

# THE SHEPHERD'S HORN



April 2020

## DEAR GOOD SHEPHERD FAMILY

### God was getting us ready for this:

When we designated the year 2020 as our year to Focus On Faithfulness we could not have anticipated what this year would hold for us. COVID-19 has certainly brought challenging days, but day also ripe with opportunity to grow in faithfulness. In January we encouraged you to establish a daily rhythm of personal prayer, scripture reading and spiritual discipline that we called Vine Time. We chose that name based on Jesus words in John's Gospel, "I am the Vine, you are the branches, abide in me....bear fruit!" Our daily Vine Time helps us to abide in Jesus, which then shapes how our lives bear fruit in the world.

Looking back, I wonder if it was Divine intervention inviting us to establish a daily rhythm of Vine Time a couple of months ago? Was God tilling the soil of our lives in January to prepare us for what we would be facing in March? Vine Time is such a life-giving habit for us to lean into as we make our way through days and weeks of isolation and not being able to gather for face-to-face worship. My prayer for you all is that your Vine Time is helping connect you with God as our lives take on new patterns, practices and paces.

Our study of the Fruit of the Spirit during Lent has also been a great resource as we all seek God's vision for how to respond to the crisis our world is facing. None of us have a playbook for living in times such as these. Isn't it interesting that we were already studying God's playbook for how to live through any situation? As we abide in the vine we live fruitful lives, revealing God's Love, Joy, Peace, Patience, Kindness, Generosity, Faithfulness, Gentleness and Self-Control, to those around us. How do we live in the midst of these times? By bearing fruit! Again, it would seem God was equipping us for what was coming. How great is our God!

I tell you all this as a reminder that if God was preparing us FOR this time, then God is surely with us IN this time, and we can trust that God will certainly lead us OUT of this time. In a few months, when we look back at these days, where will we see God's fingerprints plainly visible?

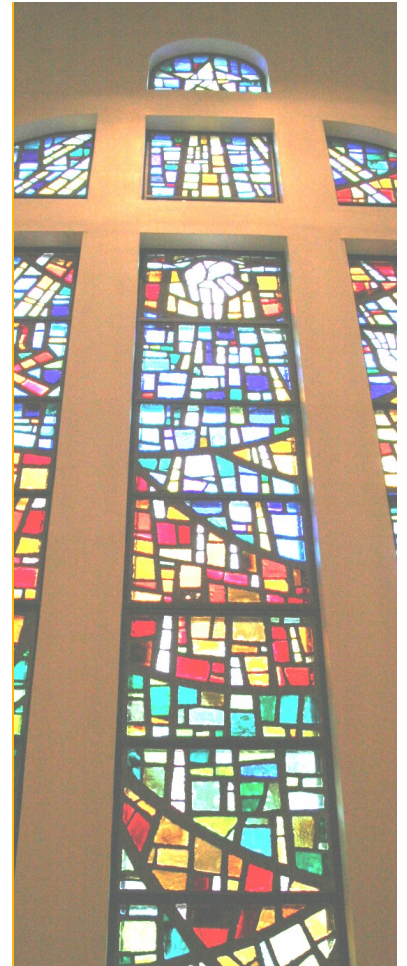
### The Church Building is Closed, But Ministry Is Happening

So you may be wondering how our ministry is adapting to the new normal. Well, God is moving among us and reminding us that the church is not a building. It's a people—you and I—reaching out to others and sharing the love of God and joining God's mission. Here are some ways that ministry is happening:

- We are worshipping in new ways! Hopefully by now you have had a chance to check out some of our worship resources, including bulletins, sermon videos and music. If not, here is the link: <https://goodshepherd.com/Worship/Worship-Resources>
- Do you want to know something amazing? Some of our videos have been attracting lots of attention online. The Family Worship video on March 22 (Pastor Alex and his kids tell the Bible story) has been watched in total (including Facebook views) 2,000 times, as of March 26th! That is about 100 times our normal Family Worship attendance! The regular sermon for that day has been viewed 450 times, and we seem to be picking up steam. Our Facebook page engagements, likes and followers have been expanding by several HUNDRED percent! It is very interesting that our message is reaching many more people, even though we can't gather for worship. What might



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God be up to here?

- Special thanks to volunteers Mark Buelsing for helping us get all this on our webpage and Frank Wiewandt for doing the taping for our latest sermons.
- Daily Devotions—delivered to your inbox Monday-Friday—offering you material for your Daily Vine time. Most days our post is approaching 200 readers. Here is the link to the daily devotions: <https://goodshepherd.com/Daily-Devotions>
- We are still doing outreach and supporting our regular outreach partners at our promised amounts, and looking for ways to partner with the families from Taft, food pantries and other organizations as we navigate this time.
- One of our ministry partners, Interfaith Hospitality Network (IHN), is having a particularly challenging time right now as they need to innovate how they care for the homeless. To support them we are investing an extra \$3000 in their ministry this month, including \$2000 in memory of Judy Herrmann, who was a champion for IHN. We also donated \$500 worth of toys and snacks. Here is the video of our shopping trip (viewed about 650 times on Facebook): <https://www.facebook.com/268222303222760/videos/2607310549394482/>
- Staff and Volunteers are reaching out by phone call. As of March 26th the Staff have made well over 100 phone calls to members—and the CFAM teams have been keeping up with their care receivers by phone, email and the US post office.
- Campus Ministry is still happening! Even though we had to close the house for now, and campus is cleared of students, NOSH is still happening! Pastor Alice and Matthew Petersen are hosting NOSH on Zoom and last time 15 students and alums showed up! They are also holding discipleship groups online, and staying in regular contact with students. They also found a way to play group board games online!
- High School Ministry is happening. This is a hard time for students as proms, sporting events and concerts are being canceled and classes are now online—but our “flock” of students are still meeting together and supporting each other using the latest technology.
- The Church Council is meeting—we called one special meeting in mid-March using Zoom and will meet again in early April. We are prayerfully discerning next best steps for our ministry.
- Our Moms of Faith group has increased how often they meet. These moms want to connect so they are meeting (via Zoom) weekly rather than monthly.
- This year about 130 people signed up to be a part of a small group for Lent. Several of those groups have continued to meet online, and are finding they can grow in faith and support each other, even if they are not in the same room. The group made up of young families is also staying connected!
- Your Staff continues to meet. In fact we are meeting even more (online, of course) as we dream, imagine and plan for new ways to do ministry.

