

Pastor's Report 2025

I am extremely grateful to God that I can report that Good Shepherd is growing and thriving in Barre. As you can see in the reports for 2024, in almost every way as a congregation we are growing in membership, attendance, financial sustainability and most importantly, serving our community in the Name of Christ. Coming out of the Covid pandemic, together we have set a strong foundation for our parish. Three years ago under the leadership of our past Senior Warden, Philip Moros, we took on the task of discerning God's will for the future, and the hard work and insightful plans developed by the Discernment team in consultation with members of Good Shepherd, set goals for the coming years. During the past two years, under the leadership of our capable Senior Warden Linda Webster, we have undertaken a Team approach to "Becoming Beloved Community." The work of all our Teams is extraordinary: we are reaching out in mission, both here in Barre and throughout the world. And week by week, month by month we see the results. Maybe the best example of all this work and prayer was our recent Christmas Eve service. For this first time in decades there was standing room only in the Sanctuary, as lovely service in which 15 children participated. And after the service, we sheltered 8 unhoused neighbors (and another 6 at Hedding Church) during a night when the temperatures fell to single digits. Maybe there was "no room at the inn" on that Holy Night in Bethlehem almost 2000 years ago, but working together we made sure there was a place for everyone.

Looking forward, I pray that God will enable us at Good shepherd to keep this energy and momentum as we grow in the Spirit. The center of our life is God's goodness that we are given in Jesus, to grant us mercy and to help us grow in the Spirit of Love. Through our worship, through our learning together, through the mission and fellowship actions we undertake, my prayer and my concern is that each one of us has our souls touched and renewed by the savior's Spirit of Love. No doubt, we live now in difficult and uncertain times, and the political, social and environmental crises we face are daunting. But our hope is in the power of the everlasting loving kindness of God, a hope that will guide and inspire our lives in this coming year.

In that Spirit, let me express my deep appreciation for all the efforts of our Good Shepherd community, for the tireless and compassionate leadership of our Senior Warden Linda Webster; for the care and hard work of our Junior Warden, Leo Martineau; for the guidance of our Vestry members, the Vestry clerk and our parish treasurer; for our tremendous Team Leaders and the team members, our acolytes, and of course, our gracious organist, Marjorie Strong. Each one of you has made this past

year fun, exciting and just plain great! Thank you so much and I cannot wait to see what God has in store for us in the coming year.

Faithfully,

Rev. Earl Kooperkamp
Rector, The Church of the Good Shepherd, Barre