

# Good Shepherd Episcopal Church/Priest-in-Charge Process

## Visioning Document

March 3, 2021

### I. Introduction

As suggested by the Episcopal Church in Colorado's *Field Guide* to the Priest-in-Charge Process, this is the report of the congregation on the Season of Visioning, the second season in that process. This document was prepared by a Transition Committee comprised of Father Gary Brower, our Priest-in-Charge, and members of the congregation who expressed an interest in participating in the process, many of whom were part of the Transition Committee during the initial Discovery phase (and each of whom is listed at the end of this report). Members of the committee included both parishioners who have been members of Good Shepherd for several years and newer members. One of the primary goals in putting the committee together was to include a diversity of viewpoints and experiences. In terms of the visioning process, the Transition Committee held several virtual meetings (via Zoom) starting in the spring of 2020 and ending early in 2021, reviewed and discussed the materials described below, held additional Zoom meetings with the congregation, and focused on the question of "Why" for Good Shepherd.

### II. The Visioning Process

At the Transition Committee meetings during the visioning process, among the items discussed were the following:

- Given the Covid-19 pandemic which had started in March and which required us to meet, and to worship, by Zoom, the consensus early on was that our visioning for Good Shepherd would need to account for the "new normal," whatever that turns out to be, and be focused on a vision for Good Shepherd in a post-pandemic world rather than a pre-pandemic world. All of our discussions were based on that premise. That required us to consider questions about how our use of our physical space might change, how we might continue to incorporate technology into our worship services, and how our various ministries might be impacted. It also required us to focus on whether some groups of parishioners might be slipping away while others might be more easily reachable as the result of the increased use of technology.
- At Fr. Gary's suggestion, we started the process by reading together (along with the Vestry and other members of the congregation who were interested) Tod Bolsinger's *Canoeing the Mountains*. That helped set the stage for thinking about where Good Shepherd might be going.
- The primary way that the Transition Committee obtained input from the congregation during this visioning phase was through hosting a series of Zoom break-out meetings, over four separate Sundays, with members of the

congregation. Each of those break-out meetings was facilitated by two members of the Transition Committee, and generally involved 10-20 additional parishioners. In those meetings, we discussed several specific questions which the Transition Committee had come up with, which were designed to facilitate discussion on where members of the congregation wanted the church to go. The discussion questions included the following:

- *What are Good Shepherd's strengths?*
  - *What brings you back to Good Shepherd time and time again?*
  - *What are the stories we love to tell about Good Shepherd?*
  - *What are the commonalities in those stories?*
  - *If you move away and start a new church, what core values and strategies would you take from Good Shepherd to implement in the new church?*
  - *What would we attempt for Good Shepherd if we knew we could not fail?*
  - *What strategies should Good Shepherd implement so as to thrive during and past the pandemic?*
  - *What breakthroughs have happened that have launched Good Shepherd into our new reality?*
  - *What does Good Shepherd "feel like" in a year, 5 years, 10 years?*
  - *Imagine Good Shepherd in 2025—of what are you proudest when you talk about Good Shepherd?*
  - *How do we equip and encourage people at Good Shepherd to live into their Baptismal Covenant?*
  - *What does diversity look like at Good Shepherd? In what ways are we diverse? How can we become more diverse?*
  - *How do we define "outreach?"*
  - *How do we want to be involved in outreach?*
  - *Have we recognized all of the allies that we should?*
  - *What allies do we need to recognize in carrying out our greater mission?*
  - *My favorite part of attending church as a family is . . .*
  - *If we knew we couldn't fail, our ministry to families would . . .*
  - *It's 2025. When we're talking to new families, we are proud to tell them that Good Shepherd . . .*
  - *What is the purpose of our ministry with children/youth?*
  - *What is our big picture goal for ministry with children/youth?*
  - *What are the spiritual needs of the children in our church and/or our community? How can we best identify and meet those needs?*
  - *When our kids graduate from high school, they are able to . . .*
- Based on the input we received from discussion of those questions, and our own conversations, the Transition Committee identified a number of common themes. That led to us drafting a statement which we thought reflected Good Shepherd's core beliefs, and then presenting that statement to the congregation. Almost without exception, members of the congregation confirmed that statement was

reflective of their core beliefs. That statement is meant to identify both (i) who we are and (ii) the “what are we here for?” question that we use as a guide for our vision as we move forward. Those core beliefs, which we have labeled as “A Vision of Good Shepherd,” are: “*Building relationships with Christ, each other, and the world around us.*”

### **III. Results of Process**

The wording of the label for our core beliefs statement, “A Vision *of* Good Shepherd” rather than “A Vision *for* Good Shepherd, is intentional. It is intended to reflect who we are, although it is both informational and aspirational. With that core “why” statement in mind, the Transition Committee then tried to identify how we might live out those core beliefs, and which ministries we have, or need, in order to do so. From those conversations we developed the chart that is attached as Exhibit A. That chart shows the “why,” describes broadly the various ways that we will try to reflect that statement of core beliefs (the “how” we get there), and then more specifically lists the various ministries that we have identified that either exist, or that we need, in order to carry out that statement (the “what” we do).

The chart is intended to serve as a sort of roadmap for us to follow as we continue to strive to get to the why. In trying to come up with markers for both the how and the what, we realized that while many of those are currently in place (the “how” items that are in green and the “what” items that are in black on the chart), there are others that we only recently started, or have yet to start (the items in purple on the chart). In that sense, we intend that this chart will be a living document. We presume that the core beliefs will remain basically the same, although perhaps over time even those will change along with the congregation and the community around us. By contrast, we expect that the “how” and “what” markers will likely always be in a bit of a state of flux, as the congregation discerns what best fulfills our purpose and our baptismal covenant.

The Transition Committee also understands that in order to carry out the concepts that make up the “how” and the ministries that make up the “what,” more detailed conversations will need to take place among the Vestry, lay ministry leaders, and the congregation as a whole about questions like what staffing will be needed, do our finances allow us to get there, do we need to have a specific plan for growth, as well as numerous other questions, in order to manage the vision. The Transition Committee believes it has identified the vision for our Parish, and the necessary components for carrying out that vision, but the logistics and management will be an ongoing, and important, part of the process.

### **IV. Looking Forward**

As we understand it, the work of the Transition Committee is done. The process now moves over to the Vestry, and to Fr. Gary, to decide whether they believe this vision we have come up with works for Good Shepherd, and whether they and Fr. Gary mutually agree that we will seek to implement that vision together. Despite the challenges of the pandemic, those of us

on the Transition Committee feel blessed to have had the opportunity to participate in this process. As we have looked closely at who we are and where we are going, our faith in our Parish, and in God, has been reaffirmed and strengthened. The challenges of the pandemic in some ways made our job more difficult, and in some ways magnified some of the challenges we face as a church community. But they also left all of us more passionate and determined than ever to make this work. In that sense, this process has been a pleasure. Moreover, being able to work with a group of people who were willing to listen, to learn, and to contribute, and who have a shared desire to not only strengthen this institution but also to hopefully shape it in a way that will allow us to share the joy and love of Christ with the community around us, has been very special as well.

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Becky Beall-Moore

Christina Blackburn

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Karin Elsen

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# Exhibit A

## A Vision of Good Shepherd



- "Why" Statement
- Catechism
- Baptismal Covenant
- Current Program
- New Initiative

As of 2/23/21