

The Shepherd's Staff

November 2021



Church of the Good Shepherd *Our story inside these pages*

**Beginning October 31 - at 8 & 10 - No need to
sign up for seats for church services!**

**Nov. 10 at 7:30-9:00 pm -Hop, Skip & Jump
Bible Study**

**Nov. 10 - Esperanza Harvest of Hope, on-line at
6:00 pm - Movie, 7:00 pm - Live Auction**

**Nov. 14 at 8:00 & 10:00 am - Undies Sunday,
Andy McMahon from LTLC visits**

Nov. 14 at 10:00 am - Church School

**Nov. 28 at 8 & 10 am - Pledge In-Gathering
Sunday**

Nov. 28 - First Sunday of Advent

Nov. 28 at 10 am - Church School

Contents

Word from the Fold	1-3
Warden's Message	3
Worship	3-6
Christian Formation	7-8
Mission Outreach	9-14
Committee News	15
With Gratitude...	15-16
Administration	17-18
Passages	18-19
If you need to contact	20
Calendar of Events	

Church of the Good Shep-
herd

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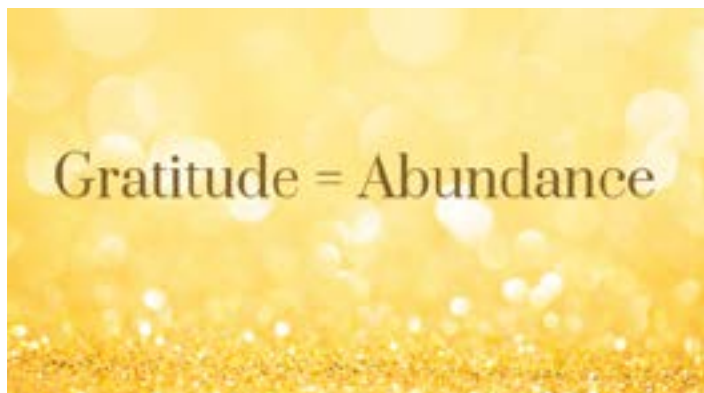
**FB: Church of the Good
Shepherd, Acton**

Episcopal Diocese of
Massachussets



Look for our faith stories inside

A Word from the Fold



Sunday at Good Shepherd, we began a month-long celebration of God's generosity and abundance that will culminate on Ingathering Sunday on November 28. On that day we will acknowledge and give thanks for our pledges of financial support that will sustain and fund our congregation in 2022. Like churches everywhere, this is the time of year we prepare our budget for next year and speak in earnest about the income it takes to sustain our congregation. Such is the practical reality of parish ministry. It costs money to run a church and the vast majority of our

operating income (for our staff, our music and children's ministries, this building, our office resources) comes directly from us, our worshipping congregation.

Stewardship is the term we often use to talk about this process. And I think for a lot of us, when we hear that term, we think about parish fund drives and the annual budget process. We associate stewardship with something we have to do to make sure the church stays open and funded, people cared for, the budget balanced. We think of stewardship as an obligation.

I would like to suggest to you a deeper, more meaningful understanding of stewardship. For I have come to understand that stewardship is NOT an annual program or a fundraising campaign. It is not focused on the church's need to survive. And it is not even about our church at all.

Stewardship is a spiritual discipline, just as prayer and worship are. It is the spiritual practice of modeling our lives after the transformative generosity of God. It is the Christian way to live our life in relationship to everything around us: our world, our community, our family, our neighbors, our planet. Stewardship is a faith-based way to use our talents, our resources, our money, our blessings. It is the spiritual practice of caring for all that God has given us, with thanksgiving.

Over and over again, throughout the stories of Scripture, God is presented to us a God of Abundance. We see that in the lessons we read this morning. Ruth has heard stories of God's generosity, which leads her to an act of incredible generosity herself, as she dedicates her life and her faith to her mother-in-law Naomi. The Psalm appointed for this morning is a song of thanksgiving for God's abundance- the God who made and heaven and earth, the seas, and all that is in them... who gives food to those who hunger." And our Gospel proclaims the abundant love we are commanded to share with God and neighbor. If our call as Christians is to be in deeper relationship with God, and if we are made in the image of a generous and loving God, then it follows that we also are called to be generous and loving in our dealings with the world.

How we spend our money, how we use our resources, is a spiritual issue. And it's one we don't like to talk about much. Especially in church! But the reality is we all interact with money on a daily basis. And I would bet we all spend more time each week making money, spending money, worrying about money, paying bills, being advertised to, than we do in prayer or other spiritual disciplines. I know this is true for me.

We all live in the same world that bombards us daily with messages about money. It is suggested that to be happy, we must acquire more. We are taught to judge others and to judge ourselves by the homes we have (or don't have), the income we earn (or don't earn), the stuff we have (or don't have). A quick Google search revealed that we Americans are exposed to an average of between 4,000 and 10,000 advertisements per day—on our phones, on Facebook, online, on those little screens at the gas pump—to say nothing of the more traditional, yet still ubiquitous, ads on TV and in print media.

Money, how it affects us, how we use it, is a spiritual issue. And perhaps it always has been. There are 2,350 verses in the Bible that deal with the subject of money. The Bible mentions money and wealth twice as

often as the topics of faith and prayer. And Jesus speaks about money and wealth more than any other subject except the Kingdom of God. Clearly this is a topic that is at the heart of our life of faith.

