



A bimonthly publication of Good Shepherd Catholic Church ~ steadfast in awakening our true being in God.

The Longest Season

The Longest Season

ORDINARY TIME: PREPARING, GROWING, STEWARDING

The spirituality of the liturgical season looks different according to each of the seasons," Father Michael states, outlining the focus of the present season, Ordinary Time. "We look at the public life of Jesus," he says, continuing to mention Jesus' teachings, healings, parables, and the beatitudes.

It is a season specific to the mystery of Christ in *all* its aspects, rather than a specific aspect, according to the *General Norms of the Liturgical Year and the Calendar*. (#43)

In total, there are about 33 or 34 weeks of Ordinary Time depending on the year. A few weeks happen at the start of the year after Epiphany and before Lent. However, the longest stretch of ordinary time, between Pentecost and Advent, totals 25 weeks in 2025. Typically aligning with the longer summer days and much of autumn, this season is the longest of the Church year.

As nature's seasons nudge us along with weather changes, liturgical seasons do the same. They guide us through the Bible and theological mysteries, helping us to order our lives towards Christ. In a special way, Ordinary Time can tap into the transcendent intensely, with day-to-day living and a sincere search for sanctity. (The word *ordinary* comes from the Latin word *ordo*.)

For some, "Ordinary Time can seem boring," Father Michael mentions before addressing the tendency to think of it as a slow time, church-wise. On the con-

trary, "*we should be asking ourselves as missionary disciples, what's that one thing more that I can be doing,*" he asks, urging the faithful to prepare, grow and be stewards of faith, hope and love.

"Pope Leo said something that I think was spot on," Father Michael shares, pulling the message up on his phone:

"A widespread ailment of our time is the fatigue of living: reality seems to us to be too complex, burdensome, difficult to face. And so we switch off, we fall asleep in the delusion that upon waking, things will be different. But reality has to be faced, and together with Jesus, we can do it well."

Pope Leo XIV

Ordinary Time challenges us to face reality with Jesus. It is an *extraordinary* season.

(Continues on page 4)



Practice the faith... *Awaken* THE SOUL

"It's crazy the way things move," Sheryl Ingravallo says with volumes of meaning behind her words. She clarifies and translates that the Holy Spirit is brilliant, genius, generous and so much more, moving in her life and the lives of two fellow parishioners and their husbands.

"It's so funny. We get giddy," the parishioner of 25 years explains somewhat apologetically for the word "giddy." Yet, she knows this perfect descriptor explains the joy the group experiences when they travel as Pilgrims of Hope to the pilgrimage church sites throughout the Diocese of Sacramento.

Sheryl, Kristin Brush, and Julie Bickford have known each other for years, carpooling their children to swimming. Sheryl and Kristin are neighbors. All three attend Good Shepherd.

When Julie was drawn to *The Rescue Project* series, presented last Lent during Soup for the Soul, she rallied Kristen and Sheryl, too.

"We brought our husbands, and all of a sudden our group formed," Sheryl recalls. Julie also called attention to Jubilee Year Pilgrims of Hope brochures displayed in the narthex after Stations of the Cross.

"I got excited when I saw the stickers," Sheryl reports of the sheet filled with a dozen stickers

to peel and place on the corresponding pilgrim site detailed in the brochure.

"Let's plan it out, let's go," the others chimed in, enthusiastic to visit the selected diocesan churches, pray and experience the Jubilee intentionally.

By March, they were on their way to St. Dominic Parish in Benicia. Upon arrival, they met Father Gregory Liu, O.P., the parochial vicar, and expressed their delight to be there, traveling as pilgrims from Good Shepherd in Elk Grove.

The women visited the Adoration Chapel while their husbands visited with Father Gregory for about 20 minutes.

"They had such a good conversation with him and they were buds in the end," Sheryl says of their trip highlights. The trio of couples also planned to "eat and have a beer," living true to their group logo/pilgrim name, "**Church and Hops.**" Kristen came up with the clever image, giving identity and personality to their periodic pilgrim quests.



