

THE CHURCH OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD

www.goodshepherd-towson.org

THE FOLD

POVERTY IN RUXTON

*"Blessed are the poor in spirit,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."
—Matthew 5:3*

People don't often stereotype Ruxton as a place of poverty, but we have as much poverty as anywhere else. While economic hardship may not be as evident, *spiritual* poverty is. Though Matthew's take on the beatitudes is quite different from Luke's (who has Jesus simply blessing the poor), it has a more universal appeal to the reality that all of us at one time or another dwell in the desert of spiritual poverty.

This poverty can result from a crisis of faith such as the unjust death of a loved one. It can result from spiritual neglect of one's soul. However it finds its way into our lives, we can be left with a feeling of isolation from God, unsure whether God cares or even exists. Church worship can become routine. Attempts at daily prayer seem fruitless.

There are members of our community who may be isolated and lonely due to age, health or other circumstances. Others may be dealing with a troubled marriage, or a difficult job, or being caregivers to children and aging parents alike. Some struggle with depression, substance abuse, or domestic violence. Poverty is more evident than we may realize.

It is part of our call as disciples of Christ to be agents of blessing. When we en-

(Continued on page 4 - Poverty)

LENTEN COTTAGE MEETINGS

Parishioners are often asking for more opportunities to get together for fellowship, so we are providing that opportunity this Lent. In addition to our traditional mid-week education program with lunch, we want to provide an additional venue for fellowship outside of Sunday mornings.

Six "cottage meetings" will be offered in Lent on various dates. These gatherings, in parishioners homes, are a chance to meet and enjoy fellowship with other parishioners, visit with the clergy and members of the Vestry in an informal atmosphere, hear stories about what others find meaningful about life at Good Shepherd, and give you a chance to ask questions or share concerns about your involvement at Good Shepherd. There is no educational program nor financial solicitation, just a chance to come together for a short time of enjoying one another in the comfort of someone's home.

Everyone will be receiving an invitation in the mail. You are asked to attend one event only, and there are numerous locations, dates and times available to accommodate everyone's schedule. We hope to see as many people attend as possible. Please make this a part of your Lenten discipline.

FEBRUARY
2008

Inside this issue: Clergy perspective— page 1 * Lenten Cottage Meetings— page 1 * Life Transitions— page 2 * Farewell to Alleluia, Ash Wednesday— page 2 * Service Schedule— page 2 * Adult Enrichment in Lent— page 3 * Evening Prayer— page 3 * Outreach— page 3 * Stewardship Update— page 4 * Choir Notes— page 4 * Stewardship Q&A— page 5 * Day School Update— page 6 * Education Opportunity— page 6 * Well for the Journey— page 6 * Calendar— page 7 * Bulletin Board— back cover

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 Hilary Sargeant, *FOLD Editor*

LIFE TRANSITIONS

We pray for the newly baptized:
 James Wolff Zink, grandson of Martha & Rip Zink, son of Matt & Amy Zink
 Anne Peyton Harty Good, daughter of Lisa Schapiro and Aubrey Good

We pray for those who have died:
 Ruth Snead, mother of John Snead; Marie Wolf,
 mother of Guy Wolf

MARDI GRAS CELEBRATION
"Farewell to Alleluia" & Imposition of Ashes
Tuesday, February 5th

The J2A youth group will be hosting a Mardi Gras dinner starting at 6:00 p.m. in the Parish Hall. The cost is only \$5 per person with a family maximum of \$20. Proceeds will benefit the J2A pilgrimage being planned for Summer 2008.

After dinner (approximately 7PM) join in the Ninth Annual "Farewell to Alleluia" service in the church. It begins with a rousing parade from the Parish Hall to the Church, where our many-colored beads will be shed, palms burned to ashes, and quiet songs and prayers offered.

ASH WEDNESDAY SERVICES
February 6th, 7:15 AM, 12:30 PM

Start Lent right with this traditional and solemn liturgy incorporating the imposition of ashes and Holy Eucharist.

