



HILLTOP HIGHLIGHTS

GOOD SHEPHERD CHURCH

*"THE SHINING LITTLE CHURCH
ON THE HILL"*

January / February 2024

Volume 3 Number 1

A MESSAGE FROM OUR RECTOR



by Rev. George Master

Oh, My, the Time Is A-Flying

As I write this article it is the week before Christmas, but you will see it as we begin the season of Epiphany and before our next newsletter, we will have begun Lent! Wow! The time sure is flying by!

But, let's go back to Christmas. Oh, yeah, the world has moved on to Valentine's Day which interestingly enough is on Ash Wednesday this new year. We celebrated the birth of Jesus which signaled a turning point in history, a new beginning of sorts. And, as we begin the new year, we are prompted to reflect on the past and thank the Lord for the many blessings he has given us in the past year. But, this is also a time for new beginnings. How fitting it is that the new year should begin just days after we celebrated the birth of Jesus.

New beginnings of any kind can be both exciting and intimidating. They represent a chance to start fresh and make positive changes in our lives, but they also require us to let go of familiar ways, thoughts and habits that hold us back from growing spiritually and in other ways, and from stepping into the unknown. Yeah, all that can be scary. But, as Christians, we can find hope and strength in knowing that in all things God is with us, including the new beginnings we face. Not only that, but God is constantly at work in our lives, creating new opportunities and possibilities for us to step into. As the Lord says in the book of the Prophet Isaiah (43:19), "Behold, I am doing a new thing, now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?" The truth is, so often, we do not perceive it. Perhaps, that is because we are so tied to those so familiar past ways, thoughts and habits that we thought had served us well in the past. (Or, maybe, we held onto them because it was easier to do so than to examine them, critically.)

But, to catch a glimpse of what new thing that God is up to now, let alone to step boldly into that new reality, requires us to re-evaluate our thinking and stance on any number of things all the while praying and asking God for guidance in every part of our lives. Listen, our God is faithful and will give us that guidance, if only we ask for it. But, once given to us, we need to follow it.

Now, another reason, we may not perceive God's new thing, is that it is sometimes difficult to see when we feel so overwhelmed by fear and despair and grief. But, Christmas reminds us of something to keep in our minds, "The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it" (John 1:5). God has helped us in the past and will continue to help us to move and grow through everything that overwhelms us or catches us off-guard.

So, remember that we are a Christmas people and that Jesus is incarnate in every act of love and kindness we show one another. God can reach us beyond all the barriers the world can create and revive us by giving us strength in times of great distress. So, we can do this, and we will overcome because we are the Church, the body of the risen Christ!

(Continues on Page 2)

Now, I pray you may see what is ahead because there is a bright future awaiting. I believe, as many of you do, too, that God is leading us into a new season of life and ministry together. My only request of you is that you do not give up. I am confident in our calling as a church and in the ministries that God has called us to and will open to us in the years ahead.

Please know that I am privileged to be your pastor, and I feel incredibly blessed and honored to be with you. My prayers are with you always.

Blessings,
Fr. George

SENIOR WARDEN'S REPORT

by David Ewaniuk

We are about to enter another new calendar year, 2024. Many of us will spend some time thinking about what happened to us in 2023: was it full of pleasure and joy or did it include major life changes or sorrow. Regardless, most like to think of the new year as bringing hope and a positive future. Many people will make resolutions for the new year but typically most of us will forget our resolutions and goals for the new year as January and February progress. The most important thing is to determine to move into the new year closer to God and our Church with a renewed purpose. Every day we see constant changes and conflicts in the world. However, God does not change. Every week during our service we are encouraged to think about all the blessings that God is constantly giving us. Therefore, as we look back on 2023 it is important for each of us to reflect on God's incredible grace, he has shared with us.

I have sought out a number verses from the Bible to share with you to guide your thoughts and actions for 2024.

Lamentations 3:22-25

"It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness. The Lord is my portion, saith my soul; therefore will I hope in him. The Lord is good unto them that wait for him, to the soul that seeketh him"

James 1:17

"Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning."

Ephesians 4:31-32

"Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you."

Proverbs 3:1-2

"My son, do not forget my teaching, but let your heart keep my commandments, for length of days and years of life and peace they will add to you."

Hebrews 13:5

"Keep your life free from love of money, and be content with what you have, for he has said, 'I will never leave you nor forsake you.'"



MONTHLY FOOD DRIVE

by Jane Ryan

Let's make 2024 an even better year for our food collection. In 2023 we collected over 8,500 pounds of food for our neighbors. 2024 Flyers and Cards are available in the narthex. Please take a few and place them around town.

2024 Drive-thru Food Donation

Saturday, 9:00 AM to Noon

| | | |
|--------|--------|----------------------------------|
| Jan 20 | Jul 20 | <u>Non-Perishable Items Only</u> |
| Feb 17 | Aug 17 | Canned Goods |
| Mar 16 | Sep 21 | Baby Food |
| Apr 20 | Oct 19 | Diapers & Wipes |
| May 18 | Nov 9 | Pet Food |
| Jun 15 | Dec 14 | Paper Products |
| | | Cleaning |
| | | Hygiene |

All donations go to local Food Banks !

