

# Parish Profile

Church of the Good Shepherd  
Reading, MA



# Who We Are

Located in Reading, Massachusetts, the Church of the Good Shepherd began meeting in 1913 and has occupied our present site since 1920.



Our parish is ready to welcome a new rector with open arms. We currently meet on Sundays at 10AM, with a worship service that is open to all.



Our Vestry meets monthly and includes a dedicated cross-section of our parish that is in place to support the new rector.

# Where We Are



The Church of the Good Shepherd is located in **Reading, MA**, a suburban community 15 miles north of Boston, located along the intersection of Interstates 93 and 95. The commuter rail stops in town, with the train station just steps away from the church.



While most of our parishioners call Reading home, we also have a significant population from other towns, including **North Reading, Wilmington, Stoneham and Tewksbury.**

# Where We Are

**First settled in the 1600s**, Reading has a busy downtown, with local shops and restaurants. The town is mostly single-family homes, but there are also new apartment and condo buildings (most near the center of town).

The town is home to just over **25,000 people** (24% of the population is under the age of 18, reflecting the community's long-standing commitment to families). There are 8 public schools, as well as a private school (Austin Prep, grades 6-12). **Reading Memorial High School** is consistently [ranked](#) among the top 25% of high schools in Massachusetts.

Reading is proud of its outdoor spaces, including the [Town Forest](#), where you can find walking trails across 290 acres. The [Bare Meadow and Mattera Conservation Areas](#) add an additional 125 acres of trails and open space.

The biggest town celebration happens each fall at the [Reading Fall Street Faire](#), which draws thousands of visitors downtown for food, entertainment, and shopping. Our church usually has a booth at the event, handing out popcorn and spreading the word about our parish.



# Our Church



Our worship space was built in 1925, and the attached hall in 1950.

There are no current major capital needs for the building and grounds. The most recent notable addition was a patio space built for coffee hour and other outdoor gatherings.

A dedicated **Property Committee** oversees all projects. The **Cleaning Crew** volunteers their time to keep things tidy, saving our parish thousands of dollars each year.

# Sunday Service



When you enter the church on a Sunday morning, you'll not only be greeted by ushers, but also by friendly smiles from across the pews. We are a tight-knit group and do our best to make new people welcome.

Our parish's liturgical style has evolved over the years: not quite high church, not low church. We currently practice Rite II on Sunday mornings (previously, a second earlier service was offered with Rite I). All are welcome to take communion at our Eucharist service.

## **Quotes from our parish survey:**

*"Every week is nice to recharge the batteries and be around a group of people that care about each other."*

*"I can recall the first time I attended mass and having a warm feeling."*

*"I believe that there is a great community within this church. That's why I've been here for such a long time."*



# Music

Our congregation enjoys the music that accompanies our Eucharist services, both by singing popular and traditional hymns and listening to the choir's anthems. We have a part-time music director and an all-volunteer, non-auditioned choir, which sounds larger than its numbers, thanks to the music director's skills in music selection, adding her voice to the choir, and choir direction.

For instrumental music and accompaniment, we have both a Conrad Olsen Pipe Organ with a 3-keyboard Skinner console church organ and a Yamaha grand piano, which was donated in memory of several parishioners. Several members of our congregation are also talented individual musicians who play a variety of other instruments, sometimes accompanying the choir on an anthem or playing individual pieces as a prelude or postlude.



# Gathering Together



Sundays are a warm welcoming start to the week. Our service is followed by a coffee hour, where everyone can visit and catch up with friends, while also learning of events that are coming up.

Special coffee hours include our **Welcome Back Sunday** in the fall, our **Annual Meeting** in the winter, and an **Ice Cream Social** ahead of summer vacation season.



# Gathering Together

Events are held throughout the year that not only bring us together, but are also inclusive of the broader community:

- **Annual Auction:** Held each Spring, this is an evening of fun, with a potluck dinner, followed by games and our ever popular auction, filled with items and services from throughout our community.
- **Fall-iday Fair:** Held every November, this is one of our largest fundraising events, offering bake table favorites, craft items, and many vendor tables.
- **Shrove Tuesday:** Our pancake dinner gives our congregation the opportunity to join together for an evening of great company before 40 days of Lent.

