

# The Shepherd's Staff

January 2022

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

## Contents

Word from the Fold	1-2
Warden's & Deacon's Messages	3 - 4
Worship	4 - 8
Christian Formation	9 - 10
Mission Outreach	11 - 14
Events	15
Committee News	16 - 19
Administration	19 - 20
Passages	20 - 21
Christmas Eve photos you need to contact	22 23
Calendar of Events	

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



**Jan. 16 at 11:30 - Love Is The Way Book Discussion  
Group**

**Jan. 19 at 7:30-9 pm - Hop, Skip & Jump Bible Study**

**Jan. 23 at 10 am - Church School  
at 11:30 am - Love Is The Way Book Discussion Group**

**Jan. 29 at 5-6 pm - PUPUSA FOOD TRUCK PICK-UP  
to benefit our scholarship students**

**Jan. 30 at 11:30 am - Love Is The Way Book Discus-  
sion Group**

**Save the Date!**

**Annual Meeting Feb 13 after the 10:00 Service**

Lots to read in this issue; you may want to print it up in black and white!

# A Word from the Fold



This year's Christmas was probably the most challenging I have known since I was ordained in 2002. Had you asked me twenty years ago, I would have projected that two decades of experience leading and crafting liturgy for this most special of holy nights would make it a breeze by now — or at least something familiar and predictable. Not so this year, thanks again to COVID.

With less than 48 hours to go before our Christmas Eve services, we were forced to pivot. Liturgies that had been prepared

and planned for weeks were torn up and re-envisioned. Worship space that had been decorated and set up went unused. The short Fourth Week of Advent which I prefer to spend in retreat-like quiet, was instead filled with meetings as our regathering team, staff, and wardens scrambled with me to figure out how to address the alarming surge of cases while honoring our commitment to provide meaningful, welcoming worship for all of us in need of Christmas. Countless phone calls and emails were logged to prepare and inform about the changes. It was exhausting.

Now that I've had a little time to reflect and rest, it is clear that part of what made this so hard is our collective frustration that COVID is not yet over. I know that I hoped things would be better by now. With vaccinations and boosters and all the careful measures we have followed... with all of the adaptations and adjustments we have learned to accept... it should have been over by now. I had not realized how much I had been yearning for a "normal" Christmas until it was taken away again.

Yet something extraordinary happened that I will never forget. Our community came together. We rose to the challenge. A generous spirit of creativity, flexibility and sacrifice rose up amongst us. Fire pits and piles of wood appeared on the lawn. The Light began to shine. God showed up. And so did we- over 150 of us across the three services on Christmas Eve! We gathered by the firelight in chilly darkness. We worshipped and sang and rejoiced and welcomed the birth of God into our weary world after all.

I cannot begin to thank all of the people who made this special Christmas possible this year. My wonderful colleagues, Ellen Oak, Deacon Ken Schmidt and Laura Brock, were fantastic companions, never failing to offer their support, extra hours of work, and creative, faithful spirits to helping us reimagine Christmas on the fly. Ellen joined us for all three of our outdoor services, managing to keep her fingers warm and nimble enough to play the keyboard and bring beautiful music and song to our worship. Ken led services on January 2, giving a tired Rector the true gift of a Christmas Sunday at home with her family. Laura Brock, our parish administrator, was a steady guiding hand, preparing new bulletins at the 11th hour and handling the last minute flurry of communications with grace and ease. She even baked us cookies! To a person, everyone who had a role upended by the sudden worship changes (lectors, ushers, Tech Team, Altar Guild, choir, lay Eucharistic ministers, flower arrangers, liturgical arts decorators, et al) were adaptable and flexible and understanding. We did it, friends,



and it became a Christmas we'll not forget.

I close with a bit of turn towards the new year that now lies before us. Perhaps we're all a little wiser now that we know life will continue to be up-ended for longer than we had hoped it would be. It's not fair. We're not in control. But God is with us through it all and the Light still shines among us. The poet Amanda Gorman has written a poem for the start of this new year. Perhaps you have seen it. I share it here with the prayer that, as the poet writes, "We are learning that though we weren't ready for this,/ We have been readied by it./ Steadily we vow that no matter/ How we are weighed down,/ We must always pave a way forward./ This hope is our door, our portal."

Happy New Year, with love, Rev. Ellie+

### **"New Day's Lyric"**

by Amanda Gorman

May this be the day  
We come together.  
Mourning, we come to mend,  
Withered, we come to weather,  
Torn, we come to tend,  
Battered, we come to better.  
Tethered by this year of yearning,  
We are learning  
That though we weren't ready for this,  
We have been readied by it.  
Steadily we vow that no matter  
How we are weighed down,  
We must always pave a way forward.

This hope is our door, our portal.  
Even if we never get back to normal,  
Someday we can venture beyond it,

To leave the known and take the first steps.  
So let us not return to what was normal,  
But reach toward what is next.

What was cursed, we will cure.  
What was plagued, we will prove pure.  
Where we tend to argue, we will try to agree,  
Those fortunes we forswore, now the future we foresee,  
Where we weren't aware, we're now awake;  
Those moments we missed  
Are now these moments we make,  
The moments we meet,  
And our hearts, once all together beaten,  
Now all together beat.

Come, look up with kindness yet,  
For even solace can be sourced from sorrow.  
We remember, not just for the sake of yesterday,  
But to take on tomorrow.

