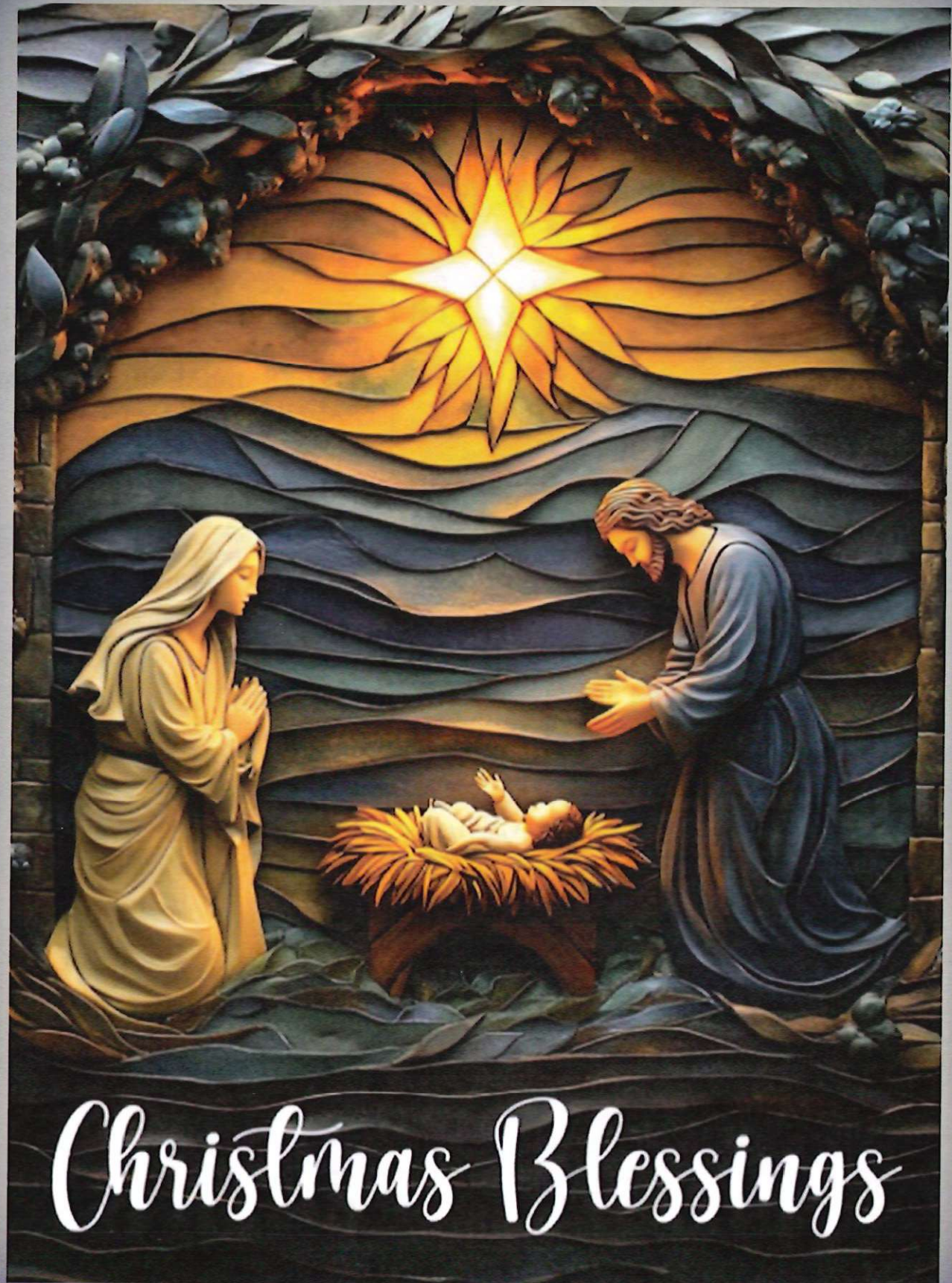


Church of the Good Shepherd



THE NATIVITY OF THE LORD – DECEMBER 25, 2025

Week of December 22, 2025, Calendar of Events

Rosary 1st Sunday of every month 20 min. before 9am Mass

Monday, December 22nd -

Tuesday, December 23rd

Wednesday, December 24th - 5PM & 10PM Mass / Offices Closed

Thursday, December 25th - 10AM Mass / Offices Closed

Friday, December 26th - NO MASS / Offices Closed

Saturday, December 27th - Offices Closed

REMEMBER TO PRAY FOR OUR HOMEBOUND,
THOSE ON OUR PRAYER CHAIN, AND THE HOSPITALIZED.



