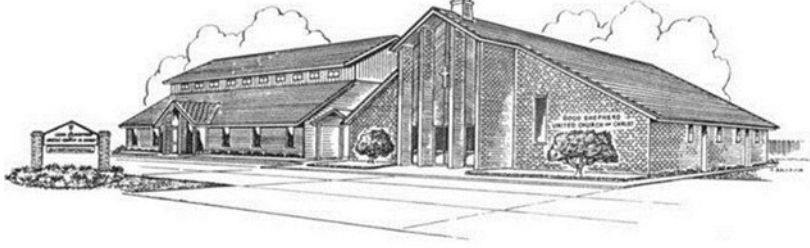


SEPTEMBER 2017

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 PASTOR'S STUDY

A Christ-inspired Act

On Thursday, August 17, I sat in the pastor's study of the church putting together an outline of points that I wanted to raise in my homily for that evening's Midweek Service of Holy Eucharist. I had some classical music playing softly in the background as I find it helps me focus during such times. My iPhone was set to vibrate only, so even if text messages were to come it, I wouldn't hear the typical "ding" to let me know. My iPhone, however, wouldn't be silent. It kept vibrating loudly on the desk as I tried to complete my message outline. I finally glanced over at it to see that multiple text message alerts had come across my phone from various news services that I subscribe to and all were saying the same thing—multiple people were injured and many feared dead in Barcelona as a van had run off the road into a crowd of pedestrians.

I decided to leave the office and drive home for a lunch a break. On the way home, I tuned the radio to a news station for more details. It was then I heard a British correspondent say the words "a terrorist event believed to be ISIS-inspired."

I began to realize that even if the person or persons responsible for the carnage weren't even members of the terror group ISIS, the group itself has the power to "inspire" others to act in ungodly and evil ways.

It was at that moment that I decided that the homily outline that remained on my desk at the office would be scrapped and that instead of preaching a sermon, I would ask our congregants to help me construct a sermon that evening. I challenged the 19 people present at our Thursday evening Service of Holy Eucharist to listen carefully to each of the Scripture readings—an Old Testament reading, a Psalter, and Epistle and a Gospel reading, and after hearing the Word of God and taking a brief moment to prayerful think about what they had heard, I asked them to construct a sermon with me.

Continued on page 2

The title of the message was "Living a Christ-Inspired Life." I explained my theory that if ISIS could inspire a horrible act of violence against innocent people, then the power of Christ followers to realize their potential for good in this world was infinite—if they allowed Christ to be their inspiration.

The group happily participated in the "build as you go" sermon, using brainstorming to come up with simple, yet powerful ways, that each of us can show the world that we live lives committed to letting the light of God shine through us.

If you were not at this service, I'm going to ask you to stop reading for a moment or two and to simply think about what YOU can do today, tomorrow, and/or in the coming week to make a difference in the world by acting on a few Christ-inspired thoughts and living a Christ-inspired life.

If you've taken a moment or two to come up with a short list of Christ-inspired acts that you could participate in today, tomorrow, and/or in the coming weeks, then let's see if your list is anything like the list our congregants came up with at our Thursday service. I'll tell you, I was quite impressed with some of the ideas and I'll bet you will be too and I'll bet you'll be surprised at just how simple, yet powerful these ideas and your ideas can be if just put into action.

Here's some of the thoughts that were shared: share the True Word of God with neighbors; volunteer to help those in need, such as at nursing homes; visit the sick and shut ins; send a card or encouraging note to someone who hasn't been to church in a while; invite a friend or family member to church; pray for people including those who are our "enemies"; give to the local foodbank; go to a nursing home and offer to paint the nails of some residents; reach out to parents of children who don't go to church and offer to bring them to church; say "thank you" to a first responder when you see them on the street; use your talents to the glory of God such as by volunteering to put them to use at church; pray for your church.

