



**We Are Ready for the Next Step**

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Your Vestry met twice during the month of March, once in early March for our Annual Retreat (before the CDC COVID19 restrictions for gathering were put in place), and subsequently (virtually) for our regular Monthly meeting. No one then anticipated the escalation of defensive and isolation measures that we have seen in our country over the last several weeks.

Whether it was just happenstance or our Lord stepping in, one of the primary areas of focus for both Vestry meetings is expanding opportunities to enhance each member of the Vestry's communication with our church Ministries and congregation. As we all have been reminded over the last several weeks, communication during these times is critical to maintaining and supporting our church family.

For a parish our size, we are blessed with a high number of Missions and Ministries. The Vestry will ensure that we have open communications with all of our Missions and Ministries to reinforce their importance to our parish, promote their accomplishments, and addressing any needs that may arise. Each Vestry member is assigned as a Liaison to Ministry leaders of the parish and are asked to reach out to them regularly. Other ways we are staying connected include our Phone Tree volunteers, who have been calling parishioners to check up on them, asking how they are doing and whether they are in need of help. We also regularly post updates on social media and by email.

The Vestry also reviewed the finances of the church. Through the end of February our financial position was strong. However, knowing that income is now down because we are not gathering in person, the Vestry is asking that all spending, including operating and capital expenditures, be reviewed and deferred where necessary. In accordance with the CDC Guidelines, the Furniture Thrift Store and Little Thrift Store are also closed. There are several easy ways to make your pledge payments or to give to Good Shepherd that are on our Church Website. Please call the church office if you have any questions on how to do that.

During this time of unprecedented change, we have been very impressed with the creativity, flexibility and capabilities of the parish's lay staff. They turned on a dime to increase and improve our technological capabilities, shift resources, batten down the campus, manage communication with outside groups, facilitate necessary changes in the worship services, and do whatever tasks and projects Becky and the Vestry have asked them to do. They are a true support team, and we are grateful for their hard work.

The Vestry's emphasis continues on our church and congregation. We are blessed with church members who remain in good communication with each other and stay committed to supporting each other. This forms us as a community of faith. We are the church, and we are ready for whatever next step comes before us. The members of your Vestry trust God, each other, and the members of this parish family, and we are confident that the best is yet to come.



## **Getting to know Carey Cherivtch.**

### **How long have you attended services at COGS?**

I had to look this one up! Officially I became a member in early 2014, but I attended services for several months before that.

### **Are you coming to Good Shepherd as an Episcopalian? What other churches have you attended?**

Born and baptized as a Roman Catholic, my family started attending an Episcopal church in RI when I was in 5, or maybe 6. I was later confirmed at Church of Our Savior in Palm Bay, FL. I genuinely do not know how many churches I've attended over the years, but most have been Episcopal/Anglican.

### **How did you find Good Shepherd?**

The internet is a wonderful tool. Before I moved from MA to FL, I began scouting churches in the general Dunedin area, an area I hoped to soon call home. COGS was on my list. (Little did I know that years later I would be the person tasked with updating that website.)

### **What inspired you to attend?**

Honestly, Good Shepherd was the closest Episcopal church to my <then> new apartment. I figured I'd start shopping at COGS and expand outward for several weeks, or even months. What a surprise it was to walk into a welcoming church that immediately felt like home from the very start! There were so many smiling faces; it was plain to see people were genuinely happy to be in this place. As an added bonus, the Holy Spirit had a mimosa waiting for me after the 10 AM service. It was during the COGS's "Celebrate Our Blessings" campaign and just so happened to be a newcomers' welcome Sunday. I attended for the first time on exactly the right day!

### **What would you want to tell others about Good Shepherd to encourage them to come and explore our parish?**

If at all possible, leave your preconceptions about what churches are/are not at home. Come visit COGS with a heart open to the joy and love we have to share. When we say "All are welcome, no exceptions!" we mean it.

### **Please tell us a bit about yourself outside Good Shepherd - family, jobs, hobbies - whatever you like.**

Once upon a time, I worked in corporate finance, was a phenomenally busy single-mom, and ran thriving, active, church youth groups. Then, about 12 years ago, I developed painful health issues that caused a complete shift in life. After spending 3 or 4 years with severely limited mobility in chilly New England, I prayed for a solid year for another path to open up. God answered those prayers with one, specific, clearly-lit path - the exact place I currently live in Dunedin. Although that meant taking a giant risk moving away from all family and friends, I jumped without hesitation. I miss all of them dearly, especially my now 27-yr old son, James. However, I have been richly rewarded, beyond my imagination, for handing over my pain and fears to God. Trust in Him ALWAYS!

