

HILLTOP HIGHLIGHTS

GOOD SHEPHERD CHURCH

*“THE SHINING LITTLE CHURCH
ON THE HILL”*



NOVEMBER/
DECEMBER 2018

ADDRESS

PO Box 132
1634 Hilltown Pike
Hilltown, PA, 18927
Office: (215) 822-3930

OFFICE HOURS

Tuesdays and Wednesdays

9:00 am—Noon

Thursdays

By Appointment

RECTOR

The Rev. Catherine D. Kerr

PARISH ADMINISTRATOR

Bobbie Livesey

WORSHIP SCHEDULE

SUNDAY WORSHIP

10:00 am

Holy Eucharist Rite II

MIDWEEK SERVICE

Wednesdays at 9:30 am

*Holy Eucharist &
Healing Prayer*

SPECIAL SERVICES

LONGEST NIGHT SERVICE

December 19 at 7:00 pm

CHRISTMAS EVE

FESTIVAL EUCHARIST

December 24 at 7:00 pm

CHRISTMAS DAY

QUIET SERVICE

December 25 at 10:00 am



Dear friends,

When I was a teenager, I traveled from my home on Long Island to the Mantua section of Philadelphia to participate in a weekend work camp operated under the auspices of the Society of Friends, or Quakers. We were there to learn about poverty in Philadelphia and work with residents to make minor repairs on their homes, and by the time we all headed home again Sunday afternoon, we would be fast friends.

As we gathered Friday evening, though, we were strangers with diverse backgrounds who had traveled some distance to share this experience. To break the ice, the organizers had us gather around an old piano to sing Christmas carols, **though it wasn't anywhere near Christmas.** I still remember the fun we had.

Christmas carols are the songs we all know and love, no matter what denomination we belong to and no matter what style of music we normally prefer. As James G. Howell writes in a new book titled, *Why This Jubilee? Advent Reflections on Songs of the Season*, **“Carols evoke a sense of home, warmth in the cold, light on even the longest of nights. Everyone seems to know the words to ‘Silent Night’ or ‘Joy to the World’ or ‘O Little Town of Bethlehem.’ We can all sing along—in fact, it’s hard not to sing along! Never is**

music more unifying, never do we feel so deeply than when we are part of something larger than ourselves. ... **We know the words without looking, and those words resonate in the parts of us that dream, love, and yearn.”**

That Friday evening so long ago was the wrong time to sing Christmas carols, and early November might seem like the wrong time to be thinking about them, but the message they convey is always relevant. We love carols because of their association with past Decembers, times we spent with people no longer among the living, in places we once called home but can never return to. But even more meaningful than that is the simple way they express the deepest truths of our faith: our longing for God, our hope in **dark times, the joy of God’s coming** into our world.

I’ve been thinking especially about that line from the Phillips Brooks carol, “O Little Town of Bethlehem:”

The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.

As Howell says, **“We are people who hope because we were created in God’s image. Even in the midst of terrible circumstances, we yearn for a brighter tomorrow. And yet we still fear. ... At this intersection of hope and fear comes Jesus ... and he meets our fears and calms them, meets our hopes and fulfills them.”**

It might seem early to be thinking about Christmas carols, but it’s nev-

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VESTRY MEMBERS

Peggy Lewis
Senior Warden

Karen Bossert
Accounting Warden

BJ Girard
Vestry Clerk

Sara Campbell
Barbara Gregory
Dan Pillie

Cindy Schwebel
Scott Strong

WORSHIP

ALTAR GUILD

Wendy Gogol, Chair

MUSIC

Cindy Schwebel, Director
Vaughn Rennie, Organist
The Shepherd Singers
The Shepherd Ringers

COMMUNICATIONS

Rob Gogol
Website Manager

Sara Campbell
Newsletter Editor

HILLTOP HIGHLIGHTS is a bimonthly publication of Good Shepherd Church. **All submissions are due** to the Editor by the **15th of February, April, June, August, October and December**. Newsletter artwork and design: © **Shirley Springsteen**. Art is to be used **ONLY** with artist's permission.

