

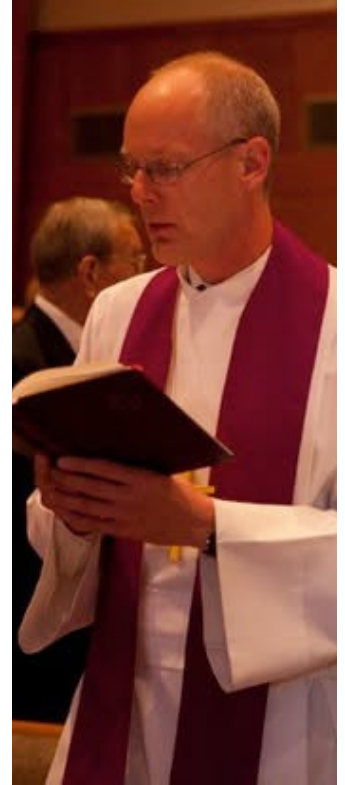


# FAREWELL, PASTOR WALTHER

**Author: Reeve M.**

As Good Shepherd welcomes new staff members, we say goodbye to Pastor Walther, who has touched many lives during his time here.

Pastor Walther served at Good Shepherd for 33 years, though being a pastor wasn't his original plan. He recalls, "My mom and dad suggested that I become a teacher. They were teachers, and they thought that was a good job. But I wanted to become a scientist or engineer, partly because I liked science and math and partly because I thought I could earn more money doing those kinds of jobs." During college, he worked various jobs at an airport, lumber yard, and construction company and served three years as a Marine. Though he enjoyed science, he eventually looked to God for direction: "After a while I realized that I was being selfish just doing what I liked for myself. I started to ask, 'What might God want me to do?'" With encouragement from his girlfriend Carol, whom he later married, he finished his science studies and went to seminary in St. Louis. After teaching at a church in Nebraska for seven years, he received a call to Good Shepherd. Though hesitant at first, prayer led him to Collinsville.



Pastor Walther strengthened the faith of those around him through his service and love. Pastor Aaron Mueller, who worked alongside him, says, "His goal was always to disciple and teach." By helping other pastors grow in faith, Pastor Walther's influence spread far beyond those he taught directly.

He also touched students' lives at Good Shepherd School. Alyssa Sidener, an eighth grader who has attended the church since birth, remembers, "When I was 7, Pastor Walther would come to pray with my grandma as she was dying, which gave me hope. Pastor Walther has become someone who represents peace and hope to me." Both Alyssa and fellow eighth grader Meghan Maske agree that Pastor Walther strengthened their faith, helping build a foundation in Jesus Christ that will support them through life's challenges.

As he leaves, Pastor Walther hopes Good Shepherd will continue its mission: "I pray that Good Shepherd will always listen to God's word and follow Jesus as He calls us to repent of our sins, believe in His love and forgiveness, and lead good lives according to His will. I pray they will always be disciples of Jesus and that they will bring Jesus to other people so that they can also become disciples."

Pastor Walther has blessed Good Shepherd's community through faithful discipleship and helping build strong foundations of faith. His influence will continue to shape the congregation for years to come as Good Shepherd carries on his mission of growing others in faith and leading those who are lost to Christ.



# NEW PASTOR

**Author: Caleb M.**

Good Shepherd's call committee spent the summer searching for a new associate pastor. After many interviews and candidates, one person stood out. Pastor Gray's fun personality and fresh perspectives made him special. These great qualities led the committee to choose him as our new associate pastor.



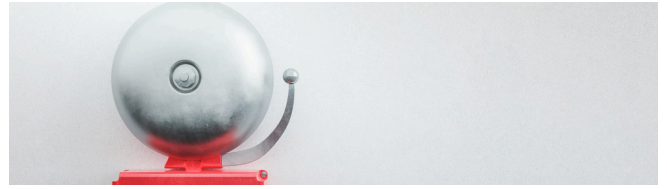
Pastor Gray brought more than just pastoral qualities to the role. While the school wanted someone who could preach God's word and had the right qualifications, they also hoped to find someone active outside the church. Pastor Gray fit this perfectly. He says, "I really enjoy running and have run a number of ultramarathons." His hobbies and interests made him an exciting addition to our school community.



Before joining Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Pastor Gray gained lots of experience. He shares, "Before I moved here, I was a Pastor for 12 years at St. John's Lutheran Church in Marengo, IA." With over a decade of experience as a pastor, plus his undergraduate degree from Michigan University and training at Concordia Theological Seminary in Fort Wayne, IN, he was well-prepared for his new role.

Pastor Gray and his family have been wonderful additions to our community. His daughter Zoe, who's in our class, says, "I am so grateful that I can attend this school; everyone is kind and welcoming. My dad is grateful for the opportunity to be a Pastor at this church and glad that he gets to have new opportunities to serve God." Our church and school are blessed to have such a good pastor with great qualities and interests. We're thankful that God sent this wonderful family to be part of our church and school.

Pastor Gray's awesome qualities and great personality made him the perfect choice for our associate pastor. Good Shepherd Lutheran Church is truly blessed to have such a great spiritual leader.



# THE NEW SOUND IN THE SCHOOL

**Author: Ezra L.**

Good Shepherd has a new bell this year, and while some students complained at first, many have gotten used to it. But is the bell still causing problems?

