

**2020**  
**CANDIDATES FOR ELECTED POSITIONS**

*Below are the candidate profiles, in alphabetical order for each group.  
Responses may have been edited for length, clarity or formatting*

**VESTRY**

*4 seats open; 3 seats with 3-year terms and 1 seat with a 1-year unexpired term.*

**1. London Bates**

*Service to the Church of Good Shepherd:* I have served on the pumpkin patch ministry for Church of Good Shepherd for the past few years. It was really gratifying to me to be a part of the ministry to continue to bring the pumpkin patch to our church and community three years ago. The pumpkin patch is embraced by church members and the community. I have also served as a volunteer in the dessert room for events at COGS such as the shrimp boil. Volunteering in the dessert room is an absolute joy! It is a volunteer service that is well-received by nearly all church members. In volunteering in the dessert room, I also became friendly with other members of the church and got to know some really wonderful ladies.



My only disappointment in my volunteer service at COGS occurred when we were not able to bring pumpkins for the pumpkin patch for the last couple of years. I felt disappointed that we were not able to bring the patch to the church and community to enjoy.

*Service to other organizations:* I have also volunteered on the Board at the Dunedin Fine Art Center for the past ten years. I am currently serving as Chair of the Board at DFAC until September 30, 2020. It has been incredibly fulfilling to volunteer as a Board member at DFAC to be a part of the expansion of the facility at DFAC to its becoming the largest art center in the Southeastern United States and to be a part of bringing art education to children, adults, seniors and veterans in our community.

Prior to being on the Board at DFAC, I served on the Board of the Gulf Coast Museum of Art. The Museum was struggling to continue its operations at its location in Largo and was eventually closed. The new Executive Director and Board worked tirelessly to try to save the Museum, but were not able to overcome the obstacles to maintain the Museum. I was deeply saddened and disappointed that we were not able to sustain the Museum.

*Connection with the Church of Good Shepherd:* I am a member of the COGS because it feels like home to me. I was baptized at COGS and attended service at COGS and at St. Alfred's as a child. As an adult, I worshiped at other churches, but felt at home when I returned to COGS. I love the formality of the Episcopal Church and feel a deep connection to COGS because of my history with family and friends at COGS.

One of the greatest strengths of COGS is in its members. The members of COGS are the heart of the church. The members are incredibly welcoming to other members, guests and new members and create a beautiful environment to worship with one another. Another strength of COGS is the leadership by Pastor Becky. The members are the heart of COGS, and Becky is the soul of the church. Pastor Becky welcomes all to the church service, "no exceptions," which always resonated with me from the first time that I heard it. A great strength of COGS is the location of COGS and the beautiful historical church building. We worship in a beautiful building in downtown Dunedin under a sunny, cloudless sky nearly every Sunday.

## **London Bates- continued**

I think that there are many opportunities available to COGS now and in the future. I think that one opportunity is to engage folks to join the church or return to the church to give folks a home for personal contact and support in an electronic age. I also think that COGS has an opportunity to engage families with children to grow the children's ministry. I view this as an opportunity and a challenge. Due to the increase in property values in Dunedin, it has become more difficult for families to purchase a home in Dunedin, and we may see fewer young families in Dunedin. Another opportunity available to COGS is the use of the vacant lot next to the church campus, which has limitless potential to serve the church. I think that COGS also faces a challenge with a decrease in church membership in general in the United States, but I do think that this can be overcome. Lastly, I think that COGS has a challenge in finding another pastor after Pastor Becky retires and the transition to a new pastor.

*Personal Context.* One of my greatest strengths is my desire to listen to others and consider the thoughts and feelings of others. Another strength of mine is my ability to make decisions in a reasonable and thoughtful way. I do not believe in making hasty decisions and like to give careful consideration when making decisions. I also think that I can bring balance and calm to others or groups of others. I like to think that I have a calming presence that I give to others around me.

My education includes a bachelor's degree in accounting, CPA license, and a law degree and law license, along with a background of practicing law for the last twenty years. As the Vestry handles the legal and financial administration of the church corporation, I can help to support the Vestry as a member with my legal and accounting background, but most importantly I can help to support the communication to church members with my strength of listening to others and bringing balance and calm to others and groups of others.