As Christians who live-out Christ-inspired lives, we can be a powerful force in our world—a force for good! We can be that light that shines in the darkness. We can be that cup of refreshing water to the person in need. We can be arms and hands of the Body of Christ, reaching out and touching other lives with the love of God. I challenge you to find a way to do something just a little extra today, tomorrow, and in the coming weeks to truly live a Christ-inspired life, so that by your actions, you bring glory to our Father God in heaven.

Until next month, let your light shine!

Pastor Randy

The Reverend Dr. Randall M. Graf, Pastor

THE ALTAR GUILD NEEDS YOU!

The Altar Guild is responsible for the Altar of Good Shepherd. Due to a change in a couple of people's jobs we are in desperate need of people who are willing to give of their time. It is not time consuming. Most important is the flowers on the Altar and fixing Communion. We would appreciate all help. Please see me if you can help.

Thank you,

Sharon Wetzel, Chairmen

THANKSGIVING BASKETS 2017

Last year Good Shepherd partnered with Metairie Baptist Church (MBC) to provide Thanksgiving baskets to families in the community and student families in need at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. Good Shepherd provided three baskets. This year we will again partner with MBC to provide this ministry.

If anyone knows of a family in need, please submit the name, address and contact information to Helen Brister at rabrister@bellsouth.net by November 12th. Each basket costs approximately \$125 per basket depending on the size of the family.

If you would like to contribute to the baskets, please mark your gift as "Thanksgiving baskets" and place in the offering plate from now through November 12th. Shopping and delivery of the baskets will take place Saturday Nov 18th. If anyone would like to assist with the shopping and delivery of the baskets please let me know. It will take approximately 4 hours. This community service is in addition to GSUCC's support of Second Harvest Food Bank.

I will be GSUCC's liaison with MBC.

Helen Brister



ARE YOU READY FOR SOME FOOTBALL?



Good Shepherd has picked **Sunday, October 22** at our Black and Gold Sunday! Please mark your calendars and plan to participate. The fun will begin after our 10:00 AM worship service that day. We'll have large screen TVs set up in the fellowship hall for viewing and our party food menu will include whatever our faithful Black and Gold Good Shepherd Saints bring to the party.

A lot goes into making this event happen and more information will be forthcoming as we get closer, but if you would like to help with this event in any way, please see Pastor Randy or a member of Church Council and let them know!

SERVICES SCHEDULE FOR SEPTEMBER 2017

Sunday, September 3 @ 8:30 AM & 10:00 AM—Sunday worship with Sacrament of Holy Communion

Thursday, September 7 @ 6:35 PM—Midweek Service of Holy Eucharist

Saturday, September 9 @ 11:00 AM—Monthly Service of Intercessory Prayer and Petition

Sunday, September 10 @ 10:00 AM—Sunday worship and Rally Day; Craft Sale after worship in FH

Thursday, September 14 @ 6:35 PM—Midweek Service of Holy Eucharist

Sunday, September 17 @ 8:30 AM & 10:00 AM—Sunday Worship

Thursday, September 21 @ 6:35 PM—Midweek Service of Holy Eucharist

Sunday, September 24 @ 10:00 AM—Sunday Worship

Thursday, September 28 @ 6:35PM—Midweek Service of Holy Eucharist

SHEEP IN THE NEWS

I hope everyone had a great summer filled with wonderful memories but now it is time to buckle down for another school year. Good luck to every child and we pray for much success for good grades, low stress, and many new friends. Good luck to all adults also who work with these children and prayers are with you also.

I just want to say what a fantastic job the youth did on Youth Sunday. From all the greeters in the back, to all who did readings, to the beautiful duet that was sung by Madison Graf and Haley Le-gard, the offering takers and certainly to Bobby Villaronga who subbed for Brennen Higginbotham on the great job he did on the sermon. We look forward to a future Sunday to hear Brennen's message. We are so blessed to have such talented children. We are super proud of all of you and pray you will continue to grow and blossom every day.

HAVE A SAFE AND HAPPY LABOR DAY!

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 BACK CHOIRS!

