

The Shepherd's Staff

October, 2023



Oct. 28 at 10 am - Men's Group

Oct. 29 Holy Eucharist at 8 & 10 am, w/handbells at 10

November Food Drive

Nov. 4 at 10 am - Men's Group

Nov 5 - at 8 & 10 am - All Saints' Day, with Baptism

Stewardship Program Kick-off, Church School at 10 am

Nov. 11 at 10 am - Men's Group

Nov. 12 at 8 & 10 am - Holy Eucharist at 8 & 10 am

Nov. 16-19 - Cursillo Weekend

Nov. 18 at 10 am - Men's Group

Nov. 19 at 8 & 10 - Holy Eucharist, Church School at 10

Nov. 25 at 10 am - Men's Group

Nov. 26 at 8 & 10 - Holy Eucharist,

Christ the King Sunday, Ingathering Sunday Advent

December Esperanza Book Drive

Dec. 2 at 10 am - **Advent Church Decorating Begins**

Dec. 3rd at 8 & 10 am - First Sunday of Advent

Contents

Word from the Fold	2
Warden's & Messages	3
Worship	4 - 6
Christian Formation	7 - 9
Mission Outreach	10 - 13
Events	13 - 15
Ministry News	16 - 17
Abundant Gratitude	17
Administration	17 - 20
Passages	20
If you need to contact...	21

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<https://goodshepherdacton.org>

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Episcopal Diocese of Massachusetts

A Word from the Fold

Open for Prayer



A few weeks ago, I woke up early after a fitful night of sleep. As I tried to fall back asleep, I suddenly had a very clear sense that I needed to make the church available for prayer that day. It was a Thursday. So, when I arrived at church that morning, I scrounged around, found a dry erase sign board in a closet, and hastily wrote the words that had come to me in prayer: “Seeking Peace? Church Open for Prayer”. I placed it by the entrance to the driveway on Newtown Road.

Less than half an hour later a man walked in. He had been jogging by and saw the sign. As we watched him approach the building, Ellen Oak and I looked at each other and smiled. That was easy! It turned out he was looking for a restroom. But he admitted he would not have known to come in, had he not seen the sign. He was very appreciative. I laughed to myself thinking that this was God’s sense of humor at work.

Many hours later, as I was getting ready to head home, I noticed a woman standing in the courtyard. After a few moments she entered the building, went up the stairs and spent about fifteen minutes in the church before quietly leaving. I do not know who she was. I do not know what she needed. But I know that she was the reason God had woken me up that morning.

entered the building, went up the stairs and spent about fifteen minutes in the church before quietly leaving. I do not know who she was. I do not know what she needed. But I know that she was the reason God had woken me up that morning.

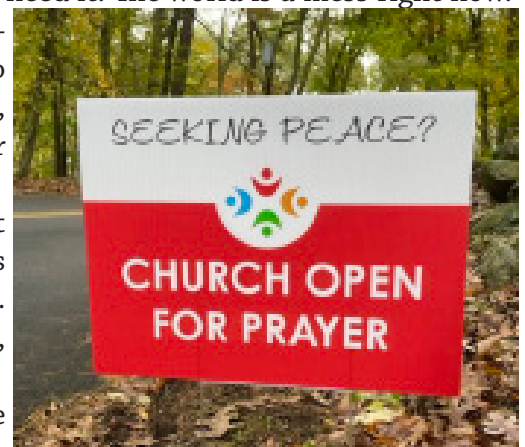
A parish church like ours has many functions. Many reasons for being. If I asked you to list a few you might say: to be a place of worship; to share God’s Good News; to build and find community; to form Christians; to follow Jesus; to support one another in times of challenge and joy, to make a difference in the world. We are proud of our commitment to being a caring community of faith, engaged in mission and immersed in compelling worship.

We are also a house of prayer. —A place where we can know and experience God. —A place where we can be still and find peace. —A place where we can listen for God’s voice. Sometimes that connection to God comes amidst community, flows out of our corporate worship, is celebrated in sharing Sacrament and ministry together. Sometimes that closeness to God is found while exploring God’s great creation, and it knows no bounds.

Other times that still small voice comes to us in silence, in the midst of sacred space set apart for prayer.

For about two weeks now I have placed the handwritten ‘Church Open for Prayer’ sign along the driveway on the days I have been at the church. I am not sure how many, if any, have to come in to pray. The number is not important. What matters is that our church be available to all who need it. The world is a mess right now. People are frightened and hurting. And while I believe God can be accessed anywhere, and prayer doesn’t have to be offered from an altar to be heard, our church exists to be a house of prayer for all people. Sacred, quiet space may be exactly what someone needs as they drive, walk, or jog on by.

Today, two new signs arrived. These have bolder colors and won’t run in the rain. They’ll be along our driveways whenever the church is open for prayer throughout the week. Please know of this invitation. And if you would ever like access to the church for prayer at other times, just let me know. We are open for prayer.



+Rev. Ellie

Senior Warden's Message



Vestry Committees

Our Vestry has been busy over the summer months; we don't take a vacation! I am excited to share the formation of three committees that will be focusing on topics aimed at uplifting the members of our congregation at Good Shepherd.

Reverend Ellie first asked the Vestry to indicate their levels of interest in three key areas: Justice Ministry, Communication and Building and Grounds. Under these, we were fairly equally divided up. During our first in-person Vestry meeting in over three years (!), each group was tasked with creating a diagram of the specific issues we perceived that fell under each topic, list these in level of importance and brainstorm on some approaches to address them.

