



THE SHEPHERD'S STAFF
The Memorial Church of the Good Shepherd



November 18, 2020

MISSION STATEMENT: Good Shepherd is growing in: Faith and knowledge of God, ministry in our neighborhood, love for one another and support for those seeking Christ.

*Please check out the **church calendar** available on our website.*

www.goodshepherdwv.org

From the Rector:

What a year this had been. I think it's safe to say most of us could not have anticipated the massive forces that have disrupted our lives—the fear, violence, and confusion. In better times we would be able to find peace and stability in gathering with our church family to worship God together. It's a strange time in so many ways. However, the people of God have experienced and lived through periods of such turmoil before, and in those times the people of God were able to draw closer to God for the peace and stability they needed. Families read the Bible and prayed together, and they found strength and comfort. They found signs of God's presence and blessing in the more simple things.

As a life-long student of history I often think about what it must have been like to live through such times as the American Revolution, the Civil War, and World Wars I and II. I wonder about day-to-day life during the Great Depression, through which my grandparents lived, but also about the daily lives of people in such far away places as Zimbabwe, South Africa, Iraq and Afghanistan. I studied Russian in college so I could read the great works of Russian authors in their own language, to learn and better understand the forces that led to the Russian Revolution and the loss of millions of innocent lives.

Through all of these confusing and turbulent times faithful Christians have survived and thrived. God is still sovereign, even when it may not feel like it. We Christians believe in a good future for all of humanity and that good future emerges through life in Christ. Being in Christ we represent Him in and to the world. We are to be gentle and merciful like Him in the midst of the whirlwind. We are to seek the truth always, to be honest, to engage in self-examination, to listen for the purpose of understanding, to forgive, and to speak the truth in sincerity because we love. We hope for peace and reconciliation by repentance and forgiveness. This sets us in a different place than so many in our world today, and this world sorely needs us to be who Christ is forming us to be.

So, this Thanksgiving I'm going to focus on being grateful for our sovereign God, His beloved Son our Savior, and the Holy Spirit that leads us into all truth and new life. I'm going to focus on being grateful for the Body of Christ and all who dwell therein. I'm going to focus on being thankful for all my parishioners and The Memorial Church of the Good Shepherd. May God bless you all and your families in new ways this Thanksgiving!

Thanksgiving Offering

Once again, we are supporting Hunters Helping the Hungry at Thanksgiving. The money we give is used to pay for processing deer that hunters donate into ground venison. That ground meat is then distributed to food pantries around the state. You will find a Thanksgiving Offering envelope in your box if you use pledge envelopes or simply send in a check made out to Good Shepherd with "Hunters" in the memo line.



Vestry Elections

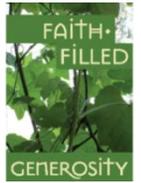
Thank you to everyone who voted and to these members who are willing to serve.

- Elected to Vestry: David Cooper, Hunter Kessell, Charles Roberts
- Elected as Delegates to the 2021 Diocesan Convention: Melissa Grega, Karen Miller, Joe Smith
- Elected as Alternate Delegates to the 2021 Diocesan Convention: Bob Crocker, April Kessell, and the Senior Warden



Faith-Filled Generosity

We have asked each of you to consider sharing your own thoughts on stewardship, either verbally in one of our services or for publication in the Staff. Here is a written statement from Dave Johnson:



First Fruits --- Stewardship

Love God, Love Neighbor, and Love Self is an abbreviation of what Jesus says are the benchmarks of all that is in the Old Testament and throughout his life as found in the New Testament. The thank offering we give in our church pledge clearly is an expression of our love for God and part of our role in the Great Commission to spread the Good Word. This spreading of the Good Word is also part of our role in Love for our Neighbor. But how does your pledge improve the Love of Self?

