



3rd Sunday in Ordinary Time

JANUARY 25, 2026



Mission Statement

"Good Shepherd Parish, under the guidance of the true Shepherd Jesus Christ, is a Catholic faith based community seeking to proclaim and live the gospel message. Recognizing our diversity, we strive to bring together a church family, welcoming all people as we grow together in faith, hope and love."

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SERVED BY

Rev. Valentine Ugwuanya Pastor

Denise Perry Secretary

For more information on our parish please go to:

Goodshepherdnj.com

Or email us at

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THIRD SUN IN O.T. [A] JAN 25, 2026.

The readings of this Sunday remind me when I was in the Military during my Active-Duty tour in Afghanistan, I had the opportunity to travel to a city called in English the "Land of dust" with my Soldiers. We had a great time, and a great experience, but I will tell you – it was ridiculously cold and sand storms. When the storm comes, you couldn't see and everywhere dark and dusty. The funny thing is, when I returned back to United States, it was even colder in Alaska! I have decided that I'm finished with the cold for a while, but now I was in a colder and Arctic region and there was light all day and night, that was Alaska.

So, I find myself relieved to read in today's Scripture that Jesus has the same idea! Well, not exactly, but he decides to move from Nazareth to Capernaum. Now as we know, Nazareth was kind of a countryside town, but Capernaum was right there in the action on the northern coast of the Sea of Galilee. It is in the lands of Zebulun and Naphtali that we heard referred to in the first reading. It's hard to imagine why a nice seaside resort would be considered a land of people who dwell in darkness, especially with the current weather here in New Jersey, but there a nice little backstory to this – a little history to this place and why Jesus is there. Back in ancient Israel, the tribes and successors of Jacob's sons Zebulun and Naphtali (those were their names!) occupied these northernmost territories in the nation of Israel. And so, in the 8th century BC, when Israel's neighbors to the north, the Assyrians, decided that they'd like a little sunshine too, and decided to come on down, the lands of Zebulun and Naphtali were the first to take the hit of their invasion. The people in these lands were the very first in the history of Israel – and Israel has a long, extensive history of this – to be deported and exiled. Even worse, it was Assyrian policy at the time to take the most educated and influential people in the conquered lands and ship them back as servants, leaving the rest of the peasants behind. So, if you can imagine, all the leaders of culture, art, government, education, and science were suddenly gone! Where once these influential people had meaning and purpose to serve their country and build up their own kingdom, now they were simply tools made to serve their captors. It left them, as Isaiah says, a "people in darkness" dwelling in a "land of gloom."

And it's there, in the land of Zebulun and Naphtali, the land of darkness and gloom, that Jesus chooses his first disciples. The fact that he chooses to do so here of all places is very important! He takes those people who had once been workers in a foreign land, whose work had become meaningless because it was for an oppressive foreign empire, and renews them by making them workers for a new Kingdom – a kingdom of justice and peace. With the call of the first disciples, he brings light to their darkness. To a land once emptied of life and culture, he brings meaning.

It's interesting to note as well how he issues this invitation. When Jesus meets them, they are on the lake fishing, doing their usual work, doing their business. They are trying to put food on the table and get things done. And as we read, Jesus comes to meet them *there*, in their environment. He enters into their everyday lives. Think about that: he could have chosen to call them at any time! He could have just dropped by their houses after work, spoken with them after their usual Saturday services in the synagogue, talked to them on their day off, or set up an appointment to meet with them in his office or something. All of these choices would have been so much easier – less interruption, less inconvenience. But Christ chooses to be part of their lives – he wants to call them in the middle of their ordinary, busy circumstance to bring them light and meaning. That is how the Lord works with us as well. He is always calling us, always prodding us, always seeking to work his way into our lives. Blessed John Henry Newmann once said, "We are not called once only, but many times; all through our life Christ is calling us. He called us first in Baptism; but afterwards also; whether we obey His voice or not, he graciously calls us still. If we fall from our Baptism, he calls us to repent; and if we are striving to fulfill our calling, he calls us on from grace to grace and from holiness to holiness, while life is given to us." The call to holiness never stops, never ceases, never ends.

