hands and walking us through the darkness. Some people lost everything they owned after Hurricane Katrina. Some even lost people they loved. The one thing that was not and will never be lost is the love and salvation of Jesus Christ. While the church is building a new physical foundation, we are holding onto the foundation in Christ that has brought us all together to honor and worship Him.

### Denise Redmon

Prayer: Heavenly Father, let us always be aware of You as our firm foundation. May we know that building our lives around You is the way to eternal life. Thank You, Lord, for holding us up, for loving us and for protecting us. Be with us through the storms of life and remind us daily that You, Lord, are our solid-rock. Amen.

## Day 15

### Surrounded by a Cloud of Witnesses

Over Labor Day weekend, my family spent the weekend at Virginia Beach with four other families, including two families from Good Shepherd (Bowman's and Hultquist's). It was great fun to hang out with everyone, to talk, to relax, and enjoy good company. As some of you may know, one of the other reasons we all went was to run in the half marathon that weekend. It was my first half-marathon and I must admit to being a bit nervous prior to the race. You see, I had had a terrible training run just six days before the half marathon. It was to be an eleven-mile run (running alone) on the Rock Creek Trail. I hit eight miles and I was beat. Had to walk the remaining three and all the while I am saying, "Will I even be able finish the race?"

Well, let me tell you what happened. On the day of the race, I felt real good at the start, running in this huge pack of thousands. Literally every mile of the way, there was music and spectators urging us on- people, who didn't know us but really seemed to appreciate the effort. It lifted my spirits and kept me going. I had just cleared the eight and one-half-mile mark and turned a sharp corner and Daryl was standing there urging me on. That was a helpful boost! About a mile later, I heard my cousin shout out to me. What a needed boost! As I came down the homestretch at mile eleven and one-half, my family went crazy from the balcony of our hotel! And as I cleared mile twelve and could see the finish line, Dana Bowman came running down and ran for fifty to seventy-five yards shouting, "Go Pastor Dave!" What a needed boost!

As the author of Hebrews says, we are all surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses. As people of faith, we are called to be people who urge others on so that they have the strength for the journey that lies ahead. Life is much longer than a thirteen and one-tenth -mile race. It is full of joys and obstacles. The words of encouragement that we, as Christians, offer to others means so much. As we grow as a congregation, as we build new and expanded facilities, let us grow in our ability to encourage those around us for their journeys.

### Pastor Dave Sonnenberg

Prayer: Jesus, you bless our lives with people to offer us encouragement and hope. As we journey on, teach our church to reach out and bless others. Teach us to reach out to those who need to be lifted up. Help us to offer care to as many people in as many ways as possible for as long as possible till we rest in you. Amen.

Day 16

Luke 10: 40-42

### Distracted by the Busyness of Life

*“But Martha was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made. She came to him and asked, ‘Lord, don’t you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!’ ‘Martha, Martha,’ the Lord answered, ‘you are worried and upset about many things, but only one thing is needed. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her.’”*

Since the birth of our daughter and my return to work, I often find myself scrambling to finish work projects, clean the house, or just get dinner on the table and attempt to put Kaitlyn to bed at a reasonable hour. About the time things seem to be spiraling out of control, my daughter will take my hand and walk me around the kitchen or the yard and show me some new wonder, such as how exciting it is to throw a ball or how pretty the marigolds are in the garden. It is in those moments that my 16-month old daughter stops and reminds me what is really important: spending time with her. She doesn’t really care if the work gets finished or the kitchen floor is dirty, she just wants to spend time together. Kaitlyn reminds me that I need to be more like Mary and not let the busyness of life distract me from what is really needed.

As our congregation proceeds with all the important work and decisions in adding to our physical structure so that we can serve others, let us not get so distracted by the preparations that we forget that all that is really needed is to serve our Lord.

### Carrie Campbell

Prayer: Lord, in the busyness of the daily life, help us to stop and remember what is truly important, your love for us. And with that knowledge, show that love to all those we encounter. Amen.

Day 17

Matthew 7:24-25

### A Foundation in Faith for New Beginnings

*“Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock.”*

My husband, Michael, and I were married on May 27, 2006. We moved to Gaithersburg from DC last fall and began attending Good Shepherd. We are pleased to be a part of the new changes at Good Shepherd because we feel as if we are beginning a new life together as a couple, and we are also a part of a new beginning at Good Shepherd with the new construction of the church. We are all building a new foundation for our lives. During our wedding, we included an affirmation by our families and friends to witness our vows and do everything in their power to uphold us in our marriage. Michael and I released butterflies at the end of the ceremony to symbolize the new beginning of our lives together and as a continuous reminder of our unity as a couple and our connection with God. In our first year of marriage, we have been through many life adjustments, many of which were quite difficult for us. We have experienced figurative storms against our marriage, but we have ‘built’ our marriage on a strong foundation, our faith in God and Jesus, along with the love and support of our families and friends. We continue to withstand the ‘storms’ that are presented in our lives by strengthening each other through prayer and reminders of our faith. We all need community support and love, in addition to faith, to continue in our growth as individuals, community members, and Christians. During this special time of new beginnings in the church, we have the opportunity to unite and establish a new energy in our community home.

### Gwendolyn Francavillo

Prayer: God, please be with us all as a community to witness to and support one another through all of life’s challenges. We thank you for blessing us with all that you give us and ask for your assistance in ‘weathering the storms’ by staying focused on our foundation, our faith. Amen

Day 18

1 John 4:7

### Build Upon This Rock

*“Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God.”*

We all have the desire to somehow better share that love we have. But how do we go about doing it? There are so many ways. Many of us do it by trying to infuse the love that God instilled within us into all the little things we do and say every day. Without a doubt, that's a good and wonderful thing to do, and there's probably not very much that's more important. But every once in a while, we get the feeling that God wants us to step out, make a grand gesture, make a splash!

A church is constructed not just as a place of worship, but as a special place from where the godly love of its members can reach out to each other, to the community it serves, and even to people in need thousands of miles away. It is a well-known fact that people who band together with a common cause have much more power to serve their cause than individuals alone. What better cause can there be than sharing the love of God?

Jesus, of course, is the spiritual foundation of the church. As He said to Peter “I am the rock.” Indeed, he is the rock upon which every faithful Christian since His time has helped to build that spiritual fortress which is Christianity. But God, the Father, made us physical beings, not just spiritual entities. As physical beings, we need tools to get our work done. Ultimately, that's what a church is; a tool for its members to better do what God wants us to do in this world. And so we have taken it upon ourselves to build a bigger, better house from which we can better share the love in our hearts, God's love, with each other and the world around us. That is the kind of splash that will make ripples in the pool, ripples that carry Jesus' love and his message, for many years to come.

