

JANUARY 2019

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-
shipped 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

Happy New Year, Good Shepherd Church Family! I pray that this first pastoral column of 2019 finds each of you well.

The new year is one of those seasons that I find interesting. Some might have had a rough previous year and see the new year as a time of casting off the old and looking forward to something new and better. Others see the new year as a time to zone in on goals for improvement and set about making so-called new years resolutions. Some give absolutely no real thought to January 1 as being anything extra-special other than perhaps being a day off.

However you see it, that's ok with me, but I wanted to take a few paragraphs this month to jot down some thoughts about what new things God may have in store for Good Shepherd Church as we head into our 43rd year of being a ministering community within the Body of Christ.

I believe God has some absolutely blessed days ahead for our church in the coming year! One of the ongoing efforts of our church parish is the work of our Denominational Task Force which was formed shortly after our disaffiliation from our former denomination in November 2017. When that group first began to meet, one of the first things I offered the Task Force was a potential path to travel down by which they could examine the landscape of available partnerships for churches like ours. While it could be argued that it may not be THE only path for exploring options, it certainly is one that allows for a "wide road" approach that leads to a "narrower field" of options. As the Task Force moves forward with its work this year, I thought I would take some time to share with you a bit about the path the Task Force has traveled and where it has led.

One of the first issues discussed at the very first Task Force meeting was the overwhelming desire for Good Shepherd Church to be in Christian partnership with something outside of ourselves and bigger than ourselves. Within that desire, however, rested some concerns which were basically of two natures: 1. Ecclesiastical, and more specifically, polity (i.e., church governance with particular concern for local autonomy of property); and 2. Theological, and more specifically, an abundant desire for an orthodox theology that holds fast to the Scripture as the unchanging Word of God.

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With those two considerations as a lens by which to examine the landscape, the Task Force examined an extremely wide range of potential affiliations that currently exist in the United States, with an eye toward crossing out obvious paths for which we do not want to explore. As you can probably imagine, listing out every single Christian association or denomination currently existing might prove to be a daunting and never-ending task. But with some appropriate, common sense parameters, an enormous field of choices can be lessened to a still pretty large field. For example, I might recommend you place the words "Christianity in the United States" in the online resource Wikipedia. When you do, you will find a page that examines that very issue and reports that a little over 75% of Americans consider themselves Christian and about 51% of American churches are considered protestant. That page also reports that the single largest denomination in America is Roman Catholicism, accounting for a little less than one quarter of the Christian populace in the U.S.

With an appreciation for the vastness of Christian traditions in our nation, the members of the Task Force were very easily able to begin to easily "cross out" certain affiliations. For example, while Roman Catholic may represent the single largest denomination in the nation, and many of us have Roman Catholic family members or may even have come from a Roman Catholic upbringing, clearly, Roman Catholicism would be a "cross off" from the list. Remembering that local autonomy over church property and orthodox theology were two important points, the application of those two parameters as filters also helped whittle down the list. For example, within many so-called "mainline" protestant denominations, our former denomination was in good company as more and more of these denominations no longer hold to the Scriptures as the rule for faith and practice. Many of these denominations also do not allow the local church parish to own their own property. One or both of these filters helped the Task Force rule-out from consideration the following affiliations: United Methodists, Assemblies of God, Evangelical Lutherans, Missouri Synod Lutherans, Presbyterian Church USA, Presbyterian Church in America, Disciples of Christ, Episcopal Church, and Church of the Nazarene.

Interestingly, a very wide field had quickly narrowed. One denomination that seemed to meet the demands of the criteria set forth by the Task Force (i.e., affording local ownership of church property and deep appreciation for the Word of God) was the Southern Baptist Convention, yet, the Task Force unanimously agreed that Good Shepherd Church does not fall within the Baptist tradition, which is ordinance-based rather than sacramentally-based, and thus results in practices that are not aligned with the history and tradition of Good Shepherd Church (e.g., Baptists do not support the baptism of infants, the rite of confirmation, etc.).

