

THE SHEPHERD'S STAFF

www.goodshepherdwv.org

The Rev. John C. Seville, Interim Rector
Paula Hoffman, Ministries Coordinator

Ginger Smith, Parish Administrator
January 27, 2010

MISSION STATEMENT: Good Shepherd is growing in: Faith and knowledge of God, ministry in our neighborhood, love for one another and support for those seeking Christ.

Dear Parishioners,

"No man ever saw God and lived; yet I shall not live till I see God; and when I have seen him I shall never die"; so preached the poet John Donne (1573-1631) in one of his sermons while Dean of St. Paul Cathedral, London. The imagery used with such succinct intensity in that sentence draws upon many layers of religious tradition found in Scripture: God the almighty, creator so holy that that which is unpure is unable to approach; the human yearning to be restored to that which is lost because of our sinfulness; and the words of the Incarnate One that those who are united by baptism to our Saviour, like the branches of the vine, will not die but have life everlasting. Easter with the preceding days of the Lenten Season and Holy Week concentrate those themes which express the human condition and God's gracious gift.

I hope that you will avail yourself of the Church's offerings this Lent to deepen and enrich your experience of the resurrection and the life awaiting you. In addition to the Ash Wednesday (7 a.m., 12:10 p.m., and 7:30 p.m.) and Holy Week/Easter services, a Lenten study will be offered on Wednesday evenings in the Great Hall beginning with a supper at 6:15 followed by a program looking at issues living our personal faith. The evening ends promptly at 8 o'clock with Compline in the church.

During Lent our Sunday services will reflect the penitential nature of the season: the purple somberness of the vestments; the absence of flowers, except on the fourth Sunday in Lent; the singing of the *Kyrie* instead of the *Gloria*; and our corporate worship beginning with the General Confession. On a personal level, I urge you to also consider adopting a discipline this Lent, such as abstaining from something, thereby mastering your desire, or by taking on a specific duty, such as an act of charity, thereby directing your attention beyond yourself.

In whatever way we keep Lent, the intention is not the mistaken idea that we by our personal efforts earn favor; rather the intention when doing these acts is to concretely remind ourselves of what Jesus the Christ accomplished for us. God became incarnate in order that humanity might have life and become what God intended us to be (see Col. 3:10). The first chapter of Genesis sees God at work in creation and the highlight of that creation comes in verse 26 when God says, let us make man in our image and likeness." Much had been written in attempting to explain God's image. What is it in humanity that made us particularly God-like? And what happened to deface that image? Perhaps it is helpful to be reminded that no one has seen God but the only-begotten Son, he has declared him (1 John 3:2) and we have seen Jesus. Use these 40 days of Lent to reflect on those themes so that you may greet with joy our Lord's resurrection knowing that those who share his life are alive for ever more. John Donne knew this joy and expressed it in another of his poems:

We think that Paradise and Calvarie,
Christ's Crosse, and Adams tree, stood in one
place;
Looke, Lord, and find both Adams met in me;
As the first Adams sweat surrounds my face
May the last Adams blood my soule embrace.

So, in his purple wrapp'd receive mee Lord,
By these his thornes give me his other Crowne;
And as to others soules I preach'd thy word,
Be this my Text, my Sermon to my owne
Therefore that he may raise the Lord throws
down.

Faithfully yours, Fr. Seville

A BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE CHURCH ASSESSMENT TOOL SURVEY

Dear Member of The Memorial Church of The Good Shepherd,

One hundred ten (110) members of our congregation participated in our first survey. We had sent authentication letters to two hundred sixty-four (264) members. This was an adequate response to provide valid results.

The survey provided us with a huge amount of information, including some extremely positive aspects of our congregation, but it also provided us with issues that need further exploration. The survey indicates that theologically our church tends to be conservative in our perspective and seems to be very settled on the flexible style index.

Overall, approximately 25% of those participating in the survey are clearly satisfied with things in the church. One might optimistically argue that this number for the entire congregation might be much higher since the 60% that did not participate in the survey are pleased with things just the way they are, so they did not see the need to participate. Approximately 55% of the respondents are "on the fence" and only 20% were clearly unsatisfied with things in the church. However, realistically considering the results, the 25% number is very low, which indicates that we need to work on raising the level of morale. Morale is important because it is one of the best predictors of overall health and numeric growth.

As indicated by the survey, some of the top goals of the participants are to develop and implement a comprehensive strategy to attract new people to the church, particularly youth and families with children and to provide high quality education for every age and stage of life.

