

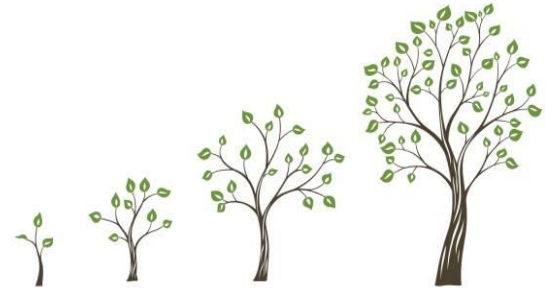
GROW TOGETHER IN FAITH: Ministries that Foster the Internal Growth of the Congregation

GROW TEAM REPORT

Nora Earnest

Grow with Us!

2020 has been anything but a typical year for our church congregation! Despite these unique challenges brought on by COVID-19, stay-at-home orders, and social distancing, the “Grow Together in Faith” ministry continued to offer opportunities for education, fellowship, and spiritual reflection. I hope you were able to participate in some (or all!) of these events and I hope you consider *Growing in your Faith* during 2021.



2020 Accomplishments

Youth Sundays

“Youth Sundays,” held on the fifth Sundays of the month in 2020, continued to be a great success! The congregation was blessed to hear sermons written and presented by our youth, as well as innovative themes and creative uses of technology to share music and messages of faith.

Back to School

Recognizing that “back to school” would look different in 2020, the Grow Team invited School Social Worker, Jen Jones, to discuss the unique stressors facing families and students this school year. *Back to School Stressors: A Facilitated Discussion*, was held on August 19 over Zoom. A summary of the discussion and resources are included on the church website, under “Back to School 2020.”

Special blessings were also offered in August to our student athletes and coaches, as well as for the technological devices (laptops, phones, iPads) students would be using as part of their day-to-day, online or hybrid education.

Family Picnic and Movie Night

The Grow Team coordinated a fun, in-person family picnic on August 30, held on the lawn at Good Shepherd. For many, it provided a welcome opportunity for families to reconnect (in a socially distanced, masked manner) with one another! Additionally, a youth and family movie night was also held on the lawn on September 19, which provided another great way to connect in-person with our church community during times of isolation.

Blessing of the Animals

Following the success of the 2019, offsite “Blessing of the Animals,” the Grow Team was pleased to again hold the 2020 blessing at Willow Creek Park. The service was well attended and included the opportunity to donate blankets and other pet items which benefited local pet shelters.

“Fun” Committee

The Good Shepherd congregation has always been one for fun, and 2020 was no exception! The newly formed *Fun Committee* developed several online events intended to provide opportunities for fellowship and fun. Activities included sports trivia, a cooking class, pumpkin carving, and Christmas cookie baking!

2020 Advent and Christmas

While the days leading up to Christmas may have looked different for children and families, they were still invited to experience the joy and wonder of the Advent season at home. Advent bags were created and delivered to families of young children and included activities, games, and stories. A virtual Christmas pageant was also developed, enabling the children of Good Shepherd to tell the story of Christ’s birth during the Christmas Eve service.

2021 Goals

Intergenerational Opportunities

In 2021, the Grow Team will continue to explore ways to bring parishioners of all ages together. Whether by creating “mentorship” programs or identifying church events that appeal to all ages, the Grow Team would like to continue to find ways to bring *all* parishioners together to explore their faith, socialize, and build relationships with one another.

Identify Opportunities to Collaborate

Following up on the success of past collaborative programs (mental health speakers’ series, etc.), the Grow Team would like to explore ways to continue its collaboration efforts with the Outreach Team (and other Good Shepherd Ministries) to bring opportunities for education, service, and spiritual reflection to the congregation. We look forward to identifying additional topics that may be of interest to the congregation and speakers who could present on a variety of educational and spiritual topics.

Youth Sundays

The Grow Team will continue to offer opportunities for children, youth, and families in 2021, including Youth Sundays (the fifth Sunday of the month)!

