

Sermon Notes

Life Notes

Discovering Life #1: Step Into The Journey
Matthew 4:18-22

Opener:
When you hear the word "follow," do you think first of freedom...or of giving something up? Why?

Go Deeper: (Exploring the Bible)
1. If Jesus said "Follow me" into your everyday routines this week, what part of your life do you think He would be stepping into first?
2. How does Jesus' picture of the vine and branches change the way you think about growth in your faith—especially when life feels busy or unproductive?
3. What does it mean to "remain" or "abide" in Christ practically?

Live It: (Applying to Our Lives)
1. What daily responsibilities or distractions most easily crowd out quiet time with Jesus for you right now?
2. Where have you noticed changes in your heart, attitude, or reactions that feel more like God's work in you than your own effort?
3. Looking at your current season of life, where do you see God using you to bless or encourage someone—even in small, quiet way?

Daily Bible Readings (January 4-10)
Sun: Matthew 4:18-22 Called to Follow
Mon: John 15:1-8 Abide and Bear Fruit
Tues: Psalm 1:1-3 Rooted and Flourishing
Wed: Galatians 2:19-21 Christ Lives in Me
Thurs: Colossians 2:6-7 Rooted in Christ
Fri: Romans 8:1-11 Life in the Spirit
Sat: Philippians 1:3-11 Fruit That Lasts

Upcoming Week

Sunday, January 4
COMMUNION WEEKEND
8:30-11am Morning Fellowship, FH
8am Worship & Communion, WC
9:30am Worship & Children's Church, WC
11am Contemporary Worship & Children's Church, WC

Monday, January 5
9-11:30am Food Pantry
12:30pm GriefShare, C4
2pm Memorial Service for Vern Barlow, WC
4pm Confirmation Class, C1

Tuesday, January 6
6:30pm "Seekers" Small Group, B7
7pm AA Men's Meeting, C5

Wednesday, January 7
9-11:30am Food Pantry
10am Un-Decorate Church
10am Men's Bible Study, C1
12:30pm Al-Anon, C4
1pm Bell Choir Rehearsal, WC
4pm Prayer & Praise Worship Service, CH
6:30pm Choir Rehearsal, WC
8pm AA Meeting, C5

Thursday, January 8
10am Prayer Group, B7
11am Al-Anon Meeting, C5

Friday, January 9
OFFICE CLOSED

Saturday, January 10
8am Men's Bible Study, C5
4pm Worship, WC

CH = Chapel
FH = Fellowship Hall
C5 = Fireside Room
NR = Nursery
WC = Worship Center
C4 = Community Room

DISCOVERING GROWTH
SPIRITUAL GIFTS
2 DAY CLASS
Mon, January 12 & 19
2 options: 10am & 6pm
"NOW YOU ARE THE BODY OF CHRIST, AND EACH ONE OF YOU IS A PART OF IT."
1 CORINTHIANS 12:27

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DISCOVERING LIFE

JANUARY 3 & 4, 2026

Step Into the Journey
Matthew 4:18-22

THE PULSE

Todd Mathison, Lead Pastor
Denton Bennet, Associate Pastor
Renée Bennett, Discipleship Pastor
Dirk Duhlstine, Chaplain
Kristin Holton Prouty, Director of Worship & Music

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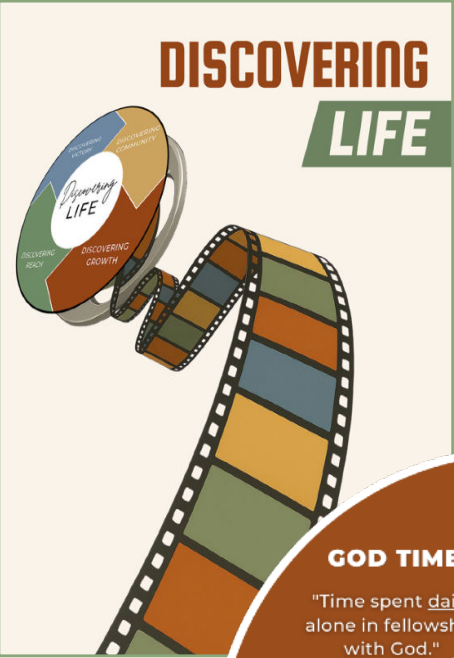
GOD TIME: *Discovering Life* — A New Sermon Series

It is easy to assume that life's most meaningful chapters are already behind us—to quietly settle into the idea that the best stories have been told, the biggest moments have passed, and what remains is simply maintenance. Many of us would never say that out loud, but if we are honest, we sometimes live as though it were true. Yet what if that assumption is wrong? What if this season—right now—could be the most fruitful, purposeful, and fulfilling chapter of your life?

This is the invitation at the heart of this new sermon series, *Discovering Life*. Together, we will walk with Jesus at the very beginning of His ministry, when nothing looks impressive yet, and no one involved seems especially qualified. We will watch as He calls ordinary people—fishermen, skeptics, seekers—into an extraordinary life with God. Again and again, Jesus refuses to let people settle for less than what the Father desires to give.

