

Church of the Good Shepherd
164 Newtown Rd., Acton, MA 01720
www.goodshepherdacton.org
978-263-5782

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Church of the Good Shepherd

Our Story Inside These Pages

Jan. 30 at 7:30 pm - Hop, Skip and Jump Bible Study

Feb. 1 at 5:45 pm - Spiritual Parenting

Feb. 6 at noon - Bread & Banter

**Feb. 10 at 9 am - Combined Service Eucharist
followed by Annual Meeting**

Feb. 24 at 4 pm - Gareth's Insitution at St. Barnabus Church, NYt

Feb. 27 at 7:30 pm - Hop, Skip and Jump Bible Study

Mar. 3 at 5:15 pm - Spiritual Parenting

**Mar. 6 -Ash Wednesday - Ashes-To-Go at Acton &
Littleton Train Stations (Service times TBD)**

Mar. 6 at noon - Bread & Banter

The Shepherd's Staff

Our story inside these pages

Epiphany 2019



A Word from the Fold

What is a pilgrimage?

A pilgrimage is a spiritual journey to a sacred or special place in which one has the opportunity for reflection and discovering a deeper connection with the Divine. Some pilgrimage experiences include journeys to well known places; El Camino de Santiago (The Walk of St. James) in Spain comes to mind, as does the Abbey on

the Isle of Iona in Scotland. Other religious traditions also have sacred pilgrimage sites. For Jews, a journey to the Western Wall of the old temple in Jerusalem to offer prayer is one such pilgrimage. For Muslims, the faithful journey to Mecca in Saudi Arabia to perform the Hajj. Among Sikhs, a journey is made to the Golden Temple in Amritsar, a city in NW India.

However pilgrimage doesn't have to include travel to a foreign or grand location. It can be a walk in the forest or a garden, sitting on a seawall or the beach. The piece that is most common to a pilgrimage is to minimize outside distractions and to be present in the moment. In this way, one can be more alert to God's presence and engaged in all the senses.

Through the years, I've been on many different kinds of pilgrimage. Perhaps my favorite experience is from a hike I made in the early 1990's in Norway into the Flam Valley. The pilgrimage began when the train I was on headed to Bergen on the west coast of Norway stopped at Myrdal Station. I had heard from another traveler while in Sweden of this wonderful hiking path from the Myrdal train station down into the Flam Valley. Unsure of where I was going, I asked the train conductor about the trek. Next thing I know, he opened the train door on the opposite side of the platform for me to jump out and start hiking.

The path was well traveled and it took me 3 hours to complete. And I am ever so glad that I did it because it was one of the most memorable experiences of my life. Walking that path on my own, even carrying a 30-lb backpack, the views of the surrounding valley and the fjord below were nothing short of spectacular! Drinking in the beauty around me—a waterfall spilling over into the valley, a clear swift running river bubbling

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The Church of the Good Shepherd

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A church in the
Episcopal Diocese
of Massachussets

along the trail, and herds of animals that dotted the hills, along with the local train that chugged up the mountainside—all were part of this breathtaking experience. And through it all, I found myself praying to God with each step and giving thanks for the beauty that surrounded me and for the opportunity to be immersed in God’s creation in a new way. It was for me a very special experience that though I hadn’t planned it, felt somehow orchestrated by God.

Thinking about the markers of my own spiritual journey and how opportunities for pilgrimage have given me a broader perspective and influenced my faith immensely, I am happy to hear that the young adults in the J2A class at Good Shepherd are in the

process of planning their own pilgrimage as part of their Christian formation. It will be an opportunity for them to experience God in a new and hopefully substantive way. As they plan, prepare, and embark on this life-changing event, may they come to know

God and grow into a fuller expression of their faith.

Blessings,
Melissa
Bridge Clergy



Senior Warden’s Message

“Christ is counting on you and I on Him”

2019 is a new year with new opportunities to bring us closer to Christ. Here at Good Shepherd, we have many hurdles to

jump. It will require the whole community working together for us to succeed. On my Cursillo weekend, I was given a cross with the phrase “Christ is counting on you,” the response being “and I on Him”. As the church and Vestry go through this transition we need to keep this phrase close to our hearts. Christ brings us sometimes to difficult places, sometimes on long journeys. This journey we are on will test our faith and beliefs in new ways. We will have some hard work ahead, but always remember: “Christ is counting on you and I on Him”. Keep the Faith in what we know, what Good Shepherd is to each one of us.



As we wait for the Diocese to send us candidates for the Interim position, I want to give you more information about the purpose of an Interim Priest and what the job is.

“The major goal of the interim Priest’s ministry is to prepare the congregation for the coming of the next Rector. To this end, the interim Priest shall:

- *Help the congregation deal with a sense of loss and any unresolved issues arising from the rector’s departure.*
- *Deal with internal conflict and help heal any divisions within the congregation*
- *Help the Vestry administration with generally accepted standards in the Diocese.”**

This position will last until the search committee calls a candidate, the Vestry votes to call the candidate, and the candidate arrives to fill the Rector’s position.