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er the wrong time to remind ourselves that Jesus himself is the answer to our hopes and fears. Maybe that's one reason I don't mind seeing the Christmas decorations go up early. And I expect to be hearing the first strains of recorded Christmas music in the stores while the leftover Halloween candy is still on sale, and this year I think I'll be looking forward to it.

At Good Shepherd, we've planned a carol sing for Friday evening, December 14, with cookies and hot chocolate available at 6:30 pm, and singing beginning at 7. (We had a similar event on the calendar last year but it got snowed out, so pray that the weather will cooperate this time around!)

We'll also enjoy a service of Lessons and Carols in church on December 30, the first Sunday after Christmas.

Let every heart prepare him room.

It might seem early to be writing about Christmas, but once the holiday season is upon us, the days will go flying by. One moment we'll thinking about how many places to set at the Thanksgiving table and offering our prayers of thanks, and the next thing you know, Christmas will be here. Advent is the official season of preparation for Christmas, but as Howell writes, if we wait until then, it's almost too late.

The time to begin is now.

Faithfully,

Cathy+



CALLING ALL ARTISTS!

**2019 GOOD SHEPHERD
3RD ANNUAL ART EXHIBIT**
FEBRUARY 22-24, 2019

Theme: "The Wonders of Our Gaze"

Application forms and informational flyers are available now! You may pick up paper copies at church. They are also available for download. [Click here](#) to download the call to artists, and [click here](#) to download the entry form.

Contact friends and relatives and let them know about this art exhibit so they will have plenty of time to create a painting, take a photo, or create a sculpture that depicts our theme, "The Wonders of Our Gaze."

If you would like to be part of the team working on the art exhibit, please contact Barbara Gregory (bgregory1936@hotmail.com) or Shirley Springsteen (joyhope048@gmail.com).

Final Application Date: January 28, 2019

MESSAGE BOARD

✝️ VESTRY November 14 & December 12
at 6:00 pm

SENIOR WARDEN'S REFLECTIONS

We will soon be celebrating Thanksgiving and Christmas, and saying good bye to 2018 and welcoming a new year.

In the month of November Mother Nature dips into her palette of colors to paint a spectacular landscape of autumn leaves. During the cool, brisk days we are able to enjoy a walk through the woods, winter sports, putting our gardens to bed, and attempting to keep up with raking leaves. The farmers are hard at work harvesting the products of their summer labor. All of this brings us to the American tradition of Thanksgiving. It is a national holiday of giving thanks for the blessings of **the previous year's harvest and will occur on** Thursday, November 22nd. It began in 1621 in Plymouth Meeting with the Pilgrims. Today the first thing people think of is turkey, filling, pumpkin pie, and, of course, football games. Let us not forget the true meaning, though—gathering around the table with friends, family, extended family, and neighbors to meditate (uninterrupted by electronic devices) and count our blessings of belonging to a family who love one another, work together, respect the differences of all people, and, no matter what, always support our endeavors. Following Thanksgiving our life style speeds up in the month of December. Social events increase and the commercial frenzy begins.

Liturgically speaking we are finally near the end of Pentecost, or ordinary time. Advent, the first season of the church year, begins with the fourth Sunday before Christmas and ends the day before Christmas. The color for this season is blue, representing penitence and expectation.

The Christmas season lasts twelve days and ends on January 5th, the day before Epiphany. Christmas Day itself ushers in the twelve days of Christmas. The color is white, symbolizing joy, purity, and truth. It initiates feelings of peace and comfort; of joy in giving and receiving spiritually; of warmth in the midst of winter; and of enjoyment for the time spent with family and friends. On Christmas Day we celebrate the most momentous

event in human history - the birth of our Savior, the most important birth that will ever be. God is spreading his love on humanity by giving us the most priceless gift of his son, convincing us of his love for all mankind. It is a love we should emulate and share with others. As God gave us the priceless gift of his son, I think it would be nice to follow his example and give the priceless gift of ourselves. It is a challenge: you could take someone out to lunch and spend quality time with them, or treat someone to a movie, play, or special event. If you are talented, you could knit, crochet, or make a special item for someone. Something from the heart is always the greatest gift.

