

THE Shepherd's Fold

February 23, 2025

The Seventh Sunday after Epiphany

Doubt: “the ants in the pants of faith” (Frederick Buechner, *Wishful Thinking*, 23)

In Ken Hardy's Sawmill Theology class on Sunday morning, the topic was the story of Nicodemus, cited in John 3: 1-17. That difficult conversation between Nicodemus and Jesus ... being born from above by water and the Holy Spirit. Remember that Nicodemus went to Jesus at night, under the cover of darkness. Nicodemus was a Pharisee; he couldn't be seen hobnobbing with Jesus or any of his ilk. Nicodemus, though, had heard enough about Jesus to pique his curiosity. He even admitted to Jesus that “no one could do these signs that you do apart from the presence of God.” Nicodemus had questions. Nicodemus had doubt. Could it be that this Jesus is the real thing? The Messiah? Now, John never comes right out and says that Nicodemus becomes a committed follower of Jesus. However, John does reveal that Nicodemus, with Joseph of Arimathea (a secret disciple of Jesus) prepared Jesus' body for burial according to Jewish custom and laid him in the tomb. (John 19: 38-41) That's a mighty big risk for someone who doesn't believe!

We often worry when we have doubt. Does my doubt mean that I'm not really a Christian? Am I a loyal follower of Jesus if I can't be sure of the whole story every minute of every hour? I mean ... virgin birth, miracle after miracle, resurrection after three days dead. To believe these things happened requires faith with a capital F. But faith and doubt go hand in hand. Without occasional doubt, can faith be real?

Paul Tillich comments that doubt is not the opposite of faith; rather, doubt is but one element of faith. (Systemic Theology, volume 2, 116) Our doubt keeps us questioning, keeps us searching, keeps us growing.

So, the next time you have questions. The next time you have doubt. Don't worry. Use your doubt as an opportunity to dig deeper into the Bible. Deeper into what you hold to be true. And believe, as I do, that doubt is what led Nicodemus to Jesus in the first place. That doubt is what led him to believe Jesus to be the Messiah. And that your doubt can lead to a deeper relationship with Jesus. Sometimes, you just have to believe with your heart until your head *catches up*.

keep on keeping on...

bunny+

SAVE THE DATE: NEW STAFF RECEPTION

This month we have announced that we are bringing four new staff members to Good Shepherd. While their start dates are a bit staggered, we thought it would be fun to celebrate them all at once with a joint reception. Please join us to celebrate the new ministries of Elizabeth Gatter (Director of Music Ministries), Lauren Hargrove (Parish Nurse), Maureen McManus (Parish and Financial Administrator), and Ashley Williams (Children's Minister) on Sunday, **March 30** after the 6pm service. We have much to celebrate!

FINAL FEBRUARY WAGS

Join us on Wednesday, **February 26** for our final session of "**Feast: A Theological Exploration of Food.**" We'll end by looking at the feasts in Scripture and talking about what they mean for our common life in Christ! Join us as we discover how God meets us at the table and calls us into deeper communion with him and one another. Dinner begins at 6:00pm! \$6 (ages 11+), \$4 children ages 4-10, children 3 and under eat free. The family max price is \$25. To register head over to our website.

EPIPHANY HOUSE BLESSINGS

The COGS clergy are available for house blessings throughout the Epiphany Season (January 6 - March 4). This special liturgy lasts only a few minutes and is a great opportunity to invite your friends and neighbors to join you. To schedule a house blessing, please email Rebecca Taylor (rebeccaebtaylor@gmail.com).

MAHJONG AT GOOD SHEPHERD

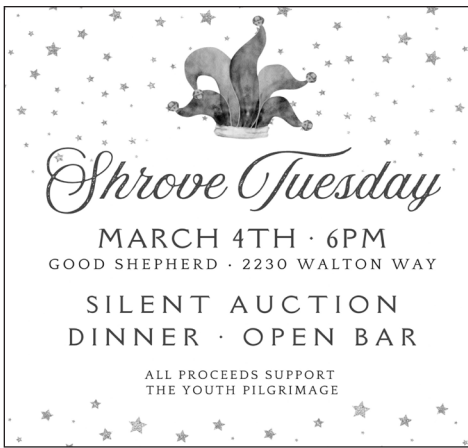
Some trends come and go, but there's something lasting about the game of Mahjong! You've probably heard that Augusta has been hit by a Mahjong craze and we want in on the action. On Sunday, **March 2** at 4:00pm we are hosting a Mahjong fest for newbies and experienced players. This is a great opportunity to invite your friends from the community who do not yet attend Good Shepherd. This event is free to attend and is BYOB and BYOS (bring your own beverage and snack)! If you are planning to attend, please fill out form link on the website. There is a place to sign up to be a table host (meaning you can bring a set of tiles, racks, and four cards). If you are able to bring a card table, please email Rebecca Taylor (rebeccaebtaylor@gmail.com). While there will not be childcare available, if your child is interested in learning to play or already knows how, they are welcome to attend! If this is a popular event and we decide to do it monthly, we will need a good name. Bring your ideas! *Shepherd's Tiles? Sunday Shepherd's Shuffle? Episco-Tiles? Baa-Jong? (Get it?)*

YOUTH NEWS

Head to the Shell Newsletter for details & to sign-up for up coming events. For any questions, email Mary Grace Wynn at mgwynn@goodshepherd-augusta.org.