How we spend our money says a lot about what we value. A few years ago, I was challenged to discover this by a very simple exercise. Open your checkbook register, examine your credit card statement. Save your cash receipts for a month and see what your spending says about what you value.

A look at my monthly credit card statements and checkbook register gives a pretty detailed picture of our life as a family. It shows that we've got household bills, a mortgage, and only recently paid off our graduate student loans just in time for our oldest to head off to college next year. A closer look might reveal that our daughters play soccer and our son's new driver's license has increased our auto insurance rate significantly! You'll see we often order takeout on the nights practice runs late, and we stop at Dunkin' after games on Saturdays. You would notice that we don't go out very much, but we do buy a lot from Amazon and have subscriptions to Netflix and Disney +.

You would also see that my husband Bronson and I are intentional about making sure that a significant portion of our income goes toward things which reflect our faith and values. We give generously to this church. As we are able, we also give to environmental and medical groups that support our concern for caring for God's creation. We support scholarship funds at the schools which graduated us, to enable others to benefit from the educations we received. We give, not because we've got a lot of extra income to spend, but because we believe it is a spiritual discipline to try and have our spending reflect what we value most.

For me, the process of converting my heart (and my spending) to this way of life has been gradual. I first joined the Episcopal Church in college. I had little money, and no sense of stewardship at all. No one ever told me what a pledge was. No one ever invited me to give. So I put \$1 in the plate on Sundays. I figured that was about what my use of the church equaled. I came on Sundays, and gave a little something to offset what it cost to put on the service.

After I got my first job, I gave a little more. Maybe \$10 a month. I figured I could afford to be a bit more generous and I was starting to be more in-

involved at the church. After we got married, we gave a little more- but not much. Bronson was in school, and I was earning a church salary. We had student loans and car payments to make and we were saving for a house and a family.

Today, twenty-two years later, we devote a percentage of our income to charitable giving—much to the church, and some to other organizations that support our faith and values. And it is an act of faith. A spiritual discipline. The switch for us came when we realized that stewardship is much more about our need to be generous than it is about the church's need to receive. We want our spending to reflect our gratitude and love for God and the role that church has in our lives.

Church can be many things. For me, it is the community within which I am supported and encouraged in my life of faith. It is the Body of Christ in all of its magnificent, complex diversity, which has challenged me to know and love others as reflections of God. It is worship which grounds me, music which uplifts me, prayers which sustain me. It is where I learn to conform my life and ministry to the generosity and compassion of God. Church is more than a building, more than a rich heritage, more than an obligation. It is a place where resurrection happens.

I give with generosity and love to Good Shepherd because I want this Christian community to thrive and witness to the love of God. I want to live in a world that embodies the divine values at the heart of Jesus' ministry and I want this church to be part of that important witness. We describe ourselves as a caring and inclusive community of faith. We offer compelling worship filled with music, sacrament and song. We are called to be the change we want to see in the world through our engaging outreach ministries. These are all values I want my life and giving to reflect, so my family and I pledge generously to support it.

God asks each of us to be stewards of the gifts of time, talent and treasure that we have been entrusted. This fall, I invite you all to join in an intentional reflection upon the transforming generosity of stewardship. As we begin to regather in person and celebrate the resurrection of our new life that is beginning to dawn on this side of the pandemic, I hope you will become reflections of God's generosity in our world. When your pledge letter arrives this week, please prayerfully consider

your pledge to Good Shepherd. May your giving reflect your love and thanksgiving for this church and our community- and for the God who makes

everything possible.

Rev. Ellie +

Warden's Message



Flexibility –

that is a word I am hearing a lot at Good Shepherd these days. It is a Tech Team mantra, but it goes beyond the tech realm. We are reimagining our use of the sanctuary, with the choir and piano in back (aren't they sounding wonderful these days?!). Ellen, our new Pastoral Associate for Liturgy and Music, has been leading

the choir in full body stretching as a precursor to vocal warmups on Sunday mornings, increasing flexibility in a literal, physical way. The children have started to come back to Church School, meeting in the Parish Hall and Library instead of in the downstairs classroom. The eight o'clock service has restarted, and I have observed a modest coffee hour outdoors in the courtyard afterwards.

Spiritual flexibility is a part of this, I think. The Vestry has been discussing how the church is

changing and will continue to change as we emerge from the pandemic. We are challenging ourselves to imagine a different future. While change can feel unsettling, it is also usually an opportunity. We can step outside of our proverbial "comfort zone." Since we cannot know exactly how our spiritual life together will develop, the only thing we can do is experiment, then adjust as necessary as we move forward. In a way, we have been given "permission" to explore more freely.

What will bring us joy? The joy may surprise us. I have been joyfully surprised recently when I have asked people for help, and they thank me for asking them! (C.S Lewis was onto this: his book *Surprised by Joy* made a big impression on me). How will we be surprised? Along with all the tactical moves we have made to begin to adjust as we emerge from the pandemic, these spiritual questions are the ones that we need to be open to – to listen, ponder, and pray. Please be open to these questions. These will be keys to our future together.

Faithfully, Lydia

Worship

Welcome Back to Church!