Obviously, each group had a myriad of items to address. With that, we are starting out hyper-focused on those that were clearly compelling, yet

could make a significant difference in the short run. Currently, the justice ministry committee is researching the Sacred Group Curriculum, and developing a schedule to bring this to the congregation. The communication committee is currently focused on reviewing our website, and making recommendations as to the content, and updates. This group is evaluating the interface of the website with the weekly blast and Shepherds Staff. The Building and Grounds committee will be compiling a list of projects, coordinating with the FinCom committee and the Vestry with prioritizing them.

What's key is that we are not looking to necessarily do all the heavy lifting. We ask for the Lord's guidance on how our parish and the congregation can proceed as a whole in these areas and what outcomes benefit the areas of greatest need. We seek to listen for God's voice, uning out the clamber of urgency and opinion. I ask that the congregation hold your Vestry up in prayer as we dive into this essential work.

In Peace,
Wendy Feddersen

Junior Warden's Message



Our Mid-Century Modern Rectory

This has been an interesting summer at the Rectory. As you know, we had an unusually wet summer. This caused the water table to rise. The

sump pump had stopped working, even though we installed it in 2020. And the sump pump pipe was clogged. We had to replace the sump pump and the sump pump pipe.

There was a mold issue that had to be mitigated. This had to be done by professionals. We are still determining what caused the mold to form. In

the meantime, there are several dehumidifiers running at the Rectory.

The cellar stairs to the bulkhead needed to be replaced. The pavers on the back patio stairs had come loose and were repaired. The range hood over the stove was not functioning properly, we installed a new range hood.

I would like to thank Harry Peebles for devoting so much of his time to being the Rectory Liaison and for doing such a wonderful job.

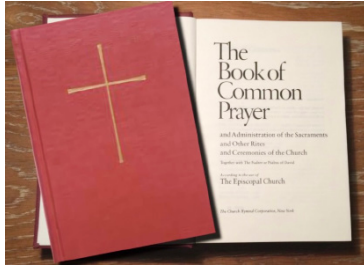
Gail Lyons



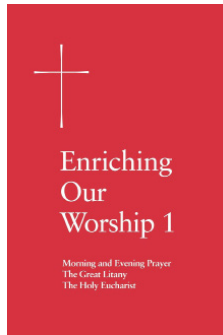
Worship

Worship in Ordinary Time

Now that the Season of Creation is over, our worship has returned to more customary Episcopal liturgies until the beginning of Advent.



At the 8am service, we are worshipping from the Book of Common Prayer, using Eucharistic Prayer A. At the 10am service, we are using a lovely Eucharistic prayer (#3) from *Enriching our Worship*. This particular liturgy focuses on themes of thanksgiving and redemption. It identifies Jesus as eternal Word and Wisdom, drawing on ancient biblical and early Church tradition. This prayer is a terrific example of how a fresh, modern Eucharistic prayer recovers the use of ancient themes.



As you experience this prayer (and any Eucharistic prayer for that matter), you might ask yourself: Who does this text say God is? Who does it say we are? What does this mean for us? Such questions invite us to explore how these prayers speak to our hearts, minds and spirits. I'd love to know your reflections.

Rev. Ellie+

Music

Singers Are Singing

Our choir for all vocal ranges high school age and up has returned to its weekly ministry. This is a warm and welcoming, fun loving, and hard working group of singers. Several people have returned or joined over the last year. We need more!! If this is something you have been mulling over, now is the time! You are welcome to "try it on" for a week or a month and see how it goes. Please speak to Ellen if you are interested or have questions, or simply show up on a Thursday.

Service Schedule

Sunday

8:00 am Holy Eucharist
10:00 am Holy Eucharist, also live streamed on Zoom

Wednesday

8:00 am Holy Eucharist, followed by potluck breakfast

Thursday

8:00 pm Compline via Zoom

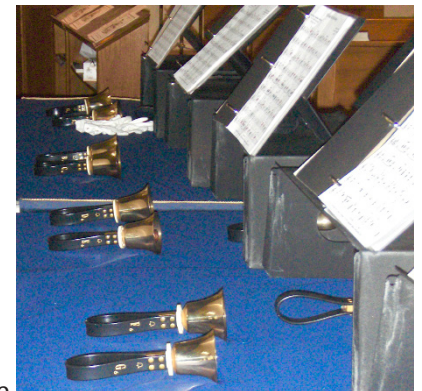
Rehearsals are Thursdays 7:00-8:30pm in the library. Warm-up on Sunday is in the library at 9:15am for the 10:00am Eucharist.

Handbells Are Ringing

On **Sunday, October 29**, the the ringing of handbells will grace our 10:00am worship. Ringers of multiple generations have stepped up to play. This first appearance will be to accompany the mixed choir in a short and sweet setting of the wonderful text from I Cor. 13: And now abideth faith, hope, and love, these three, but the greatest of these is love.

Opportunities for more people to join in will unfold in the coming months. Handbells are

easy to play and require no previous musical experience. The ability to count to 10, and the desire to play with others are all that's needed. Anyone of any age who can hold/ring a bell or two and see the music is welcome



to check it out as a one time thing. No long term commitment.

Stay tuned for the next handbell venture!

Looking Ahead To Christmas

Planning is already underway for Christmas Eve celebrations. If you are in town, please consider singing or playing that evening. Ellen will shape the music to suit the musicians. Sharing this joyous night in community brings the Spirit alive, and adds so much to the experience of the holiday.

