

JUNE 2017

# Shepherd's Voice



The monthly parish newsletter of  
**Good Shepherd**  
United Church of Christ

## **WHAT WE BELIEVE...**

*We believe in God, the Eternal Spirit, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ and our Father, and to his deeds we testify:*

*He calls the worlds into being, creates man in his own image and sets before him the ways of life and death.*

*He seeks in holy love to save all people from aimlessness and sin.*

*He judges men and nations by his righteous will declared through prophets and apostles.*

*In Jesus Christ, the man of Nazareth, our crucified and risen Lord, he has come to us and shared our common lot, conquering sin and death and reconciling the world to himself.*

*He bestows upon us his Holy Spirit, creating and renewing the church of Jesus Christ, binding in covenant faithful people of all ages, tongues, and races.*

*He calls us into his church to accept the cost and joy of discipleship, to be his servants in the service of men, to proclaim the gospel to all the world and resist the powers of evil, to share in Christ's baptism and eat at his table, to join him in his passion and victory.*

*He promises to all who trust him forgiveness of sins and fullness of grace, courage in the struggle for justice and peace, his presence in trial and rejoicing, and eternal life in his kingdom which has no end.*

*Blessing and honor, glory and power be unto him. Amen.*

## **FROM THE DESK OF PASTOR RANDY**

### **Celebrating Our Future—Celebrating Our Youth!**

The month of June is extra special in the life of our church this year as we find ourselves spotlighting our youngest members.

Our annual Vacation Bible School will be held over the course of two weeks this year. This change to two weeks has been recommended by our Christian Education Board in order to better serve the youth of our church family and community, so that developmental levels of our students are taken into consideration.

During the week of June 12-16, our VBS will be held each evening for children age 2 through rising 4<sup>th</sup> grade. During the week of June 19-23, our evening VBS will serve students rising into 5<sup>th</sup> grade through 12<sup>th</sup> grade.

Please continue to pray for our youth and their teachers, and please recognize the tremendous amount of effort and resource that goes into making VBS a success. If you are interested in volunteering to serve at VBS, please let me know, as adult volunteers are always needed and we really can't do it without a team of committed volunteers.

But, before we even reach VBS, our church will celebrate an incredible milestone involving five of our youth. On Sunday, June 4, we will celebrate Pentecost and at our 10:00 AM service, our church will confirm into full church membership 5 young people who make up the Good Shepherd Confirmation Class of 2017. Our 2017 Confirmands are: Karah Hotard, Kacie Hotard, Daniel Landry, Abby Mains, and Madison Verbest.

**Continued on page 2**

The wisdom of Proverbs teaches us to “train up a child in the way he should go and when he is old, he will not depart from it” (Proverbs 22:6, KJV). Each of our five confirmands has been “raised up” by our church family since their biological family brought them into the flock through the Sacrament of Baptism when they were but infants. In the Rite of Confirmation, these young members will publically affirm their profession of faith in Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior and will publically and personally reaffirm the baptismal covenant their parents made for them many years ago.

Luke’s Gospel account tells us “ People were...bringing babies to Jesus for him to place his hands on them. When the disciples saw this, they rebuked them. But Jesus called the children to him and said, “Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. Truly I tell you, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it.”” (Luke 18:15-17, NIV).

While some in Christianity are critical of infant baptism, the reality is, Jesus very clearly demands that we should not hinder the little children from coming to Him. He further reminds us that His Kingdom, in fact, belongs to them and we need to learn from them, that if we too wish to receive Him and His Kingdom, we must do so “like a little child”.

What a blessing that our five confirmands have grown up in Christian families that took heed of the Holy Spirit’s call on them to dedicate their children to the Kingdom of God through the Sacrament of Holy Baptism and what a blessing that we get to see the Truth of Scripture manifest as these youngsters who have been “trained up” have indeed “not departed” but instead will step forward and declare of their own volition a renunciation of Satan and his evil, and acceptance of Christ and all His mercy, grace, and blessings, not the least of which being the blessing of salvation through Him.

Please continue to pray for our youth, as they are not only the future of our world, but they are the future of Christ’s Church in this world.

Until next month, let your light shine!

