

# The Shepherd's Voice

*The Quarterly Newsletter of the Church of the Good Shepherd*

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MID-FEBRUARY THROUGH MAY

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2017

Hi Everyone,

First, these are very exciting days at Good Shepherd! We just celebrated a fabulous celebration of a new ministry – mine, as your 8<sup>th</sup> rector! By all accounts, it was classic Good Shepherd: full of joy, warmth, reverence, gratitude, hospitality, and fun. Everyone did such a great job pitching in to pull off a great night. Thank you!



Bishop Mary and Canon Blake were wonderful and they told me they had a great time. In fact, we shall see them again soon: I invited them to return for Michaelmas and Oktoberfest in September, and Bishop Mary agreed to preach. Lucky us! She lives in Peekskill with her wife and I hope we shall be seeing more of her in the future. Enjoy the great photos of the event.



## **Ongoing Assessment for God, the Common Good, and our Happiness:**

In general, during this first program year (September – June) of my rectorship, I am keeping most of what we do the same to experience everything myself as it has been done before. If I have thoughts of doing things differently, I am first talking with those involved in the events to discuss how we might do it differently next time. My chief focus to date has been on Sunday worship and assessing and improving our systems behind the scenes so the systems are able to more efficiently and effectively support our diverse activities. This focus on Sunday worship and our administrative functioning shall continue through June.

Know that in general I don't see my role as promoting any specific activity. That's your role: to discern how to best use your unique gifts and talents for God and the common good. My role is to assist you in discerning your gifts and to support you in implementing them.

Recently, a parishioner approached me with an idea and asked specifically if it was something I wanted. I chuckled and responded that that was the wrong question. The issue isn't "is that what the new rector wants?" but "is that what you feel called to get involved in or start?" My role is to be a spiritual midwife – to assist in the birth of the baby, the implementation of your gifts and talents in the world – not to conceive what your baby should be. That's your fun job. And I leave it up to you.

As I mentioned recently in a sermon, I want us for the rest of this entire 2017 calendar year to assess how well our buildings, ministries, and processes assist all of us in discerning our gifts and talents and in supporting us in implementing them in the world. Everything is on the table.



Just because we did something one way in the past does not mean we need to continue doing it that way in the future. We need to live in the present moment, not the past, responding to the present and the immediate future. We need to ask critical, loving questions: how well are our ministries responding to the needs around us and supporting the implementation of our gifts and talents? How well are our organizational processes doing that? How well are our buildings and campus doing that? Everything is on the table for consideration; nothing is left out. Anything found wanting for change will be changed. Over time, nothing will be left out of this evaluation and updating.

We do this for a few reasons. First, I am not interested in change for the sake of change; that's frivolous, inefficient, and unnecessary. Much of what we do as church, for instance, is wise and has stood the test of time and should be continued, perhaps with some minor polishing. We engage in this top-to-bottom review, however, because that's what all organizations always have to periodically do: pause, assess, improve, implement, and continuously polish. We are no different. It's our turn. And the installation of a new rector at the beginning of a new century is the perfect time to do this.

So: what are your gifts and talents? What problems do you want to address in the world? What difference, large or small, do you want to make so our world becomes a better place for all?

Are your gifts centered around hospitality, for instance? Service? Public speaking? Teaching? Behind the scenes support? Encouragement? Art? Working with youth? Issue advocacy? What are you passionate about? What change do you want to see in the world and – most





importantly – what change are you willing to get behind and personally support (as opposed to advocating that others should get behind and lead)?

We put our gifts and talents in service for God and the common good for a few great reasons. First, Jesus tells us to. He tells us to love our neighbor as we love ourselves, and that means using the unique gifts God endowed each of us with for the promotion of the welfare of others. Christianity is an active religion, constantly engaging the world, working in the world as it is for what it could and should be. Mature Christianity is not a passive set of ideas and doctrines that seeks to withdraw from the world into our own private paradise. That ain't Biblical Christianity. And that's not what Jesus expects of us. He expects us to love one another as he has loved us – and that means, in our contemporary psychospiritual parlance, that we discern the talents that God has given each one of us and, instead of neglecting them or burying them, we use them actively in the world for God, advancing the common good.

