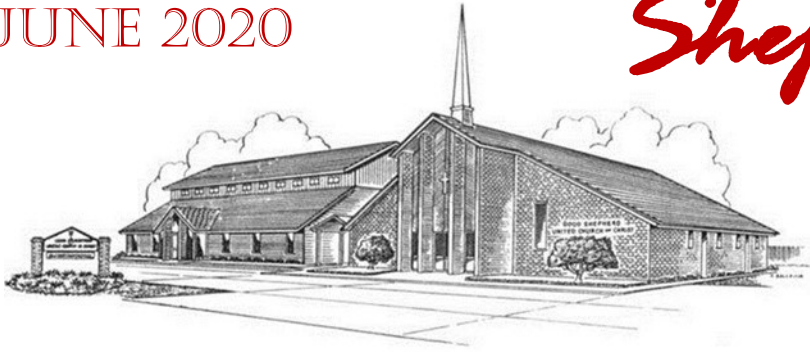


JUNE 2020

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

My dear saints of God, it is with excitement that I write to you in the June column. Excitement that we will again be gathering in-person for worship at Good Shepherd Church.

Our last time together for Sunday services was March 15, and on that day, with a goal of “flattening the attendance” we opted to hold three services—8:30 AM, 10:00 AM, and 2:00 PM. That goal was effectively met as we were able to assure that our large 10:00 AM service was kept under 50 in attendance as many 10:00 AM regulars chose to attend our smaller 8:30 AM service or the never-before held 2:00 PM service.

On June 7, 2020, we will again regather, offering the chance for any parishioner who feels comfortable attending church to do so at 8:30 AM, 10:00 AM, or 2:00 PM. While some may not yet feel ready to return, it is our belief that for those who wish to return, affording parishioners the opportunity to self-select to one of the three services will allow us to keep our worship space safe and appropriate for social distancing.

For the time being, there are some other aspects of Sunday services that will require a modified approach. Allow me to lay out several of these modifications.

Worshippers are encouraged (although not required) to wear masks.

Seating in the sanctuary will be under the direction of ushers, seating attendees in every other pew, socially distanced, and when possible, seated by household family units.

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Offering plates will not be passed but instead, a collection plate will be placed in the aisle for members to place their tithes and offerings upon entering or leaving the service.

The passing of the peace will not be offered.

Holy Communion will be offered at the Altar with reception in the hand and only under one species—bread. Ushers will assist in directing worshipers forward by row and communicants will approach the Altar by the center aisle and return to their pew via the appropriate side aisle.

Congregational singing will still be a part of worship, however, out of an abundance of caution, there will be some curtailing of the amount of singing since there does not yet seem to be agreement in the scientific community as to degree of threat that singing presents by possible aerosolization of contaminants.

Children's Time will not be held on the steps of the Altar.

Nursery and Sunday School will not be offered in the immediate future. Families are encouraged to bring their young children to church and I assure you, an abundance of grace will be offered to families with young ones who are not used to sitting still through the entirety of church.

At the end of services, worshippers will be dismissed by ushers after the recessional and dismissal will occur in an assigned, pew by pew order. Attendees will be asked to retire directly to their vehicles and congregating in the narthex, the parking lot, or any other area of the church property will not be allowed.

Coffee hour and Bible study will remain on hold until further notice.

We continue to be dedicated to making certain Good Shepherd Church is a safe and healthy space to hold our worship services. A great deal of very deep cleaning will be occurring prior to our first day back and we also have protocols in place for sanitizing our worship space in between each service offered. We will continue to follow best practices as recommended by the CDC, the State of Louisiana, Jefferson Parish authorities, and the Diocese of the Western Gulf Coast. We also look forward to being able to relax restrictions at a future date when the immediate threat of COVID 19 is diminished.

If you should have any questions or concerns, I invite you to contact me, our Council President Mrs. Margaret Aucoin, or our Property Manager Mr. Mel Aucoin.

Until next month, let your light shine!



