



THE SHEPHERD'S STAFF
The Memorial Church of the Good Shepherd
March 18, 2026

Our mission: To **Worship** God, to **Serve** our neighbors, to **Proclaim** the Good News

*Please check out the **church calendar** available on our website.*

www.goodshepherdwv.org

From the Rector

Greetings all. As we prepare to enter Holy Week, one of the most intense and yet life giving weeks of our Christian calendar, I would like to draw your attention to a new service being held at Good Shepherd this year. The Great Vigil of Easter will be held at 7:30 pm on Saturday, April 4th. Please do not confuse the Great Vigil of Easter, commonly called “Easter Vigil,” with our Thursday evening “Watch Vigil.” These are two different experiences. Let me explain below.

On Maundy Thursday (April 2nd 7pm) we celebrate the Last Supper Jesus held with his disciples. We focus on the love Jesus showed through washing his disciples’ feet as well as breaking bread with them at the table. During the worship service, we remember these moments through partaking in them, as well as other events of that night. You might recall that Jesus and the disciples went to the Garden of Gethsemane to pray, but the disciples fell asleep. Toward the end of our Thursday service, you will notice us carrying the Sacrament, believed by us to be the Body and Blood of Christ, to our healing altar, which will have many green plants around it. This is properly called an altar of repose, a place where we can watch and pray with Jesus just as the disciples were invited to do many years ago. This Watch Vigil has prayer shifts throughout the night, until noon on Friday, when we do stations of the cross, and remember the crucifixion of Jesus.

The Great Vigil of Easter, on the other hand, begins right before sundown on Holy Saturday (though doing it at sunrise on Easter is also permitted). It is the first service of Easter. You might notice that Maundy Thursday has no dismissal at the end of its service and that the Good Friday Service (April 3rd 7pm) has no opening acclamations at the beginning of the service nor dismissal at the end. This is because historically, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and the Great Vigil of Easter are all one service. Think of a play with three acts that take place over three days. This is why we enter the church in darkness for the Great Vigil of Easter, bearing the light of Christ in our hands. Just as our Jewish ancestors told the story of their salvation history during Passover, at the Great Vigil of Easter we tell the salvation history of Christians through what we call “the Prophecies.” The Prophecies are selections of scripture from Genesis forward that give a small taste of who we are and where we come from. As the sun sets, it marks the start of the new day, Easter day, and we move into the festal Eucharist – throwing on the church lights and celebrating the new life we have through Jesus’ resurrection. In some parishes, they even ring bells, though we will not do that here. It is a longer service, since it tells our history, but it is an ancient practice, filled with all that makes Christianity so remarkable.

Our friends from Trinity Church, including their Director of Music and their choir, will be joining us for this service, just as we joined them last year. I hope that you might make time to experience this remarkable evening filled with remarkable music so that you, too, might know who we are and where we are going. Amen.

Watch Vigil – April 2-3

Each year we team up to keep watch at the side altar from 9 PM Maundy Thursday until noon on Good Friday in one-hour shifts. Our goal is to have at least one person here for each hour. A sign-up board is available in the Welcome Center. This is a special time to sit in silence and candlelight, praying and reflecting on the sacrifice our Lord made for each of us.



Easter Flowers



We welcome your donations to provide flowers for the church for Easter. If you have pledge envelopes you can use the Easter Flowers envelope. Otherwise, you can give a check with Easter Flowers in the memo line. Please include a note with information on the dedication that you would like to have in the Easter bulletin such as “In thanksgiving for....” or “In memory of” . There is no minimum donation required. The deadline for inclusion in the Easter bulletin is March 29.

Easter Egg Hunt – candy, favors needed



Our annual Easter Egg Hunt will be after the Easter service on Sunday April 5. We have **plenty** of plastic eggs but welcome donations of candy or small toys/favors to put inside. Please drop off such donations at the office no later than Palm Sunday. Thank you!

Easter Offering

This year’s Easter collection will be split between the Open Sky Arts Collective and Episcopal Relief and Development (ERD).