Our Good Shepherd family is known for a compassionate and giving spirit. At Christmas time we have the Advent Gift Shoppe, where you can purchase stocking stuffers for family and friends; the money collected is used for outreach. The Mitten Tree is placed in the narthex, where we decorate it with hats, scarfs, gloves and mittens. The items are taken to Keystone Opportunity in Souderton to help those in need. Also, you will find a large Christmas stocking on a bulletin board in the hallway to be filled with gift certificates to benefit senior citizens in Bucks County during this blessed season. Last but not least, we continue to collect food for our local pantries. Giving is always a wonderful feeling.

Our parishioners will be looking forward to sharing the Christmas spirit with a tea at the Talking Tea Cup on December 5th, a songfest, and the annual Christmas dinner and decorating of the church on December 23rd. What a wonderful family to be a member of, to enjoy the spirit of the season with!

May God bless everyone with a Happy Thanksgiving, a Merry Christmas, and a happy, healthy, prosperous 2019, and may God bless the world with Peace and Love for all mankind.

Faithfully Yours,
Peggy

FOOD PANTRY

We delivered 117 pounds of food to the three food pantries in the our area during September

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and October. Thank you to all those who donated food and to those who delivered it! *Dan Pillie*

OUTREACH

Our parishioners have been very generous as usual. We just finished collecting much-needed hygiene items for St. James School in Philadelphia. **Combs were collected to fill the "Dignity and Blessing" bags sponsored by the deacons of our diocese.** Monetary donations were sent to the Good Shepherd Academy in Cameroon to purchase chairs. As Thanksgiving is fast approaching, baskets full of food will be delivered to our local pantries to help the less fortunate have a bountiful Thanksgiving dinner. In December we decorate the Mitten Tree with hats, scarfs, gloves, and mittens for Keystone Opportunity in Souderton. Gift certificates will also be collected to help senior citizens in Bucks County. Thank you and blessings to all who never fail to support all our outreach projects throughout the year. *Peggy Lewis*

HOSPITALITY

Thank you to Nancy Lonsdale for hosting several coffee hours. Thank you also to Kathy Goff, Holly Homka, Linda Lilly, and Fran & Stephen Bowers for hosting.

Thank you to Carol Blum for adding to our stash of soda. Thank you to Bobbie Livesey for restocking the bottled water.

Thank you to Cindy Schwebel for finding the insulated hot cups. Thank you to Wendy Gogol for the hot water kettle.

Thank you to Dan Pillie for getting a block for the hole in the outside door in the kitchen. No more church mice or cold breezes!

Thank you everyone for all your laughter, conversations, and friendship! *Jane Ryan*

EPISCOPAL CHURCH CALENDARS

Liturgical church calendars for 2019 have arrived and are now available on the tract rack in the narthex. They are especially helpful to those who help with the worship services. For Altar Guild members, the calendar indicates which liturgical colors are to be used during the year. Lay Readers can find the lectionary readings for each Sunday and special church holidays listed on the back of each

monthly calendar page. A donation of \$3 per calendar will help offset the cost incurred by the parish office. *Bobbie Livesey*

CHRISTMAS FLOWERS AND DECORATIONS

Please remember to sign up for Christmas flowers and decorations for the "Greening of the Church" to beautify our church for Christmas services. The sign up sheet is located behind the December Altar Flower sheet on the Altar Flower Chart, which is located near the double doors at the back of the church. Donations of \$5, \$10, or more would be greatly appreciated to offset the cost of the special Christmas flowers. Thank you! *Bobbie Livesey*

IRON PIGS GAME 2019

Save the date! **Good Shepherd's annual** outing to the Iron Pigs game is scheduled for Sunday, August 11, 2019. Watch for more information in 2019! *Rob Gogol*

