



**EPISCOPAL CHURCH OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD**  
**200 Route 23, Wantage, New Jersey 07461**  
**[goodshepherdwantage.org](http://goodshepherdwantage.org)**

## **PARISH PROFILE**

### **Parish History**

The Episcopal Church of the Good Shepherd has a reputation for being a little church with a large impact and a warm heart. We moved the short distance to Wantage in 1989 from a Gothic Stone Church in nearby Hamburg, where we worshipped for 116 years led by 22 Vicars (1871-1987). The Rev. Alan King guided us in the building of our new church home, and served us as Vicar until retiring in 1995. Three succeeding spiritual leaders have pastored us since: The Rev. Prince Singh (presently Bishop of Rochester, NY), The Rev. Fain Webb (retired in 2012), and The Reverend David Rude (has led our congregation since 2013). The Rev. Liz Ostuni was assigned to our congregation in December 2009, and served as our Deacon until 2012. The Rev. Nancy Hansen was sponsored by our congregation and joined us as our Deacon in 2017.

### **Location**

The Church of the Good Shepherd is located on 5 ½ acres in Wantage, just south of the borough of Sussex and ideally located to serve parishioners from a number of small surrounding towns. The Vicarage, a modern two-story, four bedroom colonial home with attached two car garage and full basement is located on Estate Drive in a nice neighborhood in the same township, is about 5 miles from the church. Both are nestled in Kittatinny Valley, a part of the Great Appalachian chain stretching from

Maine to Georgia. Naturally, hiking the Appalachian Trail, swimming, boating, camping, animal and bird watching, biking local rail trails, skiing, snowboarding and cross-country skiing are popular pastimes. The newly renovated Sussex County YMCA, that is equipped with a full gym, hot tub, sauna, and a pool, is approximately 5 miles from the church. Nearby High Point State Park, at 1,803 feet, is the highest point in New Jersey. The Sussex County Fairgrounds is the site of the New Jersey State Fair and Horse Show in August, as well as world-class craft fairs, rodeos, circuses, food and music events, and a farmer's market throughout the growing seasons. There are still some working farms in the area making it an ideal location for cows, donkeys, and sheep to be a part of our live nativity at Christmas. New York City is about an hour and a half away if you travel in the middle of the night. Otherwise it takes about two hours. We are ever the optimists! Newark International Airport is about 1 hour. Stewart Airport in Newburgh, NY is even closer.

### **Who We Are**

Our Good Shepherd Church community consists of approximately 40 families and individuals who worship and congregate in a lovely modern building designed for expansion, flexibility, and multiple purposes. Two Sunday Eucharistic Services are held each week during the school year and one is held during the summer months. The Church of the Good Shepherd is an environmentally responsive church boasting solar panels that provide more than 90% of the electrical needs of the church. Approximately 14 years ago we were one of the first churches to have them installed. We also sponsor an all-organic community garden on site that was created by our former Deacon Liz Ostuni in 2010. Growing plots are open to all members of the local community. The produce from this garden supplements Good Shepherd's food pantry that has been in operation for 20 years. On the front of the property is a large electric sign that announces our current projects and the times of liturgy. A lovely memorial garden sits among shade trees in the back.

### **Our Mission and Ministry**

"A worshipping community where all things are possible through God" is the mission statement that guides us in our daily life at Good Shepherd. We have a very strong and committed group of lay leaders and an inspirational Priest and Deacon who work together with our dedicated small parish of about 40 active families and individuals to grow in our relationship with God and serve each other. The Pre-Search Committee conducted an open retreat for all congregants that included a comprehensive survey to help prioritize our goals as we find a spiritual leader.