*Pastor Randy*

***The Reverend Dr. Randall M. Graf, Pastor***

## **SERVICES SCHEDULE FOR JUNE 2017**

**Sunday, June 4 @ 8:30 AM & 10:00 AM**—Pentecost Sunday; Rite of Confirmation at 10:00 AM

**Thursday, June 8 @ 6:35 PM**—Midweek Service of Holy Eucharist

**Saturday, June 10 @ 11:00 AM**—Monthly Service of Intercessory Prayer and Petition

**Sunday, June 11 @ 10:00 AM**—Sunday worship (New Member Sunday)

**Thursday, June 15 @ 6:35 PM**—Midweek Service will not meet due to VBS

**Sunday, June 18 @ 8:30 AM & 10:00 AM**—Sunday Worship (Father’s Day)

**Thursday, June 22**—Midweek Service of Holy Eucharist

**Sunday, June 25 @ 10:00 AM**—Sunday Worship

## **SHEEP IN THE NEWS**

Well, here we are at the end of the school year and we have several great praise reports. First, let's congratulate Angela Wetzel for being named Salutatorian at Mount Caramel High School. That is quite an accomplishment and we are very proud of her. Lacey Verbest made the A/B honor roll at Green Park Elementary. Way to go, Lacey! Laura Sulzer (Barbara Mehrtens' granddaughter) at the Madisonville Jr. High 8th grade awards ceremony received a certificate for 3.5 or better grade point average. She also received the President's Award for 3.5 or above grade point average all her years at Jr. High as well as scoring high on the Standardized Achievement Tests. She also received Most Improved Band Member this past year. Wow! This is quite a list. What an accomplishment! We are very proud of you, Laura. Keep up the good work at Madisonville High School in the fall. Now, at John Curtis Christian School we had three students to make Academic Honor Roll. They are Madison Graf, Gabriel Lagarde and Madison Verbest. That is not easy to do. It means they made all A's all year with just a few B's. Congratulations to all three of you. We are super proud of you. Enjoy your summer. We also have a high school graduate. His name is Brennen Higginbotham and he graduates with honors from Metairie Academy. He will be attending Avila University which is located in Kansas City, Missouri. We know we can expect great things from Brennen and we wish him all the best in his college years. Go, Brennen!

Please let Debbie Volk or the church office know of any accomplishments by our young people. We are so proud of them and want to acknowledge their successes.

Thanks,

**Debbie**

## **WOMEN'S GUILD**

Our Women's Guild will be traveling to the Northshore to visit Ms. June LeGuluche who continues to strengthen herself in Pontchartrain Healthcare in Mandeville. The ladies will be traveling across the lake on Tuesday, June 13. For more information, please see Ms. Thisis.

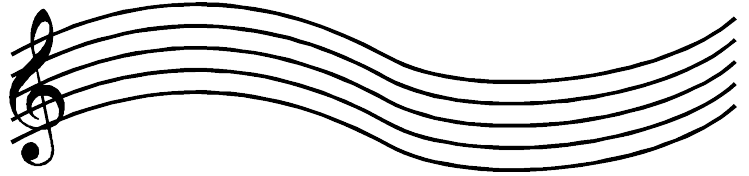
Meanwhile, Ms. June loves receiving cards and notes of encouragement. If you would like to drop her a line, her mailing address is:

June LeGuluche Rm. 120  
c/o Pontchartrain Healthcare  
1401 Florida Street  
Mandeville, LA 70448



## MUSIC NOTES

BY JORD LUFT, MUSIC DIRECTOR



### THANK YOU CHOIR

The Adult Choir will conclude its 2016-2017 singing season on Sunday, June 4. Let's give a big hip, hip hooray for this fantastic group of people who faithfully donate their time and talents to enrich the 10am worship experience with beautiful music.

Here is the list of people who sang with the group over the past several months. When you see them, please take a moment to say thanks for their immense contributions to the church.

***Margaret Aucoin, Mel Aucoin, Madison Graf, Maria Heikamp,***

***Sharon Hensley, Jan Kracke, Haley Lagarde, Stan McDonald,***

***Susan Rabb-Williams, Madison Verbest, Bob Volk, Debbie Volk.***

Following a well-deserved summer break, look for the Choir to return on Sunday, September 17. How about considering joining them? We're always seeking new members.

***Jordy Luft***

*Music Director*



### JUNE 2017 MUSIC DEPARTMENT CALENDAR

Youth Choir Rehearsal: Sundays following 10am worship through June 11

Crescendo: Performance on Sunday, June 11. Meet in the Choir Room at 9:40am for practice.

Bell Choir: Performance on Sunday, June 18 (Father's Day). Dads, Granddads and Men will be asked

to ring the bells with the children.

