



The Church of the Good Shepherd

October 5, 2023

Dear Fellow Parishioners,

We hope this letter finds you doing well. There is a hint of fall in the air, and after so many 90-plus-degree days we have welcomed the morning coolness these last few days as we are sure you have. We also know everyone is wondering how our rector search is going. The vestry has been working extremely hard in this search and interviewed several candidates. We have not yet found the right person for this important role. Please continue to pray for this discernment process and know that we are committed to do our best to find a rector to guide us forward.

Good Shepherd is on the right path. With your help we have begun to build back some of the commissions such as outreach and parish life. This has taken some time, but God's faithfulness is matched by that of our parishioners. Several worthwhile projects have taken place this year. Most recently some of our youth and adults partnered with St. Andrews to pack food boxes and distribute to tornado victims in the area. Also, several volunteers made improvements at the McDonald Street Shelter to support its work with the homeless in our community. These are just a couple of examples of outreach that occurred during the summer. We are very fortunate that our worship, flower guild, and altar guild commissions remained intact through the COVID period and remain strong today. Under the leadership of Lawrence Goering our choir and music program has excelled. Children's chapel returned a month ago. What a blessing that is! Considering all that this church has been through these last several years, there is so much to be thankful for. Church of the Good Shepherd is a beacon in this community and has been for about 150 years.

'Tis the season for the "Every Member Response" Pledge Campaign, the time of year when we ask that all of us give prayerful consideration to the financial resources, time, and talents we can share. For the next several Sundays in October you will be hearing from one of several parishioners during each service. Each will speak about the church, what it means to them, and what it takes to fulfill the mission of Good Shepherd. In addition, personal letters from some of our high school or college youth are included with this letter. We will wrap up this campaign on Dedication Sunday, November 5th with luncheon to follow service.

The finance committee put together the budget for 2024 with focus on the expense portion. You'll notice that our expenses, like those across all industries and households, have increased. Total budgeted expenses to operate, maintain, and fulfill the mission of our church is approximately \$495,000. What is included in this number?

Personnel expenses are the largest portion on the expense side of the budget, and they reflect increases in salary amounts in order to stay competitive in the current market. The amounts include church salaries along with the attendant payroll taxes and benefits and assume the new rector starts the first of January. This also includes a moving allowance for the new rector,

reinstatement of a parish administrator to keep operations running smoothly, and continued support for our outstanding musical director. The total personnel expense is \$267,500. Brief descriptions of the other expense categories include the following:

Buildings and Grounds	37,300	Operating & Program Support	122,370
Christian Education	6,000	(includes insurance, utilities,	
Worship	6,000	telephone & internet, tech	
Parish Life	5,000	equipment & support, office	
Outreach & Pastoral Care	5,000	supplies and cleaning, etc.)	
Diocesan Support	45,820		

With those expenses in mind, this year we ask you to increase your investment in the Church of the Good Shepherd through pledges totaling \$350,000. This is a \$75,000 increase over our 2023 pledge amount, and, we recognize, a bold ask. In this season of transition, we need everyone's help to continue to build on our recent momentum. We ask you to trust God's faithfulness in our parish and provide the necessary resources so we may continue God's work in our community.

This amount is considerable, but we know that it is necessary to worship, sing and pray together in a beautiful space, fulfill the different missions of outreach as described above, maintain operations in a historic building, and attract/retain well-qualified staff.

We ask that you give prayerful consideration in determining the amount of your pledge for 2024. If you did not pledge last year but shared via Sunday offering, we ask you to please consider pledging so that our vestry can guide its decisions based on more predictable resources.

If you have questions about how to pledge, such as by gifting stock, please feel free to reach out to either of us.

In his letters to the Corinthians, Paul talks of *giving generously* (2 Cor. 8:3), and of *giving consistently* (1 Cor. 16:2). 2 Cor. 9:7 instructs us that "Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a *cheerful giver*". Like those in the early church, we find ourselves seeking to fulfill God's mission amidst a sea of societal change; the need for community in Christ is ever more real. Let us meet that need by matching God's faithfulness with our resources.

Yours in Christ,



Winston Lea, Senior Warden



Emily Dwight, Junior Warden

(Please find enclosed a pledge card, a direct deposit authorization, and a return envelope.)