Grow in Faith when You are Not at Church

There are many ways we might encourage the congregation, especially when they are *not* at church. The Grow Team would like to identify ways to reach parishioners when they are at home or are away, through offering special blessings that can be done at home, or through special readings, activities, or other prayers.

Invitation

Please consider “Growing in Your Faith” in 2021. Volunteers are always welcome! If you would like to get involved with one of our Grow Ministries, please contact Fr. Gary or Nora Earnest at nearest@msn.com.

The mission of Children’s Ministry is to assist parents in making whole-hearted disciples for Christ by teaching Biblical principles and truths to be lived out and passed on to future generations.

Deuteronomy 6:5-9



An integral part of our ongoing goal to reach our kids for Christ is to offer Sunday school every week, whether it is in person or via ZOOM. Our year started off normally, but we had to quickly learn new ways to reach kids and help them to move forward along their spiritual journey path, albeit using a less than perfect venue requiring more screen time for kids who may already be maxed out. *Godly Play* has continued to meet every Sunday (including Easter), except for November 29, when I passed out the Advent bags during our regularly scheduled *Godly Play* time. It has been my goal to connect with our kids every week through a hybrid *Godly Play* class

which includes a science or object lesson that introduces that day’s message, the teaching, and a craft, as well as checking in with the kids to see how they are doing. It has been an ongoing challenge to keep kids engaged with a virtual format. Back in March, I sent out surveys to find out what time the greatest number of families were available for *Godly Play* and after trying a Wednesday night format, the Sunday afternoon time slot was chosen. Elaine Oxenbury resumed an upper elementary (and older) class on September 27, using a workbook on how to deal with the emotional fallout of COVID life changes, and she tied that to Biblical writings. Beginning with Advent, she resumed using *Living the Good News*. Both of us continue to adapt our class presentations to work within the parameters of ZOOM. Each week, beginning last March 22, I send out an email detailing what the themes are for both *Godly Play* and *Living the Good News* (which I started including on September 20), along with activity sheets, a video link, and other supplemental materials. Our *Godly Play* classroom traditionally reaches children age 3 years through 2nd grade, but for the first six months of the pandemic, it was a one room schoolhouse for all elementary-aged kids. Our Storytellers for the first two and a half months of 2020 were Elaine Farrell, Susie Street, Emma Blackburn, Kaitie Blackburn, and me; with Jackie Algermissen, Sally VanWelden, Emma Blackburn, Christina Blackburn, and myself assisting in the role of Doorperson. After March 22, I have hosted *Godly Play* every Sunday via ZOOM, with Emma Blackburn teaching on July 19, as my son got married on that day. Our second Sunday school class is for our 3rd, 4th, and 5th grade students. The lessons taught are from *Living the Good News*, and Elaine Oxenbury is the leader in this class. We have a small but faithful group of kids who join each class on Sundays, even a family from Louisiana!

We were able to “bury” the Alleluia banner on the first Sunday in Lent, and I “unburied” it virtually on Easter Sunday.

A small but fun time was had by those of us who attended a family picnic on the church’s lawn this past summer to enjoy a time of fellowship and games.

A virtual VBS, Bolt, was offered instead of an in-person event. It was designed to allow families to watch a video and do fun activities when their time allowed, instead of being on a set time schedule.

A virtual back-to-school discussion was offered to help families navigate the stresses that kids and families face because of the pandemic and the start of a new school year.

A family movie night was offered on September 19. It was a fun time to gather, with social distancing.

We celebrated an outdoor infant Baptism, albeit cold, on Sunday, October 18.



I put together Advent bags which were distributed via a drive-by delivery on Sunday, November 29. Bags included an Advent activity packet, Advent wreath craft kit, Advent chain and coloring book. It was wonderful to see families in person!

A pandemic could not get in the way of offering the kids a chance to participate in our annual Christmas Pageant. Susan Bailey, Gary Brower, and I put together a video pageant, *A Very Special Baby*, written by Susan. We had seven families participate by videoing and narrating their parts. Susan and Gary edited the segments, inserted music, and created a wonderful addition to the 4:00 pm Christmas Eve online service.

