

# HILLTOP HIGHLIGHTS

## GOOD SHEPHERD CHURCH

*“THE SHINING LITTLE CHURCH  
ON THE HILL”*



March / April 2024

Volume 3 Number 2

### A MESSAGE FROM OUR RECTOR



by Rev. George Master

#### How About That Punxsutawney Phil

Dear Members of Good Shepherd Church, my sisters and brothers,

As I write this article, it is Leap Day, the last day of February this year. And, though it is supposed to get cold tonight, it is supposed to warm up through next week. Winter seems to have gone. Of course, when you read this, it really will be Spring. Though at this time we are still in the season of Lent, in three weeks, we will enter Holy Week, then Easter, the Day of Resurrection.

Then, three weeks later we will have our Parish Annual Meeting. It will be a busy two months.

In the past I have focused my March/April newsletter article mostly, if not exclusively on Lent. This year I want to focus on Easter, and specifically on grace, God's grace.

I was reading some meditations the other day and came across this article from a man named Mark Batterson in Christianity Today. Though it is a bit long, I hope you read and reread it as a meditation. It is about us, about our church and ultimately about our mission in proclaiming the message to the world.

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“At the turn of the 20th century, a Russian physician named Ivan Pavlov won a Nobel Prize. Dogs naturally salivate at the smell of food, but Pavlov wanted to see if he could cause salivation with another stimulus. As you probably remember from a high school science class, Pavlov rang a bell before feeding the dogs. Eventually, the ringing bell caused the dogs to salivate. Pavlov referred to this as a conditioned reflex.

To one degree or another, all of us are Pavlovian. Over time, we acquire an elaborate set of conditioned reflexes. If someone slaps us on the cheek, our conditioned reflex is to slap back. Or is that just me?

The Gospel is all about Jesus reconditioning our reflexes by his grace. The result? We love our enemies, pray for those who persecute us, and bless those who curse us. We turn the other cheek, go the extra mile, and give the shirt off our back. Theologians call these the Six Antitheses, but I like to think of them as six countercultural counter-habits.

No less than six times in the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus says: “You have heard that it was said, but I tell you . . .” (Matt. 7–9). Jesus was reshaping Old Testament mindsets such as “an eye for an eye” (Matt. 5:38). He was challenging our ethic, starting with forgiveness.

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Remember in Matthew 18 when Peter asked Jesus how many times we should forgive? He thought he was being generous by suggesting seven. Jesus ups the ante: seventy times seven. It's on a beach by the Sea of Galilee (John 21) where this idea of forgiveness is personalized for Peter. This is a post-Resurrection appearance, which means it is post-denial. Peter had denied knowing Jesus not once, not twice, but three times, and it was after the third denial that the rooster crowed, reminding Peter of Jesus' prophecy (Matt. 26:75).

Can I make a Pavlovian observation? I wonder if Peter felt a twinge of guilt every time he heard a rooster crow after that. Every single morning, that rude awakening might have reminded Peter of his great failure, until the morning when Jesus reconditioned his reflexes.

One day after Jesus' resurrection Peter was out fishing when Jesus called out across the water: "Throw your net on the right side of the boat and you will find some." The early morning mist made it impossible to see who said it, but a miraculous catch made it obvious. John said to Peter, "It is the Lord!" (John 21:4-7).

That's when Peter jumped out of the boat and swam to shore. When he got there, Jesus was frying fish on burning coals. Let's pause right there—how can we not love a God who makes breakfast on the beach for his disciples?

After breakfast, Jesus asks Peter a question: "Do you love me more than these?" (v. 15). He doesn't ask it once or twice, but three times. Coincidence? I think not. Three denials require three reinstatements. This is how and when and where Jesus reconditions Peter's reflexes.

Have you ever noticed the time of day? John is precise: "Early in the morning" (v. 4). In other words, right around the time the roosters crow. The sound that reminded Peter of his greatest failure—the sound that had produced feelings of guilt—would now produce feelings of gratitude. Jesus did more than recommission Peter. Jesus reconditioned his reflexes with his grace.

Have you ever had someone love you when you least expected it and least deserved it? It's life-changing, isn't it? What if we loved others the way God loved us? The gift of Easter reveals that sin without grace equals guilt, but sin plus grace equals deep gratitude that we can carry and express every single morning, afternoon, and night.

We have a tendency to give up on God, but God doesn't give up on us. He is the God of second, third, and thousandth chances. Even when we feel like we have failed God, this is the God who comes after us, who calls out to us across the water. This is the God who makes breakfast on the beach. This is the God who gives us a new lease on life."

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And to this I say, "Amen, let us claim and proclaim this message of God's gift of grace to all of God's children."