It has been so good to be in church with you on Sundays! We are glad we can offer three different opportunities to gather for worship each Sunday: 8am in person; 10am in person; and 10am on Zoom. Since we have returned indoors, our attendance across all three services is now consistently over 80 people. We are happy to see so many of you worshipping with us, including a number of newer faces. Welcome home.



A few notes about logistics for Sunday mornings:

- Beginning October 31, you no longer need to sign up for a seat!! Alleluia! We have adjusted our seating in the church to fit more people while still maintaining a safe distance between households. Overflow seating is now available in the Parish Hall, with a Zoom feed and good sound to access the service from the church.
- Masks are required in the building. Households will continue to be spaced throughout the church and Parish Hall to maintain a safe distance. Please follow the direction of the ushers. Know that your safety remains a priority.
- Be aware that we are keeping the windows open for good air circulation, so please dress appropriately.
- The elevator is currently unavailable while we await installation of our new one. Accessible seating is available in the Parish Hall, with a live Zoom link to the service.
- We are preparing and providing bulletins again. Those who prefer can help us save paper by accessing the music and order of service online from our website.
- Our new sound system is being installed and should be ready soon.

Thank you to everyone who contributed to this effort. We will benefit from your generosity for years to come.

+ Ellie

Together in Song



I sense divine glory and mercy being revealed in our midst these days, various and radiant like the colors of our beloved New England autumn, as I continue to get to know you, and to be known by you. My gratitude and joy in your warm

welcome, generosity, curiosity, flexibility, and good humor are renewed day by day.

Someone recently asked me what my favorite musical instrument is. Without hesitation I replied, "The human voice." I have

Service Schedule

Sunday

8:00 am Holy Eucharist

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

Wednesday

7:30 am Morning Prayer via Zoom

Thursday

8:00 pm Compline via Zoom

been singing my whole life, and I still find myself surprised and smitten by the amazing variety of vocal expression; the unique character of each individual voice; and the full, sacred, transformative communion we can experience when our voices are joined together insong. I preached a sermon many years ago in which I reflected on some spiritual aspects of singing. If you would like to read it, you can find the transcript of the [sermon here](#). Those reflections remain at the core of my experience as a musician, and a person of faith. These days, I am full of questions about how to explore and celebrate the mysteries of singing God in this brave new world in which we find ourselves—with persistent, evolving Covid-19, climate change, and so many concurrent challenges and opportunities.

One way we have been doing this at Good Shepherd is by expanding our repertoire of sung prayer. For the past six weeks, we've been singing *Unidos (Together)*, for our Song of Praise. It was written by Benjamin Villanueva, who was born in General Teràn, N.L., Mexico, and was a member of El Mesias, Methodist Church of Mexico. Soon we'll be taking up *Halleluya! We Sing Your Praises*, a traditional South African piece sung in English and



Shona. At Communion we've begun to sing *Behold, I Make All Things New*, a refrain composed by John Bell of the ecumenical Iona Community in Scotland. And at the baptisms this fall I've introduced a piece I wrote—*Welcome Home*. During November, I hope to upload recordings of our choir singing these pieces, so you can listen to them whenever you wish, and sing along! As the diversity and depth of our sung prayer grow, may the blessings of beauty and grace overflow through our hearts and lives to our communities and the whole earth.

Ellen Oak,
Pastoral Associate for Liturgy and Music

Advent



This year **Advent** begins on November 28th. Check the weekly e-blast for various events in early **Advent**, including **Greening of the Church** and possible Christian Formation events.

Indoor Sound System

The new indoor sound system installation has begun! If you look closely on each side of the sanctuary, where the pillars meet the roof, you will see thin wires stretching between 4 pillars on each side. There is also a new cable that spans the last rafter, from the garden side to the walkway side, to bring



sound from the mixer, which will be located in the right rear of the sanctuary, to the speakers on the walkway side.

While the cabling and wiring is almost completed, the speakers themselves are, unfortunately, delayed — like so many goods these days. They are expected to arrive within the month of November.

Thanks to all who so generously supported the acquisition of the indoor sound system. It is very much appreciated!

Lydia Tolley

Tech Team Update

“We have come so far with our technical integrations since we embarked on this adventure at the beginning of the pandemic. It has been very rewarding to me for us to be able to unify the congregation despite the physical distances that may be between us. We can all be together, and we can hear each other’s voices and prayers. This is wonderful!”

The Tech Team continues to refine the sound and video for both the sanctuary space and the Zoom integration. With the choir and the piano moved to the back of the sanctuary, the team repositioned microphones and cables so the reinvigorated choir could be heard well on Zoom. We added dedicated microphones for both Ellen and Ken. On the video side, Jon Panek installed two high booms in the center aisle to support four iPhone cameras, facing both toward the altar and toward the back of the church. We also have added wireless camera capability, so we can move in close with live cameras for special events like baptisms. All these sound and video integrations make possible for those on Zoom to feel almost as if they are in the sanctuary.

We need to be justly proud to be a leader among Episcopal congregations in supporting two-way audio and video, and this positions us well to innovate into the future.