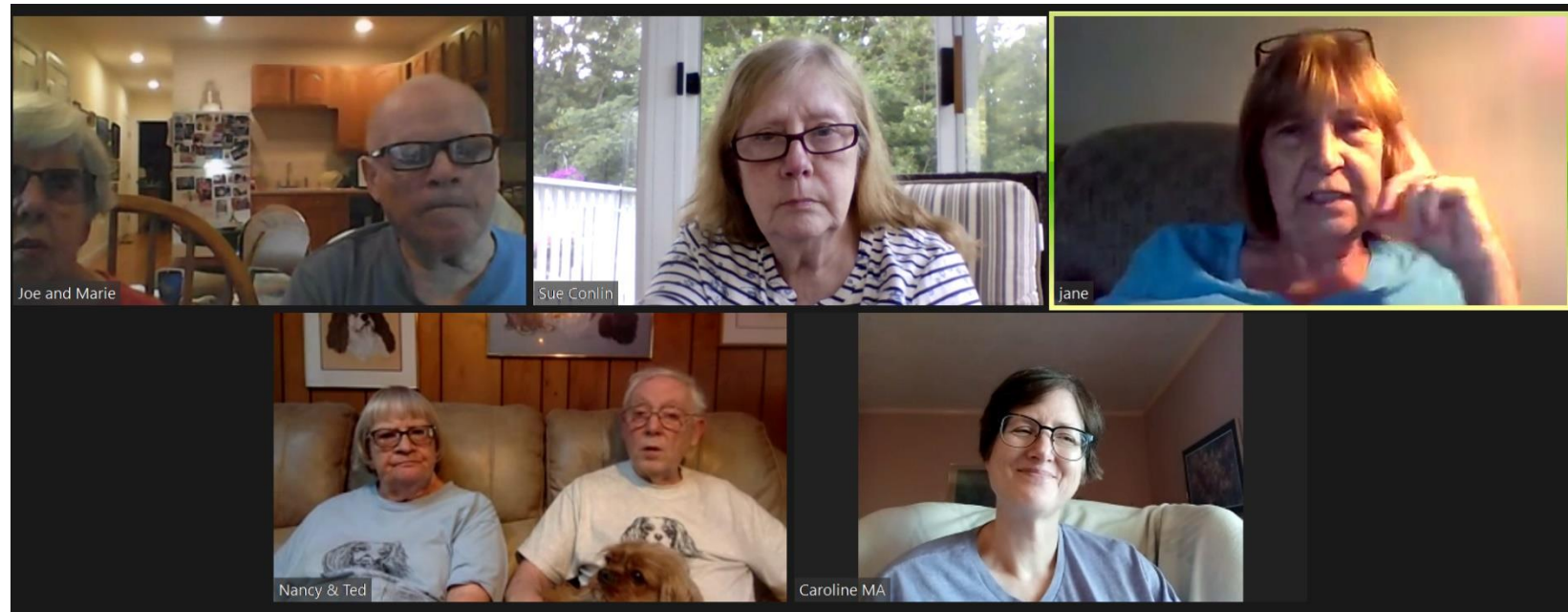
Other events include group **craft tutorials**, participating in the town **Porchfest** concerts, and dining out together for **restaurant fundraisers**.



# Online Connections

One lesson of the pandemic was to embrace technology as a way to maintain connections.

In 2020, an online social group started meeting up on Zoom on Wednesday evenings. Parishioners have kept that time slot. It's an informal evening to talk about parish activities or to catch up with friends.



You'll find all sorts of pictures from our events on [Facebook](#) & [Instagram](#)



In 2020, the church made investments in a camera and streaming hardware. We now livestream on Facebook every Sunday, where we regularly draw 6-12 "remote parishioners."

The recording is later shared on [our YouTube page](#) and with community media centers in the area, so people can watch that week's service on local TV. A small and dedicated team of volunteers ensures this happens.

# Parish Youth



The children of Good Shepherd are at the heart of who we are as a parish.

Our **Sunday School** program meets 3-4 times per month from September through June, led by volunteer members from our parish community.



# Parish Youth

Here are some of the special events where our children take center stage:

- **Christmas Pageant:** A tradition dating back decades
- **Egg Hunt:** Ahead of Easter Sunday, our youngest members are invited to collect eggs across the church grounds and even meet the Easter Bunny!
- **Sacraments:** Whether it is baptism, first communion or confirmation, these are always events that bring smiles and a sense of joy across the church.

Youth outreach and family involvement are seen as key priorities for our new rector. While we are a multi-generational church, there is broad agreement that the next rector must view young families as a key constituency.



# Our Work Away From Church

Our parishioners have a strong sense to give back in the broader community. We have a number of initiatives that we are a part of and are always seeking new ways to help those in need.

