

MAY 2018

# Shepherd's Voice



The monthly parish newsletter of  
**GOOD SHEPHERD CHURCH**

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

We believe in one God,  
the Father, the Almighty,  
maker of heaven and earth,  
of all that is, visible and invisible.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,  
the only Son of God,  
eternally begotten of the Father,  
God from God, Light from Light,  
true God from true God,  
begotten, not made,  
of one Being with the Father;  
through him all things were made.

For us and for our salvation he came down  
from heaven,  
was incarnate from the Holy Spirit and the  
Virgin Mary,  
and was made man.

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius  
Pilate;  
he suffered death and was buried.

On the third day he rose again in accordance  
with the Scriptures;  
he ascended into heaven  
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

He will come again in glory to judge the living  
and the dead,  
and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver  
of life,  
who proceeds from the Father and the Son  
who with the Father and the Son is wor-  
shiped and glorified,  
who has spoken through the prophets.

We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic  
Church.

We acknowledge one baptism for the for-  
giveness of sins.

We look for the resurrection of the dead,  
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

## **FROM THE PASTOR'S STUDY**

### **MID-TERM REPORT CARD**

*For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. (Matthew 6:21)*

Each Fall, Good Shepherd Church holds a time of stewardship. During that season of time, we prayerfully consider our personal offerings to the local church in her mission to serve our community. This is the financial lifeblood of any local church. Believe it or not, by the time we are in the midst of Spring (as we are now), we are at the halfway point of the church year and that's a good time for us to look at the financial fruits of our stewardship.

This Spring, I think it is fair to say the news is mixed. There is some really good news and there is some less than good news. I think we should celebrate the good news and prayerfully and speedily turn our attention to simply fixing the less than good news. Allow me to review both sets of news with you.

### **GOOD NEWS ON FINANCES**

In November 2017, Good Shepherd Church collected pledge cards and we are delighted to report that the number of pledge cards turned in on stewardship Sunday had reached a maximum level of participation not seen in well over a decade. That is very good news!

In December 2017, Good Shepherd's pastoral and lay leadership completed a review of premiums from a variety of different insurance companies. Our previous insurer, United Insurance Board, was no longer an option for our insurance needs because of our disaffiliation from our former denomination, and the study of alternatives yielded our church a significant annual savings. For comparison's sake, in 2016, our premiums with the United Insurance Board totaled \$23,510, while our premiums in 2018 with our new carrier total \$13,200. That is very good news!

In January 2018, Good Shepherd's surplus funds in our operational account were such that the Church Council voted to pay off the remainder of our balance for our post-Katrina SBA loan. That loan, from over 12 years ago, was worth over \$330,000 and was down to just above \$30,000 when we completely retired it in January 2018. That is very good news!

**Continued on page 2**

## **NOT SO GOOD NEWS**

As of the end of the first quarter of the year 2018, our budget was approximately \$6,000 below projected intake for the year and our operational funds are significantly lower than they were one year ago for the same timeframe. That's not very good news, but it is also not without explanation. Let's review.

The complete and total retirement of the SBA loan in January 2018 saved us over \$1,000 per month in monthly payments over the next three years, but it contributed to a significant diminishing of our savings account.

In the beginning of 2018, Good Shepherd Church opted to pay the entire annual premium with our new insurance carrier in order to avoid finance charges associated with paying quarterly. Like the loan payoff, this also places a larger burden on our savings during the first part of the calendar year.

Compared to the 1st quarter of 2017, the 2018 1st quarter accounts for several deaths over the course of 2017 and early 2018 that significantly and permanently impact our monthly plate income.

While the vast majority of our members have kept up with or surpassed their pledged giving, there are often times when a few fall behind, either unintentionally or because personal financial issues have impacted them.

## **WHAT'S BEING DONE AND HOW YOU CAN HELP**

It is hard to imagine that anyone who has read this far would not be moved to try to help in any manner in which they could. That is one of the beauties and strengths of Good Shepherd Church. Our church is nowhere close to the near financial collapse it encountered in the Summer of 2014, when our bank account slipped to a mere five digit amount before key members of Council leadership chose to share this information with the entire congregation. Admirably, in 2014, when made aware of the dire financial situation, the congregation stepped up to the plate and did what needed to be done to correct problem. I have no doubt that by simply letting our church family know now that our finances are not as healthy today as they were in the first quarter of 2017, that all will do whatever they are capable of doing to help us correct the direction of our finances well in advance in order to avert another unnecessary and painful financial crisis.