The school bell has both good and bad points. It's helpful because it's loud enough for everyone to hear when class ends. However, its high pitch can sometimes startle students and make it hard to focus. Chance Stults, an eighth grader at Good Shepherd, says the bell is good because everyone can hear it, but the high pitch can hurt your ears if you're not ready for it. While the bell isn't a major problem like in past years, some students still don't like it.

Could the bell be changed? The old bell was calmer and not as loud. Though students have gotten more used to the new bell, its high pitch can still be uncomfortable. Chance suggests turning down both the pitch and volume so it doesn't hurt people's ears. The old bell was loud enough to hear but not overwhelming.

What if we got rid of the bell? The bell is actually important because it tells us when classes start and end. Without it, teachers might lose track of time if they're not watching the clock. Kaleb Garcia, an 8th grader, points out that without the bell, "we would not know when to leave class or when to get to class, and it would not be efficient." One suggestion is to have a warning beep before the main bell so students can prepare for the sound.

Are there other options besides the bell? Schools have used bells for a long time, but maybe it's time for a change. We could use classroom timers, alarms, or even wristbands that vibrate when it's time to change classes. Kaleb suggests putting alarms in classrooms for grades 5 and up since they're the only ones who switch classes. This might be cheaper and more efficient than the current bell.

Students have talked about the bell throughout the year. While it serves its purpose, many want to find a different solution that isn't so loud. If students each contributed a few dollars, the school might be able to find a better way to signal class changes.



## THE FANTASTIC NEW RESURFACED GYM FLOOR

**Author: Rory D.**

Our gym floor recently got a new surface, and it was needed. The old floor had peeling wax and was dangerously slippery for basketball. While sliding might work for volleyball, it's not safe for any sport. Let's look at what students think about the floor and its history.

The floor has an interesting past. Before our current floor, the gym had a rubberized surface for about 13 years. The current floor was installed in 1997 and gets recoated every 2-3 years. The money for these repairs comes from athletics events like the golf classic and tournaments. Mr. Mayhew, the principal, explains that different companies do the recoating. This year, Designs Unlimited, who put in the original floor, did the work. Two years ago, a company called Bolt did it. With the old rubberized floor, Mr. Mayhew had to put soda and water on it to make it sticky enough so basketball players wouldn't slip.

Cali Wycoff, an 8th grade basketball player, shares why we needed the new surface: "When she was on the court she was slipping all the time and that the court was too slick." She adds that a dirty gym floor isn't nice to see during assemblies. She also points out that practicing on a slippery floor doesn't prepare you for games at other schools where the floors have more grip.

Elle Johnston, an 8th grade cheerleader, says the new floor is better for stunts because their feet don't slide. She notes that the old floor "was way too slippery, had stains in the floor and it is just old in general." Elle believes the new surface will help all athletes perform better and stay safer.

Kaelyn Smith, a 7th grade volleyball player, has a different view: "There is not a real reason we need a new floor because there is nothing you can add to it." She thinks the main benefit is for basketball, though it does help volleyball players avoid sliding too much. "It will help by having more contraction on your shoe so you do not have to just slide to the floor, but you can also run."

The new gym floor has already helped our teams play better and safer. While some think it wasn't needed, it's clearly helping our athletes. The basketball teams are doing better now that they're not slipping around. Hopefully, this improved surface will last for years to come.



## CLARINETS, TRUMPETS, AND BARITONES, OH MY!

**Author: Liam D.**

Have you been to a concert? Whether it's Taylor Swift or AC-DC, musicians use their talents to create the music we love. At Good Shepherd, we're lucky to have several music programs, and everyone takes part in at least one. But why does everyone have to participate in music education, even if they don't want to? While not everyone loves music class, it's an important part of our school that we should appreciate.

Good Shepherd has five music programs. Three are group activities: Band, Choir, and Music class. In Band, students pick instruments to play at school events and local parades. Choir students praise God by singing at selected Good Shepherd Lutheran Church services. Music class teaches about famous composers like Bach and Beethoven. These group programs help students make new friends. For those wanting individual attention, Good Shepherd also offers private lessons for strings and piano. Hunter Schubert, an 8th grader in the 7th/8th grade Choir, says he likes choir because he's "able to praise the Lord with my singing."

One reason for our music programs is that music is a way God designed for us to praise Him. Mr. Mayhew, our principal, explains, "Whether it is singing, learning notes, learning how to play a recorder, or learning how to play an instrument, you are using the skills God has blessed you with to honor Him!" As Psalm 100 says, "Make a joyful noise to the LORD, all the earth! Serve the LORD in gladness! Come into His presence in singing!"

# CLARINETS, TRUMPETS, AND BARITONES, OH MY!



Music education also helps develop important skills. Campbell University found that students in music programs have better test scores, thinking skills, and social outcomes. The U.S. House of Representatives noted that students in band or orchestra are less likely to use alcohol, tobacco, and drugs. These benefits alone are good reasons to have many music options.

Parents can help too, even if they're not musicians. They can volunteer to carry the school banner in parades for Band, bring their children to concerts and church when Choir performs, or donate to school fundraisers. This money helps buy instruments and equipment that Mr. Stegman, our Music Director, uses to teach students.

Having different music programs at Good Shepherd helps students learn and gives them ways to praise God. Above all, our main goal is to praise God and follow His commandments, and music is one way we'll praise Him both now and in heaven.

