

Rector's Report
Submitted to the Annual General Meeting
of Church of the Good Shepherd
Nashua, New Hampshire
26 January 2020

Dear Brothers and Sisters at CGS:

In the few short months that I have had the privilege of serving as your rector, I have been overwhelmed by your warmth, love, and gracious welcome. I have a very deep sense of joy that springs from the fact that I am sure that I am in the place that God has called me to be, and I am grateful beyond words. Thank you for calling me and thank you for your enthusiastic welcome.

During these few months I have focused mainly on developing pastoral relationships with as many of you as possible. This has included working to get myself settled and organized in the office and establishing a productive routine so that I have the time needed to make myself available to all. I am grateful to all of you who have helped walk me through my first celebrations of the time-honored traditions of this place, and have tutored me on the institutions and routines, and who have been patient with my way of learning and experimenting. I am particularly grateful for those who helped to coordinate our wonderful social and outreach events, as these have made a wonderful opportunity for getting to know people and learning how to be their pastor. I am also particularly grateful to our executive committee, who have served as a council of advice for me on pretty much all matters; I'm very grateful to our wardens Jill and Brian for such patient and sage advice, and to the search committee, led by Chris and Judy, for all their help in a complicated transition; and to Pastor Kate, Pastor Alanna, and Pastor Odie, for leaving the garden so well-tended that I could focus on people and not on problems for these formative months.

A lot has happened in those months. I have implemented some listening structures that I hope will make our worship, education programs, pastoral care and fellowship more accessible to all. I am particularly interested along with the Vestry in making our worship life a bit more accessible to those who aren't so familiar with our tradition. This is work that I cannot conduct on my own, however, as the worship that we share is an expression of the way God speaks to each one of us. I have recently called together a worship commission, made of our worship leaders and anyone else with interest, to help expand and diversify our worship so that all feel welcome and comfortable. I am also calling together a group to help facilitate better pastoral care within the parish, so that we remain connected with those who can't make it to church on Sunday. I have also worked with the vestry to organize committees and establish goals that will help us best live into our mutual vocation to know Christ and to make Christ known.

There are many other places where my ministry will have a particular focus in the upcoming months, and where preparation work has already begun. I am developing plans for an expansion of our Christian Education programs that will help all of us better articulate the faith in us and the faith of this place—for all ages and all levels of interest. I am deeply committed to working with our youth and young adults to help continue to form them into a thriving group here. I will continue to help the vestry develop a vision for our ministry and common life and work to equip them to bring it to fruition. I will continue to support our staff in the development of their own service to the congregation, and work to organize our record-keeping and financial structures to make our resources as accessible and as transparent as possible. I will continue to be involved in various Diocesan and Convocation programs, as well as local Ecumenical ministries.

Not only have I been blessed by your warm welcome, but also by a wonderful team of employees and volunteers: a creative and passionate team in Mary and Nancy to shepherd our young folks; a music team led by Brett that is the envy of every other congregation in the diocese; a sexton, Brian who genuinely cares about this place and serves with a ready and willing heart; and an office team in Abbie and Laurie who not only always get the job done well, but who make it fun and joyful to be here. And that's on top of a world-class altar guild, vergers, altar ministers, ushers, teachers, and countless volunteers, all of whom work tirelessly and without complaint to help keep the parish alive and growing. I continue to look for new ways that I can reach out to those who need the ministry of the church, and new ways which I can deepen my commitment to God's people.

Yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brett". The signature is stylized with large, overlapping loops and a prominent initial "B".