Before we can talk about calling a new rector, we need to talk about the 2019 Budget. As you may recall, I have been communicating for a while now that we have a deficit of \$48,000. Last year we had 101 pledges, which was fewer than the year before, and this year we only have 88! We won’t be able to make up this amount of deficit through any type of fundraising. Last year we had to ask for an \$18,000 supplemental pledge drive, and we in fact only raised \$15,000. So, what does this mean for us?

If we don’t have a balanced budget the Diocese will not allow us to interview for a full-time Interim or new full-time Rector. We believe having a full-time Rector is vital to this parish in order to thrive. What do we need to do to be able to call our rector? We need to cut expenses so they match our income, thereby balancing the budget. Neither the Vestry nor the Wardens wanted to take this path, but truly we have no other options.

The Finance Committee and Vestry had to make difficult decisions in order to balance the bud-

get. Last year we eliminated the paid Church School Director's position, this year we had to make the very difficult decision to change the Music Minister position to a different kind of position with substantially fewer hours.

This was especially hard for me as Tish, Sandra and their girls have been friends of ours for over 20 years, and we were instrumental in connecting Tish with Gareth and to Good Shepherd. I want to take this time to again thank Tish for her dedication to her ministry and to Good Shepherd and it's parishioners.

I want to thank Rev. Melissa Buono for stepping up during this time of transition; for her leadership, her support, her commitment to helping us all through this process, and of course her wonderful

worship services and sermons.

These difficult times are opportunities to bring us closer to Christ. We all must depend on where He guides us, as we all lean on Him through prayer. Please hold us all in your daily prayers.

Remember:
"Christ is counting on you"; will you respond "and I on Him"?"



Faithfully, Tony Geanisis

** from the Parish Transition Process for the Diocese of Massachusetts from the Office for Transition Ministry*

Annual Meeting is February 10th

Mark your calendars for Sunday, February 10th. We will have one service at 9:00 am.

After this service, we will conduct our Annual Meeting in the Parish Hall. Everyone is invited. Please bring a Coffee Hour item to share (sweet bread, muffins, crackers and cheese, etc.).

There are several topics on our Agenda:

Clergy Report

2019 Budget which is very important as we look for a new rector, thenew Good Shepherd By-laws, based on the Diocesan model, by-laws the slate of new Vestry Members

Warden Report

I look forward to seeing you there!
Gail Lyons



Junior Warden's Message

Thank-you for giving me this opportunity to be your Junior Warden. I have enjoyed serving the church in this capacity.

We had two big initiatives during my tenure: Strategic Visioning and One-to-One Listening Sessions. Strategic Visioning helped us to discover our

core values, and it gave us tools to help us make strategic decisions as we implement our goals. One-to-One Listening Sessions helped us to learn how to talk to each other to discover our areas of mutual interest, as opposed to the topics where we disagree.

Both of these initiatives will help us as we move forward in finding a new Rector. Gareth's resignation was a surprise. We are fortunate to have

Melissa in the role as our Bridge Priest. Since Melissa is part-time, Tony and I have become more involved with the administration of the church. It is a lot of work. Please step up to help Tony and Jessie as we move forward in the Search Process.

Thank-you again!

Gail Lyons

2019 Good Shepherd Leadership Slate

Junior Warden

Jessie Panek



I have been at Good Shepherd for 33 years, arriving here just after Jon and I were married and moved to Boxborough in 1985. College friends who attended the informal folk mass at Good Shepherd invited us to join them. Soon we were helping

lead music at the folk mass, and Good Shepherd has been our family ever since. For the last 25 years, we have lived in Harvard where I indulge a passion for gardening.

At Good Shepherd today I am active in our El Salvador ministry and the Finance Committee. I worked with the Creation Care Committee to make our parish more energy efficient, because nature and the environment are very important to me, and that led to serving on the Building Committee. I help decorate for special events and services, edit articles for the Shepherd Staff, and work on the grounds around the church and rectory.

I have served on Vestry three times, and I am honored to take a turn now as Junior Warden to serve our parish family during this time of transition.

Clerk Dawn Hill

I am a cradle Episcopalian who joined Good Shepherd in September 2017 when her family moved to Acton from Albuquerque. Prior to Albuquerque, I lived in the Chicago area where I served on the Vestry of 2 different churches. In addition to Vestry

involvement, I have served Church communities in many capacities: adult education, youth education, lay reading, and ushering, to name a few.

I live in West Acton with my husband, Brian, children Lydia and Orion, and dogs, Hansel and Gretel. I enjoy cooking and hosting, and relax with reading and crossword puzzles.

I am honored to be the Clerk of the Vestry for the Church of the Good Shepherd.