NOTE: *there will not be an Ash Wednesday evening service this year. If you work and cannot come to one of the daytime services, please join us at the "Farewell to Alleluia" service the evening before.*

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES
Please call the Church for a specific Sunday Schedule

<u>Sunday</u>	
8:00 AM	Holy Eucharist (Church)
9:00 AM	Stumbling Over Scripture (Room 14)
10:00 AM	Holy Eucharist (Church & Parish Hall)
11:15 AM	Adult Enrichment & Sunday School for Children
<u>Wednesday</u>	
7:15 AM	Morning Prayer (1 st , 3 rd and 5 th) or Holy Eucharist (2 nd and 4 th) and Breakfast (every Wednesday)

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ADULT ENRICHMENT OPPORTUNITIES THROUGHOUT LENT

Join us in Lent for several exciting program opportunities!

Sundays in Lent (beginning 2/9/08)

9:00am - *Stumbling Over Scripture* continues.

11:15am – *The Sacramental Life* Join us for this 5-week series that will help us look at the full story told by our participation in the sacraments of the church. Come and hear stories from members of our parish of their memories of their own participation in and experience with baptism, confirmation, communion, marriage, and burial.

Learn more about the why's and how's of sacra-

ments, as well! Come for one week, or join us for all five – we'll just be glad to see you there!

Wednesdays in Lent (beginning 2/13/08)

12:30 – 2:00pm – *Lenten Lunch Series*

Join us for soup, salad and Scripture. We'll use Marcus Borg's & Dominic Crossin's work in *The Last Week: What the Gospels Really Teach About Jesus's Final Days in Jerusalem* as a springboard for a conversation that will help us get a closer look at the last days of Jesus's life. Please purchase the book prior to the first lunch meeting! **This offering requires participants to sign up. Please call the Church Office (410-823-0122), or e-mail (rsvp@goodshepherd-towson.org) to let us know you're coming!**

EVENING PRAYER CONTINUES DURING LENTEN SEASON

Looking for a moment of quiet reflection during your very busy days? Why not try Evening Prayer during Lent. Starting February 7th and continuing every Thursday evening through March 13th, the wonderful service of Evening Prayer will be held in the Nave starting at 6:00 PM.

Under the leadership of Guy Wolf the approximately half-hour service will provide attendees the chance to continue their special meditation reflecting on where each of us is on our own journey.

No need to sign up or to do any preparation—just come on out. Please note that March 20th is the traditional Maundy Thursday service, and will not be Evening Prayer.

—Clai Carr, Senior Warden

OUTREACH EFFORTS

As we start out the new year, perhaps we can each set aside a determined amount to add to the loose plate monies for our Outreach projects each week. The Outreach budget is supported by your donations, without which we may not be able to support those with greater needs than our own. Last year we supported At Jacob's Well, the Assistance Center for Towson Churches, the Eastern Family Resource Center, Episcopal Community Services of Maryland, Loaves and Fishes, New Song Academy, Our Daily Bread, Paul's Place, Project Linus, and Sandtown Habitat for Humanity. Each dollar that you provide ensures that we can continue to support those in need.. All loose plate monies go to offset our outreach expenditures. Please be generous; the need is great.

—Suzanne Whitney, Outreach Chair

(Poverty—Continued from page 1)

counter poverty, we are called to do something about it. It is much more than encounters with street-corner beggars. It is about involving ourselves in outreach ministries such as the many at Good Shepherd. It is about looking for the more subtle kinds of spiritual poverty in our neighborhood, in our neighbors, and even in our own households.

Lent provides an opportunity for each of us to embrace the deserted places that confront us in our daily lives, and respond with generosity and love and *blessing*. Likewise, we must not allow our own souls to languish undernourished by word, sacrament, fellowship, and spiritual growth.

Choose for yourself what your Lenten disciplines will be this year, and have those disciplines ad-

dress poverty in your midst. Whether it means joining the efforts of our tenth Habitat house that just got underway this last month, or attending one of our many parish enrichment programs, or reaching out to a neighbor or co-worker or family member, or reconciling with an estranged friend who may need you, decide and commit to do something tangible. If you need help getting started, the clergy would be happy to assist you in starting down that path; don't hesitate to contact us. With God's help, each of us can and *must* make a difference.

