



THE GOOD SHEPHERD

JANUARY NEWSLETTER

2026

Volume 56, Issue 1

Seek First the Kingdom of God

Dear Friends in Christ,

This year we will be reading through Matthew's gospel with its focus on the Kingdom of God. In his core teachings in the "Sermon on the Mount," Jesus reminds us not to worry about your life, what you will eat or drink, or what you will wear, look at the birds of the air and the lilies of the field. God knows our needs and is providing for them. Jesus says, "Seek first the Kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. (Matthew 6:33)"

Our focus this year will be on "Seeking First the Kingdom of God." It is a timely reminder as we live in a world of fear and anxiety. We learned during the pandemic the destructive influence of fear in our lives. Living in an information technology and media driven world which profits on fear, it's hard to ignore it. People are anxious about many things and yet Jesus reminds us over and over not to worry, keep your eyes on him, seek him, trust in Him, and follow him.

It sounds a bit irresponsible not to worry about your life, what you will eat or drink, or wear. Yet he is not saying they are not important, but rather where do they come from, and who is in control? The point is that we do not have as much control over our lives as we think, and worrying will not add a single day to our lives. It is all about priority and order. We place way too much pressure on ourselves when our life becomes out of order.

It has been my experience that when I forget to put God first in my life, then fear and anxiety take hold as if everything depends upon me and there never seems to be enough. But when I remember to put God first, the opposite is true. I have sense of peace knowing that life is in the proper order and there always seems to be enough. I can direct my thanks and praise to God. When we seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, life is full and overflowing.

The Annual Parish Meeting will be held on Sunday, January 25th in Munds Hall from 9:00-10:00 a.m. We will start with breakfast at 8:45 a.m. and then at 9:00 we will have vestry elections, and reports from the Wardens and Treasurer. Please try to be present at this important parish meeting. If you are unable to be there, be sure to come by the church office to vote absentee for vestry beginning January 12th. Please join me in thanking all of those who were willing to stand for election to the vestry this year and keep them in your prayers. We will elect six people to serve a three-year term.

We give thanks and praise to God for the health and vitality of this amazing community of faith and look forward to a fantastic 2026!

Yours in Christ,

CHURCH COMMUNITY

Church of the Good Shepherd ANNUAL PARISH MEETING



**Sunday, January 25
9:00 a.m.
Munds Hall Auditorium**

Come hear about the impact of the Church in 2025
and the direction we are headed for 2026.

Breakfast will begin at 8:45 a.m.

We will vote on new Vestry members at the
beginning of the meeting, so please be on time.

Martin Luther King Day Walk & Service

Monday, January 19

The Walk begins at Noon
at the Nueces County Courthouse

The march will process from the county courthouse
to the Church of the Good Shepherd. Delta Sigma
Theta will sponsor this annual event.

Everyone is welcome!

St. James Sunday

Sunday, February 8

10:30 a.m. Service

On February 8th we will welcome all of the
students, families, and staff of St. James Episcopal
School at our 10:30 a.m. service. We will celebrate
our partnership as a church and school!

Please join us!

THANK YOU FROM THE CLERGY

We want to thank each and every one of you who so generously contributed to a Christmas offering for all of us. Your generous offering blessed us, not only by the amount, but by the spirit in which it was given. We would also like to thank those of you who brought Christmas sweets and goodies for the office staff to share. What a treat! Thank you for all of the Christmas blessings!

Gratefully and humbly yours,
Milton, William, and Frank

Sunday School Classes in 2026

LIVING WORD

Led by the Rev. Milton Black - Ongoing each Sunday

9:30 - 10:15 a.m. in the Parlor

The Rev. Milton Black leads a discussion-based class utilizing the scripture readings from each Sunday's services. The day's scriptures will guide us as we learn from one another and better understand God's Word.