Cheryl Lee

Prayer: Lord Jesus, you were, and are, the greatest master carpenter of all time. We pray that you guide us in our endeavor of building a house that will help us to better serve all those whom the Holy Spirit sends our way. Help us to always remember that we do this to honor and glorify you, our loving Savior. Amen

Day 19

I Corinthians 12:4-7

*“There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but the same God works all of them in all men. Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good.”*

Many years ago, I attended a week-long training session that would forever change my perspective on the world around me. It was an in-depth study on the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator, a methodology used to identify personality types. From that point on, the alien world around me began to make more sense. I had a renewed attitude toward all of those crazy extroverts out there! More importantly, I gained a deeper level of understanding about my own personality, my gifts, and my weaknesses and what it means to be an “ISTJ.” This knowledge and understanding is put to the test everyday of my life – with members of my family, co-workers, members of our church family, business contacts, strangers, and even drivers I encounter on the roadways. Each of us has a unique set of God-given qualities, and, since none of us is perfect, we each come with unique shortcomings. Through this acknowledgement, and with understanding and appreciation of each other’s differences we can come together and combine these qualities for a greater good and maybe even learn to be a bit more accepting and forgiving. Certainly these are areas I need to keep working on in my own life journey. In the process, I am learning that God uses each of us in special ways, sometimes placing us in uncomfortable, even difficult situations; sometimes with people we would not otherwise choose to be with. I am learning that these experiences are what make life an adventure because they present us with an opportunity to grow and learn and take in all that life and that God has to offer.

Vicki Schmidt

Prayer: God, help me to love myself for the unique person that you created in me. Help me to love others also for the uniqueness that you created in them. I trust that you are working out your plan in my life and that you will use me, along with others, for the glory of your kingdom. Amen.

Day 20

Philippians 4:6

### Don't Worry - Build on Faith

*“Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.”*

In the New Testament we're often advised not to worry or be anxious. Here in his letter to the church in Philippi, Paul's admonition is similar to what Jesus said, "Consider how the lilies grow. They do not labor...yet not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these." One would get the impression we can sit back and relax because God will take care of us. It's all about faith—faith that God will provide. Our theme for the Capital Campaign is *Building on Faith*, which seems to reflect the New Testament emphasis on relying on God to provide for our needs. The irony, of course, is that the goal of the Capital Campaign is to raise a large amount of money to fund our building project—not exactly what you would think of as sitting back, relaxing, and waiting for God to provide for us. It's easy to see a contradiction in this situation. We're supposed to be "Building on Faith," but we seem to be doing just the opposite—anxiously trying to do God's work on our own. But the Bible doesn't tell us that we shouldn't act. It simply says that we shouldn't worry about whether our own actions will be sufficient. As we combine our actions with our prayers, God will accomplish more through us than we could possibly accomplish on our own. And that's what "Building on Faith" means. We still have to act, but we know that God will guide our actions to accomplish his mission.

Jud Stailey

Prayer: Heavenly Father, help us to understand our role in your plan for our church and our community. Guide our decisions as we consider our participation in the capital campaign and in the life of our church. In Jesus' name we ask. Amen.

Day 21

Isaiah 28:16

### *Make Christ The Cornerstone*

*“Therefore, this is what the sovereign Lord says: ‘Look! I am placing a foundation stone in Jerusalem. It is firm, a tested and precious cornerstone that is safe to build on. Whoever believes need never run away again.’”*

In Jesus' time the setting of the cornerstone was the single most part of putting up a building. It was the first stone laid at the base of the building. In the language of the builders, it took a perfect ashlar hewn square and straight, to serve as the reference point for a sound and correct edifice (theremnantchurch.com). It also determined the character of the whole building. Once the cornerstone was solidly in place, it provided an unchanging standard, the unmovable original orientation for the entire structure (theremnantchurch.com). If the cornerstone was not set right, then the rest of the house would not be square and would not stand the test of time (medicalleader.com). A cornerstone was the reference point for the builder to keep the building in line.

Good Shepherd is entering a time when we can see both secular and non-secular implications of a well-placed cornerstone. All of us understand that we need Christ in our lives as a cornerstone. Now, as we watch our new sanctuary go up, we can see first hand the importance of a well-placed cornerstone.

Kurt Christopher

Prayer: Lord, you are the cornerstone in our lives. With You as are our reference point in our lives we remain on a solid foundation able to withstand the test of time. Amen.

## Decisions

*“Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.”*

“Pink!” “Blue!” “Pink!” “Blue!” There’s a scene at the end of the classic Disney cartoon “Sleeping Beauty” where Princess Aurora is dancing with her prince while her fairy godmothers argue over what color her gown should be, changing it back and forth from pink to blue with their magic wands as the couple dances on, paying no attention to the silliness of the color changes.

We are embarked on a significant building project at Good Shepherd and have spent a lot of time and effort on plans for the construction of our new sanctuary. Along the way we have made many design decisions and will have plenty more decisions to make on furnishing our new sanctuary with everything from seating, a new altar, choosing a sanctuary color scheme, and wall hangings and banners, to perhaps selecting new paraments. I can envision some conversations to come that may be a bit like the fairy godmothers’ dispute: “Chairs!” “Pews!” “Dark wood!” “Light wood!” “Pulpit!” “No pulpit!” The list could go on and on. Certainly we all have our personal preferences when it comes to worship, but Paul’s words to the Philippians remind us that we are not building for our own personal preferences or benefit. No – we are building in faith to advance God’s kingdom here on earth and to provide a faithful and relevant witness to His abundant love and salvation through Jesus Christ. So – let’s have those conversations on furnishings and color schemes, not with a focus on ourselves, but looking to the interests of others and with a focus on what is truly important. In the end, it’s not really the building that will matter, but our witness and work as God’s people in this place and time. The most important ‘furnishing’ will be hearts and minds dedicated to God!

Anne Crawford

Prayer: Gracious God, guide us in the days ahead as we build – not for our glory but for Yours – to make good decisions on the little and not so little details, keeping You as the focal point. Amen

### The Foundation of the Christian Life

“I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me, and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.”

That every sturdy building must have a stable foundation has been the theme of countless sermons and devotionals. There is no debating the truth of this observation. It illustrates key concepts underlying our life as Christians. Christ put it simply and succinctly: “I am the way, the truth, and the life, no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.” John 14:6. This is the solid foundation on which all of our spiritual blessings are based – the life, death, and resurrection of our Lord.