We heed this old spirit,  
In a new day's lyric,  
In our hearts, we hear it:  
For auld lang syne, my dear,  
For auld lang syne.  
Be bold, sang Time this year,  
Be bold, sang Time,  
For when you honor yesterday,  
Tomorrow ye will find.  
Know what we've fought  
Need not be forgot nor for none.  
It defines us, binds us as one,  
Come over, join this day just begun.  
For wherever we come together,  
We will forever overcome.





# The Deacon's Corner



## Happy New Year, 2022!

A new year, a new beginning with new resolutions to do better, to be better. But yet, there is so much baggage we are carrying over from last year and beyond.

I am writing this on January 6, the Feast of the Epiphany. It is also a day of remembrance for the horrific assault on our nation's capital. For me, this day encapsulates what I'm feeling; a mixture of excitement and hope symbolized by the arrival of the wise men and their acknowledgment of Jesus as the hope for the world, and a feeling of despair as I view the endless replays of the hatred and violence of last year. And don't get me started on the seemingly endless confusion of dealing with COVID!

In this season of hope in the midst of dark mid-winter, I find some solace in this prayer from Thomas Merton:

**My Lord God, I have no idea where I am going.  
I do not see the road ahead of me.  
I cannot know for certain where it will end.  
Nor do I really know myself,  
and the fact that I think I am following your  
will does not mean that I am actually doing so.**

**But I believe that the desire to please you does in fact please you  
and I hope that I have that desire in all that I am doing.**

**And I know that if I do this, you will lead me by the right road  
although I may know nothing about it.**

**Therefore will I trust you always though I may seem to be lost and in the shadow of death,**

**I will not fear, for you are ever with me and you will never leave me to face my perils alone.**

-Thomas Merton, *Thoughts in Solitude*

As we try to determine our path through this new year, as individuals and as a church, let's try to hold onto that hope, and hold onto each other. Let's acknowledge that we do not have all the answers, that we cannot clearly see a safe and sure path ahead.

Let's learn to lean more on God's love, and live in the mystery and grandeur of Jesus, the Christ-With-Us. And let's try to hold each other more closely, and more loosely, with compassion, hope, and trust. Love God; love each other.

Ken Schmidt

# Warden's Message



This will be my last message to you as Warden. It has been a great privilege to serve as your Warden. Best of all, it has helped me to build my faith – that we would figure out a way to stay connected through the pandemic, that a new Rector would discern a

call to join us, and that I would figure out how to run an online auction, to understand the financial reports, to have the courage to stand up and make announcements! I have felt supported by God, by Rev. Ellie, Jessie Panek and Harry Peebles (Junior Wardens during my term), Denise Kelly (Treasurer), Dawn Hill (Clerk), the Finance Committee, the Regathering Team, the Technology Team, and by the entire congregation. Thank you!

Wendy Feddersen will be taking over as Warden once voted in at **our Annual Meeting on**

**Sunday, February 13.** Wendy served as Junior Warden a few years ago and has been active in various ministries in the church for several years. I'm confident that Wendy will be a great leader.

Finally, I'll put in another plug to get involved in whatever church ministry calls you. The experience brings blessings of faith that far exceed

the personal effort. You will get to know people better and will discover the kindness and talents that lie amongst us, along with God's Grace. I will see you around!

With gratitude,  
Lydia

## Worship

### Welcome to the Season of Epiphany

Historically, the shaping of the liturgical year began with a special annual celebration of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Over time, the events that directly preceded the resurrection were gradually incorporated. Only some centuries later did an annual festival focused on the "beginnings" of Jesus Christ's life on earth come to be widely practiced. The first form of this celebration—what we know as the feast of Epiphany—comes from the Christian East. Christmas and Advent were added to the liturgical calendar last of all, and primarily in the Christian West. In many parts of the world, Epiphany, rather than Christmas, remains the primary celebration of the manifestation of Jesus Christ, Emmanuel, "God-with-Us."

The word "*epiphany*" means "revelation." The ancient celebration of Epiphany held together three "revelations" of the identity and mission of Jesus Christ: the Magi's visitation and adoration of the infant Jesus; the baptism of Jesus by John in the Jordan; and Jesus' first public miracle—turning water into wine at the wedding feast of Cana. Here are translations of two antiphons for Epiphany from the Gregorian chant repertoire that express



### 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

the multivalent mysteries of the day:

*Three mysteries mark this holy day. Today the star leads the Magi to the infant Christ, today water is changed into wine for the wedding feast, today Christ wills to be baptized by John in the river Jordan to bring us salvation.*

*Today the Bridegroom claims his bride, the Church, since Christ has washed away her sins in the waters of the Jordan; the Magi hasten to the royal wedding; and the wedding guests rejoice, for Christ has changed water into wine.*

God in Christ is continually made manifest, or revealed, in many and diverse ways. The ancient liturgical celebration purposefully lifted up three distinct stories and set them as co-equals alongside one another, to express the superabundant and varied nature of God's appearing. As we recover this practice today, we are invited to hold these three stories—and many other stories of God's presence and action in our lives—in conversation with one another as we give thanks for God's saving

love and ponder its mysteries in our hearts.

