

C.C.M. Liaison Report

Date: 05/07/2021

Church and Location: Good Shepherd, Bluemont

Region: Northern Shenandoah

Vicar (or Interim/Supply): The Rev. Debbie Rutter (short term supply)

Liaison: Linda Bailey

Date Audits Submitted: Current: Not begun yet Last year: Aug. 11, 2020

Has a covenant been submitted for this year? No - will do by the end of the month

2019 Diocesan Aid Amount: \$8,900

2020 Diocesan Aid Amount: \$14,900

2021 Diocesan Aid Amount: \$13,900

Average Sunday Attendance:

Past month 12.25 (*April 2021 - hybrid zoom and in-person worship 2 HE and 2 MP – and one of these was Easter*)

This time last year 10 (*For 2 virtual services*)

Monthly Income Pledge/Plate:

Past month (April) \$1,865

This time last year \$1,685

Contact by liaison with vicar or lay leadership:

Date of contact: Various

Issues discussed: Attended via Zoom vestry meetings and several worship services.

Events Held/Accomplishments:

Since our year-end report, submitted on November 18, 2020, here is what's been going on at Good Shepherd:

- The Pine Grove Alcoholics Anonymous group has been meeting in the Good Shepherd basement since October via Zoom and in-person (10 or fewer). They have been respectful of the COVID-19 rules and procedures laid out for them to follow the diocesan guidelines. For Zoom, they were using cellphone signals until we got Wi-Fi in March. In January, they had one member test positive. We followed procedures, and they informed those who had been in direct contact with the COVID patient, staying out of the church for two weeks. We continued the weekly cleaning of the basement and did a special cleaning with an FDA-approved disinfecting cleaner.
- During Advent, we initiated a Christmas outreach project, purchasing small Christmas tins and filling them with goodies and trinkets to distribute to all the houses in Pine Grove. This was a fun adventure, and those of us who delivered tins met many of our neighbors for the first time. In April someone at a store in Berryville told a parishioner how much they appreciated the gift.
- From late fall into the winter, Good Shepherd became comfortable with Zoom worship services, which fit our small group well as the feel of community and live

- interactive worship kept us in touch. We developed a nice rhythm to the service with participants knowing when to mute and unmute themselves. Rev. Debbie Rutter officiated at Holy Eucharist services, and we began to look forward to Spiritual Communion. Our singers provided regular a cappella music from home, and we sometimes used recorded music and homilies provided by other churches.
- For our Christmas service, three of us met at the church on Dec. 18 to record service music for Christmas Eve. We also invited attendees to contribute recordings of their family's musical offerings to play before the service. We had many wonderful musicians young and old who recorded real family gems, and it was special to share these Christmas gifts with our extended church family. We encouraged people to light candles from home for our rendition of "Silent Night," performed live on clarinet. Additionally, the service reached one elderly parishioner in a nursing home and another by phone. We saw that those who could not travel joined their families at the service via Zoom.
 - Learning from the Christmas Eve experience, we set up "recording sessions" in the church to record service music and some hymns a cappella for Lent and again before Holy Week, offering continuity throughout the season in viewing the familiar recordings each week while also making use of the church's acoustics.
 - We replaced the damaged front door light that we think was smashed by the front door blowing open and subsequently replaced the other one, too, since we had bought a matched pair. It cost nothing because of free labor and a lost receipt for the lamps.
 - Because of virtual worship, we only had to worry about snow clearing one time, and that was so AA could meet. For recording sessions, we just parked in the street and made footpaths through the snow to get into the church.
 - In late 2020, the church received a gift of \$2,000 from a couple that was added to the building account. A gift of \$1,000 from United Methodist Church in Bluemont came in part because of two large donations to their church that they wanted to share with our church.
 - We met with Pipe-It Plumbers on April 2 to have repair and replacement work done in the two half baths. In the first restroom, the leaking drain was replaced and the sink faucet replaced. In the second restroom, the poorly flushing toilet was fixed and the sink faucet was replaced.
 - We discovered that the exhaust motor on our 4-year-old furnace was not turning. We met with Climatic HVAC and ordered a replacement part that will be installed with our spring A/C maintenance.
 - In February it was decided we would install internet at the 110-year-old church. The one-time cost of installation was not an issue, but the router rental and internet service add monthly infrastructure costs to our budget. Internet service is required if we are going to have hybrid services. Our congregation wanted to get back to church, but there will always be those who need to remain remote participants.
 - We held our yearly Congregational Meeting on Feb. 21 at which the following slate of Vestry members was elected:
 - Cindy Ingram: Treasurer
 - Josette Keelor: Register
 - Tim Hall: Junior Warden
 - Lois Tapscott: Senior Warden