YOUTH GROUP

Due to the Annual Ski Trip this weekend, Youth Group will not be gathering this Sunday evening, 2/23.



SHROVE TUESDAY

Mark your calendars for the Shrove Tuesday celebration at Good Shepherd on **March 4th** at 6pm! There will be a full dinner, silent auction, dessert bar, and more. All proceeds benefit the 2025 Youth Pilgrimage to Greece!

We are collecting items for this auction. Examples include artwork, event tickets, a weekend stay at a vacation home, antiques, homemade food, tours and passes, golfing, dining certificates, services, and lessons. If you wish to donate items, please contact Mary Grace Wynn or Kristen Weston.

COGS

Our next COGS outreach will be **March 8th** from 9am until 12 pm. to pack food items needed for backpack meals for children in the community with food insecurity as well as senior boxes for seniors in need in our community. We will meet at the Golden Harvest Warehouse, 3310 Commerce Drive and thanks to Amy Sutherland Nesbit who will be there to greet and direct folks since I will be out of town. Golden Harvest requires that people volunteering

wear long pants, closed toe shoes, and shirts with long sleeves. They request no Crocs to be worn. Golden Harvest also requires that youth under the age of 17 must be accompanied by a parent or guardian and that no children under 8 years old can volunteer. Please let Lynn Tyson know if you can participate in this ministry calling or texting **706-833-7415** or **ltyson517@gamil.com**. Thanks so much to everyone participating in this ministry as we share Good Shepherd's Mission and the message of the Gospel in the community.

WILD GAME DINNER

The EDS Association is excited to announce that the Wild Game Dinner will be held Saturday, **March 15**, at 6:00 P.M. at Episcopal Day School's Walton Way Campus. This much anticipated event is one of the EDS Association's most successful fundraisers. Proceeds are used to purchase items on the faculty "wish list" and provide curriculum support, enhancing our student and faculty experiences. This year, proceeds will be used for renovating and updating the teachers' workroom, as well as installing a permanent sound system in the gym to enhance our athletic events, chapel services, and school performances. The EDS Association cannot do it without your support, and are incredibly grateful for parents, grandparents, and local businesses.

The event will feature unlimited food and drinks, with both a silent and live art auction that feature local artists who have collaborated with each grade for a one of a kind piece of art! Dress is casual.

Servers of the Shepherd

Sunday, February 23, 2025

8:30 AM

Organist & ChoirmasterDr. Dan Hardin
Lay ReadersCissy Bowden, Bob Nesbit
Verger.....Ed Enoch
Ushers Sean Roche, Matthew Norris

11:00 AM

Organist & ChoirmasterDr. Dan Hardin
Lay ReadersLynn Smith, Andrew Austin
Verger.....Jerry Woods
Ushers George Sancken, Matt Tracy

6:00 PM

Organist & Choirmaster Dr. Dan Hardin
Lay Readers Jennie Haynes, Anne Floyd

All Services

Altar Guild Team VI
Breakfast Ministry Team VI
Vestry Person of the Day Alyson Getchell

(Please note, this event is for ages 21 and up!)

Wild Game Dinner Ticket \$75: This ticket provides access to the Wild Game Dinner at 6:00 P.M. Enjoy an open bar, delicious food, and the silent and live auctions.

VIP Ticket \$125: This premium ticket will allow an hour of early access to the Wild Game Dinner with open bar, food, and premium tastings beginning at 5:00 P.M. Head over to the EDS website for more details.

LENT READING GROUP

Our reading group continues to grow and we are excited to announce our next meeting. Please join us on Sunday, **March 16** at 4:30pm in the Conference Room as we discuss two books. The first book is *Passions of the Soul* by Rowan Williams (former Archbishop of Canterbury); this is Bishop Logue’s Lenten selection for 1Book1Diocese. The second book is *Lent* by Esau McCauley. You can purchase copies of both books on Amazon. To shop locally, The Book Tavern has copies of *Passions of the Soul* on hand. This group is open to all people and you can read one or both of the books. We hope to see you there!