-Ellen Oak,  
Pastoral Assoc. for Liturgy & Music

## Epiphany Worship

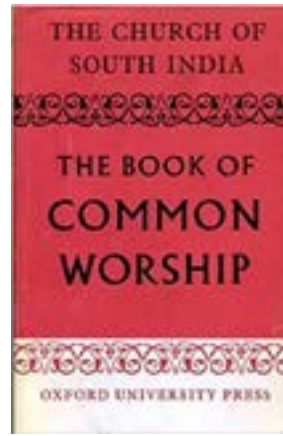
In the season after Epiphany, our liturgy challenges us to consider how we will know and receive Christ and follow into his ministry, now that the Light has come among us. The readings take us from the arrival of the Magi to the manger of the infant Jesus, through the beginning of his public ministry, and on to the Transfiguration of Christ on the threshold of another Lent. Perhaps more directly than other seasons, the Gospels over these next eight weeks of Epiphany-tide build upon each other. As we worship and hear the Scriptures week after week, we are invited to reflect on the ongoing manifestation of the God who was born to us on Christmas.



Our liturgy at the 8 am service is based upon the *Book of Common Prayer*, the normative prayer book of the Episcopal Church.

We will continue to use Eucharistic Prayer B throughout Epiphany. Its emphasis on the incarnation is especially appropriate in this season of manifestation.

At the 10 am service, we will use a liturgy from the Church of South India during Epiphany.



This Church was formed in 1947 by the merger of four major Christian churches in India: the Anglican Church, the Presbyterian Church, the Methodist Church and the Congregational church. Their *Book of Common Worship* from which this Eucharistic liturgy comes was adopted in 2004. The aim of this newer edition

of their prayer book is a conscious attempt “to bring together the spiritual traditions and heritages revered in different congregations; at the same time challenging the congregations with prayers which call for more authentic relevance in worship by bringing in contemporary issues and concerns such as violence, poverty, oppression, marginalization, ecology, justice, peace, and integrity of creation.”

For those seeking mid-week worship options, join us anytime on Zoom for Morning Prayer at 7:30 am on Wednesdays and Compline at 8 pm on Thursdays. Morning Prayer takes just under an hour and features a short reflection on a particular Saint of the day. Compline is roughly 20 minutes in length and is a perfect way to gather in prayer at the end of the day. Both services are typically drawn from the *Book of Common Prayer* or *A New Zealand Prayer Book*.

+Ellie





## Liturgical Arts

The Liturgical Arts committee had a very productive and fun time getting the church ready for the Advent and Christmas seasons. Many people helped with wreaths, flowers, candles, the Nativity set, and banners. I've listed the helpers below. (If I left anyone out, please accept my apologies!)



Sadly, because of the rapid increase of Covid cases, we were unable to worship inside the church for Christmas eve, but the outdoor service was really special! I think that those who attended services via Zoom on Christmas and last week could see some of the results of our efforts.

We are always open to new people joining the Liturgical Arts Committee. Creative and new ideas are always welcome.

Thanks to all who prepared our sanctuary and church exterior for the Christmas season: Alix Pupo, Peter Church, Doug Recko, Bob Cooke, Kevin Gross, Jane Lothian, Barb McGee, Kate and Neil Ogle, Beth McKeeman and her daughters, Harry Peebles, Andy Platt, Bev Ridpath, Wendy Feddersen, Jessie Panek, Emily Terry, Josh Conway, Diane Cooke, Chris Jones and Abby Vigneron, and Gail and Ray Lyons. Of course, a special thank you to John Link for donating the live Christmas tree to the church; it was beautiful!

Ellen Harland

## The Sound System is Complete!

If you've been in the sanctuary since Christmas, you may have noticed that the new speakers are installed! There are four on each side, at the top of each pier. Yes, the pair closest to the altar are larger than the other three pairs. When the speakers are "on" you will notice a little blue light shining on the front of each speaker. When one



is on, all should be on.

Eight speakers may seem like a lot within a sanctuary of this size. However, we have been advised that the path to the best audio clarity, especially for speaking voices, is to have many points of sound within the space



**Good-bye old speaker!**

and to use a low level of the volume output that each speaker can support. On first hearing voices when the speakers were first turned on, I couldn't perceive a source for the sound.

The sanctuary simply seemed to be filled with clear sound ("Pay no attention to that man behind the curtain!").



We first used the speakers in a service on Sunday, January

2. We are projecting speaking voices only through them currently: Ellie, Ken, readers at the Lectern, speakers from Zoom. As we become more familiar with the new capabilities, we may sometimes project musical soloists through the speakers.

The Wardens and the Technology Team will be interested to learn people's impressions of the new system. Is it easier to hear within the sanctuary? Are you noticing distortion, unevenness of sound, or anything else that is distracting? We are learning as we go and expect that we will adjust, so please let us know.

Many thanks to so many within the congregation who supported the financial appeal this past fall to complete the last phase of the sound system. We have achieved one of the core goals identified during the Strategic Visioning initiative!

Lydia Tolley

## Advent Worship Snapshots



## Blue Christmas Service





**“A big thank you from me to everyone who helped make Advent, Christmas, and Epiphany so full of grace and glory in these very challenging times.”  
Ellen Oak**



# Christian Formation

## Hop, Skip, and Jump through the Bible Wed., Jan. 19, 2022, 7:30–9 pm

Exploring the Scriptures:

In a pandemic winter with short, grey days and few cultural distractions, we are hungry for light and for ways to endure the darkness of these long nights. Light is a favorite metaphor in the *Bible* for our experience of God's presence, guidance, and love, as darkness is for our loss of faith in God with its attendant despair and confusion. Yet darkness can be restful and comforting, and light can dazzle and distract. Bring your favorite "light" and "dark" *Bible* verses and join us as we explore the light and darkness in our own lives and consider how the *Bible* might help us to expand our understanding of both.

Readings: Isaiah 9:2,6; 60:1-3,19-20; John 1:1-9; 3:17-21; 9:1-5; 12:35-36; Matthew 5:14-16; Luke 11:33-36; Romans 13:11-14; Ephesians 5:8-14.