I recently saw an old movie with one of my favorite actors, Jimmy Stewart. In *Shenandoah*, Jimmy Stewart plays the Virginia patriarch of a large, happy extended family of strong sons before and during the Civil War. While his wife always wanted him to attend to his spiritual life and thank God for their blessings, he preferred to rely on his, and his sons', strong backs and that American virtue of self-reliance. He even began his “prayers” by noting that the bounty on their table was earned through the sweat of their brows, and nothing else. But, the Civil War shredded this idyll and brought death, heartache, and sorrow. Finally, even this proud man had to face the fact that strong backs alone could not protect them. In the end, he had to lean on faith to bring him through the pain and restart – but on a stronger foundation than before.

Just as in *Shenandoah*, we have a choice. We can ignore the invitation to build a spiritual relationship with God on the solid foundation laid by Christ through his life, death, and resurrection. We can try to rely solely on our emotional resources, but will they be enough? God has offered us an opportunity to build on Christ's strong foundation by faith. By faith, we can base our spiritual and emotional stability on a foundation outside ourselves – and find a future of growth in spirit, love, and fellowship with God. Our responsibility is to build, not rest on the solid foundation Christ has given us. God wants us to reach out to embrace this mystery and build with Him a greater communion. “I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.”

Member of Good Shepherd

Day 24

Matthew 18: 20

### If We Build It Will They Come

*“For where two or three come together in my name, I am there with them.”*

My sister has a patio at her house that is made from rocks that she has collected on her travels. She knows what place each rock represents and she keeps adding to the patio. Basically, this patio tells some of the story of her life.

Good Shepherd’s buildings are a lot like this patio. It took a few families coming together to attract a young pastor, Dan Oravec, to the Gaithersburg area in the 1960’s to start Good Shepherd. These people all worshipped in a school until they built our original church building, which is the old fellowship hall. The building was built not just for the members at the time, but for the future members as well.

Now Good Shepherd is at the point where we are building again. We build because we don’t just have two or three who come together in the Lord’s name, but we have hundreds who come together in the Lord’s name. It is an exciting time because we believe that the new facility is not just for the current members but also for future members.

As a whole, Good Shepherd has heard the same voice that Kevin Costner did in Field of Dreams. We know that “if you build it, they will come.” For Christians helping others come to know God is the ultimate high. We are blessed to be a part of this exciting chance to add to the Good Shepherd history and to bring others to a future with God.

Ann Miller

Prayer: Dear God, thank you for helping us to take the leap of faith and have the courage to continue to do your work. Let us never lose sight of the goal of helping others to grow closer to you. We ask all this in Jesus’ name. Amen

Day 25

1 Corinthians 3:11

### Heroes and Challenges

*“For no one can lay any foundation other than the one that has been laid; that foundation is Jesus Christ.”*

As I reflect back, people who stand out as being especially influential and inspirational to me include three who are well known to many. These “heroes” include an 80 year old, Joe Paterno, who has more successfully coached football at one institution for a longer time than would seem possible. This fall, he will once again lead young men onto the field to face their challenges in football and later on throughout their lives. His courage, wisdom, and tenacity defy all odds. Another man, half his age, Cal Ripken, Jr., played in more consecutive major league baseball games than was ever thought possible. His determination to serve his sport and teammates by working his hardest to do his very best and show up every day, no matter how he felt, led to his remarkable record. He now serves as a teacher, motivator and inspiration to young people to meet challenges in baseball that will serve them throughout their lives. I am privileged to personally see each of these men in action many times.

As a long time member of Good Shepherd, I must admit that the logistical and financial challenges facing our congregation sometimes seem so formidable as to be overwhelming to me. Which leads me to my third well-known “hero”, and the master of them all! Jesus, who gave his life for me, who loves me as a sinner, who cares for the needy and dying, who can lead us all in the way of loving peace; Jesus inspires and strengthens me, and renews my faith in our congregation’s determination and ability to meet these challenges, and increase our ability to share his love and salvation in the Gaithersburg community through expanded ministries made possible by our new facilities.

Jesus is my all-time “hero”! And as we sing...“the church’s one foundation is Jesus Christ, our Lord”!

### George Groninger

Prayer: Dear Lord, strengthen our faith, and grant us courage to face those challenges that we sometimes fear. Help us to grow in loving service to others through our ministries at Good Shepherd. We pray in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior. Amen.

Day 26

Romans 8:38-39

### House and Home

*“For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”*

My husband and I moved many times during our marriage. Moving to a new place and school was always difficult for our daughters. I told them that we always had a home but that we needed to find a different house to put it in. We said this so that they could realize that our family loved each other so much that there was no way that moving could ever separate or destroy our family.

Many of us refer to Good Shepherd as our church “home.” We as families of Good Shepherd may find it difficult to put up with meeting in other locations, with change going on every day, and for some, the difficulty in saying goodbye to our old house. We need to remember that there is nothing that can separate us from one another during this time of building. We can recognize this change as a challenge and a great gift to have a new house for our home.

Jan Clark

Prayer: Lord, we ask your blessing on all our families as we build and prepare to move into a new house. Grant us patience when the going gets tough and we feel that we will never succeed. Keep the members of our Good Shepherd home mindful that nothing can separate us from you. Amen

Day 27

1 Corinthians 3:10-11

### Building on Solid Foundations

*“By the grace God has given me, I laid a foundation as an expert builder, and someone else is building on it. But each one should be careful how he builds. For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ.”*

The foundation may be solid, but how sturdy is the building? The stalwarts in the growth of our church, St. Paul, Martin Luther, and others, were all expert builders and have poured the concrete for an immensely sturdy foundation upon which we each build our house of faith. But have you ever sat back and wondered how robust the structure is that lay on top of that foundation? I know it is something that I ponder about from time to time. Almost daily I confront challenges to my faith; each can tempt me to cut corners, to build my structure with substandard components such that the final result may look secure, but a stiff breeze will cause it to come tumbling down. For me, faith is an ongoing, ever living, continually evolving process that should be consistently examined and nurtured. Through careful tending, exploration and, yes, even questioning my faith, I find the strength and commitment and trust to carefully build upon this foundation, a building that I believe I will never finish in my lifetime until my last breath; whereupon it will be gloriously revealed to me!

Jim Ganz

Prayer: How wonderful to live through the grace of God, to know that even in our darkest times, subjected to our deepest doubts, that You believe in us, and through this, provide us the strength to rely on the warm embrace of your love. Guide us as we build the structures of our faith and watch over us that they be worthy to rest upon those robust foundations already laid for us. Amen.