Another denomination that emerged that also seemed to meet the criteria of the Task Force (i.e., local church property ownership, the belief in the Word of God as unchanging) was the Anglican Church in North America. Further research and study into this denomination revealed that it formed in 2009 by clergy and laity who left the Episcopal Church over issues concerning the ordination of unmarried, yet non-celibate clergy; the ordination of actively homosexual clergy; denominational support for same-sex marriages; and seeming indifference for the traditional teachings of 2,000 years of Christianity on a variety of social issues, resulting from disregard for the Holy Scriptures as the unchanging Word of God. Unlike our Baptist brothers and sisters, the Anglican tradition holds to a sacramental theology that includes the Sacrament of Baptism for infants (as well as adults), and also supports frequent celebration of Holy Communion, the sacramental rite of confirmation, and other traditions and practices that clearly and comfortably align with the Evangelical and Reformed lineage of Good Shepherd Church.

Admittedly, a monthly column does not allow for much space or time to offer an in-depth analysis of such important work as that of our Denominational Task Force. As such, one of my resolutions for the new year is to incorporate some of what the task force is learning into my weekly teaching time. This will allow for a greater understanding of such things as ordinance theology versus sacramental theology, and why those things are important.

As I close out this column for January 2019, I'll add that while the list may be narrowing, the work of the Denominational Task Force is not yet over. I will also remind you that those who stepped forward to serve on this Task Force have given and will continue to give of their time and resources because of their love of our local church. I therefore ask that you remember to hold them in prayer as they continue the important and often tedious work of combining research with godly discernment in order to have Good Shepherd Church become that part of the Body of Christ that the Holy Spirit is calling us to be.

Until next month, let your light shine!

The Reverend Randall Graf, PASTOR



SHEEP IN THE NEWS

By Debbie Volk

Well, another year has come and gone. It's amazing how fast time flies when you are having fun. Congratulations go out to both Madisons. First, Madison Verbest took 2nd place at John Curtis' science fair and Madison Graf took 1st place at her JCCS science fair. Both will move on to regional competition. Next, Gabe LaGarde won the essay contest for Harahan VFW titled How I Honor My Veterans. He also won 3rd in the state for the same essay.

I also want to say how proud I know we all were of the youth of Good Shepherd for their production of "An Unplugged Christmas". They did a fantastic job as always. We love to see all our talented young people perform their best. Keep up the good work everyone and have a very Happy New Year.



SERVICES SCHEDULE FOR JANUARY 2019

- Sunday, January 6 @ 8:30AM & 10:00 AM**—Sunday morning Holy Eucharist (Epiphany)
- Tuesday, January 8 @ 10:00 AM**—Women's Guild Holy Eucharist (but EVERYBODY is invited!)
- Thursday, January 10**—Midweek Service of Holy Eucharist
- Saturday, January 12 @ 11:00 AM**—Monthly Service of Intercessory Prayer
- Sunday, January 13 @ 10:00 AM**—Sunday morning Worship Service
- Thursday, January 17 @ 6:35 PM**—Midweek Service of Holy Eucharist
- Sunday, January 20 @ 8:30 AM & 10:00 AM**—Sunday morning Holy Eucharist
- Thursday, January 24**—Midweek Service of Holy Eucharist
- Sunday, January 27 @ 10:00 AM**—Sunday morning Worship Service (Annual meeting after service)
- Thursday, January 31 @ 6:35 PM**—Midweek Service of Holy Eucharist

MOTHERS PRAYER GROUP AT GOOD SHEPHERD CHURCH

Article and photo by D.J. Estopinal

Recently I spoke with Mrs. Gwen Martinez about her newly formed ministry at Good Shepherd Church, known as the **"Mothers Prayer Group"**.

Mrs. Martinez stated that a friend of hers started a "Mothers Prayer Group" at her residence. She, Mrs. Martinez, started attending that prayer group. After attending that "Mothers Prayer Group" for a short while, she felt the calling to start her own "Mothers Prayer Group" at Good Shepherd Church.

Approximately three (3) months ago, Mrs. Martinez started her "Mothers Prayer Group" ministry at Good Shepherd Church. Her prayer group meets every **first Tuesday** of the month at **7:00 P. M.** in the Good Shepherd Church sanctuary for approximately one hour. (Please note: Due to January 1 being on a Tuesday, the next prayer group meeting will be on Tuesday, February 5 at 7:00 PM.)