We also implement our discerned gifts and talents in our lives because it makes us happy. And God wants us to be happy.

As Jesus said in the Gospel of John, "I came that they may have life and have it abundantly". Irenaeus, a first century leader of Christianity, famously said 1900 years ago, "The glory of God is a human being fully alive." The Holy Spirit wants us to be fully alive. So does the Episcopal Church. So do I.

As I said recently in a sermon, I learned about the secret of happiness years ago from a wise, old monk. Fr. William McNamara proved to me that happiness is not something we can achieve directly. It's a byproduct, like oxygen is a byproduct for a plant. Plants don't seek to give off oxygen in



photosynthesis; they seek to eat and create food through the process of photosynthesis. Oxygen is a byproduct. Likewise, when we use the gifts and talents God uniquely endowed each one of us with in the world, we too give off a byproduct: happiness. I want you to be happy.

The secret to happiness is to sing the song you were made to sing. What is that song? You are the light of the world, Jesus recently told us. (Yes, even us!) What little dark spot of the contemporary environment is calling for your light? Don't hide your light under a bushel basket; bring it to that dark spot that uniquely catches your attention. The byproduct will be happiness.

### **The Property Enhancement Task Force: Join the Subgroup that interests You!**

Our Property Enhancement Task Force is up and going, and church members are always welcome to join any subgroup that interests them at any time. Remember that this is going to be a five-year effort: we won't conclude these ideas and activities anytime soon. Basically, we are creating a five-year master plan for improving our campus, inside and out. Some subgroups will move very quickly; others will take more time. That's good and as it should be. Eventually, over the course of many years, we all will cross the finish line of having assessed all our space, and begun to make improvements.

The two basic sets of questions for each subgroup to answer are: 1) How well does this space support our ministries? What changes are recommended so the space supports our current ministries best today? 2) How well does this space reflect the character of our community? What changes are recommended so the space reflects the character of our community better today?





Below are the subgroups. Feel free to join any one that interests you and engages your gifts and talents.

The Zones and their task force members:

Zones 1 & 2: The Parish Hall – Hal, Bob, Maria, Jan, and Christine.

Zone 3: The Kitchen – Pat and Vilma, Bob, Sybil, Amanda, Lorne & Christine.

Zone 4: The Backyard Entry, Hallway, and Bathrooms – Hal, Amanda, and Christine.

Zone 5: The Guild Room – Christine, Rick, and Hal.

Zone 6: The Breezeway – Hal, Jan, and Rick.

Zone 7: The Church Office Entrance & Offices – Hal, Jan, Rick, Amanda, and Thelma.

Zone 8 & 9: The Nave and Vestibules– Hal, Phil, Courtney, Bob, Amanda, and Sybil.

Zone 10: The Front Yard – Sybil and Amanda.

Zone 11: The Rectory – Hal, Amanda, and Rick.

Zone 12: The Memorial Garden – Vilma, Courtney, Sybil, Leslie, Amanda, and Michael.

Zone 13: The Side Yard – Amanda, Bruce, Michael, and Hal.

Zone 14: The Parking Lot and Back Yard – Courtney, Phil, Jan, Amanda, and Bob.

Zone 15: The Exterior of all our Buildings – Hal, Rick, and Jan.





### **The new Community Forums:**

We have a new community mechanism coming: the Community Forum. The CF is a way for us to gather as a community to discuss issues of interest to the whole community. Basically, here's how it will work:

You will get an email in advance of a topic of interest to the community. For example, should we change the times for the Christmas Eve worship services? You will be told the date and time in which we will gather in the parish hall to discuss the pros and cons of the idea under discussion. We shall take a vote and all the information discussed at that community forum will be discussed at an upcoming vestry meeting. The results of the vestry discussion will be shared with the community.

It is not expected that everyone will attend every CF. You are welcome to attend all of them or just the ones that pertain to subjects you care about; whatever works best for you. We shall have them on Sundays at 9 am to 9:40 – right after the 8 am worship service and right before the 10 am service – to make it convenient for all to attend.