The Rev'd Randall M. Graf
Pastor

GOOD SHEPHERD CHURCH ON SOCIAL MEDIA:



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A POEM COMPOSED DURING PANDEMIC 2020

By Patsy Engles

As we are facing a very different
and difficult time in our life
We must pray and try to look
over and beyond the strife
We must pray to God to help us to
be helpful to others, to see their need

And to ourselves, we must also be
faithful and true indeed
We must ask God to help us each
and every day
And He will answer and show
us the way

WE REGATHER, BUT WE WERE NEVER REALLY CLOSED

ALSO ENTITLED: YOU AIN'T GONNA BELIEVE DIS

By The Rev'd Randall Graf

This month, I take a bit of pastoral privilege to offer a second column for the newsletter. I think it is a necessary message to be conveyed and heard by the flock.

Yes, we may have suffered through a pandemic. Yes, we may have been on social lock down. Yes, our services at Good Shepherd Church may not have been attended by the bulk of our parishioners. These are all indisputable facts.

Let me share a few other facts with you.

Good Shepherd Church never stopped being the Church despite the so-called shut down. We did not miss offering one single Sunday service. In fact, we have reason to believe that our Sunday services reached more people between March 22 and May 31 than we could have had we not been placed in the position of dealing with COVID 19 and its resulting restrictions.

Here is why I make that bold claim. When the inevitable became a reality that we would not be able to allow members to freely attend our worship services in-person, we were faced with only two options: 1. Do nothing and wait; 2. Figure out a way to continue to minister. Option one was never really on the table. As such, the second option meant finding a way to bring worship to the worshippers since the worshippers could not come to the church.

On Sunday, March 22, 2020, Good Shepherd Church, for the first time ever, live-streamed a service over the internet. To be clear, we really didn't know what we were doing, but by the grace of God, we did it anyway. As the weeks progressed, we gradually got a little better. Truth be told, it's unlikely that any major television network will be reaching out to us any time soon offering to syndicate our services, but for those in our church parish, we brought a worship experience into the home.

But allow me to return to the bold statement that between March 22 and May 31 Good Shepherd Church reached far more people with our services than we would have ever reached had we not suffered through a pandemic. One of the things that streaming worship services on YouTube affords us is statistical analytics that allow us to see how many times a service is actually viewed. The numbers I'm about to share with you, may absolutely stun you. They certainly stunned me.

Between March 22 and May 24, there were 10 Sundays and Good Shepherd Church streamed 10 Sunday services. These services accounted for 1,248 views or an average of about 125 views per week. Now, keep in mind that "views" does not mean "persons" because many of the views each week are families watching our services together and worshipping together. So, for instance, let's say the Boudreaux family tune in each Sunday for church.

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That's Mr. Boudreaux, Mrs. Boudreaux, 16 year old Bubba Boudreaux and 12 year old Sally Boudreaux. While that's a total of 4 people viewing the service, YouTube only registers that as a single view. Therefore, an average of 125 views per Sunday in all likelihood means a number greater than 125 people watching each Sunday.

We streamed 9 Thursday evening services between March 26 and May 28 which accounted for 573 views or an average of about 64 views per service. (Again, remembering that views does not equate to number of viewers which is likely a good deal higher).

Now, Sunday and Thursday are our regular days of worship at Good Shepherd Church throughout much of the year. However, during this very stressful time of pandemic lockdown, one of the things I noticed early on is that people seemed desperate for prayer and the presence of God in their lives. On March 27, I began streaming a brief (always less than 20 minutes) Midday Prayer Service on several weekdays throughout the week. In fact, between March 27 and May 28, we streamed 24 Midday Prayer services which accounted for 1,229 views, or an average of 51 views per prayer service (with again, the realization the actual amount of viewers is certainly higher)!

Finally, if those numbers are not wild enough for you, in early May, I had the crazy idea to offer a new service called "The ARISE Sacred Hour" on Monday mornings at 6:00 AM. YES... I said MONDAY MORNINGS AT 6:00 AM! We have streamed three of those services as of this writing and they have accounted for 123 views for an average of 41 views per service.