### Hymn by Walter C. Smith

*Immortal, invisible, God only wise,  
in light inaccessible hid from our eyes,  
most blessed, most glorious, the Ancient of Days,  
almighty, victorious, thy great name we praise.  
Great Father of glory, pure Father of light,  
thine angels adore thee, all veiling their sight;  
all praise we would render, O help us to see  
'tis only the splendor of light hideth thee.*

Each session is a stand-alone meeting so join us for whatever sessions you can fit into your schedule. All are welcome.

Join via [Zoom](#)

Bev Ridpath, Neal Ogle

## Love is the Way! Book Group starting in January 16

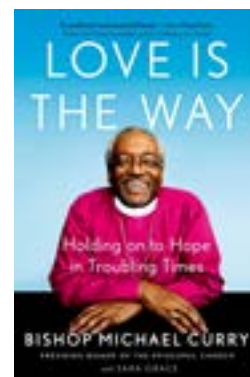
Are you a fan of Bishop Michael Curry (the Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church)? Join our Rector in a conversation about his latest book, *Love is the Way: Holding on to Hope in Troubling Times*. We'll meet on **Sundays at 11:30 am in person in the Library, and on Zoom, January 16, 23, 30, February 6**. The book is available online and by order from the [Silver Unicorn](#) and other local bookshops. Add it to your Christmas list! We'll aim to discuss three chapters per week.

January 16- Introduction- Chapter 3

January 23- Chapters 4-6

January 30- Chapters 7-9

February 6- Chapters 10-end



Ellie

## “Racial Justice and Communal Safety: Cultivating MLK’s Legacy”

w/ guest speaker

U.S. Attorney Rachael Rollins,  
Monday, January 17, 2022



Attorney Rachael Rollins has been confirmed as U.S. Attorney for the District of Massachusetts. She is an advocate for criminal justice reform and has worked to reduce incarceration, correct racial and ethnic disparities, and improve relationships between law enforcement agencies and the communities they serve.

Visit <https://www.bethelohim.org/event/MLK-2022> to register and receive the Zoom link. There is also a meal option.

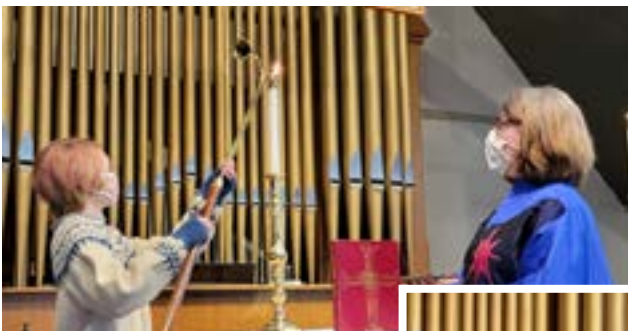


# Church School

Church School attendance continues to grow and our teachers are deeply committing to being here for your children. We are just as committed to keeping your children safe and healthy, therefore our protocols may change from time to time to address current needs.

Our children lit the Advent and altar candle each Sunday during Advent, and placed the figures in the manger on Christmas Eve.

Church School will meet next on Sunday, January 23rd at 10:00 am.



# 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 9 Epiphany Service with El Ocotillo

January 29 Pupusa Food Truck Fundraiser

February 6 Jadi Taveras joins us from Esperanza Academy

March/April: Food Pantry ??? (We need a leader)

May: Creation Care

## Mission Outreach



After what felt like so much progress, it was rough to end 2021 with rapid pivots from in-person worship amidst rising Omicron cases. As we face a New Year fraught with Covid-19 stressors at the same time as we mark the one-year anniversary of the January 6 insurrection, I have a roller coaster of emotions. I am grateful to be able to pour my energy into our Mission Outreach projects, filling myself with a sense of purpose and positivity. I hope the multitude of mission projects at Good Shepherd provide avenues for you to feel the spirit of purpose and positive energy. Let us know how we might help you to find what you need.

Barb Magee

## IINE, Afghan Refugee Support

On December 12 at our Sunday services Christine Hellman from the International Institute of New England described to us the important work of resettling the many families that have fled to the United States from Afghanistan in recent weeks. If you missed her talk, you can find it [here](#). By December 20 the Lowell office had received 120 refugees. Caroline Rowe, the Lowell Director, described in a recent [video](#) that every woman they have welcomed is either pregnant or has a newborn. How fitting and hopeful during this Christmas season for us to welcome these tiny new citizens!

The Good Shepherd community's outpouring of support for Afghan refugees is absolutely heartwarming! To date we have delivered three carloads of clothing that have included 60 winter coats and







snow pants, 16 sweaters including one beautiful new handknit one, three pairs of boots, and four bags of scarves, hats, mittens and gloves. The Lowell office was delighted to receive 48 gift cards totally \$2810.

The Cooking Team has been put on hold since the families temporarily housed in hotels are being catered by a generous donor.

We have brought these two collections to a close but will continue to be alert to resettlement needs both through the Acton Interfaith Collaborative and the IINE volunteer site. If you individually wish to get involved, use [this link](#) to view the breadth of volunteer and donor opportunities. If you are registered as a volunteer, you can sign up for a specific date and task (apartment setup, airport transportation, food delivery, etc.) at this [sign-up site](#).

Barb Magee

## Esperanza

For 14 years, our CGS Mission Outreach initiative has supported Esperanza Academy, a tuition-free Episcopal Identity middle school for girls in Lawrence.