- Judy Hall: Vestry member
- Richard Purnell: Vestry member
- Senior Warden Lois Tapscott signed an application for a Spectrum Rewards credit card at BB&T/Truist. They sent a card for our treasurer, Cindy Ingram, but said we could have as many as we need in each person's name. Richard Purnell suggested putting the card on autopay to avoid late fees.
- The church reimbursed our music coordinator, Josette Keelor, for a 10-week virtual music and liturgy class she audited through The Dean T. Stevenson School for Ministry from mid-February through April, which has already offered some useful information implemented into our services regarding musical and liturgical choices.
- For Ash Wednesday, we invited Zoom attendees to make their own ashes at home from past years' palms or pick up ashes provided at the church earlier in the week to use during our virtual service. On Palm Sunday, our blessing of the palms included various accessible branches that parishioners had at home in place of the usual palms that we didn't have during the pandemic. For Good Friday, our online service featured the Stations of the Cross with prerecorded music.
- With internet in the church, we strode into Easter day with a true sense of resurrection. Lilies, daffodils, forsythia, and tulips decked the altar and the church windows. We dusted off the inside worship procedures and listened to our two soloists sing our favorite Easter songs with the addition of prerecorded accompaniment downloaded from websites that offer free hymns. Communion with individual enclosed wafers is our new Eucharistic ritual, also used for outdoor services last fall. Those in the Zoom meeting room enjoyed the sights but were not able to hear well and could not hear Rev. Debbie Rutter's wonderful sermon. We realized that her iPad was not able to capture the sounds in the sanctuary. By the second Sunday of Easter, we had purchased a new microphone and a separate webcam, which offer better results. We continue to find our way to a successful hybrid worship experience, such as by ensuring our main speakers and soloists are on camera. We are using electronic accompaniment through the Easter season and plan to integrate it with a cappella music while we don't have a staff pianist.
- For the Easter season, we are soliciting support for the Church in Jerusalem, a donation that Good Shepherd will match.
- We discovered a possible roof leak and contacted Juarez Painting. Tim Hall met with Mr. Juarez on April 16 to discuss possible repairs and to also talk about gutter cleaning.
- Giving the parochial report at our February Congregational Meeting, Tim said that membership is down during the pandemic and although finances are good at the moment, we face challenges ahead once returning to in-person worship and now in maintaining a hybrid experience.

Future Plans:

- Rev. Debbie has committed with us through June. We also plan to invite guest speakers and/or potential supply clergy candidates for fifth Sundays.
- We will research how the Diocese is changing the requirements for gathering as the vaccine rollout continues. Good Shepherd is looking for ways to encourage the community to vaccinate while respecting those who choose not to.

- Facility plans include a parish hall facelift—new ceiling and carpet (partially covered by the \$3,500 Scott Grant), roof repair, exterior lighting, electrical updates, church sign, and landscaping. With the additional exterior lighting, the church will have improved outdoor spaces for worship and outreach activities. We plan to apply as a historic property and get landmark status.
- The electronic equipment needed for hybrid services will continue to be enhanced. The end goal is to have the church own the electronics and migrate away from personal equipment.
- Our budget anticipates reductions from less staff and cost of utilities. We'll have increases in costs for supply clergy, routine maintenance, equipment, and telecommunications. The Scott Grant will offset facility improvement costs. We have a surplus of \$8,652, which offsets the \$4,391 deficit from less income expected in 2021.
- As budget and pandemic allow, the search for a pianist will proceed to the return the worship music to a pre-pandemic level.
- We are looking into possible summer/fall fundraising efforts, if the current state of the pandemic allows.
- Outreach efforts include:
 - Continuing food donations to the FISH food pantry in Berryville
 - Researching and discussing possible ways to reach out to our area retirement communities
 - Participating in the Wickliffe Church annual homecoming service and picnic with other Clarke Parish churches, which took place outdoors with social distancing in 2020 and did not have a picnic
 - A Blessing of the Animals service in October
 - Another Christmas tin project for Advent
 - The harvest dinner we planned for in 2020 didn't happen because of COVID restrictions, so we look forward to finding creative ways to offer that experience this year.

Comments, Concerns, and Significant Changes:

- We have two primary concerns, the first being the condition of our clergy leadership. Though Rev. Debbie could potentially stay past June, she will not be a long-term solution.
- The second concern, which may be tied to the condition of our clergy leadership, is growing our congregation.
- Our most significant changes involve the ability to hold outreach events and fundraisers during the pandemic as well as continuing to offer hybrid services.
- We are very grateful to the Diocese for all the help and support you have provided, both financially and with guidance, and look forward to our continued relationship in the future.