



# *Episcopal Church of the Good Shepherd*

## *Cross and Staff Newsletter*

February- March 2026

101 Walnut Street Allegan, Michigan 49010

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### **Regular Events**

#### **Sundays**

Holy Eucharist at 10 AM  
Followed by Coffee Hour

#### **Mon., Wed., & Fri.**

Office Hours, 10 AM to 2 PM

**Special** Christian Education for Youth –  
Special Schedule **March 1 & March 15,**

#### **Second Sunday of each Month**

Ingathering for Outreach  
Vestry Meeting: all are invited.

#### **Tuesdays**

Catholic Charities meets upstairs.

#### **Thursdays**

Community Closet 10 AM to 1 PM

#### **Fridays**

Father Corwin In, 9 AM to 1 PM  
Community Closet 10 AM to 1 PM

### **Special Events**

**Youth Outing. March 11<sup>th</sup>, 19am.** Our youth will meet at Essenburg Art on Brady Street for a workshop on the pottery wheel then have some lunch at Pizza Hut.

**Ash Wednesday. Feb. 18<sup>th</sup>, Noon.**  
Imposition of ashes. All are invited.

**Forward Day by Day booklets** are available to use during Lent

**ANNOUNCEMENT:** The date of the opening of Pat Dewey's art exhibition at Ox-Bow House in Douglas has been moved to Saturday, 13 June, from 1 to 5 PM.

### *From the desk of Father Corwin...*

Growing up, our Sunday school class somehow made the traditional Lenten Sacrifice into a competition of who could out-do the others. It started when David said he was giving up his Three Musketeers chocolate bar. Someone added that he was giving up chocolate AND soda, and it continued around the room. When it was my turn I said I was giving up my favorites, beets and Brussels sprouts. I was serious about giving up something I truly enjoyed. Everyone froze and stared at me like I was weird.

The one redeeming factor was that on Sunday when we break the Lenten sacrifice I could eat my fill of vegetables. My sister was not going to fight me for the last sprouts! Then, on Easter the Lenten sacrifice was over for another year, and when it was time to plant or garden there would be two rows of beets - one for the rest of the family and one for me.

I understand the idea of a Lenten Sacrifice as a good spiritual exercise, and that this sacrifice is supposed to remind us of our Lord's greater sacrifice on the cross.

I pivoted slightly on the tradition. Instead of giving up something I like or enjoy, I select some habit or personality trait that I know is not good for me or for those around me. Once it is selected, I work as hard as possible to make the change and do it in honor of what Christ has done for me.

As with giving up or sacrificing something we enjoy, sacrificing something that blocks enjoying the abundant life for which Jesus came, is not easy. For example, it is a real challenge to give up judgmental thoughts and words that diminish relationships, even worse, we really can't break the fast on Sunday.

As I see it, the benefit of this different type of Lenten Sacrifice is that it takes about 30 days to break an old habit and substitute a new and better one. Doing this during Lent means we get an extra two weeks to have a better way of living firmly planted in our heart and mind.

+GC Stoppel

# VESTRY NOTES

Notes from the February 8, 2026, Vestry meeting.

## Opening

Ray Lewis, the new Sr. Warden, called the meeting to order with vestry members Deb Foune, Ethan MacDonald, Adam Iehl, and Gari Voss.

## Treasurer Report

The general fund from which we pay bills is healthy. Because we are carrying an extremely high amount in our bank, the vestry decided to put \$50,000 in a money market account to earn some interest. In addition, Deb Foune and Gari will adjust the checking account so we can pay several bills online and investigate making salary payments using direct deposit.

The Vestry decided to again pay the rental fees so we can open the Fair Booth in September.

## Sr. Warden Report

Ray will make available the form explaining the Safe Church training that the vestry and all members of our outreach programs must take.

The Vestry will meet in a closed meeting to review Letters of Understanding for all employees so we align with the new Policies and Procedures of the Episcopal Diocese of the Great Lakes. The date was set for Tues., Feb. 24<sup>th</sup>.

## Jr. Warden Report

Ethan shared that he is working with Ray and Jim Wendt to create a to-do list and begin prioritizing the items.

1. **Sanctuary Bulbs.** Bulbs have been replaced to give more light.
2. **Winchester Hall Flooring.** The congregation chose their favorite flooring sample. Installation bids will be sought.
3. **Shower.** Ethan expects a bid from a shower installation company to put a shower in the upstairs bathroom.