Mrs. Martinez advised me that the "Mothers Prayer Group" is a world-wide ministry. It was started in England in 1995 by two Grandmothers. There are now "Mothers Prayer Groups" in 80 countries around the world.

The purpose of the "Mothers Prayer Groups" is to pray for the safety of their children and their health and have the Lord guide their children to do the right thing in all that they do. Also, for any problems that their sons, daughters, grandsons or granddaughters may be incurring.

On the night that I attended her prayer group, there were three (3) attending mothers: Mrs. Gwen Martinez, Mrs. Shawn Hotard and Mrs. Carla Scallan.

If you have children and believe that they may need the Lord's guidance and help because of ongoing or foreseeable problems they have or may encounter, you may want to join the "Mothers Prayer Group".

This ministry is open to **all** mothers.

If you would like to attend the "Mothers Prayer Group", you can either show up at Good Shepherd Church on the first Tuesday of any month at 7:00 P.M. or contact Mrs. Gwen Martinez through Good Shepherd Church at (504) 454-0764 or their web site, www.GSCMet.com.



FROM THE MOTHERS PRAYER GROUP PRAYER BOOK:

Lord Jesus, help me remember that as long as I keep my eyes fixed steadfastly on you, all my anxieties will fade into dim unimportance with the knowledge that your love is bigger than any problem. Amen.

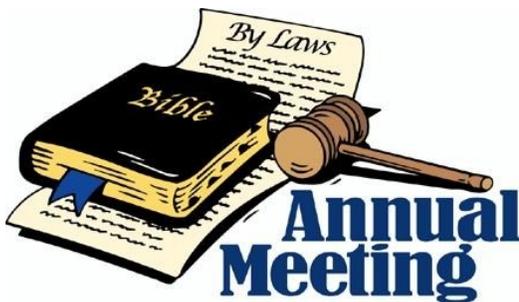
GOOD SHEPHERD CHURCH WORK DAY

Now that we have gotten past the Christmas Holidays and our schedule has become more routine I am calling for a church work day on **Saturday January 26th beginning at 9AM**. The primary focus will be to clean and organize various areas of our buildings and if the weather is agreeable some outside work. I realize that we are all getting older, including me, so I plan to have list of low impact projects that are needed.

Mel Aucoin, BUILDING MANAGER



2019 CONGREGATIONAL ANNUAL MEETING



As per our congregation's by-laws we have scheduled our annual meeting for **January 27th** after the 10AM worship. It is a time to come together and plot our congregation's direction for the coming year. The items to be discussed and voted on are our **2019 budget** and the **election of 2019 council**. There will also be discussions on our **future direction** with funding the **church's 2019 budget, future associations**, and ways we can continue to do the Lord's work.

Those leaders submitting **annual reports please e-mail to Pastor Randy by January 13th** so they can be organized and distributed before the meeting.

Mel Aucoin, 2018 COUNCIL PRESIDENT



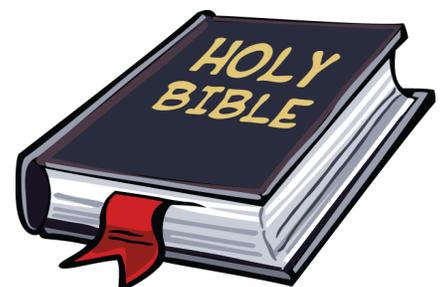
PRAYER REQUESTS

A reminder that you may submit a name or cause to be entered on to the Good Shepherd Church prayer list by completing a prayer card found in the pews and placing the card in the offering plate. Please note that the computer program used to track our prayer listings places a time limit on entries. If a name or cause that was included on the list is no longer listed and you would like it to be, simple complete another prayer card. Likewise, if you would like to update a prayer request and have it removed from the list before it automatically cycles off by reaching its time limit, this too can be done using the pew prayer cards.



WEEKLY BIBLE STUDY AT GSC

Good Shepherd Church holds a Bible study every Sunday morning at 9:00 AM in the conference room. The current study is focused on the Book of Genesis. Interested participants may enter into the class on any given Sunday. All are welcome!



GSC MEN'S CLUB NEWS

Get yours while you can!

The Saint's have been having a great season this year. They are definitely going to the play offs and stand a very good chance that they will go to the Super Bowl.