FROM ISLAM TO THE REFORMATION—JESUS' REVOLUTION CONTINUES

Led by the Rev. Frank Fuller - Begins January 4

9:30 - 10:15 a.m. in Munds Hall Library

The Church inherited the ruins of the western Roman Empire, and helped preserve learning and faith for a thousand years of chaos and darkness. This class will explore how the mission of Jesus continued to reshape the world and opened the rebirth of the West. What can their faith and teachings say to us today?

NEW MEMBERS CLASS - FOR ADULT CONFIRMATION

Led by the Rev. William Campbell - Begins January 11

9:30 - 10:15 a.m. in Dobbins Hall Adult Classroom

The Rev. William Campbell will lead an adult New Members Class in the new year for anyone interested in officially joining the Episcopal Church. This class will give a wealth of information about the Church and what it means to be an Episcopalian. If you have any questions about this class please call Fr. William.

Wednesday Evening Class in 2026

Wednesdays beginning January 7

RAMS HORNS TO ROCK BANDS

The Spirit in the Church's Music through the Generations

6:30 - 8:00 p.m. in Dobbins Hall Adult Classroom

This class will continue to look at the changing forms of music in Christian worship, with a focus on the last 300 years down to today. Different times call forth different music, and the Christian people have expressed their faith in many different musical ways. We hope to broaden our appreciation of how the Spirit speaks to us in song across the centuries and today. (You don't have to be a singer to enjoy this class!)

JANUARY

JANUARY 1

Church Office Closed

JANUARY 4

Rev. Fuller's Sunday School Resumes

9:30 a.m.

JANUARY 7

Wednesday Evening Class Resumes

6:30 - 8:00 p.m.

JANUARY 7

Kingdom Kids

6:30 - 8:00 p.m.

JANUARY 11

Breakfast Resumes

8:45 a.m.

JANUARY 11

Sunday School Resumes for Parents and Children

9:30 a.m.

JANUARY 11

Confirmation Class Resumes

9:30 a.m.

JANUARY 13

Women's Bible Study Resumes

10:00 - 11:30 a.m.

JANUARY 19

Martin Luther King Day March and Service

Begins at Noon at the Courthouse

JANUARY 24

Confirmation Retreat

6:30 - 9:00 p.m.

JANUARY 25

Annual Parish Meeting

9:00 a.m.

CHURCH COMMUNITY

A Message from Philip May

Hello Everyone from Canada's capital,

A long overdue update from me and Alice, but we finally have something to report! Alice is now officially a Canadian Permanent Resident, and has successfully made the move to Ottawa! Hooray and alleluia! It took a while to work our way through the Canadian system, and there was one piece of paperwork lost by Fedex, but it all worked out in the end. Alice arrived just in time for the first blast of winter, with some snow, and temperatures in the single digits Fahrenheit, but she is adapting well. (It's not *always* that cold!)

We are living in an old part of downtown, where everything is walkable and where we can tell the time by the clock on the tower of the Canadian Parliament building. Now that we are both here, we can work on making our place a home. Ottawa is a beautiful city, and the countryside is very close by. I have dozens of cousins and other relatives here, and it has been great re-connecting with all of them. And we will be spending Christmas with my siblings in Toronto, which is a fast train trip away. That will be very very fun!

We wish everyone at Good Shepherd a wonderful, safe, and holy Advent and Christmas. It will feel very strange not being part of the celebrations, but at the same time it will be good to be with my family. I miss y'all. You will be in our thoughts and prayers. Please keep us in yours.

With much love,
Philip and Alice



The Epiphany of the Lord

January 6

The Epiphany is the manifestation of Christ to the peoples of the earth. The winter solstice was kept on January 6 in some places during the first centuries of the Christian Era. In opposition to pagan festivals, Christians chose this day to celebrate the various manifestations, or "epiphanies," of Jesus' divinity. These showings of his divinity included his birth, the coming of the Magi, his baptism, and the Wedding at Cana where he miraculously changed water into wine. The day was called "The Feast of Lights." The celebration of the Son of God replaced the celebration of the sun.

Communion at Home

If you would like to receive communion but are unable to physically come to church, we can bring communion to your home. Please contact the Church Office to make your request.