PILGRIMS OF HOPE DEEPEN FAITH, FRIENDSHIP, MARRIAGES

"We all look forward to it," Sheryl mentions of their travels. The couples took additional trips to St. James in Davis, St. Lawrence in North Highlands, and to the Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament downtown.

"We have plans to do St. Clare in Roseville, St. Patrick in Grass Valley, and St. Isidore in Yuba City," Sheryl says, pointing to September, and "then by the end of the year, we'd like to do a week-end trip and go up north." The North State adventure would conclude their visits to the 12 parishes as they journey to Sacred Heart Parish in Susanville, Holy Cross Parish in Tulelake and Sacred Heart Parish in Anderson.

"It's like the spirit moving us in these directions and then something beautiful pops out of it, right? It's just really, really nice," Sheryl shares, conveying deep gratitude for the group's friendship. "The way God works, how he brought us all together — *how he put the three of us together* — I thank God for it," she adds.

"I wasn't expecting these pilgrimages to be fun," Julie admits, surprised a bit with beauty, awe and her own deepening faith life. "There's something really special about getting together with other people and journeying together physically and spiritually... it makes the experience more meaningful," she says.

"Continuing to learn and grow in our faith, and sharing it with such dear friends has been a true gift," Kristen shares, conveying her lifelong faith but also how she is "still learning new things all the time... This pilgrimage has made me want to experience all I can from every aspect," she affirms.

The three women often attend daily Mass, pray the Rosary and visit the Lord in Adoration.

"We go through seasons," Sheryl says, describing the practice of faith as sometimes fervent and other times, not. "This is a season I don't want to leave... I don't know if I have ever felt like this before," Sheryl discloses candidly, underscoring the graces experienced in friendship and their respective marriages.

From left: Kristen Brush, Julie Bickford, Sheryl Ingravallo

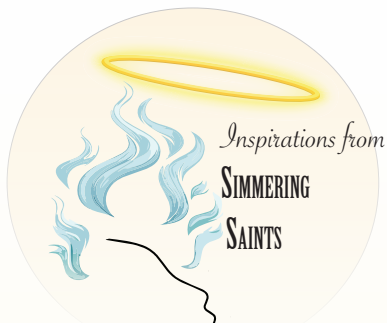


From left: Rick & Kristen Brush, Father Gregory, Julie & Jeff Bickford, Sheryl & Pete Ingravallo



Visiting these other churches has given me a comfort level I've never had before. One of my very favorite things to do now when I'm traveling is to find a church for Mass or just to visit and light a candle. It's given me a whole new appreciation of our faith, the Catholic community and how lucky we are that wherever we are, we can always find a Catholic church.

— Julie Bickford



Inspirations from
**SIMMERING
SAINTS**

The life and spirituality of Saint Josemaría Escrivá (1902-1975) made an impact on Nancy Cabangon in the earliest days of her college studies in Manila, Philippines.

"That's when I first heard of him," she says, explaining how an Opus Dei Center situated just across the street became an appealing option for young students. It introduced them to Opus Dei founder, St. Josemaría and a compelling way of life. She recalls how students could use the library and study room, and participate in spiritual activities.

"There were 30 minutes of guided prayer, confessions, spiritual direction and cultural activities," Nancy says, "attracted to the topics which were very practical."

"It was about putting the Lord in the center of our activities," she says, citing an example that made beautiful sense.

"I could convert an hour of study to an hour of prayer by studying well and with intensity," Nancy expounds, stressing the priority of then "offering that hour to God, and making the desk my altar."

"It wasn't about replacing moments exclusively devoted to prayer but rather doing everything out of love for God and for neighbor," Nancy says, effectively making *everything* a prayer. "It was a whole new panorama for me," she asserts, so much that her once two-dimensional perspective transformed almost immediately as she felt called to Opus Dei and to "living a life of holiness in the middle of the world."

