

# The Shepherd's Staff

December 2022



## **Advent, Christmas, Epiphany Worship Schedule**

**November 27 - 1st Sunday of Advent.**

**December 4 - 2nd Sunday of Advent,  
Ingathering Sunday followed by Festive Coffee hour/Christmas party with  
ornament decorating/crafts for all ages.**

**December 11 - 3rd Sunday of Advent**

**December 15 - 7 pm Blue Christmas Candlelight Service  
of Healing and Hope**

**December 18 - 4th Sunday of Advent.  
Christmas Greening after church with Festive coffee hour.**

**December 24 - Christmas Eve**  
**4 pm Family Service with 'Come-as-You-Are' Pageant & Holy Eucharist**  
**6 pm Outdoor Candlelight Service with Bonfire**  
**8:30 pm Carol Sing (in the church)**  
**9 pm Candlelight Eucharist**

**December 25 - Christmas Day**  
**9 am Service of Holy Eucharist with carols**

**January 1 - New Year's Day**  
**9 am Service of Holy Eucharist**

**January 8 - 8 am Holy Eucharist**  
**10 am Celebration of Epiphany Lessons & Carols and Holy Eucharist**

**\* Full activities Calendar on pg 2, Full Christmas worship info on pg 5 & 6**

## Contents

Word from the Fold	2
Warden's & Deacon's	3 - 4
Stewardship	4 - 5
Worship	5 - 8
Christian Formation	9 - 10
Mission Outreach	10 - 14
Events	14 - 15
Committee News	15 - 16
Administration	16 - 20
Passages	20 - 21
you need to contact	22

Church of the  
Good Shepherd  
164 Newtown Road  
Acton, MA 01720  
(978) 263-5782

Website:

<https://goodshepherdacton.org>

[FB: Church of the Good Shepherd, Acton](#)

Episcopal Diocese of  
Massachusetts

## December events

**December 3 at 9:30 am** - Advent on-line retreat

**10 am** - Men's Group

**December 4 at 8 & 10 am** - **2nd Advent** Eucharist, Ingathering of Pledges, Church School followed by Festive Coffee hour after church with intergenerational craft ornament project.

**11:30 am** - Advent Collect Adult Formation

**December 10 at 10 am** - Men's Group

**December 11 at 8 & 10 am** - **3rd Advent** Eucharist

**11:30** Advent Collect Adult Formation

**December 15 at 7pm** - **Blue Christmas Candlelight Service of Healing and Hope**

**December 17 at 10 am** - Men's Group

**December 18 at 8 & 10- 4th Advent** Eucharist and Church School, followed by the Christmas **Greening of the Church** with Festive Coffee hour.

**11:30** - Advent Collects Adult Formation

**Dec. 19 at 9 am** - Deadline for flower donations for the Christmas altar

### December 24 Christmas Eve:

**4pm - Family Service** with "Come as You Are Pageant" and Holy Eucharist

**6pm - Bonfire Outdoor** Candlelight Service

**8:30pm** - Christmas Carol Sing

**9pm - Candlelight Christmas Eve** Eucharist

**Sunday, December 25 at 9 am - Christmas Day** Holy Eucharist with carols

**Sunday, January 1 at 9 am** - one service of Holy Eucharist

**Sunday, January 8 at 8 am**- Holy Eucharist

**10am- Celebration of Epiphany**

Lessons & Carols with Holy Eucharist

# A Word from the Fold



## Advent: The Beginning is Near

I saw a post the other day of a man standing on a street corner holding a handwritten sign that reads, "The Beginning is Near." Advent humor that would make my kids cringe, but it's not bad theology. We are now in the season of Advent, the beginning of our new liturgical year. We have entered this holy time of transition as we wait, prepare and welcome the Light that will come to us on Christmas. A new beginning.

Advent is a time of renewal and rebirth. We get to start our walk with Christ all over again, from the very beginning, as we reset the church calendar for another year. If our spiritual practices have lapsed, if our prayers have gotten inconsistent, if our worship attendance has fallen off, Advent is a wonderful time to explore starting up again.

Advent is also a time of change, which, I suppose you could say about every season. Yet, there's something especially poignant about change in Advent. As we begin Advent each year, we take stock of all that has changed in our lives, and in the world since last year. We reflect on what needs to be reborn, or begun. Advent proclaims, Christ is coming; Christ is here; Christ will come again. With the arrival of Christ comes change. We cannot help but be affected, be changed, by Christ. Jesus' very birth is a significant change from the way God interacted with Creation before. Jesus' promised return will bring more change. Jesus' presence in our hearts changes us daily, if we let it. Advent reminds us that change is not always about endings. It can come at the beginning, too.

On the First Sunday of Advent this year, we read from *Paul's letter to the Romans* which reminded us:

*"You know what time it is, how it is now the moment for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we became believers; the night is far gone, the day is near. Let us then lay aside the works of darkness and put on the armor of light..."* (Romans 13:11-12). Change is stirring; change is coming.

Here at Good Shepherd, that spirit of change is echoed in the shift in our liturgy to an Advent setting in Common Worship, a modern liturgical resource from the Church of England. It is made manifest in the rearrangement of our worship space. The choir and piano are now up front, in a location many of you will remember from pre-Covid days. For others who have come to Good Shepherd in the last two+ years, including Deacon Ken, Ellen and myself, the return to something old is also something new. We'll live into these changes together knowing every change requires a spirit of grace and flexibility as we each adjust to what God is creating in our midst.

Advent invites us to live into the changes occurring all around us, reminding us that the only thing that doesn't change is God's love. We all change all the time. It is part of what it means to be human. -What it means to be in relationship with other people and with God. Advent reminds us that change is normal. It is unavoidable. Advent gives us four weeks, set apart, to pause and reflect on the change that is coming in Christ. To prepare for it. To watch for it. To practice change so that we can be flexible and resilient when it occurs, for the beginning is near.

Advent also acknowledges that change can be hard. Some change is unwelcome. Some change can break our hearts. On **Thursday, December 15 at 7pm**, our **Blue Christmas Candlelight Service of Healing and Hope** is an opportunity for those struggling with change or grief during the holiday season. It's a service filled with candlelight and grounded in prayer and Taizé music, designed to offer healing and hope, peace and encouragement for all our new beginnings.