We will have to figure out how the CF will sync with choir practice, altar guild set up, and other important Sunday activities, but we will get it figured out. Like much that we do: it will be a work in progress. Let's start it, see what works, see what we need to fix, and go from there. The goal is to spread both the input and decision-making processes more broadly amongst the community for issues that affect the whole community. This is going to be fun!





## **Our Fundraising Focus & Activities:**

Our Fundraising Committee has begun to pick the tentative dates for our 2017 fundraising activities: the private movie screening, the Fall Extravaganza in October, the Taste of Somers event in November, and the Christmas Bazaar in December. See the latest calendar of events in this newsletter for the latest updates.

Also, know that every time something changes in the calendar, the list will be updated and the newest list will be hung on the bulletin board in the breezeway. The online Google calendar on our website will also be updated.

There are three goals for the Fundraising Committee for 2017: 1) raise money for our operating budget; 2) provide fun activities for children, adults, and families; and 3) increase the number of visitors who attend Good Shepherd events.

To accomplish the third goal, it is vital that we invite people to our events. Experts repeatedly preach that the #1 way for churches to grow is by personal invitation to a church event from a member of that church. So ask yourself continually: "Who do I know who would enjoy this event or benefit from attending this event?"

Special thanks to Deacon Norm as the head of this committee and to all those who are members of this committee. If you have an idea for a fundraiser that you think would advance one of our core goals for this committee, or you want to use your gifts and talents on this community or to support one of our events, contact either me or Deacon Norm.



### **Visitor and New Member Support:**

Paul and Lorraine Miller and I are generating ideas, processes, and acts to better acknowledge and integrate visitors and new members into our community, helping them to assess whether joining our community best fits their spiritual needs.

We are a genuine, warm, diverse, welcoming, progressive, and faithful Christian community. Like other Christian communities, though, we have been perhaps a little bit too lackadaisical, believing that visitors and new members can figure it all out for themselves. We have been, in other words, too hands-off. This strategy may have worked years ago, but it is no longer valid.

Why?

Too many people have little or no familiarity with either the Episcopal Church or even Christianity, and some of the social supports churches could once assume in the broader culture are rapidly eroding and/or no longer exist. What worked in the past no longer works today, and we need to be more intentional in both inviting people to our events and helping them to integrate into our community once they have decided that God is calling them to be with us.

We aren't all things for all people. We aren't the right community for many. We are too liberal for some and too conservative for others. That's okay. In fact, that's great! With over 30,000 different varieties of Christianity (according to scholars), there is a faith community out there for everyone. Many people will grace our doors and decide – for a world of different reasons – that our community is not right for them. That's great! We need to genuinely wish them well and pray that they find a community that nourishes their spiritual needs and values.





May God lead them to where they need to be at this point in their lifelong spiritual pilgrimage.

God will lead people to us who need and are called to be with us. This task force is providing us with new ideas and processes that can help us help others who are discerning whether our spiritual community is right for them. We are informed in our efforts by a successful initiative from the Episcopal diocese of Texas, [www.invitewelcomeconnect.com](http://www.invitewelcomeconnect.com). Check it out.

Want to use your gifts and talents in this aspect of our community life? Contact me.

### **Worship: Sundays and Other Holy Days:**

We have found a great broad-church balance of word and song in our Sunday 8 am and 10 am worship services. Those services will consistently celebrate classic Rite 1 and Rite 2 worship styles, respectively. We have also incorporated "Rite 3" creative services at other times of the week for a number of reasons: 1) to expose us to the huge array of worship styles used in our world-wide Anglican Communion; 2) to expose us to other, approved, creative resources in use in The Episcopal Church; 3) to keep Sunday worship fresh by experiencing other worship styles periodically; 4) to create other worship opportunities for those who are not fed by our two main servings on Sunday; 5) to provide opportunities for specific themed liturgies with involvement from people inside and outside our community who feel called to participate in them; and 6) to celebrate holy days throughout the liturgical year with other Christians around the world who celebrate important mysteries and aspects of our faith on those special holy days.





During Lent, we shall celebrate a thirty minute, “Rite 3” Eucharist (page 400-405 from *The Book of Common Prayer*) on Friday March 10, 17, and 31 at 6:30 pm followed by a simple supper of soup, bread, and apples afterwards in the kitchen. We are calling them the *Deeping Our Relationship with God in Lent* series.