Church of the Good Shepherd

Office Phone: (724)528-3539

Office Address: 3613 Sharon Road

(PO Box 226)

West Middlesex, PA 16159

PASTOR – Fr. Glenn Whitman

Email: pastor@goodshepherdwm.org

RELIGIOUS ED DIR. – Lauren DeFelice

Email: religioused@goodshepherdwm.org

PARISH SECRETARY – Rhonda Dolin

Email: parishoffice@goodshepherdwm.org

MUSIC DIRECTOR – Greg Hansley

PLANT MAINTENANCE – Gary Wojtalik

KITCHEN MANAGER – Michelle Whalen

PRAYER REQUEST

Email: prayerrequestsgswm@gmail.com

Phone: (724)977-3369

Mass Intention Date & Time	Intentions	Requested By
Monday, December 22 nd at 8:30am	Karen Dubrasky	Brother, Tim Dudash
Tuesday, December 23 rd at 8:30am	Louise Stefanak	Ed Robich
Wednesday, December 24 th 5:00pm	For Our Parishioners Living & Deceased	
Wednesday, December 24 th at 10pm	For Our Parishioners Living & Deceased	
Thursday, December 25 th at 10am	For Our Parishioners Living & Deceased	
Friday, December 26 th	NO MASS	
Saturday, December 27 th at 6:00pm	Buck Stefanak	Family of Dave & Helen David
Sunday, December 28 th at 9:00am	Annette Wingerter	Family
Sunday, December 28 th at 11:30am	Jacob Bakuhn	Audrey Bakuhn

LITURGICAL MINISTRY SCHEDULE	LECTOR	EUCCHARISTIC MINISTERS	USHERS (HU –Head Usher)	GREETERS	ALTAR SERVERS
Saturday, Dec. 27 th at 6:00pm	Diane Salatino	Frank Langosh Fran Deeb Michael Drda Gary Salatino	Paul Bauer – HU Jody Drda Brian & Debra Biggins	Connie Titus	Luke & Jackson Seelbaugh
Sunday, Dec. 28 th at 9:00am	Ron Carson	Howard Fagan Tom Hubert Diane O'Rourke Ken Rogers	Ed Grober – HU Jeff Creveling Mary Anderson	Amy Hubert	Andrew David
Sunday, Dec. 28 th at 11:30am	Olivia Gingras	Ann U'Halie Judy Miller Rudy Koraus Beth Garrett	Deb Sokolak – HU Don Kemerer Mary Killingsworth	VOLUNTEER	Madison McClelland and or Volunteer

CHURCH OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD, WEST MIDDLESEX, PA



FROM OUR PASTOR

One Christmas eve deep in the forests of Germany toward the end of WWII, it was bitter cold with snow blowing in swirls around the bleakness of war. The wind whipped the snow in sheets freezing on the sides of trees. American soldiers were huddled in the darkness, covered in the white camouflage looking for some haven in the storm. There in the midst of the woods was a small log cabin with lights shining through small pane windows. Carefully the men moved toward the cabin, looking through the frosted windows. A family was seated at a table ready to eat Christmas eve dinner. With rifles drawn, the soldiers knocked on the door. A frail man came to the door and opened it. Afraid at first, he saw how cold the men were and motioned to them to enter. The soldiers, more cold than afraid, quickly accepted his hospitality.

At the end of the war no one had much food, but Christmas was the time to bring out what food they had for the feast: cheese, beer, bread and venison. The soldiers put their rifles down and were ushered to the table. They were about to eat a real meal whose memories had been kept only in their hearts when they heard a knock at the door. The Americans dived for their rifles. The old man walked calmly to the door and opened it a crack, only to be greeted with "*Froeliche Weinachten.*" The Christmas greeting in German exposed the new arrivals as German soldiers. The old man became frightened for his family because he was harboring the Americans. He could hear the soldiers inside get their rifles and move into the dark recesses of the room. What should he do? He closed the door and gestured to the Americans to set down their arms.