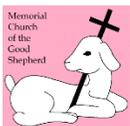
Many of the stories in the Bible about Stewardship and Thank Offerings can easily be read in a fashion that would generate self-guilt rather than self-love. Do you tithe? Do you give as the widow with her final two coins? Do you give as the rich man with the spare change in your pocket at the end of the week---thinking this is much more than the widow's two coins? Do you give your unblemished calf? Do you give of the first fruits? How could these help to generate love of self instead of negative feelings?

Let's take First Fruits as an example. Why would God care if the dollars you contribute came from the start of your pay cycle or the end of the pay cycle? A dollar is a dollar, right? Maybe it has something to do with you rather than the dollar. Look at the timing of when the church asks you to commit to your thank offering for the next year. It's on the cusp of the Christmas gift buying season. It's also likely to be well before you know if you will be getting a pay raise in the next year. Bad timing? Over the years I've met a number of parishioners that I feel were likely tithers. I don't know this for a fact, but I have my suspicions. Some of them were what we would consider well off and some seemed to be scraping by financially. Each seemed to have come to terms with managing their finances and appeared to not be overly worried about their finances. Me, I was not tithing. I had been living paycheck to paycheck but managing to work off school loans and credit card debt accumulated early in life. Christmas presents and travel to family at Christmas time was always just a few weeks away. I had been managing to increase my pledge year to year by convincing myself that I truly would not miss the equivalent of a Big Mac each week. But I was certainly not putting God first in my giving. The Bible is full of examples of God calling and the response being "Why me?" God was with each that he called and provided the support needed for the tasks at hand. So, I began to turn things around with "Why not me?"

My plan started out slow with the Big Mac increase in pledge. However, the next time I received a pay raise, I put a percentage of my pay toward that year's pledge and paid that month's pledge on the first Sunday after payday. I was getting along fairly well prior to the pay raise and the effect was to see some of the raise but not all of it. Since I contributed it early in the pay month, I did not see it in my bank balance and avoided being tempted to spend it on other "wants". The other effect was to pay off my pledge before the end of the year and provide my family with money up front to meet Christmas expenses rather than using the first part of the next year to catch up on those purchases. The accelerated giving became the base giving for the next year. Each year my "sacrificial giving" increased without any perceptible pain in the giving. It did not take that many years to fall into a pattern of planning to pay off my pledge in 10 months rather than twelve and our budget for Christmas became the equivalent of the remaining two months. We then did not have a trove of bills to catch up on early the next year. By giving as First Fruits my financial situation improved while also decreasing the financial worry that comes with any family. Surprise: First Fruits can contribute to love of self.

The pattern of applying "First Fruits" to other needs throughout my life has made it much easier to save for retirement and other such needs that are often overtaken by short-term wants. My retirement has not abated the need for giving thanks, if anything it has increased it. The patterns you build in life do not come automatically. You work at it, but you do not have to make it impossibly hard.

Why me? Why not me? - - - Why not you?



We welcome other statements – it doesn't have to be this month; it could be anytime you feel like explaining your reason(s) for sharing your resources with the church.

Pledges

Everyone should have received an annual pledge card in the mail a couple of weeks ago. Several have already been turned in, thank you!. Call the office if yours did not arrive. We hope to have all pledges returned in time for our annual pledge ingathering Sunday Nov. 22 when they will be blessed as tangible symbols of our hopes for Good Shepherd's ministry in 2021.

Advent Activities (Advent begins Nov. 29th)

• Advent Quiet

Sandscrest Conference & Retreat Center and Lawrencefield Parish Church invite interested people to participate in a four week "Advent Quiet Times". The on-line, hour and a quarter, Tuesday evening events are based on "four words for Advent" from the Society of St Julian (Awake, Allow, Accept, Attend). This will be hosted via Zoom.



Beginning on Tuesday November 24, each of the four sessions will include an opening introduction to the word of the day, sharing a scripture story as well as a portion of the writings of Julian of Norwich. There will be time for discussion or journaling. A period of silence will be followed by a spiritual practice associated with the day. And the evening will end with prayer at the close of day.