There are many more ways Good Shepherd’s ministry continues to do God’s work in the world—every household that is engaging in worship at home, those committed to living the Fruit of the Spirit, those making financial donations—ALL of you are tools in God’s hands. Thanks all of you who are finding ways to engage.

### **What Can You Do?**

- *Connect with God.* Be open to how God wants to reveal the fruit of the spirit in your life as you love your neighbor.
- *Connect with others.* Stay connected with others at Good Shepherd by checking in with each other. What if we all made one or two phone calls a day? That’s a lot of phone calls and a lot of love being shared!
- *Engage with the resources that we are providing.* Let’s keep the momentum of our ministry going. How is God prompting you to be involved?
- *Support our ministry financially.* You can give online or by mailing in your gift. Since we are not gathering, we aren’t gathering Sunday offerings, and that is definitely a challenge. Please send in your gifts by mail, or give on line, so we can continue to make an impact in our community and in YOUR life. Here is a link: <https://goodshepherd.com/Donate>
- *Share—please share our daily devotions and worship resources with others.* Forward our emails. If you see us post something on Facebook please share to your own page. Pastor Alex’s family worship sermon was shared 20 times on Facebook. We ask you to share, not to feed our egos, but because this is a way for us to share the Gospel and God’s love with those who may feel far from God right now, and may not have a faith community to lean into. We can reach peo-

ple all over the world with one click. Will you help?

- **PRAY**—*pray for the healing of our world.* Pray for medical personnel, teachers, parents, public safety workers. Pray for our ministry.

### What's Next?

Well, right now we don't know what the time frame is for when we can get back together. What we do know is that as soon as it is safe for us to do so we will put out the call to worship and come back together as a family of faith. For now, let's observe what God is doing in our midst as we explore these new ways to be church. God is leading us!

Thanks for all the ways you share in and support the ministry God is calling us to. You are loved!

*Pastor Heidi Johns*

## BRINGING WORSHIP TO YOU

We may not be able to gather for face-to-face worship, but there will definitely be worship for Holy Week. Won't you join us?

**April 5, PALM SUNDAY** - We will be celebrating Jesus' triumphant ride into Jerusalem and begin our Holy Week Journey. We will follow the same format as the last two Sundays in March by providing several bulletin options including music and a video sermon. Jesus creates quite a stir as he enters the holy city with people shouting, waving palm branches and laying garments on the road. It causes some to ask "who is this?". Throughout the week we will be reflecting on that question.

**April 6, 7 and 8** - Our Daily Devotions will be focusing on the days leading up to Jesus' trial and crucifixion. Plan now to set aside time each day to join him on this journey through reading and prayer.

**April 9, Maundy Thursday** - On this holy day we read the story of Jesus washing the feet of the Disciples. We will be providing you with a resource bulletin to use at home and invite you to join around your dinner table for a meal and a time to wash each other's feet (or hands). We feel strongly that this interactive service will help you deepen intimacy not only with God but also with each other. Don't miss out on this unique way to walk with Jesus during Holy Week.

**April 10, Good Friday** - We will be providing a very simple service for you to join that will include the reading of the Passion Story utilizing several voices, and the singing of "Were You There?"

**April 12, Easter Sunday** - We will be celebrating Christ's resurrection and victory over sin and death. This will be an Easter to remember, for sure. Perhaps we have never needed to hear the story of the power of God to bring life out of death—and hope out of despair, more than we do right now. The tomb is empty. Even the days we are living in now are leading to resurrection. Join us to hear God's powerful message for YOU this day.

## OTHER NOTABLE UPDATES/INFO

**Mulch Sale** - It is with a heavy heart that we are canceling the Mulch Sale. All signs point to the "Stay At Home" Order being extended through April. If you had previously submitted an order and payment, your payment should have been returned in the mail. See Jen Jarman with questions ([jjjarman@goodshepherd.com](mailto:jjjarman@goodshepherd.com))

**55+ Club** - The 55+ Club Meeting for April has been canceled. Keep an eye on future Horns for when the meetings will start up again.

**Taft Elementary** - Keep an eye on your email for ways that we are still connecting with our Taft students through letters. See Anne or Mary with questions about this.

**Social Media** - We are communicating A LOT through social media, so give us a follow on Facebook (@GSLC.Cinci).

## Our Mission

Good Shepherd is a caring Christian community whose purpose is to...

**SHARE** God's grace;

**GROW** our faith;

**SERVE** others.



*We are rooted in the Bible.*

## Our Core Values

**Unconditional love**

**Grace**

**Forgiveness**

**Faith**

**Service**

**Hospitality**

**Compassion**

**Stewardship**

**Integrity**

**Learning**

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