## HELPING HURRICANE HELENE VICTIMS

**Author: Zoe G.**

Should we help people in need or let them figure things out alone? The answer is clear - we should help! When disaster strikes, recovery takes much longer without support from others. Right now, Good Shepherd's seventh graders and Mrs. Hulse are raising money to help rebuild Camp Linn Haven, a place close to Mrs. Hulse's heart that was damaged by Hurricane Helene. Even if we've never been to the camp, we should help save it.

Hurricane Helene left massive damage: 1,400 landslides, over 160 damaged water systems, 6,000 miles of broken roads, more than 1,000 damaged bridges, and about 126,000 damaged homes. Around 220,000 households are expected to need federal help. The hurricane also damaged Camp Linn Haven, where Mrs. Hulse and her family spent many summers.

Group projects like fundraising help students see new possibilities in the world. Mrs. Hulse explains that these projects do three important things:

1. It builds leadership skills in the students.
2. It makes the students think about problems that don't affect them; building empathy.
3. It allows the students to work together to accomplish a class goal."

These kinds of projects also help students grow. Mrs. Hulse points out, "These projects allow students to take what they are learning in the classroom and apply those tools to real-life situations. It gives their education a purpose beyond what they see in their normal day."

The seventh graders aim to raise \$800 by giving letters to families in their community, asking for donations of \$5 per person or \$25 per family. If you want to learn more about Camp Linn Haven, you can visit their website at [www.camplinnhaven.org](http://www.camplinnhaven.org).

Helping rebuild Camp Linn Haven will make a difference for future campers. Without help now, the camp might have to close or take much longer to recover. You can help by spreading the word, encouraging others to donate, or making a donation yourself. Mrs. Hulse and the seventh graders are committed to helping Hurricane Helene victims - will you join them?



# THE IMPORTANCE OF PEER TUTORING!

**Author: Elle J.**

Need help with homework but don't have time at home? Peer tutoring is here for you! Our 8th grade tutors and teachers help students from 1st to 8th grade every week. Peer tutoring gives students a place to finish schoolwork, teaches tutors responsibility, and builds connections between students. It's a valuable after-school program that makes a real difference.

Peer tutoring happens every Thursday from 3:30 to 4:15. It's been around since 2011 and keeps growing. Students in grades 1-4 meet in the library, while grades 5-8 work in the Science lab.

The program helps tutors learn responsibility and gain new skills. Mrs. Italiano says, "Some tutors go into it not feeling very confident in their ability and leave with an entirely different outlook on their ability to help others. Some tutors also find they really enjoy it and may start to consider a profession in teaching." She's seen nervous tutors become confident teachers. Plus, the program builds friendships: "The students receiving help look up to the tutors as role models and relationships are built. I have witnessed both tutors and younger students going up to each other in the hallways and saying 'hi'. I've also seen kids running up to their tutors in the hall and giving them big hugs."

Both tutors and students benefit from the program. Mrs. Italiano explains, "It is helpful and fun for the students to have someone other than their teacher or parents help them with their homework. A tutor may also have a fun or different way they learned something and can share it with the students being tutored." Alyssa Sidener, an 8th grade tutor, adds, "If they're struggling with their grade, peer tutoring can help bring the grade up, ultimately making them happy."

Want to help? 8th graders can contact Mrs. Italiano in person or by email to volunteer. Don't worry if you're not good at everything - Mrs. Italiano says, "I am there to guide you and help find an age that you are comfortable helping. There are teachers in peer tutoring every week that will assist if a tutor has some questions. All I ask is that the tutors have a desire to help others."

Peer tutoring helps everyone: students get their work done, tutors learn to teach, and friendships grow. Without it, many kids might struggle with homework, and without enough tutors, we couldn't help all the students who need it. Peer tutoring makes our school better for everyone.



## 8TH GRADE SHOOTOUT

**Author: Robert A.**

Collinsville High School hosted its first annual 7th and 8th grade Shootout for local schools. This event brings together the community and allows teams to compete against new opponents at the start of the basketball season.

The shootout was held at the Vergil Fletcher Gym at Collinsville High School, featuring teams from East St. Louis, Collinsville Middle School, Holy Cross, St. John Neuman, and Good Shepherd. The event, planned to continue annually, offers excellent publicity opportunities as games are recorded for social media and open to live audiences. The spacious gym provides ample seating for spectators.

Kaleb Garcia, a player, notes, "If we are in this or win, people will see us as a sports school, then others might be willing to join for the sports." This exposure could increase enrollment and benefit players' future opportunities. Garcia adds, "I think we will win, especially because we've been playing together a long time; we will definitely put on a good show." The Good Shepherd Chargers Boys A team approaches the tournament with confidence while committing to give their best effort and glory to the Lord regardless of the outcome.

While this inaugural event has concluded, future tournaments will offer opportunities to support local teams. Spectators can purchase team merchandise from All Pro Tees and enjoy concessions during games. The event provides an excellent way to show appreciation for the teams and organizers.

For those interested in next year's tournament, participation options include attending as a spectator or joining a participating team. Any form of support for this community event is welcomed and appreciated.

# NECESSITIES OF NATIONAL LUTHERAN SCHOOLS WEEK

**Author: Jake R.**



National Lutheran Schools Week (NLSW) is one of the best weeks of the school year. That's why Good Shepherd should bring back some activities from previous years, like letting students vote on dress-up themes instead of being assigned them, the teacher versus eighth-grade volleyball game, and the school movie day.