The door swung open and with a swirl of snow, the German soldiers rushed in. It was Christmas eve, and the inappropriateness of war became all the more stark. Their eyes met: the Germans and the Americans, frightened at first and then angry, set for a quick response. Then the old man gestured toward the table. "*Kommen Sie hier; meiner taffel ist fur Sie. Kommen Sie; essen Sie, bitte.*"

In an uneasy move the soldiers came to the table. "No weapons," the man gestured with his hands. Then slowly each soldier on both sides set down his weapons and moved to the table. The old man bowed his head, the three children at the table did likewise and the mother brought a steaming tureen of soup and set it on the table. "*In namen des Vater, des Sohnes und des HeiligenGeistes, Amen. Vater ins Himmel, danken wir fur deiner Kind Jesus Christus.*" The man began praising God for the son who came into the world to give us peace. It was a long prayer, and I'm sure the Americans were wondering what it all meant, but the depth of the man's faith and the reverence of the family let the soldiers know God's peace had wrapped this small band of people for a time, stopping aggression and misdirected hatred. Here were the faces of the enemy, bowed in prayer. "*Stille Nacht*" was sung at the end of the meal.

Rested, warm and no longer afraid, the soldiers began to crouch in opposite corners of the cabin for the night. Early the next morning, the two groups agreed to leave, one group to the east, the other toward the West. The old man opened the door on a bright crisp morning. The snow glints on the trees, having transformed the bleakness of the forest into silhouettes of shadow and light. The soldiers' footsteps ran off in the snow in opposite directions.

Despite our historical reality in 2025, there is something about Christmas that makes war impossible. The words of Isaiah seem to promise that war itself is shattered and overthrown by the power of the Word made flesh – God become human – in Christ. The Prince of Peace is a child, not wandering parentless in the swollen streets of war, but standing firm, afire with God. This child came in our flesh to transform our selfishness into love. It is a child who leads us.

The miracle is this: Each child is born in the parents' hope of peace and wholeness, for a better world in which hatred and the anonymity of war is transformed by humanity. That is our collective vision of tomorrow. But there is a price for it. Christ is sent to experience death for our sakes, setting us on a path of new innocence. The price

of redemption is the death of the firstborn. Many European Christmas carols speak about the Yule that gives way to the Pascha – Christmas does lead to Easter. For the one wrapped in swaddling clothes will be wrapped again in linen bands and anointed for burial.

The mystery of God's love is God's movement to humanity. To be Creator was not enough, but to share our frailty was.

Revisit that log cabin in the winter woods and remember that God always invites us to a feast set in the presence of our enemies, where we speak to one another, join hands in friendship and are restored as sisters and brothers again.

James Notebaart

Blessed Christmas to the parish families of Good Shepherd and Our Lady of Fatima. May the New Year be a blessing to us all.

Pastor and Parish Staff



CHRISTMAS GIFTS

There are Christmas gifts in the back sacristy for all of the ministries of the parish, including: Lectors, Eucharistic Ministers, Ushers, Altar Servers, Greeters, Catechists, Funeral Group, Environment Prep. ie: (Flowers, Candles, Hosts, Wine, Gardening), Music Ministry, Counters, & Food Pantry Volunteers, Parish Pastoral Council and Finance Council, Cooks who make dinner for the priests, & faithful Bulletin Stuffers.

Thank you for all you do here at Good Shepherd!



Let us not forget the wonderful events that took place over the year!

