

BECOMING BELOVED COMMUNITY

Growth, Clergy, & Finances

- GROWTH: Increase the size and stewardship involvement of the congregation
 - Upgrade the quality of our Zoom system so it is more user friendly to new and current congregants
 - Explore projecting worship materials for the church service to assist visitors in understanding our service
 - Visit the Unitarian Universalist Church in Montpelier and the Baptist Church in Websterville who have had great success with growth by family programming and see what we can learn from them
- FINANCES: Assess options to increase revenue and decrease expenditures
 - Create a five-year plan to identify process for addressing increased operating expenses
 - Explore solar power, heat pumps, increased insulation, weatherization grants, etc. to decrease heating costs – and demonstrate we are good stewards of creation care for our community
 - Strengthen parishioner education regarding stewardship, estate planning, and bequests
 - Conduct periodic plate offerings for the Episcopal Relief and Development Fund & various local charities, highlighted on related spiritual Feast Days
 - Explore grant opportunities to support both sustainability matters and mission outreach needs
- CLERGY: Work toward securing and sustaining full-time clergy
 - Complete financial projections & research the process for securing full-time clergy
 - Research opportunities for federal student loan forgiveness to facilitate securing a full-time clergy, meeting the requirements as a professional serving a rural, non-profit community entity for a designated amount of time
 - Upgrade the Rectory to be a point of attraction for an incoming priest
 - Establish a Search Committee & work with the Diocese at the point Good Shepherd needs to be active in seeking new clergy
 - Explore options for constellation with the Diocese as an interim measure, if needed

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Programming for Families

- YOUNG FAMILY PARTICIPATION: Increase the number of young families in the congregation by helping to meet their needs & help Good Shepherd establish stability of the congregational base going forward
 - Provide childcare during worship services
 - Work toward establishing a Sunday School program as the number of children warrants
 - Offer opportunities that address family needs to promote growth of a younger congregant population such as those listed below:
 - Pre-school
 - Childcare
 - Afterschool Programing
 - Vacation Bible School
 - Partner with community resources to offer programs as noted above, preferably at the church through rental of our space
 - Provide low-cost family entertainment opportunities in our church building and garden area

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Community: Communication, Church Image, & Activities

- COMMUNICATION WITH OUR COMMUNITY: Ensure our community is well-advised of who we are at Good Shepherd and what we offer
 - Strengthen our website to communicate more about who we are & what we offer
 - Increase visibility on social media platforms
 - Develop a brochure of programs offered at Good Shepherd, list of contacts, etc. that can be given to people in the community to help them assess how they might want to be involved in programs at Good Shepherd
 - Educate the community to those programs which address family needs
 - Expand our definition of community by reaching beyond Barre to nearby communities that don't have an Episcopal Church (Berlin, Orange, Plainfield, etc.) to attract new members
 - Liaise with other Teams to broadcast their activities & bolster their good work
- CLARIFYING & ENHANCING OUR CHURCH IMAGE: Dispel any concerns that we might be elitist or part of the negative extremist religious segment in our country
 - Clarify our values as a church to emphasize an inclusive message that "All are welcome at Good Shepherd"
 - Increase community awareness that transportation to church services can be arranged
 - Develop a church logo for use on banners and T-shirts to help identify Good Shepherd as helpers in the community
- COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES: Promote a strong community connection with Good Shepherd for increased good will with the community and opportunity to attract new parishioners
 - Increase church visibility & hospitality by holding some regularly scheduled events like concerts, movie nights, church suppers, bake sales, pie days, seasonal events, etc.
 - Conduct Community Service Days to actively meet an identified need in our community, i.e., yard care for seniors, fundraising dinners for Emergency Relief Funding, etc.
 - Continue participation in the Barre Heritage Festival
 - Increase rental of our church space

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Mission Outreach

- CURRENT MISSION PROGRAMS: Continue as needed
 - Breakfasts twice a week through Enough Ministries for those facing food insecurity
 - Provision of clothes to Enough Ministries to address seasonal clothing needs of the homeless, i.e., coats, shoes, hats, gloves, scarfs, socks, etc.
 - Dinner meal for the Good Samaritan Haven once a month
 - Worship service & lunch for residents of The Hilltop (temporary housing for the homeless) as needed
 - Support of Vermont Interfaith Action's housing initiatives for the homeless, affordable housing, public safety, and other matters of social justice
 - Participation on the Creative Housing Solutions Task Force to address more affordable housing in the Barre area
 - Support of those parishioners participating in community programs such as Rock City Choral Group whose proceeds go to various designated charities, Restorative Justice programming and Circles of Support and Accountability for those transitioning from prison, Camp Agape for children of incarcerated parents, and Pet Food Pantry which assists the homeless in maintaining the important support of their pets by providing food for their dogs & cats

- NEW MISSION OPPORTUNITIES: Develop new mission opportunities in the community such those below, according to community need
 - Reestablish breakfast programs directly at Good Shepherd for those experiencing food insecurity
 - Establish a support program for those who are addressing Substance Use Disorder
 - Hold Speaker nights with leaders in our community to better understand their roles/programs, introduce who we are at Good Shepherd, and identify how we might meet needs in the community
 - Help with Habitat for Humanity program, upkeep needs at the Haven, etc.
 - Explore creation care programs to ensure our church is minimizing its carbon footprint & helping the community do so as well
 - Explore program opportunities at Mission Farm
 - Partner with community resources to provide support for parishioners who need assistance dealing with hardships from the pandemic

- Partner with other local churches for shared mission projects

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Caring for Each Other: Fellowship & Support

- FELLOWSHIP: Strengthen parishioner connections to reduce isolation & engender a sense of belonging & leadership in the parish
 - Increase opportunities for fellowship activities such as luncheons, craft groups, holiday gift-making for charity, etc.
 - Establish a regular system of greeters for Sunday services as well as other programs held at the church
 - Develop a “buddy system” to help newcomers understand the flow of the worship service and introduce them to parishioners at Coffee Hour if they would like
 - Initiate a process for regular scheduling of coffee hour – and set-up/clean-up assistance for coffee hour in the garden, Spring through Fall
 - Ensure all parishioners are aware of church activities and their options to participate
 - Conduct training for new parishioners who would like to be involved in coffee hour, mission programs, etc.
- SUPPORT: Demonstrate caring for each other during times of need
 - Create a parishioner-led pastoral care team to respond to parishioners in times of need, i.e., provision of meals, sending a card, providing respite care, etc.

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Music, Worship, & Organ Events

- MUSIC/ORGAN: Increase congregational growth & community well-being through our music programs
 - Hold a variety of musical concerts to attract more people to Good Shepherd, especially programs highlighting our new organ
 - Use our new organ to offer organ lessons for children and adults
 - Engage the congregation in some preferred musical choices for worship
- WORSHIP: Increase congregational growth through expanding variety of worship opportunities
 - Explore worship opportunities which would appeal to a variety of community populations & age groups, i.e., services held along a mountainside, by a river, or in other nature-based settings, etc.
 - Emphasize more holy/feast days with special programming & educate to the beauty of our spiritual traditions and images
 - Reestablish services that would be visible to the community like the Good Friday Procession and Blessing of Pets in the park on the Feast Day of St. Francis of Assisi
 - Support individuals who are interested in becoming a Deacon
 - Increase number of acolytes to ensure availability for worship services