

The Church of the Good Shepherd

Fort Lee, New Jersey



Parish Profile

1. Mission, Vision and Core Value Statements

The mission of the Church of the Good Shepherd is to help each other experience the love of God, respond with compassion to the needs of our neighbors, recognize Christ in all people, embrace diversity and inclusivity and promote justice, peace and love. We are known throughout Fort Lee and surrounding communities as caregivers; many reach out to us for assistance. We support numerous AA groups on a weekly basis and open our doors to them for all-day events on special occasions such as Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's Eve.

2. History of our congregation

Beginnings

The Church of the Good Shepherd was established in April 1853 by the Reverend Ralph Hoyt, a full-time priest in Manhattan and author, who spent summers in Fort Lee. Rev. Hoyt used the proceeds from his books to build a chapel and

establish a church, hence its first name: The Little Church in the Woods. Eventually the church became known as the Fort Lee Chapel. Then, in 1855 the congregation organized as a Protestant Episcopal Church and incorporated as the Church of the Good Shepherd. In 1861 the Church was granted mission status from the Diocese of New Jersey and remained as such until Rev. Hoyt's death in 1878. At that point the congregation could no longer sustain itself and the mission was dissolved, although members continued to worship in private homes. In 1887 the newly-formed Diocese of Newark bought a plot of land on Palisade Avenue which contained a defunct Congregational Church building. This became the new home for the congregation. The Reverend Matthew Bailey took charge of the congregation and Good Shepherd was again organized as a mission, promising to repay the Diocese the cost of the building by 1891.



Good Shepherd continued to thrive and built the Parish Hall. Since expectations for an influx of residents to Fort Lee was high with the planning of the George Washington Bridge, the congregation decided to expand the Sanctuary and install stained-glass windows; the foundation for the “new” church was laid in 1929. In 1953 the mortgage for the Sanctuary renovations was paid off and the Diocese granted full parish status to Good Shepherd. The Richard and Gail Gressle addition to the Parish Hall was completed in 1982. In 2010 renovations were made to the Parish Hall and Gressle Building to accommodate the Fort Lee Board of Education's Early Childhood Learning Center.

Community Involvement & Activism



The Church of the Good Shepherd has been known for its community involvement and activism. During World War II we served as an

emergency center, stocking food and supplies. In 1969 the first female was elected to our Vestry and in 1970 the first female was elected as a delegate to the Diocesan Convention. In 1993 Good Shepherd Community Services, a not-for-profit corporation, was established to receive government funds for outreach programs. The first such program was “Friends for Life,” a support and counseling center for people affected by HIV/AIDS throughout all of Bergen County. This program continued until 2009, at which time it moved to Oradell to be closer to the center of Bergen County.

Additional Church Tenants

Good Shepherd housed the Board of Education’s Early Childhood Center from 2010 through 2015 for developmentally-challenged preschoolers. Current tenants are The New Jersey Joyful Church, a Korean congregation which meets on Saturdays (for a Korean school and daycare for working parents) and early weekday mornings, Friday nights and Sundays for worship services, and The Intellichild Academy – a day care and Pre-K school tending mostly to Ukrainian/Russian children – whose hours of operation are Monday through Friday, from 7 am to 7 pm. Good Shepherd also makes itself available for many one-time users, concerts, recitals, health fairs, and even a shooting of the tv show: Law & Order.



Additional Community Service

Additional ways, the Church of the Good Shepherd serves as a positive role model and a spiritual lighthouse for the surrounding communities: conducting ongoing conversations with the Mayor, council members and other community leaders; regularly recognizing First Responders and other members of the community at special services and brunches; blessing their four-legged partners at our annual Blessing of the Animals Sunday (including the FLPD K9 corps), Ashes-to-Go at the inbound George Washington Bridge bus stop on Ash Wednesday and rendering pastoral care as needed.

3. Description of our worship services, activities and traditions, outreach programs, organizations and committees

Since 2015 we have had supply priests on a weekly basis for our Sunday and Wednesday 11AM services. Since 2018 we have also had a Wednesday evening Bible Study led by a parishioner. Our Sunday attendance during this period has shown an increase from 45 to 50. We have two services on Sunday. The 8:00AM Service is Rite 1 using the Book of Common Prayer and Order of Service and no music. The 10:00AM Service is Rite 2 using the Book of Common Prayer and Order of Service and does include music, hymns, prelude and postlude. It is bilingual in English and Korean with the Old Testament, Epistle, Gospel and Sermon given in both languages. The Sermon is translated either sentence-by-sentence or thought by thought, depending on the Supply Priest, by Father Francis Cho.

Activities

Holley Center is a residence for children from abusive homes until they become ready for either foster care or return to their families. Donations and gift cards are provided for their birthdays. Anna Byrne handles this outreach.

Gospel Café` is held on the third Saturday night of each month. Different types of music, Gospel, spiritual or jazz, is performed and discussed.



Wednesday Eucharist is served by Father Bill Allport (St. Paul's, Englewood) or the Rev. Steve Galleher and includes a discussion of the Bible readings.