Jesus is always coming to meet us, always coming to us along the shore of our lives, as he did with his first disciples. Whether it is at work or school or time off, whether it is convenient or inconvenient, he is always calling us. It isn't just on Sundays or while we're at Mass, but every day! He invites us to follow him more closely today than yesterday, to be more passionate for him tomorrow than we are today!

Good Shepherd Parish Schedule for Mass & Worship (schedules are subject to change)

Saturday (anticipated) 5:30pm
Holy Day TBD.

Sundays —9:00am, 11:00am
Reconciliation: Saturdays 4:45-5:15pm

National Holidays —9:00am
Adoration Mo-Fri 7:30am-5:00pm

Mass Intentions For the week of

Saturday 5:30pm For God's Blessings on the People of Good Shepherd Parish
Jan 24

Sunday 9:00am For God's Guidance and Protection of Venus Matthews
Jan 25 11:00am For God's Guidance and Protection of Emilye Chapman

Monday 7:00am For God's Blessings on the Birthday of Denise Perry
Jan 26

Tuesday 7:00am For God's Guidance and Protection of Sandi Mosley
Jan 27

Wednesday 7:00am For God's Guidance and Protection of Fr. Valentine Ugwuanya
Jan 28

Thursday 7:00am For God's Guidance and Protection of Luisa Ventura
Jan 29

Friday 7:00am For God's Guidance and Protection of Maya Azzi
Jan 30

Saturday 8:30am For God's Guidance and Protection of Giancarlo Perilla
Jan 31 5:30pm For God's Guidance and Protection of Judy Kuzma

Kindly keep our parishioner's family, with health and other challenges, in your prayers

Let us always remember in our prayers the sick members of our Parish

Paul Kocum	Sandi Mosley	Debbie Watson	Rihanna Scott	Venus Matthews	
Curtis Richards	Carlos Quinones	John Valfour	Corizon Abuzied	Margarete Victor	Bob
and Barbara Nezlick	Patrick Roylance	Graylan Banks	Aloysius Patrick Osuji	Avenelle Samaroo	

* Please advise if any names should be added or delete from the list

Hospital Privacy | Please remember that current privacy laws regarding patients in hospitals do not allow hospitals/ pastoral care offices to contact parishes. If you or a loved one are in the hospital and want a priest to visit, please call the I office at (973)375-8568

ANNIVERSARY LITURGY FOR COUPLES:

There will be ONE anniversary liturgy for all couples from all counties of the Archdiocese of Newark. This liturgy will be celebrated by Cardinal Joseph Tobin **on Sunday, May 3, 2026 at 3 p.m. at the Cathedral Basilica of the Sacred Heart in Newark.**

All clergy and family members are welcome! **It is desired that every couple in the archdiocese celebrating their 5th, 25th, 50th, or 60+ wedding anniversary be present at this special liturgy.** The presence of these couples and their families is a beautiful witness to the strength and stability of Christian marriage in today's society

Please use the QR Code below to register.

Registration **deadline is April 14, 2026.**

Kindly submit one registration form per couple. Once it is received, you will be contacted by email from the Office of Family Life Ministry with important information regarding the liturgy and directions to the Cathedral Basilica.



Collection Report		Dec 07, 2025
Weekly Target		\$6,500.00
Collection (Offering+ Fuel & Energy)		\$ No Data Available
Surplus (Deficit)		\$ -----
Fiscal Year to Date		
Budget:		\$379,864.00
Actual:		\$ 57,273.00
Surplus (Deficit)		\$ -----
Rolling 4 Week Averages		
Average Collection:		\$ -----
Average Surplus (Deficit)		\$ -----

Minister Assignments

Saturday Sunday	Lectors	Eucharistic Ministers	Presiding
1/31 5:30pm	Denise Perry	Denise Perry Barbara Banks Nellie Bate	Fr. Augustine
02/01 9:00AM	Marylyn Amah	Augustine Boakye Stanislaus Egeolu- Obimezie Denise Perry	Fr. Augustine
02/01 11: 00am	Sylvia Edozie	TBD	Fr. Augustine

GSP EVENT CALENDER

Sunday Jan 25
Monday Jan 26
Saint Timothy and Titus
Tuesday Jan 27
Saint Angela Merici
Wednesday Jan 28
Saint Thomas Aquinas
Thursday Jan 29
Friday Jan 30
Saturday Jan 31
Saint John Bosco