Breakfast, Sunday School & Chapels Resume

Sunday, January 11

- Breakfast begins at 8:45 a.m.
- Sunday School at 9:30 a.m.
- Children's Chapel and Celebration Chapel at 10:30 a.m.

Special Note:

Rev. Black's and Rev. Fuller's Sunday School classes will meet on January 4.

Women's Bible Study

The Shepherd's Voice

Resumes January 13

Join this Study in the New Year!

Tuesdays from 10:00 - 11:30 a.m.

Led by Elizabeth Black in the Parlor

It's Never to Late to Join In! The New Year is a great time to join this Bible Study! You did not have to participate in the fall to be blessed by this study in the new year.

Immerse yourself in the drama of Jesus' life, getting to know his character and becoming familiar with his voice, as He calls us to do. This study combines the ancient practice of Lectio Divina with Immanuel Prayer exercises allowing the Holy Spirit to teach and lead us through the Gospel of John. *The Shepherd's Voice* draws upon the reader's spiritual imagination, rational processing, and personal perspective, to make a uniquely individual experience of entering scripture. If you have ever wanted to hear God speak, or speak more clearly, this course will provide the tools to know, hear and respond to the Shepherd's voice, calling you by name.

CHILDREN'S & YOUTH MINISTRIES

Youth Group in January

Sunday, January 11

Youth Group at the Youth House

4:30 p.m. Middle School

6:30 p.m. High School

Sunday, January 18

Marble Slab for Ice Cream (Alameda Location)

4:30 p.m. Middle School

6:30 p.m. High School

Sunday, January 25

"Cops and Robbers" @ TAMUCC

6:30 p.m. Middle & High School

Meet at the City Bus Stop on Ocean Drive in front of the University

Confirmation Retreat

Saturday, January 24 from 6:30 - 9:00 p.m.

All sixth grade confirmands will join us for a fun and meaningful evening!
Dinner will be provided. Meet in Munds Hall.



You're Invited to

TMI Preview Night

Hosted by the Nisimblats, Fitzgeralds, & Beauchamps

Please join us for an informative reception in Corpus Christi as we introduce families to the mission, community, and opportunities of TMI Episcopal.

Come see what makes TMI Episcopal the #1 private school in San Antonio and the #9 private school in Texas!

January 28, 2026

El Camino Tex-Mex Restaurant

314 N Chaparral St, Corpus Christi, TX 78401

5:30 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.

This event will feature:

- A school overview from Fr. Ben Nelson and TMI Leadership
- TMI's approach to servant leadership
- Remarks from our TMI President, Fr. Scott Brown
- Student perspectives from current students

KINGDOM KIDS

Wednesday, January 7

6:30 - 8:00 p.m.

Kingdom Kids is a fun evening of fun, food, and fellowship for children from Good Shepherd and St. James. There are games and free-play in the gym, as well as dinner and a bible story for children in Junior Kinder - 6th grade. The nursery and Kid's Zone are available for younger children. The cost is \$8 paid online at cotgs.org. Registration is open.



SUNDAYS

Sunday School

9:30 a.m.

Children Preschool 3 - 5th Grade
Water Street Classroom 107

Confirmation (6th Grade)
Munds Hall Auditorium

Children's Chapel

10:30 a.m.

for 3 year olds - Kinder

Celebration Chapel

10:30 a.m. in Munds Hall
1st - 6th Grade

NURSERY

Ages 6 months - 2 years

Sundays from 9:30 a.m. - 12:00 noon

We offer nursery in Dobbins Hall during the Sunday School hour and the 10:30 a.m. service.

VESTRY NOMINEES

The Vestry is a lay led board of 18 members who are elected by the congregation and serve a 3-year term. It makes the governing decisions for the business and ministry of the church. The following members of Good Shepherd have been nominated to serve on the Vestry. **We will elect 6 new members at our Annual Parish Meeting on Sunday, January 25th.** Thank you to each of these members for faithfully agreeing to be nominated.