Day 28

Proverbs 3:5-6

### Trust in the Lord

*“Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight.”*

I am a worrier by nature. In fact, my grandmother and I always joke that this is a genetic trait since she too is a “worrier”. I worry when my children are sick, I worry when my husband travels for work, and I worry that I am not making the right decisions about major household projects or work-related endeavors. Worries can take hold and become overwhelming, especially when they focus on a family member’s health, a new job, or virtually anything in life we are dealing with.

What I am trying to work on in my life is to not let these worries overwhelm me. I try to remember when I trust in God and talk to Him my worries do not seem as large as they once were. It doesn’t mean that my worries will necessarily disappear, but it does mean that I acknowledge Him in my daily life and I know He will lead me through life’s worries. He has given me a wonderful family, a terrific church home, and a blessed life.

As we continue with our capital campaign, many changes to our church building will take place. We might have worries about how the building will look or how the changes will impact our congregation in the interim before the new building is complete. But if we trust in the Lord, He will guide us through these challenges in addition to the other worries we face each day.

Dawn Maynard

Prayer: Dear Jesus, thank you for your everlasting love. Teach us to trust in you with all our hearts so that life’s worries do not overwhelm us. Help us to remember that you will be here to guide us on the right path. Amen.

Day 29

1 Peter 2: 4-5

### To Build and Nurture

“You are coming to Christ, who is the living cornerstone of God’s temple. And you are living stones that God is building into His spiritual temple. What’s more, you are His holy priests. Through the mediation of Jesus Christ, you offer spiritual sacrifices that please God.”

Folks driving past the Colorado diner are greeted by a lighted sign out front with words to nurture the spirit and feed the body: “A&W. True Freedom is Only in Jesus! Romans 6. Mushroom Onion Melt. Ice Cream Treats. (and on the reverse) Jesus for Jews. Jesus for All. Chili Cheese Fries. Hot Dogs. Cheese Curds.”

This sincere, joyful and tasty declaration probably has visitors to this fast food spot both chuckling and scratching their heads. How can the A&W operators justify this bold statement of faith in the same breath as advertising their menu? My niece couldn’t help swinging into this diner on her westward drive a few weeks ago, and she snapped a photo of that sign. Yes, she said, the owners are welcoming, enthusiastic believers who feel an obligation to witness to each passerby. And yes, the chili cheese fries are great.

Taking seriously our job as builders of God’s spiritual temple, we put our behavior and our Christian model “out front” each day. We have a responsibility to build and nurture not just God’s physical temple, but also to act as examples or “living stones” as 1 Peter says. If each of us were putting our message on public display like the diner folks, what would our signs say about our faith and our God-given gifts? Maybe mine for GSLC could read: “Sing a joyful song unto the Lord! Generous portions of warm fellowship in Christ. Stop in and make this your spiritual home!”

Penny Risen

Prayer: Dear Lord, help us to know how to declare Your love for all and to act as faithful living stones. Amen.

Day 30

Genesis 11:4

### Building for the Right Reasons

*“Then they said, “Come, let us build ourselves a city, and a tower with its top in the heavens, and let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth.”*

There are many passages in the Bible that speak directly to building, both literally and figuratively – what to build, what to build on, how to build, what materials to use, etc. – but few Biblical building projects grab one’s attention as powerfully as the story of The Tower of Babel. A close look at the passage above makes very clear why this building was doomed – the Lord God brought confusion to these people and the tower was abandoned because these human beings were *building for all the wrong reasons*. They are as gifted as all human beings, then and now – we can plan, we can build, we can accomplish great things. But they are also capable of the same vices we battle – arrogance, worldly ambition, vanity, and selfishness. Think of the engineering and architectural skills building such an edifice would require! Yet look at why they were doing it – they are building only for “ourselves,” to make “ourselves” famous, to lift “ourselves” to heights unknown before this time. No mention of providing shelter, of caring for the least of their number, of helping strangers to their land. In fact, there is no mention of anyone or anything outside their own aggrandizement. And that’s what hits so close to home for me in this story -- human nature hasn’t changed very much, has it? When we focus only on ourselves, we are squandering our gifts, and any pleasure is diminished and short-lived. But when we build – families, jobs, communities, selves – with God in mind, our projects are more sound, more likely to last, and bring far greater satisfaction.

Roberta McFadden

Prayer: Lord God of heaven and earth, we thank you for the many gifts and talents you have given us. May we use them to build righteous and worshipful lives that help those around us see your grace and your glory. Amen.

Day 31

Hebrews 3:4

### Joyful Building

*“Every house has a builder, but the builder behind them all is God.”*

My father was a builder of single-family homes, often for people of great wealth. He worked hard and was proud of his accomplishments. I would have loved to have lived in one of the homes he built.

When my father and his brothers were young they sang in choirs and in summer productions of Gilbert and Sullivan operettas. As he grew older my father developed a serious hearing loss. He was then afraid to sing with a group because he was afraid he might put the others singing with him off pitch. Nevertheless, he sang by himself as he worked alone and around our home. That way I grew up learning the great hymns and anthems of the church as well as many songs from Gilbert and Sullivan.

Today we live in a world of stress and much destruction. If we think of the many lives and homes that have been torn apart in many places of our world, we might find it difficult to sing and to look at life positively and with joy.

We at Good Shepherd are fortunate to be looking forward to a new construction for our church. As we sing and pray we are partners with God for building a new and beautiful place in our troubled world. Christ, the Good Shepherd, will be with us and will inspire us in our endeavors.

Betty Jean Morgan

Prayer: Thank you, Lord, for a task that will lift our sights over the grim destruction that fills many lives today and gives us joy as we build for you. Amen.

Day 32

John 14: 6, 12

### I Am The Way

*<sup>6</sup>“Jesus answered, ‘I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. <sup>12</sup>I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these...”*

Jesus says to us, “I am the way and the truth and the life.” The way to where? What truth? What life? For me the answers to these questions are contained in what Jesus says next. If I believe (have faith) in Jesus, I will do what he was doing here on earth. Jesus was God’s greatest gift to us. Our challenge is to follow Jesus’ example.

In all of Jesus’ words, I read love, compassion, patience, forgiveness, and trust. Jesus exemplified these qualities. Love our families, love our friends, love those we encounter each day, love even those people we have difficulty loving. Jesus was able to find something to love in everyone.

Jesus’ life was the model of compassion. Sometimes he showed his compassion through healing; sometimes he showed it through spoken words.

Jesus’ patience was best shown in how he dealt with his disciples. He never gave up on them.

Jesus had an amazing ability to forgive and to ask God the Father to grant forgiveness. Was he bitter and resentful about being hung on a cross? Absolutely not! He prayed for those who hung him there and asked that they be forgiven.

Finally, Jesus asks us to trust – trust that we know the Father because we know Jesus, trust that we can do greater things in His name. Will it be easy? No, but Jesus promises to be there beside us all the way.

