

Pastor's Report: 2022

Of course, as we come to our "Annual Parish Meeting" this year, we will once again meet online, as we did last year, because we are entering the third year of the global pandemic. But despite the pandemic, the terrible toll of lives lost and disrupted, the uncertainties we still face, we at Good Shepherd still have our community to maintain and our mission to carry out. As I reflected about this past year, I was reminded that throughout the Scriptures we are told that we will encounter plagues and catastrophes, even violence and hatred in our walk in faith, yet we are also assured that God walks along with us.

In the face of the challenges we face as a congregation, this past year has been a test of our faith, and I am pleased to say as your pastor that I believe we have risen to this test. We have continued with a strong worship tradition, gather online when we must and in person when we can to praise God and give thanks for our blessings. As the pandemic lessened last year we had outdoor services, and indoor services for four and a half months until the rates rose again. We have also continued to carry out our mission to our community, supplying over 300 meals each month for our neighbors. We have regular activities of Bible Study, Yoga and Evening Prayer as opportunities to deepen our faith and renew our spirits. This year we welcomed Bishop Shannon MacVean-Brown in her first visit to Good Shepherd and Barre, and Bishop Shannon baptized our newest member, Roger Sartelle, Reesie and Will's son!

During the course of the year we have also looked to our future. The Vestry has begun a process for exploring the manner in which we can continue our ministry. We also took care of our beautiful facilities, improving lighting and electrical systems in the church, painting and cleaning, as well as putting a new, solid roof on the Rectory. We are making sure that both the physical fabric and the spiritual life of our parish is strong as we move into the coming years.

To me, the high point of the year was that on Christmas, we were able to worship together and debut our new Casavant organ. Christmas was a sign to me this year of new life in Christ, holding all the possibilities for faithful growth and mission in the name of the Risen Jesus. I want to thank each one of you from the bottom of my heart for your kindness, generosity, hard work, thoughtfulness and deep faith you have shown here at Good Shepherd. My prayer is that God continues to fill us with amazing grace that we might do more to show our love and compassion in the coming months. May God bless you always.

Peace, Earl Kooperkamp