- **Bread of Life:** We have been involved with this group for many years, offering time and money each month to prepare a meal and serve dinner to a large group of people within the Malden community who are less fortunate.
- **Refugee Support:** Members are part of a collaborative effort with other town parishes to support refugees from Afghanistan & Ukraine.
- **Reading Food Pantry:** Donations are collected and dropped off weekly
- **Giving Tree:** At Christmas time, people can purchase items for families in Reading or surrounding towns to ensure there are gifts on Christmas morning.

Previous rectors have led the parish on community programs that are important to them. We hope that our next rector brings ideas to the table.



# Bargain Box

The **Bargain Box Thrift Shop** is located in the lower level of our church, run by a volunteer group of parishioners.

Donated clothing, household items, and toys are available to those with a limited budget.

The Bargain Box has also helped members of the community who have suffered a loss, like a house fire. They have had the opportunity to come in and get what they need at no charge.

Ten percent of the proceeds from the shop support various local charities and outreach programs. The remainder funds improvements within our church.



# By the Numbers

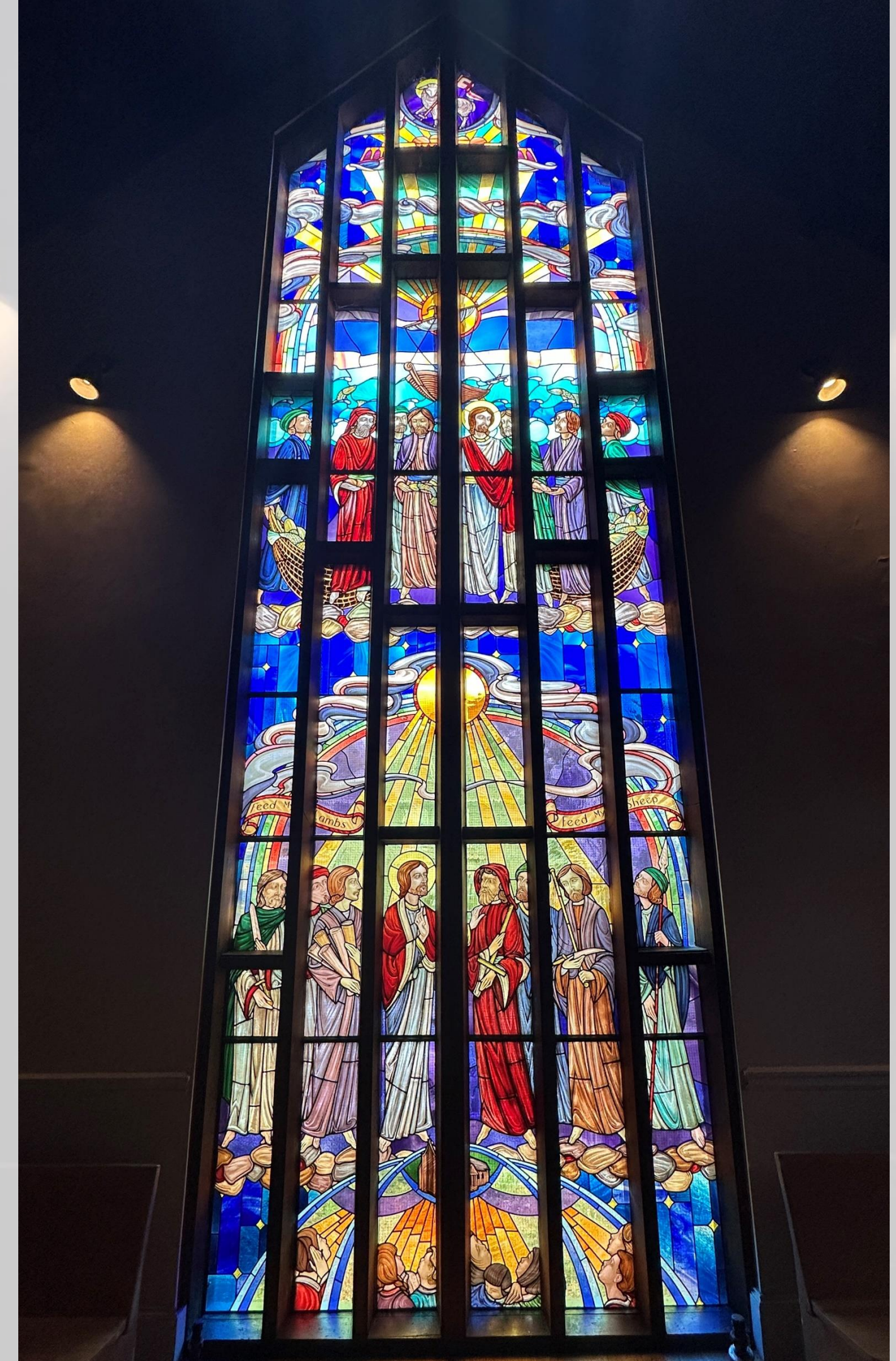
Total Parishioners:	245
Average Weekly Attendance:	72
Total Households:	146
Pledging Households:	57