May you be blessed with God's amazing grace, now and always,

Fr. George

## SENIOR WARDEN'S REPORT

by David Ewaniuk

During each of our Sunday services we share our many blessings during the “Prayers of the People”. Blessings and concerns typically include prayers for healing or for those who have been healed of various physical ailments.

I was thinking about this more recently as I am scheduled to undergo knee replacement surgery on February 28<sup>th</sup>. Certainly, one of our many blessings of our modern times is our excellent capabilities for reconstructive surgeries. As a Christian, I began to ask questions about the relationship between my faith in Christ and what I would soon experience. How does my understanding of the Bible and Christian Theology frame what was going to occur in the operating room? To be sure, I wanted people to pray for me – before, during, and after the operation. I am trusting God to help the surgeon and to help me.

As Episcopalians we know that God is the source of all healing and that health-care workers, procedures, and medications are instruments of God. For this reason, our Wednesday Healing Services are provided for healing and spiritual renewal. These services include prayers, reading of Scriptures and at times, anointing with oil and are presented in conjunction with the support of the healing ministry within the health care community.

I wanted to share this prayer as excellent one for us to use for our individual healing needs:

*Dear Lord, I ask You to be kind to me as I suffer, to strengthen the hands of my healers, and to bless how they treat me. I'm going through a hard time and suffering from a broken heart. Let me trust in the power of Your grace so that even when I'm afraid, I may put my full trust in You, my Savior, Jesus Christ. AMEN.*

### Property Committee Notes

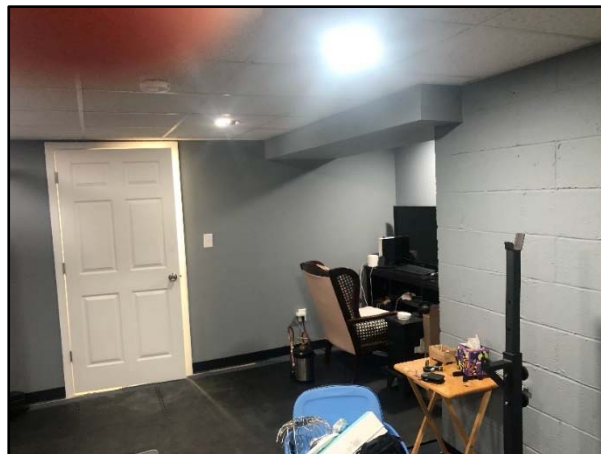
a) Renovation of one of the Rectory Basement rooms

Back in the Nov / Dec 2023 Newsletter I mentioned our planned renovation of one of the rooms in the Rectory Basement to fix the falling ceiling tiles, improve the inadequate lighting and most important to add a wall and access door to separate the room from the house's mechanical systems. I wanted to report that this work was completed on January 26, 2024.

Before



After



b) Additional Electrical Work Planned for early March

As you all may recall, November and December 2023 had very large amounts of rain. In late December I found that the sump pumps in the small basement, under the choir room, failed and the room contained 12 inches of water. Fortunately, the boiler, that heats the Sanctuary is set at 16 inches off the floor. Upon pumping out the water it was

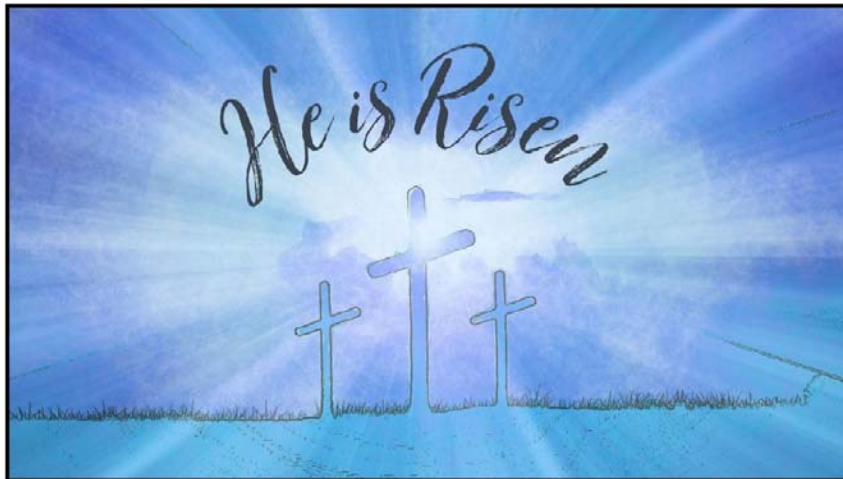
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determined that the 2 sump pumps were OK but they were both plugged into the same circuit which caused the breaker to trip due to power surging at turn-on. Therefore, the Vestry has authorized the following electrical work to improve and/or bring the systems in that basement up to code”

- i. Rewire to create 2 circuits, one for each sump pump
- ii. Add lights and update the lighting to LEDs in the crawl space to provide necessary lighting for safety and proper illumination of the areas.
- iii. Update the main circuit panel to current electrical code because the existing panel is about 50 years old and is obsolete and unsafe.