May you have a blessed and holy Advent, Rev. Ellie+

## Senior Warden's Message



Before you start singing the song, the **'Blue Christmas' Candlelight service of Healing and Hope** has nothing to do with Elvis, but it does have to do with missing someone or something. **Blue Christmas** services make room for sadness, loneliness, or loss during the holidays.

All are invited to a quiet, contemplative service of light and healing on **Thursday, December 15, at 7 pm**. The service incorporates the Taizé traditions of simple chants, meditation, and readings, providing a supportive space to those in need

of an alternative to traditional Christmas services and celebrations.

**Blue Christmas** has its foundation in ancient Yule celebrations of the Winter Solstice, celebrating the hope of returning light and life. Here we acknowledge that darkness will always be defeated by this brighter side. For people dealing with memories of loss and grief, this gathering can serve as a respite from the frenzied holiday shopping and pressures that Christmas in our culture can bring.

The ritual includes opportunities for expression of grief, pain, and heartbreak. Candles are lit at numerous occasions during the service; we commemorate those who have been lost during the previous year and reach toward hope for the future. Please join us for this service of comfort.

Wendy Fedderson

## Junior Warden's Message



A group of friends decided to play a game of self disclosure: share something personally important. One of the guys is very social. His idea of a good time is chatting it up with folks at the Friday night dance, or shoveling a neighbor's driveway. He

shared with us his constantly growing photo album. There were pictures of previous co-workers, fellow volunteers, the seniors that he plays cribbage with every Saturday morning. You get the picture.

For my part, I invited them to church. Some

of you saw or met Lee this morning, Nov 27. He commented on the friendly greetings, beautiful music, and calming service. It's a 40 minute drive for Lee, but thinks he'll drop in again. Rob is interested in attending the Blue Christmas service. Others in this group of friends are open to a visit, too. Hopefully that will happen.

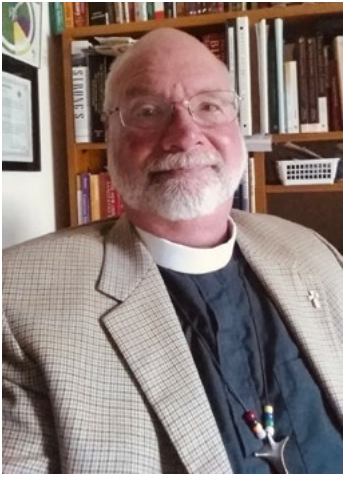
Who in your life might appreciate an invitation? Whatever your reason for liking worship services or Church of the Good Shepherd, tell 'em. Follow your own style and sensibility about extending the offer. As you are so moved, make the interaction personal. Please consider yourself invited to play.

Peace, Harry

## Deacon's Corner

What a joy it is to look out from the altar and see the pews filling up again! How great it is to hear our many voices pray and sing. Our Church of

the Good Shepherd, Acton, really does appreciate worshipping together on Sunday. Even our blended Zoom service is becoming more inviting to the



larger, world-wide community of those seeking an authentic faithful experience.

I also appreciate the thoughtful and prayerful work of our Liturgist, Ellen Oak, and the leadership of our priest, Rev. Eleanor Applewhite Terry, who design our Sunday services to be appropriate to the

changing seasons of the Church calendar.

There is an old “churchy” expression, “*Lex orandi, lex credendi*,” meaning “the law of what is prayed is the law of what is believed.” This expression highlights the

relationship between our worship and belief. Sometimes the words “*lex vivendi*,” the law of what is lived, are added. Our lives are affected by what we pray, what we believe. Changing our liturgical styles to be more appropriate to the season is a great way to keep our prayer life, our spirituality, and our very lives fresh, more in tune with the season, and to explore new dimensions of our spirituality. Such change, which may seem startling at first, also serves to shake up our perceptions of our spirituality, allowing us to re-examine those prayers and beliefs upon which we ground ourselves. We can see our spirit and our lives in a new way.

There is always more to explore and discover. May you enjoy, and truly live into, this vnew season of Advent!

Deacon Ken Schmidt

## Stewardship



Please take a moment to consider all the aspects of Church of the Good Shepherd that are meaningful to you. One way to think about it is to take five minute and list

what you like. He’s my list. We are a “spiritual oasis in the woods”, a welcoming congregation, friendly,

diverse, interesting, compassionate, generous, active, inclusive. We engage in local and international mission outreach. We connect locally with scouting and through facility rentals. We are seekers on a journey. At the same time, we are practicing Christians.

Please consider what it means to you to have this community flourish. Money helps that happen. Please pledge for 2023.

Thank you,  
Harry Peebles

Dear Good Shepherd Parishioner,

We are so grateful for your faithful support of our beloved Church of the Good Shepherd. Your generosity over the years has enabled us to be a church immersed in compelling worship, engaged in mission and devoted to caring for our community in faith. Even in the midst of a global pandemic, we never lost sight of these core values. We had to adapt and change, but we never stopped worshipping, never wavered in our mission, never ceased to love and care for one another.

This is the time of year we reach out to all our members to invite your financial support for the coming year. Your participation is vital to our mission. Over 90% of our budget is funded by our membership. The reality is, it costs money to be the church— about \$1000 per day. This money supports our mission and values. It provides us with a talented staff, a beautiful building and grounds, and ministries to proclaim the life-giving message of God’s love to young and old like.

We invite you to be intentional about your gift to Good Shepherd this year. We know that we all give for various reasons, and we each engage in the life and ministry of this parish in various ways. Our hope is that each of us, each household, will prayerfully consider what this congregation means to us, how Jesus’

message of love speaks to us, and how we will contribute to our annual pledge drive to ensure our ministries thrive in the year ahead.

We staff this church, maintain our building, and run our ministries because we have a life-giving message to share with our hurting world. We know Good Shepherd to be a community of faith that has supported us and loved us through times of joy and challenge. We want our church to thrive because it is here that we discover, and remember that we are loved by God. Grounded in that love, we are empowered to make a difference in the world around us, helping our children, our neighbors, our community to grow in God's love, too.

Please prayerfully consider your pledge to Good Shepherd over the coming weeks. We'll celebrate the abundance of God's blessing on Ingathering Sunday, December 4. A pledge by this time will enable our Vestry to develop a realistic budget for 2023. You may return the enclosed pledge card on December 5, or complete the electronic pledge card using the link in the e-blast and on our website. Further details are found in the enclosed brochure.

Thank you for helping Good Shepherd to thrive.