Vestry - 3 Year Term Denise Kelly



Originally from Boston, I was raised in a Pentecostal church. My husband James and I came to Good Shepherd in 2008 and stayed because of the welcoming spirit here. Our two daughters Shannon (age 11) and Meghan (age 8) were both baptized at Good

Shepherd. I welcome the opportunity to serve the congregation of Good Shepherd as a Vestry member, and look forward to continuing the meaningful work of the church and the welcoming presence it shares in our larger community.

Professionally, I am a relationship manager with an international wealth management company. I graduated with a B.A. from Williams College and a Masters in Accounting from the University of Hartford. In my spare time I enjoy running, learning to play ukulele, and hiking up and skiing down

Danielle Resse

My family, including Jesse, JJ (7), and Sabra (6), moved from Somerville to Acton in the fall of 2015. We immediately found Good Shepherd and have been glad for the warm welcome we received. Being able to walk to church hasn't hurt either. I have worked for Akamai Technologies in Cambridge



for the last 13 years, where my job tends to involve being a geek to non-geek translator, and turning the disparate needs of software development, information security, and standards compliance into workable solutions.

At Good Shepherd, I have served as Vestry Clerk for 3 years; I am part of the Spiritual Parenting group; I am serving as the representative to Cub Scout Pack 1 that we charter and support and have recently started teaching in the church school. Before coming to Good Shepherd, I was active at St. Paul's Cathedral in Boston as both a Verger and Cathedral Council Member, and I am looking forward to serving on the vestry at Good Shepherd.



Paul Zinn

I grew up in New Jersey and have lived in Acton, MA since 2012 with my wife, Sarah Kaufman, and children Sophie Zinn (6) and Henry Zinn (3). I have been at Good Shepherd since 2014; I attend because it is such a welcoming community of individuals that help make the world a better place.

Professionally, I am a software sales person for RingCentral, which provides cloud-based Unified Communications services. Recreationally, I enjoy spending time with my family, travelling, reading, and sports.

A Thank You From Our Former Rector

I am so grateful to everyone who helped to make the farewell and send off so meaningful and heartfelt in November. The Holy Eucharist with Leave-Taking has so many special elements, not least the special music and great singing, the prayers and Canon Parnell's involvement in the leave-taking aspect of the service.

After church there were so many goodbyes and fond remembrances as well as deeply meaningful and very generous gifts. I am grateful to everyone who planned, set up and put the Special Coffee hour together under Kathi Haney's capable leadership. There were lots of special touches that really stand out in my mind: an amazing slideshow, a memory book, gifts for my kids, copious amounts of ice cream, a British food table, very cool decor and displays as well as lots of gifts that reflected aspects of my tenure and our shared ministry over eight years.

I am also the proud owner of a watercolor print of Good Shepherd by Bill Harland (I'd presented quite a few over the years to parishioners who were moving out-of-State and had my fingers crossed that I'd be presented with one). Thank everyone who gave money towards a computer for the family to use here in Irvington. It sits in our kitchen with other mementos from Good Shepherd.

I remain deeply appreciative of the eight years spent serving as your priest and pastor. I am also incredibly grateful for all the many ways that members of CGS cared for my family and helped us in a ways that spoke to the kindness and generous spirit of the congregation. Fran and I will keep you in our prayers during the time of transition and change.

I also want to extend an invitation to you to attend my Institution at St. Barnabas Church, Irvington, NY on Sunday, February 24th at 4PM. All are welcome.

God bless.



Sincerely yours,
Gareth

Worship

Altar Guild in Transition

To prepare the Advent and Christmas season worship services at Good Shepherd is no small feat but with the help of ten altar guild members and the three “auxiliaries,” Ed Stockbridge, Doug Haney, and John Link, everything went smoothly. And a “shout out” to the Nixon family ushers at the 4 PM service. Their assistance before, during and after the service was invaluable. Many thanks to all.

In mid-November Blanche Stockbridge was hospitalized with pneumonia. With her health and stamina significantly compromised, Blanche resigned as Director of the Altar Guild, a position she says she “inherited” when Bill Heuss was Rector. Such a commitment as hers over the ensuing years is a model of servant ministry. Thank you, Blanche!

Also, Sheila Lloyd, appointed by Gareth Evans some five years ago to assist Blanche with the leadership and communications, has also resigned her leadership role as she prepares to move to Maine. The altar guild members currently are looking at some form of team leadership going forward. They are capable and committed and will succeed in supporting and sustaining the worship of Good Shepherd. Stay tuned!

Sheila Lloyd

Advent decorations, and the windows in the courtyard were decorated with wreaths. For Christmas Eve all the blue of Advent was taken down, and replaced with the reds of Christmas.

This could not be done without the help of many people. Among those who helped are: Joan Faccenda, Doug Recko, Peter Church, Kevin Gross, Emmanuel Aronie, Tom Hoch, Mark Mendoza, Jessie Cox and family, Gail and Ray Lyons, Jon and Jessie Panek, the Buono family, David Hazen, Harry Peebles, Stuart Sandberg, Beth McKeeman, Eric Grueter, Bill Harland, and John Link. I am very grateful to everyone for making this important task fun!

