



"Therefore, Go!" Pastor Andy's Monthly Outreach Update

March 29, 2023

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

We've come to the end of another month and are quickly approaching the end of the Lenten season as well. I'm excited for Holy Week and to be able to celebrate Jesus' resurrection with you all on Easter Sunday! For this month's email I've asked one of our members, Deb Woods, to share about a Bible study that she and Mikki Senkarik (another Shepherd member) started together at Deb's apartment complex. They both felt God leading them to reach out in this way and He has responded to their faithfulness! This is what Deb wrote:

"In October of 2021, I had just moved into a new apartment complex. As I got settled in, I began to pray about how I might have an impact in my apartment neighborhood. I had been thinking about starting a Bible study, so as I met people throughout the next few months, I'd ask if they'd be willing to attend a weekly Bible study in my apartment. I shared with Mikki Senkarik my desire and sense that God was leading me to start a Bible study at my apartments. She was very supportive and said that she'd like to help with it. She, too, sensed the hand of God in it. So, we went through my complex to invite people.

The first week, no one came. But Mikki and I still did the lesson and answered the discussion questions. We came together the second week, and again, no one showed up. Before the third week, my sister Diane shared with me that as she prayed for us and our Bible study, God told her to tell me to set up all the chairs I had in my apartment because He was going to fill them. So that week, we set up the 4 chairs I had and with the two spaces on my couch, we waited for the people to come. Again, no one showed up, but Mikki and I kept doing the Bible study and discussion questions. At that point, we decided to go around the complex again and see if we could find some people to invite. That fourth week, we set up the chairs again and waited. Sure enough, that week they came, and filled them all! We began with the 6 of us and in time added others while some dropped out. We continue to have a regular group of 5 that consistently meets together. From time to time, others join as they are able.

We always open and close with prayer. We have had some great discussions and have been able to really begin to build our relationship with one another. This has been such a blessed and exciting time for all of us. We have grown to be good friends and supporters of each other. I can remember when Mikki and I shared that we were praying for one of the members for her medical tests and surgery. She shared that she had never had anyone pray for her before. She now asks for prayer when she needs it. And another member said please don't

stop. It is a lifeline for him, and he so looks forward to it. He says it encourages him. It has also strengthened Mikki and me in our walk as we see what the Lord is doing in our midst. We are humbled and awed by the great God we serve.

The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Pray that Lord of the harvest will send forth laborers. We don't need to go to the ends of the earth. We may need only go to the ends of our street, or our neighborhoods, or our apartment complexes. You can be a laborer in the field by your prayers. We invite you to join the field. God bless you as you prayerfully consider the field our God is sending you to."

What an incredible story that is! I'm so thankful Deb and Mikki let me share it. Even when, week after week, no one showed up, they trusted what God was calling them to do. I pray this will be an encouragement to each of you as God guides and leads you in different directions. He may not be calling you to lead a Bible study like Deb and Mikki, but maybe He is. Or maybe God just wants you to begin a conversation with that neighbor down the street who you always see outside. Whatever it is, I know God will meet you where you are and honor your faithfulness to Him.

Do you have a story you'd like to share? I (and the rest of our Shepherd family) would love to hear it and be encouraged by it! If you do, please feel free to share it with me at pastorandy@shepherdlutheran.com.

Peace,
Andy Johnson
Associate Pastor



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