Annual Father's Day Women's Chorus: Performance on Sunday, June 18. Meet in the Choir Room at 9:40am for practice.

Here's to great turnouts at rehearsals and in church!

***Jordy Luft***

*Music Director*

## MUSIC NOTES *(CONTINUED)*

### CRESCENDO UPDATE

**NEXT PERFORMANCE: SUNDAY, JUNE 11**



Following a one month break in May due to the special Mother's Day Men's Chorus' second Sunday performance, Crescendo will return on June 11. We'll meet in the Choir room at 9:40 AM to learn and polish the morning selection, a medley of popular Praise & Worship standards.

Remember, this mass choir is for members of all ages and doesn't require any prior musical knowledge or experience. You just have to be willing to come to church early once a month and be part of a group that enjoys making a joyful noise until the Lord. It's a good time.

Once again, come out for practice at 9:40 AM on Sunday, June 11. See you then.

**Jordy Luff**

*Music Director*

### CALLING ALL GOOD SHEPHERD WOMEN!

The men sang for Mother's Day in May so now it's time for our church ladies to take center stage and shine! A special all-female Father's Day Chorus is being assembled to perform at the 10:00 AM worship service on Sunday, June 18.

We will meet in the Choir Room at 9:40 AM sharp to rehearse the selection, a jazzy version of the traditional spiritual, "Joshua Fought The Battle Of Jericho".

My goal is to have the entire altar filled with singing women to honor the terrific guys in the congregation and help them celebrate their special day.

Won't you please join us? No musical experience required and all ages welcomed.

Thanks for your consideration.

**Jordy Luff**

*Music Director*



## MISSIONS UPDATE

Thank you to everyone that was able to support Slumber Falls recently in memory of Rev Paul Pic. Good Shepherd will be sending a check for \$435.00 for our support of Slumber Falls this year.

We are now collecting donations for Strengthen the Church (STC). STC is a special mission offering to reimagine and build the future of the UCC. Shared at the conference and national levels, STC largely supports youth ministries and full-time leaders for new churches in parts of the country where the UCC voice has not been heard.

As God calls our congregations to be the church in new ways, your generosity will plant new churches, awaken new ideas in existing churches and develop the spiritual life in our youth and young adults.

If you are able to give, please notate the amount you would like to give STC on your regular offering envelope, or mail in a donation for STC to our church office.

Together we are changing lives!

*Keep up with all that's happening at Good Shepherd UCC.*

*Subscribe to our free e-news letter, delivered every Thursday morning to your email inbox.*

**[www.GSUCC.com](http://www.GSUCC.com)**

## COUNCIL NEWS

At the council's May meeting it voted to make Rev. Dr. Randy Graf Good Shepherd's full time pastor. This change will be effective June 1, 2017.

Pastor Randy has been working as a part time pastor even though as pastor he has done all the duties of being our pastor to a point of using vacation time to officiate funerals etc. Because of changes in Pastor Randy's employment he has been keeping additional office hours at church. He has also been able to make more hospital and home visits as needed. It was decided to upgrade Pastor Randy's employment status to full time to accurately reflect the time and increase his compensation, as best we are able to fit into our budget, to reflect his added time. Pastor Randy has been a blessing to our congregation working for several years without any compensation and then only with a part time salary. We pray this change employment blesses Good Shepherd and Pastor Randy for many years to come.

### **Church Council**



## SLUMBER FALLS



Good Shepherd has set aside \$400 for partial scholarships to Slumber Falls this summer in memory of Rev Paul Pic. If any Good Shepherd members have a youngster is that age 6-18 that is interested in attending Slumber Falls Camp in New Braunfels Camp this summer, please contact Pastor Randy as soon as possible.

It's not too late to think about summer camp for your kids, grandkids,



nieces, or nephews and to register them to attend a fun-filled week at Slumber Falls Camp this summer! Slumber Falls is an outdoor ministry of the South Central Conference of the United Church of Christ. The twenty acre facility is located along the Guadalupe River in New Braunfels, TX. Different age groups are scheduled throughout the summer months. Your children will LOVE Slumber Falls! Below is the 2017 camp schedule and more information on Slumber Falls including pictures of last year's camps, please check out the Slumber Falls website at [www.SlumberFalls.org](http://www.SlumberFalls.org).