## Last 5 Years

• Baptisms	18
• First Communions	9
• Confirmations	12
• Weddings	7

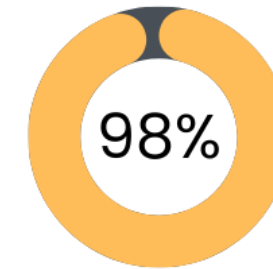
## 2024 Financial Outlook

Pledges & "Plate"	\$166,000
Fundraisers	\$18,000
Other Income	\$33,000
<b>Total Budgeted Income</b>	<b>\$217,000</b>
Current Endowment	\$595,000



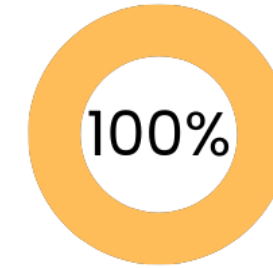
# Parish Survey

“A friendly atmosphere prevails among the members of our church.”



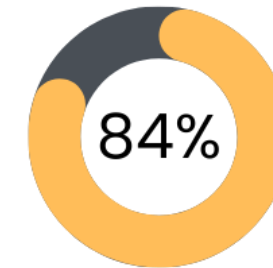
**“Tend to Agree” or Stronger**

“I sense an atmosphere of genuine care and concern among our members in time of personal need.”



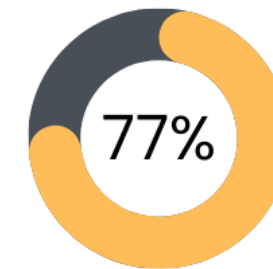
**“Tend to Agree” or Stronger**

“The whole spirit in our congregation makes people want to get as involved as possible.”



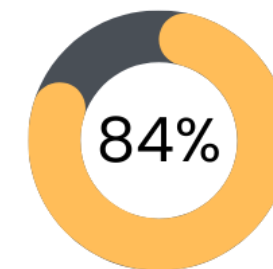
**“Tend to Agree” or Stronger**

“On the whole, I am satisfied with how things are in our church.”



**Clearly Agree**

“Our members welcome changes in worship.”



