



**GOOD SHEPHERD**  
EPISCOPAL CHURCH & SCHOOL  
TEQUESTA, FLORIDA

# *Good Shepherd Episcopal Church* **2024 ANNUAL REPORT**



**The Rev. Dr. Sanford H. Groff, Jr., Rector**  
**Ian Anderson, Senior Warden**  
**Kevin Riddle, Junior Warden**

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# Rector's Report

Dear friends,

Jesus said, "I am the vine, you are the branches." (John 15:5) These are fruit-bearing branches that he emphasizes which will produce abundantly so long as they remain connected to Him. I love this image because of the resilience of vines: they can withstand pruning and grow back stronger and fuller, much like our community has thrived amidst changes this year. The vine of Jesus Christ and the branch of Good Shepherd is an apt metaphor for 2024, especially since we have remained rooted in Christ throughout a year of change, growth, and strengthening.

We had some major staffing changes throughout the year. The departure of Father Derek Larson over the summer was a big change as he was called to serve as Rector at St. Peter's in Plant City. At year's end, we also celebrated the retirement of Merike Seely, our long-time Parish Administrator. Merike's faithful service for nearly 25 years has left an indelible mark on Good Shepherd, and we all wish her an incredible next chapter and look forward to hearing all about it as she remains a parishioner.

Just as pruning a vine encourages robust growth, the changes in our community this year have invited us to strengthen our internal operations and prepare for even greater fruitfulness. As part of this effort, we aligned our mission, vision, and values, setting clear goals to guide our future. The introduction of the digital project management software Asana has brought greater clarity and efficiency to our daily work. In addition, we have made progress in creating "standard operating procedures" for regular church activities, laying a foundation for sustainable growth and continuity.

Of course, the heart of our parish life is found in the Spirit-led moments that bring us together as a community. This year was marked by an abundance of such moments—from the joy of Artie's party to the reverence of Palm Sunday and Easter; from the laughter and fellowship of the Kick-off Cookout and Oktoberfest to the solemnity of All Saints' Sunday; from an energetic Pennies' Bazaar to the wonder of the Christmas pageant. Our shared journey is a tapestry woven with moments of worship, celebration, and service.

In 2025 we, as branches intertwined in Christ, will work together to deepen engagement, strengthen our ministries, and grow in faith and service. The vestry and I are focused on identifying and supporting volunteers at every level of engagement while fostering collaboration across ministries. The branches of Good Shepherd are strengthening, and I believe this will result in a growing and energized church ready for the next generation.

The vine of Jesus Christ is love - a divine love that is shared in the heart of humanity. We are deeply connected to that love and do such a fabulous job of sharing it in relationship with each other and our neighbors. I am overjoyed to be your rector and cannot wait to see what God has in store for us in the year ahead.

Rooted in Christ the Vine,

The Rev. Dr. Sanford H. Groff, Jr., Rector

## 2024 Vestry

- Ian Anderson, Senior Warden
- Kevin Riddle, Junior Warden
- Carolyn Reikenis, Clerk
- Mike Greene, Treasurer
- Carol Block
- Dan Gilbert
- Brad Davis
- Akin Owosina
- Dimitri Chimerakis
- Mike Grashof
- Julie Hirsch
- Janice Thomas
- Caroline Boren



## Annual Meeting Minutes Episcopal Church of the Good Shepherd Sunday, January 21, 2024

A meeting of the members of the Episcopal Church of the Good Shepherd was held pursuant to the Bylaws and by order of the Vestry on Sunday, January 21, 2024, at 10:30 AM. The meeting was held in the nave of the church.

### Call to Order, Welcome, and Opening Prayer

The meeting was called to order by the Rev. Dr. Sanford H. Groff, Jr., Rector of the Episcopal Church of the Good Shepherd.

Fr. Groff welcomed everyone, noting that we have this meeting annually in January by Canon Law, and reported that a quorum was present.

Fr. Groff began the meeting with an opening prayer, using the prayer For a Church Convention or Meeting from the Book of Common Prayer (#12, p 818).

### Vestry Elections

Fr. Groff prefaced the election of new vestry members by calling forward outgoing vestry members for recognition: Heather Graham, Senior Warden; Mike Howard, Junior Warden; Beth Bohnsack; Beverley Cunningham; and George Hines. Fr. Groff presented a card to each of the retiring vestry members. He noted that Heather Graham had stayed on the vestry for an additional year as Senior Warden during the rector search, and accordingly one member of the vestry slate would serve the remaining two years of her term.

Fr. Groff noted that biographical profiles for each individual on the new slate could be found in the 2023 Annual Report, which had been distributed to meeting attendees as they had checked in. He noted that at Good Shepherd, our vestry is nominated on a slate compiled by a nominating committee made up of the Senior Warden and the outgoing vestry members. Four members of the slate have been nominated for the standard three-year term: Dimitri Chimerakis; Michael Grashof; Julie Hirsch; and Janice Thomas. One member of the slate is nominated for a two-year term, as previously noted: Caroline Boren.

Fr. Groff called for nominations from the floor. None arising, he called for a motion to close the nominations. Motion was made to close the nominations for Vestry Motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

Fr. Groff then called for a motion to elect the slate as presented. Motion was made to approve the 2024 Vestry slate as presented. Motion was seconded and passed unanimously. Fr. congratulated the newly elected Vestry members. A round of applause followed.

### Treasurer's Report 2023 Year-End Budget Report

Treasurer Mike Greene began by reporting that 2023 was a good year, thanks to the financial contributions of the membership. He drew attention to the financial summary which appears on the inside back cover of the 2023 Annual Report.

The year 2023 was characterized by an eleven-month period during which the Rector position was vacant, and Mike was glad to report that this vacancy did not have an adverse effect on church finances. Over the year, Good Shepherd had a revenue of \$1,017,353 and expenses of \$1,034,499, for a deficit of \$17,146, which fell well short of the budgeted deficit of \$42,652 for 2023. The vestry voted to fund the 2023 deficit from the Operating Reserves restricted account.

Total income for 2023 was under budget by \$60,734, primarily due to a shortfall in budgeted pledged income of ~\$84,400, which was somewhat offset by other sources of income coming in over budget. Another source of variance in revenue was the Ridgewood property, which during 2023 was transitioned from a source of rental income to a residence (parsonage) for our Associate Rector, Fr. Derek Larson, and his family. He reported that Pennies for Heaven had had another great year, with a gross income of \$158,110. The net income from Artie's Party, which was over \$36,000, was added to the Committed Outreach restricted account.