Lydia Tolley



Worship Snapshots



Blessing of the Animals



Christian Formation

**Hop, Skip and Jump
through the Bible**
Wednesday, November 10th,
7:30pm-9pm

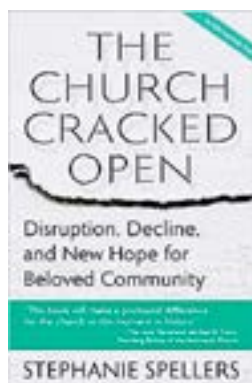
Exploring the Scriptures

We will be holding our Bible Study on Zoom on **Wednesday, 10th November from 7:30 – 9pm**. The topic, readings and Zoom link will be posted in the e-blast the week before the meeting.

Come and join us as we explore the scriptures and consider how they speak to us today. Each session is a stand-alone meeting so join us for whatever sessions you can fit into your schedule. All are welcome!

Bev Ridpath ; Neal Ogle

Suggested Reading



The Church Cracked Open: Disruption, Decline, and New Hope for Beloved Community
by Mary Spellers

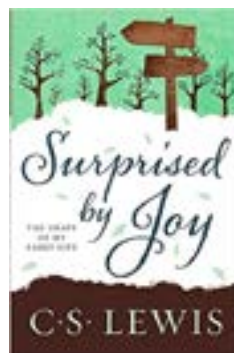
“This book will make a profound difference for the church in this moment in history.” The Most Reverend Michael B. Curry

Sometimes it takes disruption and loss to break us open and call us home to God. It’s not surprising that a global pandemic and once-in-a-generation reckoning with white supremacy on top of

decades of systemic decline have spurred Christians everywhere to ask who we are, why God placed us here and what difference that makes to the world.

In this critical yet loving book, the author explores the American story and the Episcopal story in order to find out how communities steeped in racism, establishment, and privilege can at last fall in love with Jesus, walk humbly with the most vulnerable and embody beloved community in our own broken but beautiful way.

[*The Church Cracked Open*](#) invites us to surrender privilege and redefine church, not just for the sake of others, but for our own salvation and liberation.



Surprised by Joy: The Shape of My Early Life by C.S. Lewis

In [*Surprised by Joy*](#) C. S. Lewis—the great British writer, scholar, lay theologian, broadcaster, Christian apologist, and bestselling author of *Mere Christianity*, *The Screwtape Letters*, *The Great Divorce*, *The Chronicles of Narnia*, and many other be-

loved classics—takes readers on a spiritual journey through his early life and eventual embrace of the Christian faith. Lewis begins with his childhood in Belfast, surveys his boarding school years and his youthful atheism in England, reflects on his experience in World War I, and ends at Oxford, where he became “the most dejected and reluctant convert in all England.” As he recounts his lifelong search for joy, Lewis demonstrates its role in guiding him to find God.



Church School

Church School Update

We are excited to reopen the Good Shepherd Church School! It has been so nice to see the children and their families back with us in church.

Church School meets on the second and fourth Sundays of every month. We hope this new schedule will better accommodate the needs of our busy families. On the weeks when church school is not in session, we welcome our families to join us for church at 10 am. We are exploring ways to include the kids in our worship each week — including having them serve as acolytes, lectors, and musicians. Stay tuned!

Our two church school classes (one for kids grades K-4 and the other for kids grades 5-8) began meeting in October. We are grateful to teachers Jen Thornton and Mary Bunker for their commitment to our kids. We are also extremely lucky to have Taryn Ross-

Hyman continuing to be a guiding light for our children's programs. Taryn returned to full-time teaching this fall and has stepped down from her role as church school coordinator. We

are delighted that Taryn and her family are not going anywhere, however. Taryn will continue to be a big part of our Good Shepherd family as a parent, church school volunteer and champion of our kids.

This is a year of re-building and re-engagement with our Christian education programs for all ages. As a parent of three school aged children myself, I know how challenging the past 19 months have been for families with kids at home. It's important for our congregation to remember that families like mine are still waiting for our children under the age of 12 to be eligible for the COVID vaccine.



Our children don't yet share the freedom that vaccinated adults have begun to enjoy. Our kids have been through a lot since the pandemic began, and over a much larger percentage of their young lives. It's been a very long time since life was normal for them. For us parents, it has not been easy either. Many of us are simply exhausted.

As life begins to return to its "new normal" and activities for children and youth resume, it is understandable that many families are reevaluating their commitments. Schedules have been upended. Priorities shifted. For many, church has simply fallen off the radar. That's to be expected and it is okay.

We are here for our families, whenever and however you are ready to return. Good Shepherd is gradually coming back to life in person. We hope you will join us again soon when the time is right. We want this to be a place where children and families feel safe. Where you are comfortable. Where your children are nurtured and supported in their growing life of faith. The pandemic raised a lot of questions for kids. It exposed them to fear we wished they didn't have to feel. It disrupted their lives at a time when we hoped we could provide them security and routine. Perhaps church can be a place where some of that is restored — Where our children's questions and fears are validated, where they can connect with people again, from other families and generations and cultures, and where they can be part of a community that loves them. We hope Good Shepherd will be part of your reemergence as you become part of ours. Come and see and join us in this time of resurrection.

Light and peace,
Rev. Ellie+

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 14: Andy McMahon, Lowell Transitional Living Center

December: Immigration

January: El Ocotillo Pupusa Fundraiser

February: Esperanza Academy

March/April: Food Pantry

May: Creation Care

“Undies Sundies”

November 14th

As most of you know, we have supported the Lowell Transitional Living Center (LTLC) for many years. We look forward to a **visit from Andy McMahon on November 14**, with an update on how the center has been functioning throughout the pandemic.