NLSW is when over 1,800 Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod (LC-MS) schools celebrate and share God's gifts. Students talk about how God works through them during this special week. Good Shepherd has celebrated NLSW for decades, making it an exciting break from regular school routines with fun activities and special dress days.

Students love NLSW because it's different from normal school days. They especially enjoyed voting on class themes and dress-up days, but recently this freedom was taken away. Nolen Pickering says, "When we are told what to wear it is like a dress code, but whenever we get to pick our themes we are able to show off our fun outfits." Being told what to wear takes some fun out of the week.

The eighth grade versus teacher volleyball game should also return. Last year's eighth graders missed out on this tradition that many classes before them enjoyed. Cooper Italiano explains, "It was a fun final thing for the eighth graders to do with their teachers before they graduate and leave." The game creates a fun competition between teachers and students while giving eighth graders a special farewell moment with their teachers.

Another missed tradition is the whole-school movie day. Students used to gather in the gym to watch a movie together on the last day of NLSW. Kaleb Garcia says, "I like the school movie day because you get to hang out with friends and watch a movie. Which is something we don't do a lot." Students loved this activity because it let them relax with friends.

Want to help bring these activities back? You can email Good Shepherd or the NLSW coordinator. Students can talk to teachers or Mr. Mayhew. Spreading the word and encouraging others to contact the school could help restore these beloved traditions not just for current students, but for future classes too.

These changes would make NLSW more fun and give everyone more to look forward to during this special week. While NLSW isn't just about activities and dress-up days, these traditions make it even more memorable for Good Shepherd students.

## IMPORTANCE OF THE HARVEST FEST

**Author: Chance S.**

The Harvest Fest brings fall fun to Good Shepherd, helping people connect and welcoming new faces to our community. Like jumping in leaf piles and picking pumpkins, the Harvest Fest creates lasting memories through fun activities and fellowship. This yearly event helps grow our community and brings people to our school to strengthen their faith.

The Harvest Fest has been a Good Shepherd tradition for many years, happening the first weekend in October. Each class runs a game or activity. There's a wagon parade with the marching band led by Mr. Stegman, our music director. Visitors can enjoy lots of food - hot dogs, snow cones, pie, and even a chili competition. There's something for everyone.



# IMPORTANCE OF THE HARVEST FEST

**Author: Chance S.**

The festival is great for meeting people. Vanessa Stults, a parent, says, "Being able to meet new people and talk with other parents is the best part of the Harvest Fest. Getting to know parents, teachers, and your child's friends helps you to better understand your child's experience at Good Shepherd." Teachers come to connect with students outside class, and everyone's encouraged to bring friends, which helps build our community.

Kids love doing fall activities with their classmates at the festival. They can enjoy bouncy houses, ring toss, or pumpkin decorating. First-grader Cullen says "jumping in the bouncy houses and eating snow cones is my favorite part." It's a chance to make friendships that last through eighth grade and beyond. Fifth-grader Ceana Stults likes "being able to see my friends outside of normal school."

The Harvest Fest helps bring new people into Good Shepherd. Students can invite neighbors or friends to learn about our school and church. Pam Sinclair notes, "Yes it is important for Christian schools to continue to grow so youth will grow up in a faith based community and learn to live with God in their lives." Inviting new people each year helps our ministry grow.

The Harvest Fest builds Good Shepherd's community through parent and teacher connections and children's friendships. This encourages new families to join our church and school. The festival gives us a chance to grow our community and promote Christ-centered education for children.

# HERE FISHY FISHY

**Author: Hunter S.**

Largemouth bass fishing is one of the fastest-growing and most inclusive sports in the world. While some traditional sports are declining, fishing keeps growing. Unlike basketball and other sports that separate men and women into different leagues, fishing has everyone compete together. Adding a fishing team would be a great way to bring a modern sport to Good Shepherd.

Fishing is more popular than ever. In 2022, over 54.2 million Americans went fishing. Some Good Shepherd students already love the sport. Ezra Clary, an eighth grader, has been fishing since he was three years old and says he'd be happy to join a team. This shows how much room fishing still has to grow.

Fishing has other benefits too. It's a sport anyone can start, no matter their budget. Cooper Italiano, an eighth grader, points out that fishing would be perfect for spring when some other sports aren't active. Many other students agree.

Fishing gets kids outside and active. It lets them see the land they live on and appreciate God's creation, like the amazing largemouth bass. Elle Johnston, another eighth grader, says fishing would be great for students who already enjoy it. It's a perfect way to experience the outdoors that God gave us.

Want to help? Get outside and fish! Share your love of fishing with others, especially those who spend too much time inside. Help get kids off their Xbox and onto a boat or the shore.

A fishing team would be a great addition to Good Shepherd's sports program. It's modern, growing fast, affordable, and gets people outside to enjoy nature. So come down to your local lake - I'll see you on the water!



# BALANCING SCHOOL AND A SOCIAL LIFE

Would it be nice to have a break from school and work once in a while? Good Shepherd should have a monthly early dismissal or late start since teachers wouldn't have to stay late for their hour-and-a-half faculty meeting. Students could use this half day to catch up on homework and rest. Students are expected to balance being at school all day, participating in extracurricular activities like sports and music lessons, reading, and staying active. Sometimes, the world forgets that students are just kids who need activity and adequate sleep.