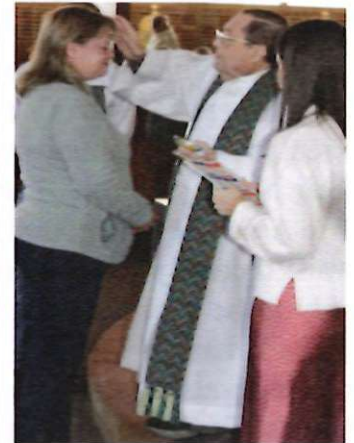
The Two Late Wise Men



Aiden Puskar,
Eucharistic
Minister



Anointing Mass



FOOD PANTRY RIBBON CUTTING





Family Day 2025



**Annual Spaghetti Dinner
2025**



**2025 GRADUATES
OF GOOD SHEPHERD**



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**CONGRATULATIONS TO THE
1ST HOLY COMMUNION KIDS**

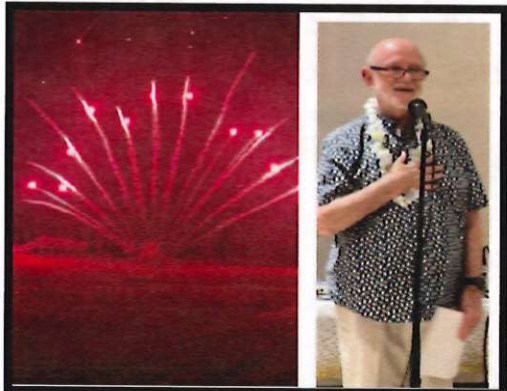
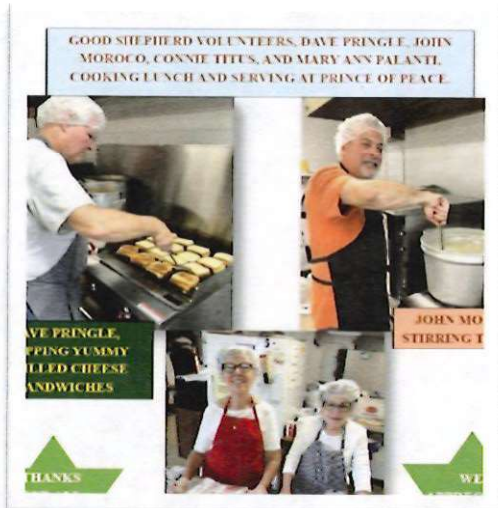


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2025 CHARITY DINNER



326 MEALS SERVED

THANKS TO OUR VOLUNTEERS, TEEN SHEPHERDS, AND THOSE WHO BOUGHT TICKETS!

RETREAT AT VILLA MARIA



FINANCIAL REPORT JULY 1, 2024 – JUNE 30, 2025

INCOME

Offertory	\$427,474.00
Bequests, Special Gifts, Extraordinary	10,932.00
Parish Activities	13,863.00
Miscellaneous	68,028.00
(Candles, Reimburse, Donations, Hall Rental, Lease)	
Designated Funds (Income)	46,881.00
(Special Collection, Misc.)	

TOTAL INCOME	\$567,178.00
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EXPENSES

Salaries – Clergy	\$15,425.00
Benefits – Clergy	11,484.00
(Retirement Hospitalizations, Retreats)	
Salaries – Employees -	102,048.00
Benefits – Employees -	46,357.00
Rectory Expenses	9,128.00
(Food, Supplies, Minor Repair, Misc.)	
Office Expenses	23,481.00
(Supplies Postage, Equip., Minor Repair Ads-Printing, Offertory Env. Misc.)	
Church – Altar – Sanctuary	18,596.00
Plant Maintenance	23,676.00
Utilities	43,094.00
Insurance & Taxes	14,302.00
Parish Activities	21,568.00
(Bus trip, Socials & Fellowship, Parish Picnic, Parish Dinner, Misc.)	
Diocesan Fund Assessment	27,648.00
Secondary School Assessment	50,000.00
(Kennedy Catholic)	
Religious Education	39,756.00
(Salary, Textbooks, Audio Visual, Retreats, Parties, Adult Rel. Edu., Supplies, Misc.)	
Miscellaneous	69,945.00
(Carpeting, Sound System, Misc.)	

TOTAL EXPENSES	\$516,508.00
-----------------------	---------------------

Total Income	\$567,178.00
Total Expenses	516,508.00
Remaining Bal.	\$50,670.00

Parish Data 2024-2025

Registered Households	585
Registered Members	1494
Baptisms	9
1 st Eucharist	7
Confirmation	11
OCIA	5
Marriages	1
Deaths	17
Religious Ed.	91
Enrollment	

Finance Committee Members

Tom Onestak
John Kerins
Lou Colella
Dave Pringle
John Moroco

Perhaps one of the most stunning news items of 2025 was the election of Pope Leo XIV, a Peruvian/American Augustinian missionary to succeed Pope Francis. This is an editorial from a Catholic newspaper in London commenting on the occasion.

A GREAT ADVENTURE

The final vote in the conclave on 8 May was a win for Cardinal Robert Prevost, a win for the Catholic Church, a win for the world's poor – and a win for the late Pope Francis. As the pieces of the conclave jigsaw come together, it becomes clearer how Francis had managed to influence the outcome in advance, and in particular how he had planned to ward off the conservative and traditionalist forces in the Church who wanted a very different papacy to follow his own.

They wanted a minimalist interpretation of the Second Vatican Council, with a renewed emphasis on obedience to authority and less talk of participation and consultation with clergy and laity. They did not want more engagement with social justice issues such as immigration and climate change. What they got was the man hand-picked by Francis to hold them at bay and continue his own trajectory of progress and reform, first as the man responsible for appointing bishops all over the world, and then as his successor. It was a decisive, indeed historic, defeat for the forces of reaction.