We cannot escape spiritual poverty, but we can be agents of blessing. May each of us discover joy this Lent in bringing blessing into the poverty of our own lives and the lives of the poor in our midst.

—Scott Slater+, Rector

STEWARDSHIP UPDATE JANUARY 2008

As of January 9, we have pledges toward this year's budget of \$329,900 from 134 parishioners—roughly half of the active parishioners. What is needed to balance the budget is gifts in the amount of \$425,000.

We all must re-examine the importance that the Church of the Good Shepherd carries in each of our lives. While the parish was amazingly generous toward the Capital Campaign, we need this same level of generosity *annually* to provide the income that it takes to operate our parish. If you have not made a pledge, please do so this week. If you have made your pledge but just "did what I did last year" please remember that Good Shepherd's expenses rise every year just as ours do. Thank you very much to those who truly have taken this year's stewardship campaign to heart.

—Beau Whitney, Stewardship Chair

CHOIR NOTES

Our parish choir continues to support the worship in the Nave service. As Lent approaches, we look forward to singing the Psalms as a congregation as we did during Advent. We will be returning to the Franz Schubert setting of the Kyrie, Sanctus, & Agnus Dei as we always do during Lent. The choir will commence singing the Psalms in the Anglican Chant style starting on Easter Sunday and continuing through Trinity Sunday.

In 2007, we added voices in the soprano, alto, and bass section. Could you "lend us a tenor"? Of course, as I've said to any and all who've inquired, **THIS IS YOUR PARISH CHOIR....**and everyone is welcome to sing with us. Some may shy away from committing to our 7:30 PM Thursday rehearsals and our singing every Sunday during the school year....but please don't let that stop you. Maybe you can just commit to singing with us for the 2 services on Easter....whatever your schedule we welcome your participation and are eager for your fellowship. Join us!

—Kevin King, Director of Music

F.A.Q. ABOUT STEWARDSHIP

Q: What is stewardship exactly? Is it raising money for the church's expenses?

A: Stewardship is about much more than money. It is literally about being good stewards of the resources that God has entrusted to each of us as Christians. These include our personal finances as well as our time and talents. How effectively and faithfully we use them in our personal lives and in our relationship with the church reflects the generosity we feel toward returning a portion of what God has entrusted to us for the mission of the church in the world.

Q: Where does our money go?

A: Our annual stewardship campaign solicits pledges which go to fund the annual operational expenses of the church, which include staff salaries, program expenses, utilities and maintenance, and outreach to the diocese and various local ministries that we choose to support financially. Approximately 80% of our operating income comes from charitable contributions.

Q: Why should I pledge? Why can't I just give money?

A: A pledge commitment at the beginning of each fiscal year allows the Finance Committee and Vestry to make more accurate decisions on budget planning based on projected income. Every year we receive a substantial number of contributions from people who do not pledge, but we can only estimate what that amount will be each year, and that number varies tremendously from year to year.

Q: I would like to pledge, but my income varies from year to year. I am afraid to commit to too much for fear that I will not be able to fulfill my commitment. What should I do?

A: A pledge is based on what you and God agree to give. The church does not hold you legally accountable for your commitment and we understand if your financial situation changes and you are unable to completely fulfill your commitment. Many people in this situation pledge a lower amount, one that they feel can be confidently met, then give more at the end of the year if they are able.

Q: I'm not sure how much to pledge. How much should I give?

A: The Bible encourages giving a percent of your income as a basis for giving. The tithe (ten percent) is the "gold standard" for giving, and is a goal every Christian should strive toward. At the very least, choosing to give something is the first step, with the goal of increasing the amount each year.

Q: What is the average pledge at Good Shepherd?

A: Pledges from individual households range from \$260 a year (five dollars a week) to \$15,000 a year. The average pledge in 2008 is just under \$2500. If you have at least an "average" income for this metropolitan area (and most of us do), we encourage you to begin with at least an "average" pledge.

Q: How well do we meet our expenses each year?

