

JULY 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

Summer Activities in Full Swing at Good Shepherd!

Summer at Good Shepherd is in full swing and we're about to turn up the heat with more activities!

Before I talk about what's on the agenda for the coming weeks, let me begin by offering ongratulations to our team of volunteer teachers and leaders who put together an incredible Vacation Bible School during June. The kids had a GREAT time and our church should be very proud that we continue to reach children in our community with the message and love of God through the Gospel of His Son Jesus Christ! To all of our VBS volunteers, I extend a GREAT BIG THANK YOU!

Speaking of VBS... Have you ever wondered as an adult what it would be like to attend VBS as a student? Think about it... fun with friends, snacks, crafts, the Good News! Well, this Summer, Good Shepherd is excited to offer an Adult VBS! I will be offering a workshop-based adult Christian Education experience for any post-Confirmation Christian who wishes to participate. We'll meet evenings from 6:30 PM until 8:00 PM from Monday, July 24 through Thursday, July 27. The cost to register is only \$10 for the entire week. We'll spend our week learning about how to grow closer to God through contemplative prayer, with our craft project including the opportunity for each participant to create a set of fully functioning Protestant (aka, Anglican) Prayer Beads. This should be a very fun and spiritually fulfilling time. Please feel free to invite others to participate. You may sign up using the sheet on the bulletin board in the narthex.

Continued on page 2

Looking ahead to August, I'm excited to announce that Good Shepherd will be hosting a three session health education workshop entitled "Beneath the Weight." The sessions will be held on three consecutive Saturdays, August 12, 19, and 26, from 10:30 AM until 1:00 PM. The "Beneath the Weight" workshop aims to educate participants in the relationship between psychological mindfulness and healthy eating. Over the course of the three Saturday sessions, participants will learn about the relationship between stress and overeating; how better to manage stress; the power of changing the way our mind influences our food choices; and so much more. This program, offered by SelfCare Health Initiatives, is absolutely free and contains no lectures, no diets, no exercise, and no products for sale. In the coming weeks, we'll have more information available about how to sign up for this life changing, three workshop program.

And one final upcoming summer event I want you to know about will take place on Saturday, July 15. Good Shepherd will be holding an American Heart Association HeartSaver CPR & AED training. There is no cost to attend this training, but spots are limited. You may sign up using the sheet on the bulletin board in the narthex. Class will begin at 9:30 AM and should conclude by 12:30 PM. Our instructor is a firefighter/EMT who is a certified instructor for the American Heart Association.

This isn't the end, but merely the beginning of all that is happening at church this summer. Keep your eyes and ears open for so many other exciting activities including an ice cream social after our 10:00 AM worship service on July 23, our celebration of Christmas in July on Sunday, July 30, and a very special event on August 21, when Good Shepherd is partnering with God to offer a solar eclipse! (Just trying to see who really reads all the way through!)

Until next month, let your light shine!

Pastor Randy

The Reverend Dr. Randall M. Graf, Pastor



SERVICES SCHEDULE FOR JULY 2017

Sunday, July 2 @ 8:30 AM & 10:00 AM—Sunday worship with Sacrament of Holy Communion

Thursday, July 6 @ 6:35 PM—Midweek Service of Holy Eucharist

Saturday, July 8 @ 11:00 AM—Monthly Service of Intercessory Prayer and Petition

Sunday, July 9 @ 10:00 AM—Sunday worship

Thursday, July 13 @ 6:35 PM—Midweek Service of Holy Eucharist

Sunday, July 16 @ 8:30 AM & 10:00 AM—Sunday Worship

Thursday, July 20—Midweek Service of Holy Eucharist

Sunday, July 23 @ 10:00 AM—Sunday Worship featuring the Mardi Gras Chorus (Ice Cream afterwards)

Thursday, July 27—Midweek Service of Holy Eucharist

Sunday, July 30 @ 10:00 AM—Christmas in July

VISION 2020 UPDATE

Good Shepherd's Vision 2020 project is our medium range wish list of things that we'd like to see happen in the next three years (i.e, by the year 2020). This list includes items that individuals have suggested to improve our church's physical appearance as well as areas that are identified as needing improvement or maintenance. We're starting to see some progress but there is still much to do. The year 2020 sounds like a long way away but the years go by quick. Here's a short list. As you read it, ask yourself "Is that something I may be able to assist with?"

VISION
2020
@ Good Shepherd

Cleaning and removing mildew from siding and fascia on buildings. This will be completed by the end of July.

Repairing and repainting trim fascia and soffit on rear of sanctuary building. Replacing missing aluminum fascia and vinyl soffit on front of sanctuary. This will most likely be done by a contractor and we are currently looking to get quotes.

Landscape improvements. Many of our shrubs are old and overgrown. We need help and ideas on ways to improve. Many bushes need to be removed and replaced. I have cut back the azaleas on front of the sanctuary. Carrie Mains has added small plants in the area between the two buildings. There is a lot more that needs to happen.