To start, school and life can be stressful. An early dismissal or late start could benefit students by allowing them to rest, complete extra homework, and spend time with family and friends. As children get older, they tend to stay up later doing homework or by choice. However, they still must wake up early every morning. Over time, it becomes difficult to catch up on needed sleep. A late start gives students a chance to sleep in, while an early dismissal allows them to nap when they get home. Jake, a student at Good Shepherd, says, "I think it would help students get their homework done because some students have extracurricular activities later in the day. It would be easier to get the homework done for the next two days." Jake notes that students have busy schedules that make completing homework challenging. Some days, school provides the only time available for homework.



Students and teachers share similar opinions on this topic. For students, a half day or early dismissal provides opportunities beyond schoolwork. Being social can be challenging when school occupies much of the day along with sports. This schedule change would allow time to spend with friends. Additionally, family time can be difficult when everyone has different commitments. The teachers have their monthly faculty meeting on Wednesdays. Having early dismissal on that day would allow for an earlier meeting time. Teachers also struggle to complete their work while making time for family. Even those without family nearby benefit from time away from work-related stress. School can become monotonous, but this schedule change would provide variety and something to anticipate. Cali, another Good Shepherd student, says, "It's a great idea. It is something that kids might look forward to once a month, and it will give them more time to do their homework." She suggests that the excitement of a half day or extra rest could help reduce student fatigue and boredom. Teachers deal with many responsibilities plus meetings that keep them at school until at least 5:00, on top of their other work. This change would help everyone catch up.



Meanwhile, the school has considered but not implemented an early dismissal or late start. Mr. Mayhew, Good Shepherd's principal, states, "Yes, we have, but it always comes down to whether it would be possible for all parents." He adds, "We have many working parents, which means their children would need after-school care and face additional costs, so we don't want to burden parents further." While students would need alternative transportation or attend after-school programs, teachers could be home with their families earlier. Since these meetings occur monthly on Wednesdays, parents could plan transportation accordingly. Mr. Mayhew believes this wouldn't work for elementary schools, stating, "No, not really, it probably wouldn't work for the elementary schools." Though an early dismissal or late start isn't ideal, it could be feasible.

You may wonder how you can help. While protests aren't necessary, considering this proposal is valuable. Students and teachers need occasional breaks, and an early dismissal or late start could provide that relief. Having faculty meetings a few hours before school starts or ends could allow teachers to transport their children to activities while still spending time with them.

In conclusion, balancing school, sports, and social life is challenging, but a monthly early dismissal or late start (coinciding with faculty meetings) could benefit both students and teachers. Students could rest, spend time with friends and family, and complete homework. Overall, this monthly schedule adjustment could significantly benefit students and staff.

**Author: Cooper I. & Meghan M.**



# THE CROCHET CLUB

**Author: Alyssa S.**

Good Shepherd offers band and sports, but what about students who want something different? A Crochet Club could give kids who aren't interested in sports or band a quiet place to create and express themselves with colorful yarn. It's a great reason to add this club to Good Shepherd Lutheran School.

Alyssa Sidener and Cali Wycoff enjoy crocheting different things for fun. They think a club could create a space to help kids with depression and anxiety. Students could feel proud seeing others use the items they made.

Principal Mayhew supports the idea, saying, "A crochet club could benefit children's mental health because it's a quiet space where children grades 5-8 could relax and express themselves." He thinks it would help students' mental health and bring back an activity that parents and grandparents loved. Mr. Mayhew suggests running it as an 8-12 week elective during school hours in the library, an open classroom, or the learning center, since after-school hours are busy.

Cali Wycoff has different thoughts. She suggests having it after school and says, "At the beginning it would be best if the school provided the students with the tools but then as time goes on they should have their own supplies." This way, students could try it before spending about \$100 on supplies they might not use. She agrees with Mr. Mayhew that it should be for grades 5-8, saying, "Some parents might not be comfortable having older kids with the younger kids."

To get started, the school could hold fundraisers for supplies. People could also donate money or materials. The club would need someone to lead it.

A crochet club would give students a creative outlet, help their mental health, and offer another activity choice besides sports and band. Parents would like that their kids have something productive to do instead of being on electronics after finishing homework.



# THE BEST DAY OF THE MONTH

**Author: Nolen P.**



Would having one free dress day each month be good for our students? While Good Shepherd students accept the dress code and appreciate not having to pick new outfits daily, a monthly free dress day could let them express themselves and show their creativity.

Having one free dress day monthly would help students be more creative when choosing clothes. Instead of wearing the same uniforms every day, students would have something special to look forward to and plan for.

As a student, I support having a dress code because it gives us rules and guidelines to follow. But one free dress day a month would give us some freedom in what we wear. The dress code sets good boundaries for behavior, but that one special day would let us be creative and show different styles.

With our current dress code, coming to school can feel like going to work, limiting how we express ourselves through clothes and reducing creativity. Cooper, a student, says "kids get so used to the same clothes everyday it would be good to have a change in their clothes so that we could show off their style."

A monthly free dress day would give students something exciting to anticipate. Cooper adds, "it would be a great idea to have a free dress day once a month to switch things up and not have to wear the same thing to school every day."