**“Tend to Agree” or Stronger**



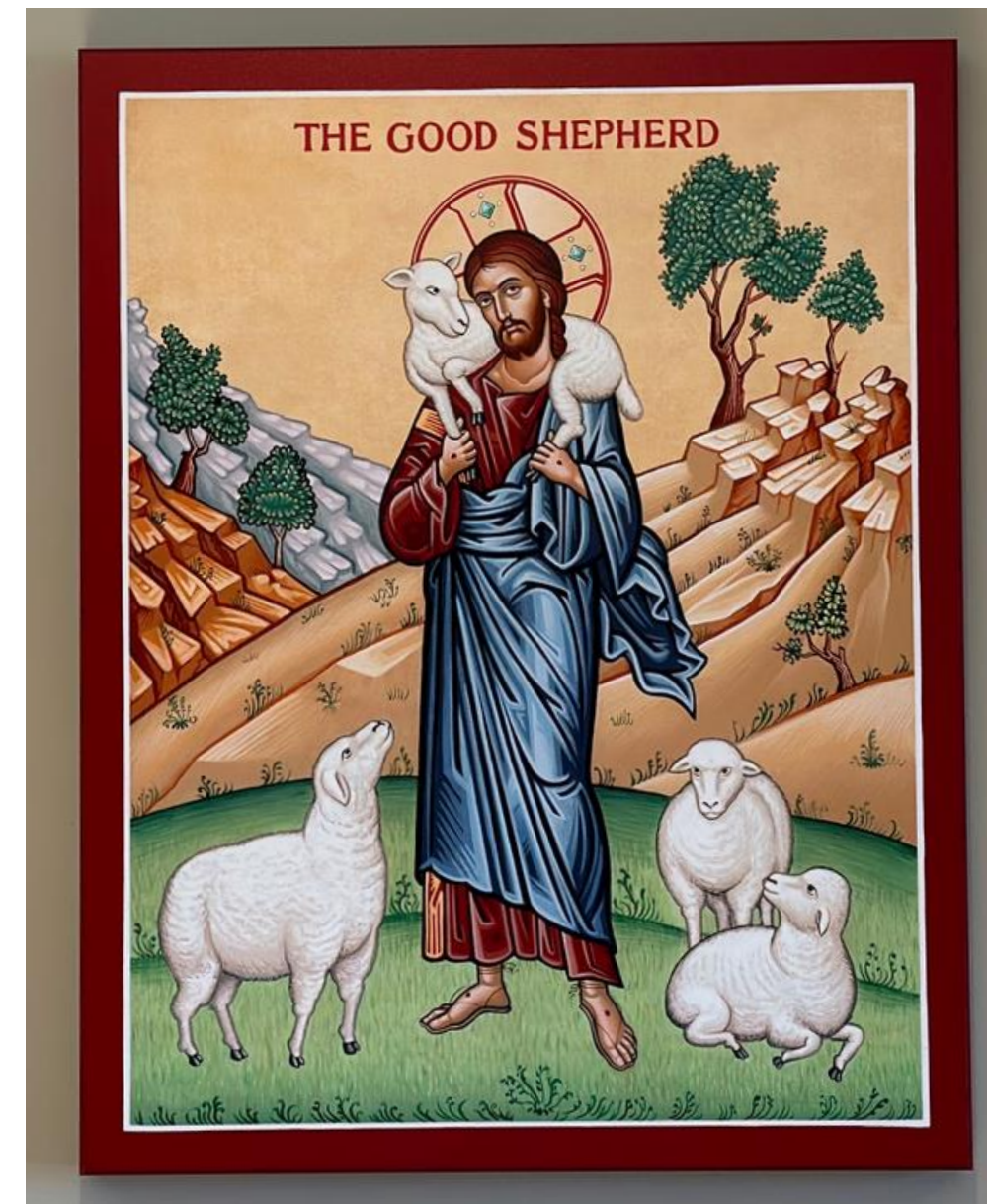
# Goals & Opportunities

*When our parish survey asked where we need additional energy placed, there were two clear priorities:*

1. Make necessary changes to attract **families with children and youth** to our church.
2. Develop and implement a **comprehensive strategy to reach new people** and incorporate them into the life of the church.

*Additional Priorities:*

- Develop the spiritual generosity of the people to financially support the ministry of the church.
- Develop ministries that work toward healing those broken by life circumstances.
- Provide more opportunities for Christian education and spiritual formation at every age and stage of life.



# Helping Hands

## How You Can Support Us, Your New Parish

- **Preach sermons** that help us understand Jesus' teachings in their context and for our lives today.
- Offer a strong **pastoral presence** to help those in need.
- Offer **spiritual leadership** to strengthen our faith.
- **Listen and learn** about our church. Then, bring **creative** and **innovative** ideas to the table to lead us forward.
- **Connect with the broader community.** Be approachable and available to those who are seeking details about our faith.
- Offer ideas and collaborate with lay leadership to develop programs that will appeal to **children and families.**
- Work closely with our committees to offer **leadership and guidance.**



# Helping Hands

## How We are Ready to Support You, Our New Rector

- We are a **flexible** parish, willing to change to attain our goals. We are seeking a strong leader to set the path.
- We want your transition to our parish to be **as smooth as possible**. Leadership pledges to be welcoming and patient as you get settled in, ready to offer input and opinions about our history and future goals.
- Most people who attend church on Sunday are involved in some other capacity at the parish. Whether it be Vestry, another committee, or some form of community ministry, **our parishioners are active in our mission**.
- You will find that this group is always **willing to help those who need it**. Whether that involves visiting those who are sick, delivering flowers or just sending birthday cards, this parish truly cares for those around them.



# What Else You Should Know

- Please note that this is a **3/4-time position** (ie: 30 hours per week) and is compensated as such. See our OTM report for full salary details.
- We do not have a rectory. A portion of the rector's salary is designated as a housing allowance in order to offset owed income tax.
- The salary also includes a 50% reimbursement for SECA (Self-Employed Contributions Act)



**Thank you for learning about our parish. We look forward to learning about you!**

Interested applicants should send cover letter, resume and OTM portfolio to:  
[search@GoodShepherdReading.org](mailto:search@GoodShepherdReading.org)

**Rector Applications Due: February 24, 2025**



*Our Rector Search Committee*