Faithfully,  
Veronica Diesl, Harry Peebles, Chris O'Leary and the Rev. Eleanor Terry,  
Stewardship Team 2023

## Sunday, December 4 is Ingathering Sunday.

Please submit your pledge commitment for 2023 by this date. Having a sense of our income for 2023 is essential for The Finance Committee and Vestry to prepare a sound budget for the coming year.

We will celebrate the season and God's abundance with a **Festive Holiday Coffee Hour after the 10am service on December 4**. We'll have an intergenerational craft project—decorating book marks/ornaments to share on Christmas Eve. We look forward to celebrating together on December 4.

## Worship

### Services for Christmas Through Epiphany

(times and locations are listed on pages 1 & 2)

- **Christmas Eve, Saturday, December 24**
- **Family Service** with "Come as You Are Pageant" and Holy Eucharist - Kids of all

ages will help fill and decorate our manger as scriptures and carols of the season tell the story of Jesus' birth.

- **Bonfire Outdoor Candlelight Service.** Begun two years ago when we couldn't gather in-person indoors, this short, simple service invites us to gather around the fire to sing, pray and hear the Christmas Gospel under the open sky.



- **Christmas Carol Sing.** Come a bit early for the later service to sing some carols of Christmas.
- **Candlelight Christmas Eucharist.** A service filled with light and peace to celebrate the birth of Christ.

**Christmas Day, Sunday, December 25**

- **Holy Eucharist** with carols on Christmas morning, only one service
- **New Years' Day, January 1**
- **Holy Eucharist** one service
- **Celebration of the Epiphany, Sunday, January 8.** Early Service of Holy Eucharist, and at 10 am Lessons & Carols with Holy Eucharist

## Seasonal Music at Good Shepherd



Many thanks to those who have already volunteered to sing and play for the special services coming up. It's not too late to join in the fray! Speak to Ellen Oak about how you'd like to participate and when you are available. All levels of skill and experience welcome. The more the merrier. The time is always Now. Ellen is putting together the repertoire for all the season's services this week.

## Advent Music

Our Advent liturgy overflows with music in the many moods of the season: exuberant anticipation; contemplative expectation; wonder and awe that inspire us to turn our lives around;

# Service Schedule

## Sunday

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

## Wednesday

- 7:30 am Morning Prayer

## Thursday

- 8:00 pm Compline via Zoom

robust trust in the promises of the Divine; the warmth and simplicity of everyday life in community. Take a minute to notice what particular piece especially attracts or moves you. What do you find yourself humming in an odd moment? How might God be speaking to your heart through the music?

At the **Blue Christmas Candlelight Service of Healing and Hope** healing service on Thursday, December 15th, at 7:00pm, we will bask in the chants of Taizé, light candles, embrace stillness, and seek blessings in the shadows for our wounded souls, and for the broken-hearted of the world.

## Christmas and Epiphany Celebrations

Additional singers and instrumentalists are most especially invited for the 4:00pm "Come As You Are Pageant" and Eucharist; and the 9:00pm (with carols beginning at 8:30) is a more introspective and mystical candlelight Eucharist. On Sunday mornings December 25 and January 1 we will have one Eucharist at 9:00am, as we continue to sound forth the joy of divine incarnation.

On Sunday, January 8, at 10:00am, we will celebrate a festive Epiphany Lessons and Carols with Eucharist. Be a part of something amazing that will carry you through the grey days of January.

Peace, Ellen Oak



## Greening of the Church

Help decorate the church for Christmas after our **10am service on 4 Advent, December 18**. We'll have yummy refreshments at Coffee

Hour. For more information see page 14 in the Events section.

## Christmas Flower Dedications

If you would like to contribute to Christmas flowers for decorating the Sanctuary, please fill out a small red form available at the ushers'



table and put it in the collection plate or leave it under the office door. Checks should be made out to the church with Christmas flowers in the memo line. You can also email [Laura Brock](#) with your dedication. Dedications must be received no later than **9:00am Monday December 19** to be included in the holiday publications. Contributions should be made as soon as possible so that flowers can be ordered.

After Christmas these plants are given to parish members and friends who are shut-in or ill.

Laura Brock

## Tech Team News

The Tech Team would like to make the remote worship experience more inclusive and satisfying, and invites you to participate!

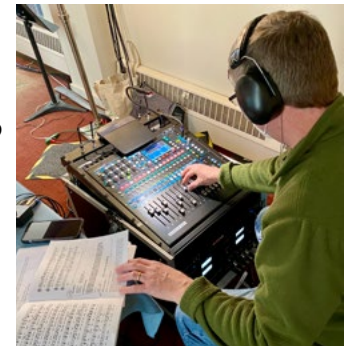
Want to read a lesson aloud in Sunday worship from your home? To read the lesson



remotely over Zoom, [sign up here](#). Please know that during some portions of the service, the Zoom audio feed is routinely piped into the sanctuary. For example, just unmute to verbally contribute to Prayers of the People. Or use the Chat to get the zoom co-host's attention during Announcements, so they can announce you and the congregation can hear your announcement.

Zoomers, you are also invited to optionally turn on your video during the service. If you do, Ellie, Ken, and the LEMS could then see you on a monitor facing the altar. Routinely, other folks in the sanctuary do not see you.

There are lots of ways to find recordings from our church service. Sermons, the stewardship messages, and guest speakers are included on our [website](#), just scroll to the bottom of the main page for the currently featured posts, or see



the News or Sermons page. This content is also available directly from our YouTube channel named [Church of the Good Shepherd, Acton, MA](#). And of course, it's also posted to our Facebook page named [Church of the Good Shepherd Acton \(Episcopal\)](#). We



also provide recordings directly to guest musicians and speakers. Recent equipment improvements include the addition of a third remote control camera. We are also arranging the microphone wires to be less obvious.

The Tech Team helps the worship service happen, like the greeters, lectionary readers, ushers, acolytes, LEMs, guest musicians, choir, or altar guild members. We manage the audio levels



inside the sanctuary, and the real-time audio and video broadcast to Zoom.

For all of you who longed to be members of the Audio/Visual squad in High School, now is your second chance. Come play with us and our state-of-the-art audio and visual mixing stations!