Do you think a monthly free dress day could boost student creativity and morale? If you agree, you could contact the school with your thoughts. With enough support, we might be able to start having free dress days. As Cooper says, "I think it would be a great idea to have a free dress day once a month or once a week."

In conclusion, a monthly free dress day would give students something to look forward to and could improve both morale and creativity at Good Shepherd.

Thank you for reading about free dress days. I hope this helped you understand why they could be good for our school.

# BENEFITS OF STUDY HALLS VS. ELECTIVES

**Author: Prabhgun K.**

Would you rather have a class to finish your work or one that gives you more homework? Study halls let students complete their assignments during school, while electives just add more work. Study halls offer many advantages over electives, making them the better choice.

Study halls give students free time to finish assigned or missing work. Many students can't do homework after school because of sports and clubs. Bhavneet, a Good Shepherd student, says, "Study halls are beneficial for students because sometimes they don't have time to do their homework after school, so they can finish it during a study hall." Even if students don't finish everything, they'll have less work later. Study halls also give time to complete late assignments before they become zeros. Students can finish homework, catch up on missing work, or read. Meanwhile, electives just pile on more work and stress.



Teachers benefit from study halls too. Elle, an 8th grader, points out, "Study halls benefit teachers because they don't have to teach and can get their work done, so they won't have to take it home either." Teachers need time to grade papers, help students, and review lessons. Study halls mean less work to take home on busy nights. In electives, teachers must teach, assign work, and grade more papers - adding to their workload.

To make this happen, students must use study halls wisely. This means working quietly without talking or messing around. Raelei, another 8th grader, suggests, "The best thing we could do is talk to the teachers. Also we need to earn it and prove that we can use a study hall by working wisely." Students could write to the school board explaining why study halls should replace electives, mentioning benefits like homework time, teacher prep time, and less stressful evenings.

Study halls offer many advantages over electives. Students can finish work and read, while teachers get time for grading and planning. Just one study hall could make evenings more peaceful for everyone. Replacing electives with study halls would mean less homework stress for students and less teaching prep for teachers. Study halls are clearly the better choice.

# WHY WE NEED A CHESS CLUB

**Author: Kaleb G.**

Good Shepherd should start a chess club to give students who don't play sports something fun to do after school. It could help kids discover chess and give them something to look forward to, whether they want to play with friends or compete. Some students might even earn scholarships through chess. A chess club could give kids a better alternative to video games and possibly lead to future opportunities.

What about homework time? Robert Atchisson says, "It could negatively affect their time, but they would be around fellow students that could help you if needed." While the club might take up some homework time, students could help each other with assignments. Plus, students would always have the choice to skip chess club if they need to focus on homework.

A chess club could also improve how students talk to each other. Robert Atchisson points out that "they would have to talk to more people and learn with more people and actively communicate." This means students who haven't met before might become friends while learning chess together. This would be good for the whole school.

How can we make this happen? We need to talk to teachers and Mr. Mayhew about their schedules and thoughts. We also need someone to run the club - maybe parents or school staff would volunteer. Robert suggests, "We could maybe find chess boards in tracks or the people that go they could supply it." Getting chess set donations would help get the club started and attract students who want to learn the game.

Think about it: a chess club at Good Shepherd could create many opportunities for students and make our great school even better. If we don't try to start a chess club, we'll never know what good things might have happened.



# A NEW EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITY AT GOOD SHEPHERD

**Author: Trinity B.**

People have talked about starting a school book club, but would students enjoy it? Let's look at what needs to happen to create a book club at Good Shepherd.

A book club would be a place where students who love reading could meet, read, have snacks, and talk about books chosen by the leaders or as a group. At Good Shepherd, students would read appropriate books and discuss them along with God's word.

Mr. Mayhew, our principal, has some requirements for starting a book club. "A faculty member would have to be involved with the decision of starting a book club, and the making of the book club," he said. Students would need to talk to him or another school staff member. The club would need rules and would follow school policies. Mr. Mayhew mentioned that books would need to be age-appropriate, and the club would probably be for junior high students only. He also noted that a teacher, not a parent, would need to be in charge, saying, "The first thought goes to an English teacher being in charge."

A book club could really help our school. Mrs. Hasamear, a seventh-grade teacher, said it would "encourage kids to read" and mentioned that "we are in competition because of iPads and phones." Many students spend time watching YouTube or playing games like Fortnite instead of reading. People also spend lots of time on Instagram and Pinterest. The money spent on one video game could buy several books. A book club would give students more chances to learn.

Students and parents like the idea too. Eighth grader Elise Terracina said it would be "enjoyable for people who like reading and it would also be educational." She thinks it would be a good Christian setting to read and get to know classmates. Mrs. Buchanan added, "I think it would be beneficial as it would encourage reading for fun outside school assignments and it would also provide an opportunity for those who like reading to socialize together." She suggested having a book club for grades 3-5 too, and Mrs. Hasamear thought having snacks would be fun - after all, what's a book club without snacks?

Many people want a Good Shepherd book club. While there's still more to figure out, like who would be in charge and what books to read, students should keep thinking about it. Everyone agrees a book club would help our school, but Mr. Mayhew will make the final decision. Until then, how can you help promote reading at our school?



# BRING ART TO GOOD SHEPHERD!

**Author: Elise T.**



Good Shepherd offers many great opportunities, but we're missing something important - a real art program. While we have art class during school, we don't have a dedicated art teacher. Many students want to learn more about art but can't. Art is important for education and children's lives, and without a proper program, students can't discover their artistic passions.