SIDEBAR: The ARISE Sacred Hour is a one hour video stream. In the first half of the Sacred Hour, I lead the viewers in the praying of the Office of Morning Prayer from the ACNA *Book of Common Prayer*. In the second half of the Sacred Hour, I leave the video stream "open and live" with the camera focused on our Lord's Altar adorned with burning candles. During that second half of the Sacred Hour, I remain silent and worshippers are invited to simply remain in the virtual presence of our Lord's Altar offering their own prayer intentions or quietly meditating or reading Scripture or simply being still and listening for the gentle whisper of the Holy Spirit in the heart of the one worshipfully awaiting His voice.

There were a few other various and sundry videos that were posted between March 22 and May 28 on our YouTube channel such as a Children's Time, our Good Shepherd Sunday montage, our salute to our graduating seniors, etc. These videos also sport impressive view numbers.

All in all, allow me to offer this summary of data on our YouTube channel.

On **March 1, 2020** our YouTube channel had **4 subscribers**.

On **May 28, 2020** our YouTube channel has **150 subscribers**.

On **March 1, 2020** our YouTube channel had **4 posted videos**, all of which were essentially experimental uploads as I attempted to teach myself in my spare time how to use YouTube for the church. Those 4 videos accounted for less than 10 total views since I started the channel in late 2017.

On **May 28, 2020** our YouTube channel **hosts 55 videos** which have since mid-March accounted for just under **4,000 views and over 35,000 watch time minutes**.

Another interesting and encouraging phenomenon of streaming our services on YouTube is the amount of people who have reached out to our church after finding us online. Some of those viewers live locally. Many of them live in other parts of the country.

We have been contacted by a family in New Braunfels, Texas, a couple in Michigan, a couple in Tennessee, and a family in Houston, Texas, just to name a few. One of those contacts has sent in a monetary donation to our church while another one of the contacts sent me a donation of masks to be worn in my ministry outside of the protection of solitude. Another one of those contacts is offering to send us a new video camera to help us in our ongoing efforts to continue online streaming.

Closer to home, our YouTube channel has caused us to be contacted by a family in Mandeville, a couple in Metairie, and a lady in Kenner. Two of those three contacts have mailed in monetary donations to the church in thanksgiving for streaming our services online.

On **Sunday, June 7**, we will begin to regather as a church family for **in-person worship**. We will also **continue to stream our services online** as it seems to be a mission field worthy of our investment.

As I stated in the beginning of this article, **Good Shepherd Church never really closed**. That is to say, we never stopped offering worship services—we just offered them in a slightly modified way. But, one of the reasons we never missed a Sunday, continued on Thursday evenings, and offered additional services such as Midday Prayer and The ARISE Sacred Hour is because of the assistance of some very dedicated members of our flock. I wish to offer my sincerest thanks to **Margaret Aucoin, Mel Aucoin, Adam Bennett, Rinda Coleman, Sandi Graci, and Madison Graf**. Each of them contributed mightily in the effort to stream our various worship services not only to our flock but to the world!

The Rev'd Randall M. Graf
Pastor



“I am amazed at the wonders of technology and am grateful for the ways in which we are able to use it to share the Gospel around the world.”

The Reverend Billy Graham

NOTES FROM RINDA

Greetings from quarantine! Hopefully, we will soon be able to meet together-following all appropriate protocols-and experience corporate worship. Thankfully technology has allowed us to stream services and maintain our congregational identity.

Things will be different. Some of us may decide that it is not yet time for them to join us in the physical location of our church sanctuary. That is perfectly all right. We must first and foremost take care of ourselves. Music will be different as well. We will not sing as much, probably only one stanza of a hymn. The choir will be taking its summer break. I was in the choir room this week and noticed that all the anthems we were working on were Lenten anthems. Time stood still in the choir room anyway.



If you watched the youth group's reflections on the good that is coming from this quarantine, you probably feel as I do that we are fortunate to have such strong young people. We all should take that approach. Spend time in reflection and Bible study. Look for some of your favorite hymns and anthems on YouTube. Most of you know that I love to research the history of hymns. This is a great time to refresh my memory.