A: Each year is unique, depending mostly on pledge amounts, personnel costs and maintenance needs. It is fair to say that we struggle to make ends meet and they don't always. Staff often receives a cost-of-living adjustment only. Utilities costs are increasing exponentially. There is so much more we would like to do if we had more pledge support.

Q: What happens when we don't have enough pledge income to support expenses?

A: The Vestry has to decide to either cut expenses, which usually involves staff or program reduction, or dip into our investments, which we have had to do more often than we would like.

Q: What can I do to make a difference?

A: If you have never pledged, please consider beginning now. If you are able to increase your annual gift, please consider doing so. If you have never asked God to help you decide what amount you should contribute to the mission and ministry of Good Shepherd, please do so. Based on the success of the recent Capital Campaign, we know that we possess the capacity to meet our needs and do even more. But we need everyone to participate in that effort and give out of a spirit of generosity and sacrifice.

NEWS FROM THE GOOD SHEPHERD SCHOOL

The time is flying by here at Good Shepherd School. Everyone is happy to be back learning new skills and playing with their friends. February 1st, Good Shepherd School will notify new students of their acceptance for the fall of 2008 school year. It's hard to believe we are already thinking about the 2008 school year! Please let anyone know that we are still accepting applications for 2008. Good Shepherd will be closed on Monday February 18th in honor of Presidents' Day.

- Susan Andrews, Director

AMAZING OPPORTUNITY THROUGH ST. MARY'S ECUMENICAL INSTITUTE

N.T. Wright, the Anglican Bishop of Durham, England and arguably the world's most prominent and influential biblical theologian, will deliver the 40th Anniversary Lectures at the Ecumenical Institute of Theology at St. Mary's Seminary & University on February 25 and 26, 2008. The lecture series, part of the Ecumenical Institute's celebration of 40 years of theological education in Baltimore, will be entitled "The Bible and the Future."

This is an amazing opportunity for us at Good Shepherd! Please consider attending at least one of these lectures. Contact the Church if you are interested in carpooling (410-823-0122).

The schedule for Bishop Wright's lectures is as follows:

Monday, February 25, 8:00 p.m.
The Bible and Tomorrow's World

Tuesday, February 26, 4:00 p.m.
The Bible and Tomorrow's Church

Tuesday, February 26, 8:00 p.m.
The Bible and Tomorrow's Christian

The lectures, free and open to the public, will be held at St. Mary's campus on Roland Avenue at Northern Parkway in Baltimore. A book signing will precede each one.

For further information, contact St. Mary's Ecumenical Institute of Theology at 410-864-4200 or ei@stmarys.edu, or visit www.stmarys.edu/ei.

FEBRUARY OFFERINGS FROM WELL FOR THE JOURNEY

Crossroads Companions: The Quest to Serve

Free Intro Session: Tues., Feb 5 (7:00 pm) at The Well Center. Leader: Mabeth Hudson

Do you sense that God may be nudging you to serve in some new way? A small group is being formed that will meet twice a month to help participants listen for and respond to God's call in their lives.

Mystics on Mondays: A Fireside Chat

Feb. 11th (12:30-2:00 pm) or Feb. 18th (7:30-9:00 pm) at The Well Center. Learn about Rumi, February's mystic, who offers insight and wisdom for contemporary daily living. Instructor: Rose Mary

Dougherty, SSND. Fee: \$15.

Busy Person Retreat: A Retreat amidst Your Daily Routine

Feb. 21-28. Designed especially for those who don't have time to get away, the "retreat" offers the opportunity to become part of an intentional community and enter into "retreat" amidst your everyday routine. "Retreat" includes two sessions with a spiritual guide, opening and closing sessions at Second Presbyterian Church, and retreat materials for daily reflection. Retreat Leader: Sr. Kathy McNany, OSB. Fee: \$100.

To register or inquire, visit www.wellforjourney.org, call 410.296.9355, or email Sutton@wellforjourney.org.