This is not the synopsis of another novel by Robert Harris, following his bestseller and subsequent Oscar-winning film *Conclave*. It is a plausible explanation of how Pope Leo XIV, hitherto known as Chicago-born Cardinal Robert Prevost, was elected Bishop of Rome on 8 May. Pope Francis knew what he was doing. It is safe to say that, had the Holy Spirit objected, his plan could have been thwarted. The vast majority of the faithful are grateful that it was not.

Delivering the Francis legacy and going beyond it, with extra breadth and depth, seems to be the mission Leo has set himself. A former prior general of the Augustinian Order, he has in his spiritual formation the huge depository of wisdom and insight in the writing and preaching of a foremost Doctor of the Church, a theologian and philosopher who raised questions modern philosophers are still asking. What is self-knowledge, what is consciousness, what is reason, and what do these things tell us about ourselves, about reality and about God? It is not surprising that Leo, with Augustine at his right hand, has already raised the issue of Artificial Intelligence. Nor is it surprising that, in the same way, he has mentioned his namesake Pope Leo XIII, whose great gift to the Church was his 1891 encyclical *Rerum Novarum*.

In Augustine's view, love of God and love of neighbour are virtually the same thing. And the neighbour could be anywhere – even before he became Pope, as custodian of the Augustinian tradition Prevost had refuted US Vice President J.D. Vance's disingenuous assertion that St Augustine had taught a version of "clarity begins at home" to justify cuts to the US overseas aid budget. Pope Leo is clearly not scared of controversy.

Leo XIII laid the foundations for the long and weighty tradition of Catholic Social Teaching, which steers a way between *laissez-faire* economics on the one hand and Marxist socialism on the other – not by looking for the halfway point between them, but by asserting a different set of human values altogether, derived from the Gospel. With both free-

market economics and Marxism now widely regarded as no longer relevant, indeed as destructive of human dignity and human community, there has never been a greater need for fundamental moral principles to guide post-globalisation economics – a new politics of the common good. There has rarely been a greater need, therefore, for someone like Leo XIV to lead the way.

He knows what raw capitalism did to Chicago, and how after the Civil War the huge internal migration of black people, fleeing Jim Crow in the Deep South, transformed the racial demographics of the city. He has seen American racism in action. He knows what poverty has done to the

people of Peru, his adopted homeland, plundered as it has been by economic colonialism. He has seen the environmental degradation that can follow unregulated mining activity in a country rich in natural resources. He knows about the burden that international debt has placed on the shoulders of the poor across Latin America. He knows what political instability can do to a country.

This was an extraordinary preparation for the job he has now ascended to, and raises many questions about the relationship between the

new papacy and the "MAGA" administration of Donald Trump. The US President is no longer the world's most influential American. And as the peacemaker he imagines himself to be, he now has to deal with a real one, whose first words from the balcony at St Peter's were "Peace be with you" – the first words spoken by Christ after his Resurrection.

The polarisation of the US, of which Trump is both cause and symptom, has also divided its 62 million Catholics. It may be significant that Prevost chose not to join the hierarchy of the United States, as no doubt he could have done, and has stood apart from the so-called "culture wars" that threaten to tear it asunder. Can he bring peace to it from outside? This has to be one of his priorities. His election will send a profound signal to the United States hierarchy about the direction it should take.

Leo is not afraid of big ideas. He has deeper philosophical interests, such as what makes people stop believing, how to take their objections to faith seriously, how to win them over, the relationship between faith and reason, and the nature of the human soul. Those were questions Augustine himself wrestled with as he opposed both Donatists and Pelagians, not to mention the Manichees he had once belonged to. The leadership of the contemporary Catholic Church has not quite known how to handle them.

Nowhere more than Europe has shown a more dispirited sense of anomie, as the loss of its ancient faith is replaced by trivial alternatives and distractions. It wrestles to resist immigration, seen as a threat, when it may be precisely what it needs. In the Church and in the world, the Global South is where the energy has moved to. All these issues will tax him to the limit, but with the Church united behind him, miracles are still possible. This papacy promises to be a great adventure into an unknown future, led by a man uniquely open to the challenge.

What traditionalists
and conservatives
got was the man
hand-picked by
Francis to hold
them at bay



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