GIFT RECEIVED

We have received a thoughtful monetary gift in memory of Al Neumeyer and in honor of the Rev. Harper and Professor Wayne Turney, **from Al's wife, Shirlee Neumeyer of Bethlehem.** For those who were at Good Shepherd during Pastor Harper's tenure, you may remember Al and Shirlee Neumeyer, friends of the Turneys. They worshipped with us a few times, prepared brunches for us on special occasions, and Al sang with the Shepherd Singers. Al passed away at the end of July, and Shirlee wanted to honor Harper and Wayne for their help to Al during his last days and continued help and friendship to Shirlee by giving a gift to Good Shepherd. *Bobbie Livesey*

CHRISTMAS TEA AT THE TALKING TEA CUP

Wednesday, December 5th at 12:15pm

Join us for a Christmas tea at the Talking Tea Cup in Chalfont. The deadline to sign up is November 20. The sign up sheet is on the bulletin board in the hallway across from the parish hall. Cost is \$23; please make checks payable to Barbara Gregory. All are welcome! If you have any questions, please speak with Barbara Gregory (215-348-3971).

CELEBRATIONS



BIRTHDAYS

NOVEMBER

11/02 Jeanne Scanlon
11/03 Jane Ryan
11/06 Marge Barba
11/08 Shirley Springsteen
11/09 Barbara Gregory
11/12 BJ Girard
11/19 Isabella Ragazzo
11/21 Janet Schlitz
11/24 Vaughn Rennie
11/29 Matt Lilly

DECEMBER

12/02 Hannah Campbell
12/02 Eudora Tasker
12/06 Rob Gogol
12/06 Cindy Schwebel
12/18 Sara Schafer
12/19 Wendy Gogol
12/20 David Ewaniuk
12/24 Wally Goff
12/28 Carol Blum
12/30 Marjery Stumpfrock
12/31 Tayo Akamo



ANNIVERSARIES

11/01 Bob and Fay Wozniak
11/17 Tayo and Nicky Akamo
11/19 Rob and Wendy Gogol

12/11 Barry and Lesley Heckenswiler

PHOTO ALBUM



Photos: Cathy Kerr

PHOTO ALBUM



Photos: Kathy Goff

The Santa

by Marian Bellus

Late one night in late December, after a long evening of extracting the Christmas wishes of young children at a local garden shop, a famished Santa settled into a booth at a local diner, where the staff were cleaning the tables and floor in preparation for closing time.

A gentleman walked in. Looking around, the man, Kel, saw that the only spot untouched by a wet cloth or a mop was a man dressed as Santa. He asked Santa if he could share his booth with him. Without hesitation, Santa waved him over. Santa knew the look of a troubled person, his eyes half hiding his burden and half begging to be asked to share his story.

Kel's story came out in fits and starts, Santa's quiet attention drawing the words from him like a magnet. Sensing Kel was feeling wrung out, he didn't press him for details, but the combination of near desperation and Santa's look of compassion led Kel to speak of secrets hidden from view all his life, much of it, it seemed, hidden from his own discernment until now. Kel hinted at a childhood marked by strict rules and measured punishments, more in the way of demeaning words than physical abuse. As soon as Kel could afford it, he sought training as a mechanic and moved into his own place. With sheer determination and a knack for his work, he quickly became the owner of a car repair shop.

That had been ten years ago, and now that Kel had a wife and child, he was being pressured by his wife to try to repair the father-son relationship. Kel wasn't so much opposed to seeing his father as he was indifferent to him, so deeply had he stuffed his feelings. Santa sensed the depth of Kel's pain more from his demeanor than from his words. And now that the door to forgiveness had been opened a crack, the conflict long held within Kel was exhausting all his emotional reserves as he tried to maintain the old equilibrium.

After some moments of munching their late-evening dinners, Santa broached a question. Speaking more bluntly than usual, Santa asked Kel, "What is your heart's desire?" Kel swallowed awkwardly as this straight-to-the-point question hit home. It had a simplicity to it that made him see things more clearly than he had ever been able to do. With great emotion, Kel shared how much he wanted the love of his father.