Holiness – a universal call

For St. Josemaría, the idea of living a holy life while in the world is rooted in baptism. In 1928, when he founded

"A whole new panorama for me"

Nancy Cabangon reveres St. Josemaría Escrivá, the "Saint of the Ordinary"



NANCY CABANGON and her mother, Loreto, attending the Knights of Columbus Luau last June



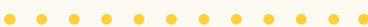
Saint Josemaría Escrivá

For more information on Opus Dei and the spirituality of Saint Josemaría Escrivá (1902-1975), visit opusdei.org.

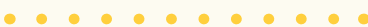
Married, single and priest members share a charism that strives to make God present in sincere friendship, authentic concern for others, and sharing the best that we possess which is our faith.

Opus Dei, this view was considered "very new," according to Nancy, who describes the vocation of Opus Dei as "living one's baptismal calling to its fullness." She explains how Vatican II's *Lumen Gentium* specifically highlights the call to universal holiness for every baptized Christian.

Nancy remembers thinking, "I think I can do this," albeit accepting and acknowledging that it is a lifelong endeavor. Opus Dei helps members on the journey.



*To do the will of God,
to achieve sanctification and
to be perfect like your heavenly
Father...*



"To do the will of God, to achieve sanctification and be perfect like your heavenly Father," Nancy recites, unpacking the Prelature's charism. "I don't have to do anything differently," she insists, noting that "I can pursue holiness right where I am... I can bring God to these places."

Nancy recognized her personal calling to be an Opus Dei member. She has been an active celibate member for over 30 years.

Nancy immigrated from the Philippines to the United States in 2010 and has attended Good Shepherd since 2018. She works for the State of California as a senior IT project manager, but she also regularly visits the Opus Dei Center in Berkeley where she participates in "forming a group of ladies" in the spirituality of Opus Dei.

St. Josemaría Escrivá's teachings

"God waits for you there in the ordinary," Nancy stresses, giving focus to how the ordinary ways of everyday life offer the chance to sanctify work and attain holiness.

"He was so magnetic and very down to earth, responding with practical wisdom and a sense of humor," she says of the Prelature's patron saint. She discusses St. Josemaría as a man of "palpable faith...so huge, so deep, so profound, and with a great sense of self-mortification.

Pope Saint John Paul II referred to St. Josemaría Escrivá as the "Saint of the ordinary," presiding at his canonization on October 6, 2002.

Nancy easily shares quote after quote and many of the Saint's noteworthy sayings.

In his little book, *The Way*, that has become a modern spiritual classic, St. Josemaría wrote, "How I wish your bearing and conversation were such that, on seeing or hearing you, people would say: This person reads the life of Jesus Christ." (*The Way*, no. 2)

Nancy uses the writings of the founder of Opus Dei as her daily guide, inspired by St. Josemaría's wisdom, as when he said, "Heaven and earth seem to merge in the horizon, but where they really meet is in your heart, when you sanctify yourself through your work."

**May you seek Jesus,
May you find Jesus,
May you love Jesus.**

Saint Josemaría Escrivá

WHAT A JOY IT IS TO BE SIMMERING SAINTS, SIMMERING APOSTLES, SIMMERING MARTYRS.

— Blessed Mario Borzaga

"IT IS EXTRAORDINARY EVERY DAY!"

Parochial Vicar Father Davis looks at what it means to prepare and grow worthily in Ordinary Time with the story of Abraham, Isaac and the ram caught in the thicket (Genesis 22)



"The season doesn't make any difference," Father Davis reflects, referring to the titles given to delineate the liturgical year. They are practical distinctions and identifiers to guide the faithful through the year, but all liturgical seasons share the riches of faith, positively influencing spiritual progress. "We go through all of them with Jesus...we are all pilgrims going along together with the real Shepherd, Jesus."

Stressing the importance of the celebration of the Holy Mass, Father Davis says, "Only after Mass does anything else come."

He notes the attendance at Good Shepherd's daily Mass, pleased to see two hundred people *regularly*. Seven weekend Masses, likewise, brimming with faithful parishioners.