Harry Peebles



### Worship Snapshots



# Christian Formation

## Advent Program - A study of the Advent Collects co-led by the Rector and Neal Ogle

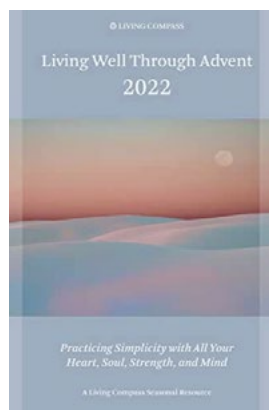
***“There was a great conversation last week, it went really well - join us!”***

Each Sunday after the opening acclamation, the Collect for Purity, and the Song of Praise, we all say the Collect of the Day. Come explore how the **Advent** collects can help us understand what this sacred season and readings are all about. After a brief history of the Collects in our *Book of Common Prayer*, we will look at the collect for each **Advent** Sunday using a modified form of the African Bible study, and then discuss how we may gain insights into the scriptures we have just heard.

We will start after the service **at 11:30 am in the Library on Sundays Dec. 4, 11, and 18.** Come for one or more sessions as you can. Our meetings will have a separate zoom link from the Sunday morning service. Questions, please contact either the Rector or me via the link below.

Neal Ogle

Here is the Zoom link for the Advent program:  
<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/82122066021?pwd=Z1ZUWkt4bnorUVJiWDk4MFJwazlKZz09>



**Living Well Through  
Advent Daily  
Meditations:  
Available at the back of  
the church**

## CGS Men's Group Needs Your Voice!

The Men's Group meets every Saturday at 10:00 am in the church library. Our gatherings are very informal. We start with brief check-ins, then

read the Gospel for the next day. Focusing on words or phrases that attract our attention, we discuss the scriptural passage and try to see our connections to the story or ideas presented by them. A second reading is done to see what is reinforced or revealed, and then free discussion takes us where it will.

You are most welcome to join us as we explore our spirituality in light of our gospel readings and discussions. We also learn about each other, and the roles our church and our faith play in our lives. It's a "come as you can, come as you are" kind of group, and there's no telling where our discussions may go. We hope to see you soon.

**Note:** there will be no Men's Group meeting on Dec. 24th or 31st.

Deacon Ken

## “Comfort ye, my people”: An Advent online retreat



**Saturday, December 3 | 9:30 a.m. - 12 Noon | Online (free)**

We live in a time of radical challenge and change. Advent offers us rich material for prayer, conveying images of disruption, struggle, and endings, and images of reconciliation, birth, and beginnings. In this morning retreat, we will seek to create a space of prayer big enough to encompass both what disturbs and shakes us, and what brings comfort and hope. How do the images of Advent enlarge our capacity to midwife Christ's birth within us and among us?

Our time together will include presenta-

tions, silence, singing, solitude, and small group conversation. If possible, please bring a candle and a Bible, and wear something comfortable for an optional walk outdoors.

This free retreat is open to the public and is sponsored by both Episcopal dioceses in MA and by Southern New England Conference, United Church

of Christ.

<http://events.r20.constantcontact.com/register/event?oeidk=a07ejg47g4y1bef9ef3&llr=s4blzzbab>

## Church School Calendar

December 4 at 10 am - Church School followed by intergenerational craft ornament craft project with a festive Coffee Hour.

December 18 at 10 am - Church School followed by **Greening of the Church** and a festive Coffee Hour

Dec. 24th at 4 pm - "Come as You Are" pageant with Holy Eucharist

## 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

January - Esperanza Academy

March - El Ocotillo

## Undies Sunday

For many years, Church of the Good Shepherd members have collected socks and underwear for the residents of the Lowell Transitional Living Center (LTLC) and delivered them to church on what are affectionately known as Undies Sundays.

On November 20<sup>th</sup>, we welcomed Isaiah Stevens, Director of LTLC, and Deb Leary, its Resource Development Manager. Isaiah shared his journey with us. He said he chose to be a volunteer at LTLC years ago, when his mother was a resident after falling on hard times. In the past five years, he became an employee, graduated from college, and recently accepted the position as Director of the Lowell Transitional Living Center after Andy McMahon's retirement.



Deb shared some updates, including the purchase of 30 apartments that will house residents of LTLC as they transition from homelessness to their own homes. She described the center's ongoing needs for volunteers, especially in the donation center, which has been without volunteers since the pandemic started. She said that there are "floor to ceiling" black bags of clothing that need sorting. Deb also described a grant-funded tech center that was created in the past year to help residents with basic tasks such as writing emails and resumes.



During coffee hour, we discussed a plan for another tour of LTLC for CGS members. (The last one was in January 2020 just before the pandemic.) We reviewed the possibility of volunteering in the donation center, tech center, and a visit to sing carols with the residents, employees, and LTLC volunteers this Christmas season.

There brochures available at the back of the

church, please pick one up and consider sharing this information with family, friends, co-workers, and neighbors. This is a perfect time of year to ask loved ones for donations to LTLC on your behalf rather than store-bought items. If anyone would like to donate, please have them send a check to The Church of the Good Shepherd, 164 Newtown Rd. Acton Mass 01720. Don't forget to put LTLC in the memo.

Thank you again for opening your hearts (and wallets) to this wonderful cause!

Helene Gagliano



Since 2007 Good Shepherd has partnered with Esperanza Academy, a tuition-free middle school for girls in Lawrence MA. Here are some recent moments from Esperanza's journey as a school reimagining urban education.

Service projects are an important opportunity for Esperanza students to work together and contribute to the community. Team Esperanza celebrates a three-mile walk to support the Lazarus House Hike for Hope.



Esperanza is committed to making math fun for their diverse learners. Black and brown children, and especially girls, face false beliefs that they are not inherently good at math. Yet, Esperanza students are as mathematically brilliant as any others! By changing the narrative around good at math, Esperanza is not only subverting the dominant culture, but also giving students pathways to STEM careers where they can build a better world for all! Head of School Jadi Taveras proclaims that Adrianna, the vivacious sixth grader pictured





here in red sunglasses, proclaimed “I LOVE MATH” during a hands-on lesson about measurement units.

Jacqueline (Jack) Clark, Esperanza’s Chaplain, gave a sermon to a captivated group of students as part of their bi-monthly Chapel experience.

The Episcopal experience at Esperanza is thoughtfully planned with the understanding that spiritual growth is an



important part of the students’ development.

The students and faculty would welcome us for a live tour to see more exciting moments. Look for a sign up in early 2023 for an Esperanza tour.