Ellen Harland



Liturgical Arts Committee

The annual greening of the church is done in stages during the season. This year lighted garland was hung along the sides of the sanctuary, the tree in the narthex was decorated with blue



Altar Flowers

The 2019 Altar Flower Calendar is posted and ready for you to sign up to donate altar flowers on any given Sunday. Now is the time to do so in order to pick a particular date you have in mind before it is taken. The calendar is on the wall to the left as you walk into the parish hall. The cost remains the same at \$62.50. Please contact Diane Cooke at dcooke711@comcast.net with questions.

Diane Cooke



From the Music Minister

Dr. David Miller, one of my religion professors described angels a little differently than the cherubic figures playing flutes and harps that we might imagine: he preferred the sort you wrestle with, as Jacob did. An angel, he said, is a vertical blast from heaven to earth, more like a strike of lightning, which pulls you off your feet and changes your life.

I write with astonishment now as I just had a visitation from the angel I did not see coming. As you probably know by now, the CGS Vestry has decided to cut the Music Ministry, reducing the position to a contract musician not to exceed \$12,000, beginning April 1st (before Holy Week/Easter). I am left reeling, struggling with the angel as feelings of surprise, anger, disillusionment, and great sadness come to the surface. Words like “dispensable” come to mind.

The first time I walked into the church, exactly seven years ago, it felt like coming home. It reminded me of one of my favorite churches growing up, Gareth was wonderful, the congregation warm and engaging: a good fit at just the right time in my life. I quickly came to love the church, feeling integral to its ministry and the life of the congregation. I imagined myself being one of those 90-something musicians, still sitting at the organ or piano thirty years from now — because I love the church. It has nourished me spiritually, and I hope —dearly hope— I have given something in return. And it is from this place of vulnerability that my heart will eventually open, wounded as it may be.



It turns out that the boundary between being a minister of the church and a congregant is clearly there. It will be too difficult for me to be a part of this community after being told I’ve lost my job, and that is where the sadness lies. I will miss my devoted choir. I will miss the children. I’ll miss the concerts and cocktail cruises Sandra & I have hosted to raise money for the music ministry and the auctions. Lessons & Carols! Most of all, I’ll miss you, the congregation.

It occurs to me that this is not my angel alone. You, as a congregation, have also been knocked off your feet. During this time of discernment I hope you all dig down very deep to discover who you really are, and what you really want. It feels like a crucial turning point in your future to lose both a priest and your music minister at once. I truly hope all ultimately goes well for the church during and after this transitional time.

I thank you for your kindness and support over these past seven years. I hope to have the opportunity to thank you all individually over these last weeks before my leaving.

Dr. Tish Anne Kilgore

Service Schedule

Sunday: 8:00 am Holy Eucharist
10:00 am Holy Eucharist
w/Church School

Wednesday:
7:30 am Holy Eucharist
w/potluck breakfast

- Healing Prayers and Laying on of hands the first Sunday of the Month.
- Food Ingathering the second Sunday of the month.
- Holy Eucharist for All Ages Service the fourth Sunday of the month at 10:00 am

Christian Formation

Spiritual Parenting News

Parenting today certainly has its challenges. Things that seemed so easy when we were young now are more daunting in this age of bento boxes and playdates. What's a parent to do? How about get together with other moms and dads for some conversation around various themes having to do with the joys and difficulties of raising a family today? That is the vision of the Spiritual Parenting group that meets once a month at Church of the Good Shepherd. While the name of this group might sound like we have it all together, perhaps we should rename ourselves to something like "Parenting in the Real World."



In gathering for a potluck supper, families hold hands in a circle to sing a table grace before sharing in a delicious meal that runs the gamut from mac'n cheese to vegetarian chili, pizza, and salad too. Some families have brought a stew or soup, or the whole slow cooker for a one-pot meal. Whatever it is, there always seems to be plenty for everyone. After dinner, the children move to the Sunday School rooms for a time of supervised play or a movie. Parents gather in the library for a time of conversation. We typically start with an exercise called "Rose, Bud, and Thorn" in which we share something that has gone



well in the week (rose), something we need to work on (thorn), and something we're looking forward to (bud).

All families are welcome to join us for this fun and engaging time

together. We meet monthly, alternating on Sunday (5:15–7:45 pm) and Friday (5:45–8:15 pm) evenings. Our schedule includes gatherings on Friday, Feb. 1; Sunday, March 3; Friday, April 12; Sunday, May 19; and Friday, June 7. We look forward to seeing you there!

Melissa Buono

Exploring the Scriptures: A Hop, Skip and a Jump Through the Bible.