Senior Warden

*David M. Luriansky*



## *Holy Week & Easter Sunday*

**MAUNDY THURSDAY SERVICE**

**7:00 PM**

**GOOD FRIDAY SERVICE**

**12:00 NOON**

**EASTER SUNDAY SERVICE**

**10:00 AM**

## MONTHLY FOOD DRIVE

### **2024 Drive-thru Food Donation**

**Saturday, 9:00 AM to Noon**

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

**All donations go to local Food Banks !**

## PENNIES FROM HEAVEN



**by Karen Bossert**

Do you have spare change? On Sunday mornings, you may have noticed the glass jars on the table by the entrance to the church. One is labeled *Pennies from Heaven* and the other is the *Jar of Hugs*. Spare change is collected in these, and the money goes to the Discretionary Account. This past quarter, we collected \$ 51.48 in loose coins!

The Discretionary Account is for Fr. George's use, and it can be used to address urgent needs for individuals or within our community. Disbursements from this account are kept confidential, and only Fr. George and the Accounting Warden have access to the account.

In many churches, the loose plate collection on the first Sunday of the month is deposited in the Discretionary Account. At Good Shepherd, we do not follow this practice. We have found that, post-Covid, our in-person attendance is low, and the loose plate collection is often \$0. Instead, we use the two jars, and of course, parishioners are welcome to donate to the Discretionary Fund at any time by writing "Discretionary Fund" on the memo line of their check. Finally, the Vestry can authorize transfers into the Discretionary Account; in recent years, this practice has been followed to allow portions of money from Fundraising efforts to be used directly in our community.

As always, please feel free to contact the Accounting Warden or any Vestry member if you have questions, and of course, thank you for your continued support of Good Shepherd Church!



## **WEDNESDAY EVENING BIBLE GROUP**

by Mark Witzigman

We are meeting 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](mailto:communication@goodshepherdhilltown.org)) if you would like the link to Zoom.

## **SUSTAINABILITY COMMITTEE**

by Mark Witzigman

The Sustainability Committee will resume meeting after Easter, continuing to work on programs of interest based on our demographic findings. All are welcome to attend our meetings.

## **COMMUNITY OUTREACH SCHEDULE**

by Kathy Goff

### **MARCH – PERSONAL HYGIENE PRODUCTS**

The focus for March's outreach program will be for personal care products for all ages. I found out there is a big demand at Keystone Opportunity Center in Souderton for these items. Shampoo, conditioner, shaving cream, deodorant, toothbrushes, and toothpaste, etc. This collection will be delivered to Keystone at the end of the month.

### **APRIL – SUMMER FOOD BAGS**

April's focus will be summer food bags, also for Keystone. Keep in mind that children will be home from school and need food that's easy to prepare along with a variety of snack packs and fruit juice boxes. Everything is very much appreciated!

### **FELLOWSHIP HOUR**

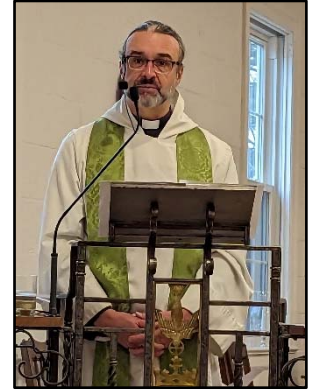
We are continuing to look for additional volunteers to handle fellowship hour. We currently have four regulars handling fellowship hour completely. Fellowship hour includes setting up, making coffee, supplying the goodies, and cleaning up. Just a reminder of a policy that has been in place for some time- if you do fellowship hour completely you may submit receipts for up to \$25 in reimbursement. Some other ways you can help are by partnering with one of our regulars as a helper, or you can buy some selected snack items to help fill the cupboards. Sign up sheets are on the bulletin board across from the hall / kitchen and there are sticky notes with items needed for the cupboard. Please consider helping with this ministry.