WEDNESDAY EVENING BIBLE GROUP

by Mark Witzigman

Wednesday Evening Bible Group will be resuming on Wednesday, January 10. We meet on Wednesday evenings for about 1 hour, beginning at 7:00pm. This year we are going to be going through the book of Isaiah. Joining us in person is very beneficial, but if you are not able, the Bible Group is available on Zoom. Please send me an email (communication@goodshepherdhilltown.org) if you would like the link to Zoom.

SUSTAINABILITY COMMITTEE

by Mark Witzigman

The Sustainability Committee has been on break and will return in early February. We will be concentrating on church growth based on the information we receive from our guest speaker on January 28th (see upcoming events on page 4). It would be wonderful to see a few new faces when our meetings resume. In the meantime, we have placed an ad in a publication by Hilltown Township. It is a map and directory that will be mailed to all 6,000+ residents and businesses in Hilltown Township and be given in a package to all new residents when they move in.



UPCOMING EVENTS

by Mark Witzigman

Please mark your calendars for these upcoming events!

January 28: We are welcoming a special guest, Canon Kirk Berlenbach. Canon Kirk will be preaching this Sunday. Immediately following the worship service, he will be addressing the congregation on the subject of growing our church. Vestry met via Zoom with Canon Kirk at their November meeting to get an overview of our demographics. Please plan on staying for this presentation as it is very important to the future of Good Shepherd. Immediately following we will have a fellowship lunch.

Shrove Sunday: This year Shrove Sunday falls on **February 11th**. Normally we would have a pancake breakfast. But this year it also falls on Super Bowl Sunday. So instead of pancakes we are planning a Tailgate Party instead featuring all the foods you would expect to see if you were in the stadium parking lot.

Lent Soup Lunches: This was a Big Hit last year, so we are bringing it back again for 2024. The dates will be: **February 18th, February 25th, March 3rd & March 10th**.

Lent Potluck Lunch: In 2023 we featured a meatloaf themed potluck. This year we are thinking chili. But it does fall on **March 17th**, St. Patrick's Day so we may re-think this year's theme.

More details on all of these upcoming events will be coming as we get closer. And keep an eye on the "communications" bulletin board which is the one across from the fellowship hall & kitchen.

2024 COMMUNITY OUTREACH SCHEDULE

by Kathy Goff

JANUARY – SAVING SOLES

There will be a box in the church narthex for collecting all sizes and kinds of SOCKS for infants up to adults. These will be delivered to Pennridge FISH at the end of the month.

FEBRUARY – SOUPER BOWL

Bring in cans or dried packages of SOUP and place them in the basket provided in the church narthex. Donations will be given to Pennridge FISH. Also take the time to vote for your favorite team! A chart will be posted for your use. May the best team win!

FELLOWSHIP

by Jane Ryan

Please see the sign-up sheets on the bulletin board across from the fellowship hall and kitchen. We could use a few new regular volunteers! Would you like to help with Fellowship Hour BUT worry about making coffee and those other things that need to be done? Consider being a Fellowship Partner! If we can have a Partner or two or three, we can get it done! Don't like to bake, but love bagels and donuts? So do we!! Have a favorite frozen dessert? I bet we will love it! Any questions? I will be glad to answer them. Hope to see you in the kitchen soon...Partner!



**ARTICLES FOR THE MARCH / APRIL NEWSLETTER
DUE BY DECEMBER 15th**

GOOD SHEPHERD PHOTO ALBUM
A picture is worth a thousand words!
The Holiday Shoppe