Our continuing goal is to offer programs, regardless of being in person or virtual, that raise a generation of believers. We stress the truth that God is with us and guides us and, with God's blessing, we are raising up a generation for Him!

We also want to hear from you if you have any events that you would like to propose. We are here for all the families!

CHILDREN'S NURSERY

Sue LeFant



For our littlest ones, a reassurance, that when we can be back in the building, our nursery caregiver, Cindy McClain will also be back!

COFFEE HOUR

Liz Peel



Our plea for new coffee hour crews at the 2020 Annual Meeting was well received, only to be interrupted by COVID! I say “interrupted” because Coffee Hour has remained a strong social aspect of our GS family. We welcomed new crew members and were redesigning our coffee hour “flow” when we were forced to take a break. Coffee Hour continued and continues after the 9:00 am service as people choose to stay and chat over their own coffee/snacks prior to Faith Forum. As we move into 2021, I hope that members pick up where we left off in 2020 and express new visions, desires, and commitments to this very vibrant ministry. Please let me know (epeel11@gmail.com) if you would like to join this ministry! I am so looking forward to seeing everyone in person sometime in the near future!

On a closing note, please thank the following hosts/hostesses who so graciously served the GS family during Coffee Hour since the last Annual Meeting and prior to COVID:

Jim and Bev Wolfe
Pete and Deb Roden
Shunila Rae
Kathy Alfeld
Marilyn Taylor
Richard Thomas
Rachel Whipp and the Youth Group
Marjorie Lell
Elaine Farrell
Carol Chamblee
Jen Lee
Liz Peel

And here are the members who joined the crew but were not able to serve because of COVID—please do return to us!

Jonathan and Robin Gear
Curt and Melissa Watson
Dave and Pam Dominguez

Contact us at: congregationalcare@gshep.org



Members: Karin Elsen, Jr. Warden; The Rev. Gary Brower, The Rev. Sandy Boyd; Greg Bell, Eucharistic Visitor Ministry Leader; Bev White, Presence Ministry Leader; Nan Behringer, Utility Ministry Leader; and Duanne Namaksy, Utility Ministry Leader

One of the goals during our clergy transition and re-visioning is to revitalize the Congregational Care Ministry (CCM) at Good Shepherd. It is important for the congregation to see itself as the body of Christ and know that love and caring for one another is missional to the Church.

Unfortunately, in 2020, many of our in-person ministry objectives were impacted due to the church closure, social distancing, and stay-at-home recommendations for older citizens. However, we were able to pivot and respond in new ways:

- Throughout the year, CCM members and clergy have been Good Shepherd's pastoral emergency contacts at times when Fr. Gary takes well-deserved breaks. CCM members also reach out to those who leave a request on the church's website.
- In May, CCM sponsored a Zoom Q&A session, "Being Well During Times of Change," featuring experts Bev White, counselor, and The Rev. Canon Carl Andrews, Diocesan Disaster Relief Coordinator, speaking to life and church imbalances due to COVID-19. The still timely recorded session can be found at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=292BYtd3-6Q&t=3010s>.
- In June, July, and August, CCM members prepared the on-line Season II Re-gathering Survey and analyzed survey responses, focusing on personal safety and comfort levels expressed by the survey takers. In addition, CCM analyzed on-line Morning Prayer service attendance records and then reached out with postcards to members not attending. We had distanced drive-by visits with flowers to at-home parishioners. We also shared suggestions for personal wellness in Sound Body, Mind & Spirit communication segments to the parish.
- In September, a subgroup of us helped design communion prayers and drive-by host distribution practices. We continue to pray each week for parishioners who have received at-home communion in the past and hope that we will be able to visit again soon.

Whenever it is safe and practicable, we will continue the Presence Ministry training and, with clergy, plan to develop end-of-life planning resources with a Senior Information Day. As always, you can reach out to us at CongregationalCare@gshep.org.

