

THE SHEPHERD'S STAFF

www.goodshepherdwv.org

The Rev. Marjorie S. Bevans
Linda Crocker, Parish Ministries Coordinator

Ginger Smith, Parish Administrator
January 25, 2012

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.

From the Rector

This past weekend the Vestry and staff participated in a retreat facilitated by The Rev. Canon Faith Perrizo. Part of the retreat included a Mutual Ministry Review, which is a reflection and evaluation of how we are functioning as a parish. This has become a vital tool in the Episcopal Church for keeping a parish moving forward in its growth, spiritually and otherwise.

We began on Friday night with an evening of reflection, prayer and Bible study, seeking to understand more deeply God's call to each one of us. We were seeking to be open in heart and mind, and to be more aware of God's presence with us.

On Saturday morning we reflected on the roles and the work of the Rector, the Vestry and the Congregation this past year. Overall, the results of the review were very positive. We do have great gifts and strengths among us, and the level of energy and devotion to serve Christ here at Good Shepherd is high. We were also very honest with each other about our growing areas, and the things to which we need to pay more attention or devote more time. And as the new 2012 Vestry, we re-committed to a set norms for preparing and conducting vestry meetings. Chief among these norms are mutual respect, confidentiality, and accountability. We noted our accomplishments and set new priorities for the year ahead.

The accomplishments we noted on behalf of the whole parish were: the widespread and sustained support of the Rummage Sale and The Christmas Adopted Families in bad economic times; the 'fantastic' improvement in the choir and music, and the call to Mary Thomas to be our organist; and about a 10% increase in pledges and the first balanced budget in 7 years.

Areas identified for attention and improvement were: communication, managing change, community building, setting goals and evaluating progress, Christian Formation and role definitions. Even before the retreat we were already working on a number of these things with the establishment of a new Communications committee under the leadership of Gwen Justice, the forming of a Christian Formation planning group—with a high priority on Sunday school, and invigorated Parish Life under the energetic leadership of Joe Smith.

Coming out of the retreat we are working on a better process of receiving constructive input from parishioners on what constitutes 'a change', and Wendy Tuck and Trish Pritchard are working on a process to make sure our goals fit with our mission statement and that we are making some progress. If you have an interest in making a positive difference in any of these areas, please let someone on the vestry know.

This may seem like a lot, and we all acknowledged it would take more than the next year to see definite improvement in these areas. So we are asking for your support and patience. We think we are pretty

aware of the 'problems' we have as a parish. What Good Shepherd most needs now is for more of us to be open in heart and mind to hear from God, and a willingness to 'roll up our sleeves'.

Also coming out of the retreat was the suggestion that I take Mondays off instead of Fridays, so someone will be in the office on Fridays, and the staff meeting will now be held on Tuesdays. We are tweaking our new voicemail system to make it even easier to use, and to reassure you can contact me immediately in the event of a pastoral emergency. There will be more to come in the weeks ahead about all of these efforts in particular.

God bless you all. Thank you for entrusting us with the leadership of this great parish. We pray the Holy Spirit will be active here, in giving us wisdom and discernment, and renewed hope and vision!

MISSION PRAYER

Beginning Sunday January 29 you will notice an addition to the Prayers of the People. Ever since we adopted our most recent Mission Statement (printed on every issue of the Staff and in every bulletin) some of us have been looking for a way to include it as part of our congregational prayers. Dave Johnson took the initiative to put our statement into prayer form and with some gentle editing Mother Marjorie has settled on a final version:

Lord Jesus Christ, we believe you are leading us
to grow in our faith and knowledge of you,
to carry forward the Gospel message of love and
forgiveness,
to reach out as your hands to those in need,
especially in our neighborhood,
and to broaden and deepen our love for one another.
With grateful hearts for this parish and its people
we pray for the gift of the Holy Spirit's continued
guidance
as we seek to do your will, and bring you honor and
glory, Amen.

The Mission Prayer will come at the end of the Prayers of the People. Hopefully this will help us all stay inspired and focused on our goals as members of the Good Shepherd community.

SOUPER BOWL SUNDAY – Feb. 5

We are continuing Good Shepherd's tradition of collecting food for the Food Pantry on Super Bowl Sunday. Watch the ads and stock up on items such as tuna, mac and cheese, soup, canned ravioli, spaghetti and sauce, fruit and veggies, brownie mix (everyone loves a treat), etc. so you will have something good to donate on the 5th. Of course we always gratefully accept donations of items or cash but we want to fill one of our pink shopping carts that day. We will also celebrate the ministry of our Food Pantry workers at the 10 a.m. service, the first in a monthly series of affirmations of lay ministry.