Total expenses for 2023 were under budget by ~\$86,000, primarily because we had budgeted for the Rector position for six months, and it was only filled for one month, as Fr. Groff arrived in December. We had also budgeted for a sexton position, which remained unfilled throughout the year. On the other hand, physical plant expenses were over budget, as maintenance, utilities and insurance expenses were higher than anticipated. He noted that our property and liability insurance, in particular, had increased significantly in 2023.

Mike reported on the current balance sheet of the parish. We currently have assets of \$1,876,471, which includes more than \$564,000 in cash and cash equivalents, such as certificates of deposit and money market funds, as well as an investment funds of \$1,312,101: our Mission and Ministry Development Fund (\$657,444), Endowment Fund (\$584,829), and Memorial Garden Fund (\$69,827). During 2023, funds were withdrawn from the investment accounts in the amount of \$155,651: ~\$16,000 from the Endowment Fund (3% of principal) to our operating budget and \$139,718 from the Mission and Ministry Fund for renovations to the parsonage and the rectory. The church owns the Good Shepherd Episcopal Church and School campus, the rector and the parsonage, and has no debt.

The church has restricted accounts, held outside of the general assets and intended for specific purposes, in the amount of \$385,260, with major account balances for Operating Reserve (~\$100,000) and Committed Outreach (~\$50,000). During 2023, we had transferred ~\$65,000 from Undesignated Gifts and Bequests restricted accounts to fund the renovation of the Ridgewood parsonage.

### **2024 Budget Presentation**

The 2024 budget approved by the Vestry forecasts a balanced budget. Relative to 2023, this year's budget features some increases in expenses, most significantly a full year's budget for the Rector position. We also have funded an Assistant Manager position for Pennies for Heaven. There are cost-of-living increases for the staff, as well as increases in our physical plant expenses, diocesan obligation, and our property and liability insurance. These increases are partially offset by lower budgeted professional services and lower costs for Children's, Youth and Family Ministries, due to the vacancy in this staff position, for which only half a year's salary and benefits have been budgeted in 2024.

Mike thanked everyone who had responded to our pledge campaign for 2024, and assured those who had not yet pledged that there was still an opportunity to do so. He thanked those who had contributed to the mission of Good Shepherd in any way, whether through pledges, non-pledge contributions, undesignated gifts or support of Artie's Party. He also thanked the clergy and staff for good stewardship of member contributions.

Fr. Groff called for questions from the floor for the Treasurer. In response to a question about the lower budgeted professional services, Mike indicated that the majority of budgeted services in 2023 were for supplementary Pennies administrative costs, which in 2024 were represented by the Assistant Manager line item. In addition, the funding for professional musicians had been moved from this budget line item to the music program. Another question centered on making up the income from renting the Ridgewood property, since this is now used as a parsonage. Mike indicated that there were offsetting increases in interest income and endowment income. Fr. Groff indicated that there was also a significant budgeted increase in Pennies income, given the creation of the Assistant Manager position and the decision to be open on Saturdays apart from the summer months. Finally, there was a question about a small (\$100) line item for Seniors Ministries in the budget which sparked discussion about ministry offerings for seniors.

### **2023 School Report**

Fr. Groff invited Head-of-School Heather Vaughn forward to report on Good Shepherd Episcopal School (GSES). Heather noted that the past year had been a whirlwind of activity in 2023, and that she was pleased to discover that GSES had accomplished all four items listed as aspirational goals for 2023 in last year's Annual Meeting presentation.

For the 2023-2024 school year, enrollment was 165 students, which represents a 10% increase year-over-year relative to 2022-2023. (Heather reminded everyone that the GSES fiscal year runs from July 1 through June 30.) The enrollment was roughly evenly split between pre-K and elementary school ages; GSES enrolls students aged 2 through 12. Despite a nationwide teacher shortage, GSES continues to attract top talent through its collegial and collaborative culture. Our re-accreditation was approved in the spring of 2023, accompanied by a glowing report that highlighted commitment to mission, solid academics, and a joyful learning environment. During 2023, there were also two new academic initiatives: during the summer, faculty completed eight weeks of intensive phonics training based on Orton Gillingham methodology, and in October we began the roll-out of new assessment tools, referred to as MAPs. Heather believes that these two initiatives will give our students better skills to become high-performing middle schoolers.

Heather emphasized the importance of partnerships to GSES success: our Parent Association; our Board of Trustees; our many church connections; and the Village of Tequesta, which allows us to hold our gym classes in their building across the street. We expanded these partnerships in 2023, and entered into an exclusive agreement with the Pine School that provides a streamlined process for GSES graduates to enter the Pine School in sixth grade. Heather also pointed to a relationship with Banner Lake in Hobe Sound to provide a GSES education to students who would not otherwise be able to afford our school.

Financially, the GSES operating budget has grown from \$2.2 million in 2022-2023 to \$2.5 million in 2023-2024. Tuition accounts for 80% of this budget, the remaining 20% from other sources of income, such as summer camp, parent-led fundraising, and annual fund campaigns. GSES applied for and received an additional \$75,000 federal grant this year, which will help to replenish its reserve accounts. As regards facilities, GSES has seen upgrades to the playground, installation of artificial turf at the front of the building, replacement of broken furniture and fixtures, the fencing and sodding of the field for additional security, and the complete remodeling of the library and lobby after 30 years of use.

Heather concluded by thanking Heather Graham, Senior Warden, who went the extra mile to understand the school, ask questions and champion our causes; Fr. Derek Larson, who embraces his role as spiritual leader and provided a great connection between school and home throughout the year; and to the Board of Trustees, especially Chair Jim Couillard.

### **Rector's Report**

Fr. Groff began by announcing two appointments that he has made for the coming year. Emily Smith has accepted his appointment as Youth Liaison to the Vestry for 2024. Zach Gouery, who has served in this capacity for some time will continue on in an emeritus role for the remainder of the school year. Fr. Groff also noted that the Senior Warden is appointed by the Rector, while the other officers – the Junior Warden, Clerk and Treasurer- are elected at the first Vestry meeting in February. He introduced Ian Anderson as our next Senior Warden, while noting that he would also continue to serve in leadership role, along with Beth Bohnsack and Fr. Derek, for our Youth Ministry.