**Jadi Taveras, the Head of Esperanza Academy, will join us for worship on**

**February 6.** We hope that he will be here in person, but if conditions prevent that, he will make a Zoom appearance. In either case, he will have Good News to share about the school.



2021 was a challenging year for Esperanza. Keeping the girls engaged on Zoom was difficult. The

faculty and staff, however, stepped up their game in the face of Covid, which extracts a greater cost to the resource-strapped students of Esperanza. Students and staff are back at school now with masking precautions.

Another challenge during the year was the totally unexpected death of the beloved Chair of the Board, Sarah Bankson Newton\*. Sarah, whom some of you met at our Esperanza dinners, was a wonderful partner to Jadi and really the anchor of the school.

So Jadi comes to us leading a mission of resilience. They are a school that teaches and lives resilience. If you'd like to visit the school virtually, please check out the website [www.esperanzaacademy.org](http://www.esperanzaacademy.org) for a visit to the school.

Andy and Carolyn Platt

*\*Sarah Newton passed away unexpectedly at the age of 60 after experiencing a medical emergency while traveling. She chaired the Board of Trustees at Esperanza and often said it was "the most difficult and rewarding work" she had ever done.*

## Food Drive

Are you looking for a way to engage more deeply in meaningful volunteering? Are you thinking about a way your family might contribute to a better world in the New Year?



The Mission Outreach Committee is looking for several people or a family to lead a Food Drive and/or a volunteer work experience at a food pantry during the weeks of Lent (March 2 - April 17).

Please reach out to [Barb Magee](#) or [Rev. Ellie](#) if you are interested.

Barb Magee  
Mission Outreach Committee chair

## Our El Ocotillo Students

In December we received Christmas greetings from our scholarship students in El Salvador. David's letter was written in English. We thank Nora Mendoza's Spanish students at CCHS for

translating the other letters.

**David:**

Hello to everybody,

I am David. I am honored to be one of the students who is a beneficiary of the scholarship which is a great help in the Ocotillo community for professional development.



Maybe these are a few lines in which I want to thank you for your generous support. Let me tell you that I am currently studying my bachelor degree in English and thanks to the scholarship I am able to afford my university expenses.

I have always thought that growing up in a privileged community such as Ocotillo has not only showed me how to overcome financial and academic challenges, but has also helped me realize the value of a professional education. That is the reason why I am giving all my effort in order to accomplish my goals as a way to encourage the little children who are starting their path to their success.

My educational purposes would not be possible without generous support from scholarship sponsors and personal ones like your organization. Thank you for enabling this opportunity!

Greetings to all,  
Elvin David Argueta

**Roselia**

Sending a warm hello to you wishing that you are doing well and that your families and friends round you are well also.

After this short hello I will continue. Thanks to God and the committee in our Ocotillo community and to you because today I can say

that I have lost less than yesterday thanks to you, to my family, and to my friends. I am a nurse and almost finished with my social service in the San Fernando clinic. I will finish in December. God will-



ing, I hope to graduate possibly in March.

I continue putting my trust God, that one day I can have a job and support my family and anyone who needs my help. As a thank you to you all, I am willing to continue helping the committee in the different activities and if anyone would like to study and would need my support, I would one day like to be ready to help them.

I say goodbye to you,  
Roselia

I send you many hugs from far away.

**Christian**

Dear Sister Community,

It is my great pleasure to greet you and to wish you success in your daily work.

I hope that this letter finds your family and friends well in the midst of this pandemic. I want to first thank God because he has kept us safe and the school year is almost over and everything has gone well.



In spite of the situation of covid 19 we have been safe and healthy in my family.

Apart from this I want to thank all of you for the great support that you have offered to the community of Ocotillo and also to me.

This is everything that I could say, maybe on another occasion we can converse in person. I wish you all the best and I always have faith that everything gets better. Blessings to your family and friends.

Merry Christmas!  
Christian

**Flory**

Hi,

It is a pleasure to greet you, I hope this letter finds you well.

I want to thank you for the help that you provided these past months, it was a lot of help.





I hope you have a Merry Christmas and a prosperous/happy New Year and may God shower you with many blessings.

Flory Elizabeth Arguela

**Luis**

From: Luis Miguel  
To: Good Pastor

It's great to greet each of you, having the faith that you're well and that the blessings of God will be with each of you.



2021 is my first year of high school, and I have the confidence I will finish high school in 2023, even though I recognize that it will not be easy for my family to rise above the current circumstances.

I thank you as a family for your concern and care toward the Ocotillo community and for this effort and dedication. Thank you from all of our hearts. You are part of the motor that propels us forward and does not allow us to give up in reaching our goals. Thank you for being part of our life.

I wish you a life full of abundant blessings from God and that God fulfills these blessings on my behalf. I appreciate each one of you and hope to see someone one day. Let's hope for it!

With all the love:  
Luis Miguel Benitez Peraza

## **“Undies Sundies” The Lowell Transitional Living Center**

Following our November visit with LTLC Director, Andy McMahon, the Church of the Good Shepherd community donated approximately twenty five hundred dollars to our virtual “Undies Sundies” mission outreach ministry.

In early December Andy McMahon sent me this email :

*“Good Morning Helene,  
I wanted to let you know that Friday 12/10/21 will be my last day at LTLC. It was very difficult decision and 1 that I struggled with for some time. For the time being,*

*Alyssa Dee would probably be the best contact person to use here at the shelter. ADee@ltlc.org  
Thank you for all you have done for LTLC.  
Andy McMahon”*

When Guido and I delivered the Undies Sundies check to LTLC in December, Andy said he'd be moving to Florida in mid-January and looking forward to his mattress and beach chair after four years at LTLC. He said he plans to spend time on the beach and joked that he may find work at a Publix supermarket stocking and cleaning shelves!