Joan Palmer

Prayer: Lord Jesus be with me this day and guide me in your way that I may trust in you and live as you would have me live – with love, compassion, patience and forgiveness. Amen.

Day 33

Ephesians 5:19

### A Path to Our Lord Through Music and Song

*“Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord.”*

Have you ever thought about how many of the scriptures have been put into song? I do not know the answer, however, the amount of songs composed is humongous. As a member of the choir I have become aware of many of the songs that have words derived from scripture. Some of the hymns and songs that I feel are both beautiful and meaningful include a hymn based on Psalm 121 with these thoughts, “I lift up my eyes to the hills. Your help comes from the Lord. He will not let you stumble. He will not let you fall.” Another hymn is inspired by Psalm 84 “How lovely is your dwelling place.”

Good Shepherd is blessed with a wonderful music ministry. Our choirs, bell ringers, organist, and instrumentalists certainly enhance our services by uplifting our spirits and faith through music and song. It is my fervent hope that our music ministry grows in numbers and continues to be an important part of our worship. I know that there are many people in our congregation who have musical gifts. I am sure that Peter would be glad to work with anyone who would like to become a part of the “MUSIC MINISTRY.” We are all looking forward to our new sanctuary. The acoustics, access to the choir loft, visibility, and the position of the choir will enhance our path to the Lord.

Frank Walkuskie

Prayer: We pray that our music ministry grows so that we may continue to worship with music and song. Let us all make music to the Lord in our hearts and minds. Let our new sanctuary be filled with the sounds of prayers and praise to the Lord. Amen.

## It Takes All Kinds

*“Then I said to them, ‘You see the trouble we are in: Jerusalem’s gates are in ruins...Come, let us rebuild the wall of Jerusalem, and we will no longer be in disgrace.’ I also told them about the gracious hand of my God upon me and what the king had said to me. They replied, ‘Let us start rebuilding.’ So they began this good work.”*

Nehemiah was among the Jews who were exiled in Persia, descendants of those who had been carried off to Babylon upon the fall of Judea in 586 BC. He was a bright young man, cupbearer to King Artaxerxes, who appreciated Nehemiah’s loyalty to the court. Nehemiah was disturbed and discouraged when word came to him about the ruinous state of his homeland, and he vowed to do something about it. After praying, then watching for a judicious time, he approached the king and asked permission to return to Jerusalem to rebuild the walls of that beloved city. Not only did the king grant his request, he also funded the expedition. Who would have thought the mighty king would be sensitive to the calling of Judah’s God? Help comes in surprising ways. Can you remember a time when you felt discouraged, only to be lifted up in ways you least expected? Were there people who appeared and encouraged you to see possibilities for solving your problems? God works in mysterious ways; we must be open to those opportunities for growth and healing.

Nehemiah recruited help in rebuilding the wall and accomplished it in 52 days. He mobilized and arranged his men skillfully, working day and night in spite of many obstacles. He had faith in God and let nothing stand in his way.

Ezra, the priest, taught religion to the people, and Nehemiah became their governor. They worked together to accomplish God’s purpose. At Good Shepherd *it takes all kinds* of ministers to build God’s kingdom on earth. Our new building will be the result of many hearts and hands bound together in Christ’s love.

## Cathy Heim

Prayer: Loving God, we thank you for opportunities to serve you. Help us find our place in your plan for our church and community. May we commit our lives to your service. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

Day 35

Luke 6:38

### Give a Full Measure

*“Give to others, and God will give to you. Indeed, you will receive a full measure, a generous helping, poured into your hands – all that you can hold. The measure you use for others is the one that God will use for you.”*

Recently when visiting a friend in a local rehabilitation hospital we met a wonderful, beautiful dog and its owner. The owner is a lady who brings the dog to visit patients as they are recovering. She visits each room and if the patient is responsive commands the dog to jump up on the bed (a protective covering is placed under the dog). The patient in a wheelchair was able to pat the cocker spaniel, feed her a treat and for a few minutes relax and forget about her pain, rehab and loneliness. The volunteer, who was most charming, has been doing this visiting for over five years. She is a model of a perfect example for giving herself, sharing her handsome dog, taking her valuable time to share her love.

Take some time to rethink your life today. How do you spend your time? Are you giving full measure for others or are you minimizing your blessings and sinking into a selfish, self-centered lifestyle?

### Dot Haltiwanger

Prayer: Come into our lives and change us Father. Help us offer ourselves for God’s use in bringing more love into the world. Amen.

*God Is Our Builder*

*“For every house is built by some one,  
but the builder of all things is God.”*

Have you ever been part of a group working together to accomplish an important task? You may have been on a sports team where you and your teammates worked hard to achieve first place. Or maybe you were on a team at work where you were given a critical task with an important deadline. Or perhaps it was a more light-hearted occasion, such as planning a surprise birthday party with friends for someone close to the group. So often these efforts start out slowly, maybe even reluctantly. Negative thoughts might pop to mind, such as “How will I find the time,” or “There’s too much to do,” or worst of all, “We might fail.” But then as your work starts, you begin to see progress. You find yourself getting to know the people you’re working with better than you knew them before. You make new friends and renew old friendships. You feel good being part of a group with a common goal. Over time, the original negative thoughts fade away and you find yourself excited about the results of your work. And then the effort pays off. The sports team does well. The critical task at work is accomplished. The surprise birthday party is a joyous occasion, to be fondly recalled for years to come.

At Good Shepherd, we have set out as a congregation to accomplish the major task of expanding our church in order to reach out to more people in our community. It is a major undertaking. And no doubt there will be problems to overcome. And there will be doubts. We’re only human after all!! But if we seek God’s help, we will succeed. And we will reap the benefits of working together to achieve our goal. Because as it is stated in Hebrews 3:4, “God is the builder of all things.” With God leading us, how can we fail?

**Stuart Richards**

Prayer: Lord, guide us in our work to expand Good Shepherd. Strengthen us when problems occur and help us to work together as a team. And when our building work is complete, help us to reach out to better serve our community in Christian faith. Amen.

Day 37

Ecclesiastes 3: 1 & 3b

### A Time to Build

*“There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under heaven....a time to tear down and a time to build.”*

It was Sunday afternoon, July 8, 2007, when we gathered to celebrate and remember all that God had done in the building that was Good Shepherd's first sanctuary.

When my husband, two small children, and I arrived to worship in September of 1969, Pastor Dan Oravec and the people of Good Shepherd greeted us warmly and welcomed us with open arms. The Spirit of God was alive in this faith community known as Good Shepherd Lutheran Church. This was the place for us.