Some of the issues that need further exploration relate to our worship experience, including the music. Our congregation has now completed the additional survey that will help us understand exactly what the congregation believes to be exceptional in quality and spiritual content and specifically what may need to be changed. According to those with experience in the rector search process, it is absolutely imperative that we understand where we are as a congregation and if issues exist, they must be addressed as quickly as possible, before moving to the next step in our search process.

Thank you for participating in these surveys and, most of all, thank you for your continued prayers.

Faithfully yours,
Alan Parks, Chairperson Rector Search Committee

RECTOR SEARCH COMMITTEE

We have met three times in January and have two meetings scheduled for February. We are busy analyzing the results of the parish survey and are currently running a second survey we put together to more deeply explore members' experiences and feelings about worship and music at Good Shepherd. Next month we will be working with Archdeacon Faith Perrizo on our Parish Profile. As soon as it is complete we will begin receiving names. A chart showing our progress towards finding a new Rector is on display near the office. Watch for it to be updated as we move along. Please continue to keep the Search Committee in your prayers.

FINDING HOPE IN HARD TIMES

Seven Spiritual Practices: A Faithful Steward's Guide

Following is Installment 1 of a series produced by the Office of Stewardship of the Episcopal Church. Look for the next six installments in future issues of the Staff.

1. Count Your Blessings

Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air; they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? And can any of you by worrying add a single hour to your span of life? (Matthew 6:25-27)

We are living in anxious times. What began as an economic slowdown has turned into a deep recession, the likes of which we have not known since the Great Depression. Many have lost jobs or fear their jobs are on the line. Many have lost homes or have seen the value of their home plummet. Years' worth of conscientious savings have evaporated. At the same time, our culture lulls us into believing that what we wear, what car we drive, what neighborhood we live in defines us. It is easy to lose sight of our true value, of our inherent blessedness as beloved children of God. It is easy to focus on what we want and what we fear rather than on what we have. Sometimes the lines between what we want and what we need become so blurred it is difficult to discern the difference. However hard life seems, we have things we can be thankful for.

Action: Write down the things you are thankful for. Share your gratitude list with someone you know. Set aside time each day to give thanks for all the ways God blesses you.

Pause for Reflection: As well as being thankful, we need to acknowledge our anxieties. What money worries do you have? Write them down. Share them with someone you trust. Share them with the Lord in prayer.

You may find the following prayer helpful:

Lord God, we live in disturbing days: across the world, prices rise, debts increase, banks collapse, jobs are taken away, and fragile security is under threat. Loving God, meet us in our fear and hear our prayer: be a tower of strength amidst the shifting sands, and a light in the darkness; help us receive your gift of peace, and fix our hearts where true joys are to be found, in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

SHROVE TUESDAY PANCAKE DINNER Feb. 16th, 5:30-7pm by the Peterkin Pals

Shrove Tuesday will be here before we know it, so don't don't forget to mark your calendar for that famous pancake dinner. We will begin serving at 5:30 and run until 7 P.M. Bring your whole family and all your friends and neighbors. This is the best bargain in town! Homemade (from scratch) buttermilk pancakes and delicious sausage prepared by the Peterkin Pals. If you want to be a Peterkin Pal and help with this project, sign up at the office door.

Remember the donations go to support Peterkin so be generous!

DAUGHTERS OF THE KING

Daughters of the King is a national organization for Episcopal women based on prayer for the up-building of God's kingdom. A candidate promises to wear the cross of the order and also promises to support and serve the priest of the parish. A class is being planned for the spring. If interested, call Linda Bennett at 304-295-9073, Dianna Quick at 304-295-5933, or Toni DeVore at 304-422-3776.

"SOUPER" BOWL SUNDAY DONATIONS

February 7th is Super Bowl Sunday as well as "Souper" Bowl Sunday at Good Shepherd Church. As has been our custom in the past, the EYF kids will be collecting non-perishable food items and money to restock our food pantry. Items that are particularly needed right now are: mac & cheese, tuna, tuna helper, hamburger helper, soups, crackers, oats, canned meats, etc. Please bring food items and/or money to the 10:00 worship service on February 7th. Kids with baskets will be available to collect these items after the service at the central narthex doors and side doors. Those attending the 8:00 service can place food items at the pantry door, or money can be placed in the collection plate with checks marked "Manna".

Thank you for your thoughtfulness.

RELAY FOR LIFE TEAM

The Relay for Life Team is forming right now. If you are interested, please call Suzanne Anderson 304-424-6230 for more information. We will have a "team meeting" on Sunday, Feb. 21st after the adult forum. Please bring fund raising ideas!!

VALENTINE COOKIES FOR RELAY FOR LIFE

The Pink Church Walkers will be raising money for Relay for Life by selling heart-shaped frosted cookies after both services on Feb. 14. If you can help bake cookies contact Suzanne Anderson (304-429-6230).