“FUN” COMMITTEE

Deborah Sampson, Kaitlyn Bridgers, and Suraya Bowermaster



At the 2020 Annual Meeting, Suraya Bowermaster, Kaitlyn Bridgers, and Deborah Sampson were sitting together and chatting. One of them said, we need a committee to bring fun back to Good Shepherd. We all agreed and asked Fr. Gary if we could do something. He not only agreed, but announced to the gathering that a Fun Committee was being organized. Then, COVID.

Early in the pandemic, Kaitlyn, Suraya, and Deb discussed activities, but it was a busy time, as parents were creating home school classrooms while also setting up home offices for themselves. Health care employees were working many hours of overtime. We all thought this would not last a long time, and we would come up with new things when we could all get together in person. By late July, it was obvious that this pandemic would keep us isolating for a much longer time. So, the Fun Committee got to work with a schedule of activities that would promote fun and fellowship.

In August, we invited the members of the parish to a Sports Trivia Night. We wore clothes for our favorite teams, explored Zoom backgrounds, learned how to ask for reservations for Zoom events, and even created Zoom polls. There were not a lot of participants, but those who showed up had a great time and laughed a lot. Thanks to the Bridgers who came up with trivia questions and underwrote gift certificates for Buffalo Wild Wings.

September was a big, and somewhat complicated, event with cooking, an option to learn about why it is hard to pair wines with onion soup, family reunions across 500 miles, and a lot of raucous laughter. We also learned that Brad Nye had experience as a tableside French chef. This was our largest event, with 21 registrations and the first with some former Good Shepherd members showing up for the fun.

Pumpkins and costumes dominated the evening for our October event. We have known for some time that Marge Pegula is a creative artist, but she really impressed us with her multi-media pumpkins. The Bowermasters were heavily into the Harry Potter world with their costumes, the Bridgers had something of a fairy tale theme, complete with a large green frog. And Mary Ann Panarelli did Where's Waldo with a flair.

In November, we combined fun and charity with Bourbons and Blankets, where we made fleece blankets for donation to RezDawgs rescue center. Some of us also learned about different styles of bourbon while tying layers of fleece together to make the blankets. We donated dozens of blankets to the charity which matches rescue dogs, cats, and other pets to forever homes.

December had a decidedly festive theme of treats and crafts. Cathy Conley taught us how to make pomander balls from oranges and cloves to make our homes smell wonderful. It is almost impossible to have a December party without festive treats and beverages. About a dozen participating families shared favorite cookie and beverage recipes, and Kaitlyn Bridgers made them into a cookbook that was emailed to participants.

We are looking forward to more fun events in 2021, including a Super Bowl with trivia, and more food donations to Covenant Cupboard, which has been serving many more families than ever before, a chocolate tasting where a local expert will talk about the health benefits of chocolate, and a Chinese New Year activity.

We welcome new members to our committee, either as a full member or as an expert to share expertise at an event.

GREETERS

Greeters are Good Shepherd's hospitality face to the community. They meet and greet fellow members and new visitors to make everyone feel welcome and a part of our worship community. When the building was closed in March, we had only 16 volunteers serving both the 7:45 and 10:00 am services, and they did an outstanding job performing their duties and making everyone feel welcome. Once we resume in-person services, even with reduced numbers allowed, we will try to find additional volunteers to assist in this very important service. Once our building is reopened, I will be contacting everyone for their consideration and help.

Joe Gavlick



HOSPITALITY AND THE MARTHAS

Marjorie Lell



The Hospitality Ministry supports events that provide opportunities for parishioners to gather, enjoy refreshments and enjoy the fellowship of our Good Shepherd brothers and sisters.

Thanks to all who served on the two hospitality events in 2020. Because of the COVID pandemic the church was closed in March to all activities including the use of the parish hall and kitchen.

January – The Martha Ministry provided hospitality support for the Newcomers Luncheon on Sunday, January 19. The Annual Meeting was held Sunday, January 26, with a delicious brunch provided.