Open Sky brings a team to Parkersburg each summer to provide a week-long Vacation Bible School for neighborhood children. Our donations will help with their expenses for food, art supplies, Bibles, etc.



ERD works with locally-based organizations in the US and around the world to bring about lasting change in the areas of justice, poverty, disasters and climate change. You may contribute by using your Easter envelope or giving a check with Easter in the memo line.

Shepherd’s Closet Rummage



Deb says she is ready to accept donations of household items (especially bedding) and small furniture. She is also ready for your donations of spring clothing. The first sale of 2026 will avoid Easter weekend so it will be the 2nd weekend in April – Friday and Saturday April 10 and 11.

It’s Spring! Things to celebrate

- Generous shoppers: While Bob was shopping for pantry and bag supplies at Aldi, a customer saw the cart overflowing with bread, asked if it was for a pantry, and gave Bob \$20 to help pay for it. Bob went back in and loaded a cart with food pantry items. When he got to the checkout the same customer said she would pay for it. Bob told her she had already been generous to help pay for the bread but she insisted, paying over \$80 for the cartful.
- Generous friends: One of Katie Beth’s friends sent a several thousand-dollar donation to be used as general revenue which will help offset our expected budget deficit.
- More generous friends: the neighbor of a parishioner has sent a portion of her RMD (Required Minimum Distribution from her retirement fund), designated for the food pantry.
- Generous neighbors – we have received 3 shelves full of books from a member’s neighbors as the result of a neighborhood FB post.
- Thanks to the Thursday Work Crew for installing brighter replacement lights in the Great Hall



A Exciting Steps forward in Children's Ministry:

During our most recent vestry retreat, one of the topics we discussed is how to better integrate families who arrive as visitors at our church. Modern sensibilities on child protection often leave parents uncomfortable sending their young child to a nursery or children's church with people they do not know. Additionally, psychological research on loneliness, spirituality, and child development have all independently pointed to it being best for children, from birth to adulthood, to be incorporated directly into the actual worship service. * There are many reasons for these findings, some of which I will cover here.

The first is "Faith is caught, not taught." Children carry the weight of their parents' emotions –if a parent loves being in worship, this will translate to the child, even when words might not be able to be comprehended. The late Pastor John Piper puts it this way,

"Of course the service is over the children's heads. It is supposed to be over their heads. They are beginners. The English language is over their heads when they come out of the womb, but we do not say, 'Well, let's put them with other children in their own situations and limitations so they can understand a word or two.' No. We immerse them in the English language every day. For a while, they do not understand most of it. But we hope and expect them to grow up into joyful use of the English language. Long before children fully understand the words said and sung in the service, they are absorbing tremendous amounts of valuable experience."

The second reason is belonging. Children who are welcomed, even when they are fussy, wiggly, or careening down the aisles, tend to not doubt their place in church. They are much less likely to inherit that, "I have to be good," or "I have to dress this way," or any of the hundred other excuses we tell ourselves about what we have to do first before we are worthy of church.

The third reason is intergenerational life. The giggles, the laughter—it reminds us that the next generation of Christians are here, present, and ready to praise God with us. Sometimes the way a child sees things, or asks questions, can zap us out of the narrow way we have entrenched ourselves. Sometimes it's the dose of life we didn't know we needed.

So, while your vestry has decided to end children's church as we have known it,** we invite you to be excited with us to welcome families, to let them know their whole family is welcome in worship, sounds, wiggles, and all, and to embrace the new life brought with our youngest Christians.

*See, for example, this Sojourners article which cites such research and the sources:

<https://sojo.net/articles/news/case-ending-childrens-church>

**The nursery will remain available for parents or families wanting to take their children, 4 and under, somewhere to regroup. It will not be staffed.

Any ideas? New renter needed

Unfortunately, the state Head Start management has decided not to renew the lease for our classroom and office space. There are plans to build a facility to combine all the sites into one central location. Our local people are very happy here, but it was not their decision. Their lease ends on June 30.