Improved signage. We have been using various banners that are starting to look old and tired. We would like to replace them with a two sided, 4 line changeable letter sign that we can add messages to, so that we can highlight events to the traffic that passes our building. We have started to look at prices to accomplish this.

Redesigning the choir room into a chapel for a smaller worship experience. The redesign would involve improved lighting adding a worship table, improving robe and file storage and relocating some of the items that are storage. I am preparing drawings in the next month as to what we want to do and they will be posted for comments and suggestions before changes are made.

Adding a prayer garden in the southwest corner of the property. A small area with planting, seating and possible a small fountain. I am currently working on a design. I am gathering information on this and will welcome any help available on the design.

We need help to accomplish these improvements and it is not all physical labor. We need help getting quotes and sharing ideas. I think we will need fund raisers to accomplish some of the more costly items that will need help from the entire congregation.

If you have any thoughts, ideas, or wish to be involved, please see me or Carrie Mains!

Mel Aucoin

SHEEP IN THE NEWS

Ok, now summer is half over. I hope everyone is enjoying their time off from school. Also over is Vacation Bible School. Everyone who attended had a wonderful time. Everybody enjoyed the music and, of course, the snowballs after a wonderful performance by our young people.

We want to congratulate Taylor Verbest, Lacey Verbest and Gabe Legarde on having perfect attendance for the 2nd quarter of Sunday School. Way to go, guys! Also deserving congratulations are our 5 confirmands. Welcome to adulthood in the church Karah and Kacie Hotard, Daniel Landry, Abby Mains and Madison Verbest. We are so proud of you and look forward to watching you grow in your Christian faith. We also want to congratulate Madison Verbest on joining the choir. We loved hearing her trio song with her aunts.

We must also congratulate our 8th grade graduates, Daniel Landry and Abby Mains. Our only high school graduate was Brennen Higginbotham and we want to congratulate him on an outstanding high school career and look forward to his many accomplishments in college.

It's never too soon to publicize Youth Sunday. It will be August 6th and we will hear Brennen Higginbotham preach the sermon that day. Immediately after the service, Brennen will be off to college so please mark your calendars now for that very special Sunday. It will be remarkable.

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 Volk

WELCOME OUR NEWEST MEMBERS!

On Sunday, June 25th, Good Shepherd welcomed into our family of faith, D.J. and Rebecca Estopinal. Even before formally joining our church, the Estopinals have been active participants in the life of our church parish. Recently, D.J. spearheaded our acquisition of an AED and the Estopinals generously donated a brand new, state-of-the-art first aid kit housed in the sanctuary kitchen, next to the AED. When you see them, make sure you greet them with a warm Good Shepherd welcome!

STAY UP TO DATE

To make sure you're keeping up-to-date with everything that is happening at church, sign-up for our Thursday morning e-newsletter by going to our website at www.gsucc.com. While you're on the website, go to "Calendar" and take advantage of syncing your Google calendar app with ours! You can also follow us on Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube!



WOMEN'S GUILD NEWS

The June 2017 gathering of the Women's Guild took place at Pontchartrain Healthcare in Mandeville, as members of the Guild traveled to visit Ms. June LeGuluche who continues to rehabilitate from a fall she had earlier this year. The next Women's Guild meeting will be held at church on Tuesday, July 11 at 10:00 AM.



GOOD SHEPHERD IS CRUISING IN 2018! WHO'S ON BOARD?

February 11, 2018, is the sailing date chosen for the Good Shepherd Cruise aboard the beautiful Norwegian Cruise Line on the Pearl.

Just imagine - 7 days of no cares, lots of sunshine, great food and dining choices, wonderful entertainment from Broadway-style shows to karaoke, or curling up with a book in a quiet lounge, swimming and other outdoor activities with our Good Shepherd family and friends.

Plus you have opportunities to explore areas in the Caribbean and make new friends while aboard the Pearl.

Ash Wednesday is February 14. Norwegian Cruise Line has graciously allowed the use of the chapel on the Pearl for the imposition of ashes by Pastor Randy at 9:00 that morning.

To date there are 10 families and friends of Good Shepherd who have made reservations. It's not too late to reserve a cabin for you and your family.

Our selected travel agent is Liz Finlay of Crown's Adventures at Sea. Liz is an independent agent and can be reached at 504-468-1295. Should she not be available at the time you call, please leave your name and phone number, and Liz will return your call as soon as possible. If you would like more information, please see Dottie Frilot.

EXTRA SPECIAL—MEL AUCOIN

We continue our monthly feature of shining a spotlight on some of our many EXTRA SPECIAL members at Good Shepherd—those who go the extra mile in their service to Christ and His Church.

This month, we turn the volunteer spotlight on Melvin Aucoin. Mel and his wife Margaret have been members of Good Shepherd for over two decades, coming to us from St. Matthew's UCC in New Orleans.