The 4:00pm Eucharist is youth focused; the 6:30pm outdoor firelight service basks in the somewhat paradoxical juxtapositions of this special night: informality and awe; humility and vulnerability mixed with mystery and beauty. The 9:00pm Eucharist is contemplative in character and preceded by community carol singing starting at 8:30.

Check In With Ellen Oak

If you have questions about or interest in any of the above; or if you have a musical idea or talent you want to share that you don't see listed, please connect with me, Ellen Oak, Pastoral Associate for Liturgy and Music. I am at coffee hour after the 10am service most Sundays; you can also contact me through the office.

Ellen Oak

Liturgical Arts

The Liturgical arts committee is the group that changes the interior of the sanctuary as the church calendar changes. The goal is to enrich the worship experience of all the parishioners.

Believe it or not, we are already planning for the upcoming [Advent](#) and Christmas seasons, which begins on the first day of [Advent](#), Dec. 3. We decorate in stages during this season.



We will begin decorating on **Saturday, Dec. 2nd** when we hang wreaths in the sanctuary and on the exterior windows. We also hang two banners at the front of the sanctuary using a 10 foot ladder, so we will need two people who can lift and are comfortable on the ladders.

We will hang the garland and put up the

[Advent](#) tree in the narthex on **Saturday, Dec. 16.**

This is a wonderful multi-generational and family event. Many hands make light work!

Immediately after the **10:00 Advent 4 service on Dec. 24th**, we will switch all the decoration from [Advent](#) blue to the [Christmas](#) red and green decorations.

If you are looking for a way to become involved in parish life, this committee is fun and requires no meetings. Most of the times that we are busy it involves about 1-2 hours every few months. You don't need to be creative, but new ideas are always welcome. You just need the ability to work together. Being able to climb a 10 foot ladder is sometimes needed also. ;)

If you are interested, feel free to write or call me, or see Rev. Ellie.

Ellen Harland

Another Step towards Accessibility

Several years prior to the pandemic, the Vestry established three strategic goals for the parish. One of us to make our worship service more accessible. Hearing the lessons and sermon was difficult for some due to our poor sound system, and for others with hearing challenges. That goal led to the installation of a new sanctuary sound system in 2021. This system, with improved microphones and eight speakers, takes it much easier for everyone to hear and understand what's being said, no matter where they sit.

During the pandemic, our community faced geographic and physical challenges – we couldn't meet in person for worship, or we needed to be spaced far apart. Addressing this hurdle opened the door into the world of online services. Today, people can participate in the Sunday morning service live and interactively. We provide an [online experience](#) that sounds and feels immersive, as if the viewer were actually there in the church. This capability expands our reach to people with serious mobility issues, illness, and access over long distances. For the past 16 months, we have also created a video clip of the Gospel and sermon for each week and posted it to our [website](#). [YouTube channel](#), .

We continue to make our online worship

experience more accessible physically, geographically, virtually, and on-demand. We just introduced our latest improvement. **Beginning October 1, the video clips posted online now include accurate, easy-to-read closed captioning.** You can find these clips on our website's home page. Just scroll down past the calendar and upcoming events to the "Good News" section. The clips are also available on our [Facebook Page](#).

Jon Panek



Blessing of the Animals



Blessing of the Backpacks



Christian Formation

Intergenerational Formation

Christ Walks have ended for this fall.

These informal walks wound through the Grassy Pond Conservation area across the street from the Church were open to everyone. As we celebrated the Season of Creation, these walks helped us center ourselves in the beauty of God's creation that is all around us. We began with a short prayer and later shared a brief meditation on the dock overlooking the pond. The rest of the walk was ours to enjoy



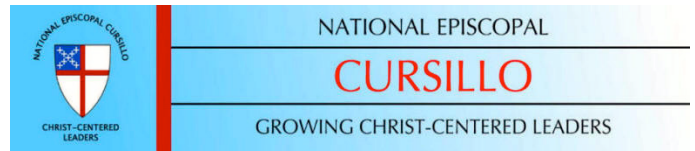
with one another. We headed out after the 10am Coffee Hour and returned by 12:30pm. All ages were welcome. We thank all those who joined us!



Spiritual life

If you've ever thought about wanting to enrich your spiritual life, I would like to share with you a way that I found to be very meaningful. Thirty nine years ago (!) I lived a Cursillo weekend, and for me it was life changing, in that my faith became much more personal and fulfilling.

The Cursillo movement is a renewal movement of the church. It is lay-led, and is an



open, liturgical, and inclusive program. It is not intended to be a conversion experience, but an enriching and deepening of what is already there. It often provides new insights into our faith as well as fostering ministry among lay people. The goal of Cursillo is the goal of the church, to bring all to Christ.

The weekend is co-ed, which means it is mixed gender. But it is not couple oriented. It is Christ oriented. The weekends are held at LaSalette Retreat Center in Attleboro Ma., a beautiful facility with great private accommodations. The weekends start on Thursday evening, and end on Sunday afternoon. This is a big time commitment, but we like to think of it as a vacation to take care of our own spiritual selves. The cost is \$290.00, but there are scholarships available.

The next weekend is Nov. 16-19, so if interested, you need to contact me as soon as possible. In order to go on a Cursillo you need to have a sponsor, someone who has already done a weekend. I would be happy to talk with anyone about Cursillo. There are many people in our parish who have gone on a Cursillo weekend.