Our surveys suggest that we seek to blend contemporary and traditional liturgical styles in our worship and hope to grow in our ability to find common ground with new members. A stronger choir, more musical variety and more participation in the music program is needed, although those who attend the 8 o'clock service do like the traditional service without music. Certainly, we would like to grow in number, but more importantly, we envision strong emphasis on our warm welcome,

commitment to spiritually nurturing each other and energetically and enthusiastically enjoying our shared relationship with God. We seek to support our ministries with children, seniors, and young families. Our outreach goals include a strong commitment to the homebound, hospitalized, and dying, as well as adult education and community outreach. Welcoming young people, the gay community, and diverse groups is also very important, and we would like to continue our commitment to the hungry of our community through our food pantry operations.

All believe that a stronger church school is necessary and that youth are the future of our church. At present we only have 5 or 6 children in Sunday school that is led by an able and effective member of our congregation, Ms. Kellie Ortiz. As an aging congregation, we need to recognize and acknowledge the need to encourage young families to become involved in the Church of the Good Shepherd, as the future of the church depends on this. We wish to develop strategies that offer involvement of youth and opportunities for young families to grow together with us in our church environment. Very recently several young adults have shown an interest in beginning a mission trip ministry for teens. It appears that their experiences here as teenagers were meaningful and they are seeking to pass on this tradition.

#### **Parish Vision Statement:**

#### **A Place for Growing and Caring, Learning and Sharing; God's Place.**

The outline below demonstrates ways in which the Church of the Good Shepherd seeks to live into our Vision Statement.

I. The Church of the Good Shepherd **GROWS and Learns** by offering:

#### **A. Spiritual education, training, and enrichment**

1. Bible study
2. On-going Christian education to children and youth
3. Confirmation classes
4. Meditation group
5. Training for Lay Eucharistic Visitors
6. Annual Vestry Retreat
7. Regular inclusion in Prayers of the People: Prayers for those in Military Service Ready exchange with, and access to, all Diocesan spiritual and liturgical resources, consultants, communication, training, meetings and Annual Convention, through clergy and lay ministers.

#### **B. Financial support, where needed and possible**

1. Church budget: support for Diocesan outreach activities, the Annual Convention
2. Priest's Discretionary Fund (various small outreach needs, requests)
3. State Grant Monies (in addition to congregational donations): support of Food Cart

4. Diocesan (Ward Herbert) grant: funding for unexpected repairs
5. Regular fundraising activities: Attic Treasures (a grand flea market); annual auction; Italian dinner, game dinner, Pawn Shop Road Show and others. Clothing Bin Contract (\$\$/number pounds collected)

**C. Physical space and amenities:**

- 1) Family Promise: Housing the homeless for one or two weeks in summer
- 3) AA and NA groups, a support group for Parents of Children who have Autism, a community Cub Scout Troup, and community garden meetings
- 4) Numerous church-related meetings and gatherings
- 5) Technological support: Website and Facebook page Social Media Prayer Circle
- 6) Church Publicist

**D. Open and Enthusiastic leadership**

- 1) Executive Council;
- 2) Worship committee;
- 3) Seniors Group
- 4) Christian Education Committee
- 5) Lay Eucharistic Ministers
- 6) Church Life (Social)
- 7) Building and Grounds
- 8) Outreach ministries
- 9) Altar Guild
- 10) Acolyte Program

III. The Church of the Good Shepherd Cares and Shares with ministries that:

**A. Serve the homeless and destitute**

- 1) Family Promise: Two weeks every year we host the temporarily homeless in six individualized rooms that we have built and set up. We provide all meals, cook dinners, and work with other churches and community volunteers. Church members stay overnight with the guests and provide support during this difficult time.
- 2) Make contributions to the Diocesan North Porch ministry that provides food, baby wipes and diapers
- 3) Once a year we have a diaper and baby needs drive for local community neighbors in need provided by the church and grants from Thrivent Financial
- 4) We supply school age children with the school supplies they need to succeed utilizing a grant from Thrivent Financial and donations from church members and the public.

- 5) We have a clothing drive for local homeless veterans and their families
- 6) Once a year we collect gently used Christmas decorations and memorabilia. We set up the church as a Christmas store for anyone in the community to “shop” for whatever they need to enhance their Christmas for free.