While Mel is a lifelong member of the denomination, when he met and married Margaret, she was a

Roman Catholic and shortly after, she ended up joining Mel on his Evangelical and Reformed Christian faith journey. Following the birth of their two children, Mel and Margaret found that the demographics at St. Matthew's church were shifting in such a way that little was available in terms of children's Christian Education. They soon discovered Good Shepherd and have never looked back.

Since joining Good Shepherd, Mel has served our church in just about every capacity imaginable, including President of the Church Council. Currently he serves as Vice President and also spends his time as our Buildings and Grounds Manager. You could call him Sexton, Custodial Engineer, Technology Guru, and Chief Mechanic of Anything Mechanical, and you would still only barely touch the surface of all that Mel does for Good Shepherd, which also include choir member, New Orleans Association delegate, and electronics/technology manager.

With a reflective tone, Mel recalls with fondness his days at St. Matthew when he was a Sunday School teacher for teens, a position that eventually led to he and Margaret to start a Youth Group. He's also quick to add with a chuckle, "but that was a long time ago." When asked what he believes his true calling to Christ's Church is, without hesitation Mel will tell you "Pretty much taking care of the church property. Somebody's got to do it. I don't think I'm particularly gifted in teaching or preaching, that's for sure, but property maintenance, I would say, is my calling."

Mel may not consider himself called to preach, but he's no stranger to it either. One Thursday evening in 2016, Pastor Randy, at the very last minute, was unable to make it to church for Midweek Service. Like a man born to witness to the Gospel, Mel stepped up and filled in with an inspiring message for those in attendance.



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Mel also has Christian teaching in his blood. His grandmother taught kindergarten Sunday School for nearly seven decades at St. Matthew. In her younger days, Mel says she would walk from Brooklyn Avenue in Jefferson all the way up to St. Matthew's Evangelical and Reformed Church on Carrolton Avenue, always determined to arrive at least thirty minutes early to prepare herself for her "scholars" as she affectionately referred to her young students. "She was my Sunday School teacher" says Mel, "and in fact, she taught several people who are now a part of Good Shepherd. She taught all the way up until the week before her death."

Mel's deep love for Good Shepherd is rooted in "the Spirit. The Christian Spirit is clearly evident at Good Shepherd!" And when asked about what he believes to be one of the most pressing issues facing the Christian faith, Mel pulls no punches and speaks with a knowledge level and authority most typically observed in a seminarian professor when he states "The lack of fundamentals in churches today is a problem. So much of Christianity has become about personal feelings and the modern church has gotten away from basic fundamentals of the faith--what it means to be a Christian and the gift of salvation that comes to us through Jesus Christ."

Council Member, Sexton, Buildings Manager, Custodial Engineer, Choir Member, Technology Guru, Chief Mechanic, and only the Lord knows how many other titles are appropriate for this month's spotlight member, but one thing for sure is, Good Shepherd is blessed to have Mel Aucoin as a member. His unselfish sharing of time and talent is stands emblematic of what it means to be a member and leader in a church!

REMEMBERING MR. HARRY WETZEL

(APRIL 27, 1935 — JUNE 12, 2017)

A Christian Service of Remembrance was held at Good Shepherd on Friday, June 16. Harry went home to His Lord on June 12, 2017, after a brief stay in Canon Hospice. Let us continue to hold Ms. Sharon, John, Jerry, Marti, and the entire Wetzel family in prayer and let us also offer prayers of thanksgiving for the many lives our brother Harry lovingly touched in his earthly years.

Requiescat in pace, Harry Wetzel.

In Christ,
Rev. Graf



Harry Wetzel

JASPER

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CHURCHMOUSE says...

I personally know how important your Good Shepherd Worship Committee is to your church and offer my vote of approval at their choice to change their name to the Good Shepherd Altar Guild. I often sit in on those committee meetings. Sharon Wetzel oversees its activities.

As you know, she has been on the prayer list for some time and has needed help seeing that Communion preparation and clean-up goes well and that you have flowers every Sunday, seeing that the Altar, vestments, and banners are clean and up-to-date.

There is always someone in the foyer to greet you, give you a program, and find a set for you when you have a "full" house. The committee also sees that there is a "team" to serve Holy Communion and take the offering.

I hear Sharon say how much she appreciates those members who have jumped in to see that all is going well while she is unable to be there. She asked me to thank them for her. "Thank you!"

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

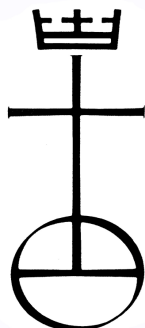
Jasper



Good Shepherd UCC

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The Rev. Dr. Randall M. Graf, Pastor



Sunday Services

10:00 AM every Sunday
8:30 AM 1st & 3rd Sundays

Midweek Services

6:35 PM Thursdays

Intercessory Prayer

11:00 AM
2nd Saturday of the month