Fr. Groff began his Rector's Report by saying that the state of Good Shepherd Episcopal Church and School is very good and very strong. During his seven weeks as a new rector, Sanford has been embracing all the newness around him. As he has been getting to know us as a parish, two recurring themes have consistently stood out. First is the pervasive sense of gratitude. The Good Shepherd community expresses deep thanks for the past, the present and indeed the future. Your collective perspective is one of gratitude, viewing the world through faithful eyes, and appreciating all that you encounter. I truly hope that this outlook persists through our time together. Second is action. You are not a group that likes to sit around and do nothing! The parking lots are typically full every day of the week, there are people wandering around the campus, and opportunities to participate abundant. You like to be busy, and thanks be to God, I do too! You are a people of action.

So what I see is that we have much to be grateful for in our common life together and much to do in the year that lies ahead. With that I'd like to run through a couple of different areas of our life with the themes of gratitude and action.

I am so grateful for our rich liturgical life together, and we are called to action by improving access to our liturgies, welcoming newcomers and deepening our liturgical experiences. Our worship of God is at the heart of who we are as the body of Christ. It is the engine that runs the rest of our life together. Worship is the source by which we are fed and sent out to do the work that God has given us to do. It is here that we learn the language of our faith and that we encounter the risen Christ. Here at Good Shepherd, we do liturgy really well already, and we will continue to work at creating a sacred space with excellent preaching, engaging praying, beautiful singing, reflective contemplating and Eucharistic eating. Liturgy is "all hands on deck." As you come to church each week, I hope that you will be an active part of worship through one of the many liturgical ministries that we offer; or better yet, if you are already active in one of these ministries – altar guild, ushers, greeters, acolytes, chalice bearers and other – and you are sitting near someone who is not, after this meeting, please invite them to learn more. It is part of our life that we all participate in together.

Next, I'm so grateful and thankful for the many vibrant programs we have here, and this year we can act by ensuring that our offerings are accessible to those who need them the most. I've been impressed by your attendance across the board: you all show up to everything – Bible studies, youth group, special events, receptions, funerals, (I haven't done a wedding yet) – but everything that goes on here you show up to.

Now from a program perspective, I'd like to spend a moment on our Youth Ministry. In the fall, we said goodbye to David Dixon, and in the short term I am grateful to Ian Anderson, to Beth Bohnsack and to Fr. Derek to fill the gap to make sure that our youth are well taken care of. [Applause.] I am also grateful to Mary Lou Crifasi and Merike Seely for taking on Children's Ministry in a greater capacity during this interim time. [More applause.] For the long term, I have asked Fr. Derek to conduct and in-depth study of our Youth and Family Ministry needs, and to devise a holistic system that will help us properly resource and staff this part of our life together. I anticipate that he and his committee's work will take 12-18 months to complete it and to do the work that they need to do. In the meantime, I would encourage you to reach out to the aforementioned people to find out how you can help them. They do need help! Specifically: with youth group, meals; with Sunday School, supplies; and with numerous other parts of their work that is known only to them, and soon, to you, when you ask.

Next, how could we not be brimming with gratitude to be located in the heart of paradise on this fabulous campus. The action during the coming year is to continue improving our facilities, our buildings, and our campus as a whole. One area of immediate action is the interviewing of a part-time sexton candidate; we aren't in a position to make an announcement at this time, but stay tuned and we'll keep you updated as we fill that position. Improving landscaping and doing some deep cleaning are "low hanging fruit" that will bring out some of the natural beauty of our campus. Additional work this year will be to look at our infrastructure, including our water, sewer, our internet, and the livestreaming and sound system here in the church. Now I know that some of you might be thinking that these cameras and things are brand new, and from one perspective they are; but from a technology perspective they are middle-aged. We need to start looking ahead as they come to the end of their useful life. We are grateful for the renovation of the parsonage, also known as the Larsonage, where Fr. Derek and his family live, and we look forward to the renovation of the rectory, which began renovation in earnest on Friday after a protracted permitting process. I'm grateful to Heather Graham, to the Vestry and to the Finance Committee for making this happen with great efficiency. For you all, please keep an eye out for campus clean-up days and opportunities to support the work that make our physical environment the best it can be for everyone. Thank you for that "sweat equity" that you put into this place.

As highlighted in the Treasurer's Report, our financial health is robust, giving us ample reason for more gratitude. It is not just about the numbers: it is about viewing our finances as a spiritual exercise that brings hope and joy into our lives, both collectively and individually. I take great pride in announcing that the Vestry has successfully approve a balance budget for 2024, the first time it's happened in a while. This achievement is a testament to the strength of our community, and to our unwavering commitment to everything that we have set out to accomplish this year. Notably, it also marks the largest budget our church has ever passed. I want to emphasize that this is a lean budget, trimmed of almost all fat, which is okay for now, but needs to have a little bit more in the future; and while it's balanced as a budget, the majority of our income comes from pledges. Relative to 2023 actual pledged income, we're looking to increase pledged income by almost \$140,000. Now, I'm confident that can do that, but it is going to have to be an all church effort. With over 150 pledging households for 2024 thus far, hypothetically we could easily surpass our goal with every pledging household increasing their pledge by \$1,000. But more seriously, I am confident that as we move into this year, we will find that the finances of this place are abundant, and we can step forward with hope and faith that God will provide. Early in this year, to accomplish these goals, we will continue the work of the Giving Team and we will grow it to ensure that their focus on generosity is shared with all. We will focus on our spiritual relationship with our finances, especially in moments where we have fear around running out, around not having enough, that we as a community can trust in Jesus' providential care, even with our wallets. We will bring the Heritage Society back to the front of our community, as we give thanks for all those who have shared with Good Shepherd in their estate plans and wills. Planned giving costs nothing, because we will be gone, and has a lasting generational impact through the endowment, which continues to grow and fund all of our activities. Since you are all church groupies attending the annual meeting, I'm sure that you've all pledged for 2024, and I want to thank you, to express the deep gratitude that I have for you and for your pledge, and I hope that you are excited, that you are filled with joy about being part of a vibrant, growing, hope-filled community of faith here at Good Shepherd.

Next, we have a staff that is second-to-none, and we are exceedingly grateful. Our focus for the next year is bringing us up to an appropriate staffing level and need, including the hiring of a part-time sexton and discerning what youth staffing we will need into the future. In addition, I'm committed to compensating our staff fairly. I don't think that anyone goes into church work to get rich, but I want to make sure that we are offering excellent benefits and time off, so that they can continue to function and give their all. As a group, we're just getting going, and I have a feeling that you will be experiencing an impressive and well-run operational and programmatic staff this year. As parish insiders, please keep praying for us, and offer your help where you see fit and you feel free you can give it. And be sure to share your gratitude with the staff members wherever and whenever you can; a kind word goes a long way with all of us.