Each year, we gather and send new underwear, socks, undershirts, scarves, and hats to the LTLC. We’ve also had fundraisers for specific items such as pillows, blankets, cots, and a commercial washing machine.

Due to the pandemic, we will once again be asking for “virtual donations” this year. If you would like to support this ministry, choose a donation (listed below), and send a check directly to the Church of the Good Shepherd. Please write LTLC in the memo on your check.

We request that **donations be made by November 28**, when we will deliver a check to our friends at the Lowell Transition Living Center.

I also encourage you to send a card (or cards, if you’d like to write/make several) with words of encouragement to the staff and residents along with your donation. I will have a basket at the back of the sanctuary where you can leave the cards and donations.

Donation options are:

- \$10.00 - socks, underwear, undershirts, scarves,



- hats
- \$20.00 - pillows
- \$50.00 - blankets
- \$100.00 - cots
- (If you prefer, you may also donate checks/ gift cards for items not listed above.)

I thank you all for your past generosity and hope that, in this

very difficult time, you will help sustain this ministry.

Helene Gagliano

Welcoming Afghan Evacuees

“*As-Salaam-Alaikum*” is the most common greeting among Muslims and means “**Peace be upon you.**”

The most common response that you can give is “*Wa-Alaikum-Salaam,*” which means “Peace be also with you.”



Good Shepherd is joining a team of four other faith communities in the area to work under the direction of the International Institute of New England (IINE), a resettlement agency with a long history in the Boston/Lowell/Manchester NH area. Our group is called the Acton Area Interfaith Partnership and includes the South Acton Congregational Church, St. Matthew’s United Methodist Church, the Apple Valley Catholic Community, and the Trinity Chapel in Shirley. We are excited to be collaborating with our neighboring churches!



IINE is beginning the resettlement of 425 Afghan evacuees in the area. It is a massive humanitarian undertaking! The federal government provides a one-time payment



to each immigrant of \$1225. For a family of four, \$4900 is quickly used up after paying first and last month’s rent at an average cost of \$1800/month for a two-bedroom apartment. IINE will receive \$1050 per arrival for the myriad of services they provide including housing, furnishings, interpreters, food, clothing, ESOL for adults, school enrollment for children, cultural and work preparation, and legal services.

There is never enough public funding for any arrival. IINE supplements with privately raised donations and in-kind contributions. Clients are encouraged and supported to quickly find employment.

We are expecting to create opportunities for outreach specific to Good Shepherd and also occasions to work with partner churches. IINE is also setting up a portal for individuals to sign up to volunteer.

Stay tuned as we create a plan for Good Shepherd outreach activities to begin in late November. In the meantime, there is time to practice these words of welcome!

“*As-Salaam-Alaikum*”

“*Wa-Alaikum-Salaam*”

If you are interested in participating in planning, please contact Barb Magee. Many hands make light work!

Holiday Gift Bags for Those in Prison

For the 2021 holiday season, the Massachusetts Department of Correction intends that all men and women incarcerated in Massachusetts will receive a gift. The DOC is working with CPO and

Bethany House Ministries, Inc. to create 5,000 gift bags. CPO will expand its Holiday Gift Bag program to deliver 2,300 gift bags to men and women at MCI-Concord, Northeastern Correctional Center, MCI-Shirley, Souza-Baranowski Correctional Center, and MCI-Framingham. We have centralized the ordering process and will deliver materials to four different church locations in November. Anyone interested in a volunteer slot can contact Ellie at ellie@concordprisonoutreach.org

Beverly Duncan

Celebration of Our 20 Year Relationship with El Ocotillo

The Celebration



Prayer Chain

Members' Sharings:

"I feel called to pray for others mainly because of how so many people prayed for Bill when he was so sick. That got us both through a tough time, and brought me much comfort. So since I have seen, first hand, how prayer works, I feel impelled to do my part." Ellen

"I always need time to think. The Prayer Chain has been very helpful to me. I have focused more, learned to pray spontaneously when a name pops into my mind, and love being part of a special caring community."

"I am on the Prayer Chain because I love people and do not want to see anyone suffer. I offer up my prayers to God for healing whether it be mind or body. When good news comes through, it tells me that my prayers along with others are really working."

"Praying for the concerns and celebrations of the people of Good Shepherd is a blessing to me and an expression of my deep gratitude and love for the faith filled community there."

If you, or someone you know, needs prayers please never hesitate to ask us to pray for them, no matter how small or large the need. Every request is kept in strict confidentiality. Contact Jane Lothian, Margaret Geanisis, Rev. Ellie Terry or Laura Brock in the church office for prayer requests. If you want to join us or have any questions let Jane or Margaret know.



Delegation Memories

On my first trip to El Salvador, I had just begun reluctantly learning Spanish in school. After my 2006 trip to El Salvador, I realized how important speaking another language is in facilitating connections with other cultures and histories. I then went on to major in Spanish in college and have spent my adulthood travelling to Spanish speaking countries where I get great joy out of being able to connect with people from other cultures in their own language.