With this news, the Mission Outreach Committee unanimously agreed to designate the remaining COGS budgeted outreach funds of eleven hundred dollars to honor Andy McMahon. When asked Andy how he'd like the funds designated to honor him, he responded :

*“The kinds of things that our guests need but we have been unable provide are things like bus passes, gift cards that allow them to go to a Dunkin Donuts and sit inside on a bad day. They are not allowed to go in unless they purchase something. I don't know if those examples are possible or if anyone would be in a position to grab things like that.*

*When I get settled I will be in touch.  
Andy “*

We have now co-ordinated and established an eleven hundred dollar “Andy Fund” with the help of LTLC development director Debra Leary.

As a follow up to our December meeting Deacon Ken wrote,  
*“I will echo Andy's request for bus passes, DD gift cards, etc. The gift cards can be in small amounts, up to \$5.00. This will allow folks to be “customers”, and sit at a table, use the restroom, etc. It's more about human dignity than free goodies at Dunkin.”*

Our church community will continue to “accompany” the staff and residents at LTLC in our effort to continue Andy's legacy and all the work he has done to give dignity to the people they serve. I pray that next year we will once again gather the “Undies Sundies” items and bring them to LTLC ourselves.

Thank you all for your generosity to this ministry. We wish Godspeed to the good and faithful servant, Andy McMahon.

Helene Gagliano

# Events

## The Good Shepherd Pupusa truck is doing take out!

**Saturday, January 29,  
pick up is 5-6 pm in the church parking lot**

**Support the El Salvador Scholarship Fund and bring your family the experience of delicious Salvadoran pupusas!!**



Typical adult serving is two pupusas. Dinner comes with red sauce, slaw and fried plantains. Deliveries are available if necessary.

Pupusa choices are:

Cheese

Cheese and beans

Cheese & chicken

Cheese & pork

Cheese & jalapeño

Cheese & loraco

(like summer squash)

**To place your order watch the eblasts and click on the link!  
There is no set cost, but a **FREE WILL OFFERING** is greatly appreciated.**



# Committee News

## Stewardship Committee

### 2022 Campaign Update

Thank you to everyone who has supported the church in 2021 and responded to the pledge campaign for 2022. We are very grateful for your generosity and support.

As of January 3, we have received 68 pledges for about \$246,000. This includes 30 pledges which have increased since 2021 along with 4 first time pledges. We are especially gratified by this response. Fixed expenses like health insurance go up every year and these increased and new pledges advance our goal of maintaining a balanced budget. Gail Lyons and Dave Hazen are working on sending thank you notes to everyone who has pledged so far. In addition to thanking you for pledging, these notes confirm we received your pledge. They should be out by the middle of January.

We are short of our projected income requirement of \$300,000. Your pledges of support provide over 90% of the income needed to run our parish, pay our staff, and maintain our building each year. If you have not yet pledged, we hope you will help us meet this goal so that we can head into 2022 with a balanced budget and the confidence that we have the necessary support of our congregation for our life and ministry in the year ahead. There are 19 individuals/families who pledged last year who have not yet pledged in 2022. If we receive those pledges, we will be close to \$300,000 which is similar to our expected operating budget. It is really important for the church to know the status of those pledges as we plan for 2022. We will do our best to establish contact with each of those individuals/families during January.

If you intend to pledge, but have not yet, please take the time this month to pledge using the electronic pledge card on the [church website](#), email to the [church treasurer](mailto:cogstreas@gmail.com) (cogstreas@gmail.com), or mail or hand carry to the church office. You do not need a pledge card if you don't have one. We just need your name, address, and the amount you will pledge.

Gratefully, Dave Hazen

## Creation Care

### Living God

**Where there is waste, let us bring recycling,  
Where there is recycling, let us bring reuse,  
Where there is reuse, let us bring sustainability,  
Where there is sustainability, let us bring justice  
Where there is justice, let us bring love**

John Polhill (from *Eggs and Ashes* published by Wildgoose, South Africa Anglican Youth)

## Plastic Bag Recycling

**Yes, plastic bags are recyclable!**

**Where?** Look for the plastic bag/film recycling bins at local supermarkets, often where the can recycling are is located.

**What?** To learn what can and can't go into these bins go to <https://tinyurl.com>.

**Why?** Recycling plastic bags not only helps the environment but, plastic bags can be used to make composite lumber for making decks, benches, and playground sets. Plastic film can also be reprocessed into small pellets, which can be made into new bags, pallets, containers, crates, and pipe.



Carolyn Platt

## Building and Grounds

### Elevator Update

We are so close! The Elevator is installed and working. Bob Christmas





is generously completing



punch list items, like trim and lighting. The inspector has been contacted. So close, **but please DO NOT use the elevator yet.** Once it passes inspection, we'll update the signage and make the announcement.

### Sidewalk Care

Dear Friends,

Sure footing is a wonderful thing. Let's keep our entry way safe this Winter. We have a snow plow service. But they don't always get the walkway. Plus there are frequent days of little to no accumulation, but the walk gets slick anyway. [Please signup here](#) for daily inspection, salting and shoveling. The salt and shovels are outside under cover of the entrance tower.

Thank you!