July – I contacted Fr. Gary to ask if it were possible for my daughter, Katherine Anne, and me to come into the church to work in the parish hall and the kitchen. He gave permission. We put tables and chairs in storage leaving three round tables with three chairs per table six feet apart in the parish. We disposed of expired supplies and cleaned the pantry shelves. We emptied and cleaned the refrigerator. All while wearing masks of course. It was, I have to say, a surreal feeling to be shutting down the parish hall and kitchen and wondering when we would all be gathering again.

Goals for 2021 include, when our church is open again, inventorying supplies and equipment such as tables, chairs, dishes, and other kitchen/hall equipment and developing a kitchen manual so that anyone using the kitchen and parish hall can safely and efficiently use the kitchen and the hall.

If you feel hospitality may be the ministry for you at Good Shepherd, please contact me. I am always happy to talk with you or visit with you regarding this important ministry. You may like to email me, at marjorielell@comcast.net, or call me at 303-782-5545.

HUNGRY FLOCK

Tricia Hartman



Hungry Flock is Good Shepherd's monthly "supper club." Everyone is welcome, including significant others who do not attend Good Shepherd. We have continued to meet the second Saturday of the month throughout the pandemic, although now our meetings are by Zoom. Thus, we have missed sharing yummy food, but have been able to continue our fellowship, the most important part of Hungry Flock. We look forward to being able to meet in each other's homes once again in small groups, hopefully, this fall. Please contact Tricia Hartman at 720-810-0850 or at hartmanpe@me.com or Amy McLaughry at 303-907-7590 or at admclaughry@yahoo.com to join us.

LIVING NATIVITY

Deborah Sampson, Mary Ann Panarelli, Susan Bailey



How do we make Christmas in COVID-land fun and meaningful for members and neighbors? Why, we create a totally new event called a drive-by Living Nativity, that is how! And more than 150 carloads of folks and a few walkers visited the Living Nativity.

Visitors circled the parking lot in their cars or on foot, and they donated food to Covenant Cupboard, saw the Three Wise Men (people, wise guys, etc.) on their way to where the star led them, watched Mary and Joseph with the Baby Jesus (sometimes with animals crawling on the manger, and found the angels visiting the shepherds in the field of sheep. Many of them heard Christmas music and Dave Hill's narration of the nativity story. And Santa got in on the action, distributing candy canes and invitations to our Christmas Eve Zoom service. Apparently, some of the kids considered it a big plus to have the Arapahoe County Sheriff Department car posted at the entry/exit to the event.

Mary Ann Panarelli, Deborah Sampson, and Susan Bailey served as the Triumvirate, aka steering committee, for the event. Marcia Poirier and Katherine Alfeld quickly signed on as Costumers, Curt Watson agreed to manage the scenery and lighting, and Keith Anderson took on the monumental task of managing traffic. Of course, DeeDee Atwood took on the double challenge of publicizing the event and creating narration and music for visitors to the event. Greg Brower made sure there were hot beverages to warm the hands and tummies of more than 30 volunteers and cast members. The Outreach Committee had a small army of volunteers to move the truckload of donated food from cars to the Covenant Cupboard Food Pantry truck.

All of this -- the meetings, the costume fittings, the construction, and the traffic directions -- had to be carried out within the restrictions of COVID safety. We got creative about it. Masks were a constant. Our angels even had sparkly ones as part of their costumes. Our Santas, Merrie Need and Jeff Spahr, worked out a system to get candy canes to the children in the cars, along with an invitation to our Christmas Eve service.

Thanks to cast members Tom Billings; Ellen, Michael, Emma, and Rachel Blackburn; Kaitlyn, Griffin, Maddy, and Macy Bridgers; Alissa, Evelyn, and Chloe Creenan; Nora and Eric Earnest; Molly and Priscilla Hawkinson; Doug Moore and Becky Beall-Moore; Rev. Merrie Need; Jeff Spahr; Donna White; Jim Wolfe; and Rev. Sandra Boyd. Thanks to Katherine Watson (daughter of Curt and Melissa Watson) who painted the camel and donkey, Marge Pegula who created seven of the animal cutouts, and Robert Sampson who was responsible for supporting all the animal cut-outs. Brad Nye, Mark Kelly, Steve Kane (from Men's Group), Andy Folkerth, Jim Wolfe, Pete Roden and David McLaughry were the set-up crew with Curt Watson. Jim Wolfe and Kip Travis helped tear down and store all the pieces. Food Collectors were from our Outreach Committee, Traffic Direction came from Keith Anderson and his crew.