"When we come for Mass, it is not only for us, it is for *all* people of the parish, and people who are *away* from the Church," exhorting the pre-eminence of the Eucharistic celebration and its sacrificial character. It is a time of *preparation* for our ongoing spiritual journey lived out in the world.

"We must make it specific. Is there anything to add or cut off in our lives?" he ponders, referring to an everyday examination of conscience. Ordinary Time, Father Davis says, is no different from other liturgical seasons on this point.

"I need to have authenticity in the spiritual journey and realize *My God did this for me, why am I not giving more?*" Father Davis questions.

"How much of my life do I give in gratitude?" he asks, unreservedly.

Ordinary Time, then, is a *gift of time* to remodel, reschedule or redefine one's spiritual intensity.

"It is a time to find and focus on whether I have Jesus in me, and if not, how can I," Father Davis asserts.

HOLY MASS IS THE MOUNTAIN OF SACRIFICE — "Every day, as I am getting ready for Mass, there is preparation," Father Davis explains of the natural sequence after waking. We shower, dress, and undertake a litany of preparations before going about our days.

"It is like Abraham going to the great mountain, seemingly prepared until his

(Continues from page 1)

ORDERING OUR LIVES

in Ordinary time

son Isaac wonders and asks about the sacrificial lamb. "Where is it?" Father Davis recounts, telling the chilling narrative of Abraham's plan to sacrifice his son to God.

"My God says, 'don't touch him' and Abraham leaves Isaac unharmed. He turns to a ram crying loudly, caught in the thicket. Abraham offered it up as a burnt offering instead of his son."

"Holy Mass time is the mountain of sacrifice and upon the sacred altar, there we sacrifice," Father Davis says, illustrating the story for fresh eyes and hearts.

"Our Lord, Jesus, is that ram, sacrificed with all our sins. For *us*," Father Davis concludes, urging a preparation that regards human failings, sins, struggles and worries as our own "ram offerings." "For humans, there will be many rams," he posits.

"I may have a ram of enmity, of bad thoughts. I may have a ram of unforgiveness," Father Davis says, naming examples to be offered up. There are "several rams in life. Look for the ram in the bush, crying. These problems, crises, and struggles," he says, *are* our offerings made pure and holy because of Jesus.

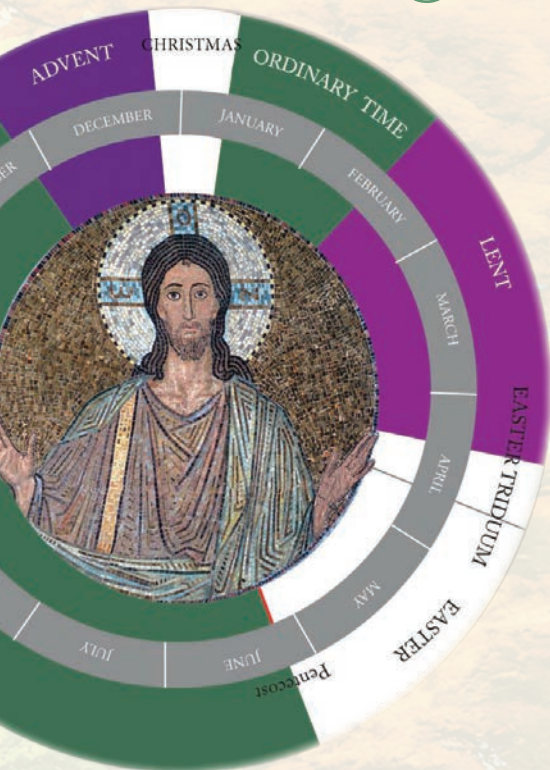
Holy Mass is the most significant preparation undertaken in the spiritual life.

"How can we say it is *ordinary*" this season of Ordinary Time, Father Davis queries, insisting, "It is *extraordinary* every day." ✚



ES TOWARDS CHRIST

ne, and always



Let us be humble preparers

"Love is not the result of chance, but of a conscious choice. It is not a simple reaction, but a decision that requires preparation. Jesus does not face his passion out of fatalism, but out of fidelity to a path freely and carefully accepted and followed."