I preached about being fed and feeding others as my first sermon here seven weeks ago. Our work in the world is such a great gift, and I am so thankful for those who lead and participate in the many ways that we reach out beyond ourselves. We have the usual work to do, especially as Artie's Party is just a few weeks away. As we experience new people getting to know Good Shepherd, we must continue to focus our attention on those in our community who are underserved and in need. The most damaging way to be a church in this day and age, in my humble opinion, is to become insular: to be self-focused and self-interested only. When we stop looking outward to see others in need, we will fail to live up to Jesus' call to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, care for the sick, and proclaim release to the captives. I'm grateful that this selfless, giving ethos is part of our DNA here at Good Shepherd, and I encourage us to find creative ways to reach out beyond ourselves and include those around us, especially those who are new to our campus, our church and our school. In the next year, we will be looking at ways that we can support St. George's and the Table in their ministry in Riviera Beach, including the building of the Hearts of Palm Center which is the future home of St. George, and countless other outreach ministries that are ongoing all the time.

In closing, I want to express my profound gratitude for the warm welcome that I have received in these last seven weeks as your new rector. The spirit of gratitude runs deep in this community, and it's evident in every corner of Good Shepherd. As we embark on this journey together, let's not only cherish the blessings we have, but also to channel that gratitude into action, whether it's active participation in our vibrant liturgical life, supporting our programs, or reaching out to those in need, may we turn our thankfulness into tangible deeds. With each act of kindness, each moment of service, we contribute to the shared narrative of a community that not only expressed gratitude, but lives it out loud. Here's to a year ahead filled with gratitude and action, forging bonds and making a positive impact on our shared journey. Thank you for being a part of this incredible community, and may we continue to thrive in gratitude and action together. Thank you.

### Recognitions

Fr. Groff thanked the Vestry, particularly the outgoing Vestry members, and thanked them for their service during this time of transition, and for running this church and school community the way that it had.

He further thanked the members of staff individually by name and role: Jamie Phillips, our Nursery Coordinator; Evi Seely, our Digital Media Assistant; Erik Pariseleti, our Livestream Coordinator [applause]; Lynn Evans, our Business Manager; an especial thanks to Beth Long, our Thrift Shop Manager, and Jennifer Johnson, our Assistant Manager [applause and whistles] for their incredible work during the past year bringing in a record amount of revenue, and for managing the store and for involving the many volunteers that you have; Mary Lou Crifasi, our Office Coordinator; for Timm Johnson-Reynolds, our Music Director, and Debbie White, our Assistant Choir Coordinator; Jo Wood, our Hospitality and Facilities Director [much applause]; for Merike Seely, our Parish Administrator, for all of her hard work and putting together this beautiful Annual Report; Heather Vaughn, our Head-of-School, and her entire team; and to Father Derek Larson, our Associate Rector, for all of his work during the past year [standing ovation]. Fr. Groff added, on a personal note, that he can't tell you how thrilled I am to be working with Fr. Derek on a day-to-day basis; he's an excellent priest and colleague to work with. We're just getting started.

Fr. Groff announced that we have two special presentations first to Heather Graham for her Senior Wardenship that seemed to be never-ending but that has now ended. He presented her a gift of an Apple watch for her incredible service to Good Shepherd. Heather Graham then thanked Fr. Derek and presented him with a thank you gift on behalf of the Staff and the Vestry: a week's stay in the Blue Ridge Mountains, thanks to Kevin Riddle, and a small offering to enhance his vacation. She thanked Fr. Derek's wife LauraAnn and his children Barret and Alaster for sharing Fr. Derek with us for so long. She shared an anecdote that she felt exemplified the sense of belonging and care that characterizes Good Shepherd and described it as God's gift to all of us.

### Year-in-Review Video

The assembled were then shown a video prepared by Parish Administrator Merike Seely.

### Parish Prayer

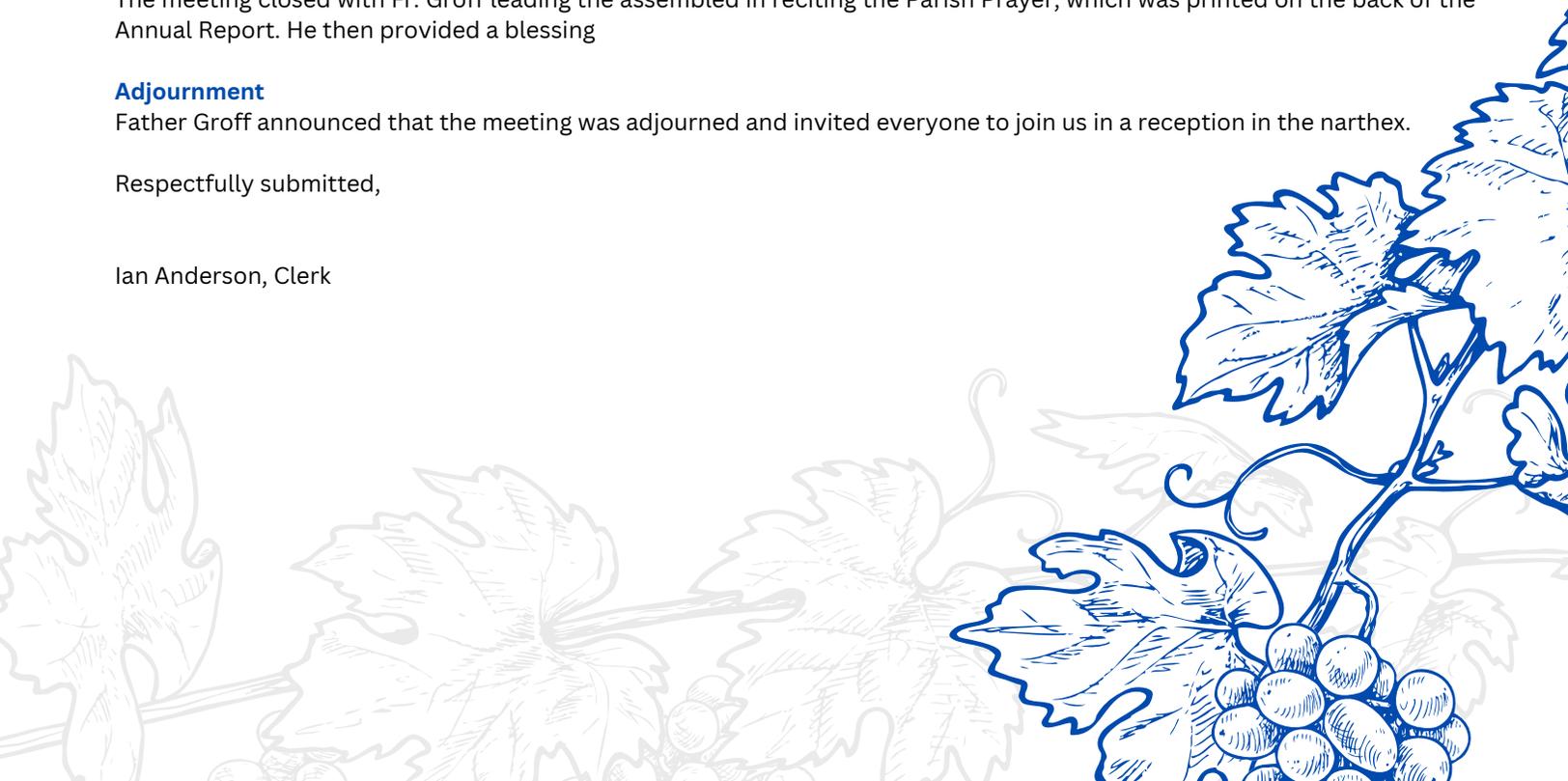
The meeting closed with Fr. Groff leading the assembled in reciting the Parish Prayer, which was printed on the back of the Annual Report. He then provided a blessing