The pattern we have discovered that works well is to introduce an idea during the 5 minute reflection which lends itself for discussion afterwards over dinner. On March 10<sup>th</sup>, Michael Wilson, a postulant for the priesthood from St. Mark’s in Mt. Kisco, will lead a reflection and discussion afterwards on a terrific mission trip he leads annually to West Virginia in June. I would like us to consider getting involved in this mission trip in the future; if this is something that might interest you, try to come to this service and talk. Our very own Wilfried Haensch and Fay Wright shall each offer reflections at the other two Eucharists, March 17<sup>th</sup> and March 31<sup>st</sup>.

Also, know that Cecelia and I both want to improve the sound of our organ during worship. We have both prioritized replacing the antiquated organ speaker in the choir loft with a new and better one, using the funds from our organ fund for that purpose. More on this as we engage in this project this spring.

Want to use your gifts and talents for anything related to worship in our community life? Contact me.



## #LPIC

Lori and I are thrilled to be here. As I often say and feel: I am the Luckiest Priest in Christendom (#LPIC). We have a wonderful, positive, engaged, diverse, smart, faith-filled community. Very bright days lie ahead for us. God is with us, and God will always be for us.

May we be open to God's Holy Spirit, in us and amongst us, calling us to imagine new and relevant ways to be faithful in our day and context.

"Glory to God, whose power, working in us, can do infinitely more than we can ask or imagine: Glory to him from generation to generation in the Church, and in Christ Jesus for ever and ever." (Ephesians 3:20-21; *BCP*, p. 102)

Amen!

With love and gratitude, and joy in what lies ahead,

Faithfully,

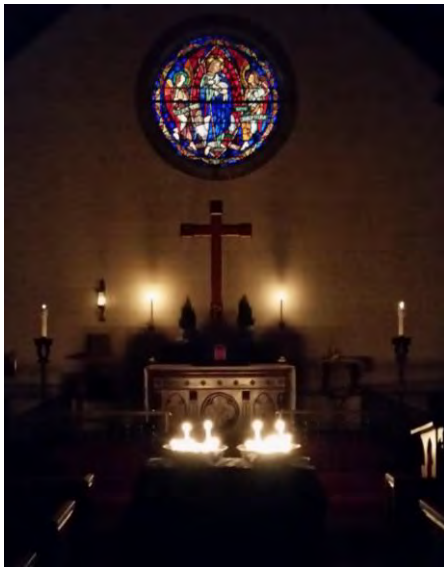
*Hal*





## SENIOR WARDEN'S REPORT – NOVEMBER 2016

Spring is coming. It may not look like it, but the days are getting longer and the air is (subtly) getting warmer. Meanwhile, the last six months have been a flurry of activity. The October Stewardship campaign resulted in a record projected pledge income for 2017. Thank you to everyone that contributed to that success. The “Tastes of Somers” fundraiser in November and the Christmas Bazaar in December were well-attended and raised much-needed income for the church. Father Hal’s Advent and Christmas services garnered rave reviews, especially his “Quiet Christmas” mass which explored the sad feelings that can accompany the chaos of the holiday season. We all enjoyed getting to know our new Rector and his family as the year wound down.



On to 2017 and the January 22<sup>nd</sup> Annual Meeting, which was blissfully short and generated a lot of hope and goodwill for the coming year. The Budget Committee (Father Hal, Paul Miller, and I) presented the Budget for 2017 and are confident that it projects an accurate financial picture of the months ahead. We estimate a \$14,000 deficit, but feel that this shortfall can be surmounted if we can attract new members to the church. If the parish continues to project the friendly, caring atmosphere that we always have, this shouldn't be a problem.

Finally, on February 2, we instituted our new Rector, Father Hal Roark, during a joyous mass celebrated by Bishop Mary Glasspool, various clergy and a church full of Good Shepherd congregants. A wonderful party followed – thank you to all who organized, set up, cooked, served and cleaned up afterwards. It never fails to amaze me how tirelessly our parish labors in its love for Christ and each other.