"... prepare the Passover not only liturgically, but in daily life—through gestures of availability, forgiveness, and simplicity—so that God may dwell in our hearts."

"May the Lord grant us to be humble preparers of his presence."



Pope Leo XIV,
General Audience, August 6, 2025

CONSIDER "SPIRITUAL" BOOT CAMP

In solidarity with Fr. Michael who is heading off to boot camp as part of his National Guard chaplaincy commitment, **ENGAGE** in your own spiritual boot camp during Ordinary Time to grow closer to Jesus

Father Michael spotlights the necessity of 1) meditating on Jesus' Word and 2) contemplating His example in the practice of virtue.

Jesus is "crafting out the moral and doctrinal life for the Christian," he says, distinguishing the season of Ordinary Time with a compelling if not potent point: "If we don't look at Christ and measure ourselves up to Him, then we think we're fine."

Father Michael implores that Jesus' life should challenge Christians to be *more than fine* as they discipline themselves away from stagnancy to ongoing formation.



Please keep Father Michael in your daily prayers!

Father Michael will be on leave from Sept. 11 to Dec. 19 for boot camp at Fort Jackson, South Carolina. May God bring him strength, guidance and protection throughout this rigorous training.

BOOT CAMP BASICS — *Grow in knowledge of Christ*

MASS

"*Sacrosanctum Concilium* (Article 7) tells us where Christ is present. In the Word, in sacrament, in the people and assembly and in the minister. We're always looking for Christ. He is always trying to find us, but at the same time, if we don't look for him, he's not going to reveal himself to us. It's an active thing."

STUDY

"We come to know Jesus through the Gospels. We have *Lectio Divina*. We can meditate on the daily readings. We can read good commentaries and delve deeper every day."

ADORE

"Know Christ in the Eucharist. It's not just limited to scheduled Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. The church doors are open. He's there. Talk. Listen."

ENCOUNTER

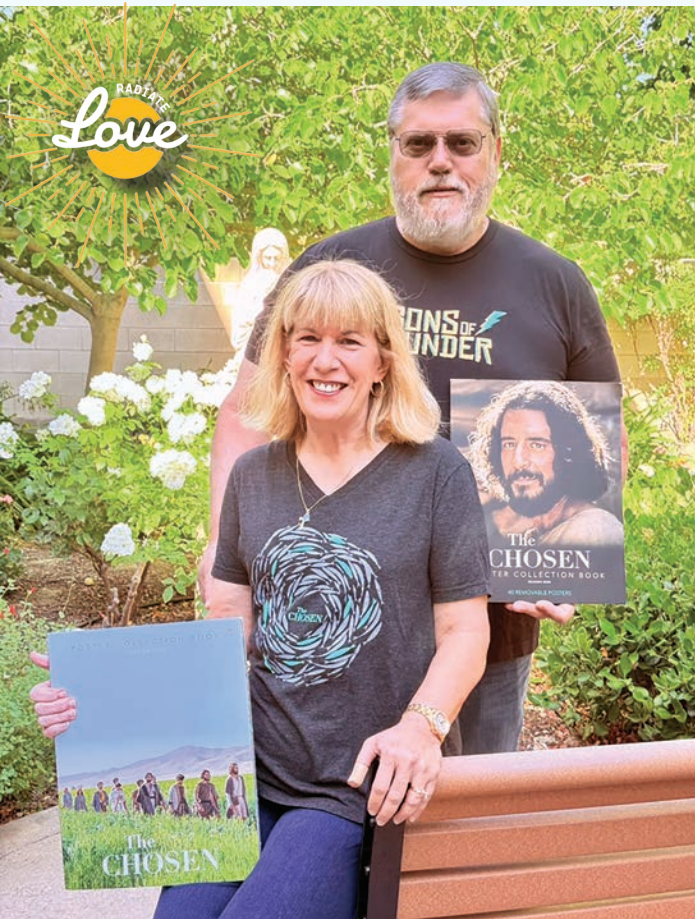
"Participate in an activity, a small group, confession, adoration... because *all* are encounters with Christ."