An art program would help students learn, and it could benefit the whole school. We could raise money by selling student artwork. This would showcase student talent and build confidence. But first, we'd need our own fundraiser to buy supplies and hire a real art teacher. As Prabhgun Kaur suggests, "We could ask high schools how they found their teachers, or ask if the teachers could volunteer or teach in their spare time." People could also donate supplies.

Students would get to choose a class they enjoy. The Bible says, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" (Genesis 1:1). What better way to use God-given talents than learning art? The program would help students understand that God gave them artistic abilities. Jake notes, "Art helps people express who they are by calming them down, as well as taking all bad thoughts out of their head." As we grow up, it gets harder to express ourselves because we worry what others think. Art lets us escape that and be creative.

Art also helps students with learning disorders, special needs, or mental health challenges. It improves communication and focus. Prabhgun points out, "The students in art are important because they are part of the community that represents Good Shepherd." Everyone in the program should represent our school well, including students with special needs.

At Good Shepherd, art could bring students together in Christian community. Unlike public schools, students here can talk freely about Jesus while doing something they love. Jake says, "Even if there aren't enough people interested in art, the people that are should still be allowed to do it because it's a hobby more people would like to learn more about." Art brings people together to tell a shared story - in our case, how Jesus gave us creativity to use for His glory.

Good Shepherd needs an art program to give students more opportunities. It would help raise money for our school, give students choices, help those with special needs, and build Christian community. A proper art program would benefit not just our school, but future artists who graduate from Good Shepherd.

# FAIRNESS IN SPORTS

**Author: Calilynn W.**

Have you ever felt something you love isn't fair? Good Shepherd has many sports programs - volleyball, baseball, and basketball - with teams for boys and girls. These teams have practices, games, and tournaments, including GSLCS-sponsored tournaments for every team except girls' basketball. Like debates about WNBA pay, people have different views on this situation. Good Shepherd should sponsor tournaments for all teams, including the girls.

Elle Johnston, who plays on the girls' basketball team, thinks another tournament would help the team. "This would provide more games which equals more playing time for the team." Her teammate Reeve Mueller adds, "It would be good for us to play in our home court, it would also raise money for the school." Coach Wycoff, the girls' head coach, says "It would benefit our team, because it would show our school supports our girls basketball program." He believes this support would encourage girls to improve and stay with the sport.

Coach Wycoff shares from experience: "Growing up on my basketball team my favorite was the one sponsored by my school and I think it's important to know your school supports you and to have a tournament that's at your own school cause more people from your school, friends and family, can be a part of it." Kaleb Garcia, a boys' team player, notes, "When we are in tournaments we record it and rewatch it to see what we can fix and it benefits our team."



Many see this as unfair. Elle Johnston states, "It's definitely unfair that the boys have a tournament and not the girls." Reeve Mueller adds, "I understand the cause of Covid, but if the boys have the tournament, the girls should also have the opportunity." Coach Wycoff agrees: "I think it's understandable if that's how Good Shepherd has always done that but it's unfair. Because the girls basketball program is just as important and big as the boys."

The girls' team, coaches, and parents are willing to help with fundraising through concessions or entrance fees. Coach Wycoff suggests, "You should be able to support it financially through concessions and entrance fees, but if you need another fundraiser we could start a raffle ticket fundraiser for a prize." Extra money could help both the tournament and school.

Good Shepherd should give the girls' basketball team their own tournament. It would help the team grow, make things fairer, and create great memories. With support for funding, this tournament could build friendships and love for basketball while making Good Shepherd even better.

# LET'S WRESTLE

**Author: Isaiah C.**

Starting a wrestling team at Good Shepherd could give students an amazing opportunity. Wrestling is one of the most demanding but rewarding sports, offering great exercise and conditioning. One of its biggest benefits is how it keeps you active, and it's easy to learn.

Wrestling gives you a reason to stay in shape even when other sports are off-season. Studies show that staying fit helps in many ways: it can lower depression, reduce heart attack risk, improve sleep, and boost energy.

Wrestling also provides a safe place to release energy. Having a wrestling program would give students a healthy way to work out their feelings. Plus, it's just fun to have something active to do three evenings a week.

During the regular season, there are weekly wrestling meets where students can show their skills and compete. The schedule isn't too demanding, giving plenty of time for rest between practices and meets.

Wrestling doesn't cost as much as some other sports. You just need uniforms, headgear, and wrestling mats. While there are competition fees, they're lower than many other sports.

Adding wrestling would give Good Shepherd's sports program a complete lineup by including a contact sport.

Want to help make this happen? First, if you're interested, ask your parents about coaching. Once we have coaches, we just need wrestling mats, uniforms, and money for competition fees. Let's work together to start a wrestling program at Good Shepherd.



# THE BENEFITS OF A THEATRE CLUB

**Author: Chloe B.**

How can theatre benefit students? Theatre teaches kids to appreciate storytelling and exposes them to different forms of literature. According to A.A.T.E. (American Alliance for Theatre & Education), "From learning to read to the in-depth study of Shakespearean literature, drama can play a significant role in the continual development of students' reading comprehension skills." Theatre also builds creativity and teamwork. The Children's Theatre of Annapolis states, "Theatre stimulates children's creativity... It allows them to step into the shoes of different characters, explore various emotions and dive into imaginative worlds... Theatre is a collaborative art that requires teamwork and cooperation." Having a theatre club at Good Shepherd would benefit students both academically and socially.