### Adjournment

Father Groff announced that the meeting was adjourned and invited everyone to join us in a reception in the narthex.

Respectfully submitted,

Ian Anderson, Clerk



# 2025 Vestry Nominees

Nominees for a three-year term



## **GEORGE CREEL**

George Creel was born in Washington, D.C., and after college he lived in New York City and Southampton, New York, where he was an active parishioner in the Episcopal Church. He first visited Jupiter in 1980 with his parents, who later settled in Tequesta. George and his wife, Karen, were married at Bethesda-by-the-Sea in Palm Beach in 2005 and have called South Florida home for over 20 years. In 2020, George became a year-round resident of Tequesta. Since the pandemic, George has been a regular parishioner at the 10:00 AM service, where he serves as a reader and Eucharistic Minister. He is also an active member of the Good Guys and the Investment Committee. An avid reader, George participates regularly in the Theological Book Study, the Literary Circle, and weekly Bible Study. A cradle Episcopalian, George is a proud graduate of The Hill School and Auburn University.



## **RON DOUCETTE**

Ron is a retired Partner and Officer of UBS Financial Swiss Bank in Boston, where he led a successful team for nearly 40 years, maintaining lasting relationships with clients. A graduate of Central Connecticut University with a BS in Finance. Ron has an extensive history of service, including roles on the Vestry of the Old North Church in Boston, where he chaired fundraising efforts for capital projects, and as a trustee and committee member for several nonprofit organizations. His notable contributions include 14 years as service chairman for The Home for Little Wanderers, leadership in Habitat for Humanity projects, and coordination of events for the New England Aquarium Dive Club. Ron resides year-round in Hobe Sound with his wife, Sharon, and is an active member of The Retreat community, where he promotes Pickleball participation and serves on the Clubhouse Committee.



## **KATE GOUERY**

Kate grew up in Southeastern, PA where she was raised Episcopalian, attended University for Studio Art, and worked for several years in high-end commercial art, selling her pottery on the side. She then switched gears to become a preschool teacher, married Gwen and had 3 wonderful sons. Their first church home was a very positive Episcopal experience in West Chester, PA that fostered curiosity and a love of service. In 2011, Gwen was transferred for work, and they were led to home educate the kids here in Tequesta, FL from kindergarten through 8th grade. The family explored other denominations for a year before finding this church home in 2012. The kids are now in college, high school and middle school and follow both their parents in being active in the church. Here at Good Shepherd, Kate has enjoyed serving as Sunday School Teacher and Director, served on Search and Discernment committees and more. She is currently serving on the flower delivery team, healing ministry, and morning prayer team.



## **LARRY SMITH**

Larry Smith has been member of Good Shepherd with his wife Tracy, and daughters Megan & Emily since 2011. A cradle Episcopalian, he was baptized at 8 years old at Immanuel Episcopal Church on the Green in New Castle, Delaware and later confirmed at Good Shepherd. Larry is a former vestry member where he served as Junior Warden for two years. He has also served as a cursillo board member, verger, eucharistic minister, eucharistic visitor, stewardship committee co-chair, master plan committee member, youth & children's foundation team member, and has been involved in volunteer opportunities such as gleaning, food packing for Haiti, youth group, Artie's party, and kids in the courtyard. Larry is excited for this opportunity to continue serving God, Good Shepherd Church & School, and the community.

## Bylaw 4.2 Vestry Qualifications

1. Be a communicant in good standing of the Parish.
2. Have maintained regular attendance at the Parish for not less than one year.
3. Be a qualified elector.

### OUTGOING VESTRY MEMBERS

We give thanks to our current Vestry members who have fulfilled their term: **(below, l-r)** Ian Anderson, Carol Block, Brad Davis, and Akin Owosina.



## Good Shepherd School

Heather Vaughn, Head of School

Good Shepherd Episcopal School continues to flourish, with enrollment growing to 165 students and a dedicated team of 32 staff members—both increases from last year. This vibrant community has actively participated in outreach initiatives, including the Food Pantry, Youth Ministries, Shepherd's Flock reading program, toy and bike drives, and gleaning efforts, fostering a spirit of service among students and staff alike. In 2024, the school celebrated several key accomplishments: the implementation of upgraded security systems, enhancements to classroom technology to enrich the learning environment, and enrollment in the Florida Empowerment Scholarship Program, expanding access to quality education for even more families. Together, these milestones reflect a thriving institution committed to academic excellence and community engagement.



For enrollment and other information about GSES, please call the school at 561-746-5507



Call the shop to be a part of this wonderful ministry!  
561-406-2923

# Pennies For Heaven

2024 brought Pennies For Heaven to new levels! They did more business, received more donations, had greater community impact, recruited more volunteers and provided more than ever to the Good Shepherd operating budget! Thanks to this hardworking team led by Beth Long and Jennifer Johnson.