Carolyn` Platt

## An Update on the Habibi Family

The Habibis were guests for Thanksgiving at a home in Acton. I’m sure that they have much to be thankful for, but I have learned that resettlement is HARD! After searching this fall for better housing, the Habibis were excited to find a newly renovated spacious apartment. However, their application was rejected because the owner felt their family was too large for the number of rooms. The Habibis then made plans to move to a much smaller place, but they realized within days of the move, that it would not be better than their existing situation, and so they decided to stay put until March when their lease terminates. They have begun sharing the cost of rent with the Partnership. Thank you to everyone who volunteered to help them move!

Often the jobs an immigrant can access impede learning English. Haidar is working the night shift in a job where no one speaks English or his

language, Dari. Although he is in English classes six hours a week, the lack of English exposure at work is making for slow progress. Learning English is crucial to obtaining a better job and working hours that mesh with family life. Haidar drove a taxi in Afghanistan but did not pass the drivers’ test here. Although the written test for a driver’s license can be in the applicant’s native language, the driving test is requires understanding English. Habibi could not obtain a driver’s license because he did not understand the verbal directions given him during the test, surely a hit to his dignity.

Aida is a great support to her family because she speaks fairly good English, but her fluency is not yet at a level that would enable her to attain her goal of attending college. She is enrolled in English classes through Middlesex Community College. For several months Aida had a job that required her to leave her home at 4:00am, pay an Uber for transportation, and work a 10-hour shift. She was falling asleep in her evening English classes, and so she decided to quit her job and pursue part time work.

Aida, who is 21, would like to obtain a driver’s license, but she has only had the ten hours of driving instruction offered in adult classes, and so has struggled to pass the test. We now have a plan in place for volunteers to provide regular instruction so she can gain experience and confidence and have a better outcome on her third try. Obtaining a license and a car will provide the family with more choices of where to live and work.

Learning English will open so many doors for the Habibis to better work, education and integration into their new country.

Barb Magee

## Help During this Season: Prayer, Pastoral Care, & Prayer Shawls

Ask anyone who has been on our Prayer Chain for several years and they will tell you that the number of prayer requests goes way up in November and December. The Prayer Chain is here and ready to pray for anyone in need of prayer for any reason; please don’t hesitate to notify [Jane Lothian](#), [Margaret Geanisis](#), or [Rev. Ellie](#) of prayer needs during this time. All prayers are kept in strict confidence and are not named publicly in the Prayers of

the People – unless you request that addition.

If you would like a Prayer Shawl, just let Diane Cooke or Rev. Ellie know. Our knitters and crocheters pray for the shawl's recipient as they make each shawl, hands are laid upon the completed shawls, and they receive a final blessing by Rev. Ellie at a Sunday Eucharist. Often, a prayer for the person receiving the shawl is included so they can be wrapped in prayer as they heal or face uncertainties.



Pastoral Care can help if you are ill or taking care of an ill person and need meals, rides to the hospital or doctor's office, and even grocery shopping. Contact Rev. Ellie or Diane Cooke if you or someone you know needs help.

Another way we provide prayer and support during the holidays is our **Blue Christmas service on December 15 at 7pm**. See page 3 of this Shepherd's Staff for further details. This service is designed to be an offering of healing and hope for those who are grieving, or struggling to find joy, this holiday season.

Margaret Geanisis

## Emmanuel in Ukraine

Several members of the congregation have been in touch with Emmanuel Aronie who has moved to his family's native country of Ukraine where he has many friends. The needs are immense. We are talking with Emmanuel about how we can best support his efforts and plan to have a fundraiser in place later this month. Stay tuned!

One of Emmanuel's poems follows:

### To a Russian General

Sir, I know you are out there, somewhere,  
I feel your presence,  
You are a no-nonsense guy,  
a very tough soldier,  
and I know you can end this,  
this enormous miscalculation,  
Russia's invasion of Ukraine.  
Maybe you thought it would take 3 days or a week

certainly, no longer than a month,  
or that Zelensky would run away,  
like a scared little mouse, a miscalculation.  
Maybe people told you that Ukraine wants you,  
maybe people, for their own reasons, told Putin,  
or perhaps he told himself,  
"This is my destiny, our destiny, Ukraine is ours."  
Does greed have any boundaries?  
No. Could Vlad's prized dream of empire slip  
through his fingers? Oh, yes.  
Sir, open your eyes for a moment, you're a student  
of war and history,  
with Putin's mobilization call, 1000's of your  
best and brightest people,  
have left Russia or plan to leave, any way they can –  
in cars, trains, planes, on bikes, even,  
on foot, to Kyrgyzstan, Georgia, Turkey, Finland.  
Poland, Norway, etc.  
Note also that now,  
some of your best and brightest IT people, so outraged  
by events, have begun hacking the Kremlin!  
Your leader has forced annexation on people who  
don't want it.  
Of course, there are people everywhere, with an  
interest in power, who crave to put their  
hands on the steering wheel.  
Of course, they support annexation.  
But, the majority in Donetsk, Lugansk, Zaporizhe,  
Kherson, etc. ?? Not a chance, not even close to a  
majority; even, a casual observer knows this.  
Sir, you're a student of war and history, of good and  
evil, life and death.  
Is not America's misguided adventure in Vietnam  
eerily similar to the here and now in Ukraine, which  
is today, worldwide, in everybody's face?  
One photo showed it all, one beautiful photo – from  
the jungle on the Ho Chi Minh Trail,  
a string of North Vietnamese women, trekking  
south, through dappled daylight jungle light,  
barefoot, heavy supplies and equipment on their  
heads, walking south – calmly, certainly,  
resolutely !! Why?  
It was their country !!  
They would have walked 1000 miles for a 1000  
years, if needed.  
And so it is today in Ukraine.  
Sir, I know you are out there, you have a great soul  
and great courage, and I know, if you  
wish,  
You could end this madness.

Certainly, the original 44 million Ukrainian residents – worried, harassed, intimidated, raped, stolen from, wounded and killed, with many forced to leave their lives and property, certainly, they all would like to return to a normal life.

Sir, put your foot down and pull your troops out, for good!

Save the Russian soldiers !

Let them be normal sons, brothers, husbands and fathers.

Let them go home, alive and whole.

When and IF the "contested regions", truly and freely, want to choose their fate and direction, so be it, let them,

but not at the point of a gun,

or because 450 Duma rubberstamps for a dictator, vote "yes, we agree". Fooey !!

You have annexed something that is not yours.

