

# THE SHEPHERD'S STAFF

[www.goodshepherdwv.org](http://www.goodshepherdwv.org)

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**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

In his beautiful treatise, *"On The Incarnation"*, in the fourth century St. Athanasius wrote, "You may be wondering why we are discussing the origin of men when we set out to talk about the Word's becoming Man. The former subject is relevant to the latter for this reason: it was our sorry case that caused the Word to come down, our transgression that called out His love for us, so that He made haste to help us and to appear among us. It is we who were the cause of His taking human form, and for our salvation that in His great love He was both born and manifested in a human body. For God had made man thus (that is, as an embodied spirit), and had willed that he should remain in incorruption."

God has come among us to save us from the inevitable descent into spiritual death caused by our own sin. See how He loves us—the unfaithful, the guilty, the impenitent, the 'unworthy'?

In thanksgiving for the birth of our Savior, on the feast of the Baptism of our Lord, which is January 8<sup>th</sup>, Good Shepherd will celebrate the day with the theme of 'commitment', or 're-commitment'. At both services we will renew our Baptismal Vows. In connection with the sense of starting off the new year with renewed dedication to Christ, we will also distribute the new United Thank Offering boxes for use through Epiphany and Lent. We will be renewing our commitment to Outreach and Mission in the world.

God has given us many good gifts. Let us express our thankfulness by sharing every good thing we have with others. This would be the sign of God's grace appearing among us and upon us, Emmanuel.

## CHRISTMAS OFFERING

The vestry accepted the recommendation of the Outreach Committee that the Christmas Offering (Christmas envelopes and plate collection at Christmas Eve and Christmas Day services) be donated to Horizon House to go towards the cost of replacing the access ramp at the rear of their building.

Horizon House provides sheltered housing for adults with developmental disabilities, several of whom worship at Good Shepherd. We have a long relationship of helping to maintain their home. The ramp at the rear is deteriorating and has been patched many times. The rear of the building is the only handicapped-accessible access and is a primary exit in case of fire. The ramp is at the point that it needs to be replaced and the work is beyond the scope of what we can do with volunteers. Horizon House thinks they can come up with the additional funding if we give them a jump-start with our donation.

Did you read Whitney Justice's article last month about her month without make-up? She received donations to supplement what she saved by not buying make-up. She contributed a make-up kit to Adopted Families and has given the treasurer \$100 to go to the Christmas Offering.

## THANKSGIVING OFFERING REPORT

Hunters Helping the Hungry will receive \$416 we collected to help pay for the processing of donated deer meat that will then be distributed to local food pantries. Thank you for your generous donations.

## CHRISTMAS CAROLING - Fa la la la la la, la la la la!

Everyone is invited to join the EYF this Sunday, December 18 at the church at 6 p.m. to go caroling to some of our homebound members and friends. Bring a musical instrument or a Santa hat if you have one, bells to jingle, warm clothes and a smile; a good singing voice is optional.

If someone you know would appreciate a visit contact Bob Crocker (304-863-5647) and he will try to work them into the schedule.

## 2012 PLEDGES

To date we have received 67 pledges. Of these 32 are new or increased pledges, 30 are equal to last year and 5 were decreased. If you plan to pledge please turn in your card now so we can have accurate figures for next year's budget.

If you haven't pledged before and aren't sure how to start, why not consider pledging \$30/month? That is about \$1/day. You might also consider \$50/month which is where many people start. Whatever amount you pledge, the staff and vestry will do their best to be good stewards of the money you donate.

## OFFICE CHRISTMAS HOLIDAY

The church office will be closed the week between Christmas and New Year's, including Monday January 2. Senior Warden Wendy Tuck will check to see if there are messages that need attention on Tues., Weds. and Thurs. the 27, 28 and 29th and will be scheduling clients for the Food Pantry.

We are in the process of installing voicemail to our telephone system, which we hope to have up and running by Christmas. This will make it much easier for the office Staff and Mother Marjorie to check messages when away from the office. When the voicemail is in place, we will inform you of how to utilize the phone system and how it will be easier, more confidential and much more efficient.

## ADOPTED FAMILIES INTERIM REPORT

As the Staff goes to press we are providing Christmas for about 80 families representing over 200 children and their parents. Heartfelt thanks to the shoppers, cookie bakers, interviewers, store guides, the Basement Gang, the set-up and tear-down crews and those who donated toiletries, money or other items. We are also grateful to the many other churches and organizations who contribute in a variety of ways. Special thanks to Ginger for fielding many calls from applicants and especially to John and Carol Lathrop for all their organizing and countless hours of behind the scenes work.