Good Shepherd Parish Information

RECTORY HOURS: Monday Thru Wednesday 10:00AM-2:00PM; Thursday / Friday 9:00AM-12:00PM

Parish Registration Forms can be found at the back of the church or call the rectory at (973) 375-8568

THE SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION Saturday 4:45PM - 5:15PM

THE SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM In order to have your child baptized at Good Shepherd, the parents must be registered and active members of our parish. Godparents or sponsors must meet qualifications as to have received both sacraments of Communion and Confirmation, attend Mass regularly and been a registered parishioner at a Catholic Church. Baptisms will be held the third Sunday of the month. For more information please call the Rectory at (973) 375-8568

THE SACRAMENT OF MATRIMONY Couples who are planning a wedding should call the parish office to meet the priest, to choose the date of the wedding and before any other arrangements are made call (973)375-8568

PASTORAL OF THE SICK Notify a priest of all who are hospitalized, home-bound, or Emergencies call (973)375-8568

ORDER OF CHRISTIAN INITIATION OF ADULTS, RCIA. Adults interested in becoming members of the Catholic Church and Catholics in need of Sacraments, Confirmation or Eucharist; inquire at the Rectory. To register please call the rectory at (973-375-8568

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION Sunday of October-April from 10:00-11:00 am in the Church building. For more information please call the Rectory at (973-375-8568. Children's mass will be every second Sunday of the month, at the 11AM mass.

HOMILY OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS
St. Peter's Basilica

3rd Sunday in Ordinary Time Year A, 22 January 2023

Jesus leaves the quiet and hidden life of Nazareth and moves to Capernaum, a port city located along the Sea of Galilee, at the crossroads of different peoples and cultures. The urgency that impels him is the proclamation of the Word of God, which must be brought to everyone. Indeed, we see in the Gospel that the Lord invites all to conversion and calls the first disciples so that they may also spread the light of the Word to others (cf. *Mt* 4:12-23). Let us appreciate this dynamism, which will help us live out the Sunday of the Word of God: *the Word is for everyone, the Word calls everyone to conversion, the Word makes us heralds.*

The Word of God is for everyone. The Gospel presents us with Jesus always on the move, on his way to others. On no occasion in his public life does he give us the idea that he is a stationary teacher, a professor seated on a chair; on the contrary, we see him as an itinerant, we see him as a pilgrim, travelling through towns and villages, encountering faces and their stories. His feet are those of the messenger announcing the good news of God's love (cf. *Is* 52:7-8). In Galilee of the Gentiles, on the sea route, beyond the Jordan, where Jesus preaches, there was – the text notes – a people plunged into darkness: foreigners, pagans, women and men from various regions and cultures (cf. *Mt* 4:15-16). Now they too can see the light.

And so Jesus “enlarges the boundaries”: the Word of God, which heals and raises up, is not only destined for the righteous of Israel, but for all; he wants to reach those far away, he wants to heal the sick, he wants to save sinners, he wants to gather the lost sheep and lift up those whose hearts are weary and oppressed. In short, Jesus ‘reaches out’ to tell us that God's mercy is for everyone. Let us not forget this: God's mercy is for everyone, for each one of us. Each person can say, “God's mercy is for me”.

This aspect is fundamental also for us. It reminds us that the Word is a gift addressed to everyone; therefore, we can never restrict its field of action, for beyond all our calculations, it springs forth in a spontaneous, unforeseen and unpredictable way (cf. *Mk* 4:26-28), in the ways and times that the Holy Spirit knows. Moreover, if salvation is destined for all, even the most distant and lost, then the proclamation of the Word must become the main priority of the ecclesial community, as it was for Jesus. May it not happen that we profess a God with an expansive heart, yet become a Church with a closed heart – this, I dare say, would be a curse; may it not happen that we preach salvation for all, yet make the way to receive it impractical; may it not happen that we recognize we are called to proclaim the Kingdom, yet neglect the Word, losing ourselves in so many secondary activities or discussions.

Let us learn from Jesus to put the Word at the center, to enlarge our boundaries, to open ourselves up to people, and to foster experiences of encounter with the Lord, realizing that the Word of God “is not encased in abstract or static formulas, but has a dynamic power in history which is made up of persons and events, words and actions, developments and tensions”.

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