**31 Dedicated Volunteers**  
**2 Staff members**



**4 Special Events and community activities**  
**10 Outside agencies assisted**



**\$188,564 2024 Income toward operating**  
**15% of Good Shepherd Operating Budget**

## Worship, Prayer and Pastoral Care

**Sunday Services and Church on the Green** - 135 services

**Wednesday School Chapel Services** - School Chapel, Preschool Chapel - 75

**Wednesday Healing** - 45

**Youth Group Compline** - 15

**Special Services** - 9

**Home Communion** - 190

**Daily Office** - 232 online services held in 2024 with a rotating team of about 12 people who served 1,504 participants.

**Eucharistic Visitors** - A team of nine take communion to the homebound weekly. This is a decrease from 2023.

**Eucharistic Ministers** - We ended the year with 31 people who assist with services regularly.

**Intercessory Readers** - The number of readers increased in 2024 to 22 who serve on a rotating schedule.

**Vergers** - Our Verger guild remained steady at seven total in 2024.

**Youth Acolytes** - Four new acolytes added in 2024! Four graduated and we ended the year with 15 total.

**Prayer Shawls and Seafarers** - This ministry is looking for new leadership in 2025. 445 items were blessed off site for Seafarers' and there were four knitters producing prayer shawls in 2024.

**Flower Delivery** - a team of five made over 100 altar flower deliveries in 2024.

**Healing Team** - 12 people serve on this team to pray over people during services including Wednesday Holy Eucharist. The Surviving the Holidays and Loss and Suffering workshops were well attended and the latter has continued weekly.

**Altar Guild** -The Altar Guild Ministry faithfully supports all Eucharistic needs at Good Shepherd, preparing the altar for weekly services, special occasions, and Children's Chapel. In 2024, the guild assisted with baptisms, funerals, and healing services, cared for linens and silver, and arranged Eucharist for the North Palm Beach Deanery meetings. Funded by donations, they also covered altar flowers and related needs. Attracting younger members to continue this vital ministry remains a priority.

**Daughters of the King** -Grew to 14 members in 2024, engaging in prayer, service, and spiritual development. They collaborated with ministries like Sandwiches for St. George's and the Prayer Shawl group, supported external organizations such as the Women's Center in Madagascar, and contributed to church-led projects through donations.



**Livestream and A/V** played an important part in worship, connecting 4,369 families or individuals to our content in 2024.

## Music Ministry



**Music Ministry**, under the leadership of Timm Johnson-Reynolds, and Debbie White, grew to 10 participants in 2024, enhancing worship services weekly and performing at special events like Good Friday, the Longest Night, and Christmas Eve. Highlights from the year included hiring instrumentalists to elevate Easter, Holy Week, and Christmas celebrations. While this ministry serves hundreds of people with liturgical music through a variety of services, recruiting choir members remains an ongoing challenge.

# Fellowship Ministries

**Literary Circle** engaged 12 participants and a wider audience of 21–40 readers in 2024 through book discussions and "Book Gossip" sessions. The group attracted non-parishioners and out-of-state members, with participants joining from Alabama and even London. They continue to balance accessibility with diverse selections, fostering community through shared reading.

**OWLS (Older Wiser Livelier Shepherds)** averaged 12 participants monthly in 2024, with a total reach of 76–150 people. Highlights included a guided tour of Good Shepherd's stained glass, hosting Thanksgiving dinner, and a presentation on birds. They also launched a monthly newsletter, strengthening connections within the group.

**Foyer Groups** engaged 12 participants in 2024, fostering connection through socializing, cooking, dining, and welcoming new members. Challenges included a decrease in participation and efforts to attract more members, especially singles and men.

**Morning Glory Women's Fellowship Breakfast** maintained 15 participants in 2024, focusing on connection and care by sending cards to members experiencing loss or illness. While they celebrated many meaningful moments, keeping participants engaged remains a challenge.

**Thursday Bridge Club** maintained 12 participants in 2024, welcoming 8–10 non-parishioners weekly for three hours of play and fellowship. With no notable challenges, the group's focus remains on fun and camaraderie.

**Good Guys** maintained 14 members in 2024, fostering fellowship through weekly breakfasts and three annual grill nights open to all men. They supported Good Shepherd with \$500 gifts for graduating seniors and donations to Artie's Party. Challenges included sustaining attendance and attracting new members, but their focus on camaraderie and care for the church community remains strong.

**Tech Tuesday** continued to give hands on training and instruction for people who struggle with technology. Troubleshooting issues on a one-on-one basis, we met in the Barn on the second Tuesday of each month in 2024 and saw a varied group of parishioners bring in their mobile devices for assistance. A special cyber safety presentation was facilitated by Jupiter Police Department in September.

**Hallowed Hikes** are outings in nature where we celebrate Holy Eucharist on the path. In 2024 we met on months that no Church on the Green was scheduled -- May through October. Groups vary in size from about 8 to 18 and we enjoy a nature interpretation with an inspired liturgy on the way.



# Education and Formation

**Sunday Forum** met monthly on the third Sunday between services for conversation about issues that meet at the intersection of faith, community and Good Shepherd. Participation ranged from 15 - 35 in 2025.

**Wednesday Bible Study with Clergy** meets at 11:00 in the Parish Hall weekly, to discuss Biblical themes and topics in a series format. This is a very well attended and faithful group of 12 - 30 people weekly.

**The Episcopal Way** is an opportunity for anyone to find out about the history and theology of the Episcopal church and Good Shepherd in particular. This training serves as preparation for confirmation for adults.

**Theological Book Study** met on Thursdays at 4:00 in the Library for a deep dive into titles that reflect on major theological concepts and seasonal themes.

# Meal and Assistance Ministries

**Food Pantry**, powered by 10 dedicated volunteers and countless donors, serves as a beacon of hope for struggling families in our community. Partnering with organizations like CROS Ministries, Rotary Club, Palm Beach Harvest, and local businesses, we are entirely supported by in-kind and financial donations. This year, we provided food, friendship, and choice—thanks to our new condiment cart—to an average of 45-50 families weekly. On Thanksgiving, we set a record, serving 85 families and 378 individuals. Together, we bring nourishment and hope to those in need.

**St. George Table** provided 5,000 sandwiches and 4,500 hot meals to help struggling people in Riviera Beach.

**Shepherd's Flock** reads to children at Warfield School to give them a better start at reading. In 2024, we served around 100 children and assisted their dedicated teachers.