Carrie M

Traveling to El Salvador and spending time with the outh there helped me realize that our opportunities in life really are dictated by factors beyond our control - such as where we live, the governments we reside under, and the resources available to us. The youth in El Salvador were just like me but were born in a place with little access to the resources we are lucky to have at home, such as reliable safe transportation, school lunches, and internet access. In our current climate, it is often come back to this point and remember how lucky I am and how that doesn't make me better than anyone else; we are all just born into different circumstances which outline our futures.

Carrie M



tOne of the most meaningful memories from my trip in 2006 was listening to Samuel [Claudia's husband and village leader who died in 2014?] emotionally discuss the trials and tribulations he willingly took on for the betterment of his

community, only to have seen nothing major changed in his lifetime. This moment helped me realize just how complicated the situation in El Salvador was, and is, and how solidarity is a crucial component in understanding the struggles of another.

Amelia W

My participation in the delegation set my life on a trajectory of social consciousness and awareness. I strive to see the world through the eyes of those experiencing injustices, and seek ways to live as a better human on our beautiful planet.

Amelia W



It is difficult to wrap my arms around the many ways that being part of delegations to El Ocotillo has changed me. Every delegation experience re-centers me, stripping away all the outer frills and distractions to a simple inner spirit alive with boundless friendship and mutual caring. It is in part leaving behind everything of this hectic world, traveling with the companionship of friends, and especially being generously welcomed like extended family to renew relationships, laugh, share meals, and walk together in solidarity.

On one trip, we arrived during a four-week drought. An entire corn crop had dried in the fields. We gathered for our annual meeting in the metal-roofed school to discuss scholarships and community goals. The classroom was packed with students and parents and even some people from a neighboring village. We barely got started when the skies darkened, the winds picked up, and rain came thun-

dering down ending all attempts to hold a meeting but for the happiest reason!

– Barb M



Walking into the village of El Ocotillo in 2004 I was greeted by name with warm hugs by people I recognized from 3 years ago. I felt awash in love and belonging. I was personally connected to these camposinas living in the remote mountains of Morazán. Here were people who knew something about me, who'd shared their homes and their stories with me, and who were joyously welcoming me back as a friend.

Over the past 2 decades I have watched toddlers grow into young adults, university students, and parents. I feel love and pride at their accomplishments and their qualities as human beings. I have shared their heartbreak too, as we mourned those who have died, individuals I have also known and called friend.

Jon P

My most meaningful memory is experiencing the gratefulness, love, and dedication of our hosts. Families and individuals trusted God in all things. And the children were so proud of the things God had given them, simple things like soccer balls and books. I distinctly remember our host father was working very hard to combat malnutrition in the rural countryside with very limited resources.

John W.

After years of hearing about and praying for El Salvador with Carol Davis, even before we ever sent a delegation, my most meaningful



memory is when I first stood in the school yard at El Ocotillo. I felt so much joy knowing that the village had grown from huts and shelters and was now a place that had a school that size, providing an education that is so important to the village. That this space served as their meeting place, and that I had only seen it in photos and here I was – I just broke down and sobbed. (actually all over Rafael) When you pray for people for so many years and then you finally get to meet them it's very powerful. Prayer totally changes and enriches relationships.

Margaret G



HARVEST OF HOPE

Film Premiere and Reception Presented by Esperanza Academy



You're Invited to our Online Film Screening + Reception

Join [Esperanza Academy](#) on Nov. 10 for a virtual reception to celebrate the latest installment in the Harvest of Hope film series! You'll hear beautiful new stories of Hope Rising in the context of Esperanza Academy's 12-year commitment to its students and community. Our Reception ([7pm here](#)) will follow the Film Premiere ([6pm here](#)).

[Save Your Spot for the Reception](#)

BONUS: All reception participants will be entered into a raffle for a chance to win four round trip JetBlue airline tickets good until November 2022.

Nov. 10 @ 6pm: FILM

Our new short film is a beautiful exploration of the distinct journeys of three sisters from Lawrence and how their experiences at Esperanza Academy shape their lives.

Nov. 10 @ 7pm: RECEPTION

Our lively program will include remarks from the Head of School, a can't-miss musical performance, and a remarkable student speaker. We will toast to a bright future, together.

Website link for more information and to [sign up](#).

Committee News

Stewardship Committee

When my children were small, we raised butterflies. We would find the caterpillars, feed them in the house, watch them make their chrysalis, and finally see them emerge as butterflies. I am still awed by this process. I imagine what it must be like to be a caterpillar, only able to crawl from leaf to leaf. And then to form a shell, and be sealed up inside. After sleeping for a long time, waking up completely transformed. That must be terribly disconcerting, but also thrilling; now it can fly!

Good Shepherd has gone through its own transformation during this time of isolation. We have new staff to welcome to our community. Ellie is celebrating her one-year anniversary as our Rector. We also have a new Deacon, Ken Schmidt, and a new Pastoral Associate for Liturgy and Music, Ellen Oak.

We also have new amenities for our church building: a new sound system for the Sanctuary, a new roof, and soon a new elevator.

Our mission work still continues. Our support for El Ocotillo, Esperanza Academy and the Lowell Transitional Living Center is as strong as ever. The Pastoral Care ministry still helps us take care of one another. The Creation Care ministry shows us ways that we can fight climate change.

We have remained a vibrant community of faith through it all.