KID'S CHANGE

The Sunday School students have decided to donate this year's Kid's Change collection to ERD (Episcopal Relief and Development) for Haiti. If you have children, please talk to them about ways to donate extra money in the Sunday School collection over the next 2 weeks. We will send our current total to ERD in mid-February and the rest in June.

PARISH BREAKFAST – FEB. 14

The EYF will be hosting breakfast on Feb. 14. Enjoy Valentine's Day breakfast with the parish family. Donations are split between Aid to Seminarians and Friends of Peterkin.

BREAKFAST WITH FAITHLINK

Enjoy a Valentine's Pancake Breakfast at the Vienna Applebee's on Sat., Feb. 13 from 7:30 a.m. to 9:30 a.m. FaithLink Volunteers will be taking your orders and serving you. Tickets are \$5 or call FaithLink at 304-424-3457 to reserve and pay at the door. All proceeds will benefit FaithLink.

They will have a basket full of valentine goodies to be raffled that day. The basket is handmade by Sharon's Baskets. Tickets for the raffle are 6 for \$5 or \$1 each.

NOTES TO CONGREGATION

Annual Congregational Budget Meeting is this Sunday, Jan. 31 in the Great Hall instead of Adult Forum. Youth Sunday School classes will still meet at the same time.

2010 Parish Telephone Directories are available from the ushers.

2009 Year-end Pledge Statements are in the narthex. All that are not picked up by Feb. 7 will be mailed. Please save us postage by picking yours up soon.

"BE-Attitudes for Church Growth"

1. **Be faithful.** We are a church, not a social club. We are a people of prayer, with a commitment to service and action on behalf of the least and the weakest. Sure, we make friends at church—but that is not what we come for. We come to worship and serve God, and to learn and to grow in the likeness of Christ.
2. **Be focused.** We have a mission. Each congregation has a distinct calling from God to minister in its community and in the world at large. We must know and live into that mission, and we must fight the impulses and influences that seek to distract us from that purpose.
3. **Be proficient.** In our tradition, it is important to offer God our best: our best building materials, decorations, altar ware, and vestments. We must be attentive also to offering to God and our neighbors the best liturgy, proclamation, teaching, outreach ministries, and spiritual formation opportunities we are capable of. We must be our own toughest critics, and our own best coaches.
4. **Be visible.** We must stop hiding our light under a silver mint julep cup. Publicity is part of the planning for any event. Sometimes, that means spending some money. Sometimes, it just means talking up church programs and events or mentioning what the church means to us among people we contact regularly. If our publicity attracts some folks who are not quite like the rest of us, Halleluiah! Never let anyone say of our church, "Oh, I thought that church had closed," or, "Ah, you mean that church that's always locked, " or, "I never knew that someone like me would be welcome there," or "What is an Apostole Church, anyway?" or "Hmm, I've never heard of that one" (which happens to be a block or two away.) --Yes, I've heard all of these comments about some of our congregations!
5. **Be accessible.** We must do everything we can to make it easy to choose to participate in church: parking, lighting, signage, ramps and ADA equipment, convenient times, publicity, greeting and welcome, plan for inclusion, housekeeping, maintenance, hospitality. We have to eliminate obstacles and impediments to all kinds of people, including less able ones, finding their way to us. If we are not willing to do these things, we need to shut down now and get it over with.
6. **Be spiritual and experiential.** Why is the Main Line in decline? Because it is doctrinal. Dogma is anathema to many people today, especially younger ones. Those churches that are growing do have doctrine, often one that would be repugnant in many ways to the people they are attracting. But they don't stress doctrine, they stress experience. It happens that what we believe is important, to us and to others. But we will never have the opportunity to teach doctrine unless we offer spiritual and emotive experience, with hands-on opportunities for ministry, first.
7. **Be prayerful.** Are the members of the congregation praying for their church and for one another every day? For guidance, for insight, for resources, for opportunities to minister? Are those prayers included in the Prayers of the People in worship? Why would we expect to receive if we do not ask?
8. **Be adaptable.** We must reach people as they are. That is God's way. We must be the church in the 21st century, not an easy assignment for an institution that spans many centuries. Specifically, though, the present moment calls for a rather drastic reinvention of ourselves.

In summary,

9. **Be Church.** Not club, not family, not business, not support group, and for God's sake, not historical society. We are the living, breathing Body of Christ, his hands and feet in a suffering world. If we live into that, we will...
10. **Be Light.**

Donald K. Vinson
Canon for Congregational Development
Dean, Equipping the Saints