So what's ahead? Many good things are coming. Look for improvements to the physical buildings as the Campus Enhancement Task Force gets going in full swing. Several fundraisers are also planned for the year ahead. All of our well-established committees continue to be active and make plans for the future. In addition, we have a new committee to help welcome visitors to the church. Spring is coming. How will you celebrate it?

Respectfully submitted,

Maria Kaprielian

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# **TREASURER'S REPORT**

## **2016 Financial Results and 2017 Proposed Budget**

*(Originally published in the 2016 Annual Report)*

Our 2016 year started off with The Reverend Gwyneth Murphy as our interim pastor, our search committee in full swing in their search for our new pastor and lastly in January I presented a deficit 2016 budget of (\$33,200) at our annual meeting. Fay Wright and the search committee with God's help provided the vestry with two excellent candidates for their consideration. The Reverend Hal Roark was then chosen as our new pastor and began ministering to our parish in September.

During the next four months, under the guidance of Reverend Hal and our Financial Warden Maria Kaprielian and vestry, major changes were made to how the church financial records should be maintained and reported to the vestry and congregation. The rest of my report will show how the changes impacted 2016 and how we will go forward with them in 2017.

The biggest change is the definition and purpose of a church Restricted Account Fund and the church General Operating Fund. A Restricted Fund is an offering with a specific directive as to how the offering should be spent. Restricted Funds are not needed for the daily operation of the church. That is the purpose of the General Operating Fund, as these offerings and donations are used to run the daily operations of our church. These include everything from salaries, utilities, maintenance, worship, programming, fellowship and outreach, just to name a few.

In December the vestry approved the closing of ten Funds worth \$45,265 to the General Operating Fund. In order of magnitude these are the ten funds closed. The Capital Improvement Fund \$26,764, Sustainability Fund \$12,679, Memorial Fund \$3,258, Fellowship Fund \$832, Altar Guild \$670, Outreach Fund \$494, Flagpole Fund \$260, Senior's Group Activity Fund \$163, Adult Education Fund \$73 and Vacation Bible School Fund \$72.

In closing those ten Restricted accounts we finished the year in the black. Our General Operating Fund Net Income increased by \$26,233. We started the year with \$16,513 and added \$26,233 enabling us to open 2017 with \$42,746 in our General Operating Fund. When comparing actual 2016 results to the approved budget by the vestry you

must normalize the Income by reducing 2016 Income by \$45,265. This is a one-time occurrence in December of 2016.

When you normalize your 2016 General Operating Fund Income by \$45,265 you will then have 2016 Income of \$191,048 which results in our Net Operating Income being a loss of (\$19,032) as opposed to a gain of \$26,233 for 2016. Based on this normalization the Finance Committee then proceeded to develop the 2017 budget that the vestry approved in their December meeting.

The 2017 approved budget has our Income increasing \$12,122 or 6.4% with a corresponding increase in expenses of \$7,091 or 3.4%. This all results in our 2017 General Operating Fund Net Income being a deficit of (\$14,000) which is actually \$5,032 or 26.4% better then where we finished in 2016 normalized.

Our stewardship campaign led by John Kaprielian was the main reason for our Income increase of \$12,122 as our pledge income increased by \$10,291 to \$163,731 in 2017. I have included in my financial charts a Stewardship chart that depicts how we grew to 64 pledge units in 2017 compared to 60 pledge units in 2016.

The expense growth in the 2017 approved budget of \$7,091 is driven by the following expense areas: Staff of \$4,116, Diocesan Assessment \$1,718, Worship \$1,881, Church Programs \$3,345, Church & Office Expense \$2,164. These expense increases are offset by a decrease in Rector's compensation and benefits of \$5,317, reduced Fund Raising expense of \$842 with flat year to year expense for Utilities and Maintenance.

In conclusion, our approved budget depicts we will finish in the red by \$14,000 but I am sure with God guiding us we will find ways to reduce this deficit.

For more details on what I summarized above please review the financial charts included in the full Annual Report. If there any questions, please either call me, email me or speak to me at church.

Respectfully submitted,

Paul H. Miller  
Treasurer

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