First, you and your men have to go – your troops, personnel carriers, tanks, planes, ships, rockets, artillery, mines, bombs and bullets, all gone !!

Then, the ripped up, pock-marked

God forsaken product of your invasion – homes,

roads, fences, buildings, bridges, big and

little villages, big and little cities,

can be rebuilt and reborn, step by step,

Mariupol, Bucha, Irpin, Kherson, Kharkiv, Lyman,

Lugansk, Donetsk, Zaporizhe and 1000

other places, all over Ukraine, everything must be repaired and rebuilt.

You want Ukraine to be a neutral country ? That's rubbish.

Russia must become a neutral country, so that people everywhere can live again, normally,

out of their cellars and hiding places, back from overseas, Europe and elsewhere, so that millions of refugees, can return to safety and security, along with those who have fled your own country, and don't forget those brave souls, who stood up and said, from the very beginning, "No! This is wrong !"

and were hunted down, arrested, wounded, thrown into jails, if not killed outright.

Sir, let us all learn from history and set a new course. Sometimes, you have to remove the probka, flush the toilet and solve the problem !!

And lastly, one more thing – there is a photograph, that should have ended the war months ago - -

A mother and her two children, after intense hospital care, sit for a moment, in Lviv's central railroad station, a mom and her twins, a boy and a girl, maybe 10 years old, all, totally traumatized, a loving mother holds her children close, all glad to be alive – the girl has nubs only, no feet, they were blown off by a Russian cluster bomb, outside on the platform, at an Eastern Ukraine railroad station. The mother has one foot and a nub only.

The twin brother, lucky to be inside the station at the time, is whole, but scarred for life.

Everybody on the planet should see this photo.

Sir, how many more terrible events must happen, before you take swift and certain action ?

Sir, I know you can do this.

The world is waiting for you.

Make your move.

We have a planet to save.

Emmanuel Aronie, Cherkassy, Ukraine

## Events



### Greening of the Church

#### December 18 after the 10 am Service

We are now entering into the most beloved season of the church- Advent leading to Christmas. The Liturgical Arts Committee has been working with Ellie to plan the worship environment, and part of our planning includes ways to involve our entire congregation in this festive celebration. (continued)

## Greening of the church (cont.)

The **Greening of the Church** will be on Sunday, December 18th. In preparation for the Greening, Bill and I will pick up the tree for the narthex, generously donated by John Link, on Friday, December 16th. We need two people to help bring it into the church. It won't take more than an half an hour, and we can schedule around any time constraints that people have. Please contact me if you can help on the 16th.



On December 18th, the congregation will join in the fun of greening the sanctuary. We will be decorating the tree in the narthex, hanging the large wreaths and the lighted garland in the sanctuary, and setting up the creches, as well as switching all the blue bows to red ones outside on our windows. Families who have small children frequently enjoy working on the creches, and each project is a lovely way to enjoy the fellowship CGS offers. When Bill and I first came to CGS in 1977, the Greening was done as a parish event, and the group working together really showed us what a wonderful community we had found.



We look forward to seeing everyone on **Sunday, December 18th for a fun-filled time after the 10 AM service.** We will be having a special coffee hour that morning – look for great food and the usual wonderful conversation!

Ellen Harland

## Committee News

### Prayer Shawl Creators

Our prayer shawl inventory is very low right now – and in the middle of a high demand season. If you have any completed shawls, please drop them off at the church as soon as possible. If you've got one in process, please bring it to church as soon as you are finished. This is a very meaningful ministry in which you are involved, we and many unnamed others thank you.

\* If you are a knitter or crocheter and would like to learn more, please call me at 978-263-2014.

Nancy Brown

### Building and Grounds Updates

#### Elevator update—Fixed!

Apologies to anyone who would have liked to use our church elevator these last few months. It took the elevator company a long time to figure out why it wasn't working. Something kept shorting out the electrical system, and a number of parts had to be replaced. The best guess is that, as everything settled over time, some of the wires going to the controls outside the elevator doors shifted slightly and touched a drywall screw. We believe it has now been fixed, but, just to be sure, the installer is waiting until we've had some time with it working to



cover the new wiring and ‘clean up’ the area. Thank you for your patience!

***To use the lift, remember — unlike a regular elevator where you push and release the button— you have to hold down the button until the platform reaches the destination, and then, to enter or exit the lift, you need to open the door promptly after releasing the button.***

Jessie Panek

### **Ministry Oportunity! Sidewalk care**

Calling all willing parishioners. Winter weather is on-the-way. Please sign up for “sidewalk care”. It’s easy: pick dates you are available, check the weather prediction, and pop by the church on your mornings. If the main entry walkway needs salting or shoveling, please have at it. Supplies will be sitting just under the entry tower. Thanks!



Harry Peebles

### **Rectory Maintenance**

We have the good fortune of owning both the Church property and the next-door rectory. Traditionally used for housing by the rector, recent residents included Rev. Gareth Evans and his fam-



ily, then Rev. Melissa Buono and her family. Each rector has the option of accepting to live in the rectory, or to receive a hous-

ing stipend when living somewhere else. When the rector opts for the stipend, we then rent out the rectory. That is our currently situation. We are lucky enough to currently have wonderful tenants.

Years ago, before we owned it, the rectory received an addition, increasing the living space. One result of the addition was that the house has had two oil burning boilers, each with its own oil tank. The older tank was recently condemned, and this fall that tank was removed. The remaining oil tank is now connected to both boilers.

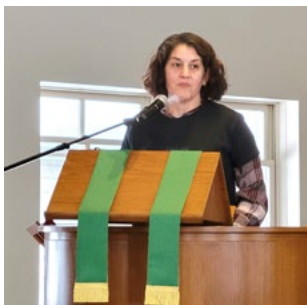
Earlier this year, during a routine furnace service visit, it was noticed that the liner to one of the exhaust chimneys was compromised. We recently completed the necessary work to replace that chimney liner.

Special thanks to Guido Gagliano for the many rectory maintenance and improvement projects. One of his latest contributions is a new hand-rail down the steps to the back patio.

Harry Peebles

## **Administration**

### **Treasurer’s Report**



Preliminary financial results through the end of November show a year-to-date net income of a little over \$10,000. Through this

point in the year we had budgeted net income of just over \$1,000. Through the end of the year we proj-

ect that we will end up slightly better than budgeted. You may recall that our budget for 2022 projected an annual loss of \$13,859, but we now expect to do slightly better than that. Thank you to everyone for keeping your pledges up to date.