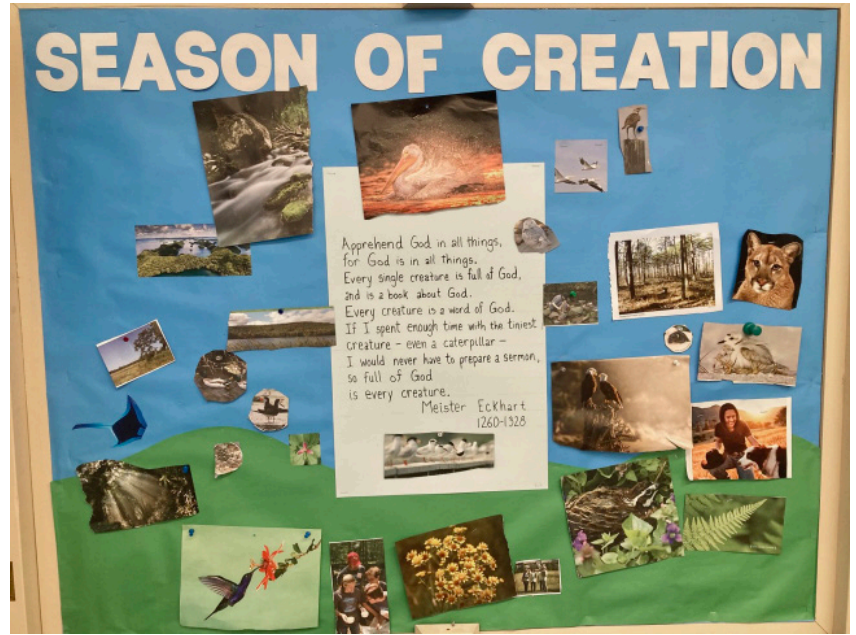
Ellen Harland



Church School

Creation Care Sunday

First, it is great to encourage creativity alongside reflection. When the Sunday School kids made a collage of photos on the main triptych board, it looked truly joyous. They also participated in the Creation Care Survey. Many thanks to our Church School Teachers, Jen Thornton and Mary Bunker.



Church School Calendar

Sunday, November 5

Church School

Sunday, November 19

Church School

Confirmation Class Coming

We are excited to be offering a Confirmation Class for youth in grades 9-12 this winter. Details and class schedule are on the flier on the following page. The classes will prepare students for Confirmation on **Saturday, February 10, 2024**, here at Good Shepherd. Bishop Carol Gallagher will lead the deanery-wide service.

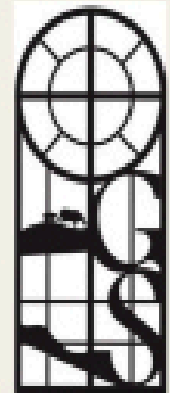
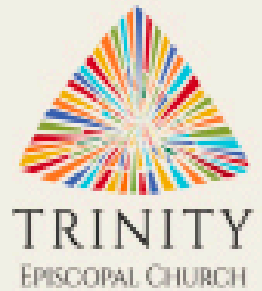
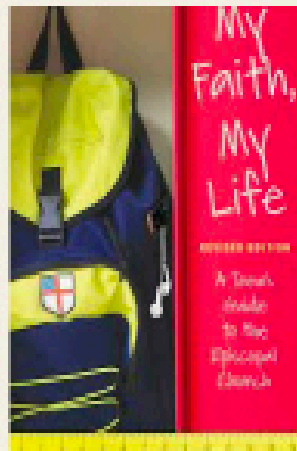
The class is open to high school youth at both Good Shepherd and Trinity Church in Concord, and will be co-led by Rev. Ellie and leaders from Trinity. To sign up, please register on the google form: https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdckOY4hlImYXxHbqDbHmS4W-iM_iF69XWKl6R3r0yrnmL0sg/viewform

Rev. Ellie

COLLABORATION

Confirmation 2024

THE CHURCH OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD AND TRINITY
EPISCOPAL CHURCHES COLLABORATE FOR
CONFIRMATION. PLEASE SAVE THESE IMPORTANT
DATES.



1

January 7, 2024, 12 p.m. @ Good Shepherd in Acton
Chapters 1 and 2 of our discussion. Pizza is provided

2

January 21, 2024, 12 p.m. @ Good Shepherd in Acton
Chapters 3 and 4 of our discussion. Pizza is provided

3

January 28, 2024, 12 p.m. @ Trinity in Concord
Chapters 5 and 6 of our discussion. Pizza is provided

4

February 4, 2024, 12 p.m. @ Trinity in Concord
Chapters 7 and 8 of our discussion. Pizza is provided

5

February 9, 2024, Time TBD @ Trinity in Concord
Final Chapter 9 and meeting with the Bishop. Pizza is
provided

6

February 10, 2024, Time TBD @ Good Shepherd in Acton
Confirmation Liturgy

Mission Outreach

“We are called to be the change we want to see in the world by honoring human dignity and seeking to improve the rights and conditions of people locally, nationally, and globally.”

Mission Outreach Calendar

November	Food Drive
December	Esperanza Book Drive
January	Refugee Fund Raiser
March 9	Pupusa Dinner
May	Rise Against Hunger



FREEDOM FROM WANT

Thanksgiving Food Drive

As we lead up to Thanksgiving, during the month of November we would love to orchestrate a Food Drive. **We need one or two people** to offer to lead the organization of it. Please reach out to Barb Magee or to Ellie if you feel called to this mission.

Exciting News!

We received word last week from the folks at Rise Against Hunger that the 10,000 meals we packaged in May reached their destination in the Philippines where they will be distributed by the organization Convoy of Hope. The meals in the RAH container from New England totaled 285,120!