## Rector's Report

1. Father would like to create some short videos to put on our website. Ethan will work with him on one for Ash Wednesday.
2. A suggestion was made to start a fife and drum band that could perform in places like Bridgefest and the Allegan County Fair Parade.
3. Lynne and Steve Winters would like to renew their wedding vows to celebrate their 50<sup>th</sup> Wedding Anniversary. This will be on Sunday, Feb. 15, 2026.

## Old Business

1. The Annual Meeting went well. A suggestion was made to distribute the Annual Meeting booklet the week before the meeting so some strategic planning can be done with the congregation during the formal meeting.
2. The Vestry needs to keep an eye on the plans for improving Walnut Street because the members do not want to change the entrance to the handicap parking slots.
3. Gari will be happy to speak with anyone who must take a required deduction from their investments to save the tax deductions. Several of our parishioners already make direct contributions to the church each year.
4. Rekha Varghese was unable to find a facilitator for the Vestry Retreat, but we will continue to seek a facilitator while creating the Agenda for Sat., Feb. 21, 2026.

## New Business

Gari shared that a paranormal group had met in the church on Sat., Feb. 7, 2026, and had some interesting finds in the children's chapel. An interesting reaction when using a handheld instrument was the reaction to the life-sized Santa figure used during the Santa Workshop. If only cutout Santas could talk...

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## Annual Meeting – January 18, 2026

Thank you to all who braved the weather on Sunday, January 18, 2026, and stayed for the Annual Meeting. If you missed the meeting, we do have copies of the Annual Meeting booklet that can be sent in the mail or electronically. Just let Sarah know in the office.

## Praying for Others



“And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord’s people.” Ephesians 6:18

Currently we are praying for: Chuck; Joan & Ron; Brenda; Pam; Sue; Mary Ann; Angie; Kaylee & family; Kay; Jama; Tina; Rita; Lisa & her family; Jim and Mary Ann; Mike Benedict; Teddy and Todd Cassidy; Carol B.; Wendy; Gladwin Miner; Frank; Bonnie Vose; Tonya; Michelle; and Rick. In addition, let’s remember those in the military, police and first responders, plus teachers and students as they prepare to return to the classroom, and our shut-ins

### February Birthdays

2	Chris Sinden
3	Theresa Krickow
4	Rekha Varghese
5	Don Morris
7	James Wheat
17	Vicki Barber
23	Angie Sinden
24	Nan (Hunter) Vincent
27	Michelle Cook
29	Kate Adams-Nameche

### FEBRUARY Anniversaries

14	Steve & Lynne Winters
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### Looking Forward:

#### March Birthdays

4	Ryan Krickow
10	Debbie Foune
11	Nathan Tibbitts
13	Janis Emery
14	Judy Buchanan, Pam Sinden
16	Deborah Isenhart
18	Evie Keck
21	Shawn White, John Iehl
28	Ray Lewis
31	Cheryl Cook

## Special Thanks

We would like to express our gratitude to those of you who help keep this parish running smoothly every day of the week. There are too many to name, but we would like to express a special thanks:

To Harold for Shoveling all the thick ice buildup from the walkways!

To the volunteers for the February Meals on Wheels Pop Up lunch. The kitchen was left impeccably!

## Warming Station Update



Good Shepherd and the First Presbyterian Church have been operating a Warming Center for our unhoused and those who are passing through town but have limited resources.

The Station has alternated between the churches each week and opens when the weather is below 32°. Beginning February 1, 2026, the Warming Station will be housed at the Allegan Community Action building on Water Street.

We still need volunteers to help welcome the visitors and to make simple hearty meals. A special thank you to Elma Rosenberg and Ethan MacDonald for providing meals.

If you can assist, please contact Gari Voss at [gari749@gmail.com](mailto:gari749@gmail.com) or Will Walker at [william.walker@recyclingisba.com](mailto:william.walker@recyclingisba.com). As the days get longer, it would be very much appreciated if volunteers could serve meals between 5 and 6pm.

## Our Ongoing Outreach!

Thank you to all who support our outreach efforts.

**Food Pantry Donations:** Our congregation has been extremely kind by contributing to the food insecurity in Allegan County. Our contribution for the January ingathering for the Food Pantry was \$20. We will continue doing an ingathering each 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of the month for community projects. February is the Peanut Butter gathering, and we will take donations all month.