There are a number of things each of us can do to help.

Pray for Good Shepherd Church and for her finances. While you are at it, pray for your own finances and ask the Lord to guide you in any ways He sees fit.

If you are behind in your giving, do all in your power to get caught up.

If you are able, consider giving a little extra each time you are able. I promise you, the Lord will bless you for it.

Actively participate in all of our fundraising efforts. Just don't attend our fundraisers, but help us by advance-selling tickets to your friends, family, and neighbors. Likewise, just don't purchase a few raffle tickets, but take tickets home with you to sell to your friends, family, and neighbors.

Actively seek and invite new people to be a part of our church. Every time our family of faith grows, our giving income grows too as new members gratefully acknowledge their appreciation for the ministry of beautiful church.

Until next month, let your light shine!

**THE REVEREND RANDALL M. GRAF, PASTOR**

## SERVICES SCHEDULE FOR MAY 2018

**Thursday, May 3 @ 6:35PM**—Midweek Service of Holy Eucharist; National Day of Prayer  
**Sunday, May 6 @ 8:30 AM or 10:00 AM**—Sunday morning Holy Eucharist  
**Thursday, May 10 @ 6:35 PM**—Midweek Service of Holy Eucharist; Ascension of the Lord  
**Saturday, May 12 @ 11:00 AM**—Monthly Service of Intercessory Prayer  
**Sunday, May 13 @ 10:00 AM**—Sunday morning Worship; Mothers Day  
**Thursday, May 17 @ 6:35 PM**—Midweek Service of Holy Eucharist  
**Sunday, May 20 @ 10:00 AM**—Sunday morning Holy Eucharist; Pentecost Sunday (**wear RED!**)  
**Thursday, May 24 @ 6:35 PM**—Midweek Service of Holy Eucharist  
**Sunday, May 27 @ 10:00 AM**—Sunday morning Worship

## SHEEP IN THE NEWS

There's not much to report on so far, but we do have one person to congratulate. Madison Graf made varsity dance line at John Curtis Christian School. Way to go, Madi. We are very proud of you.

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.

**Debbie Volk**

## 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.GSChristian.com](http://www.GSChristian.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 Good Shepherd on Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube!

## LISTEN ONLINE

Missed a Sunday or Thursday service? Made the service and wanted to hear the message again? Visit the Good Shepherd Church website at [www.GSChristian.com](http://www.GSChristian.com) and use the main menu to navigate from "media" to "sermons". There you'll find all of Good Shepherd's recorded messages from our Sunday morning and Thursday evening worship services.



## FISH FRY FUNDRAISER SUCCESS!

On Sunday, May 6, 2018, Good Shepherd Church hosted a fish fry fundraiser in the fellowship hall. As this article goes to press, gross income seems to be in excess of \$2,300, with approximately \$1600 in lunch and soda sales, \$129 in dessert sales, and \$785 in liquor basket raffle ticket sales.

The list of GSC members who worked tirelessly to make this fish fry a success is long and we are so encouraged by their hard work and thankful for their efforts. Kitchen help included Mel, Margaret, Sarah, Jacob, Don, Pam, Sheila, and Shawn. Our cooking team was comprised of Clif, Don, Mel, and Breck. Bob, Stan, and Dottie manned the drink station, while desserts were made and/or manned by Debbie, Pam, Carla, Barbara, Sharon, Madi, Maddie, and Karah. Meals were served by Pam, Renee, and Kelly, while John manned the front door selling tickets along with D.J. selling raffle tickets. And the fellowship hall was beautifully decorated by Sandy and Carmel. What an incredible team of volunteers! Please make sure you offer each one a warm Good Shepherd THANK YOU when you see them!