Read this message from RAH:

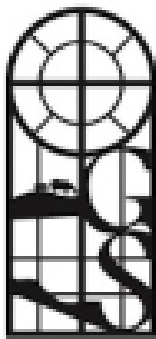
“The Philippines consists of over 7,000 islands in the Ring of Fire in the Pacific Ocean. One of the most environmentally disaster-prone countries in the world, it faces near constant threats of natural disasters like earthquakes, typhoons and volcanic eruptions. These disasters cause displacement and major loss of livelihoods and infrastructure, and disproportionately affect poor communities in rural areas, where people rely on agriculture and fishing. Rise Against Hunger serves the regions of the Philippines where hunger is most

urgent. To address some of the food security challenges that children, families, and communities in the Philippines face, Rise Against Hunger partners with organizations that support educational programs by providing meals to children at schools and early child development centers. This is a key part of Rise Against Hunger’s Nourishing Lives pathway. In some cases, the food children receive at school will be the majority of the food they eat in a day. The meals you packaged will help ensure that children have access to the consistent nourishment they need to live healthy lives and successfully pursue their education.”

Bill Maniscalco, our contact at RAH, was also excited to report that a full container ship of meals will leave later this month for Ukraine.

Mark your calendars: the Church of Good Shepherd will host the next meal-packaging event **Sunday, May 5th, 2024.**

Barb Magee



Mission Outreach: Ways to Be a Shepherd



Be the change you want to see in the world.

Food Drive

Good Shepherd has supported local food pantries for many years.

- Lead the organizing of this event
- Identify the needs of the designated food pantry
- Help to advertise the event: announcements at church, in the eblast, on posters
- Donate
- Deliver donations
- Contact Barb Magee if you are interested in leading a food drive.



Esperanza Book Drive

Esperanza Academy in Lawrence is an independent, all-girls, tuition-free school welcoming students of all faiths and backgrounds.

- Get the word out: announcements during services, eblasts, Shepherd's Staff article
- Buy a book
- Pick up orders at Silver Unicorn
- Insert book plates indicating the donor COGS
- Organize a display of purchased books in the parish hall
- Deliver books to Esperanza Academy in Lawrence
- Contact Barbara Dailey, the leader of this project, to help.



Lowell Transition Living Center

A facility providing shelter and case management services to single, homeless adults in the Merrimack Valley.

- Join a discussion with Helene Gagliano, outgoing leader of this mission project, to creatively think about ways COGS can engage with LTLC in the future. Date TBD.

Refugee Family Support

Since 2022 Good Shepherd, in partnership with five other local churches, has sponsored a family from Afghanistan. The partnership is preparing for a new family in January 2024 with the support of the International Institute of New England, the area's key refugee resettlement organization.

- Help to organize fundraisers
- Donate cash, gift cards
- Donate goods for apartment set up
- Offer storage space for apartment goods
- Organize the collection of goods
- Move furnishings to apartment
- Set up apartment
- Help make the meal on arrival day
- Provide transportation for appointments, etc.
- Take family on excursions to know their new city
- Join the interfaith leadership group's zoom meetings
- Assist as needed with internet, TV, etc; financial literacy and budgeting; learning to drive; learning English; getting academic support; and job interview skills, etc.
- Contact Barb Magee if you are interested in being part of this mission project.



El Ocotillo

Good Shepherd has been in a mutual relationship with the village of Ocotillo, El Salvador, since 2001. In dialogue with their local leadership, the current joint effort is a scholarship program.

- Help to plan joint services with El Ocotillo
- Help with pupusa dinner fundraiser: announcements, decorating, serving, clean up
- Donate to the scholarship fund
- Translate letters from Salvadoran students
- Create a display in the parish hall
- Organize writing holiday cards for El Ocotillo
- Work at crafts sales: set up, staff tables, pack up
- Vet applications for post grad grants
- Support our graduates virtually in learning English
- Join the next delegation Summer 2025
- Join committee meetings
- Contact Rafael Pupo or Barbara Magee if you'd like to be part of this mission project.



Rise Against Hunger

A once-a-year fundraising drive and food packing day to help this charity target remote communities facing hunger.

- Work with the RAH rep to organize/lead this event
- Get the word out
- Help set up the parish hall
- Volunteer the day of the event
- Help clean up
- Contact Barb Magee if you are interested in helping to lead this event.



Events

Save the Dates!

Advent is Coming! Advent is Coming!

- **Saturday, Dec. 2nd - Hang Wreaths with blue ribbons and two large banners** (with ladders)
- **Saturday Dec. 16 - hang the garland and put up the Advent tree in the narthex**
- **Sunday, Dec. 24, post am Service - switch all the decorations from Advent blue to the Christmas red and green**

Dec. 16 & 24 are wonderful multigenerational events & guests are very welcome!

Walk Against Hate

“It made me more hopeful seeing all those people there!”

Church Schooler Andrew

On Sunday, October 15, about 15 members of Good Shepherd participated in the Walk Against Hate. This community-wide effort gathered students, faith communities, families, school and civic officials, local businesses, racial justice groups and many others together in a show of unity amidst our diversity. Over three hundred people joined in the Walk. Rev. Ellie, along with other leaders, spoke at the gathering assembly at Acton-Boxborough Regional High School before the Walk began. To learn more about community efforts to combat hate, please see the resources on the flier below.