If you know of a non-profit that would be a good fit for us, both in terms of mission and space needed, please pass your suggestion to a staff or vestry member or ask them to contact us.

Books for children

Are you thinking about spring cleaning yet? Are any neighbors having garage sales? We still need more children's books for our Little Free Library. Babies, toddlers, beginning readers, growing readers, teens, we need them all. Kid's magazines are good too. But, do not go out and buy new books. They go so fast that it isn't worth it. Thanks for your help.



Inreach Opportunities

We show our care for other members as we listen to each other, spend time together, support each other in our church ministries, share a hug during the peace, help in times of need and celebrate special moments. Those who can't be here in person are also valued members. If you or a loved one would like a card, a visit, a meal, or a home communion, please call the office and we will connect you with someone who would love to be asked to help.

Appreciating a card or note: Peggy Roberts (in assisted living) Brookdale Chapel Hill, 2220 Farmington Dr., Apt. F2, Chapel Hill, NC 27517

♥ Pastoral Care

Someone is in the office Monday through Thursday, 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. If you need pastoral care outside office hours, contact Toni DeVore or Linda Crocker (see below). Additionally, the Eucharistic Visitors can offer a visit and/or home communion to those who can't come to church – just ask!

♥ Prayer Chain

We have a group of people who pray for those having emergency situations – surgery, accidents, or other crises. Linda Crocker makes the calls using the One Call system when she is notified by a church member of an immediate need. If you want to be added to the prayer chain let Linda know (304-210-5591). **God hears all our prayers** – you don't need a special gift to pray for healing and comfort for those in distress. All prayer chain calls remain confidential.



Staying Connected, Continuing to Serve

Intercessory Prayers:

During your prayer time use the lists below to remember those who have asked for our prayers:

Good Shepherd Parish Prayer List

War in the Middle East	Marcia Doyle – healing	Mary Gevas – healing
The People of Israel and Gaza	Vickie Fielder – healing	Bob Fielder - healing
The People of Ukraine	Susan Allander – healing	Julie Stover - healing
Victims of gun violence	Nicole Combs - healing	Peter Gevas – healing
Buck Harris – strength/healing	Ann Stevens– healing	Dee Milhoan – healing
Amanda Morris – healing	Margy Yokum – healing	Jone Johnson – healing/strength
Gene Allander – healing	Peggy Roberts – healing	Crystal Proper – healing
Deb Hepburn-McKinney – healing	Diane Cottrill – healing	



Safety for all those serving in the Armed Forces

Sterling Slusher, Lauren Fielder, Peter Keiser

Those needing healing from cancer

Hal Foss	John Stevens	Alana Dailey	Gary Greer	Lois Switzer
Faith Beha	Mirtala Smith	Everett Gilmore	Charles Sterchak	Wilbur Lemmon
Ellen Faymon				

Outreach Programs

♥ **Donuts** - We make day-old donuts available to our neighbors and the homeless. Thank you to McHappy's and to those who make sure the donuts are picked up daily.



♥ **Little Free Library** – Filling the church neighborhood with books to read. Your donations are always welcome. We especially need kids' books (see above).



♥ **Last Sunday Supper** – The next meal will be Sunday, March 29. Come help set-up and cook at 1 PM or come help serve and clean-up at 5:15 PM. We begin serving at 5:30 and continue until 6/6:15 (or earlier if we run out of food). We are usually out of the building by 7 or 7:15.

- ♥ **Food Pantry** – If you would like to help handing out food bags to the unhoused or preparing food orders in the pantry for our housed clients, the current need is someone on Monday afternoon and Thursday morning. We also need subs occasionally. Contact Linda if you can serve a few hours weekly or just as needed. Also, **we need your used bags**, doubled if possible.



- ♥ **Reading Camp – 5, 4, 3, 2, 1 READ!** Time to start planning this year’s one- week space-themed camp for struggling elementary-age students. Contact Linda to help.