## Outreach and Missions

Good Shepherd's outreach ministries had a remarkable year, marked by generosity, collaboration, and community impact. We partnered with organizations like the South Florida Haiti Project, CROS Ministries, and St. George Table, while also supporting local schools such as Warfield and Jupiter Elementary through supply drives and toy collections. Our Artie's Party fundraiser kicked off the year with an incredible \$47,000 raised for our budgeted ministries. The Food Pantry distributed 2,500 bags of groceries to an average of 45 families weekly, and St. George Table served 200 hot meals daily, with Good Shepherd preparing two meals each month and supplying countless snacks and sandwiches.

We rallied to support St. Raphael's in Ft. Myers Beach, providing \$20,000 and fulfilling wish-list needs as they rebuild after hardship. Other highlights included sponsoring hygiene kits and school supplies for Warfield School and raising spirits with our annual Food Packing for Haiti.

All of this was made possible through the dedication and love of our church, school, and wider community. While we celebrate these accomplishments, we also seek volunteers to help lead key efforts like meal prep and special events. Together, we continue to be a blessing to others!

MINISTRIES	2024 CONTRIBUTION
El Sol	1,500
Episcopal Relief & Development	500
Food For the Poor	1,000
Food Pantry (CROS Ministries)	500
Guatemalan Tomorrow Fund	1,000
Guatemalan Tomorrow Sponsorships	1,500
McGregor's Ministry (SAMS)	1,100
Our Little Roses	1,000
The Lord's Place	2,000
Seaman's Church Institute	200
St. George Table	7,800
St. George Meals (sandwiches)	10,560
South Florida Haiti Project	8,604
Food Packing For Haiti	2,000
Mission – Youth, Adult, Intergen.	6,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$45,264</b>

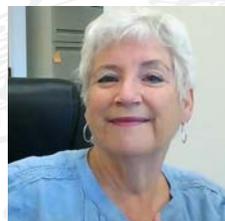


# Administration

The Rev. Dr. Sanford H. Groff, Jr., Rector  
Heather Vaughn, Head of School  
Lynn Evans, Business Manager  
Jo Wood, Director of Hospitality



Timm C. Johnson Reynolds, Director of Music  
Mary Lou Crifasi, Family & Children's Ministry  
Director/Front Office Coordinator  
Debbie White, Choir Coordinator  
Lisa Ellington, Front Office Coordinator



Beth Long, Thrift Shop Manager  
Erik Pariseleti, Livestream A/V Coordinator  
Idalia Adams, Field Ed Student  
Alex Serra-Wolfington, Field Ed Student



Evelyn Seely, Digital Media Associate  
Daniel Perez-Vasquez, Sexton  
Jennifer Johnson, Assistant Shop Manager  
Mr. Bingley, Morale Officer



Merike Seely, Parish Administrator\*  
The Rev. Derek M. Larson, Associate Rector\*  
Not Pictured:  
America Hernandez, Nursery Attendant  
Danny Vaz, Livestream A/V Assistant



\*Merike and Fr. Derek left the staff during the 2024 calendar year. Fr. Derek was called to become the Rector of St. Peter's, Plant City. Merike decided to retire from her role after decades of service to the parish. She will remain a parishioner.

**Staff:** In this transition year, our dedicated staff has been committed to the parish's mission, providing stability and inspiration during a season of change. Through collaborative spirit and innovative approaches they have set a tone of excitement and possibility. We are grateful for the resources and leadership of our staff.

**Investment Committee:** Faithful management of our endowed funds is the role of the Investment Committee. The team of seven is charged with the growth, protection, and preservation of our funds. The team develops strategies to grow our long-term financial assets in order to ensure that Good Shepherd Episcopal Church continues to flourish, and the funds are needed when required. In 2025 funds were used to support the operating budget and rectory renovations. Overall our funds grew during 2024.

**Security and Safe Church:** 2024 saw increases in the number of Safe Church training among volunteers thanks to coordinator, Lynn Evans. The Church Security Team convened again to review updated procedures and protocols and we had our very first fire drill in church. Trainings of ushers and greeters were held a few times throughout the year.

**Office Volunteers:** This dedicated team came together to help get projects organized and into the mail. Processing mailings and correspondence and filling in at reception are some of the ways volunteers help with our day-to-day operations.

**Facilities and Events Coordination:** Under the supervision of Jo Wood, many events and activities take place throughout the year in all areas of parish life: Artie's Party, Treasure Coast Youth Symphony, Summer Sunday Café, Music and the Arts Concerts, Kickoff Cookout, and Oktoberfest in addition to worship and private parties.

# Treasurer's Report

## 2024 OPERATING RESULTS

Included in your Annual Meeting Report is a 2024 Budget Analysis and 2025 Budget Summary, which provides added detail for your information.

Total income was \$1,089,599, which was \$114,695 under budget. Pledges received were under budget \$145,553. The following sources of income were over budget: Non-Pledge Offerings, Undesignated Offerings, Plate Received and Pennies for Heaven, which had another great year with gross income of \$188,564. Artie's Party net income, over \$39,500, was added to the Committed Outreach restricted fund.

Total expenses were \$1,133,453 which was \$70,841 under budget. This was primarily due to Stipends, Salaries and Benefit being under budget \$100,470. The Youth Director position remained unfilled and Assistant Priest expenses were lower due to Fr. Larson leaving. Physical Plant Expenses were under budget \$4,609, due to Parsonage and Rectory expenses being under budget, partially offset by Church Properties over budget. Admin/Office Expenses were over budget \$19,973 primarily due to under budgeted professional services and professional development. Program/Ministry Expenses were over budget \$14,265, primarily due to unbudgeted expenses for Pennies for Heaven and most Worship expenses being over budget, partially offset by Youth Group expenses being under budget.

The Church had an operating deficit of \$43,854. The Vestry has decided to fund this deficit from the Operating Reserve restricted account.

## 2024 YEAR END BALANCE SHEET

The Church had current assets of \$1,903,840 as of year-end. These assets include \$572,115 in cash, certificates of deposit, and money market accounts and the investment account balance of \$1,328,885. Investment accounts include the Mission and Ministry Development Fund with balance of \$625,548, the Endowment Fund with balance of \$626,391 and the Memorial Garden Fund with balance of \$76,946. The investments appreciated \$125,220 and earned income of \$17,487. The Church withdrew \$113,277 from the investment account, consisting of \$17,545 from the Endowment Fund to support Church operations and \$95,732 from the Mission and Ministry Development Fund to fund renovations to the rectory. The Church also owns the Ridgewood Circle parsonage, Rectory and Church buildings and land. The Church has no debt.