The Adult Choir begins its 2017-2018 singing season on Sunday, September 17. This group of people faithfully donates their time and talents to enrich our 10:00 am worship experience with beautiful music. The selections they perform reflect a wide variety of styles from sacred works and traditional spirituals to contemporary Christian classics and toe-tapping Gospel songs. How about considering joining the Choir? We're always seeking new members - as the sayings go, "the more, the merrier" and "in unity, there is strength". Weekly rehearsals are held every Wednesday evening at 7:30 pm. They usually last between 60 and 90 minutes and are conducted in the Sanctuary. No prior experience necessary, just a willingness to learn, blend in and have fun. Please see me or a Choir member for more details.

Our Youth Choir will also resume regularly singing in church following a summer break. Beginning September 10, weekly 15-20 minute rehearsals will be held in the Choir Room immediately following the 10:00 am worship service. Miss Debbie and I are looking forward to working with the children again.



Here's to growing our Choirs this singing season! See you in church - and at practice.

Jordy Luff

Music Director

September 2017 Musical Calendar

Adult Choir Rehearsal:

Wednesday evenings at 7:30 pm in the Sanctuary

Youth Choir Rehearsal:

Sundays following 10:00 am worship in the Choir Room beginning on September 10

Sunday September 10:

Crescendo performance. Meet in the Choir Room at 9:40 am for practice

Sunday, September 17:

Adult Choir singing season begins

Sunday, September 24:

Bell Choir performance

Crescendo News

GROUP TO SING ON RALLY DAY, SEPTEMBER 10

After a summer break, Crescendo will resume monthly second Sunday performances beginning on September 10. We've been

averaging a consistent 15-20 singers representing multi-generations - that's great. Recent selections have included "Lamb Of God", "Down In My Heart", "Battle Hymn Of The Republic", "Soon And Very Soon" and "Blessed Be The Name Medley". Next up, the group will participate in our Rally Day celebration by presenting an appropriate selection TBD as we kick-off a new Sunday School year.

It's time for you to join Crescendo! Come out at 9:40 am on Sunday, September 11 for practice. Hope to see you in the Choir Room then.

Jordy Luft

Music Director



Crescendo sings in Spring 2017.

(Photo by Joan Lyles)



BUILDING USAGE

As we have done for many years, we have made available our buildings to various outside groups and events. We are very much dependent on the rent from these groups to meet our budget. To bring our members up to date I felt it was time to share the different groups using our facilities. As many of you know Meals On Wheels terminated their use of our facilities as a distribution site on February 1, 2017 due to their consolidation. Our ongoing tenants are as follows:



The Korean Church of New Orleans that occupies the east portable behind the gym, each Sunday our sanctuary for their worship at 12pm followed by a dinner in the gym.

First Trinity Evangelical UCC occupies the small office off the entrance to the gym, which has is primarily for their record storage along with some of their other property. They also are keeping a van in the rear corner of the parking lot.

Next Step Volleyball Academy (nextstepvba.com) run by Coach Sinisa Momic provides private volleyball lessons, group lessons, volleyball specific strength and conditioning, team clinics, and coaching consultation.

A local Narcotics Anonymous group named Friday Night Lights meets ever Friday evening at 7 pm in our conference room. They have been having their meeting at our facilities for many years.

Beginning this Fall and throughout this school year, we have added a Christian Home Schooling group called Classic Conversation, Metairie. Nicole Moliere is the director. This group will be using most of our Sunday school rooms, nursery, and conference room on Tuesdays through May. They will begin at 8:30 AM until noon for the younger children and the older children will stay until 3:00 PM. The group will consist of about 20 children along with their parents who stay with their children the time they are there. This will give these children time to be with other home schooled children and their parents to do joint lessons and projects to further their education.

We have two larger rentals coming up this Fall for our gym. First is the Louisiana Bengali Cultural Association (cultural celebration of immigrants from Bangladesh and the Indian state of West Bengal) on the weekend of September 22 and 23 and the evening of Sunday September 24. The second rental is for the Cajun Canary and Bird Club who will hold their bird fair on Saturday, November 11 with set up on Friday, November 10. Each of these two groups have rented space in previous years, and we are pleased to welcome them back to Good Shepherd.