## FOOD PANTRY

This month's needs are for cereal, peanut butter, canned dinners (ravioli, stew, etc) and laundry or dish soap. Small jars of coffee are also greatly appreciated by our clients.

Thank you to all of you who have supported the Food Pantry with donations of groceries, money and volunteer time in 2011 and to Bob Flinn for the pink shopping carts.

## **A PATH OF FAITH**

By Wendy Tuck, Senior Warden

In thinking of this Advent season, and the many people who were at the scene at Jesus' birth, I wonder where each of us would be in the story. I have been reading The Prison Memoirs of Father Delp, who called the churches to resist Hitler's regime and was executed on Feb. 5, 1945. He knew clearly the darkness of the times and yet his faith was a shining testimony of the freedom and power God's love provided him. In his meditations on Advent, he asks if we would be like Mary, who yielded of her own free choice to the inner promptings of God's voice. We are often so concerned with our self-fulfillment, our self-realization, our living conditions, etc. Everything is organized for self-gratification, and we are getting progressively poorer and more miserable. Mary's decision was complete surrender to God. What is our decision? Or, he asks, are we like Joseph, standing on the outskirts, silently waiting in the shadows, there when wanted and always ready to help. His message is willing obedience. He is the man who serves. It never enters his head to question God's commands.

Would we be one of the angels? The angels are identified with freedom, loyalty, wisdom, and love. They bring tidings; they announce God's mystery and summon the listeners to adoration. Where are the messengers of glad tidings, joyfully proclaiming and praising God? Or would we be among the shepherds? They were people who were capable of registering wonder, whose hearts could be warmed by the promises of God, who still believed in miracles. They were instantly ready to respond to the call, and their lives still held desire and expectation. We might consider ourselves to be one of the wise men – they are those with clear eyes that probe things to their very depths. They have a real hunger and thirst for knowledge and are capable at arriving at right decisions. They subordinate their lives in a quest of following a star, a sign, an inner voice. What were they looking for? What are we looking for that neither fatigue nor distance nor fear of the unknown nor loneliness nor ridicule will deter us?

We are all called to the cradle, men and women, rich and poor, old and young. We are all called out of the darkness of night, out of the darkness of indifference, hopelessness, apathy, and fear. Now is the time Christ comes. In these times, in these places. Today. Tonight. This is the destined place and hour of a new holy night, a new birth for humanity seeking God, a new nativity. Darkness shall not frighten us, says Fr. Delp, or distress wear us out. We will go on waiting, watching and praying, until the star rises.

## **HP ALL-IN-ONE OFFICE JET**

Mother Marjorie has a spare Office Jet that can FAX, scan, copy and print. Contact her if you would like to give it a new home.

## **WOMEN'S RETREAT SCHEDULED**

The women of Good Shepherd are invited to attend a weekend retreat at Sandcrest February 17 and 18th. Sandcrest is a beautiful piece of property owned by the Diocese and is located in Wheeling. It is perfect for that little getaway we all need. You may sign up for Friday night only, or for both nights. The cost is \$88 a night, so start saving now! The Good Shepherd Daughters of the King are sponsoring the event for all of the women in the church. Please consider signing up early so we will know how many to count on! For more information call Margie Miller at 304-375-6239 or 304-615-4336. We look forward to hearing from you!

## **THE COMING**

By Frank Bono

The night was not unusual,  
Quiet,  
Some would say peaceful,  
With the moon shining silently,  
Illuminating the still desert with a cold luster,  
Not at all you would think  
The setting for a miracle.  
For centuries the same rumor persisted  
That would not release its grip on a people –  
Destitute  
Clinging to wisps of hope invisible to the rest of the  
world.  
Yes, it was a cold night,  
Easy to forget the unreal, the improbable,  
With the odor of animal dung surrounding us,  
Half-empty stomachs,  
Chilled bodies hardened by the elements.  
The only hope that night was of warm soup  
Followed by warm women in warm beds,  
Not at all for a Messiah.  
Yet it happened.  
But not as some had supposed.  
A child was born in a stable to simple folks.  
A few of us came to visit.  
Three strangers placed gifts and left.  
Then it was over –  
Not the hunger, the cold  
Nor the dangers of the desert –  
They persisted.  
But the frustration of waiting,  
The doubt,  
The suspicion of delusion  
That had lingered so long like a terrible agony  
Were gone.  
What remained was a beginning –  
First death  
Then birth.