Wednesday Bible Study is held in the evenings and led by Craig Clark, a parishioner. Currently the Bible is being read from beginning to end.

Sunday Bible Study in Korean at 12:00 pm.



Food collection for the Center for Food Action, located in Englewood.

Collection of used ink/toner cartridges and cell phones which are then taken to Staples or Verizon for recycling and credit.

Our Website has recently been updated by Richard Horan, a parishioner.

A Prayer Chain for those for whom prayers are needed. The Parish Administrator emails these requests.

Pastoral care by Lay Eucharistic Ministers is provided as needed.



Our Sunday School teachers explore the joys and wonders of our children's faith through music, art, crafts and origami, tying these to the weekly Bible readings.

Greeting cards are sent for birthdays and get well wishes.

We actively participate in the Central Bergen GreenFaith Circle and support the global GreenFaith organization.

We participate in the diocesan Senior Ministries, advocating for senior citizens in the Diocese with Medicare workshops throughout the Diocese.

Mary DePinto is active in the Episcopal Church Women out of Grace Church, Nutley.

Outreach Programs

These are the programs Church of the Good Shepherd supports on a regular basis: Alcohol Anonymous groups (9 per week plus Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's Eve and Day alcathons), GreenFaith (environmental issues), Center for Food Action (CFA), North Porch, Holley Center and other local outreach programs. In addition, we sponsor an annual Mission and Ministry month where we request parishioners to designate monies to be contributed to certain charities (Seamen's Church Institute, Bergen County Campership, Bergen Animal Rescue, Center for Food Action, the Episcopal Relief and Development Corporation, etc.) with matching funds from Good Shepherd. Conversations with the Mayor, council members and other community leaders will continue. First Responders and other members of the community will continue to be recognized at special services and brunches. Pastoral care and St. Francis Day Blessing of the Animals (open to the public and including the Fort Lee Police Department K9 Corps) will also remain an integral part of GS activities. In this way, the Church of the Good Shepherd can be a positive role model and a spiritual lighthouse for the congregation and the surrounding communities.



4. Description of our facilities

The Church of the Good Shepherd is a charmingly beautiful church which blends the traditional with modern. There is an older building which includes the sanctuary and the parish hall connected to a newer building where there are classrooms and offices. The church has a traditional sanctuary with stained-glass windows, a high ceiling, and a free-standing altar. There are pews for the congregation with an aisle in the center and on the outsides. The shape of the narthex allows the organ and the voices of the congregation to soar and fill the



space with music. Next to the sanctuary is a small meeting room which used to be a chapel. The “chapel” connects the sanctuary to a big bright modern Parish Hall where children meet for church school activities and everyone congregates after church for a coffee hour. The well-used somewhat cluttered kitchen is next to the Parish Hall. Sometimes, the coffee hour spills into the kitchen.

The “Gressle Building” is connected to the Parish Hall by a small hallway. There are several small rooms and two big rooms in this newer building mainly used by the preschool. The Parish Rector’s offices are in this building. The Rectory is next to the church, and in fact, the Rectory kitchen window looks out at the Gressle building. It has three bedrooms and two bathrooms.

Surrounding the church and Rectory is a sizable parking lot which is rented out to local businesses and residents.



5. Summary of current financial status

For the past four years the Vestry has been able to decrease our expenses to provide financial stability. We have been able to move funds steadily from our Operating (Checking) Account to our Money Market Account to earn greater interest. We currently have \$67,498 in our Money market Account, \$22,940 in our Operating Account, \$56,263 in our Vanguard account. In addition we have \$6,601 in an Escrow Account from our two tenants. Our year-end results for the past five years were:

Year	Budget	Actual
2014	(\$15,784)	(\$11,835)
2015	(\$10,467)	\$,2,039
2016	(\$69,747)	\$1,578
2017	(\$9,250)	\$36,743
2018		
Income	\$203,558	\$215,813
Expenses	197,816	185,089
Net income	\$ 5,742	\$ 30,724

For 2019 we have a projected Income of \$206,250, projected Expenses of \$220,460 and a projected Budget Deficit of \$14,210. Based on recent years' results we expect to find methods to control expenses to either reduce or eliminate this deficit. Please note that the budgeting process is done in a conservative manner, estimating expected income based on previous years which has generally been less than actual income for a year and estimating expenses greater than actual taking into account the age of our boiler and facilities and their replacement or repair costs.

6. Hopes and dreams of the members determined by congregational survey, town hall meetings and forums

First and foremost, we are called to be God's presence in the community. We are called to seek and work for social justice, perform community outreach, be a place of stability and shelter (spiritually as well as literally), and respond to the mobility

of the community by being stable and evangelical. We will continue providing space for AA, community programs, and the arts.