Registration for the four Advent Quiet events are free and are presented as a gift to the community from Sandscrest and Lawrencefield Parish Church. They will be led by the Rev Nancy Woodworth-Hill, Adjunct Spiritual Director for Sandscrest, and Rector at Lawrencefield. To register please send an email to Clergy.Lawrencefield@gmail.com including your name and the email address for the Zoom link and materials.

• Good Shepherd Advent and Christmas Calendar

A seasonal Calendar is included with this issue of The Staff. It includes a variety of activities to help us each enjoy all these seasons of the church year offer us – time for reflection, time for rest, time for family and friends, time for generosity, and time for worship.

• Christmas Greetings

Every year we have a special issue of The Staff that includes our Christmas greetings to our Good Shepherd family. Please email your greeting to Linda at LLBC100@msn.com no later than December 12 or mail us a note. Especially this year when so many of us haven't been able to meet face to face, let's share our wishes and hopes with each other so we are all encouraged and 'feel the love'.



No Singing? Let's Sign!



Several churches in the diocese are learning sign language so that when there is in-person church, the congregants can sign since they aren't allowed to sing. This idea was mentioned for our church at the last Worship X meeting. Carolynne Cooper said she'd be happy to teach the "Glory to God" to us. Carolynne will take 10 minutes before each service to teach a part of the "Glory to God". The first part was shown and recorded Sunday, the 8th. If you missed it, you can go to the recording. Tune in to our Facebook service 10 minutes earlier the next three Sundays to learn the rest of it. All of these are recorded so you can go back and watch and learn during the week. At the time of the actual "Glory to God", while you're learning, Sean will play it slower so you can do it with Carolynne, whether you are at home or in church. After this, we can easily learn the "Holy, Holy, Holy" as we will know all the signs for that except for one.

Shepherd's Closet Rummage News:



The November sale raised about \$750. We are so grateful for your donations and for everyone who works to sort, price and sell. The Rummage Room will be open only for Adopted Families in December and there will not be a sale in January. Donations of winter clothing and holiday items only between now and December 1st.

After December 1st PLEASE HOLD YOUR DONATIONS UNTIL JANUARY 25. The rummage team needs a break before the 2021 sales begin on February 5 and 6.

The Rummage Team is also collecting **Christmas mugs** to decorate and fill with candy to hand out to our Adopted Families shoppers. Please bring mugs with Christmas colors or designs to the office ASAP so we can fill one for every family.



Staying Connected

Someone is in the office Monday through Thursday, 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Due to the governor's order you must wear a mask when visiting the office. If you arrive here without one, just let us know when you buzz to come in and we will give you one. If you need us outside office hours, contact Mother Marjorie, Linda, or Larry at home (see the end of the Staff for our contact information). We are praying for you, your families and friends, and for Good Shepherd.

♥ Prayer Chain

We have a group of people who pray for those having emergency situations – surgery, accidents, or other crises. Linda Crocker makes the calls using the One Call system when she is notified of an immediate need. If you want to be added to the prayer chain let Linda know (304-210-5591). All prayer chain calls remain confidential.



♥ Intercessory Prayers

During your prayer time at home please use the lists below to remember those who have asked for our prayers:

Parish Prayer List

Frank Bono—healing	Tonya Wynn – eye sight	Deb Hepburn-McKinney – strength/healing
Mary Gevas—healing	Peter Gevas—healing	Geoffrey Smith – COVID-19
Carol Lathrop—healing	Ann Stevens—healing	Ed Tanner – COVID-19
Diane Cottrill – healing	Phyllis Tanner – healing	Mac Moore – facing heart surgery
Vickie Dilley—healing & strength	Donna Kapron - healing	Jone Johnson—healing of eye
Dean Parsons—strength & healing	Gene Allander – healing	Rev. David Cyphers - healing
Marlene Reed – strength/guidance	Mona Sams – kidney issues	The Rev. Canon Mark Seitz – kidney surgery