People have learned through storytelling for hundreds of years. Ancient civilizations shared history and lessons through stories passed down through generations. Theatre doesn't need fancy costumes and makeup - puppets and movement are also important parts of storytelling. According to Britannica, "It may certainly be said that puppet theatre has everywhere antedated written drama and, indeed, writing any kind. It represents one of the most primitive instincts of the human race." Schools can include theatre in many ways: upper grades can put on full productions, lower grades can sing story-based songs, and younger students enjoy puppet shows and drama games. Students of all ages like when readers bring characters to life using different voices.

Theatre helps struggling students. The American Alliance for Theatre & Education reports that students in theatre have better attendance and school engagement. It improves memory and understanding through learning scripts and expressing lines. Alyssa Sidener, an 8th Grader, says, "Theatre can benefit students by learning stories from history, like 'SIX' and 'Hamilton.'" The American Library Association adds that theatre helps teach history in new ways to new audiences.

Theatre builds social skills through listening, empathy, and teamwork. The Children's Theatre of Annapolis says theatre helps students express creativity and develop social skills. Raelei Buchanan, in 8-1, states, "Theatre helps students socially by learning how to work as a group to make something beautiful. Every person matters and makes the production special." These skills help with public speaking and working with others later in life.

Good Shepherd students can support theatre through the Young Authors Writing Contest, Fourth Grade Musical, and seventh-grade weather reports. Field trips to Springfield, IL, The Daniel Boone Farm, and Junior Achievement BizTown also include theatrical elements. Theatre could greatly impact Good Shepherd and its students.



# GSLCS SOCCER TEAM

**Author: Noah W.**

Looking for a new sport at Good Shepherd? Soccer would be a great addition. It's challenging, takes discipline and skill, and offers great exercise while having fun. Adding soccer could bring in new students and help make our school known for more than just baseball, basketball, and track. It would give kids chances to make friends and represent our school in a new way.

Soccer, known as football in many countries, is one of the world's most popular sports, especially in Europe and South America. It takes endurance and fitness to play well. Many 8th graders say they'd join a soccer team if Good Shepherd had one. Since some leagues let boys and girls play together, finding enough players wouldn't be a problem. Playing against other schools could improve our reputation and attract new students.

Soccer could help grow our school. As Ezra says, "Some people would come to Good Shepherd just for the soccer team and it could help the school become more popular." More students means more resources for better equipment and school improvements. Having strong sports teams shows other schools that Good Shepherd students work hard to do their best.

Adding sports is important for our school and students. Some kids might not play our current sports but would love to play soccer. There's even a league for younger kids, giving them a chance to start sports early. Kaleb notes, "Adding soccer to the sports that Good Shepherd has can expand our sports programs." Soccer would give students more choices for activities after school.

Soccer should become part of Good Shepherd's activities. It could attract new students, make our school more popular, and give students more sports options. Adding soccer would benefit both our school and our students.

# THE DEBATE OF CODING

**Author: Donovan T.**

Ever thought about adding a new extracurricular activity? For tech-loving students, a coding club might be perfect. Here's why we should consider it: coding helps build character, develops computer skills, and lets students express creativity. But there are also reasons why it might not work. Let's look at both sides of adding a coding club to Good Shepherd.

First, coding can build character. How do circuit boards and wires help with that? Liam Downing, an 8th grader, explains: "Let's say that we refer to possibility of this interview one of the kids has homework if that kid has a lot of missing assignments but and are focusing all their time on the extra curricular then they should probably not be doing that extra curricular and focusing their time on their homework." In other words, students learn responsibility by keeping up with homework so they can participate in coding club.



Second, students can learn important engineering skills. Ms. Italiano points out, "There are many jobs that require coding skills. Having the opportunity and the exposure to coding at such a young age can help the students decide if coding would be a skill they would like to pursue later in life." With technology growing, coding experience could lead to future job opportunities.

Third, coding lets students be creative. Liam Downing suggests, "The students should build a robot and program it to do a certain action another one could be that they could pick something to do with coding they could create their own way they could create like a program to do stuff." It's like art class, but with technology.

However, there are challenges. Mr. Mayhew raises important questions: "If we would add another one the question would be two questions one is what would we put in and take out as a possibility or our day would have to be longer do we start earlier in the day do we go later in a day and then if we do one of those two things then again it comes back back down to parents getting their students here their children here and in a timely manner and then also what about extra curricular activities after school that would be pushed later right now." The biggest issues are scheduling and money for materials.

While I support adding a coding club, students and teachers need to discuss it first. Coding offers many benefits, but we need to talk about the challenges too. I hope this article starts a conversation about whether Good Shepherd should start a coding club.

## LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

This edition of Shepherd's Staff was written, edited, and published by Good Shepherd Lutheran School's Journalism 101 class, which is composed of eighth-grade students. The newspaper is a culminating project of this semester-long course.

During this class, students analyzed many local and national news articles. They learned the key components of a news story, the importance of a good lead, and the value of citizen interviews.

A special thank you to Mrs. Hulse for rebranding and modernizing the layout of our school newspaper. Her creative vision and attention to detail have made our publication more engaging and professional than ever before