Continue the Effort



LEARN

- ADL Resources
 - www.adl.org/resources/tools-strategies/search
 - Read *Antisemitism Uncovered* – antisemitism.adl.org
- Ask a librarian - our local libraries have comprehensive resources

CONNECT

- Our sponsors include organizations that care to speak out against hate. Find one to join (see reverse side).
- Subscribe:
 - ADL New England's Newsletter: www.newengland.adl.org
 - AB School's Superintendent's Updates on www.abschools.org (Acton-Boxborough Regional School District / District / School/District Information)
 - Congregation Beth Elohim's Social Justice group's weekly newsletter Na'aseh News. Subscribe at socialaction@bethelohim.org

SPEAK UP/ SPEAK OUT

- Vote and attend Town Meeting
- Report incidents: to administrators, to police, to ADL
 - For help contact Jen Faber, jfaber@abschools.org or Wanjiku Gachugi, wgachugi@acton-ma.gov
- Write, call, e-mail letters to the editor; call or write legislators, administrators
- Stand up for others – be an upstander!



Oktoberfest



NOTA Concert

Saturday, October 21 at Good Shepherd.

We enjoyed a fantastic local a cappella group NOTA "None of the Above" (which featured our own musician Ellen Oak). This concert also supported the Acton-Stow Interfaith Partnership in raising funds to sponsor a new refugee family in 2024. Suggested donation was \$20. If you were unable to go, but would still like to donate please contact Ellen Oak.



Ministry Updates

Creation Care

Update on the Season of Creation

The Season of Creation may be a distinct five-week period; however, it is clear that people at the Church of the Good Shepherd celebrate the natural world and take stewardship seriously all year long. The Creation Care Ministry Team learned a few lessons during this period of reflection.

First, it is great to encourage creativity alongside reflection. When the Sunday School kids made a collage of photos on the main triptych board, it looked truly joyous. (see p.8) The other photo collage of sustainability actions taken by different households was equally beautiful and encouraging.



Another lesson is that surveys do not have to be scientific to be informative. Thanks to everyone who participated in the Pom-pom Survey! (results below.) It is inspiring that a good number of people have taken big actions to become more energy efficient and thoughtful about energy use at home.

Many folks have added additional insulation to their homes and a significant number of households have utilized air source heat pumps (sometimes called mini splits). Not only are heat pumps more efficient than oil, propane, and natural gas for heating and cooling, they are potentially fossil-fuel free.

It was also fun to discover how important gardening and composting are to quite a few households.

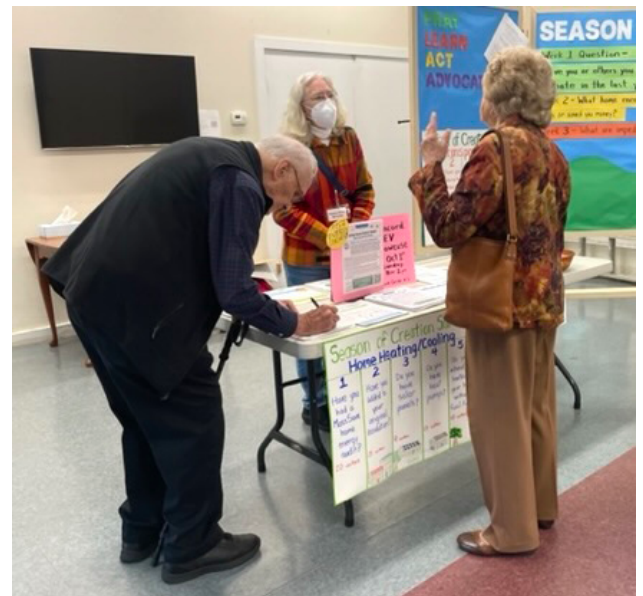
The one survey that felt more difficult was

about transportation. As we think about making our lives more sustainable, the choices are not always simple. And yet genuine stewardship of our creation is as beautiful as it is essential.

As the theologian Meister Eckhart wrote over 750 years ago, *“Every single creature is full of God, and is a book about God.”* The gardeners amongst us would remind us that plants are also wondrous and part of the gift that is the web of life. We are all connected on this island Earth. Thank you for the many heartfelt conversations during the Season of Creation. The Creation Care Ministry Team is looking for ways to continue these conversations and to give each other support as we navigate the complicated choices ahead. Please join us. Thank you!

Karen Root Watkins

Results from the Creation Care Survey



Home Heating and Cooling

- Have you had a Mass Save home energy audit? 20
- Have you added to your original insulation? 21
- Do you have solar panels? 9
- Do you have heat pumps? 13
- Do you intend to heat and cool your home without fossil fuels? 10

Transportation

Do you think about your carbon footprint when you do errands, commute, or travel? 14