Mary Campbell

I grew up in San Antonio and attended St. Luke's Episcopal Church. My husband Charlie and I moved to Corpus Christi in 1974. He was a busy doctor, and I was busy raising our 5 children. They all graduated from St. James Episcopal School, and I became active in the church and the school, wearing many different hats including the St. James School Board, Fund Raising Chairman, President of the Women of the Church, Vestry Member, Building Fund Campaign Committee, Altar Guild and Altar Flowers. My craziest job serving the church was as a wedding coordinator, which was a lot of fun! I feel so blessed to be part of our Church community and would be honored to serve on the Vestry again.



David Crow

I was born in Minnesota and baptized in the Congregational Church in 1954. My father moved our family to Corpus Christi in 1965, and I attended Corpus Christi public schools and Southwest Texas State University. My wife, Becky, and I were married in the Church of the Good Shepherd in 1977, and I was confirmed in the church in 1978. We have a long history with the Good Shepherd and St. James. All four of our children went to St. James, K- through middle school. We now have 5 grandchildren, and although they all live in Austin we see them often. My business life is in agriculture, managing our farms and ranches in South Texas and far West Texas. I have served on several bank boards, the Buccaneer Commission and as past Chairman of the Buc Days Rodeo. I've always considered the church as my spiritual home and look forward to giving back if I am elected.



Payne Neessen

My name is Payne Neessen. I was born and raised in Corpus Christi, and my family has been in business in the Coastal Bend for over 40 years. Our family owns and operates Neessen Chevrolet GMC, Neessen Chrysler Dodge Jeep Ram, and Neessen Outdoors in Kingsville. I currently serve on the Driscoll Children's Hospital Development Foundation Board of Directors, the Buccaneer Commission, and the Texas Automobile Dealers Association Leadership Network. My wife, Sharla, and I have two daughters, Kate (6) and Kora (4), who both attend St. James Episcopal School. Sharla is very active in the school and currently serves as President of Friends of St. James. We truly love Church of the Good Shepherd and are so thankful we found it. We became members a couple of years ago, and both Sharla and Kora were baptized here. Our family feels very blessed to be part of such a welcoming and supportive church community. I would be honored to serve on the Vestry and give back to a church that has meant so much to our family.



Debbie Newman

I was baptized and confirmed at the Holy Spirit Episcopal Church in Waco, Texas as a child. I moved to Corpus Christi in 1985 to marry my husband, John. I am a Certified Public Accountant, a mother and a grandmother. We have three sons, two of which were baptized at Good Shepherd. All three were confirmed at Good Shepherd. We joined The Church of the Good Shepherd in the 1990's. I am currently serving on the altar guild and have previously served as a Sunday school teacher, a member of the hospitality committee and as an egg lady. I am grateful for the community of Good Shepherd and I am happy, honored and humbled to be nominated for the Vestry.

VESTRY NOMINEES



Courtenay Berry Rickett

My family joined the Church of the Good Shepherd nearly 40 years ago when I was just a few years old. I was confirmed here and I am a St. James graduate. I grew up attending Sunday school, VBS, youth group, bible studies, diocese retreats and served as an acolyte throughout my middle school and high school years. My husband Robert and I were married here in 2018. Our daughters, Courtenay (6) & Margaret (3) were baptized here and are now St. James Jaguars themselves! Growing up in this church has impacted my life in so many ways. It instilled and grounded me in my faith at a very young age and I'm grateful our daughters are experiencing the same wonderful atmosphere. It is an honor to be nominated for Vestry and it would be a privilege to serve the very same church community that continuously blesses me throughout every stage of my life.



David Stewart

My wife, Elizabeth Stewart and I joined the Church of the Good Shepherd when we moved to Corpus Christi in 2018 and our daughters Claire, Eleanor and Alice were all baptized here. I was confirmed in The Episcopal Church of the Good Shepherd in Austin in 1999 and Elizabeth and I were married there in 2012. We have enjoyed getting to know Corpus Christi better through the Church as well as attending William and Frank's Sunday School classes and I've recently begun participating in services as a Lay Reader. It was a pleasure to serve St James Episcopal School for six years as a trustee including five as treasurer. It's also an honor to be asked to serve the Church as a vestry member and would happily join if chosen.