A PATH OF FAITH by Wendy Tuck

"One Way or Another, we're all in the dark". This song by Guy Clark goes on to list fireflies, and sparks, lightning, stars, campfires, the moon, headlights on cars, the Northern lights, the Milky Way, and says "you can't see that stuff in the day".

We are often "in the dark". It's winter – physically our nights are long. Fighting continues in Afghanistan. Too many people have no work and my husband Steve agonizes that the sexual abuse of children causes never ending wreckage. Many of us wrestle with pain, heartache, and anger.

And yet, there was a star. "The people who have walked in darkness have seen a great light"(Isaiah 9:2). The light was Christ, and He left the world with the Holy Spirit and His body, the Church. The world is a dark and fearful place, and people are not nice all the time. The Church is to be a different kind of world, a place where healing, repentance, and forgiveness take place, where community is formed and honored.

Keith Haynes made a valiant effort to break the grip of the dark by heaping logs in the fireplace at Cedar Lakes during the Vestry Retreat. Gwen Justice was sitting as close to the fire as she possibly could, wrapped in a warm blanket. Keith was determined to keep her (and us) warm and cozy. At the close of Compline, the logs in the fireplace set off the fire alarm and it kept ringing for the next 20 minutes, even though we flung open every door and window!

If "the dark" is a metaphor for the unknown, the unseeable, and the things we are unaware of, then Guy Clark reminds us of things we can see in the dark. The Vestry followed the star that has led the church for 2012 years. The star led us back to our own church, our own congregation. We are the place where Jesus was laid. We are the unfinished barn. We are the hearts that enfold him, that honor and adore him, that fail and betray him, and that are forgiven by him and one another. What we do to one another, we do to Christ. It's too bad we have to fall off the porch to learn our lesson (when we make mistakes), but fall we do. The Church is where we learn to address those who cause us distress with prayer, honesty, respect, and even curiosity. "My friend, what were you thinking?"

This church is where we have the opportunity to see the lights that we may not be able to see in a dark world. I had deeply but unknowingly wounded a friend of mine. She came to me and told me how that affected her. We had a chance to restore a broken friendship. We followed the star. Sally Morgan calls you when someone needs an emergency meal – she follows the star. The Daughters of the King visit members of the parish who can't get out –they follow the star. You offer an ear, a ride, a donut – you follow the star. As the Vestry sets goals to build community and carry out the mission of Good Shepherd, they, too, follow the star. This church is on the way. When it's dark out there, follow the star!

Last Chance for Freud's Last Session

Join a group from Good Shepherd on Friday March 9 for a theater trip to Pittsburgh. Brochures for this play about an imaginary conversation between CS Lewis and Sigmund Freud are available outside the office. If you want to attend contact Linda Crocker (304-210-5591) before noon Sunday Jan. 29th.

UPDATE ON VOICEMAIL SYSTEM PLEASE READ

We have a new voicemail system. When you call the office you will not get a person right away. Don't hang up! Please listen to the message and it will instruct you on how to reach a *real person*. You can reach Mother Marjorie, Ginger or Linda as long as their extensions are not busy. If they are already on a call or not in their office, your call will go to their voice mailbox. If this happens, please leave your name, phone number and a brief message and they will return your call. We have a red light on our phones that tells us we have calls waiting for a reply and we return those calls as quickly as we can.

With the old answering machine anyone in the office or outside the office door could hear you leave your message as well as hear your message when we retrieved it. This was not very private. That has totally been eliminated with our new system. You now can leave *confidential* messages for the person intended in their personal mailbox. No one but that person will hear your message.

Mother Marjorie can now check her messages at any time of day from anywhere when she is away from the office. Therefore, if you need to speak with Mother Marjorie there is no need to call her at home, just call the office, leave a message (if she does not answer) and she will retrieve her messages periodically and get back to you. **If you have a life threatening emergency or death**, simply call the church, dial "4" on your keypad and leave a message. Mother Marjorie will get your call and call you back. Mother Marjorie checks her calls approximately 4 times a day. We are currently working with our voicemail supplier to see if we can get the emergency calls routed to Mother Marjorie's cell phone so she can receive those calls as they come in, but please keep in mind that this line is intended for "*life-threatening emergencies*" and "*deaths*" only.

