

NEWS



From the Sheep Fold

Good Shepherd Episcopal Church – June 26th, 2020

Greetings everyone and best wishes for a pleasant and safe summer, into which we just crossed with last Saturday's solstice. Believe it or not, the days are now getting shorter again, working their way, as they always do, towards Christmas and the longest night. But let's not think about that just yet. Instead, send us your seasonal stories. What's been going on in your life that you'd like to share? We'd love to hear from you because, after all, it's your personal stories that make News from the Sheep Fold special. You can email us (timhall00@aol.com) and we'll include your news in an upcoming issue. In our last edition we heard "Chestnut Stories" from Cindy Ingram. And **this week we have a story from our friend and occasional guest preacher, Jaqueline Whalen**. Enjoy!

From the Diocese:

Our main news is about how we're planning, as the larger church, to stay safe, continue to worship, help each other, and eventually come back together, physically in His name. The Diocese is working hard to help us all figure this out. We'll have more news to share on this soon. But, just so you'll have some idea what to expect when we regather, church will look much different than what we had become used to in BC time (Before Coronavirus).

For now, in-person gathering for worship inside is still suspended at least until we receive advance approval by the Diocese by showing that we have addressed all concerns in the "Reopening Guidance Checklist". We could try to get together for outside worship now, but many of the same guidelines still exist... physical distancing, face masks, no singing, spiritual Eucharist only. Would you like to try? Let us know your thoughts.

At Good Shepherd, worship will continue using our Zoom meeting format, which we continue to refine. We'd love to hear your thoughts on how we can improve on what we're already doing. And we'd love for you to join us. More information on how to do so is included later in this newsletter.

July Birthdays: No parishioners of which we know! Here is a prayer (from the Episcopal Book of Common Prayer) offered for the upcoming 244th birthday of our Nation:

Almighty God, who has given us this good land for our heritage: We humbly ask that we may always prove ourselves a people mindful of your favor and glad to do your will. Bless our land with honorable industry, sound learning, and pure manners. Save us from violence, discord, and confusion; from pride and arrogance, and from every evil way. Defend our liberties, and fashion into one united people the multitudes brought hither out of many kindreds and tongues. In the time of prosperity, fill our hearts with thankfulness, and in the day of trouble, suffer not our trust in thee to fail; all which we ask through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

If you know of any birthdays we may need to add to our list, please let us know.

"Epistle from Pennsylvania"

by Jaqueline Whalen

Ah, but it has been quite a long time since I have joined you in worship. Tim and Judy have kept me on the email list, so I have been able to follow all your doings at Good Shepherd. I am sending prayers and warm wishes that all of you are well and staying safe during this time of isolation.

For those of you who don't know, Jim and I have moved to Landenberg, PA in the middle of Amish country! We love our new home and I am only 15 minutes away from my youngest daughter, which is proving to be a real joy. We have been able to get together often for socially distanced walks and visits outside, as she is quite worried about Jim and me. We now live on a 26-acre property at the top of a hill. Our driveway is lined with beautiful ornamental cherry trees (*see photo from this spring*), and a local farmer keeps the hay field mowed and tended. We have a resident herd of about 25 deer who visit my flower garden all too often, as well as foxes, a groundhog or two, and a rabbit family.



My vegetable garden is well protected as I commissioned an 8-foot fence with wire grating at the bottom to deter deer and groundhogs. It seems to be working as my tomato plants, beans, asparagus and horseradish are flourishing! Lots of weeding, but then I have plenty



of time right now as we do not go out except to the grocery store. I am thinking that if my tomatoes really overwhelm me that I might have to learn to can them, just like I remember my mother doing when I was little. My other project is to learn what to do with all the horseradish that will quickly take over my garden if I am not careful!

A remarkable part of our new life is our new church, Christ Church Christiana Hundred, an old established parish in Wilmington, DE that Father Ralph recommended to us. It has a wonderful outreach program with myriads of opportunities to serve. Jim and I have joined in sponsoring a Haitian family on the island of Laganov. Our dollars are helping a single mother and her daughter with financial support, health care, schooling for the child, and a brand-new pig that the Mom is will be trained how to care for so that she will have an income. If you are interested in learning more, check out <https://beyondborders.net>. The organization is doing wonderful things for single mothers with no income.

Another important aspect of our new church family is the small group bible study that Jim and I have started. The church has many small groups, but there were none near us. We asked, and received permission, to start one with parishioners who live in our area, as it is a bit far from the church. It has been a great way to meet and get to know not only our neighbors but parishioners in our new church home. Tonight our small group is getting together in a Zoom meeting, and we are taking a look at Matthew 9:35 – 10:8, that says:

"Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom, and curing every disease and every sickness. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest."