If you plan on using Amazon for Christmas shopping, please remember to use Amazon smile and select Church of Good Shepherd as your charitable recipient. See next page.

Denise Kelly, Treasurer



Did you know that you can support Good Shepherd when shopping on **AmazonSmile**? AmazonSmile is a simple and automatic way for you to support Good Shepherd every time you shop – and it comes at zero cost to you. It’s a donation made by Amazon in your honor. You just have to select us at [smile.amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com) and use [smile.amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com) instead of [amazon.com](https://amazon.com) whenever you shop.

## Vestry Vingettes

The meeting opened with a prayer led by Ellie; a Compline recording “*Let There Be Peace on Earth*”, sung by the Voices of Hope Children’s Choir, was played. A meditation followed to ease tensions that might be felt as the Vestry met on Election Day. The Minutes of the October 11th were accepted.

### **Finance:**

The budget is on track through this month. Pledged income year-to-date is behind by around \$6,000. This could be due to the timing of posting payments. It has been offset by the Plate offering, other receipts, and prior year pledge payments. As a result, we are \$4,000 ahead of projected income. Some expenses are over budget, some under budget. Through the end of the year, we will likely be over budget due to heating expenses and plowing. This can be partially offset by savings.

The income accounting has been further complicated due to the recording in the books of monies taken in for our sponsored Afghan family as it has yet to be spent. Denise asked for a motion to put these monies into a separate fund. The motion was moved and accepted.

Some questions on the budget as presented included Ellen asking about the increase in utility costs. Denise confirmed that \$400 of the \$1,500 YTD is due to the new tenant using the kitchen. Ellie confirmed that Nina, the caterer, will be using the kitchen each week on Tuesday and Thursday per the agreed schedule at the \$100 per day rate. This will offset the energy costs. It was not determined if

Nina using the kitchen as a trial run was the direct cause of the \$400 increase.

Ellie summarized for the Vestry other sources of income for use of the Parish Hall, which have included an Indian cultural group, music recitals, weddings, baptisms, and school team dinners as examples.

### **Rectory Rent and General Repairs:**

A discussion was raised by Denise about the Rectory rent. Multiple numbers and goals had been mentioned. One such statement included the desire to increase the monthly rent well above a 3% hike. But such a large increase should be delayed until tenant turnover. The Finance Committee would like to raise the rent beginning in January 2023, giving the tenant notice about this now. The rent is still comparatively low for comparable properties for the town of Acton and this region. Once the current tenant moves out, it is anticipated the rental rate will be brought up to full market rate at that time.

The chimney repairs are scheduled for next week. The elevator at church is still awaiting a part to be replaced.

### **Stewardship Committee Report:**

Harry is leading the Stewardship team; he led the discussion of the upcoming pledge drive. The stewardship team includes Ronnie Diesl, Chris, O’Leary, Gail Lyons, and Rev. Ellie.

Early budget projections put us at an 8% deficit at the end of this year. For 2023, we are asking for an additional 5% increase in pledges. Denise will have a draft 2023 budget by the end of November. In the past, the conversation about pledging focused

on operational aspects. This year, the approach will be focused on our core values, with an emphasis on intentional giving. The letters will address common questions, such as:

- What is pledging
- Why do we pledge (being responsible)
- Tax implications
- Who can I talk to about pledging (Wardens)
- How do I make a pledge
- How much should I give

The rollout of the pledge drive was outlined as follows:

A. The Pledge Drive started on 11/6 with Ellie's sermon, which set the tone

B. Personal Testimonies will be shared on the four following consecutive Sundays leading up to the Ingathering on December 4 th . Our presenters are Gail Lyons, Harry Peebles, Nancy Brown, and Barb McGee.

C. Two versions of the pledge letters will be drafted, approved by the committee, and sent to the congregation next week

- A current church member who is an established giver
- A relatively new member who hasn't given before

D. The mailer will include the cover letter, a pledge card, a simple trifold brochure discussing pledging, and a budget pie chart that illustrates where our income is spent in the areas of Salaries, Facilities, Diocese and Ministries.

Gail Lyons asked if we were going to discuss dollar amounts specifically, will this be in the letters rather than the brochure? If we asked specifically for what we need, we would get a better response. Harry Peebles asked Denise to supply numbers in the brochure.

Ellen Harland asked if we can still discuss a budget for a church school administrator. This was tabled for a future Vestry meeting.

**An ingathering event will be held after the December 4 th 10:00AM service**, taking the form of a more extended coffee hour, with a craft for all to participate in. Raphael asked about decorations incorporating the color purple since this takes place during Advent. He will ask Jessie Panek and Barbara Meglis if they would like to participate in decorating the Parish Hall. John asked if we need a Christmas tree for the 4th..

#### **Holiday Schedule:**

Ellie discussed the Christmas services sched-

ule. John Link asked if there would be music for the Christmas Day service. It was confirmed Ellen is planning to play for the one service at 9:00AM. John also suggested, on the secular side, if we would consider having a holiday theme movie night, especially if we show "The Bishop's Wife". Gail asked if we were planning a Lessons and Carols service this year. Ellie said this will be scheduled during Epiphany.

Signage for advertising our holiday services, Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, and Blue Christmas was discussed. Options include lawn signs at key corners in Acton, or a banner. Wendy will research locations and costs.

#### **Mission Strategy:**

Ellie discussed the Invite/Welcome/Connect program, created by the Mission Strategy Committee. A booklet was introduced at the Diocesan Convention. It is a process of reimagining church to inspire congregations to participate in evangelism. Three orientation sessions were coming up via Zoom, and Ellie encouraged us all to sign up for one of them: November 17 th , 10:00AM, November 13 th , 7:00PM, November 16 th , 7:00PM.

We will decide at the next Vestry meeting if we want to be a part of this program. The booklet is at the church for our review.

#### **Diocesan Convention:**

Ellie, Wendy, Ken Schmidt, and Peter Church attended the in-person convention this year representing Good Shepherd. Ellen was at a Cursillo booth in the expo center. Chuba also attended.

Key business and topics of the convention were touched upon, including the selection of a Substitute Bishop to replace Bishop Gayle Harris for an interim time, the reparation funds being budgeted for black churches, indigenous people's recognition initiative, stipend for Deacons, support to create a more multicultural diverse church leadership, and Bishop Gates' address to the gathering.

The meeting ended with prayer.