Safety for all those serving in the Armed Forces

Hannah Slusher	Noah Estes	Sterling Slusher	Donovan Burns
Lauren Fielder	Dayne Hess	John R Davis Jr	Jed Harris



Those needing healing from cancer

Glen Kirk	Sharon Burnside	David Friend	Vicky Wilson	Samantha
Dylan Burton	Patty	Steve Meadows	Dale Haught	Ed Davis
Joe Moore	Lisa Grimm	Dennis Cox	Billie	Daisy McBride
George	Rain	Keith	Tessa	Larry Seevers
Tammy Reynolds	Hazen	Linda Bavousett	Deb Tuttle	Judy Conkle
Matthew Jacobs	Ray Kidder	Jim Sheets	Mary Withum	Floyd Anderson



Deaths Nancy Marlow

We also pray for all our community's medical workers, first responders, grocery and drug store workers, shelter and pantry workers, delivery workers, correctional officers and all others in harm's way while making sure our community continues to function and meet our needs as we await a safe, effective COVID vaccine .

Outreach Programs

♥ Food Pantry

We continue to see lots of homeless people as well as local residents. Thank you to everyone who has made a special donation to keep us funded and thank you to all our volunteers.



♥ Donuts

We continue to make them available to our neighbors and the homeless.



♥ Adopted Families Christmas



Applications are in and most of the shopping has been completed. We are currently filling gift bags (black plastic bags) for each child and family. We are serving 60 families this year. The gift bags will be distributed by appointment Dec. 14-16. Contact John or Carol Lathrop (304-863-3531) if you would like to help in some way.

Inreach Opportunities

We show our care for other members as we listen to each other, spend time together, share a (virtual) hug during the exchange of the peace, help in times of need and celebrate special moments.

Those who can't be here in person are also valued members of our congregation.

Currently in a hospital, rehab or care facility and appreciating a card or call:

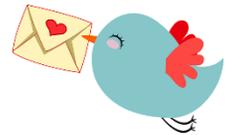
Dennis Armstrong: Ohio Valley Healthcare, Room 309, 222 Nicolette Rd, Parkersburg, WV 26104

Bob Flinn: Wyngate Senior Living, 1 Wyngate Way, Parkersburg, WV 26105 304-480-2834

Deb Tuttle: Arcadia Valley Nursing Home, 25675 Main St. Coolville, OH 45723

At home:

Michael James: 235 S. Campus Drive, Apt. 209, Parkersburg, WV 26105



Important Upcoming Calendar Dates:

November 22 – Pledge Ingathering

November 29 – 1st Sunday of Advent

December 14-16 – Adopted Families Gift Distribution

December 20 – Caroling to the homebound

Christmas Shopping?

Support Good Shepherd When You Shop!

Amazon Smile: Go to smile.amazon.com and register your support for The Memorial Church of the Good Shepherd. Return there to shop (at the same prices as the normal site) and a percentage of your spending comes back to the church.



Kroger Rewards:



This is a lucrative source of funds for our food pantry (usually over \$200 each quarter). It costs you nothing except a few minutes to register your Kroger Rewards card on the Kroger site. You will still earn your own fuel rewards. Please sign up at www.kroger.com/communityrewards or ask and we'll help you. Good Shepherd is organization number PN457. You can shop anywhere in Kroger's mid-Atlantic region, including Parkersburg, Belpre and Marietta.

Contact Information:

The Rev. Marjorie Bevans, Rector 304-679-7381

reverendsbevans@gmail.com

Ginger Smith, Parish Administrator 304-428-1525, ext. 10

gingersmith.goodshepherdwva@gmail.com

Linda Crocker, Parish Ministries 304-210-5591

LLBC100@msn.com

Larry James, Senior Warden 304-482-9661

blesense@suddenlink.net