The Good Shepherd Church Men Club is currently conducting a football pool for whatever teams plays in this years Super Bowl. If the Saint's continue to win their games, the closer we get to the Super Bowl, the faster the football pool is going to fill up and sell out.



So, see either Mr. Don Peters or myself and purchase the squares that you want right now on the football pool poster. Otherwise, you may lose out on the chance on being in that number when the Saint's go marching to the Super Bowl.

For this football pool, the winners will be the end scores of each quarter of regulation (i.e., no overtime). Each of the four (4) winners will receive \$250.00.

So, get your square while they are still some to purchase!!!

This month's Men's Club meeting will be held on Monday, January 14 at 6:00 PM in Classroom No. 1 of the Fellowship Hall.

D.J. Estopninal, President

GSC Men's Club



GSC WOMEN'S GUILD

The January meeting of the Good Shepherd Church Women's Guild will be held on Tuesday, January 8, 2019. The Women's Guild invites you to join them in worship on that day at 10:00 AM in our sanctuary. Their business meeting will be held after worship in the Conference Room



PLEDGING TO SUPPORT OUR CHURCH

The mission and ministry of Good Shepherd Church can only happen because her members lend support in the form of time, talent, and financial gifts. If you have not yet completed and turned in your 2019 Pledge Card, please do so. This data is used to help our Budget and Finance Committee create the budget that will be presented at the Annual Congregational Meeting on Sunday, January 27, 2019. Completing a Pledge Card greatly enhances the accuracy of our budget and your continued generosity greatly enhances our Good Shepherd's ability to continue to minister to her members and reach new people with the love of God through Christ our Lord.

NEW MEMBERS AND BABY-TO-BE-BLESSINGS

Story and photos by D.J. Estopinal

On Sunday, December 9, 2018, Reverend Randall Graf and the Good Shepherd Church Parishioners welcomed into the service of our Lord and its congregation the below six (6) new members to our church.

Also on Sunday, December 9, 2018, Reverend Graf administered the Rite of the Blessing of the Child in the Womb to Sarah Aucoin and her husband Jacob Aucoin.



New Member Sunday: From l to r: Sarah Aucoin, Rinda Coleman, Gina Corley, Rev'd Graf, Pattie & Joe Deible (Not pictured, Travis Corley)



From l to r: Rev'd Graf, Cindy Rittler, Sarah Aucoin, Jacob Aucoin, Mel Aucoin & Kenney Rittler

Mrs. Sarah Aucoin is expecting their first-born child in June of 2019. In attendance with Mr. and Mrs. Jacob Aucoin were Ms. Cindy Rittler, Mr. Kenny Rittler and Mr. Mel Aucoin.



GSC WOMEN'S GUILD CHRISTMAS PARTY 2018



SUPPORTING OUR VETS

Story by D.J. Estopinal

On Saturday, December 15, 2018, Rebecca Estopinal led twenty (20) members of Good Shepherd Church to the Southeast Louisiana Veterans Home located in Reserve, Louisiana. Their mission was to greet, interact with, sing Christmas Carols to and hand out Christmas Presents to the residence of the Southeast Louisiana Veterans Home.

Amongst the many good shepherds attending were Rev. Graf, the Good Shepherd Church Youth Group, the Choir Director Mrs. Rinda Coleman and the Choir, and our own WWII Veteran, Mr. Thom Kolesa. All in attendance said that they had a very good time and enjoyed their time with the veterans in the home. These veterans are of the Korea and Viet Nam wars.



GSC MISSIONS UPDATE

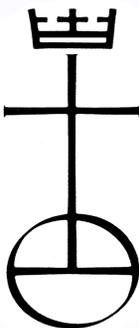
By Heidi LaGarde

Our new missions campaign is underway! For the months of **January** and **February**, we will be collecting for **Camp Nora (No One Rides Alone)**. Camp Nora, which is administered by Ride of the Brotherhood, is a "one-stop housing, outreach, and supportive system" for our local veterans. It is located in Covington, Louisiana. If you would like to read more about this organization, feel free to visit www.rideofthebrotherhood.org/camp-n-o-r-a/. If you would like to give to this mission, please place your contribution in one of the white envelopes and write MISSIONS on the front of the envelope.

Good Shepherd Church

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www.GSCMet.com

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