The church will also continue supporting GreenFaith, environmental issues, Center for Food Action (CFA), North Porch, Holley Center, the Episcopal Relief and Development Corporation, Seamen's Church Institute and other local outreach programs. Conversations with the Mayor, council members and other community leaders will continue. First Responders and other members of the community will continue to be recognized at special services and brunches. Pastoral care and animal blessings will also remain an integral part of GS activities. In this way, the Church of the Good Shepherd can be a positive role model and a spiritual lighthouse for the congregation and the surrounding communities.

We understand our duties to be the following in these areas:



Preaching/Teaching

- Ensuring that sermons are timely and understood by all, especially since we have a mix of Korean and English-speaking congregants.
- Working with Sunday School teachers to connect weekly lessons with sermons and Bible readings.
- Enhancing spiritual growth and guidance.
- Living into our mission as being a welcoming community, open to all

Evangelism

- Becoming fully engaged in community events (public gatherings, community service to those in need) and continuing to show our concern for others.
- Reaching out to a largely bilingual worshipping community (English and Korean). With a large Korean community in Fort Lee and surrounding towns, this is imperative.

- Planning to have occasional Korean services (New Year's Day, Korean Thanksgiving Day, etc.) to welcome surrounding Korean community to worship with GS at the beginning and grow into once a month Korean service.
- Using a modern liturgy at 10AM service on Sundays. This includes readings and sermon in Korean and selecting hymns familiar to all.
- Generating ideas and methods to draw in younger parishioners.

Church Growth and Development

- Generating ideas to increase advertising, especially through the use of social media.
- Keeping the church website and Facebook page interesting and up-to-date.
- Identifying gifts of those in the congregation and finding a place where they will be welcomed at Good Shepherd and be able to contribute to our mission and function.
- Training parishioners in lay preaching and lay ministry.

Pastoral Care

- Engaging with parishioners to determine those in need of Pastoral Care visits.
- Taking communion to the homebound on a regular basis.
- Being available for pastoral emergencies, weddings and funerals.
- Being available to AA groups to assist in developing faith programs and services.



7. Information about our community and diocese

Good Shepherd is a part of the Diocese of Newark which consists of over 100 parishes in the northern part of New Jersey. Fort Lee is a growing, diverse and transient community of 40,000 residents with both permanent residents, diplomats and professionals, both of which reside here temporarily. Many are commuters into New York City. In addition, Good Shepherd serves, or has the opportunity to serve, the communities of Edgewater, Palisades Park and Englewood Cliffs, none of which has an Episcopal Parish.

Qualities We Seek in Our Next Rector

- the ability to preach with clarity and to make the Gospel and sermon relevant in people's lives along with the ability to teach and help people of all ages to understand and live the Christian Faith.
- an easy-going style with a sense of humor, open mindedness, compassion in general, approachable and preferably willing to consider suggestions from the congregation.
- bilingual (English/Korean) and/or be able to work with Korean parishioners.



Our Congregation at its Best

Three Years from Now

What will we be doing both inside and outside the church?

Our congregation will be far more visible to the community, both physically and spiritually, continuing our growth and thriving. It would be surrounded by beautiful pastoral landscape and be brightly lit at night. The community would be drawn to the church because the inside of the church would be filled with spirit: preaching, singing, teaching and learning, and praying. We will have a vibrant program for children, including them in the church service as well as having a special time for them to do projects for the church and the community. We will continue our active outreach and community action by sponsoring AA groups, arts and music programs, environmental and local social action programs, and institute an English as a Second Language program. We will partner with the Fort Lee Historical Society and Museum to sponsor events which celebrate our borough's rich history. We will invite local political figures to discuss issues affecting our communities and continue to hold our annual Animal Blessing, which includes the local K9 Corps, and brunch honoring our First Responders. Our vision is to spread the gospel in a variety of ways, incorporating the new with the old, increasing our friendly relationships with our neighbors and continuing to be a positive role model and spiritual lighthouse for our congregation and local communities.

What are we passionate about as a congregation?

We are passionate about growth and welcoming people by accepting, embracing, and loving diversity and different points of view, inclusivity of all regardless of race, gender, sexual orientation, creed or religious background. Discussion/disagreement is accepted, not dismissed. We are a congregation that can learn from one another without judging. The Church of the Good Shepherd is a safe place to agree and disagree or agree to disagree. Our passion extends to the community, where we are known as welcoming and care-giving, the place to come to for help.

What are our congregation's gifts, both individually and collectively? How do we understand being "Gifted, Called, and Sent?" -Theme of our Diocesan Convention

Our flexibility and ability to handle change with the times are our gifts. For the past three years, the church has been struggling with a variety of decisions. At one point, we considered selling/developing the church and surrounding land and had a commitment from a local developer. Financial considerations have often driven our discussions, but currently we are able to move forward with outreach and outlook as these concerns have lessened. Our desire to spread the gospel to the surrounding community has remained strong and consistent throughout these challenging times.



1576 Palisade Avenue, Fort Lee, NJ 07024 ❖ Tel: (201) 461-7260
Email: churchofthegs@verizon.net ❖ Website: www.goodshepherdfortlee.org
Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/Church-of-the-Good-Shepherd-157746787634142/>