**Feed the hungry**

- 1) Food Pantry, Community Garden

**B. Educate children and youth**

1. Sunday School with certified teacher
2. Cub Scouts

**C. Create sustainable living**

- 1) Solar panels
- 2) Organic community Garden
- 3) Sustainable lighting throughout church
- 4) Trash recycling
- 5) Clothing recycling bin, and a contract with the company to redistribute clothes (not rags) to poor and developing neighborhoods

**D. Welcome the community into our space**

- 1) Church-sponsored events that welcome the public: (dinners, auction, Attic Treasures flea market, etc., Live Nativity)
- 2) “Public” Liturgies: baptisms, weddings, funerals
- 3) Community Garden
- 4) AA, NA meet at the church

**E. Send blessings out into world**

- 1) Blessing of animals
- 2) Motorcycle Blessings
- 3) Distribution of ashes at the local Acme Supermarket in Sussex and Franklin House Senior Housing Community that is located in Franklin and was built by the Diocese of Newark
- 4) Worship Services at the Homestead nursing home in Frankford and Barn Hill nursing and rehabilitation facility in Newton

**Financial Information**

The church has struggled to meet its financial goals over the past several years. Our pledging income from members is approximately 70% of our annual financial needs. We depend heavily on fundraisers that come largely from sources outside our congregation. A previous significant source of revenue was a nursery school that operated in our parish hall since 1989. In 2015 the school had to close.

Our financial assets include:

(1) A savings account that holds capital for outreach, memorial funds, capital projects, and operating emergencies.

(2) Endowment funds being held in the Diocesan Investment Trust.

(3) In addition to the church building, we have a 4-bedroom home which is available for use as a vicarage.

### **Gifts and Ministry of the Congregation**

As a congregation we are fortunate in that we have a wide range of ministerial interests that changes and grows as we feel called. The church is operating very well as we prepare for this transition and the congregation works together to keep spirituality present in the services, bible study, meditation groups and meetings. There is a very active senior group in the church. There are children and adults who serve as acolytes, help with Church School, and volunteer their time in many outreach activities. The senior group works together to support each other and those in need. They provide rides to church for those who are unable to drive and also give assistance to the handicapped and elderly members. Although small, the church school does have one teacher and a group of children who meet each Sunday.

Good Shepherd has a community food pantry two mornings a week and supports Family Promise, a countywide group that houses the homeless. There is also a community garden on the church grounds where plots are given to members of the community and church. The church has a few talented musicians who occasionally are part of the worship services on Sunday at 10 AM. A Hymn machine that includes a great number of hymnals and can also play custom midi and mp3 files generally provides music. We recently received a gift of a Kawai keyboard that offers amazing versatility in music.

We genuinely support each other's gifts and talents and offer openness to the inspiration of the Spirit. We are a forgiving and open group of people with very few serious conflicts. The majority of the congregation feels very connected to each other and believes that a good support system is in place, especially in times of illness and bereavement. When a parish activity is planned, we have an "all hands on deck" mentality and we are rarely disappointed. Our greatest gift, however, is our sense of community and belonging. We see ourselves as an ever-growing family, sharing in our mutual joys and sorrows, seeking comfort and celebration as our lives unfold together.

### **Gifts and Ministry We Seek in a Clergy**

We seek a priest willing to work together with us as a team to create a plan to bring new people to our doors. Because of our strengths in leadership and our high level of commitment, we look for a clergy person who is a true companion on our journey. We understand that our role is mutually supportive and that our Vicar will need to be a partner open to the friendship and warmth we have to offer. We seek a person

of deep spiritual commitment and experience and with ability to know us as individuals and be known by us as well. We would like to be challenged and supported by our clergy in our liturgy as well as our lives. We hope to be inspired to deepen our commitments to God with love and openness. Our pastor would ideally work collaboratively with us and foster a sense of safety and growth by keeping confidences and inspiring new and young people to join the congregation. Most focus groups hope that that a priest would inspire members to use their talents, help build a strong church school program and lead the service in both a traditional and contemporary style.