In time it became obvious that a new and bigger worship space was needed. The current worship facility was erected. Later an educational wing was added. More and more people found Good Shepherd to be a warm and welcoming faith community. More and more people came to know our Lord Jesus better at this place on the corner of Frederick Avenue and South Westland Drive.

Growth has not stopped. Since the arrival of Pastor Dave Sonnenberg, our congregation has grown even more. The Spirit of God has touched lives through warm and welcoming pastors and people. It has become obvious again that a new and bigger worship space is needed. Now is “a time to tear down and a time to build.” God's Spirit will continue to move through the warm and welcoming hearts of His people here at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church!

Brenda Kessler

Prayer: Thank you, God, for people who want to share You with others. Continue to give us warm, welcoming, and generous hearts as we build to give You the glory. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Day 38

John 14:1-3

### Preparing A Place for Us

*“Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me. In my Father’s house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.”*

I remember several years ago when we moved into our new house, our two daughters did not want to leave our old house. As parents, we tried to appeal to them rationally. Our new house is larger, and right on the lake, on a quieter street, closer to the schools, closer to some of their friends. Even though we owned this new house and were no longer renting they kept saying that they were “going to miss the old house!” So, that first day in the new house, my wife and I carefully set up the beds in our daughters’ bedrooms, lovingly made them up with their sheets, blankets and stuffed animals, and tenderly placed throughout their rooms, as many of their “comfort” items as we could. When my wife and I led them up the stairs to their new bedrooms later that night, we knew from the looks on their faces that the rooms we had prepared for them would be places where they would rest comfortably and sleep peacefully throughout the night.

Jim Ganz

Prayer: Lord Jesus, we all know that transition can sometimes be frightening and stressful and that as your children we are all too often apprehensive about new changes in our lives. Thank you for giving us the strength and faith to walk fearlessly with you into all the new rooms of our lives. Amen.

*Follow Your Heart and Trust in the Lord*

“Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him and he will make your paths straight.”

In 1987-88, I was eager to learn and acquire more education. That vision stayed in my mind to the point where I got depressed. As I looked around, I saw my friends with college degrees and I had just an associate degree in banking, which I had obtained in 1984 in England. I wanted to travel, see the world, educate myself and it had to start in America. I asked the Lord to send someone to help me fulfill my dreams. (Mark 11:24)

My focus prayer was “O’ Lord, help me find a family in America that will offer their home to me and I will reciprocate by serving them.” After all, my mother had taught me how to run a home efficiently.

In August 1989 I met Dr. Ivan Hubbard from America when he visited Lagos, Nigeria for a vacation. A mutual friend had a reception for him, which I helped organize. Dr. Hubbard was impressed with the way and manner in which I handled the event and he questioned me about my life and future plans. I told him about my plans for education in the US and specifically to obtain a degree in marketing.

Three days later, I called to wish him a safe trip back to Connecticut and he said, “Gloria, if you want to come to the US and need a place to stay, I will offer you a private room and bath.” I immediately accepted the offer and left for Connecticut in December 1989. Upon arrival, and with his assistance, I enrolled in Quinnipiac University and obtained a degree in Marketing through his generosity and paved my path.

A few years later, when I married, Dr. Hubbard walked me down the aisle like a father would. We are now part of the same family, God’s family, and I know he was sent by the Lord to help me achieve my goals, now with an MBA in Strategic Management.

The benefit of wisdom is not to be wasted. Long before now, I learned that dreams change everything. If you follow your dreams, you must remember to pray, and ask God to help you achieve those parts of your dreams that are good and beneficial. God usually sends help through people or things and when you believe, God will open the doors of opportunities. When it happens you must remember to give Him the glory and praise.

Gloria Gbalekuma

Day 40

Matthew 6: 25, 26

### I Think About It Every Day

“Do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air; they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?”

I knew the sermon was a good one when people leaving Church remarked there is hardly a day goes by when they don't ask the same question. I had mused about Jesus words, “What good is it to gain the whole world and lose your soul?” He and the prophets always claimed we lose our souls when we base our lives on the abundance of possessions rather than the care of God, when we trust things more than we trust God. I then remarked that these words often forced me to ask if I had lost my soul and was not aware of it.

The people leaving Church were claiming they too worried about this. They realized they were part of the 30% in the world that has 95% of the wealth, part of the 1/6 of the world that uses up 2/3 of its natural resources. They knew Jesus said, “From everyone to whom much has been given, much will be required,” and they wondered about the health of their souls.

If we are going to build on faith, we must trust that God will take care of us. Faith in God includes not only belief that he is the Almighty who creates the world but also that he is the Father who provides our daily bread. Christianity is based on doing what must be done today in faith that God will provide what we need tomorrow. Or as Jesus said, “Do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring worries of its own. Today's trouble is enough for today.”

Pastor Fritz Foltz

Prayer: Grant us the courage to build our lives on faith, Father. Make us confident that you will provide what we need tomorrow, so we do not ignore what is needed today. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

Day 41

Philippians 4: 6

*“Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything,  
by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving,  
present your requests to God.”*

We live in a society in which many people do not know the works of Jesus Christ, and others questioning the fate of the Christian church. I am so thankful that my family is part of a church that is actually growing in Jesus' ministry. Today, there are many churches being torn down never to see the light of day again and here we are tearing down our church to add more light. Our church is a direct reflection of what Christ desires from his disciples, and that is the foundation I desire for my family as we grow together in our life with Christ. I am thankful everyday to be a part of Him. As a mother, I can't express more to my children that this is the real meaning of life (being disciples of Christ and growing His ministry). It is through prayer and thanksgiving that we can have the faith to take the steps that are necessary to fulfill the dream that is before us. He will provide, as he always does, even through anxious times in our lives.

Kathryn Hoffpauir

Prayer: Dear Jesus, your amazing gifts are always upon us. Please help us to remember the gifts that we possess inside to help carry out the never-ending work that is to be done for you. Continue to nurture us with the strength and courage that we need in growing your ministry through our faith in you. Amen.

Day 42

## Foundations of Faith

*“Work as if everything depends on you,  
pray as if everything depends on God.”*

The above oft-quoted statement, attributed most correctly I believe to St. Ignatius of Loyola has recently become my motto. The past year has been one of, if not the most difficult, of my life. Upon beginning to finally take constructive action to formally end an emotionally long-dead marriage, and as an only daughter to spend more time with my elderly widowed mom; I was faced with the devastating situation of my 11<sup>th</sup> grade son's probable depression highlighted by excessive sleeping and his refusal to go to school or almost anywhere else. With the already demanding schedule of a paraeducator job I truly enjoy plus several hours of daily after school chauffeuring, I found my fiercely independent self completely frazzled and unsure of what to do. It was then that I turned to the foundation of my Christian faith and took the giant step of going out of my comfort zone to request the prayers of friends and family, reach out to Good Shepherd's Stephen Ministry, and find a competent therapist to support me in conquering these challenges.