Camp	Dates	Ages
Roaring Rapids	Jun 11-17	15-18
Eco Camp	Jun 11-17	9-12
Streams of Faith 1	Jun 18-24	9-11
Creeks in Creation	Jun 25-Jul 1	12-13
Springs Alive	Jul 05-08	6-8
Living Waters	Jul 09-15	13-15
Sports Camp	Jul 09-15	9-12
Streams of Faith 2	Jul 16-22	9-11

In addition, the New Orleans Association has a program that may help you offset \$100 of the cost of camp and there are additional funds available for families in need of financial assistance as well as discounts for bringing a friend to camp or military families. If you have any questions about Slumber Falls and whether it would be a good fit for your youngster, please ask Carrie or David Mains.



## NEW MEMBER SUNDAY

Good Shepherd will hold New Member Sunday on June 11 at our 10:00 AM service. If you are interested in formally joining our church family, please let Rev. Graf know as soon as possible so that you can be included in that morning's joyous welcome of new members!



## AED TRAINING

Immediately following the 10:00 AM worship service on Sunday, June 25, Good Shepherd will offer a brief training workshop for anyone interested in seeing our newly acquired automated external defibrillator and being trained in its use. Please remember to give a little extra this month to help us purchase a second AED to be kept in the fellowship hall. While we pray we'll never have to use them, what a blessing it will be to have these devices should the need ever arise. When donating to the AED fund, please mark your check memo: AED.

## REMEMBERING MR. EARL ITTMANN

(JANUAR 21, 1923 - MAY 16, 2017)

It is with a heavy heart but joyful spirit that I report the heavenward passing of Mr. Earl Ittmann. Earl went home to His Lord shortly after midnight on May 16, surrounded by loving family who were singing hymns of praise, knowing he was being reunited with the love of his life, Dottie.

A Christian Service of Remembrance will be held at Good Shepherd at a date and time to be announced. Let us continue to hold the Ittmann family in prayer and let us also offer prayers of thanksgiving for the many lives our brother Earl lovingly touched in his earthly years.

Requiescat in pace, Earl Ittmann.

In Christ,  
Rev. Graf



***"Captain" Earl Ittmann***



## EXTRA SPECIAL—BRENNEN HIGGINBOTHAM

Good Shepherd is blessed with so many extra special members who go the extra mile for church and this month, we begin a new feature of shining the spotlight on one such member. Our first Extra Special Spotlight is being shined on 18 year old Brennen Higginbotham.

Brennen is an active member of our church who keeps things moving every Thursday and Sunday in our media booth. He just graduated from Haynes Academy where he played football, bowled, and managed his academics so well, that he has been offered a full scholarship to attend Avila University in Kansas City, MO this fall, where he'll also play football as he double majors in History and Secondary Education and minors in Religious Studies.



In five years, Brennen sees himself back in New Orleans, teaching high school and attending seminary part time as he continues to discern a call to Christian ministry. This should come as no surprise to Good Shepherd, as he has been an active participant in our Youth Ministry and has even preached his own, original sermons from time to time in our pulpit. In fact, he is scheduled to preach twice this summer. On Thursday, June 8, he'll preach a message entitled "Beat the Heat" at our Midweek Holy Eucharist and on Sunday, August 6, we'll hold our annual Youth Sunday and Brennen, for the third year in the row, will bring the Youth Sunday message. This year is "bittersweet" as Brennen explains "I'll be leaving the church parking lot on Sunday after preaching the youth service and driving off to college."

Brennen states that moving out of New Orleans comes with the upside of a much cooler climate, but he admits he's uncertain about what do to about missing New Orleans food and his Good Shepherd church family. While he knows virtually no one at his new school, he is excited about making new Christian friends. Avila University is a private, Catholic college. He looks forward to continuing to foster his leadership skills at his new school. At Haynes Academy, one of his leadership duties on the football team was to lead a prayer and offer a motivating devotional to the team before each game. He explains that he was able to minister to his teammates by talking to them about "the cornerstone the builders rejected" and that, as a team, they didn't have to accept the identity that the local newspaper depicted of them. His junior year team was picked by the local press to go winless and that team ended up with an 8-2 record, including the chance to host a play off game.

We know the Lord has big plans for Brennen and all of us at Good Shepherd hold him in prayer as he prepares for the next chapter of his life!

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## VISION: 2020

Earlier in the year meetings were held for the congregation to generate ideas they would like to see explored in order to make improvements to our church. There are three areas we would like to undertake in the very near future.



Beautification of the exterior. This involves cleaning the exterior of the siding, replacing the fascia and soffit along with the underling wood that is rotten on the gable ends. Updating the shrubs and planting. Some plants have been added in the area between the two buildings and some of the dead sections of azaleas have been removed.