The Church had Restricted accounts in the amount of \$337,117 as of year-end. These balances are monies held outside of the operating budget intended to be used for specific purposes. After funding the operating deficit from the Operating Reserve fund, its balance will be \$56,198. The other restricted funds with the largest balances include: **Committed Outreach**-\$52,541; **Memorials**-\$43,825; **Bequests**-\$42,803; **Memorial Garden**-\$32,894; **Youth Ministry**-\$20,988; **Food Pantry**-\$14,579

## 2025 OPERATING BUDGET

The 2025 operating budget forecasts a balanced budget. Total expenses in 2025 are less than the amount budgeted for 2024. This budget includes expenses for five months for an Assistant Priest, cost-of-living increases for staff, a new Children's Ministry Coordinator, a new Communications/Engagement position and expanded roles for both the Business Manager and Office Coordinator. It does not include a Parish Administrator. Other increases in expenses include those for church maintenance, property and liability insurance, professional services, Pennies for Heaven and worship. These increases are partially offset by lower projected costs for diocesan obligation, the parsonage and children and youth. The youth budget assumes Youth Director expenses for only three months of 2025.

Thank you to all who responded to the Stewardship Campaign last year. For those who have not yet responded, it is not too late to make a pledge for 2025.

Thanks again to all who paid their Pledge, contributed Non-pledge Offerings and Gifts, Seasonal Offerings and those who supported Artie's Party in 2024. Thanks to all who worked hard to make Artie's Party and Pennies for Heaven the successes they were this past year. Finally, thank you to the Clergy and Staff for being good stewards of the contributions and gifts received from the congregation.

Respectfully Submitted, Mike Greene, Treasurer



## 2024 BUDGET ANALYSIS and 2025 BUDGET SUMMARY

	Budget 2024	Actual 2024	Budget 2025
<b>REVENUES</b>			
<i>Pledges</i>	\$733,969	\$586,146	\$668,148
<i>Contributions</i>	\$155,000	\$178,696	\$191,500
<i>Other Income</i>	\$233,245	\$242,455	\$251,903
<i>School Contributions</i>	\$82,080	\$82,302	\$91,555
<b>TOTAL REVENUES</b>	<b>\$1,204,294</b>	<b>\$1,089,599</b>	<b>\$1,203,106</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>			
<b>Stipends, Salaries &amp; Benefits</b>			
<i>Clergy</i>	\$298,741	\$246,391	\$226,548
<i>Administrative</i>	\$323,068	\$321,291	\$336,482
<i>Children and Youth</i>	\$48,300	\$1,958	\$35,325
<i>Music Program</i>	\$53,619	\$53,618	\$56,299
<b>Total Stipend and Salary Expenses</b>	<b>\$723,728</b>	<b>\$623,258</b>	<b>\$654,654</b>
<b>Physical Plant Expenses</b>			
<i>Church Properties</i>	\$122,542	\$123,627	\$138,393
<i>Parsonage</i>	\$10,028	\$8,309	\$7,304
<i>Rectory</i>	\$15,664	\$11,689	\$14,414
<b>Total Physical Plant Expenses</b>	<b>\$148,234</b>	<b>\$143,625</b>	<b>\$160,111</b>
<b>Diocesan Obligation</b>	<b>\$133,651</b>	<b>\$133,651</b>	<b>\$125,379</b>
<b>Admin/Office Expenses</b>			
<i>Office Expenses</i>	\$38,626	\$38,722	\$42,150
<i>Computer Expenses</i>	\$10,860	\$11,058	\$12,880
<i>Insurances</i>	\$116,995	\$117,535	\$134,982
<i>Professional Services</i>	\$5,500	\$24,639	\$25,500
<b>Total Admin/Office Expenses</b>	<b>\$171,981</b>	<b>\$191,954</b>	<b>\$215,512</b>
<b>Program/Ministry Expenses</b>			
<i>Education</i>	\$8,000	\$4,632	\$7,500
<i>Hospitality/Evangelism</i>	\$3,250	\$4,379	\$7,300
<i>Congregational Ministries</i>	\$4,800	\$10,383	\$11,800
<i>Vestry</i>	\$500	\$560	\$500
<i>Worship</i>	\$10,150	\$21,011	\$20,350
<b>Total Program/Ministry Expenses</b>	<b>\$26,700</b>	<b>\$40,965</b>	<b>\$47,450</b>
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$1,204,294</b>	<b>\$1,133,453</b>	<b>\$1,203,106</b>
<b>Operating deficit 2024</b>		<b>-\$43,854</b>	
<b>Projected balanced budget 2025</b>			<b>\$0</b>

For additional financial information, feel free to contact our Treasurer, Mike Greene.

# Family Ministries

**Family Ministry Foundations Team** is a new and dynamic group of parishioners committed to discerning and addressing the needs of our children, youth and families. This team, composed of youth group members, parents, teachers, clergy, and seasoned lay leaders, brings a wealth of diverse gifts and experience. In 2024, the Family Ministry Foundations Team gathered monthly to lay the groundwork for a robust and vibrant children's and youth program by creating structures and selecting a curriculum format that best work for Good Shepherd. This endeavor was described at one of our Sunday Forum sessions.



**Youth Group** engaged 15 participants in 2024, contributing to outreach efforts like Artie's Party, Food Packing for Haiti, and St. George's Ministry. They supported Vacation Bible School and Sunday School, served as acolytes, and connected with the community through a Fall Festival activity. Highlights included attending Youth Week at Kanuga and a successful April fundraiser. Finding a dedicated coordinator to enhance planning and communication remains a main consideration.

**Sunday School** saw renewed interest in 2024 with increased registration, attendance and ongoing participation. While the ministry saw increases, we are trying to encourage continued engagement through programs like First Sunday Lunches, outings, and family-fun activities before some of our evening services. Easter and Christmas were both very well attended and we had 60 and 25 respectively for the Easter Egg Hunt and the Christmas Pageant cast.

**Vacation Bible School** saw Camp Firelight come to life for 66 campers on our Good Shepherd campus. We were blessed with the volunteer support of about 50 adults in many areas of coordination to make the week such a success.

**Kids in the Courtyard** was reconnecting kids once again in 2024, offering weekly Sunday connections after the 10 a.m. service. Restarted post-COVID, the ministry has seen renewed engagement and energy with about 200 participants during the year. Recruiting volunteers is ongoing.



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The Rev. Dr. Sanford H. Groff, Jr., Rector  
Heather Vaughn, Head of School

## Good Shepherd Episcopal School

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