Happy New Year! Come and join us as we begin a 2019 session of A Hop, Skip and Jump Through the Bible and give your bible knowledge a New Year's boost! We are trying something new this year, meeting on the last Wednesday of the month from 7:30-9:00pm at the Church of the Good Shepherd. The format will remain the same though and we will post the readings in the blue sheet and E-blast a week ahead of each session. Each week is a 'stand-alone' meeting so please join us for whatever sessions you can fit into your schedule (whether you have done the readings or not!). We will spend a little time on the background to these books of the bible and then enjoy a lively discussion exploring their relevance to our lives today. Coffee and cookies provided! All are welcome.

Here are the dates and the first topic:

January 30 - The Gospel of John: The Word. Reading: John 1:1-34, February 27, March 27, April 24, May 29, June 26.

Neal and Kate Ogle; Danielle Reese;
Beverley Ridpath



Church School



We have had a fun and busy fall and early winter in Church School learning about the Old Testament, Advent, Christmas and Epiphany through Godly Play (K-2 classroom) and Exploring the Bible (Grades 3-5.) Children learned about Noah, Moses, Exodus and the Ten Commandments and during Advent we learned that many people (including us!) were on the road to Bethlehem. We also learned that the Magi arrived on Epiphany bearing gifts for Jesus, and the children all thought of gifts they could give to Jesus throughout the upcoming year.



Over the next few weeks, the new Godly Play volunteers (Nora Mendoza, Brendan Bates, Dawn Hill and Catherine Conway) will begin to transition into their teaching roles by observing Jen and Julie teaching throughout January and February and attending a couple of short training sessions after church on Sundays (specific dates TBD.) We still hope to have a more comprehensive training in the early spring. Sean Coughlin and Danielle Reese have started to teach in the 3-5 grade classroom and will be rejoined by Emmanuel Aronie when he returns from traveling in mid-February. Please stay tuned for information regarding First Communion classes which will begin around Easter.

We want to give a very special thank you to Erika Forsberg who led the Church School last year; we are grateful she continued to run the Nursery this fall/winter until we could find qualified replacements. We want to welcome Beth McKeeman, Caroline Browning, and Elsa Grant who will take over the Nursery along with the continued assistance of Lydia Hill. We also want to thank Eleanore Recko, Mary Bunker, and Kathleen Zawicki for the wonderful work they do for the older youth. Lastly, we want to recognize Alex Skinner who has agreed to help us plan and organize the Church School for the remainder of the year. It truly takes a village, and we greatly

appreciate all of the support we continue to receive from the church school parents, Tony Geanisis, Melissa Buono, and members of the church community.

With Peace and Gratitude,
Julie Shields-Rutyna and Jen Thornton

Special Communion class



A new Special Communion class is tentatively set to begin on Wednesday, March 13 at 3:45-4:45 pm, and will run for 5 consecutive weeks through April 10. During this time, children will learn about the significance of the Sacrament of Holy Communion. The children in the class will receive Holy Communion with their families during the 10:00 am service on Palm Sunday (April 14). This class is for children in 2nd grade or above. If you would like your child to participate, please contact Melissa.

Rev. Melissa Buono



Registration opens Feb. 1 for summer camp: It may be the peak of winter, but the Barbara C. Harris Camp and Conference Center in Greenfield, N.H., is already preparing for summer. Register at www.bch-center.org/camp. For more details on programs and session dates, visit the Barbara C. Harris Center site or contact the camp registrar, Abby, at abby@bchcenter.org.

Youth Activities

J2A Advent Wreath Fundraiser

The J2A Youth want to thank everyone for helping their Pilgrimage fundraising efforts last year: purchasing Advent Wreaths, getting their cars washed, purchasing candy and treats. The group is narrowing in on details about their Pilgrimage, but for now they have raised just more than \$1,600 thanks to your support. There will be more fundraisers this year and more details to come. Thank you again!

Kathleen Hoch



Mission Outreach

Esperanza Academy Visit and Future Events

Jadi Taveras, Head of School at Esperanza Academy, preached at the 8 am and 10 am services January 13. He was joined at the 10 am service by Viviana Cordero, Assistant Director of Graduate Support, Board member Sarah Newton, and two former



students who have graduated and are now in private high schools. Jadi gave a sermon on the prodigal son, relating it to his personal experience and that of his brother, and then connecting to the stories of many of the Esperanza girls and the mission of the school.



We celebrated their visit with a cake with the



Esperanza logo on it, and many enjoyed talking with our guests in the parish hall.

Future Events

Visit Esperanza: Look for a sign up in February to visit Esperanza for a tour of the school and possibly lunch with the students.

Caribbean Dinner:

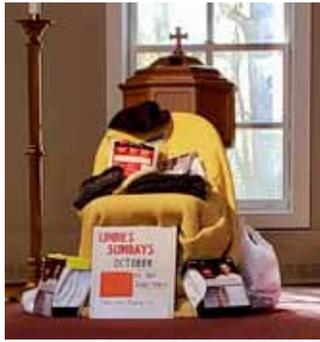
Parish wide Esperanza Caribbean Dinner at Good Shepherd is Sunday May 5 at 5:00 pm

Carolyn Platt

Undies Sundays: the Results

Another October, another successful Undies Sundays ingathering! Warm winter clothing, socks and underwear were collected in the parish hall all

month for the Lowell Transitional Living Center. On October 21, Crystal McCarthy, Development Manager at the shelter, visited our parish, dialoging at both services with Gareth about the shelter, its programs and its clients.