Good Shepherd's current building program has and continues to offer many challenges and opportunities to us as a Congregation and individually. We have a strong forty-year-old foundation of faith to preserve while making changes that will allow us to positively move forward in many, often new, directions. It will require several of us to step out of our collective and individual comfort zones. We will need to conscientiously pray for God's guidance and ask for the support of others while putting our utmost effort into using our talents to maximize service to Him. The paths we are led to may not be easy or expected, but we will definitely receive strength to move forward in His love and care.

Sharon Hoppler

Prayer: Dear Lord, may we always know that faith in You is our foundation for strength and guidance, whether in or out of our comfort zones.  
Amen

Day 43

Psalm 1:3

### The “Wilting” of Our Souls

“And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season, his leaf also shall not wither; and what so ever, He doeth shall prosper.”

The flowers bought from the church youth fundraiser were planted. Then came the dryness, or drought as it would later be called. With no rain to feed the newly planted flowers, the flowers began to close, the leaves wilted. But oh, how they perked up with a good saturation of water.

We are the same way. With all the technology gadgets available to us today, the ability to “stay in touch” with anyone and everyone, or they with us, anytime, anywhere, permeates our daily lives. (I am for instituting a cell/blackberry FREE day!). But do we stay in as close communication with God? It is easy for us to forget to water our spiritual souls and we wilt with all the constant commotion; our souls need a little perking up by God. He is the constant reliever of the drought in our lives and will never fail to provide for our needs.

As we build, God will be the rock, the cornerstone, and the foundation of our new structure. We then become God’s “trees” (helpers) to relieve the wilting of other souls as we open up new opportunities for worship to all who enter our doors.

Anne May

Prayer: Oh, God, thank you for being a constant companion in our busy world. Lift us up when we stumble and help us to remember that we are to help others and keep them from wilting by providing your Word. Amen.

Day 44

2 Samuel 22:2

### Step Out in Faith

*“The Lord is my rock, my fortress, and my deliverer”*

To paraphrase a popular commercial, “Life comes at you fast.” The commercial grabs our attention because we know it is true. We are constantly bombarded by events that literally come out of the blue. Our inability to anticipate them or plan to mitigate them can leave us feeling like a log adrift on a swift current. As we careen downstream it is easy to lose all hope and allow ourselves to be carried away. David too knew adversity. Life came at him fast. After dealing with Goliath, David suffered the perfidy of Saul and then set about dealing with the Philistines, the Moabites, the King of Zobah, the Arameans and the Edomites. Trust in the Lord enabled David to step out in faith and do the unimaginable. Look at all the characters in the Bible. Apart from Jesus they are all flawed, David especially. Flawed, yes, but with God as their rock and fortress the men and women of the Bible become people of action. They are not satisfied to be swept along with the tide. They meet life as it comes, do their best, trust in the Lord, and achieve the unachievable. Second Samuel 22-2 parallels the first portion of the 18<sup>th</sup> Psalm. Both reflect David’s prayerful song of thanks to God for being his protector and deliverer. In our time, the fourth stanza of the famous hymn “Amazing Grace” underscores God’s care for us:

*“The Lord has promised good to me; His word my hope secures; He will my shield and portion be as long as life endures.”*

Don Wernly

Prayer: Lord, as we embark on the construction of our new sanctuary and ministry facilities, be our rock and fortress. Strengthen our resolve and commitment to build for your glory so as people of action we can extend your kingdom to Gaithersburg, Maryland, and the world. Amen.

Day 45

Romans 8: 28

### Working Together

“And we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to His purpose for them.”

Watching the plans come together for our congregation’s new building is a very surprising and rewarding experience. After years of discussion, pouring over drawings and specifications, and a final vote of faith, God’s “new house” on S. Westland Drive and Rt. 355 is taking shape.

It is a surprising experience because no matter how much wrangling committee members and planners did, perhaps stepping on toes and offending others with our opinions or preferences, all of us seem to be on the same page in getting this project accomplished. We each bring a different talent and outlook to the building project, yet we try to stay focused on the big picture. Did you know for each Building Committee meeting, we open with a devotional moment to set us on our course, and that we close with a prayer for guidance and thanksgiving for our church?

It also is rewarding because by having this new space emerging, we can confidently invite worshippers and community members to join in our vision for God’s work --- knowing we’ll have space to grow in this mission and in fellowship. As folks walk or drive past our construction site, let’s hope this new growth is a sign to them that God indeed is working for the good of those who love Him --- and for those newcomers who will be called into our flock.

### Penny Risen

Prayer: Dear Lord, help us to see the big picture of your plan for our lives. Show us how to be supportive of each other as a Christian family and to be good stewards of our time, talents and resources for Your kingdom on earth. Let us always be welcoming, even when Your house is a bit dusty during this GSLC Transition. Amen.

Day 46

James 2:26

### Why Are We Building

*“Just as the body is dead without breath, so also faith is dead without good works.”*

What is the most important reason that we are undertaking a building program? A church? A new sanctuary? A community space? Church school classrooms? A new kitchen? The highest steeple on route 355? All of the above? The closest answer might be “None of the above.” Sure, we will see all of those, but the most important thing we are building is something we can’t see—the faith of the people who make it all meaningful. Without faith, the greatest cathedral in the world would be just another building—built today, gone tomorrow. Our new church building will be not an end in itself, but rather a reminder and demonstration of our faith. And this is what should guide our contribution—not how much the building costs, or how much is our fair share, or what we will get out of it, but rather, why we are building. The Scripture reminds us that faith without deeds is meaningless. Remembering this, we should ask ourselves not “How much do I have to give?” but rather “How much does my faith inspire me to give?” Let us look upon this program not so much as an obligation to spend our money, but rather as an opportunity to express our faith. The long-term value of our program will be measured not by the amount of money spent on it, but rather by the amount of faith put into it.

### Alan & Rosemary Wolff

Prayer: Dear Lord, remind us that work completes faith, and that faith and deeds cannot exist without each other. Help us to put our faith into practice and spend our time serving others so that this vision of our new church will become a reality. Amen.

Day 47

1 Peter 2:4-5

### Our Spiritual House

*“...you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood...”*

How do you feel when you drive into the Good Shepherd parking lot? For us, it feels like coming home. The Good Shepherd family has been part of our family for 25 years, and most of our family's significant events have involved our church family and church home. We have worked with, played with, cried with, laughed with, worshiped with, studied with, prayed with, and ministered with our church family. To look through past church directories is like looking through family photo albums.