## **2. Iris Brookins**

Currently and for several years I have served on the Lay Eucharistic Visitors team. I have attended discussion groups, most recently "The Mourners Path" and as a follow on, several members of that discussion group are forming a support group to continue our relationships.



As a part of my personal mission to assist the aging population as a licensed insurance agent specializing in Medicare enrollments, I have been available to discuss and support several members of the congregation. Also, my experience with Bill on his Alzheimer's journey enables me to help others on their journey with a spouse or loved one. These experiences have been personally rewarding and supportive on my journey to embody the teachings of Jesus. Most frustrating and less enjoyable are the limitations of the resources and saying good-bye to friends when they die.

I attended the New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary for two years, was married to a minister for nineteen years. Later I established my own businesses and ran those and still do. I have twenty plus years experience as a human resources staffing specialist for computer software professionals. I have always loved learning and have studied interior design, coaching, and education. One of my hobbies has been to purchase and restore neglected houses. Like people they mostly needed love and caring. Currently as a Medicare specialist I help people understand complex information which effects their health care. I found the experience of being a minister's wife less than fulfilling. I felt my pastor husband was undercompensated for the work he was expected to do. My own lack of freedom of expression was frustrating, very. I am the mother of two daughters from this union. Also, I have five grandchildren.

## Iris Brookins - continued

My husband Bill Taylor and I began attending COGS in 2012 when we decided to get married after moving to Florida from the Maryland suburbs of Washington, D.C. Bill was an inactive Episcopalian and I a disillusioned Baptist. We met and were drawn initially because of Pastor Becky. We found the love and acceptance here I had not experienced in other congregations. I became an Episcopalian shortly thereafter and we became members. We were married by Pastor Becky in 2013 in this church. Bill died June 8, 2019.

The greatest strengths of this congregation are Love, Love, Love. Love of God, Love for each other, and Love of ourselves. We must now share more of this love with each other, with our community, and our ministries abroad. I see our challenges as a congregation as increasing outreach to younger prospects; our aging congregation; and, the noise in Kirk Hall.

I believe my strengths include my ability to feel and empathize with my fellow humans. My business skills have enabled me to run my businesses successfully. My variety of educational experiences have given me a broad prospective of people and organizations.

I would welcome the opportunity to be a member of the Vestry of the Church of the Good Shepherd.

## 2. Dan Depies

### *Service to the Church of Good Shepherd:*

- Current / Past service to the Church
  - Current Vestry board member.
  - Chaired or participated on committees such as Audit committee, Furniture Thrift Store purchase, Peace Walk, and long-range planning for Peace Park.
  - Current member of Building and Grounds committee.
  - Past truck driver for Furniture Thrift Store.
  - Also have helped at times with Parking Lot team, Shrimp boil team, and Meals of Hope food packing team.
- I found that I greatly enjoyed all the volunteer work. It was an opportunity to get to know and work with other church members and provided personal satisfaction that we did things that either directly or indirectly helped others.



### *Service to other Organizations:*

- Rotary Club of East Lake Sunrise
  - Member for 8 years, Board of Directors for 7 years.
  - 2-time President (2015-2016 Rotary year, and 2018-2019)
  - Treasurer (Current and past)
- As part of Rotary, I have also helped participating or volunteering for Habitat for Humanity projects, Santa for Senior's initiatives and promoting World Polio day.

### *Connection with the Church of the Good Shepherd:*

- Reason for Church membership:
  - Better understand the history and meanings of the words in the Bible.
  - Ask our Lord for help and guidance.
  - Celebrate and thanks for all the great things that have been provided to us.
  - Do all these things as a member of a community.
- Greatest strengths of the congregation:
  - Devotion to doing good things for others.
  - Can do attitude of Church leaders and members.
- Opportunities open to congregation:
  - Ensure that members find personal reward in their efforts to help others.
  - Grow Parish membership.

## Dan Depies - continued

- Challenges facing the congregation:
  - Church member burn-out. To few doing too much.
  - Finding a new Rector.
  - Supporting individual Church members during this time of change.