Coming Up:

March 18 and 25 – Lenten Potluck, study and compline

March 29 – Palm Sunday and Last Sunday Supper

April 2 – Maundy Thursday service at 7 PM and Watch Vigil begins at 9 PM

April 3 – Good Friday – Watch Vigil ends at noon, Stations of the Cross at noon, and evening Good Friday service at 7 PM

April 4 – Easter Vigil at 7:30 PM

April 5 – Easter Sunday – Service at 10:15 AM followed by Easter Egg Hunt



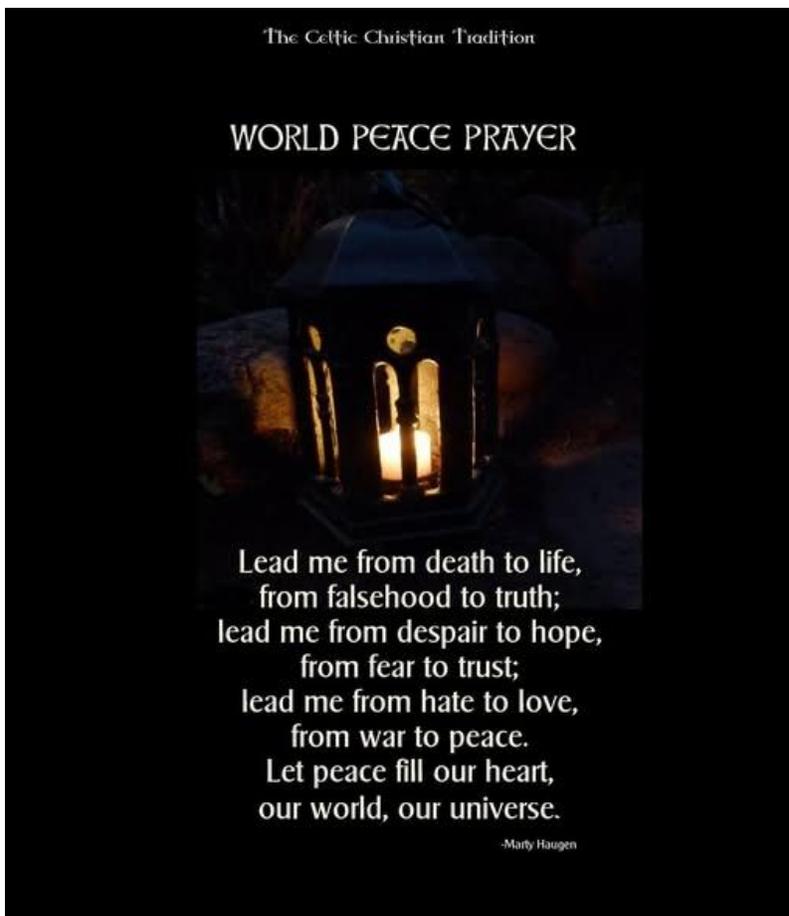
Holy Week

A note from Linda about the Rector’s Day Off

Katie Beth has Monday as her day off. To enable her to have a relaxing break, please do not send a text message on Mondays *unless it is an emergency*. If something comes up that you want to share (before you forget it?) and for all routine matters, you can send an email for her to read on Tuesday to rector.goodshepherdwva@gmail.com. If you prefer to text, wait until Tuesday. Thank you for supporting Katie Beth in this way.



Found on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/TheCelticChristian>



Head Start Art display



Thursday Work Crew preparing the bell from the Bell Tower for cleaning



One Call system 1-877-698-3261

This is the way we notify our members of important announcements.
Caller ID will say that the call is from Good Shepherd, but it is really from One Call.
Call the number above if you need a message from the church repeated.
If you are not receiving messages, contact Linda to be added to our call list.

Contact Information:

The Rev. Katie Beth Miksa	304-428-1525, ext. 4	rector.goodshepherdwva@gmail.com
Ginger Smith, Parish Administrator	304-428-1525, ext. 1	gingersmith.goodshepherdwva@gmail.com
Linda Crocker, Parish Ministries	304-428-1525, ext. 5	LLBC100@msn.com
Toni DeVore, Senior Warden	304-991-2259	drtld51@gmail.com