It is your generous support that has allowed our church to thrive during this challenging time. Thank you for your abundant sharing of time, talent, and treasure, even when we cannot be

together.

It is time again to pledge our financial support to Good Shepherd for next year. During the month of November, we will be sharing our stories. Ingathering Sunday will be Sunday, Nov. 28. Pledge cards and further information will be sent out the first week of November. Please consider increasing your pledge if you can. Thank you!

Gail Lyons
Stewardship Committee

Boy Scouts

Our Boy Scout Troup has resumed meeting here on the first Friday of each month and just did a lovely service project clearing the path between the church and the rectory. Please take a look and let us know if more needs to be done. Thanks for suggesting this great project!



With Abundant Gratitude to:

- **Taryn Ross-Hyman** for doing such a wonderful job as our Church School Director these past few years. Your programs were creative and engaging for our children before the Epidemic and even more so while we were isolated. We can't thank you enough for all you've done and all the loving care you have given them. We are so grateful that you all will be staying at Good Shepherd.
- **Jon Panek** as he steps down from the Tech Team at the end of October. Jon has been a driving and creative force in making us a leader in supporting two-way audio and video worship. We love the way God works through you and



your technological background!

- **Everyone who helped** to make Dick Wright's celebration of life a wonderful event
- **Barbara Magee, John and Jessie Panek, Kathleen Zawicki and Tom Hoch, Rafael and Karen Pupo, and David**

Argueta with our friends in El Ocotillo for helping to make our Anniversary Celebration so wonderful.

- **Ellen Oak and the choir** for leading us in such uplifting music for the Anniversary Celebration (and all Sundays too)
- **Jen Thornton and Mary Bunker** for leading our Church School classes



- **Bob Christmas** for his continuing work on the elevator. Here's to being "uplifted" by Christmas!
- **Rev. Ellie and Deacon Ken** for the wonderful Blessing of the Animals service this year.
- **We are also grateful for the joy** of being able to worship together in our church building once again, and for those who made it possible.

- **Rev. Ellie** for blessing the Harland home.



- **Tony Geanisis** for helping Dave install the new sound wiring. (Tony's at the top of the ladder!)



- **Dick Wright** for his many ministries here at Good Shepherd through his life.
- **Church School parents and students** for returning ready to participate in Church School at church once again.

- **Debby Flint-Baum** for contacting the Acton Beacon and other media to update our service times in the newspapers and online.



- **Tom Hoch** for spending countless hours fine-tuning the audio in both the sanctuary and Zoom.

Administration

September Vestry vignettes

Ellie began the meeting with the Prayer attributed to Saint Francis. After the August Vestry Minutes were approved we welcomed Deacon Ken to the Vestry; he will be attending regularly.

As our topic for discussion this month we talked about creating a culture of generosity and abundance. The context is not limited to finances, but is

in fact a mindset, not a collection of wealth. We hope to share personal stories to create a culture of abundance/generosity, as well as Biblical stories, outcome stories, generosity stories, and most importantly our own stories. These actions help us get out of a scarcity mindset.

Stewardship Campaign:

David Hazen will be leading the campaign and he will gather the committee in the next few weeks.

They will create an event timeline and gather some outcome stories to foster generosity. He is determining the mediums to use and getting familiar with a pledge platform – Breeze – to track pledging and giving.

Finance Update:

We are ahead in income, even though we haven't realized some of our projected income (e.g. plate, rental). We are also doing well in the expense area, though some expenses haven't hit yet (e.g. the sound system, rectory mold remediation).

Evangelism & Outreach:

We need to begin to tell stories and ask for stories about what God is doing in our place and the impact of our ministries (these have already begin to appear in the Shep Staff).

Regathering Update:

We are on track for in-person Sunday services with people seated in every third pew. Church school is targeted to start October 10 and will be held on the second and fourth Sunday of each month. The plan is to start slow, inviting families and teachers to a regular commitment. Classes K-4 will meet in the Parish Hall; Grades 5 – 8 will meet in the library; Nursery will be in the basement.

Warden's Report

There was mold in the Rectory due to the high amount of rain and resulting humidity we had this summer. Remediation was done and was successful. Moving forward we will need three dehumidifiers to prevent future mold; we will look at cost sharing options with the tenants for increased electric bills.

We closed with Prayer and Dismissal.

Upcoming Diocesan Convention November 12-13



The climate crisis, racial justice and a renewed mission strategy are at the top of the agenda, as the annual Diocesan Convention prepares to gather next

month, deliberating under the theme “Members One of Another” taken from Romans 12:5 and an invitation to celebrate and explore interdependence as members of the Body of Christ. With COVID-19 precautions still in play, the Nov. 12-13 event will take place fully online again this year.

Friday for all:

The virtual format makes it possible to open Friday's full line-up of learning sessions and worship to anyone who would like to participate.

The Friday schedule includes a 1 pm plenary session, “*Remembering Our Mutuality: Renewing Our Church with Hopeful Imagination and Reaffirmation*” offered by the Rev. Lydia Kelsey Bucklin, Canon to the Ordinary for Discipleship and Vitality in the Diocese of Northern Michigan, followed by a series of breakout sessions delving deeper into aspects of interdependence as the Body of Christ.