### Personal Context:

- Strength's / Gifts:
  - Organization of work and tasks to maximize efficiencies.
  - Problem solving skills.
  - Common sense solutions.
- How will strengths contribute to Vestry's purpose:
  - Help to maximize the outcomes of meetings and the efforts of the team.

## 4. Judy Warner

I am a cradle Episcopalian and had my membership transferred to Church of the Good Shepherd 23 years ago. In April, 1997, I went through a reaffirmation process within our church with The Rev. Randall Hehr and The Rev. Mary Anne Dorner.



My first involvement with our church was through the Incorporation Committee which I eventually chaired. We invited, greeted and incorporated new members into the life of the church.

I will list subsequent involvement since then.

### Former Ministry Involvement

Vestry for 4 terms

Chaired the search for The Rev. Becky Robbins-Penniman

Sr Warden for The Rev. Patrick Ward and for The Rev. Becky Robbins-Penniman for 3 years

Treasurer of the church for 7 years

Chaired the Capital Campaign that raised \$700,000+

### Current Ministry Involvement

Choir Member

Bell Choir Member

Lector

Chair of the Personnel Committee

Chair of the Stewardship Committee

I consider Good Shepherd to be my home filled with fellow Christians whom I connect with and love. I believe it when it is said to come as you are, all are welcome, no exceptions. It is being lived. I love the liturgy, the church building, and the many ways we serve God by ministering in the community. There are so many options provided for us to serve.

In my past leadership roles, I particularly enjoyed the 3 years serving as Sr. Warden for Becky. I learned so much from her and appreciated our ability to speak openly on any topic and to help plan and strategize with her as to short and long term visions for our church. Part of that vision was to launch a comprehensive Capital Campaign with the goal of raising funds to remodel the church and campus. The campaign was successful not only in the money raised but how it was used to meet our remodeling needs. We accomplished every improvement need over a 3 year period as planned. Also, I love using my modest musical abilities in our church, both in the choir and the bell choir. It takes a team and we have excellent leaders and talented members who sing and ring to the glory of God.

## **Judy Warner - continued**

I believe that God has blessed me with talents that I want to share with others at Good Shepherd. I carefully choose the ministries I am involved in and can honestly say that I have never disliked any engagement. I strongly believe we are called as Christians to use our time, talent and treasure and I have chosen Good Shepherd to be the primary benefactor of those. My strengths lie in organizational, communication and leadership abilities, mostly acquired over a 25 year career in sales & marketing at Johnson & Johnson. I am interested in using my time and talents again on Vestry especially at this point in time at Good Shepherd. We will be experiencing a departure of our beloved priest and welcoming a new one. It is a pivotal time for us and I am confident my skills can aid in the overall process.

Thank you for your time in reading this.

## **ENDOWMENT FUND BOARD** *1 seat open*

### **Scott Hood**

*Service to the Church of the Good Shepherd:* I have served Good Shepherd in a number of capacities including a 3-year term on the Endowment Fund Board, seven years on the Finance Team including several years as Chairperson, three years as church Treasurer, member of the leadership team for the Celebrating Our Blessings Capital Campaign, a 3-year term on Vestry, and two years as Senior Warden. All these roles were fulfilling as they gave me the opportunity to use my business background to contribute to a team effort to move our parish forward. All were enjoyable, but I did pull back a couple of years ago because the time commitment of Vestry coupled with serving as Sr. Warden was taking its toll on my business.



*Service to other Organizations:* I have been active in community organizations over the years serving on the Board of the Friends of the Island Parks and currently serving on the Board of the Dunedin Council of Organizations. Giving back to the community has been important to me, so these involvements have always been enjoyable. In terms of what aspects I didn't enjoy, it would be the 80/20 rule of volunteerism...20% (or less) of the members do 80% (or more) of the work.

