



The Good News!

As I write this another year is coming to a close; 2017 is history; one year is gone and another has begun. It's that time of the year when many people make resolutions. So what improvements and goals have you set for yourself for the New Year?

Here at Good Shepherd the Church Council has set a goal to double our attendance numbers in the next two years. That's a lofty goal, but one we are willing to roll up our sleeves and get to work on.

When people and organizations set goals they are motivated either by negative or positive factors. Most people won't act until the pain of not doing something outweighs the pain of doing it which is what negative motivation is all about. And on the positive side of things, the rewards of doing something must outweigh the temporary reward of not doing it.

Sometimes our motivation comes from both perspectives.

Our "negative" motivation for doubling our attendance looks like this:

- In 1920 80% of Americans attended church on a regular basis. That would have included my great grandfather's generation.
- By 1960 only 40% of Americans attended church. That would include my grandfather's generation.
- This past year in 2017, less than 20% of Americans attended church on a regular basis. That would include us. (More than **40 percent** of Americans "say" they go to church weekly. As it turns out, however, less than 20 percent are actually in church.)
- And unless there is a change by 2025 less than 15% of Americans will attend church and that would include your children, grandchildren, and for some your great grandchildren.
- And by 2050 only 11% will attend church.

That is very negative motivation for sure.

Now for some good news!

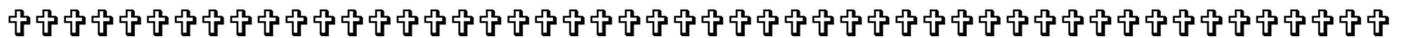
We have been given the "Great Commission" to make disciples of all nations with the promise from Jesus that He would be with us as we carry it out. That's positive motivation!

On Sunday, January 21<sup>st</sup> during the Sunday School hour at 9:30 AM we are bringing all the adult classes together in the Martin Brown Fellowship Hall where we will be sharing our vision on how we will double our attendance in the next two years. We encourage you to be there!

Looking Forward!

Pastor Ray





“So this is how liberty dies...with thunderous applause.” – Galactic Senator Padmé Amidala, Star Wars, Revenge of the Sith



There are distinct differences in Disney’s Star Wars mythology and the mythology created by George Lucas. The contrast between the two is as extensive as Russell Crowe’s portrayal of Noah (2014) in its divergence from the biblical record. Even Mark Hamill, who signed on to reprise his role as Luke Skywalker, was disappointed in how the new franchise owners changed his character.

The early church had their struggles with maintaining purity of doctrine, and with much more at stake than a billion dollar movie franchise. The biblical writers; Paul, John, and Peter each wrote letters addressing false teachings that threaten to erode faith. Indeed, one reason we have the written Word today is for use as a benchmark for comparison. After the apostles, the church wrote creeds to defend what it taught and define its identity among its competition. Creeds do not change or add to Scripture but instead seek to preserve what is central.

The Apostles Creed was not written by the apostles themselves, but dates back to the first century where the first generation after the apostles could give credit to them. It’s valid because it states briefly the teaching that God gave through the apostles in Scripture. It is Trinitarian because Scriptures reveals God as triune.

Then there were a few historical movements that gave rise to the formation of other creeds. At Nicaea in 325 A.D. the issue was whether or not Jesus was coeternal with God the Father. Their creed serves to separate us from those who did not believe that Jesus’ Divinity was Equal to the Divinity of the Father. In 451 A.D. the Athanasius Creed was used to summarize the nature of God as triune against people who said Jesus was created and that there was a time that the Son did not exist. Sometimes you just need to spell it out for people.

Over time, popes and councils began to deviate from the apostle’s teachings until they created a different system of justification. The Lutheran creeds (as found in the Book of Concord (1580) are held as true, unadulterated statements, and comprehensive descriptions of Scripture corrects the errors of church traditions.

Our understanding of God is not decided by popular vote (or ticket sales) but by what is revealed to us about Him in Scripture. Scripture alone is our source of religion truth. Paul warns us that we must test everything (1Thess 5:21) against what is written in Scripture so that we are not carried away by every deceitful scheme or teaching that comes along (Ephesians 4:14). Creeds are useful instruments as a first line of defense.

Thankfully there are no eternal life issues associated with a changing Star Wars mythology.

Grace & Peace,  
Cur † is



### High School Youth Group

Meets Sunday evenings 6:00–8:00 PM



### Elementary Youth Group

1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Sundays 12 – 1:30 PM



Pastor’s  
Tuesday  
Morning  
Bible Study



Join Pastor Ray Tuesdays at 10:00 AM in the Library  
for a study on the Book of Acts. Bring your Bible.





### HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Darrell Bittle	1/9	Daniel Lawrence	1/18
Bill Adams	1/10	Tom Cox	1/22
Marion Russell	1/11	Roger Riggerbach	1/22
Andrea Fooshee	1/12	Jacob Schwartz	1/26
Bill Anderson	1/16	Connie Haney	1/27
Dave Hudson	1/17	Christel Austin	1/28
		Adam Heckmann	1/29

### HAPPY ANNIVERSARY

Jim & Brenna Owen	1/8
Tim & Kim Finn	1/9
Roger & Louise Gilman	1/20
Vern & Barbara Umholtz	1/29



*But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. Acts 1:8*



Greetings Beach Goers & Doers:

Men's Ministry resumes on January 20, 2018.

It's 2018 and another year is upon us to bring Christ to people that have so many issues confronting them each and every day. Let's take a quick look back at 2017 to see what we did to reach out to our community.

**February:** A family concert was held at GSLC featuring Don Wharton, Christian singer, song writer, author, humorist, and plane crash survivor

**March:** The GSLC Life Team hosted the Anti-Abortion Film "Voiceless" at the Ft. Walton Beach Civic Auditorium.

- April:**
1. Good Shepherd Lutheran Church held a BLOOD DRIVE to give the precious gift of Blood.
  2. Annual Community Easter Egg Hunt

- May:**
1. The GSLC Life Team held a Church Group calling for donations to Lutherans for Life
  2. Southern District (Eric Johnson) held a Community Outreach Workshop to encourage GSLC with effective, simple, practical, & doable ways of church growth with Faith, Baptism, and Discipleship
  3. The Outreach Board sponsored a booth at the World's Greatest Baby Shower at the Emerald Coast Conference Center.

**June:** Every One His Witness, Lutheran Evangelism Program in the summer months of Sunday School.

- September:**
1. Rally Day at GSLC
  2. The GSLC Life Team hosted a booth at the NW Florida Fair

**October:** Reformation Festival- 500 years in the making at the Fort Walton Beach Landing with The Beach Brass Band, David Seering, Amanda Holmes, and Susanna Lynn

- December:**
1. A seminar on Heaven at Bob Hope Village
  2. The Giving Tree (sponsored by the Human Care Board) Christmas gifts to the under privileged
  3. Cookies for Prison Ministry

Lifetree Café meeting every Tuesday night at GSLC, Lenten Meals and Services, Advent Meals and Services,

2017 was a blessed year or anyone hearing about Good Shepherd Shalimar. That was then, this is now. How will we bring Christ to the Nations in 2018? We will have plenty of opportunities to bring Christ to our community with Lifetree Café, the Billy Bowlegs Parade, small group ministries, Rally Reformation Sunday, including ALL the wonderful ideas you bring forth to the Outreach Board and GSLC. Prayerfully consider what God would have you do for Him in 2018.

Happy New Year from the Outreach Board!





“Doing life. Doing good.”

Lifetree Café is a place where people gather for conversations about life and faith in a casual coffeehouse-type setting here at Good Shepherd on **Tuesdays at 7:00 PM.**

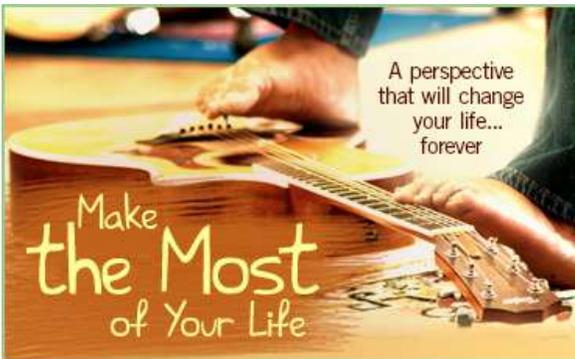
**January 9<sup>th</sup>** — *“Make the Most of Your Life: A Perspective That Will Change Your Life...Forever,”* features a filmed interview with Tony Melendez, a professional guitarist who was born without arms.

**January 16<sup>th</sup>** — *“Care for Caregivers: Meeting the Unique Needs of Those Who Sacrifice for Others,”* features a screening of the short film Life in Reverse.

**January 23<sup>rd</sup>** — *“News From the Future: A Futurist Gives a Sneak Peek,”* features a filmed interview with Thomas Frey, senior futurist at the DaVinci Institute.

**January 30<sup>th</sup>** — *“Friends for Life: 10 buddies. 38 years. 1 week a year,”* features the filmed story of a group of guys who have remained friends 38 years after graduation from middle school.

## Now Showing – January 2018





## YOUTH GROUP



Thank you Youth Group for sponsoring our Advent Meals and providing "service with a smile," and for all the baking you did for the Cookie Walk!