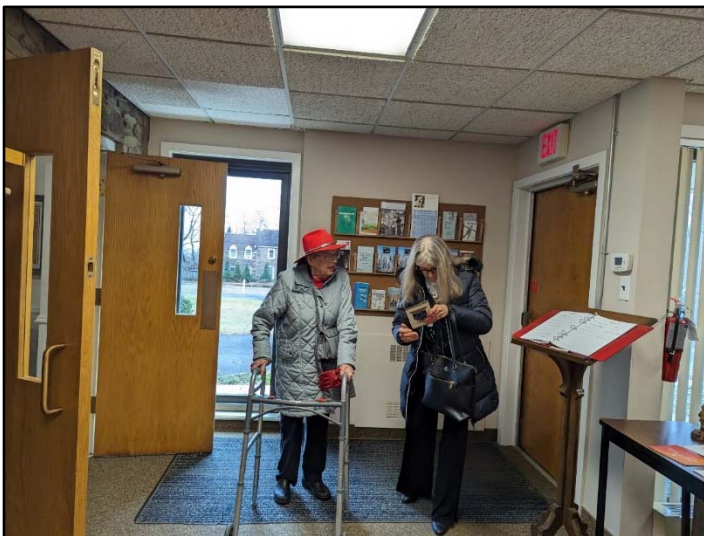


Around the Church









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| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|--|----------------------------------|-------------------------|---|------------------------------|--------|---------------------------------|
| 31 HOLY EUCHRIST RITE II 10:00 AM NEW YEARS EVE | 1 | 2 | 3 HEALING SERVICE 11:00 AM | 4 AL-ANON 7:30 PM | 5 | 6 |
| 7 HOLY EUCHRIST RITE II 10:00 AM | 8 | 9 | 10 HEALING SERVICE 11:00 AM BIBLE STUDY 7:00 PM | 11 AL-ANON 7:30 PM | 12 | 13 |
| 14 HOLY EUCHRIST RITE II 10:00 AM | 15 MARTIN LUTHER KING DAY | 16 VESTRY 6:30 PM | 17 HEALING SERVICE 11:00 AM BIBLE STUDY 7:00 PM | 18 AL-ANON 7:30 PM | 19 | 20 FOOD DRIVE 9:00 - NOON |
| 21 HOLY EUCHRIST RITE II 10:00 AM | 22 | 23 | 24 HEALING SERVICE 11:00 AM BIBLE STUDY 7:00 PM | 25 AL-ANON 7:30 PM | 26 | 27 |
| 28 HOLY EUCHRIST RITE II 10:00 AM SPECIAL GUEST CANON KIRK BERLENBACH LUNCH TO FOLLOW | 29 | 30 | 31 HEALING SERVICE 11:00 AM BIBLE STUDY 7:00 PM | 1 AL-ANON 7:30 PM | 2 | 3 |
| 4 HOLY EUCHRIST RITE II 10:00 AM | 5 | | | | | |

| January '24 | | | | | | | March '24 | | | | | | |
|-------------|----|----|----|----|----|----|-----------|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| S | M | T | W | T | F | S | S | M | T | W | T | F | S |
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| 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | | | | | | 7 | 8 |
| 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 15 | 16 |
| 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 19 |
| | | | | | | | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 |
| 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 | | | | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 |
| | | | | | | | 31 | | | | | | |

| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|--|---------------------------|-----------------------------|--|--|--------|---------------------------------|
| 28 HOLY EUCHRIST RITE II 10:00 AM | 29 | 30 | 31 HEALING SERVICE 11:00 AM BIBLE STUDY 7:00 PM | 1 AL-ANON 7:30 PM GROUNDHOG DAY | 2 | 3 |
| 4 HOLY EUCHRIST RITE II 10:00 AM | 5 | 6 | 7 HEALING SERVICE 11:00 AM BIBLE STUDY 7:00 PM | 8 AL-ANON 7:30 PM | 9 | 10 |
| 11 HOLY EUCHRIST RITE II 10:00 AM SUPER BOWL TAILGATE PARTY AFTER WORSHIP | 12 | 13 | 14 ASH WEDNESDAY 11:00 AM IN PERSON 7:00 PM IN PERSON & ONLINE NO BIBLE STUDY | 15 AL-ANON 7:30 PM | 16 | 17 FOOD DRIVE 9:00 - NOON |
| 18 HOLY EUCHRIST RITE II 10:00 AM LENT SOUP LUNCH | 19 PRESIDENT'S DAY | 20 VESTRY 6:30 PM | 21 BIBLE STUDY 7:00 PM | 22 AL-ANON 7:30 PM | 23 | 24 |
| 25 HOLY EUCHRIST RITE II 10:00 AM LENT SOUP LUNCH | 26 | 27 | 28 HEALING SERVICE 11:00 AM BIBLE STUDY 7:00 PM | 29 AL-ANON 7:30 PM | 1 | 2 |
| 3 HOLY EUCHRIST RITE II 10:00 AM LENT SOUP LUNCH | 4 | | | | | |

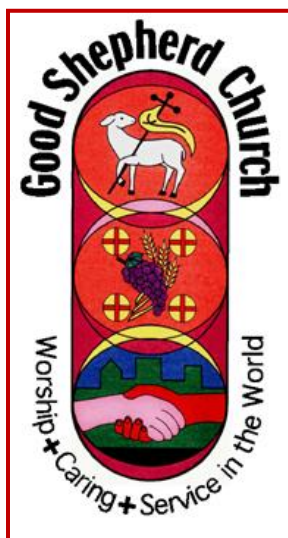
Good Shepherd Church

Episcopal

1634 Hilltown Pike

PO Box 132

Hilltown, PA 18927



The Rev. George O. Master II, Rector

MISSION: In response to God's call, we will love Him and all people through worship, serving others and by carrying His message throughout the world.

Sunday Services

10:00am Holy Eucharist Rite II

Office Hours

Tuesdays and Wednesdays (9:00 to 2:00) – Thursday (9:00 to 12:00)

Fr. George, Wednesdays after 12:00 by Appointment

CONTACT INFORMATION

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Visit us at www.goodshepherdhilltown.org

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