In early November we drove to the shelter in Lowell to deliver a careful of clothing donations just in time for the arrival of the cold weather. We were also able to tell Crystal that \$790 had been raised by our parish to help support the Winter Emergency Bed Program. Since that time the vestry voted \$400 from the Mission Budget for LTLC. Thanks go to all who donated clothing and monies to the shelter. All were gratefully received.

We were saddened to learn from Crystal that she has accepted a position in Atlanta with an organization that offers dropout prevention and other programs for children in low income families. We shall miss her humor, sensitivity, and dedication to her work at LTLC. Her first visit to us in 2017 was the first time she spoke at church services. She said that experience was a great help to her in her work. Amen! However, Undies Sundays continues, the shelter continues—See you in the fall of 2019!

Charlie and Ellie George

So Much Gratitude

This past December was the first time we opened our Good Shepherd Fair Trade craft sale to the broader community, something we had contemplated trying for years. We ran articles in local papers, put up signs on the day of the sale, and we stayed open all day right through the Good Shepherd Holiday Pops program. I am so pleased to say that it was completely gratifying to have done so! We had steady “traffic” throughout the day, people were very happy to have the opportunity to purchase fair trade items, and Good Shepherd was recognized for having an outreach beyond our borders.

I also want to report that our church community and the additional “customers” purchased more than \$2,000 of Fair Trade crafts during the two Sunday sales. We also received more than \$400 in the form of Gift Certificates depicted with beautiful Sal-

vadoran art.

In our small way, Good Shepherd was able to touch so many lives in two countries that are in much turmoil, helping these artisans have a sustainable income and make a way in their homes in El Salvador and Guatemala. Some proceeds from the Fair Trade craft sale also support the scholarship program that is critical to our El Salvador mission, but it is also important to note how far the reach is of these Fair Trade sales.

Thank you with so much gratitude,

Kathleen Zawicki.

Photos from the El Ocotillo Pupusa Food Truck Night



The El Salvador Committee held a ‘Pupusa Food Truck’ fundraiser evening in November to raise money for the scholarships we send our sister community, El Ocotillo. We had a very fun evening with delicious authentic pupusas (from La Hacienda de Don Juan in Worcester), and we were thrilled to receive \$2450 in donations. A big thank you to everyone for your generosity.

Jessie Panek



Events

SAVE THE DATE

PARISH WIDE

ESPERANZA CARIBBEAN

DINNER AT

GOOD SHEPHERD

SUNDAY MAY 5 AT 5:00 PM

Bread and Banter

Wednesday February 6 is our next Bread and Banter Lunch, which is a simple soup, salad, bread, and dessert lunch for retired, semi-retired, “older” parishioners. The theme this month of Valentine’s Day is “Songs of the 50s and 60s.” Who was your favorite? Vaughn Monroe, Perry Como, Frank Sinatra? What was “Your song”? Watch for the sign-up sheet in the Parish Hall on Sunday February 3. Come and join us!



For March:

The theme for March’s Bread and Banter on the 6th is, you guessed it, everyone’s favourite saint, Patrick. Wear green if you like (or orange if you prefer!).

Committee News

Finance Committee

We started the 2018 year with a deficit budget of almost \$36,000. At year end the deficit was reduced to \$8,000, because of the generosity of our congregation during the supplemental pledge drive and reduced staffing expenses by the elimination of a paid youth minister position as well as the rector departing a month early. A BIG thank you to all who pledged during the stewardship drive. However, as of year end, the amounts pledged for 2019 are significantly less than the goal by \$48,000.

As part of the transition activities, in early December, our finances were audited by a congregational consultant. Some significant risks identified for the next few years were:

- a. Increases in total rector expenses that will have to be budgeted for because of the uncertainty of how the rectory will be used
- b. Gradual decline in number of pledges and total pledges over the past few years, and a significant percent of operating expenses borne by pledges

c. No large endowment funds to draw from to offset any uncertainties (actually, no endowments) Her recommendation was that expenses should be reduced so that the budget is balanced, and a further review in February after details of 2019 pledges are known.

The finance committee presented a draft budget with several scenarios for 2019 for discussion and approval by vestry at the Jan meeting. Of particular concern is how to address the \$48,000 deficit. The 2019 budget is currently being refined for final approval by the vestry.

The annual statements of all your 2018 contributions have been mailed. Please take a moment to review them and make sure they match with your records. Please contact Harry Johnson hjoh1709@aol.com for any clarifications.

My sincere thanks to the several people who spend many hours planning and reviewing the numbers, counting and keeping track of your donations, and writing the checks. And a BIG THANK YOU to all members who support this church with your generous donations.