*Connection with the Church of the Good Shepherd:* I chose to become a member of Good Shepherd because of the quality of the worship experience. I believe our three greatest strengths are the worship experience and related educational programs, the commitment of church members to outreach, and of course our fantastic Rector! I see the three most compelling opportunities open to our congregation being the opportunity to attract new members from the ranks of those dissatisfied with their current religious experience, the opportunity to have more impact on the Dunedin community, and the opportunity to continue to strengthen the financial foundation of Good Shepherd. Three significant challenges facing the congregation are replacing our very popular Rector, minimizing the disruption of the transition to a new Rector, and ensuring that we are all prepared and committed to adapt to the changes.

*Personal Context:* My three greatest strengths or gifts are organizational ability, leadership skills, and attention to detail. I believe that my volunteer experience at Good Shepherd from initial experience on the Endowment Fund Board, to the Finance Team, to Treasurer, to Vestry, to Sr. Warden prepares me well to again serve on the Endowment Fund Board.

## **DELEGATES TO DIOCESAN CONVENTION**

*4 seats open: 3 regular delegates and 1 alternate*

*Pursuant to Diocesan Canon, seats not filled by election are appointed by the Vestry.*

### **2. Chester “Butch” Niford**

*Personal Context:* Although my given name is Chester, all my family and friends call me Butch. After graduating from The Citadel, I served in the US Army Corps of Engineers and after 20 years of continuous active service retired in 1984 as a Lieutenant Colonel. My primary responsibilities were combat engineer and construction engineering and facilities management. After retirement, I was employed with Westinghouse and Northrop Grumman for 21 years as both a Program and Project Manager supporting the US and UK Navy’s Trident II submarine fleets, and other US Navy programs, retiring in 2006. Among other educational accomplishments, I have both a BS and MS in Civil Engineering.



My personal strengths have changed throughout the years and I believe three primary strengths are now: patience, respectfulness, and willingness to serve others. Favorite hobbies: Cooking, gardening/yard work, traveling, and naps.

*Connection with the Church of the Good Shepherd:* My wife, Diane, and I have been members of COGS since 2015. The three main reasons for me joining were, and still, are the meaningfulness of our worship services, the open and friendliness of parish members, and the various ways we have to serve God through COGS.

*Service to the Church of the Good Shepherd:* Worship Team, Shepherding Team, Buildings & Grounds Committee, Furniture Thrift Stop, Parking Lot Team, Furniture Thrift Store, Prayer Team (with Diane), and, maybe the best, “other duties as needed”. I would be grateful to again represent COGS at Diocesan Convention.

*Service to other Organizations:* Church Service: In previous churches, I was a member of the Worship Committee, a high school youth leader, high school Sunday school leader, member of the Men’s Club, being a Trustee, providing children’s’ message as part of our worship services, supporting various church social events and dinners and/pot lucks, and hosting visiting youth groups.

Civic Service: Member of a Rotary Club, elected member of a local Community Planning and Utilities Commission, and volunteer at a local elementary school assisting “as needed” in Kindergarten, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th grades.

### **2. Diane Niford**

*Personal Context:* Education: B.A. degree in History and Business; Professional licenses required for California Nursing Home Administrator and Financial Advisor. Working as a fiduciary throughout my career, a positive and caring attitude, a belief in serving all God’s children, actively assisting my church family and the South Florida Diocese in its worship, missions and goals is what I offer as a Delegate to Diocesan Convention.



Our church is greatly strengthened in its work by being a part of the larger church. I believe it important to know how the system has been created for the betterment of each congregation as well as the way in which it expands our mission to the community, state, nation and the world.

*Connection with Good Shepherd:* Vestry, Worship Committee, Shepherding Team, Prayer Team, Prayer Chain, Pack A Sack, Finance Committee, and Parking Lot Team are my areas of service. Connecting with members and attendees of worship services is my greatest joy at COGS. It is the loving atmosphere of the parish that led to my choosing to be an active and loyal member in April of 2015.

*Service to other organizations:* It began with Y-Teens in high school and progressed to 30 years of teaching all grades in Sunday School, youth group leadership, Bible studies, numerous church committees, Cursillo leadership, Methodist clergy spouse and now giving at COGS.

Civic included Rotary, AAUW, Chamber of Commerce, Women's Shelter Board Member/ HOA. Perhaps serving as a clergy spouse was the most joyous and profound. I still think about writing a book entitled "Who Are All These People in My Bed?"