We also have rented our gym over the years for various celebrations, showers, birthday parties, etc. to members and non-members. If you or know of someone needing rental space they can see me for availability and pricing.

Mel Aucoin

Building Mgr.

EXTRA SPECIAL—THAIS LACROUTS

Forty-one years ago, Good Shepherd formed from two New Orleans churches—Bethany and St. John. This month, we shine our spotlight on one of Good Shepherd's founding members, Mrs. Thais Lacrouts.

Having grown up in Bethany E&R, Thais brings a rich history with her to Good Shepherd. She was baptized, confirmed, and married in Bethany and also had both of her sons baptized there as well, but since 1976, Thais and her family have been loyal members of Good Shepherd.

Most people probably associate Thais with the Women's Guild and Craft Class at Good Shepherd, and that would certainly be an accurate association. She speaks fondly of the Women's Guild, which she has headed for the past 8 years, but some of her fondest memories go back to the early days. "Back then, I used to bring my mother to Women's Guild and ladies like Sister Borel, Mary Ella McCarthy Verstappen, and Millie Falanga were running it." She goes on to recall that through Women's Guild and Craft Class "June LeGuluche and I became like sisters."



Thais Lacrouts (right) celebrating Christmas festivities with her good friend and fellow Good Shepherd Women's Guild and Craft Class member June LeGuluche (left).

More recently, the Craft Class at Good has begun to wind down operations as members have become less able to regularly participate. On Sunday, September 10, after the 10:00 AM worship service, Thais and her ladies plan to sell the remainder of the crafts inventory, as well as the leftover supplies. All proceeds will benefit the Good Shepherd general fund and this will be an excellent chance to pick up on some nifty Autumn and holiday items.

While Women's Guild and Craft Class are two of Thais' passions at Good Shepherd, during her years in Bethany, she also served as a Sunday School teacher and sang in the choir. In more recent years, she has found herself extremely active in the Senior Olympics, competing in shuffle board (singles and doubles), horse shoes, accuracy throw, distance throw, and bean bag baseball. Over the course of the past 26 years, she's accumulated more Senior Olympic medals than she can recall, even earning medals at the national level.

Her athletic prowess also extends to coaching and one of the young ladies she coached in softball went on to be known as the United States Senator from Louisiana—Mary Landrieu.

Good Shepherd's members are some of the finest folks you'll ever meet, and this month, we're proud to shine our spotlight on Mrs. Thais Lacrouts! When you see her, make sure you give her a BIG Good Shepherd THANK YOU for her years of service and dedication to the Body of Christ!

JASPER the



CHURCHMOUSE says...

September is here and summer is beginning to wind down. Folks are returning from their summer get-a-ways and kids are returning to school.

Speaking of back-to-school, we churchmice have been getting the chance to meet some new kids at church. Classic Conversation, Metairie, a Christian home schooling group, has begun meeting in Good Shepherd's classrooms each Tuesday. They seem like they'll be really nice friends of our church!

As summer concludes, it's also nice to look forward to the return of our church choirs! Members of the Reformed Rodents Fellowship always look forward to hearing Good Shepherd's Adult Choir, Children's Choir, Bell Choir, and Crescendo. And of course, we churchmice also look forward to the return of Jordy and his uplifting music!

I must say, however, we have also truly enjoyed hearing Debbie Volk lead the congregation at the start of Sunday worship services over the summer. I'm sure you'll agree, her beautiful and joy-filled voice is always music to the ears! When you see her, please remember to give her a BIG thank you for her service to Good Shepherd. I know we churchmice sure appreciate her!

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

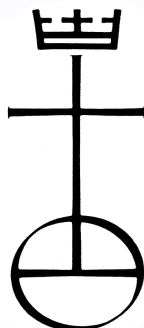
Jasper



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