In any case, we know that "all things work together for good to those who are called according to His purpose," Romans 8:28 God has us so we don't need to worry.

Rinda Coleman, Music Director



BRIEF FINANCIAL REVIEW

The pandemic related lockdown has taken a serious toll on the nation's economy. At Good Shepherd Church, this toll is also being felt but thankfully, the reverberations of the economic disaster have in some ways been ever so slightly mitigated. However, we are not "out of the woods" by any stretch of the imagination and we still need your help and your prayers.

While giving is down a bit since we have not been meeting in-person, it must be noted that most of our members have continued to mail in or drop off their offerings. Some have even given a bit more knowing that others may be hurting. All of this is greatly appreciated!

Good Shepherd Church was also blessed to be able to secure the government sponsored Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) loan. This has been a tremendous help to us for payroll.

Good Shepherd Church has been deeply hurt in our finances at the level of rentals, which are a very significant part of our budget. We have been unable to rent out our fellowship hall and we have not been able to collect rent from the school that was using our facilities as they were forced to discontinue. Our tenant, the Korean Church, has not been able to secure the PPP monies and has also not been able to remain up-to-date with their rent and need prayer.

Your prayers and your gifts for our church's finances are greatly appreciated right now!

PSALM 91

WHOEVER DWELLS IN THE SHELTER OF THE MOST HIGH

WILL REST IN THE SHADOW OF THE ALMIGHTY.

I WILL SAY OF THE LORD, "HE IS MY REFUGE AND MY FORTRESS,

MY GOD, IN WHOM I TRUST."

SURELY HE WILL SAVE YOU

FROM THE FOWLER'S SNARE

AND FROM THE DEADLY PESTILENCE.

HE WILL COVER YOU WITH HIS FEATHERS,

AND UNDER HIS WINGS YOU WILL FIND REFUGE;

HIS FAITHFULNESS WILL BE YOUR SHIELD AND RAMPART.

YOU WILL NOT FEAR THE TERROR OF NIGHT,

NOR THE ARROW THAT FLIES BY DAY,

NOR THE PESTILENCE THAT STALKS IN THE DARKNESS,

NOR THE PLAGUE THAT DESTROYS AT MIDDAY.

A THOUSAND MAY FALL AT YOUR SIDE,

TEN THOUSAND AT YOUR RIGHT HAND,

BUT IT WILL NOT COME NEAR YOU.

YOU WILL ONLY OBSERVE WITH YOUR EYES

AND SEE THE PUNISHMENT OF THE WICKED.

IF YOU SAY, "THE LORD IS MY REFUGE,"

AND YOU MAKE THE MOST HIGH YOUR DWELLING,

NO HARM WILL OVERTAKE YOU,

NO DISASTER WILL COME NEAR YOUR TENT.

FOR HE WILL COMMAND HIS ANGELS CONCERNING YOU

TO GUARD YOU IN ALL YOUR WAYS;

THEY WILL LIFT YOU UP IN THEIR HANDS,

SO THAT YOU WILL NOT STRIKE YOUR FOOT AGAINST A STONE.

YOU WILL TREAD ON THE LION AND THE COBRA;

YOU WILL TRAMPLE THE GREAT LION AND THE SERPENT.

"BECAUSE HE LOVES ME," SAYS THE LORD, "I WILL RESCUE HIM;

I WILL PROTECT HIM, FOR HE ACKNOWLEDGES MY NAME.

HE WILL CALL ON ME, AND I WILL ANSWER HIM;

I WILL BE WITH HIM IN TROUBLE,

I WILL DELIVER HIM AND HONOR HIM.

WITH LONG LIFE I WILL SATISFY HIM

AND SHOW HIM MY SALVATION."

GOOD SHEPHERD CHURCH

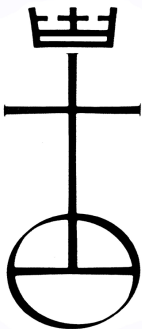
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The Rev. Dr. Randall M. Graf, Pastor



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