We are calling this a big success. We got to see a lot of friends from a distance and we reached quite a few neighbors, welcoming them to Good Shepherd. Several our members got to take action supporting this wild idea. The first plans are underway for the next drive-y Living Nativity for 2021.

One of the visitors described it as "the perfect alternative to blow-up Santas and excessive Christmas lights, a reminder of the real Christmas."



The Good Shepherd Men's Group completed our 35th year of meeting in 2020. Wow, 35 years, and it is amazing!! We had 22 of 24 meetings throughout the year, meeting twice a month on Saturday mornings for either breakfast or coffee and pastries along with our program. Five of those meetings

were in person, with the remainder being held virtually via Zoom due to COVID-19. We will continue to meet this way until we can resume meeting in person sometime in 2021! We currently have approximately 35 members and average about 15-20 at our meetings. The Men's group is built on three principles – **prayer, study, and service.**

Our group prays for our members, the Good Shepherd church family, our country, any special requests, and the Episcopal Church. Through email and our group roster we maintain the Prayer list, send prayer requests, and provide the group a listing of historical and upcoming events. We will lay hands on and pray for individuals and/or situations in our meetings as appropriate.

Our programs during any given year generally originate from the Serendipity Bible, Sunday scripture readings, and book reviews. During 2020, with help from several men in the group who volunteered to cover the topics, our study programs came primarily from book reviews which included:

- “An Uncommon Guide to Retirement” by Jeff Haanen
- “The Twelve Disciples” Life Guide Studies by Douglas Connelly
- “Why Men Hate Going to Church” by David Murrow

All program topics have studies standing on their own, therefore allowing attendees to miss a session without losing the overall theme.

In December, we were also fortunate to have our special Christmas program presented by fellow parishioners Jim Wolfe, with music led by Kees Corssmit.

This year we unfortunately were not able to have our annual Men's Retreat generally held in February due to COVID-19. We plan on resuming this special event in February/March of 2022.

A special thank you to Jim Wolfe for his on-going support, volunteering, guidance and oversight relating to our programs and varying facets of the Men's Group; to Whit Hill for his mentoring and technical support; to Kip Travis for his valued contribution in creating new/refreshing events and programs for our consideration; to Brad Nye for his ability and willingness to create delicious, special breakfasts for a good number of our monthly in-person meetings (while we could), and he has agreed to take the lead in that role for our future similar events; for all the men within our group who volunteer to take on the set-up, service, program presentation and clean-up associated with our in-person meetings; and finally thanks out to Jim Ball, Kip Travis, and John Michel for their continued assistance of calling and reminding our Men of each meeting.

In service, we look forward to the future when we can resume hosting the Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper, the annual Good Shepherd Church Picnic (with help from the Youth Group, the Sunday School Program team, and the Grow team), and provide assistance with on-going maintenance/clean-up projects at the church. We also look forward to continuing our work with Chuck Kelly, Men's Group member, and Shelly Hitt, fellow parishioner, and St. Clare's board member, who assist in keeping us informed and involved, along with several of our parishioners in Outreach with the St. Clare's ministry (St. Peter's and St. Mary's Church) feeding a weekly meal to people in need. Good Shepherd has traditionally taken the third Tuesday of each month to serve the meal at St. Clare's, and the Men's Group has coordinated the meal for one month out of the year. With COVID-19 and the related restrictions in place, our involvement has been curtailed, but we will resume those services hopefully sometime in 2021, when we are able to. Finally, for 2020, several men from the Men's Group volunteered to lead and assist in a variety of ways contributing to the success of the church's Christmas Living Nativity event.

We are very proud of our activities and the contributions we make to and on behalf of Good Shepherd, and we will continue to do the same in 2021, when and where we are able, while building support within our team. I am very fortunate and honored to have the opportunity of coordinating this long-standing group of men, and I appreciate all the cooperation and support they have provided me during this challenging year of 2020! God's Peace.