## **2022 Episcopal Diocese of Massachusetts 237th Annual Convention Summary Report**

Church of the Good Shepherd attendees: The Rev. Eleanor Applewhite Terry, Ken Schmidt, Deacon, Wendy Feddersen and Peter Church, Diocesan



## The Call of Love in Our Time and Place

237TH ANNUAL CONVENTION  
OCT. 28-29, 2022

Episcopal Diocese of Massachusetts

representatives  
The convention was held on October 29 at the DoubleTree hotel in Danvers, MA. This was the first in-person event held since 2019.

### **Business Highlights:**

The 2023 Diocesan budget was approved unanimously

Clergy Compensation and Benefits – The 2023 TCC Standard formula was defined for full time, active clergy.

### **Key Resolutions: New Bishop Suffragan**

Bishop Gates proposed to not have a successor bishop suffragan to replace Bishop Harris. The convention voted to create an assistant bishop position and authorized Gates to appoint an eligible bishop to that position, with the advice of the Executive Committee of Diocesan Council and consent of the Standing Committee. There was quite a bit of discussion about this at the convention. One key point that was brought forward was to make sure diversity of a potential candidate is kept in mind. Part of the decision for this change were associated to costs of a nationwide search for a new bishop suffragan.

### **Reparations Fund**

The Episcopal Diocese of Massachusetts Reparations Fund was resolved as part of our effort to address the legacy of wealth accumulated through the enslaved labor of Africans and Afro-Caribbeans on our behalf, and for our use even today. The initial pool of resources will total approximately \$3 million, as investment income for the Fund, with the goal of reaching \$10 million. These will be made up in part



of draws from the Trustees of Donations unrestricted trusts, unrestricted agency funds and bishop-directed funds. There will also be funds contributed through an increase in parish assessments. The Diocese has also urged individual worshipping communities to commit a percentage of their endowments as well. Timing for the fund to be included in the annual budget is scheduled to begin in 2024.

In conjunction to this resolution, there was a call to improve diversity of ordained leaders in the Church, supporting cross cultural ministries which can engage and lead difficult conversations within communities, with proficiencies in multiple languages. The Racial Justice Commission has been tasked to work with the Commission on Ministry and Office of the Canon for Ordained Vocations to support the program.

### **Minimal Assessable Compensation**

A policy was approved for each Permanent Deacon to be provided with minimal compensation for the first time. This will be forwarded to the Church Pension Fund on their behalf.

### **Poor People's Campaign**

A resolution was passed for individuals, congregations, and deaneries in the Diocese to join in solidarity with the Massachusetts Poor People's Campaign through education, formation, engagement, support, and actions to live into our mission strategy.

The Poor People's Campaign, or Poor People's March on Washington, was a 1968 effort to gain economic justice for poor people in the United States. It was organized by Martin Luther King, Jr., and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) and carried out under the leadership of Ralph Abernathy in the wake of King's assassination in April 1968.

After presenting an organized set of demands to Congress and executive agencies, participants set up a 3,000-person protest camp on the Washington Mall, where they stayed for six weeks in the spring of 1968.

The campaign did produce some changes, however subtle. They included more money for free and reduced lunches for school children and Head Start programs in Mississippi and Alabama. The USDA released surplus commodities to the nation's 1000 poorest counties, food stamps were expanded, and some federal welfare guidelines were streamlined.

The Poor People’s Campaign has been supporting a broader movement to be launched in May 2023, a Third Reconstruction, defined as a revival of a constitutional commitment to establish justice, provide for the general welfare, and end decades of austerity. This initiative is recognized in 45 state coordinating committees and by a network of more than 250 labor and organizational partners, hundreds of faith partners, and dozens of national faith bodies.

**Fostering Right Relationship: The Episcopal Diocese of Massachusetts, Indigenous Episcopalians, and our Indigenous Neighbors**

This resolution asked that the Diocese acknowledge that we live, work and worship on ancestral lands of Indigenous Peoples, and to make public statements acknowledging this whenever possible. A special working group from the Subcommittee of the Reparations of the Racial Justice Commission will explore and implement this policy. The Diocese has also asked parishes designate one Sunday a year, beginning in 2023, to honor the people indigenous to these lands.

**Resolution in Thanksgiving to God for the Episcopacy of The Rt. Rev. Gayle E Harris**

The entire Diocese expressed their profound grati-

tude for Rev. Harris, in the 20th year of her episcopacy, for her faithfulness to our part of the Jesus Movement and her support and love of the people of God in eastern Massachusetts. Of the many contributions acknowledged at the convention, some of the highlights included:



- Support and oversight of the formation and ministry of our vocational deacons
- Championing of Palestinian Christians and leadership of Holy Land pilgrimages
- Leadership of the Mass Council of Churches
- Personal engagement with youth, and Black, Indigenous and People of Color communities

A video message from our Presiding Bishop, the Most Rev. Michael B Curry was shown, and an address by Bishop Alan Gates both thanked Bishop Gayle for her care, love, and advocacy that made a “beloved community more possible in our midst.” The Diocese resolved that we will miss Bishop Gayle and her formal role in our lives, and we wish her Godspeed and much joy in her retirement.

Wendy Fedderson

## Passages

### Funerals



Parishioner **Paul Guditz** passed away on November 15. Paul was the husband of Mary Ellen Guditz and father of Eric and Michael. A funeral service with Eucharist was held on Saturday Nov. 26.

Paul grew up in Lexington, MA, graduating from Lexington High School. He went on to receive an MS in Electrical Engineering from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in New York. He pursued his engineering career working for Digital Equipment Corporation, Raytheon Technologies Corporation, Intel Corporation,

Marvell Technology, Inc., and most recently, Philips Health Care.

Paul was a devoted and loving husband and father. His boys went to church school, participated in Youth Group, and were confirmed at Good Shepherd. Erik went with a parish group to El Salvador, and Michael was always ready to lend a hand as needed — as was Paul. Paul had a strong work ethic, but also enjoyed playing hockey for the Raytheon Hockey League, skiing with his sons, fixing things around the house, and working in the yard. His greatest passion was flying — Paul received his pilot’s license before he received his driver’s license!





Paul found his greatest ministry in Scouting, where for the past 20 years he devoted many hours to the education, nurturing, and mentoring of the members of Troop 284 as a Scoutmaster, friend, and role model. Nothing made him prouder than when his two sons, Eric and Michael, made Eagle Scout.