Bishop Douglas J. Fisher from the neighboring Diocese of Western Massachusetts will be the guest preacher at the 5 pm service of Holy Eucharist, followed at 7 pm by a keynote address from Dr. Catherine Meeks, Executive Director of the Absalom Jones Center for Racial Healing in the Diocese of Atlanta. Her topic is “*Dancing on Paradox's Floor While Searching for Beloved Community.*”

Convention's annual business sessions follow on Saturday. Delegates and clergy will participate via Zoom, with a livestream available for those who wish to observe the proceedings. (All convention Zoom sessions and the Saturday live stream will be presented via a virtual event management platform, so pre-registration will be necessary to access them.)

Resolutions:

The climate crisis and racial justice top the convention's policy-making agenda for a second year. Two proposed resolutions call for carbon draw-down commitments and the embrace of sustainable burial practices. Another proposed resolution charts a course for accountability and action on the diocesan commitment to repentance and reparations for the sin and legacy of slavery, including the creation by 2024 of a diocesan reparations fund.

And, the convention will vote on a request to the 80th Episcopal Church General Convention in 2022 to add the late Rt. Rev. Barbara C. Harris, first female bishop in the worldwide Anglican Communion, to the church calendar for commemoration on March 13. ([Read Episcopal News Service's story](#))

[here.](#))

Proposed resolutions are available in full in the convention [Handbook](#) (Español).

Mission strategy:

A revised mission strategy proposal will also come before the convention. Diocesan canons require that the diocesan mission strategy be reviewed no less frequently than once every five years; the current strategy was adopted in 2016.

The proposed revision draws on the core themes of discipleship, justice seeking and care for creation that emerged from survey and conversation responses collected from congregations and groups earlier this year by the Mission Strategy Committee of Diocesan Council. The revised strategy lays out goals and actions for individuals, congregations, the bishops and Diocesan Council across eight areas of commitment. The mission strategy report and proposed revision are available in the convention Handbook (Español).

An online discussion session to review the revised mission strategy ahead of the convention is scheduled for Wednesday, Nov. 3 at 7 pm. Anyone who would like to take part can register for the session through the convention registration site.

2022 budget:

Convention also will vote on the proposed \$9.4-million diocesan budget for 2022. It restores to pre-pandemic levels the congregational development and deanery grants that were redirected for pandemic and assessment relief in 2020-2021, and it includes a five percent increase in mission initiatives grants. Also of note for 2022 is a new income-based, graduated assessment formula for calculating the contribution that each congregation makes to the annual diocesan budget in support of common mission and ministry.

For links, materials and updates, visit www.diomass.org/diocesan-convention-2021.

Passages

Baptisms

Thoren James Doss, son of Ethan Doss and Alesia Gagliano Doss, and grandson of church members Guido and Helene Galiano was baptized on October 17, 2021.



Deaths



Beloved parishioner **Dick Wright** passed away at the age of 85 on Thursday, October 7, 2021. He was the husband of Binki for 41 years, and of the

late Carol Wright, who succumbed to breast cancer in 1979. He has three surviving daughters, Judy Croft, Karon Wierman, and Brenda Scully; along with six grandchildren, Jessica, Danielle, and Zachary Croft; Sarah Mann; and Benjamin and Nicholas Wierman; and one great-granddaughter, Saoirse Mann.



Dick grew up in Chelmsford, attending All Saints Church. After graduating from Chelmsford High, Dick went to Worcester Polytechnic Institute, where he was a member of Sigma Phi Epsilon. He then went to Northeastern for his graduate degree. Prior to his early retirement at age 59, he worked at Raytheon as an Electrical Engineer for 35 years. Some of his career's early highlights included working on the Polaris and Trident Missiles. He was an avid HAM Radio operator, known worldwide by federally assigned call letters while a student at WPI, Dick pioneered the first TransOcean Message 3,800 miles to Denmark. Dick was also a member of the Civil Defense in Acton, MA and a Member of William North Lodge A.F. & A.M. Lowell, MA. In 2006, Dick was named "Man of the Year" in Chelmsford, MA for his life achievements.

Always very involved in the Church of the Good Shepherd, he served on the Vestry and as Junior Warden. He was one of the original visiting representatives that traveled to El Salvador, bringing resources to El Ocotillo villagers to enhance the quality of their lives. He was a leader in the Cursillo movement, serving for many years.



Dick summered on Lake Sebago in Naples, ME for 50 years, sailing, or, more often, reading the paper in his lounge chair on the screen porch overlooking the lake. After his early retirement, he and his wife traveled extensively. They finally decided that Saint Maarten was their favorite spot, and vacationed there for 15 years.

Dick was an amazing soul, and very much loved and respected by so many. He was one of a kind, and a true gentleman.

A Celebration of Life Service was held at the Church of the Good Shepherd in Acton, MA on October 15. Donations in his name may be made to The Church of the Good Shepherd.

Our church family has lost one of our long standing members, Richard (Dick) Wright. Dick has been a member of CGS for decades. He served in many capacities, including as Junior Warden, as a LEM and on many different committees and ministries over the years. He was one of the original ambassadors that traveled to El Ocotillo in 2001, and he remained very supportive of that ministry over the years. He was a very active member of the Cursillo community and was part of their leadership for many years.

Dick was much loved and respected by many. His quiet demeanor and wonderful smile that he shared so often will always be remembered.

Love, Karen and Ellen