Have you reduced the number of flights you take? 7

Do you own or plan to buy an electric vehicle? 9

When you visit/work in Boston, do you take the train? 5

When you do local errands, do you walk or use a bicycle? 5

Our Living Earth

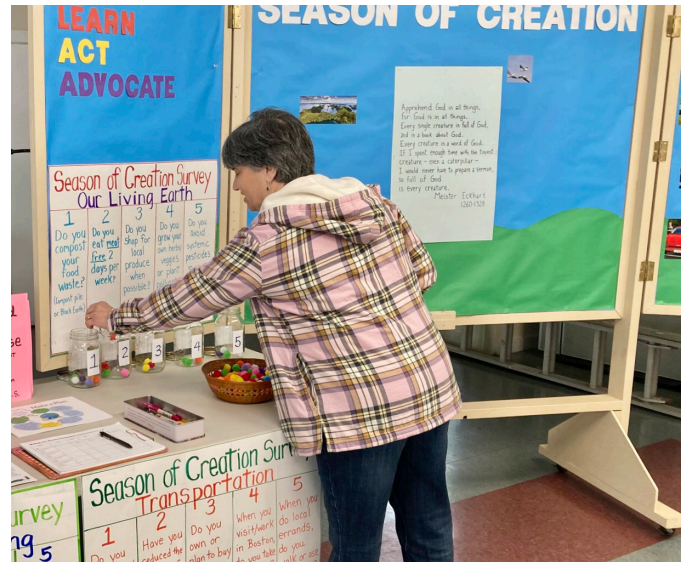
Do you compost your food waste? 16

Do you eat meatless meals 2 or more days/week? 13

Do you shop for local produce when possible? 13

Do you grow your own herbs & veggies or plant pollinator flowers? 13

Do you avoid systemic pesticides in your yard and home? 14



With Abundant Gratitude to:



- **Binki Wright** for the beautiful floral arrangement in memory of her husband, our much loved Dick **Wright**.
- **All those whose took and sent in photos** for this issue. It would look completely different with out your actions!
- **All those involved in** activities in this issue which are changing the world - and that is most of you!

Administration

From the Bishop Nominating Committee:

The listening sessions are complete. Thank you to all who participated. The Nominating Committee invites you to complete an online survey. All members of our diocese are invited to participate in the survey. If you attended a listening session or not, you are invited to complete the survey. The survey will be open until Nov. 1, 2023.

The survey is available in English and Spanish. Please assist anyone in your worshipping community who may need a technology buddy to complete the

survey.

Questions may be directed to the Nominating Committee at co-chairs@mabishop-search.org.

For more information about the

bishop search process for our diocese please visit www.diomass.org/bishop-search.

Bishop Search Survey (English)

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/33WR6Q8>



Vestry Vignettes, August 2023

Rev. Ellie opened with grounding and prayer. The June 2023 meeting minutes were approved. The Vestry shared photos from their leisure time this summer.

Treasurer's Report:

Denise gave a finance update. Discussion around the handbell fund came up, along with a short discussion about using them during the service.

Rector's Report:

Beginning September 10, our regular schedule of 8 am and 10 am services will resume. Ellie wondered if we would want a picnic for this "homecoming." September 30 is Oktoberfest in West Acton. Ellie invited us to staff a table at the event.

Good Shepherd has been invited to host a deanery Confirmation Service on February 10, 2024. This offers us an opportunity to invite confirmands from our region to be confirmed in our church. Ellie is exploring running a joint confirmation program with Trinity, Concord, given low numbers of youth at both churches.

We discussed the need to hire someone to work in our nursery on Sunday morning.

Warden's Report:

Discussion about our large sanctuary window repair was discussed, with both the sill and potentially also the glass being a problem. The replacement will be funded by Howard Kuenzler's estate. Tony Geanisis is receiving bids at this point.

Gail provided an update on repairs at Rectory. There is a list of Rectory needs, and the Vestry discussed whether or not to provide tenants relief for electricity costs due to extra dehumidifiers. A motion that we offer financial relief to the Doss' to cover the additional cost on the electric bills that they have incurred by running the dehumidifiers until the fan is repaired. All approved and Harry will ask for copies of electric bill to determine the amount.

Special Reports:

Jessie Panek approached the vestry on behalf of the Creation Care committee about putting solar panels on the roof of the church. She told us that panels on the sanctuary roof could cover all our electrical costs. One bid is \$89,000, before rebates and roughly 60,000 after. In 12 years, the panels will have paid for themselves. There are additional incentives which would reduce the time needed to recoup the cost. They would like to get it started this Fall. The

Solar committee is receiving bids for vestry to consider.

Margaret gave us an update on wooden rainbow fish to go at the bottom of signs, and talked about making metal ones for our metal signs.

Deacon Ken closed with a poem called "The Night Shift."

Vestry Vignettes, September 2023

Our Vestry meeting was held in person at church for the first time since the start of Covid. Call to Order and Opening Prayer was offered by Ellie.

Treasurer's Report:

Denise went through the financials from August. We are generally on track for the year so far. Pledges were slightly down in August, but overall income continues to be up year-to-date. A few program areas are (or are nearly) over budget including Parish Life and Music. Denise and FinCom will look into whether some of the organ repairs/tuning expenses are better handled by designated funds, rather than the Annual Budget. Ellie has asked Ellen Oak to provide a detailed account of anticipated tuning costs for next budget process. Rectory expenses are anticipated to be over-budget due to significant maintenance issues this summer.

Fall Events:

Ellie and the Wardens discussed plans for the upcoming picnic this Sunday. Vestry is encouraged to help set up/clean up.

Oktoberfest is on Sept. 30, and we will have a booth. Ellie is looking for volunteers to help staff the booth for an hour or so. Catherine advised we have a large sign for our booth. We'll have brochures and other info about our church to share. Walk Against Hate is on Oct 15 at 2 pm. We are a sponsor which means we are listed on the event fliers and are responsible for helping to publicize the event. This is a walk from ABRHS to Gardner Field in W. Acton in response to recent anti-Semitic incidents at the schools and to unite against hate and prejudice in all its forms.

Rides to Church:

Bev shared concern for a number of 8 am parishioners who are in need of a ride to and from church. FinCom suggested using a memorial fund for Uber rides. Margaret said the Pastoral Care Committee has a list of people who have volunteered in the

past to provide rides, and it is their ministry. Ellie will follow up as this is becoming a more pressing need as parishioners age.

