



THE EPIPHANY OF THE LORD

JANUARY 4, 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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PASTOR'S REFLECTION ON THE EPIPHANY OF OUR LORD JAN. 4. 2026

Today we celebrate the Feast of Epiphany. Before the birth of our Lord Jesus, as St. Paul said that "the whole world was in chaos and agonizing looking for a redeemer who will deliver it from the dominion of darkness. So, at the time of Jesus' birth, it was commonly believed that a new star would appear whenever a new ruler was born. God the Father in Heaven used this belief to honor His Son Who was born as the new King of the universe. The three Magi from the East were astrologers. When they saw this "new star," they chose to follow it to discover the new born King. Creation itself, in the form of a star, pointed the way, thus giving glory to the newborn King, manifesting Him to the whole world as symbolized by the Magi.

Thus, as we celebrate this feast, the word "Epiphany" means "manifestation or revelation." Therefore, as we honor this moment in time when the Christ Child was made manifest to the world, we need to look into our own hearts. There, we discover Christ's ongoing manifestation to us so that we can worship Him Who humbled himself to be born in human form and has also chosen to be born within our hearts. We must diligently seek out that manifestation of God within us and respond to it in the same ways that the Magi responded.

First of all, the Magi were determined. When they saw a sign from the heavens that pointed to a new King, they stopped everything they were doing and immediately departed in haste to find Him. When God speaks to you and manifests Himself to you in some way, nothing could be more important than to be attentive to His voice and follow His manifestation with the same haste.

The Magi brought embarked on rigorous and difficult terrain to find the new born King and they brought along with the gifts to offer the child Jesus. The Magi offered the Child gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. God was honored and glorified through His creation by the giving of these gifts. God created gold to manifest His beauty and dignity. It was a gift that symbolized kingship, that Jesus Christ is the King of the universe. When we ponder the natural gift of gold given to the Christ Child, we are inspired to give Him our own gift of symbolic gold by prayerfully acknowledging Him as our own King to whom we pledge our complete submission.

Then, the second and third gifts, made from the sap of trees found in North-East of Africa, India and the Arabian Peninsula, frankincense and myrrh are also fruits of God's creation. Used in worship to symbolize prayers rising to heaven before the Almighty God, frankincense also symbolizes the divinity of the Child Jesus. We offer frankincense to Christ when we acknowledge His divine nature, since He is God in the flesh. Often used in burial, myrrh honors the Christ Child Who came to give His life as a sacrifice for many. We offer myrrh to profess our belief in the saving power of Christ's death on the Cross and our need for that gift of salvation, symbolizing that after his death, emblemed with myrrh, the body of Jesus will never decay.

As we celebrate the Solemnity of the Epiphany, try to see it as a historical event in which you are invited to share. God wants to manifest Himself to you today. When this happens, you must respond with faith and worship, giving God the greatest glory by giving Him your very life and offering Him your spiritual gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

As you walk along the path of faith this week, consider how God has manifested Himself to you personally. What is your response to this human and divine outpouring of love? Are you an obligatory Catholic or are you a cheerful steward giving back what He has already given you? We are blessed at Good Shepherd Parish to have a variety of ways to learn and serve as stewards of God's many gifts.

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 Jan 03—Jan10, 2025

Saturday 5:30pm For God's Guidance and Protection of the People of Good Shepherd Parish
Jan 03

Sunday 9:00am For the Repose of the Soul of Catrina Borg

Jan 04 11:00am For the Repose of the Soul of Roger Gonzaga

Monday 7:00am For God's Guidance and Protection of Sandi Mosley

Jan 05

Tuesday 7:00am For God's Guidance and Protection of Mary Ann Pecorelli

Jan 06

Wednesday 7:00am For the Repose of the Soul of Judith Lupo

Jan 07

Thursday 7:00am For the Repose of the Soul of Corey Chapman

Jan 08

Friday 7:00am For the Repose of the Soul of Robert Hailes

Jan 09

Saturday 8:30am For God's Guidance and Protection of Milton Hinton

Jan 10 5:30pm For the Repose of the Soul of Luis Sanchez Esq

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

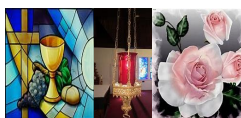
* Please advise if any names should be added or delete from the list

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

We will be getting new Missal/Hymnal books on the week of November 30th First Week of Advent)

Please, take this opportunity to honor a loved one (living or deceased) or commemorate a special event, like the birth of a child, anniversary, etc., by sponsoring a Missal book for just \$20.00

Please Contact Fr. Valentine or call the office, if you are interested in requesting mass intentions, intentions of a Sanctuary Lamp, Chapel Lamp, Altar Bread, or Altar Flowers.