This series is not about nostalgia or chasing a younger version of faith. It is about attentiveness—learning to listen again for Christ's voice in the present moment. It is about discovering that life with God is not something we once had or hope to have someday, but something Jesus offers us now. Here. In this season.

As we follow these early encounters with Jesus, we will be guided by a simple but profound truth: **"Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit"** (Galatians 5:25). This is an invitation to move with God—into deeper faith, renewed purpose, and Spirit-led living—trusting that the life Jesus promises is still unfolding, and that He is not finished with us yet.



GO TIME: *Forward Together* — Faithful With What God Has Given
Pastor Todd Mathison

There are moments in a congregation when faith moves from conversation to action—when prayerful discernment becomes obedience. This is one of those moments. It is *Go Time*. In Matthew 25, Jesus tells the Parable of the Talents. The sharpest warning is not aimed at the servants who tried and put things at risk, but at the one who was afraid and did nothing. Faithfulness is not about preserving what we have at all costs. It is about putting to work what God has entrusted to us—for His purposes, in His time—trusting Him rather than retreating into fear.

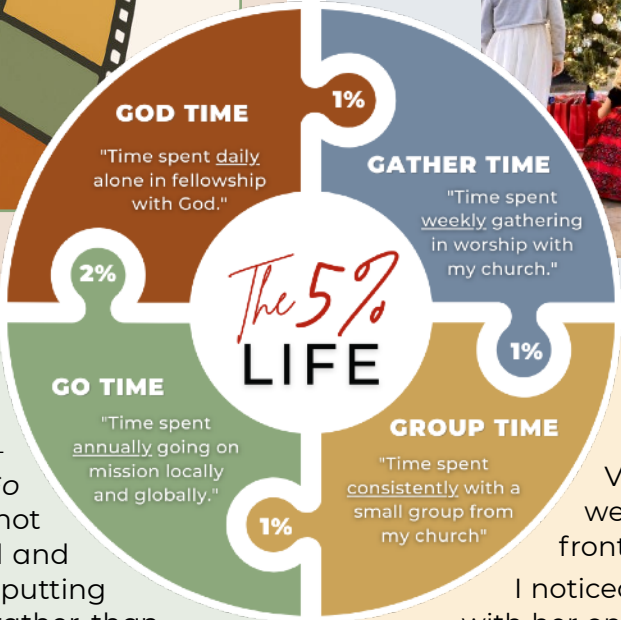
God has given Victory Lutheran many gifts: faithful people, inspiring worship, clear biblical teaching, caring leaders, and generous hearts. We have never questioned whether we have been blessed—we have. The question is whether we will step into those blessings with courage in this season.

That is what Victory Forward represents. For a defined, prayerfully discerned season, your leaders chose not to pull back, but to lean forward into mission—investing time, energy, and resources so the Gospel might reach more people. This has never been about carelessness. It has been about faith: believing God does not call His church to bury its gifts, but to use them. And God has been faithful. As of December 28, year-end giving brought us very close to covering our 2025 ministry expenses, and gifts still being received may yet bring us to fully fund our ministry. Once our fiscal year books close, we will share the final numbers.

And so we give thanks—and keep going. This is not a season to pull back—it is go time. As we look ahead, let us continue to support the ministry and outreach of Victory, trusting God to multiply what is offered in faith. We move forward not driven by fear, but grounded in faith and hope, stewarding what God has entrusted to us with care while trusting Him to use this church to share the Good News of Jesus now and in the years ahead. To God alone be the glory.

Pick up a copy of our January 2026 Newsletter for more details!

GATHER TIME: Christmas Eve 12.24.25



GROUP TIME: Meet Our Staff — Eileen Hernandez

Fifteen years ago, I first stepped foot on Victory's campus. I came with two friends to pick up a food box from the Food Pantry. If you remember your first time coming to Victory, you know the building setup can be a little confusing. Walking from the bus stop, we weren't sure where the main entrance was. Then we saw a metal gate propped open in front, so we headed that way and entered through the gate.

I noticed a woman sitting at a table with literature spread out, and we decided to stop and talk with her on our way out. That woman was Ellen Smith, who worked at Victory for over 20 years. She was leading a class and looking for new people to sign up. As we turned to leave through the same gate we had entered, Ellen said, "You can't go that way—it's locked." It's true, that gate is *always* locked. However, on that day, God had a plan. The gate was open so we could come through and meet Ellen. It was in Ellen's class that I met my best friend, Helen Buelen. Three years later, Helen called me and told me there was an opening at Victory and that I should apply. I had earned my degree in Graphic Design from ASU, and the position was perfect for what I went to school for.

Today, I serve as the Director of Communications, and I get to glorify God through the use of my creative talents. Each week, I produce The Pulse, send out e-blasts and Life Notes, create announcements, the monthly Newsletter and update the website with current events. I also design and produce promotional materials for church events, memorial services, and programs—including logos, graphics, brochures, signage, and other branding needs. I also help decorate when needed. I have been with Victory for 12 years and have met so many amazing people. I am deeply thankful for the support, encouraging notes, and love I have received over the years. I am grateful for the body of Christ and for being placed by God into such a loving church family. What a miracle it is that God opens doors—or gates—where you least expect it. He certainly did for me!