All at once he saw his father in the role of bread-winner, struggling during a time of economic downturn to provide for his family. Kel's mother was partially disabled and unable to work outside the home, so it had fallen on his father to keep the family financially secure. This insight provided a more rounded view of his father as a person. Having a wife and child of his own helped Kel to see the pressures of fatherhood in a new light. It didn't excuse the bad behavior or the tearing down of Kel's self-worth. But all at once, Kel's one-dimensional perception of his father was awash with images of a responsible father and faithful husband who remained steadfast in the face of life's unforeseen challenges.

As Santa and Kel finished their meal, Santa saw a less desperate man emerge from their conversation. Whatever had been stirred

within Kel as a result of Santa's question had somehow hit its mark, but the compassion with which it was said had not produced an angry response but rather a warmer feeling within Kel, one that seemed filled with the possibility of healing.

During the next week, Kel made time to visit his father. In the end they agreed on Christmas dinner at Kel's home, a chance, perhaps, for his father to see him in his new roles as husband and father. He sensed that having a son would resonate with his father and perhaps change the atmosphere of angst between them.

Christmas season that year was filled with a great mixture of emotions for Kel, his emotional discomfort mixed with a persistent sense of hope. But the feeling of near despair was gone, and he began to think that Santa had something to do with it. He started keeping an eye out for the man in red, hoping to have another conversation with him. He vaguely remembered that Santa had mentioned the garden shop as the place where he was working. So, although reluctant to leave work a bit earlier than usual, he walked to the edge of town with a more confident step than usual, hoping to catch Santa at the garden shop at the end of his work day. When he didn't find him there, he headed to the little diner for a quick cup of coffee.

Suddenly Kel heard the sound of fire engines. In the distance he saw flashing lights, and he hurried toward them. As he drew closer to several fire engines parked outside a home, he saw Santa emerge from the home, looking extra splendid in his red attire with all the flashing lights. He seemed to be limping too, with two firefighters walking with him toward one fire engine in particular.

Then it dawned on Kel. It was the evening for Santa to ride up and down the streets of town, greeting children with his hearty voice and wishing all a Merry Christmas! As he watched, Santa made his way to the top of the fire engine with the help of the firefighters and took his place on a specially made seat, high atop the fire engine, a spotlight directed toward him and making him appear larger than life.


At that moment Kel became aware of Santa's infirmity. He saw how willingly Santa surrendered to the offers of assistance, and something inside of him felt changed for the better. Remembering that his wife had planned a special dinner for that evening that included his father and that she had asked him to be home earlier than usual, Kel pulled his phone from his pocket and saw with great relief that he still had time to be home early.

The thought of his waiting family filled him with such a grateful heart that he barely managed not to run like the wind to get home. In a flash of appreciation, he felt his heart open wide to the many blessings in his life. He suddenly felt that the dinner with his father would be filled with new insights and appreciation for each other. It might be only a start, but he felt a hopefulness for the future that he could not ever remember feeling before. He strode into his home with a broad smile, and his wife and child hugged him with an intensity that seemed to acknowledge the change within Kel. When his father arrived, the evening went smoothly. Both men opened up to each other with unexpected ease. And Kel thought again of the evening shared with Santa at the diner, and he was filled with deep gratitude.