Jason Davis

Coffee Hour Hosts Needed for March - June

It's time to fill up the schedule for coffee hosts!

Do you want to volunteer for something at Good Shepherd but don't have the time for meetings or a lengthy commitment? Being a Coffee Hour Host could be just the fit for you!

As you likely know, volunteers make coffee and bring snacks to share after the 10 am service every Sunday. We are VERY grateful to all those people who stepped up to host in the past months. Your time and treats are appreciated!



What do you need to know to be a host?

- Making coffee is easy! We have a very simple coffee machine and use thermal canisters to keep the coffee hot.
- You don't need to bring a banquet of food. Coffee hour is not a meal; it should be a light snack and beverage that provides people time to be in community with each other.
- The new dishwasher is SO EASY! No more opening, closing, pray, repeat!
- Consider teaming up with a friend or spouse. Or we can pair you with a well-trained host to show you the ropes.
- There are written instructions for everything and other are always willing to answer questions and offer helping hands.
- Everyone really appreciates your efforts—Who doesn't love it when there are snacks and coffee waiting for them?

I previously sent an email using Sign-Up Genius that included dates for the winter through

June. I will send another reminder soon. I also have the schedule and sign up available at the church for easy reference.

Please contact me with questions.

See you at Coffee Hour!

Debby Flint-Baum

Stewardship Express

Thank-you to everyone who pledged this year. Good Shepherd is funded by all of us. Your pledge enables us to pay the staff, maintain the church building and the Rectory, and support the Diocese. This infrastructure allows us the opportunity to participate in meaningful worship and engaging missions. Our missions do make a difference in the world.

The Stewardship Express was successful! \$311,376 was pledged for 2019, which is a 4.2% increase from 2018. However, there were thirteen people who had pledged last year who did not pledge this year. Some of this was expected: some people have moved away, other have passed away, and some families are dealing with severe illness. Only one new pledger was added for 2019.

Thank-you for supporting your church,

Gail Lyons



Building Committee Update

Keeping the heat on in the church building is of course one of the important jobs the Building Committee does, and it seems there is always something that needs attention in this area. Recently it seems we had a power surge which damaged the main controller in the variable-speed large circulator which pushes heat through the parish hall/office/library wing of the church. The result was an emergency repair with the installation of a slightly smaller (but readily available) circulator. This has been keeping the space mostly warm for several weeks now.

We are currently waiting for an insurance claim to be processed in hopes that insurance will pay for the cost of this repair, which is going to cost about \$6,000 by the time the special large circulator is repaired or replaced appropriately. We plan to install

a surge protector to prevent a reoccurrence of this problem as well. Just like our individual homes, our church home constantly needs repairs!

Jessie Panek

Rectory Update



We will be starting the process of repairing and painting the Rectory soon. Barbara Meglis and Ken Kozik helped go through the Rectory to make a list of repairs needed.

The Vestry is looking for someone to organize the project and recruit volunteers, i.e. create signup sheets, figure out needed supplies, set dates, etc. The organizer doesn't necessarily have to do the work. We will need help with painting, cleaning as well handyman skills.

The first thing we have to do is clear out the house, then patch nail holes in the walls and give the rooms a fresh coat of paint. In addition, we plan to re-grout one of the bathrooms and decide if we need to give the kitchen a facelift. Because of the deficit budget this year, donations to offset the cost will be necessary and welcomed. If you're able to help fund any of the work/supplies, please put a check in the offering and write 'rectory' in the subject space.

We need to make the property improvements ASAP in case the future Interim or the new Rector

chooses to use the rectory. We might also offer the rectory for a short-term rental if needed; that will be up to the Vestry.

Please contact Tony Geanisis if you're willing to share your time and talent in any of the above ways.

Thank you for your help,
Tony Geanisis

Newcomer's Committee

In this time of transition and as we begin a new year, the Newcomers Committee has established several specific goals for 2019. We hope to do the following:

1. Improve follow-up for individuals and families to try to connect them more fully with the Parish.
2. Expand membership of this Committee to include younger parish members.
3. Coordinate with Greeters to renew a push for wearing nametags as we prepare for an interim minister.
4. Better coordinate with church administrator.

In addition, the Committee is working to do a better job of defining 'Newcomer' and determining how and when Newcomers can be identified (versus people who are just visiting).

The Newcomer Committee currently includes Andy Platt and Karen Pupo, co-chairs, Wendy Feddersen, greeter coordinator, Diane Cooke, vestry liaison, and at large member Cindy Woodman. If you would like to help reach out to and integrate newcomers into the parish, you would be very welcome to join the committee.

Andy Platt

Administration

Vestry Vignettes November

Report from our Scout Pack:

We have rechartered with our Scout Pack; they are one of the few packs in the area which have already begun to accept girls, there are 68 children in the Pack. Troop 284 and Pack 1 did the clean up

at the church and the Rectory for which we are very grateful.

Report from the Rector:

Gareth and Danielle discussed the the recent Diocesan Convention and resolutions which were passed.