**Community Closet:** Visitors sign in, and individuals and families “shop” for necessities. Thank you to the Clothes Closet team for sorting and hanging donations, directing visitors, and providing a friendly place for people to meet their needs. The Closet can always use donations of clean, gently used towels and sheets.

**Baby Closet:** Lynne, Ardy, Jama, and Ann continue to oversee the Baby Closet. The Baby Closet still needs hand knitted or quilted small blankets. If you are not a knitter, crocheter or sewer, you might wish to make a monetary donation. Even with grants, the need is larger than the awards.

### Good Shepherd Baby Closet 2026 distributions

Month	Caregivers	Layettes	Pack'n Play	Car Seats	Newborn diaper kit	(size 1- 6)	(Pull- ups)
January	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
February							
March							
April							
May							
June-July							
August							
September							
October							
November							
December							

## Congratulations!

The Baby Closet received word that they had been awarded \$6,000 from the Mignon Delano Foundation and \$5,000 from the TAG Team at the Allegan County Community Foundation. With these funds, the Baby Closet Team will be able to continue their ministry in assisting mothers and their babies.

In addition, Christina Madison, the director of Positive Options in Allegan, made a visit to the Baby Closet. Ann Stough shared the background of the closet while Ardy Ballard and Lynne Winters filled layettes that would be used for babies who were scheduled to be born soon. The ladies shared ideas on how the two services can better meet the needs of clients.

## Snow Shoveling

We thank all who take time to shovel or to snow blow our walks. At this time, we need someone who will make sure that the walk through the garden to the office is shoveled on Tuesday morning by 9am, so it is open for the Catholic Charities clients. If you, or someone you know, could do this, please let Ethan and Gari know ASAP. Thank you.

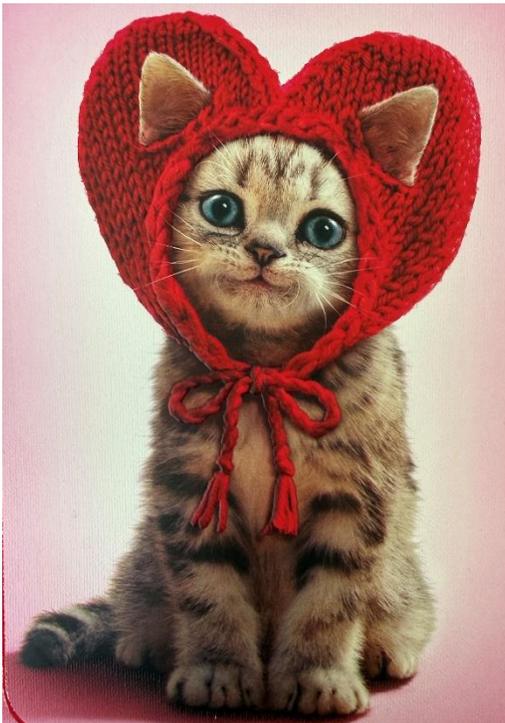
## Parishioner Submissions

### Family Matters

By: Donald Salley

If there is only one thing I have learned with my little time on earth,  
It's that the people closest to us are the ones we're quick to hurt.  
I come from a family that's as dysfunctional as the rest.  
And don't put us all together, or our tempers we will test.  
Now holidays and reunions are meant to be so much fun....  
But after only twenty minutes, the whole family is looking to run.  
We cut each other up leaving a lot of emotional scars  
and we are prisoners to our words, locked deep behind bars.  
"Can't we all just get along" I used to always hear,  
And now I'll bring a message and hope I make it clear.  
Generational strongholds, we pass from us to them,  
Unless we break that cycle it will continue to happen again.  
We need a time of peace, forget about the war.  
Stop looking for a way to even up the score.  
God designed us to love, and love is what we need,  
But in order to watch that grow, we must first plant the seed.

### Adorable Valentine!



Thanks, Ginny Cain, for  
sending me this amazing  
Valentine! I decided to share  
the love!

## Household Hints- Words of Wisdom

### HOME MAINTENANCE

To make a safe, non-slip surface on porch and basement steps, mix coarse sand (from a garden supply or hardware store) with some of the paint.

Make painting in tight corners easier and neater by trimming a medium-sized paint brush into a V. After you finish, clean, wrap and store the brush for the next job.

To remove mildew from house exterior, fill a sprayer with equal parts of water and common bleach. Working from bottom, spray, scrub with soft brush, and rinse with hose.

Store sandpaper in sealable plastic bag to protect it from moisture, which ruins its effectiveness.