NOVEMBER 2018

GOOD SHEPHERD CHURCH


CONTACT: 215-822-3930

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1 <i>All Saints Day</i> Office Hours By Appointment 7:00 pm Al Anon	2 Church Office Closed	3
4 <i>All Saints Day (observed)</i> <i>Stewardship Ingathering</i> 9:00 am Shepherd Singers 9:45 am Sunday School 10:00 am Holy Eucharist II 11:30 am Shepherd Singers	5 Church Office Closed	6 Office Hours 9am—Noon	7 Office Hours 9am—Noon 9:10am Silent Prayer 9:30am Holy Eucharist & healing prayer	8 Church Office Closed 7:00 pm Al Anon	9 Church Office Closed	10 <i>Diocesan Convention</i>
11 <i>Twenty-fifth Sunday after Pentecost</i> 9:00 am Shepherd Singers 9:45 am Sunday School 10:00 am Holy Eucharist II 11:30 am Faith Enrichment Series	12 Church Office Closed	13 Office Hours 9am—Noon	14 Office Hours 9am—Noon 9:10am Silent Prayer 9:30am Holy Eucharist & healing prayer 11:00 am Pine Run Service 6:00 pm Vestry	15 Office Hours By Appointment 7:00 pm Al Anon	16 Church Office Closed	17
18 <i>Twenty-sixth Sunday after Pentecost</i> 9:00 am Shepherd Singers 9:45 am Sunday School 10:00 am Holy Eucharist II 11:30 am Shepherd Singers	19 Church Office Closed	20 Office Hours 9am—Noon	21 Office Hours 9am—Noon 9:10am Silent Prayer 9:30am Holy Eucharist & healing prayer	22 <i>Thanksgiving Day</i> Church Office Closed 7:00 pm Al Anon 	23 Church Office Closed	24
25 <i>Last Sunday after Pentecost</i> <i>Christ the King Sunday</i> 9:00 am Shepherd Singers 9:45 am Sunday School 10:00 am Holy Eucharist II 11:30 am Shepherd Singers	26 Church Office Closed	27 Office Hours 9am—Noon	28 Office Hours 9am—Noon 9:10am Silent Prayer 9:30am Holy Eucharist & healing prayer	29 Office Hours By Appointment 7:00 pm Al Anon	30 Church Office Closed	<i>Rev. Cathy at DioPA Clergy Conference</i>

DECEMBER 2018

GOOD SHEPHERD CHURCH

CONTACT: 215-822-3930

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1
2 First Sunday of Advent 9:00 am Shepherd Singers 9:45 am Sunday School 10:00 am Holy Eucharist II 11:30 am Shepherd Singers	3 Church Office Closed	4 Office Hours 9am-12pm	5 Office Hours 9am—Noon 9:30am Holy Eucharist & healing prayer 10am Advent Study 12:15pm <i>Talking Tea Cup Christmas Social</i>	6 Office Hours <i>By Appointment</i> 7:00 pm Al Anon	7 Church Office Closed	8
9 Second Sunday of Advent 9:00 am Shepherd Singers 9:45 am Sunday School 10:00 am Holy Eucharist II 11:15 am Faith Enrichment Series: The Journey from Nazareth to Bethlehem <i>Advent Gift Shoppe Open</i>	10 Church Office Closed	11 Office Hours 9am-12pm	12 Office Hours 9am—Noon 9:10am Silent Prayer 9:30am Holy Eucharist & healing prayer 11 am Pine Run Service 6 pm Vestry	13 Office Hours <i>By Appointment</i> 7:00 pm Al Anon	14 Church Office Closed 6:30pm Cookies & Carol Sing	15 <i>Jan/Feb News letter Article Submission Deadline</i>
16 Third Sunday of Advent 9:00 am Shepherd Singers 9:45 am Sunday School 10:00 am Holy Eucharist II 11:30 am Shepherd Singers <i>Advent Gift Shoppe Open</i>	17 Church Office Closed	18 Office Hours 9am-12pm	19 Office Hours 9am—Noon 9:30am Holy Eucharist & healing prayer 10am Advent Study 7pm Longest Night Service	20 Office Hours <i>By Appointment</i> 7:00 pm Al Anon	21 Church Office Closed	22
23 Fourth Sunday of Advent 9:00 am Shepherd Singers 9:45 am Sunday School 10:00 am Holy Eucharist II <i>Greening of the Church & Parish Christmas Dinner</i>	24 <i>Christmas Eve</i> 7pm Christmas Eve Festival Service	25 <i>Christmas Day</i> 10am Christmas Day Quiet Service 	26 7:00 pm Al Anon	27	28	29
30 First Sunday after Christmas 10:00 am	31 Church Office Closed					