How is it possible that we feel so grounded in our Good Shepherd home? It is the Holy Spirit at work within the Good Shepherd family. We have seen our church home grow both in its physical size and in its membership. We have experienced many changes as a church family but the Holy Spirit has never ceased to be mightily at work among us, bringing blessings and enabling us to face the challenges we encountered. Our church home is not the place where we take off our shoes and relax; it is the place where we meet and praise our Creator together. It is God's house that is our church home, and it is our Lord who welcomes us, blesses our coming to be with Him.

When our home needs improvement in some way, we work and set aside money to take care of the need. When our church home needs improvement, we likewise work and set aside money to take care of the need. The Holy Spirit has blessed us with new members and new ministry challenges. When we are at work at Good Shepherd, we are His hands and feet to minister to others and to maintain and improve His home so that we can faithfully meet those challenges to which He calls us.

### Peggy Luther

Prayer: Dear Father, today, may we know your house as our home, and allow you to build us into a spiritual house. Help us to faithfully meet the challenges to which you are calling us and to which we have made our commitment. In Jesus name we pray. Amen

Day 48

Mathew 6:19-21

### Living in a Material World

*“Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”*

Cars, cell phones, Ipods, clothes, shoes, and computers. Our world is obsessed with things. And in our society the one with the best toys wins. This is a sad but true assessment. We tend to forget what really matters. We forget each other, ourselves, and God. This bible verse is comparing an Ipod to God. An Ipod can be broken, stolen, overloaded, smashed, and run over. God cannot be broken, stolen, overloaded, smashed, or run over. So why is it that we invest our time and money into something that can be destroyed in a second? Our time and money should be invested in God. God is permanent; God provides us a future in heaven. The only things that should matter are the things that help us grow spiritually. For this is what our “treasure” is. Our “treasure” is in our hearts. It is our compassion and devotion to one another and God that allows our hearts to grow. And when our hearts grow, we become wealthier than the richest person in the world.

Sara Mann

Prayer: Lord, please allow us to become rich in spirit and to resist the material things that run the society we live in. Let us always remember your promise for our future in heaven. And let us invest ourselves and time in you. In your name we pray. Amen.

## Building on the Foundation

*“As a wise master builder I have laid the foundation, and another builds on it. But let each one take heed how he builds on it. For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.”*

When was the foundation for Good Shepherd Lutheran Church laid? The cornerstone of the original building says 1969. But that's the year that the structure was completed; the foundation was laid sometime in 1968. Or would you say that Good Shepherd's foundation was laid in April 1965, when 81 people signed the church Charter and called their first pastor? Or was it laid in November 1964, when Good Shepherd's first worship service was held? You might even think that it was laid in September 1964, when the LCA sent a mission developer to Gaithersburg. Obviously, the date you select depends on your definition of "foundation." If we use the "act of founding" definition, we select April 1965, as Good Shepherd's foundation – a foundation laid by 81 members and one pastor, Dan Oravec. They laid the foundation but others have built on it: Pastors Scheck, Mayberry, Weber, Neubauers, Hebers, Dahlin, Handley, Sonnenberg, Lathrop, Driver-Bishop, and over a thousand people who have been members. Each of these builders has taken heed about how they've built on that original foundation. Good Shepherd's mission today – to encourage and equip every person in our congregation to give of ourselves daily – serving the Lord Jesus, each other, and the community we love – is very much in keeping with the original foundation. Let's consider another definition of foundation: "the supporting structure." We are tearing apart that foundation and laying a new one—a much better and more useful one, we hope. Finally, there's one more definition we must consider: "the basis upon which something stands." That's the foundation that Paul speaks about in today's text, the foundation that can't be replaced: Jesus Christ. He laid our foundation 2,000 years ago. Good Shepherd Lutheran Church has been building on that solid rock for 43 years. As long as we continue to recognize that our foundation doesn't consist of bricks and mortar, but that our foundation is the Lord Jesus, we will continue to have success as we serve Him.

## Don Kress

Prayer: Lord Jesus, help us to recognize you as the only true foundation upon which we can build. You are the solid rock upon which Good Shepherd Lutheran Church must stand. We ask it in your precious name. Amen.

Day 50

Philippians 4:6-7

### Inspiring Thoughts from Nivea

*<sup>6</sup>Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.*

*<sup>7</sup>And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*

I want you to know that I have two beautiful houses: the one where I sleep, eat, and share with others and Good Shepherd Lutheran Church.

On December 16, 1991, I landed in a suburb, the whose name sounded to me like "hamburger". It was the first time that I, a Spanish speaker, heard such a word: Gaithersburg!! I came with eight suitcases, my thirteen-year-old son, Frank, and my autistic son, Raymond (whom I call Raymondcito.) Both children are the light of my life. Even though Frank is now thirty-three and Raymondcito is twenty-nine, both are still my babies.

When I left my beloved Puerto Rico, my family and friends, my town- my marvelous San Juan Bay, I was heartbroken. I did not know anyone around here and it was no fun trying to communicate, especially with a heavy accent. At that time I came here because I needed to save Raymondcito's life. His self-abusive behavior was severe all the time. The weather here was cold to us coming from the Caribbean, and I felt so lonely and devastated.

Good Shepherd has become my home. I feel blessed to look around and see the candid and loving eyes of Pastor Dave and to feel the love and support of my Good Shepherd family every minute; this is priceless to me. I know that this is my home because I can share with you my happiness, sadness or any need. Knowing that when I cannot go to church, my church family comes to me is priceless!! Knowing that Pastor Dave and others, day in and day out are there to pray and support has no words.

To give and receive agape love is beyond comprehension. You know, though, we cannot live just by love!! We need to rebuild our sacred home and we must provide the money to do our LORD'S work. Some of you can say that the sanctuary could be anywhere or that we do not need to put all this money into a new facility, but I totally disagree.

I strongly believe that our commitment is necessary if we are to have a solid and expansive structure and continue our mission in Gaithersburg. I know I cannot survive without my beloved Good Shepherd Lutheran Church!! We all need to pull together, and pool our resources in order for us to receive

Jesus' promises; if we give, we will receive in return.

**Nivea Cordova-Berrios**

Prayer: Dear God, Thank you for providing me Your house when I needed it the most. Help us understand that we need to be generous and that your house needs to be rebuilt because we are moved by your promise. Amen.



***“Every house has a  
builder, but the Builder  
behind them all is God.”***

***-Hebrews 3:4, The Message***

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