Harry Peebles

## Shepherd's Staff Team

### Twelve days in the Shep Staff Production Process

Several months ago we realized that most church members have no idea about the process we

use to create this monthly magazine. We knew this information would help our contributors to understand our deadlines, and hoped it would help everyone else understand how important it is to disseminating information to the parish.

First I will contact Ellie about deciding on a mailing date and set a time to visit the next Staff Meeting to go over needed contents of the SS. Once the date is decided I look at the calendar and give contributors seven to ten days to write their articles and get them to me by midnight on the date.

Next I go through my SS template and change the colors of all the headings to the church calendar colors, and I check the back page contact information to see if any changes need to be made. Once the articles start coming in I skim for content and tone; occasionally I'll contact the writer if I have any questions. The articles then get sent off to one of our editors, and I plop the unedited article into the correct section of the SS. Usually several days before the deadline I send out another reminder to all contributors, and if articles are slow to come I'll send another reminder on the day of the deadline.



As the edited articles begin to come in I delete the original and cut and paste the edited article in place. As I wait for the articles to come in, if I have all the edited articles in for a section I will start detailing the articles. That means making sure the fonts and paragraph indent and spacing are uniform, changing the font and size for the heading. Meanwhile I am thinking about how to illustrate the article, whether I already have photo(s) or will have to use google images to find something. This process continues through the deadline until all the articles



are in place. Occasionally there will be one or two necessary articles which will be need to a be a day so late coming in (WHY?), most people are wonderful about getting everything in on time.

Once the articles are in place, I find the photo(s) I need for articles, I edit, correct the lighting and colors, and move them from iPhoto into both a photo file and then onto the InDesign page. I really enjoy this part when I play with the photos and layout to see what looks the best or attracts your eye to make the best impact to support the article. Then I layout our post-event photos pages. I'm also



a firm believer that a picture can tell 1,000 words and sometimes capture that for which there are no words.

I usually need at least 2 full days to pull the whole thing together. Once the layout is completed, I update the page numbering, and the Table of Contents. Then I go through the SS and pull out all the event dates and times to arrange on the cover sheet. Once it's all together I give myself an hour so of not looking at it, then I go through page by page making any necessary changes. At this point I happily send it off to Rev. Ellie and Laura to vet the dates and information.



As soon as they get changes back to me I send it off to Lorraine to do the final proofreading. I would be lost without this step as I truly can't proofread to save my life. Lorraine usually does this in a minimum of time and I make the final corrections. At this point it goes to Laura in three versions: interactive email, print, and then a version with no personal contact information for our website.

As you can see, a great many vital hands have gone into the making of the Shepherd's Staff that you are now reading. We all hope that not only do you enjoy this issue but that you are inspired, that you can see God's hand at work here, and that you are moved to participate and support all the wonderful things happening at Good Shepherd through your gifts of time, talent and treasure.



Those involved in the actual production are: our editors Jessie Panek, Jane Lothian and Helen Young; proofreader Lorraine Summerfelt, staff members Laura Brock and Rev. Ellie Applewhite Terry, and Editor-in-Chief Margaret Geanisis. The Shepherd's Staff would be less-than if any of these wonderful people weren't involved.

Margaret Geanisis

## Tech Team

Those of you at home have noticed how much more technically sophisticated our Zoomed Worship Services have gotten as our team continues to explore new and more technical options. If you look at the distance photo of our speakers you'll see a camera placed just up and to the right of the first speaker.

Most of our Zoom production technology has been cobbled together, learned on the fly out of necessity, and jury-rigged with free programs. After much researching Jon Panek decided that it was worth spending money on a good Video



Switcher program. After learning all about the new program, Jon held a training workshop on Sunday Jan. 9th attended by Denise Kelly, Chris O’Leary, Harry Peebles and Tom Hoch. The goal was not only to learn how to use the new program, but to have a large group of the team with the same base knowledge which could be taught to others.

Many thanks to Eleanor Mendes who donated her TV (and was happy to hear how it would be used after she died), and to Jon Panek for replacing the laptop which died a few weeks ago as well procuring the new Video Switcher Program.

The new program has been deemed much

simpler by all who have used it, which is GREAT news for all you who may be intrigued by the idea of playing with these new “toys”. **If you would like to try your hand at the possibility of joining the team Jon will be holding another training session** in a few weeks. It would be a great opportunity to find out if the ministry is something you would like to try. Watch the E-blast for the date.



## Administration

### Treasurer’s Report

We ended 2021 in a better position than expected, compared to our budget for the year. However, the budget for 2022 is not currently looking as rosy, due to a large decrease in pledge amounts. If you haven’t already done so, please submit your pledge for 2022 so that we can effectively plan for the coming year.

If you requested pledge envelopes for 2022, they are available for pickup in the parish hall. If you didn’t request envelopes, but would like them, please contact Denise Kelly (cogstreas@gmail.com).

Giving Statements for last year will be issued prior to the end of January and delivered by email. If you would rather receive a paper copy of your Giving Statement, please let us know.

Denise Kelly

***“Being part of the Vestry has been a great experience. One of the best parts of Good Shepherd for me has always been that I feel it is a community of good people looking to make the world a better place. That is also the reason I decided to join the Pastoral Care Committee. Being part of the Vestry reaffirmed these thoughts for me. It is motivating to be part of a great group of people that is simply looking to help.”***

**Thank you,  
Paul Zinn**

### October Vestry Vignettes

We opened with prayer. September Minutes were approved, and then Rev. Ellie invited us to check in and share our personal stories and experi-



ences of God's Abundance and Generosity in our lives during the past month.