WEEKLY ACTIVITIES AT GOOD SHEPHERD (Service Schedule found on page 2)

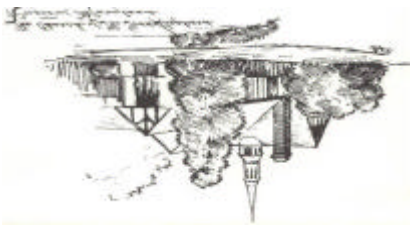
MONDAYS	8:30 PM	AA (Parish Hall)
TUESDAYS	6:30 PM	Swing Dance Classes (Parish Hall)
WEDNESDAYS	7:15 AM 9:30 AM	Holy Eucharist/Morning Prayer Staff Meeting (Room 14)
THURSDAYS	7:30 PM	Choir Rehearsal (Choir Room)
FRIDAYS	8:30 PM	AA (Parish Hall)

FEBRUARY

Sun, Feb 3	9:00 AM 12:00 N	Vestry Nominating Committee (Library) Hospitality Committee (Serving Room)
Tue, Feb 5	6:00 PM 7:00 PM	Mardi Gras Dinner (Parish Hall) Farewell to Alleluia (Nave)
Wed, Feb 6	7:15 AM 9:15 AM 12:30 PM	Ash Wednesday—Holy Eucharist & Imposition of Ashes Parents' Association Meeting (Rug Room) Ash Wednesday—Holy Eucharist & Imposition of Ashes
Thu, Feb 7	10:15 AM 6:00 PM 7:15 PM	Book Group (Smith Room) Evening Prayer (Nave) Outreach Committee (Smith Room)
Sat, Feb 9	2:00 PM	Loaves & Fishes (Kitchen)
Mon, Feb 11	5:00 PM	FOLD DEADLINE
Tue, Feb 12	7:30 PM	Regional Council (Smith Room)
Thu, Feb 14	6:00 PM	Evening Prayer (Nave)
Mon, Feb 18		OFFICE CLOSED (Presidents' Day)
Tue, Feb 19	8:30 AM 7:00 PM	Our Daily Bread (Kitchen) Vestry Meeting (Smith Room)
Wed, Feb 20	7:30 AM 6:30 PM	Men's Group (College Manor) Artists Way (Serving Room)
Thu, Feb 21	10:15 AM 6:00 PM	Book Group (Smith Room) Evening Prayer (Nave)
Thu, Feb 28	10:30 AM 6:00 PM	Manna for Moms (Rug Room) Evening Prayer (Nave)

MONTHLY CALENDAR

To find out more about any of the activities in the Fold or listed in our calendar, please call the Church office or go to:
www.goodshepherd-towson.org



*The people of the Church of the Good Shepherd aspire to grow continually in spirit with Christ as our head and the Holy Spirit as our guide. * We are a parish of many blessings, and we pray that our spiritual growth will be witnessed through loving concern for, and service to, our parish family as well as the broader community, especially our neighbors in need. * We find strength for the journey in diverse worship experiences, rich Christian education for all ages, and active lay ministry.*

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BULLETIN BOARD

VESTRY NOMINATIONS

It's that time again. We need to select three candidates for the Vestry, to be elected at our annual meeting on May 18, 2008. Our outgoing members are Guy Wolf (Worship), Doug Brinkley (Capital Planning), and the late Ann Cromwell (Day School). Amy Millin is filling an unexpired term as Outreach Liaison and will automatically be nominated for a full term.

Guy Wolf is chairing the Nominating Committee. Please fill out a nomination form found on the Welcome Table in the Foyer, or contact Guy at 410.494.4329 if you would like to nominate someone.

MANNA FOR MOMS

We continue to meet on the fourth Thursday of each month, 10:30-11:30. Mark your calendar for the following dates: February 28, March 27, April 24, and May 22. Join us for good coffee and good conversation!

COMMUNION BREAD RECIPE

Interested in making special bread during Lent, based on the recipe used for last year's communion bread? The recipe, along with the "Prayer for Baking Bread," is available on our website, on the "LENT" page.

BOOK GROUP

The Book Group schedule for early 2008 is as follows:

- February 7—A Thousand Splendid Suns (Hosseini)
- February 21—The Road (McCarthy)
- March 6—Year of Wonder (G. Brooks)

Please join us in the Smith Room on Thursdays at 10:15 AM.

NEXT FOLD DEADLINE

Monday, March 10th at 5:00 PM