Redesigning the choir room into a chapel for a smaller worship experience. The choir would still use the room for before Sunday worship practice and for children's choir practice. The redesign would involve improved lighting, adding a worship table/altar, reconfiguring current robe and file storage, and relocating some of the items that are stored in that space.

Adding a Prayer garden in the southwest corner of the property. A small area with planting, seating, and possibly a small fountain.

We are seeking ideas and help in the design and implication of these projects. If you would like to contribute thoughts, time, effort, donations, or other resources, please do not hesi-

## VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

It's time to prepare for VBS 2017. This year we will do things a little differently. There will be two sessions, divided by age groups. The first session will be for age 2 through those who have just completed 3<sup>rd</sup> grade and will be the week of June 12-16. This session will be from 6:30-7:30 in the evening and will be only \$10 per child. Registration forms are available at church and on the church's website at [www.gsucc.com](http://www.gsucc.com), and on page 11 of this newsletter. The second session will be for those who have just completed 4<sup>th</sup> grade through those who have just completed high school and will be the week of June 19-23. If you or anyone you know is interested in this session please call Renee Graf at 504-723-2226 for further information.

Please consider volunteering for one or both of these sessions as the Christian Ed team finalizes plans for this new adventure with our children and youth. As always we ask for your prayers.



**Renee Graf**

*Christian Education Director*

# VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL REGISTRATION 2017

Please complete a separate form for each child registering.



**Good Shepherd UCC**  
5122 W. Esplanade Ave.  
Metairie, LA 70006  
(504) 454-0764  
www.gsucc.com

## Vacation Bible School - Age 2 years old through 3<sup>rd</sup> grade Monday, June 12<sup>th</sup> – Friday, June 16<sup>th</sup>, 2017 6:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

VBS Registration Fee: \$10.00

CD with songs (optional): \$5.00 each

Child's Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_  
Home Address \_\_\_\_\_  
Home Phone (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian's Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_  
E-mail address \_\_\_\_\_  
Grade Last Completed \_\_\_\_\_ Name of School \_\_\_\_\_  
Home Church \_\_\_\_\_

Registration may be turned in to Renee Graf at church or mailed to the church office. If you have questions, please call Renee at 504-723-2226.

My son/daughter, \_\_\_\_\_, has my permission to participate in Vacation Bible School at Good Shepherd Christian Church. I give the representative from Good Shepherd Church permission to seek any necessary medical attention for my child.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian's Signature Date

Allergies and/or Medications: \_\_\_\_\_

Emergency Contact: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

Please list all persons (and their relationship to the child) who are authorized to pick up your child from VBS each day. Identification may be requested.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**OFFICE USE ONLY:**

Registration Fee \$10.00 \_\_\_\_\_ Paid CASH CHECK # \_\_\_\_\_  
CD Rom @\$5.00 each \_\_\_\_\_ Paid CASH CHECK # \_\_\_\_\_

**JASPER**

**the**



**CHURCHMOUSE says...**

Good Shepherd's Churchmouse Choir may not sing as loud as the full Choir does. Some say we even sound "squeaky," but we try really hard. We practice with the Adult Choir and with the Youth Choir. We even came in early and practice with the Men's Choir as they rehearsed for the Mother's Day special.

Some of us squeaked "of key" and even missed a few notes but Jordy didn't even notice. He was concentrating on the men who were trying so hard. It paid off. They only needed to go through the song two times before it sounded great. Jordy was pleased and signed the men up for next year. The ladies are next, Father's Day is fast approaching.

We hear a lot of comments about the full Choir and agree with Jordy that they can always use some additional voices. Music adds so much to the uplifting spiritual service at Good Shepherd.

Thanks to all participants.

....With Love of the Best Kind, I am,

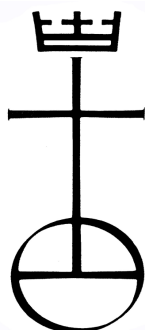
*Jasper*



**Good Shepherd UCC**

5122 West Esplanade Ave  
Metairie, LA 70006  
504.454.0764  
www.GSUCC.com

The Rev. Dr. Randall M. Graf, Pastor



**Sunday Services**

10:00 AM every Sunday  
8:30 AM 1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Sundays

**Midweek Services**

6:35 PM Thursdays

**Intercessory Prayer**

11:00 AM  
2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday of the month