Treasurer's Report:

Variations from the budget are not too far off, because current pledges and plate income are

slightly higher than anticipated. At this time we've received \$274,378 in pledges, with 35 pledge units still not replying, Tony will personally email them this week. At this date we have a budget shortfall of \$85,622 for our 2019 budget.

Betsy Anderson from the Diocese will be our financial consultant who be reviewing our financial state and working with the Bishop to help decide if we can afford a full time rector.

Harry Johnson has started working on our 2019 budget, and documents are ready to be packaged for our Annual Audit.

Warden's Report

Due to an administrative snafu there was a \$5,000 fee on our elevator, Ray Lyons and Jason Davis appealed the issue and the fee was waived. People are submitting names for the Search Committee to Tony; once the list is complete the Vestry will pray over them and discern who needs to be called. We discussed Vestry terms and getting a Nominating Committee together. We also discussed the need to change some by-laws to bring them inline with the recommendations from the Diocese; a committee will be formed.

New Business:

Melissa was approved as our Bridge clergy person.

Vestry Vignettes December

Interim Clergy Reflection:

Practicing generosity

Treasurer's Report:

With Income and Expenses we are at a negative \$13, 675 which is actually better than anticipated. We will have a large expense coming up for heating pump repairs (aprox. \$6,000), and we need to set aside \$1,200 for Mission Outreach.

Stewardship and Pledge status: we received 82 pledges; still missing 19 for a shortfall of \$64,300.

Harry has started budgeting for next year. Some unknown factors are Housing and Insurance for the new Interim Rector. The current financial situation does not look encouraging when we are trying to attract the right rector.

We need to form a year round Stewardship Committee for better education around all areas of stewardship. The vestry also discussed the need to have more parish-wide meetings during this transi-

tion time. Bridge priest compensation was discussed and we will follow Diocesan Guidelines.

Betsy Anderson, our Diocesan Financial advisor, met with Harry, Tony, and Jason to review finances and property. Her impressions were that our finances have always been on the edge, just balancing the budget by the end of the year, and that we do not have any large endowments to give us any kind of a cushion. She will send us a report in a couple of weeks.

Diane Zimmerman-Decker will lead our audit. The documents will be given to her.

Warden's Report:

Search Committee:

Chris O'Leary has agreed to chair the Search Committee. Tony requested that we all pray over the confidential list of names to serve on the committee because we want the members to be a true representation of the entire congregation.

Warden's Report:

The church by-laws are being reviewed by a small group so that they can be brought in line with Diocesan models.

Erika Forsberg turned in her resignation as Nursery care-taker. We will be looking to replace her with all candidates being CORIed.

Heating system repairs—The circulator for the parish hall failed over Thanksgiving and we are currently using a temporary circulator. The entire cost estimate is \$2,500. We will have to make decisions regarding replacement or repairs.

New Business:

We voted to divide our Mission Outreach budget into three equal parts going to the Lowell Transitional Shelter, Esperanza Academy, and the El Octotillo Education Fund.

We approved bringing Jeannette McDonald back for six hours for a Vestry Retreat.

Vestry Vignettes January

We opened with prayer led by RuthAnn.

J2A Pilgrimage Report given by Kathleen:

The group this year will be too small to fit the criteria for the company which we used for the last two pilgrimages and they are looking for another provider. They need to go on their pilgrimage between the end of school and July 4th, with 4 girls

going. They've already raised over \$1,600 and still will need to raise another \$400. This is a considered a spiritual pilgrimage, not just a week of working to help others. The best retreats combine both; if you have any ideas, please share them with Kathleen Zawicki.

Treasurer's Report:

Summary shows that till Dec 31, 2018 we are negative \$8,365. We were budgeted to be at negative \$25,860. This is \$27,495 better than anticipated. Fortunately the variations from the budget are not too far off. Current year pledges and plate are slightly higher. There was about \$14,600 collected from supplemental pledge drive (\$15,585 pledged). Jason presented several potential Budgets for 2019 and the Vestry discussed them in Executive Session.

Warden's Report:

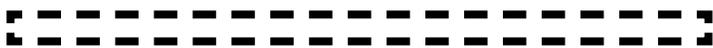
The Vestry reviewed the By-Law-Changes and Tony will present the changes at Annual Meeting. The Vestry thanks the subcommittee of Danielle Reese, Marilyn Fedele, Margaret Haley, Ray Lyons, Ton Coach and Chair Jessie Panek.

Search Committee Update: Tony summarized the meeting with consultant Bob Malone, who discussed guidelines and tasks for the Search Committee, described his consulting costs, and answered some questions. Search Committee Chair Chris O'Leary reported that he has contacted potential Search Committee members and four have accepted the call. The goal is to commission the committee at the combined service at 9:00 am on February 10.

Passages

Baptisms

On January 6, 2019 **Henry Joseph D'Amelio** was baptized. He is the son of George and Christine D'Amelio.



Pageant Images