STEWARDSHIP

"God is in the now. He's in the present. Find him now. He will reveal himself to each of us in our lives every single day in a different way. We must persevere daily with focused habits. Weekly, give God one hour of your time (prayer), one hour of your talent (volunteer), and one hour of your treasure (salary)."

"Find holiness in the ordinary."

SUSAN & LEE SCHENCK PARTICIPATE IN THE EVANG



Susan and Lee don their "Chosen" T-shirts at home in Good Shepherd's garden. Below, catching a moment with the creator, writer and director Dallas Jenkins on scene in Utah.



"This is phenomenal," Susan Schenck remembers saying as she watched a YouTube film called *The Shepherd* back in 2019. She sleuthed a little further to discover the work of Dallas Jenkins and Angel Studios, finding several "shorts" of the same quality, and the first season launch of *The Chosen*.

"Dallas says *The Chosen* is the largest crowd-funded effort ever done," Susan adds, explaining the beginnings of their involvement. The Schencks gladly participated as donors eager to support the show's ever-expanding reach and tremendous impact in sharing the story of Jesus.

"We became regular, monthly donors," Lee says, pointing to the creators' decision to refuse studio funding and retain control of the production without risk of studio or advertiser influence.

"It is believable, and I love the backstories of some of the characters," Susan mentions having watched similar Jesus films, disappointed by unauthentic casting. "The actors fit," she says of *The Chosen*. Lee finds the series "entertaining," too, making the Bible "come alive."

Susan and Lee both share how they "hear" the Gospel at Mass and "see" the scenes in their minds as depicted in *The Chosen*.

Dallas is not Catholic, but the Schencks applaud his move to surround himself with an advisory group that includes a Catholic priest. Jonathon Roumie, who portrays Jesus, is Catholic and shares his faith prominently on several platforms.

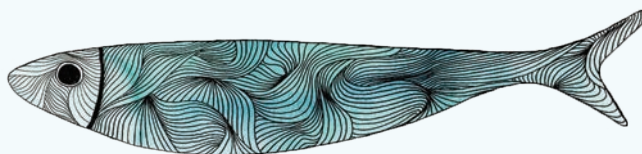
"Anything that brings people to God is OK with me," Susan inserts, recognizing that naturally there are people who don't like it or the creative latitude in storytelling. "But most people love it," she says of those she talks to about the series.

The worldwide evangelizing impact of *The Chosen* continues to widen its territory, claiming a massive and loyal audience.

"That's why we started supporting it," Lee affirms, moved by its initial "pay it forward" method of crowdfunding. Their donations meant new viewers could watch and potentially pay it forward with their donations, too.

"We got messages from people — emails — from fans who said how much the show touched their lives," Lee says, astounded by the impact of the show, but more so by the real evangelization underway. Strangers volunteered heartfelt moments of faith and told the Schencks, personally, in these communications, "you made a difference," Susan shares. "They came to faith, and gave their lives to God."

"It has just resonated with so many," Lee comments, saying as its five seasons unfolded, the Come & See Foundation formed as the show's non-profit entity for donations.



Susan and Lee in Utah spend time with the show's cast and crew to immerse themselves in the story.



EVANGELIZING WORK OF The CHOSEN

An international film sensation recognized by viewers for deepening their faith, bringing them closer to Jesus. Five of seven seasons have been released with a viewership over 280 million people in 175 countries.

Serving as "extras"

Lee and Susan enjoy the opportunity to be "extras" and work alongside the cast and crew. They have gone twice to participate in Seasons 5 and 6 in Utah.

In the early years, people learned about being extras through 'word-of-mouth.' With the program's growing popularity, the Come & See Foundation moved to make volunteer service by invitation only.

