

Mid-Year Review  
Becoming Beloved Community  
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Church of the Good Shepherd  
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Seems hard to believe that we are at the mid-point of 2023. It has been a very busy 6 months for Good Shepherd. I thought it would be a great time to look back & review all that you have accomplished for our community, church, & each other.

- We started by submitting our discernment plan to the Diocese, emphasizing sustainability of our church & plans for mission vitality as we answered the question: What is God calling us to do next at Good Shepherd? Soon thereafter we kicked off the implementation of the plan officially with the theme of **Becoming Beloved Community** – following the words from Coretta Scott King: Beloved Community is focusing on a way of Living in the Sacred Vision of the Kingdom of Heaven & being Courageous to follow the Love of Jesus in caring for each other.
- With that foundation, we held a Leadership Retreat with our Vestry and Ron, Amy, Christina, Beth, Marjorie, & Tess who agreed to be Team Leaders for the 6 areas of church life we were going to focus on:
  - Growth, Clergy, & Finances
  - Programming for Families
  - Caring for Each Other: Fellowship & Support
  - Mission Outreach
  - Music & Worship
  - Community: Communication, Church Image, & Activities.

Bishop Shannon joined us at the retreat and gave us strong words of support. She was very pleased with our plan & encouraged us to “Go Big!” We also met Rev. Lorenzo from Try Tank who would serve as our coach

throughout the year. Soon after, on Good Shepherd Sunday, our leaders were officially commissioned to their roles with The Rev. Susan Ohlidal, Canon for Mission Vitality for the Diocese, participating in the worship service to add her encouragement as well.

- Team Leaders then held meetings monthly as a group and again with Coach Lorenzo – and gatherings with you as individual teams began to happen as you chose to participate in one or more teams.
- I know we all remember the Major Event of the Earthquake Relief Dinner which was Sold Out. Over 100 people were served or chose to pick up a takeout meal. \$5,000 was raised for the people of Turkey & Syria. We had incredible sponsors for both the dinner & silent auction and rave reviews from the community. Beth, Phil, Elizabeth, Joe, Tess, Leo, Felicia, & Earl took the lead in making all of this happen with so many more of you helping in multiple ways.
- You also supported Richard & Joy for several weeks in follow-up to Richard's surgery.
- A Diaper Program was started by Amy's Team to help those who needed assistance in securing diapers for their little ones.
- We hosted Christ Church & St. Mary's Church for the Easter Vigil to focus on joining in activity & worship with our neighboring Episcopal churches – a goal we had from our discernment plan.
- Russ took on the role of organizing Readers for each service who also often served as Greeters.
- Marjorie offered her porch again for an ongoing plant sale in the neighborhood for several weeks. Many of you donated & \$500 was raised to support our outreach meal programs.
- A trial of the onsite breakfast was held for several weeks as well as food & worship support at the Hilltop Inn to meet some short-term needs of residents there.

- About 650 breakfasts were provided to Enough Ministries, Supper support for 25-30 people was provided monthly at the Haven, & 750 bags of dog & cat food were generated for our Pet Pantry.
- A phone campaign was activated in support of the Unhoused in conjunction with Vermont Interfaith Action, wherein the legislators & governor revised the planned end of the hotel-motel program to allow time to coordinate longer term programming for those in need. The Creative Housing Solutions Task Force has also been working hard to break through barriers to promote more options for affordable housing in the Barre area.
- We took initiative to address Gun Violence by sending a letter to our local and federal legislative leaders, voicing our concerns & actions needed. We also supported the local vigil held to remember those who tragically lost their lives from gun violence.
- Through the Music & Worship Team, Good Shepherd hosted Cameo Baroque who provided a lovely concert for the community where proceeds went to support the Pride Center during Pride month.
- Our Outreach Team again had great success in holding another dinner, this time to help Ukranian Relief & the Good Samaritan Haven. A pie & sunflower sale was added to the fundraising opportunities. This along with the dinner & silent auction raised \$3,000 for these important humanitarian resources – both local & global. Again, rave reviews from the community!! Through Tess's coordination, we were noted in the Times-Argus & Front Porch Forum for both dinners. We were the "Talk of the Town" feature for our last dinner.
- In recent weeks, Cindy, Jim, Beth, & Marjorie have worked on getting our garden in shape. A safety assessment was completed through our City Engineer so we know the wall is secure -- and lattice, donated by Linda Wentworth, was hung to add a lovely backdrop to the South end of the garden.
- We just recently had Rev. Debbie Ingram join us to look at how we can support the Declaration of Inclusion in welcoming all in VT and participate in a project to strengthen the relationship between our Police and the community.

- And throughout the last few months, Leo has been working feverishly to identify the best options for upgrading our heating system & physical plant overall to minimize our carbon footprint. Plans are in process and you will hear details in weeks to come.
- Teams are also working to improve our Zoom connection & update our website & social media platforms. Tess got us started last week in planning for a logo which will be used in a variety of ways to help the community get to know us and our mission better. Thank you to those on Zoom who have added your voice to help us improve the Zoom experience.
- A Master Calendar for happenings at Good Shepherd is in place, a bulletin board area has been established, and Becoming Beloved Community Updates are included in the weekly newsletter, all to ensure good communication so everyone knows what is happening & how to participate. Plans for a Parish Directory are also underway so stay-tuned for more information on that.
- Currently, Beth & Tess are researching a process for Good Shepherd to host the school subsidized breakfast program for children for about 5 weeks this summer. This is going to start very soon so be sure to let Beth know today how you can help, either by serving the children any day from 9 to 10 am Monday through Friday or by picking up the breakfasts at Barre Town Middle School.
- Planning is also in process for the upcoming Barre Heritage Festival later this month. We will be providing free ice cream cones the morning of July 29 & opening our church as a place of respite during the festival. Our booth is always a favorite for the children!
- Planning for many other actions & fun events for the Fall are underway. Team Leaders will keep you apprised of what's ahead as they continue to report out each Sunday.

**This is a lot!!!** Sorry if I forgot some things. As I was pulling this list together, the thing that was so wonderfully obvious is the strong level of investment & caring you all demonstrate in truly loving our neighbors. What an awesome message for

our community to see & hear from us as they come to know & experience Good Shepherd more & more. After the Earthquake Dinner, when I was following up with some sponsors, one asked how things went. I gave him a brief overview and he said: "You got all of that out of that little church?!! Wow!! Impressive. Come back & see me again when you think I can be of help." I think that says it all!!

So thank you all again for the hard work that has gone into the last 6 months & the many happenings yet to come in the next 6 months. And much appreciation to Earl for his support & spiritual guidance throughout these past months as we started this journey together of Becoming Beloved Community.