PRAYER MINISTRY

Tricia Hartman

Prayer chain members have continued to be privileged to join with many of you in prayers for yourself, family members, friends, and our world during this pandemic year. We deeply appreciate allowing us to join you in your prayer needs. The chain receives prayer requests from all, for any concerns. Requests can also be anonymous. We appreciate updates, but we know that the Lord knows what we are praying about and primarily wants to hear from us. We welcome new members.



you
prayer

Please contact Tricia Hartman at 720-810-0850 or email her at: hartmanpe@me.com to join us, or to request prayers.



Senior Singles of Good Shepherd has been a close personal and active group at Good Shepherd for several years.

The year 2020 started off with our annual White Elephant dinner and gift exchange at the home of Tricia Hartman. The gift exchange is always very entertaining with crazy presents chosen and then stolen from one another.

Senior Singles meets once a month. The group enjoys potluck dinners, usually with a theme. Unfortunately, the COVID pandemic curbed almost all our in-person get-togethers after March 15. Many Senior Singles also help when special donations of funds or goods are solicited by groups in or outside of the church. For instance, we donated many dozens of cookies to a homeless shelter during the Christmas holidays.

Senior Singles started Zoom meetings almost as soon as the quarantine began. These hour-long sharing times have continued to the present day. The group also looks forward to continuing to meet every Friday evening for the foreseeable future. Sometimes these meetings feature a question which is answered by all, i.e., “your favorite vacation”, “most embarrassing moments”, “our animals”, etc. Other meetings consist of mainly checking in with one another, sharing thanksgivings or prayer requests for our families, friends, or ourselves. We also share favorite books, family visit reports, ways to handle getting groceries and other items, and tips for handling the isolation most of us feel.

Senior Singles very much missed meeting together, so after a few months of the pandemic we got together for three in-person picnics in summer and fall. Each person brought their own food, chair, beverage, and wore a mask, of course. We enjoyed seeing one another again. However, the weather in late fall and winter precluded further meetings face to face. We look forward to our famous dinner meetings when the weather improves, and we have all had our vaccines.



all



Good Shepherd youth started the new year strong with our very favorite activity, a lock-in! We had so much fun playing games and hosting the Music with a Mission Concert. February was full of silly games and building community. We had a blast playing pancake relay on Shrove

Tuesday. We were preparing to leave for our spring Quest retreat when COVID turned our worlds upside down. With so much uncertainty, we found solace in gathering on Zoom. We shared our tales of boredom and we mourned our losses together. We found online games that made us laugh and helped us pass the time. We created new ways to celebrate milestones. We enjoyed front porch chats, and birthday parades. We were blessed to be able to safely gather in person over the summer. It was precious time spent playing and catching up. Some of our favorite socially distanced activities were making smores over tea lights, watching a movie on the lawn, tie-dye wars, painting, and hiking. We wanted to continue to meet into the fall and winter, but with the rise in COVID cases it became clear that the best way to keep our community safe was to go back to meeting virtually.

The youth put together four Sunday services, three of which were virtual in 2020. Their creativity, flexibility, wisdom, and talent are astounding.

The resilience of our youth has not ceased to amaze me this year. Our young people have taken a terrible situation and made the best of it. They have sacrificed so much for the good of many. Service to our community has always been a very important aspect of our youth program. While we were not able to participate in service in our typical fashion, I want to recognize the outstanding service our young people have provided our community this year. Our youth have been living in service to us all for the last ten months. For most young people COVID-19 does not pose the same danger as it does for adults. Our children and youth are staying home for us. The sacrifices the youth in our congregation have made this year are too numerous to count. Everything from education, sports, and activities, to internships, and employment opportunities. They have sacrificed friendships, travel opportunities, rites of passage, and so much more. This level of sacrifice has come at a high personal cost for each of them. Our youth truly know what it means to love their neighbor.

YOUTH PHOTOS - 2020

