

**Becoming Beloved Community**  
**Year in Review -- 2023**  
**Church of the Good Shepherd**  
**January 14, 2024**

This past year – 2023 – was a momentous year for Church of the Good Shepherd, notably in kicking off year one of our 5-year Discernment Plan, “Becoming Beloved Community,” and actively attending to Flood Relief needs in our community. Below is a review of the many actions taken by parishioners at Good Shepherd. This information is provided to assist in our planning for 2024, asking ourselves what worked well and what didn’t, what needs more attention, what did we learn about new needs, where are we with our goals of sustainability and mission vitality, all answering the core discernment question of **“What does God want us to do next at Good Shepherd?”**

Please review this information in preparation for our next round of Congregational Meetings to be held in a few weeks on February 4th, 5th, & 6th to establish our vision as we extend “Becoming Beloved Community” into 2024. There will be six meetings, four in person and two on zoom. The schedule is in this week’s newsletter and sign-up sheets will be available at our Annual Parish Meeting on January 21, 2024. We are asking all of you to please attend at least one of the meetings to ensure we have everyone’s input.

Thank you to each one of you for your strong investment in the wellbeing of Good Shepherd, each other, and our community, both in 2023 and as we look ahead to 2024.

Here are the activities that guided our ministry & mission in 2023:

General/Administrative

- Leadership Planning Retreat held for Vestry and Team Leaders of Becoming Beloved Community with Bishop Shannon attending to share her support
- Ongoing monthly Team Leader zoom consultation sessions with the Rev. Lorenzo Lebrija of Try Tank, an organization promoting church innovation. This opportunity was provided to us through our Diocese.
- Ongoing monthly Team Leader meetings and/or Individual Team meetings for activity planning
- Becoming Beloved Community Bulletin Board established to improve communication along with periodic Team Leader reports to the congregation and updates in the church newsletter
- Garden Committee had safety assessment of garden wall completed and lattice was hung as a backdrop to the South end of the church garden

- Planning in process for improving the church's heating system & minimizing our carbon footprint in the process
- Multiple repairs completed to ensure solid maintenance of Good Shepherd's physical plant
- Plan initiated to improve our Zoom system. Bandwidth increased & new equipment in process. Training to be held.
- Other projects in process – development of a Becoming Beloved Community logo, church master calendar, use of building schedule, and parish directory

### Growth, Finance, & Clergy

- Coordination of a strong stewardship response
- Establishment of a Finance Committee for long term planning
- Visitation to other churches to learn about strong growth pathways
- Researching opportunities for legacy programs

### Programming for Families

- Diaper program for parents who need help securing diapers for infants/toddlers
- Children's play area set up in back of the church
- Pumpkin Carving & Decorating for Halloween
- Holiday Babysitting Event for Parents

### Caring for Each Other

- Cards/notes of support & food offerings coordinated for all parishioners in need throughout the year
- Support visitations arranged as needed
- Coordination of Coffee Hour schedule
- Advent Wreath Making & Chili Supper

### Mission Outreach

- Earthquake Relief Dinner & Silent Auction for support of Turkey & Syria – Sold-Out & \$5,000 raised
- Annual "Plant Sale on the Porch" held as a fund raiser for our food outreach programs with Enough Ministries and the Good Samaritan Haven -\$500 raised
- Worship & food support for Hilltop Inn residents to meet short-term needs
- Over 2500 breakfasts provided to Enough Ministries, monthly meals for 25-30 people provided to the Haven, and over 1600 gallon bags of dog & cat food generated for our Pet Pantry
- Trial of onsite breakfast program initiated
- Trial of onsite subsidized breakfast program for children initiated

- Dinner to support Ukranian Relief & the Good Samaritan Haven, along with pie, sunflower sale, and silent auction -- \$3,000 raised
- Holiday Decoration Give-Away Event for flood victims
- Poetry, Music, & Written Word Event in conjunction with the Dedication of Artwork given in honor of Charlotte Durgin
- United Thank Offering for the Diocese of Jerusalem -- \$1,000 raised with a \$1,000 match
- Participation in providing food supplies for the Food Pantry of Hedding Methodist Church in Barre

### Music & Worship

- Commissioning of the Becoming Beloved Community Team Leaders with the Rev. Susan Ohlidal, Canon of Mission Vitality for the Diocese, providing her support on Good Shepherd Sunday
- Participation in the Good Friday Procession throughout Barre
- Hosting Christ Church and St. Mary's Church for Easter Vigil
- Coordinator of readers and greeters established for regular scheduling at worship services
- Hosting a concert by Cameo Baroque as their fund raiser for Rainbow Bridge
- Blessing of the Motorcycle Ride for Breast Cancer
- Celebration of Michaelmas with St. Mary's Church
- Blessing of the Animals in City Park on St. Francis Day
- Greening of the Church for Advent including decorations made by the children & an array of creches on display from a parishioner's private collection
- Hosting the Rev. Lorenzo Lebrija of Try Tank as guest preacher
- Children's Participation in Advent Service
- Addition of Children's Christmas Eve Service
- Choral Group & Instrumental Music added to our worship service along with cantor-led Lord's Prayer during various liturgical seasons
- Season of Creation liturgy added to emphasize the importance of creation care
- Joint Zoom Worship Service held with St. Mary's Episcopal Church of Northfield on Christmas Day

### Community

- Good Shepherd noted in the Times-Argus for many events, including being featured in "Talk of the Town"
- Events regularly published in Front Porch Forum
- Phone campaign activated in conjunction with Vermont Interfaith Action to address needs of the unhoused as the hotel-motel program was coming to an end
- Letter sent to local & federal legislative leaders to address Ending Gun Violence as an action for Mother's Day
- Participation in a local vigil in remembrance of those who lost their lives to gun violence

- The Rev. Debbie Ingram from VIA invited to Good Shepherd to educate us to the Declaration of Inclusion & opportunities to support local police
- Participation in the Statehouse Gathering & The Longest Night service by the Poor People's Campaign to bring attention to needs of those who are homeless
- Coordination of the Creative Housing Coalition to address need for affordable housing in Barre
- Free ice cream cones and sundaes offered at Barre Heritage Festival
- Communication with our community strengthened through increased involvement in social media platforms, website updates, & local news articles
- Two resolutions initiated by Good Shepherd were passed at Diocesan Convention in support of the Declaration of Inclusion and Letter to End Gun Violence
- Increased use of photos of events and other church happenings shared on our website, in the weekly newsletter, and on church bulletin boards

### Flood Relief

- Good Shepherd served as a respite and resource center for immediate flood assistance – water, food, spiritual support, & resource information
- Direct hands-on assistance in mucking out basements & cleaning debris areas throughout the Summer months
- Making cleaning supply kits & bags of personal hygiene items for flood victims along with diapers and pet food donated to Rainbow Bridge for immediate distribution
- Bringing Worship into the community on July 16<sup>th</sup> to assist individuals and other churches with various flood relief needs
- Strong participation in Barre Up meetings & canvassing flood impacted neighborhoods to ensure people's input in flood relief efforts & planning
- Support of Barre Strong T-Shirts as flood relief fundraiser
- Provision of clothing & household items to the Library's Flood Relief Giveaway Event for those in need
- Participation in the Elks Flood Relief Fundraiser
- Opening Good Shepherd to business and social service groups displaced from prior locations due to the flood
- Meetings held with other church and social service resources to address housing concerns, completion of FEMA applications, and other support services needed short & long term
- Distribution of \$7,500 in monetary gifts received at Good Shepherd for Flood Relief to Barre Community Relief Fund, Christ Church, and Hope Coalition