Please bear with us as we work out all the little kinks in our new system. It already is proving to free up a lot of our time so that we can be more efficient in our work. We think that you too will find it to be a good change. We welcome your feedback. Let us know what you think of the new system or ways we might improve it.

SUGGESTIONS?

Do you have a comment or suggestion about the Liturgy, sermon, new voicemail system, etc.? We would like to hear your thoughts.

There is a mailbox hanging on the wall just outside the office in the little alcove that leads to the door that is not an exit. You will find a tablet, pen, and envelopes to use to make your comments or suggestions known to us. Also, you will find yellow prayer list cards for you to add people to the prayer list. By the way, this is where the vestry members pick up their mail, should you wish to leave a message for one of them.

We are interested in what you think. Please leave us a note so we may address your concerns or enjoy your compliments. Thank you.

PARISH BREAKFAST

The February breakfast will be hosted by the Chancel Choir so get your taste buds ready! That is February 12th – mark your calendar now! If anyone is willing to host the May breakfast, please call Linda Bennett (304 295-9073).

GOT COFFEE for Coffee Hour?

As 2012 starts, the sign-up sheet for the EASY TASK of preparing coffee is in need of people that will be available for preparing coffee on Sunday mornings. If you have not done this before or wonder how does the coffee “appear” for coffee drinkers, here are the expectations when arriving to the church kitchen.

- Make the coffee (directions and everything you need are in the kitchen)
- Place the coffee urn on the table in the hall and move the hot water pot in the Bailey Parlor there as well, plug in.
- Gather cups, sugar, powdered creamer, artificial sweeteners, tea, spoons or stirrers, and napkins and place on the table (there is even a chart showing you where everything goes)
- Arrange an assortment of snacks/cookies. You can bring your own and/or use those in the cabinet.
- Make a pitcher of lemonade for the kids if there isn't juice in the fridge
- Go to the service. Leave church during the last hymn to move the snacks and lemonade to the table from the kitchen.
- After Adult Forum put everything away and wash up. Thank you!

If you have other commitments before or after church (choir, a meeting, etc.) team with someone – one to set up and the other to clean up. If you are new to this duty ask someone to help you the 1st time. Linda Crocker or Joe Smith would be happy to show you the ropes.

MORNING PRAYER

You are encouraged to come join the parish staff for Morning Prayer Monday thru Thursday at 9:30 AM. It's a wonderful way to begin your day and only takes 20 minutes of your time. The office staff finds it a great way to gather our thoughts, calm our anxieties and help us do the tasks God puts before us. You will find it rewarding too, so please come join us.

SHROVE TUESDAY PANCAKE FEED

On Tuesday, February 21st, the Peterkin Pals will, once again, man the kitchen. With spatulas and mixers in hand, the men will turn the kitchen into pancake heaven while the women and young people do the serving. The featured menu will be buttermilk pancakes, (made from scratch just like grandma use to make), savory sausage, warm tasty applesauce, and the usual side items of real butter and hot maple syrup. Now, how does that sound? Aren't your taste buds saying “Do we have to wait until February 21st?” Well, yes we do, but mark the date now and be ready! Bring your family, friends and neighbors. There will be plenty for everyone. Serving will begin at 5:30! If you are willing to help, please sign up at the office door. Remember, all your generous donations for the meal will help purchase materials for Peterkin Work Weekend. If you have any questions, contact Linda Bennett.

DRIVERS needed for Winter Riders

As cold snowy mornings approach in February, one might choose to stay in bed on Sunday, considering the risks and hassles of going to church services on a winter's day. To overcome any concerns about travel to church on snowy mornings (or anytime someone might need some help), Joe Smith is organizing drivers for members needing rides from various locations. If you would like to have someone give you a ride to church contact Joe Smith. If you are available and willing to pick up a fellow GSC person so he/she can get to church on Sunday, please let Joe know. This is an opportunity to get to know one another and assist those who want to attend services but might have limited access to transportation or are hesitant to drive in winter weather. Joe's number is 304-422-3776.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

The Activities Committee is planning two upcoming events. The first is February 24 at Emerson Lanes for a family night of bowling. The fun begins at 7:00! The second event is scheduled for April 27th when we are planning a dinner at the Blennerhassett followed by a short trip up the street to watch the Actors Guild perform "Hairspray". More information will be forthcoming, and sign/up sheets will appear at church soon. The dinner prior to the Actors Guild play is optional. You can do the play, dinner, or both. Watch for details or Call Mark Miller at 375-6239.