Then Jesus summoned his twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to cure every disease and every sickness. These are the names of the twelve apostles: first, Simon, also known as Peter, and his brother Andrew; James son of Zebedee, and his brother John; Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax collector; James son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus; Simon the Cananaean, and Judas Iscariot, the one who betrayed him. These twelve Jesus sent out with the following instructions: "Go nowhere among the Gentiles, and enter no town of the Samaritans, but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. As you go, proclaim the good news, 'The kingdom of heaven has come near.' Cure the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons. You received without payment; give without payment."

Here are some questions we are going to talk about:

- 1) Jesus' calling of the twelve disciples gives us a good model for shared ministry and mission in the church ("Jesus gave them authority"). Jesus teaches, proclaims, and heals, and it is through him that his disciples teach, proclaim, and heal too. Place yourself in the role of disciple: what authority has Jesus given you to share the good news? What values/dispositions should we cultivate as modern-day disciples? In what ways can you proclaim the good news today?*

My thoughts on this question... Jesus has given me the authority to share the good news and he has invested me with an open heart for this work. The values I believe we must carry with us on a daily basis are patience; acceptance of the diversity of thought, action and belief in the world; faith in the hope found in the love of Christ and the grace of God. We are asked to proclaim the Good News by example rather than superiority. I must trust that God will shield me from fear and heartache by other's actions. I must be brave enough to declare my belief and love of God in the face of disbelief.

- 2) Even though the disciples are well intentioned, they rarely get it right the first time. Peter is constantly coming up short; John and James argue about who is the most righteous and will sit at God's right hand; Judas betrays Jesus to authorities. We, as disciples, come up short too. Through our shared shortcomings, what can the disciples teach us about the trials and difficulties of being followers of Jesus?*

The disciples always came back for more. They fail but then they always show backup to try again. Failure is not a reason to turn away. It is a reason to carry on and move forward for another go! After all, it is very important to remember that we did not choose God. He chose us. He chose me. He chose you. We are responsible to only Him and he believes that we can be up to the task!

Well, I have rambled on long enough. Please hold in your hearts the love and support I send you. Good Shepherd will always be in my prayers. Cordially, Jaq

Giving

Thank you so much to everyone who continues to support the ministry and mission of Good Shepherd by sending in your offerings during these unusual times.

2 Easy ways to give:

1) Mail: Good Shepherd Episcopal Church, P.O. Box 324, Bluemont, VA 20135

2) Online: Thru our Diocese of Virginia, which has created a secure link to receive offerings for individual congregations. Go to <http://bit.ly/DOVChurch> and be sure to enter "Good Shepherd, Bluemont" in the memo area.

Fr. Ralph Sermons

Father Ralph has been writing sermons for every Sunday since the pandemic began. They can be found on our website, at www.goodshepherdblueмонт.com under News > Sermons.

Upcoming Events

Sunday, June 28th @ 10am – The 4th Sunday after Pentecost: Virtual Morning Prayer
*Homily **delivered live** by The Rev. Dr. Ralph Bayfield, our own supply priest.*

Sunday, July 5th @ 10am – The 5th Sunday after Pentecost: Virtual Morning Prayer
Homily by Bishop Susan Goff, Bishop Suffragan and Ecclesiastical Authority

Would you like to try to join us for virtual worship? Here's the link to join the service:

<https://zoom.us/j/2302684545?pwd=aUIxYW9yZWhzTUNMQWJDZTFlaE85UT09>

Meeting ID: 230 268 4545 | Password: Get2gether

If you'd like to call in, please use one of these telephone numbers:

+1 646 558 8656

+1 253 215 8782

+1 346 248 7799

+1 669 900 9128

When prompted, enter the following information on your telephone keypad:

Meeting ID: 230 268 4545

Password: 881353

If you need more assistance, please call Judy Hall at 540-454-2148 or email her at judyrefo@gmail.com to talk about how we can help get you connected.

A prayer for the Future of the Human Race (from The Book of Common Prayer)

O God our heavenly Father, you have blessed us and given us dominion over all the earth: Increase our reverence before the mystery of life; and give us new insight into your purposes for the human race, and new wisdom and determination in making provision for its future in accordance with your will; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Good Shepherd Episcopal Church, 27 Good Shepherd Road, Bluemont, VA
(in Pine Grove, just west of Snickers Gap and north of Route 7)

www.goodshepherdblueмонт.com

May God bless you and keep you!