"We hope we'll be invited for Season 7," Susan says of the concluding segments that will address the Resurrection of Jesus. While the Schencks continue their regular donations, accepting the invitation to be extras on the filming site is not without cost. Extras also must provide their own transportation, accommodations and costumes. They endure 12-hour days on set with light meals, snacks and sunscreen.

Still, it's worth it. The Schencks pack up their RV and experience the phenomena of *The Chosen* together. If invited, a tiny window of time opens up for online acceptance of the invitation as

hopefuls rush quickly to RSVP. Like sought-after concert tickets selling out in minutes, the Schencks are ready. They admit it can be costly, "but we'll figure it out," Susan assures, thrilled to have a part in this uncommon method of evangelization and disciple-making.

A lasting impact

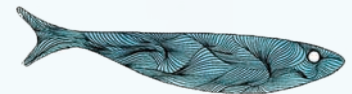
"It's a real education on how they make movies," Lee conveys, captivated with how snippets of film become believable drama.

The Schencks enjoyed meeting fellow extras from all over the world – 600 extras per day on set. The mix of people changes daily as extras come for varying lengths of time, making a unique pilgrimage, in a sense, to Biblical times. Susan indicates that a production team member inquired among extras about the miles each traveled to be there. She heard people shout out, "Australia! Europe! Africa! Canada!"

"Everyone is there because they love Jesus," Susan says of the motivation of the participants. A special assistant director manages all the "background extras," making sure they know their cues and spots as the scenes unfold.

Lee and Susan have a small wardrobe of T-shirts, released for every season of *The Chosen*. It amounts to another form of evangelization for them as people strike up a conversation with them upon seeing their shirts.

"On vacation in Hawaii, someone came up to us on the beach to say, 'I love the show,'" Susan recalls, thinking how every conversation leaves a lasting impact, as does the quiet evangelization that occurs when people simply see them wearing their T-shirts.



During 2024 filming scenes for Season 5. Thrilled to receive the invitation to serve as "extras" during filming, they hope the opportunity may come again and allow themselves in Biblical times. Fellow parishioner Vicky Moore helped create the Schenck's authentic period costumes, which all the extra talent must provide on their own.





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Womens Bible Study — [Walking With Purpose](#) — Resumes September 20 with Coffee Connect

Good Shepherd will continue with a well-received Bible study just for women, Walking with Purpose. This year's selected course is "Keeping in Balance," launching with the Coffee Connect gathering on Saturday, September 20 in the Father Phil Wells Hall.

This special journey is open to all women who desire authentic connections while exploring scripture. Women are placed into small groups that fit your schedule, meeting weekly in homes and selected campus sites. Monthly Coffee Connect gatherings bring everyone together for special talks and videos.

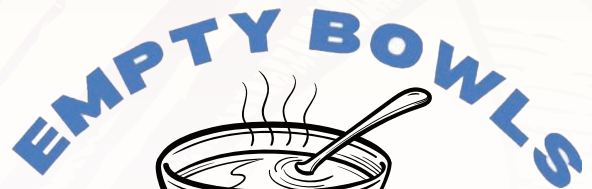
Feedback from last year's series was phenomenal. Women reported a deep enriching experience in community and a growing personal relationship with Jesus.

If living life calmly and in balance appeals to you amid the daily stress and pressures of our world, consider this Bible study and walk with purpose. Watch the bulletin for more information.



walking with purpose

Visit GSCCEG.org to learn more about upcoming events.



Join the Interfaith Council of Elk Grove in fighting food insecurity! This annual event occurs on September 13, 2025, 6:30 p.m. at Good Shepherd in the Father Philip Wells Parish Hall.

Get your tickets for \$45 online at:

bit.ly/EmptyBowlsEG2025

An Empty Bowls ticket includes the following:

- A hand-crafted ceramic bowl made by Elk Grove Unified High School District student artists. This is yours to keep!
- Unlimited soup, salad, bread and dessert provided by participating local restaurants
- An evening of community-building and celebration