To make a good water repellent for wood, add 2 T white vinegar to 1 pt mineral oil. Mix and rub into wood.

Small holes in your screen? Don't replace the whole screen. Paint the small holes with model airplane glue. They will be invisible and sealed.

A coating of softened hand-soap will plug a gas leak until the repair man can get there.

When marking lumber, use a knife. It makes a more accurate cutting line than a pencil.

Pour a little club soda or ammonia on a rusted bolt to loosen.

If you mark a ladder's balancing point (where the weight of it is evenly distributed), you will always know just where to grip it when you are carrying it from one place to another.

After sanding a surface, pull an old nylon stocking on your hand and rub over the surface. You will find any rough spot.

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It is a well-known fact, you will always find the lost hammer or screwdriver in the last place you look.

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A house is just a house until it is filled with love; then it becomes a home.

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## Call for Choristers

The choir of the Episcopal Church of the Good Shepherd is currently looking for new members ahead of Eastertide!

Singers of all abilities and backgrounds are welcome to join. Whether you are an adult or youth we would love to have you!

Choir practices will be held weekly on Sunday Mornings at either 9:00am or at 11:30am (before or following our 10:00 am service).

If you are interested in joining, are curious about sacred music, or have any other questions please contact us at (269) 873-7369 or by email at: [Secretary@GoodShepherdAllegan.org](mailto:Secretary@GoodShepherdAllegan.org)

*Help us make a joyful noise unto the Lord!*



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**The Deacon's Corner: What to do for Lent?**

It's traditional during Lent to "give up" something, the modern version of strict Lenten fasts. More recently we have been encouraged to "take on" something, for example a prayer practice or a form of outreach. Here are some suggestions adapted from Sarah Bessey: you could choose one for the entire season, use a different one each week, or change your practice each day.

1. Open your prayer book or download an app like "Common Prayer" and choose one of the offices to pray each day. In addition to the forms for Morning and Evening Prayer, the order of service for Noonday, and Compline. The Book of Common Prayer contains shorter forms of Daily Devotions for Individuals and Families beginning on page 136.
2. While we are often prompted to pray for our friends and families, it may be harder to pray for our enemies or people we just don't like much. Set aside some time each day to find a way to pray for those you most struggle to love.
3. Sit quietly in the evening, think about your day, and make a list of five things, experiences, or people you are thankful for. Write it down.
4. Clean out a closet or cupboard and donate 10 things to the Community Closet, the Allegan Food Pantry, or some other charitable group.
5. Read one of the Psalms of Lament (for example, Psalm 12) and write a lament for injustice you or people you love have experienced. On Good Friday, bury that piece of paper in a garden so that your grief and lament can nourish the growth of a living thing.
6. Speak aloud words of forgiveness for something you've been holding onto for too long.
7. If you normally listen to music, TV, or a podcast when you're driving or home alone, choose silence instead. If you spend a lot of time online, fast from social media.
8. Hold a person, place, or cause in prayer with a labyrinth prayer. Trace a labyrinth on a sheet of transparent plastic or tracing paper. Place it over a picture of the object of your prayer. Follow the labyrinth silently with your fingers.

And always remember:

*you are loved*

*Church of the Good Shepherd*  
101 N. Walnut Street  
Allegan, MI 49010



In 2026, the Lenten season runs from Ash Wednesday, February 18, through Holy Thursday, April 2, marking a 40-day period of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving (excluding Sundays). It is a time for Christian reflection leading up to Easter Sunday on April 5, 2026.

### **Key Dates for Lent 2026**

- **Ash Wednesday:** February 18, 2026
- **First Sunday of Lent:** February 22, 2026
- **Laetare Sunday (Mid-Lent):** March 15, 2026
- **Palm Sunday:** March 29, 2026
- **End of Lent:** Maundy Thursday, April 2, 2026 (before the evening Mass of the Lord's Supper)
- **Good Friday:** April 3, 2026
- **Easter Sunday:** April 5, 2026

### **Observances and Traditions**

- **Fasting and Abstinence:** Friday is a traditional day of fasting. Abstain from habits that may affect relations with others.
- **Colors:** The liturgical color for the season is purple or violet.
- **Devotions:** Many parishes hold weekly Stations of the Cross on Fridays and find a devotional text to study each day.
- **Focus:** The season emphasizes conversion, repentance, and preparation for the Resurrection.

Sundays are not counted in the 40-day count as they are considered mini-celebrations of the Resurrection.