**ARTICLES FOR THE SUMMER (MAY TO AUGUST) NEWSLETTER  
DUE BY APRIL 15<sup>th</sup>**

## **GOOD SHEPHERD PHOTO ALBUM**

GOOD SHEPHERD PHOTO ALBUM  
*Canon Kirk Pays Us a Visit*



*Super Bowl Tailgate Party*





*Women's Retreat*



*Around the Church*





# March 2024

February '24

S M T W T F S  
 4 5 6 7 8 9 10  
 11 12 13 14 15 16 17  
 18 19 20 21 22 23 24  
 25 26 27 28 29

April '24

S M T W T F S  
 1 2 3 4 5 6  
 7 8 9 10 11 12 13  
 14 15 16 17 18 19 20  
 21 22 23 24 25 26 27  
 28 29 30

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
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	5	6 HEALING SERVICE 11:00 AM BIBLE STUDY 7:00 PM	7 AL-ANON 7:30 PM	8	9
10 HOLY EUCHRIST RITE II 10:00 AM LENT SOUP LUNCH DAYLIGHT SAVINGS BEGINS	11	12	13 HEALING SERVICE 11:00 AM BIBLE STUDY 7:00 PM	14 AL-ANON 7:30 PM	15	16 FOOD DRIVE 9:00 - NOON
17 HOLY EUCHRIST RITE II 10:00 AM POTLUCK LUNCH ST. PATRICK'S DAY	18	19 VESTRY 6:30 PM FIRST DAY OF SPRING	20 HEALING SERVICE 11:00 AM BIBLE STUDY 7:00 PM	21 AL-ANON 7:30 PM	22	23
24 HOLY EUCHRIST RITE II 10:00 AM PALM SUNDAY	25	26	27 HEALING SERVICE 11:00 AM NO BIBLE STUDY	28 AL-ANON 7:30 PM	29 GOOD FRIDAY	30
31 HOLY EUCHRIST RITE II 10:00 AM EASTER SUNDAY	1					

# April 2024

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

Sunday		Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
31 HOLY EUCHRIST RITE II 10:00 AM	1 APRIL FOOLS DAY	2	3 HEALING SERVICE 11:00 AM BIBLE STUDY 7:00 PM	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	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 ANNUAL MEETING	22 EARTH DAY	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	29	30	1 HEALING SERVICE 11:00 AM BIBLE STUDY 7:00 PM	2 AL-ANON 7:30 PM	3	4	
5 HOLY EUCHRIST RITE II 10:00 AM	6						

# May 2024

April '24							June '24						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6		23	24	25	26	27	28	29
7	8	9	10	11	12	13	30						
14	15	16	17	18	19	20							
21	22	23	24	25	26	27							
28	29	30											

Sunday		Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	
28 <b>HOLY EUCHRIST RITE II</b> 10:00 AM	29	30	1 <b>HEALING SERVICE</b> 11:00 AM <b>BIBLE STUDY</b> 7:00 PM	2 AL-ANON 7:30 PM	3	4		
5 <b>HOLY EUCHRIST RITE II</b> 10:00 AM	6	7	8 <b>HEALING SERVICE</b> 11:00 AM <b>BIBLE STUDY</b> 7:00 PM	9 AL-ANON 7:30 PM	10	11		
12 <b>HOLY EUCHRIST RITE II</b> 10:00 AM MOTHER'S DAY	13	14	15 <b>HEALING SERVICE</b> 11:00 AM <b>BIBLE STUDY</b> 7:00 PM	16 AL-ANON 7:30 PM	17	18 <b>FOOD DRIVE</b> 9:00 - NOON		
19 <b>HOLY EUCHRIST RITE II</b> 10:00 AM PENTECOST	20	21 <b>VESTRY</b> 6:30 PM	22 <b>HEALING SERVICE</b> 11:00 AM <b>BIBLE STUDY</b> 7:00 PM	23 AL-ANON 7:30 PM	24	25		
26 <b>HOLY EUCHRIST RITE II</b> 10:00 AM	27 MEMORIAL DAY	28	29 <b>HEALING SERVICE</b> 11:00 AM <b>BIBLE STUDY</b> 7:00 PM	30 AL-ANON 7:30 PM	31	1	<b>BOOK SALE</b>	
2 <b>HOLY EUCHRIST RITE II</b> 10:00 AM <b>BOOK SALE</b>	3 <b>BOOK SALE</b>							



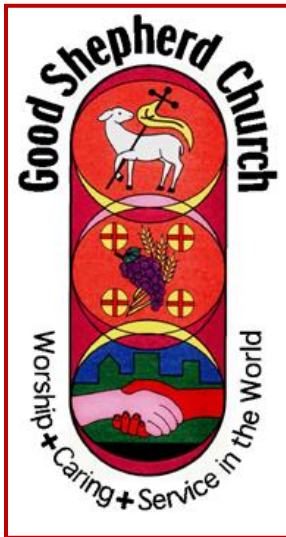
## **Good Shepherd Church**

*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**

**Parish Administrator:** Sandra Clayberger

**Phone:** 215-822-3930

**Visit us at** [www.goodshepherdhilltown.org](http://www.goodshepherdhilltown.org)

### **GOOD SHEPHERD EMAIL ADDRESSES**

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Communication (Mark): [communication@goodshepherdhilltown.org](mailto:communication@goodshepherdhilltown.org)