Blaire Turnbull

I was born and raised in the Episcopal church attending Church of the Heavenly Rest in Abilene, TX where I was baptized, confirmed and served as an acolyte. I moved to Corpus Christi to be with my husband, J.R. Turnbull, in 2011. Our children, Blakely (7) and Roby (4), were both baptized here at Church of the Good Shepherd and are both scholars at St. James. Growing up, and even more so now, youth groups and creating a wonderful church environment for children is a passion of mine that I would love to further invest in with Church of the Good Shepherd. My family's life is so blessed by this church community, and it would be an honor to serve on the Vestry if elected.



David Underbrink

I was received into the Good Shepherd in 1982 after growing up in St. Patrick's Catholic Church, and married Ellen Wood, a fifth-generation member of the Good Shepherd, in 1983. I have served the Good Shepherd as an Usher and Head Usher, Sunday School teacher, Every Member Canvas Team Captain, and as a Vestry member. I am a Licensed Professional Engineer receiving both a Bachelor's and Master's degree in Civil Engineering from Texas A&M University. In addition to being an owner in Naismith Engineering and Hanson Professional Services, I have been very active in community organizations through the years. Ellen and I raised two boys in the Good Shepherd, David, Jr., and Christopher, who were both in the children's choir, the Christmas Pageant, active in youth group, were Acolytes, and earned their Eagle Scout ranks and each chose the Good Shepherd Youth House for their Eagle Scout projects. They still consider Good Shepherd as their home and have baptized their children here. Our family has cherished our Good Shepherd fellowship and I would be honored to serve the Good Shepherd community as a Vestry Member.



Tom Wheat

I am a founding member of Pediatric Home Healthcare and have served as a member of the Advisory Committee and the Board of Managers since the inception of the company. I maintain a private law practice in Corpus Christi advising governmental entities, businesses and individuals in ad valorem tax, real estate, transactional, litigation and business-related matters. I attended Texas Tech University and South Texas College of Law and began my law career in Alice. I then moved to Corpus Christi to join the Kleberg Law Firm. I have served as president of the Alice Chamber of Commerce and the board of directors for the Alice Country Club. After moving to Corpus Christi, I served as the co-host of the 1996 Cattle Barons celebration, president of the Corpus Christi Country Club, was a member of Class Eighteen of Leadership Corpus Christi also serving as a board member, and I served as president of the Corpus Christi Little League. I previously served on the Vestry of Church of the Good Shepherd.

WORSHIP SERVICES & HOURS

Sunday Schedule

8:00 a.m. Traditional Eucharist
8:45 a.m. Breakfast Fellowship
9:30 a.m. Sunday School
10:30 a.m. Family Eucharist
5:30 p.m. 'Come As You Are' Service

Nursery For the Little Ones

6 months - 2 Years in the Nursery 9:30 a.m. - 12:00 noon

Sunday School Classes

Sundays 9:30-10:15 a.m.

Children Meet in Water Street Classroom 107

Confirmation in Munds Hall Auditorium

Youth Meet in Munds Hall Auditorium

Adults:

Living Word w/Rev. Black in the Parlor

New Member Class w/Rev. Campbell in DHAC

From Islam to the Reformation w/Rev. Fuller in Munds Hall Library

Weekday Services

Wednesdays at 5:30 p.m. Healing Service with
Holy Eucharist (Rite II)

Monthly Services

We offer a service of Holy Communion at the Trinity
Towers/Brookdale retirement community at 3:30 p.m. on
the first Sunday of every month.

St. James Chapel Services

Tuesdays at 8:05 a.m. Middle School Chapel

Tuesdays at 8:45 a.m. K- 4th Grade Chapel

Wednesdays at 8:20 a.m. Preschool Chapels (4 services)

Thursdays at 8:05 a.m. All School Chapel

Parents are welcome at All School Chapel on Thursdays.