*Some of the folks who dined in with us at our church fish fry in the fellowship hall on Sunday, May 6, 2018. (Photo by D.J. Estopinal)*

## SERVICE OF HEALTH, HEALING, AND HOLY EUCHARIST

*Story and photos by D.J. Extopinal*

On the evening of Thursday, April 27<sup>th</sup>, 2018, Good Shepherd Church held their quarterly Service of Health, Healing, and Holy Eucharist.

Anyone who is sick, to any degree or knew of someone that is sick was invited to attend the Health and Healing service. This church service included a normal full church service with Holy Eucharist communion. In addition, Pastor Dr. Randall Graf anointed, with blessed oil and had the attending church's elders, Mr. John Falanga, Mrs. Margaret Aucoin and Mr. Mel Aucoin, lay hands on each attendee while Pastor Graf prayed over them. This service was very well attended.



*Worshippers come forward to be anointed with holy oil, have hands laid upon them, and be prayed for by elders.*



*The Reverend Jerry Bass offers beautiful music during our Service of Health, Healing, and Holy Eucharist.*

While the attendees were being anointed and prayed over, a guest vocalist sang beautifully. The Reverend Jerry Bass sang "In His Time" during this part of the service.

The date of the next quarterly Health and Healing service will be scheduled and announced in the coming weeks.

If you were not able to attend the service but would like to hear Pastor Graf's message from that evening, you may listen to a recording of it on the church website at <http://www.GSChristian.com/sermons/Th/2018-04-26.mp3>.

# GOOD SHEPHERD CHURCH PICNIC

Story and photos by D.K. Estopinal

On Sunday, April 29, 2018, Good Shepherd Church held their first annual picnic at Wally Pontiff Playground, Pavilion Number 3 in Metairie, La. The Lord gave us the best possible weather possible for the perfect picnic. The weather could not have been better.

A large group of Good Shepherd Parishioners attended. As usual, the ladies of our church out did themselves in preparing and bringing a large variety of excellent tasting foods. There was enough food to feed twice as many people that showed up



Mr. Mel Aucoin and his son, Jacob, Barbecued Hamburgers and Hot Dogs to perfection.



At approximately 10:30 A. M., because of Pastor Randall Graf being sick in bed and being unable to attend, Brother Mel Aucoin conducted an abbreviated Sunday Church Service. He did an excellent job of doing so.

Then Brother Mel advised everyone that all of the food was ready. Everyone proceeded to the food serving tables and obtained all the foods that they wanted to eat.



After everyone finished eating, numerous games started to be played in the area of Pavilion #3. Adults and children alike played numerous and various games. Some of the games played were Lawn Darts, Horse Shoes, Badminton and a VERY modified game of Cabbage Ball. The children also played on a swing set and children's playground equipment that was located next to Pavilion Number 3. Everyone had a great time playing all of the games.



During the course of the day, two of the Good Shepherd Church Parishioners found out that they had something very special in common. They both had served in the U. S. Marines Corps. Of course, the old war stories started to flow.

Needless to say, kids, young and old(er), had a great day and everyone thoroughly enjoyed themselves. All stated that they wanted to make this the "Annual Good Shepherd Church Picnic"!



**JASPER**  
**the**



**CHURCHMOUSE says...**

And Jasper says.... “

...there are some members of Good Shepherd Church that think someone from the church writes these letters and uses the pen name “Jasper”. Don’t be misled by these rumors. The Jasper column has been running for many years now, through a number of Pastors, Secretaries, and many new members that have come and gone. But believe me, there really is, just like Santa Claus, a Jasper.

There are several cities named after me, and there is even a street near the church named after me. No, I don’t live there. I live at Good Shepherd. That’s why I know so much about all that is happening at the church.

I miss a few things, but not many. If you happen to hear about a good story that should be included, just let me know. From what I hear, some of your out of town trips have generated some great stories that would be of interest to your members. Just up-beat positive stories, no gossip please. I get my mail at the office, so drop me a not there.

Gotta go now.

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



**Good Shepherd Church**

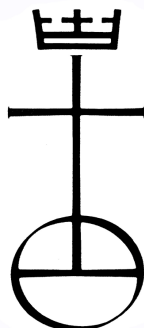
5122 West Esplanade Ave

Metairie, LA 70006

504.454.0764

[www.GSChristian.com](http://www.GSChristian.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*