Rector's Report:

Church School: K-grade 4 will be taught by Jen Thornton. Grades 5-8 will be led by Mary Bunker, with assistance from Karen Root-Watkins on occasion. The older students will be using a new curriculum this fall centered on climate justice. Church School will meet on the first and third Sundays of each month beginning Sept. 17.

Ellie is pulling together a confirmation program for high school youth with Trinity Church, Concord. Good Shepherd will host the deanery Confirmation Service on Feb. 10 with Bishop Carol Gallagher. We are anxious to get nursery care provided for families with young children. Ellie will work with Laura to create a job description to share with area early childhood programs and the HS job list. We have budgeted \$500 for 2023.

Vestry Planning Groups:

Assignments were given to each of the working groups. An update is to be provided by each group at the October Vestry meeting:

- Justice Ministry: Research Sacred Group curriculum & develop schedule/plan.
- Communication: Review website and make recommendations on content/updates. Consider relationship between website/ weekly eblast/ Shepherd's Staff.
- Building & Grounds: Begin to compile a list of building/grounds needs to assist vestry and FinCom with prioritizing projects.

Rectory Update:

(Harry Peebles joined us for this discussion as he is the Vestry-appointed liaison to our tenants in the Rectory). Many repairs have been completed and others are underway. A motion was made to spend \$625 to fix the sump pump drain in the rectory which passed with full agreement. A general contractor has been contacted to provide a quote for other repairs.

Other Business

Gail asked about status of backing up Laura's computer in the church office. Ellie will follow-up with Jason Davis about backing up to Google, which is the recommended process.

The meeting adjourned with a closing prayer from the New Zealand Prayer Book's Night Prayer service.

Vestry Vignettes, October 2023

Ellie called the meeting to order and opened with prayer.

Rectory Update:

The wardens reported that the sump pump has been repaired, the oil burner inspection for the year has been done, the range hood repair is in process, repair of loose pavers is in progress, and securing the unsecured cellar stairs is in progress. The Vestry members are grateful for Wendy, Gail, and Harry's management of the rectory. Wendy noted that the responsibilities of property management are best handled by a professional (not a volunteer) At church on Sunday, the hot water heater for the sacristy and the downstairs bathroom cracked; Denis Dauplaise, our plumber, was on his way home from his church and very nearby, so he was able to stop by to make a temporary fix. Today it was replaced!

Treasurer's Report:

Finance committee met on Saturday to review the September report. No major changes to note (similar trends as prior months). We made up some of the August dip in pledges this month. Denise sent out interim pledge reports this past weekend, and she will send out another interim pledge statement in December. She will also likely mail out copies to folks who are significantly behind. Denise plans to analyze why pledges are over for the year so far. We've over budget in the Music and Parish Life expense categories. We are keeping an eye on electricity and heating fuel (which we have no control over). Overall, we're approximately \$9K over budget in net income for this point in the year!

Rector's Report:

Additional Rainbow Fish proposal:

Jessie Panek got a quote for five road signs \$337.50; the funding may come from a donor or a memorial fund (not Annual Budget). Margaret pointed out that the middle line in the proof should be green (not black). It was moved that we spend \$337.50 to hang five metal fish signs below our directional signs around the community. All were in favor. None opposed. Ellie will check to see if someone wants to make a donation.

West Acton Oktoberfest - We still need volunteers for Oktoberfest (particularly 12 -1 pm). The set-up window for CGS is 7:45 - 8:15 am; Wendy and Catherine will set up.

Walk Against Hate is meant to be a celebration of the diversity of our community and condemnation of hatred of all kinds. It has taken on new meaning in the context of the events in Israel this weekend. It starts on Sunday at 2:00 pm. Ellie will be speaking with other religious leaders. They will walk to Gardner Field with a celebration at the end. Margaret requested pictures for Shepherd's Staff.

Stewardship:

Lydia Tolley is helping to lead stewardship activities this season. Ellie invited members of the Vestry to help support this important ministry.

Rector's reflection:

Ellie reflected on how much pastoral work she and the Vestry have been engaged in, and, on a recent Clergy day she was inspired by the idea of *depreciative* and *appreciative spirits*: *Depreciative spirit* is when we're always measuring ourselves, striving for an old thing, not leaving room for God; an *appreciative spirit* is looking for what's right, rather than for what's wrong; what's possible rather than impossible...

With an appreciative spirit, Ellie has committed to putting out a sign welcoming people to come into

the Sanctuary and pray when she is at the church. Margaret suggested that we make the church more accessible for spontaneous prayer.

Vestry Planning Groups report:

Buildings and Grounds: Top priorities are solar and the repairing of the large window in the sanctuary. Tony is coordinating a quotes between a framer and a window specialist for the large window.

Solar Pannels: we have 3 quotes that are difficult to compare; work will happen in 2024.

Entrance railing project requires some design work, including deciding which materials to use.

Communications: Group still needs to coordinate on recommendations. Ellie will share a list of website content edits and a competitive analysis that Laura did over the summer. Website is the primary place where prospective parishioners are learning about the church before setting foot in the building. Margaret requested that this group come up with a plan for keeping the website current. Wendy added that families really like to see photos of their kids on the website.

Social Justice: Group hasn't met yet. We adjourned with a closing prayer.

Passages

Baptism

Quin Vaughn Dutton, the son of David and Kristen Dutton, and grandson of Karen Dutton was baptized on Sunday October 8th. David Dutton grew up here at Good Shepherd.



Photos from the baptism of Cameron Romero in August



Karen Dutton, David, Stephanie & Matthew