### **Stewardship Update:**

We learned that Chris O'Leary has joined the committee. As leaders of the Parish, Vestry members are encouraged to get their pledges in early. This year there will be options for mail-in and electronic pledges. There will be weekly messages with different themes.

There was some discussion about Vestry members helping to make calls to gather pledges. There would be a pastoral focus to these calls.

### **Treasurer's Report:**

We are still on track, though by year-end we may be approximately \$2,000 behind, which isn't bad given 2020 challenges. The appeal for the sound system more than covered the deficit. We are about \$500 in excess of what we needed. Contributions were generous.

### **Sound System & Elevator:**

We are working on wiring for the speakers. Due to supply chain challenges and shipping issues, we may not get the speakers until after Christmas. We will move the Tech table to the back and look for ways to simplify the setup. We will be able to move the camera from the middle aisle which will make equipment less intrusive.

We are making progress on the elevator. The shaft has been widened. The order has been placed and the equipment will arrive after Christmas.

### **Regathering:**

We are averaging over 80 people over the 3 congregations every Sunday with 8 new members

consistently attending each Sunday.

The overflow space is up and running. It is a regular option, so people no longer need to sign up in advance for a service. We are starting to get requests for use of the building. Cub Scouts on Fridays and Girl Scouts on Sundays are regular now. We are looking forward to bringing people into our building as a means of community outreach.

### **Advent and Christmas Planning:**

A Blue Christmas service is scheduled for December 19. On Christmas Eve a 4:00 pm in-person Holy Eucharist/Family Service is planned with a 5:30 pm and 7:30 pm Candlelight Vigil in the parking lot. Christmas Day will be a pre-recorded, family-oriented service on YouTube. And on Jan 9, Epiphany-themed Lessons and Carols in person. We may invite the El Ocotillo community to participate virtually.

### **Vestry Membership/Nominations:**

We are looking for 5 new vestry members, a Clerk, and a Senior Warden. We discussed considering fewer Vestry members (2 each year) with possibly longer Warden terms to provide continuity.

### **Other Business:**

The parking lot needs the spacing lines to be repainted and some repairs to cracks which have formed.

We ended with a Night Prayer and Dismissal.

## Passages

### Deaths

Parishioner **M. Eleanor Mendes**, 93, passed away peacefully in her sleep on Sunday Dec.5th. She was the wife of the late John S. Mendes, and mother of Margaret Geanisis and John C. Mendes. Eleanor was raised and educated in Somerville. Following gradu-



ation she went on to work in business, managing accounts payable departments for several corporations. After a hiatus to raise her children, she returned to work as an Administrative Assistant for the Guidance Department at Arlington High School in the late 70s until she retired in 2001 at the age of 72.

As a child she loved to dance, crochet, and play baseball — she was a life-long Red Sox fan. She volunteered with the Red Cross in high school during the World War II, and enjoyed roller skating, meeting her future husband John while skating.

They skated and ballroom danced well into their 40s. Ellie got her private pilot's license in the early 1950s and enjoyed flying with John. The family took up skiing as she turned forty which led them to Lake Winnepesaukee where they could enjoy winter sports as well as their boat in the summer. They spent many years camping there with their fifth-wheel trailer until they bought a cottage which she later retired to, and she even continued going up to the cottage after she moved to assisted living whenever she could.



Over ten years ago Ellie moved part-time then full time to Littleton and joined CGS. Most recently she lived at Nashoba Park Assisted Living Center where she was an active and happy participant in their events. Six months before she died



she was still crocheting prayer shawls for the church. She had a life-long strong faith and lived that faith helping others whenever she could.

In addition to Margaret and John she is survived by her grandchildren, Melissa Anderson, Don Geanisis, Adam and Michael Mendes and the late Jake Mendes. She is also survived by her four great-grandchildren, Makayla Garcia, Anthony and Haylie Geanisis, and Faith Anderson, and two great-great-grandchildren, Cayden Geanisis and Ivan Garcia.

Family and friends gathered on Saturday, December 18, 2021, at the Church of the Good Shepherd, 164 Newtown Rd., Acton for her funeral, which was also live streamed via Zoom. Eleanor was laid to rest privately at Mt. Pleasant Cemetery in Arling-



ton.

*“Ellie arrived at her daughter’s home in Littleton ready to start another chapter in her amazing life. She immediately started to attend our church, both services and activities. I got to know her at our Bread and Banter lunches. She always arrived in a pretty, bright outfit and quickly made new friends. She seemed to enjoy every person that she met, making that person feel very special. After she moved to Nashoba Park, Donna Heaney and Mary Billingsley often picked her up and brought her to the lunch. She was a great addition to that gathering! Charlie and I feel blessed to have known her.”*



Ellie George

*“Ellie was an original....a friend, a glamour-girl, a great story-teller, a wonderful listener. She could make you feel understood, and she offered real wisdom, not just one-size-fits all advice. If I were stranded on a desert island, Ellie would be in my top five people I’d like to have with me – if only for the entertainment she would provide! This was a woman who had an amazing life – a daughter, wife, mother, yes – but also a long-time career person, a pilot, an adventurer....she had a point of view that encompassed real living, so she didn’t guess what life could be like – indeed, she didn’t have to. She lived her life with both hands....she was out there doing it when most people were only wondering what was possible. When I went to visit her in her last long-term care facility, she was delighted to see me, and proceeded to both comfort and advise me about getting on with my life; as a long-time widow herself, she knew of which she spoke. She has set a fabulous example for all of us... ..I miss her.”*

Lorraine Summerfelt





# Christmas Eve