ANNUAL²⁰²⁵ APPEAL

The Annual Appeal is ongoing, your contributions to the appeal will help so many lives.

Faith Formation Corner:

Good Shepherd Faith Formation classes have begun:

If you would like you would like your child to attend the classes, please see the registration forms in the Hall of the Church

Collection Report		Dec 21, 2025
Weekly Target		\$6,500.00
Collection (Offering+ Fuel & Energy)		\$ 2,208.00
Surplus (Deficit)		\$ 4,292.00
Fiscal Year to Date		
Budget:		\$379,864.00
Actual:		\$ 51,197.00
Surplus (Deficit)		\$328,667.00
Rolling 4 Week Averages		
Average Collection:		\$2,329.00
Average Surplus (Deficit)		\$4,171.00

Minister Assignments Nov 22—Nov 23, 2025			
Saturday Sunday	Lectors	Eucharistic Minis- ters	Presiding
1/10 5:30pm	Denise Perry	Denise Perry Barbara Banks Avenelle Samaroo	Fr. Augustine
1/11 11:00AM	TBD	Augustine Boakye Stanislaus Egeolu- Obimezie Denise Perry	Fr. Augustine
1/11 11: 00am	Children's Mass	Jerome Hule Victoria Asoluka Bernadine Osuji	Fr. Augustine

GSP EVENT CALENDER	
Sunday Jan 04	THE EPIPHANY OF THE LORD
Monday Jan 05	Saint John Neumann
Tuesday Jan 06	Saint Andre Bassette
Wednesday Jan 07	Saint Raymond Penyafort
Thursday Jan 08	
Friday Jan 09	
Saturday Jan 10	

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 Friday, 6 January 2022

Like a rising star (cf. Num 24:17), Jesus comes to enlighten all peoples and to brighten the nights of humanity. Today, with the Magi, let us lift our eyes to heaven and ask: “Where is the child who has been born?” (Mt 2:2). Where can we find and encounter our Lord?

From the experience of the Magi, we learn that the first “place” where he loves to be sought is in restless questioning. The exciting adventure of these Wise Men from the East teaches us that faith is not born of our own merits, thoughts and theories. Rather, it is God’s gift. His grace helps us to shake off our apathy and opens our minds to ask the important questions in life. Questions that challenge us to leave behind our presumption that everything is fine, questions that open us to what is beyond us. For the Magi, that was the beginning: the restlessness of those willing to ask questions. Filled with yearning for the infinite, they scan the heavens, find themselves marveling at the brilliance of a star, and experience the quest for the transcendent that inspires the progress of civilizations and the tireless seeking of the human heart. The star left them with a question: Where is the child who has been born?

Brothers and sisters, the journey of faith begins whenever, by God’s grace, we make room for the restlessness that keeps us awake and alert. It begins when we are willing to ask questions, when we are dissatisfied with our daily routine and take seriously the challenges of each new day. When we step out of our comfort zone and decide to confront the uncomfortable aspects of life: our relationships with others, unexpected events, projects needing to be undertaken, dreams to be realized, fears to be faced, physical and mental sufferings. At such times, deep in our hearts, we find ourselves before the irrepressible questions that lead us to seek the Lord: Where do I find happiness? Where do I find that fullness of life to which I aspire? Where do I find a love that does not fade away, a love that endures even in the face of frailty, failure and betrayal? What hidden opportunities are present in the midst of my crises and my sufferings?

Yet each day the very air we breathe is full of “tranquilizers of the soul”, surrogates meant to sedate our inner restlessness and to suppress those very questions: new items to consume, empty promises of pleasure and non-stop media controversies, the idolatry of fitness. Everything seems to tell us: Don’t overthink things; let go and enjoy life! Often, we try to soothe our hearts with creature comforts. If the Magi had done that, they would never have encountered the Lord. The danger is that we sedate our hearts, sedate our souls in order to quell our inner restlessness. God, however, is always there, there within our restless questioning. In that questioning, we “seek him as the night seeks the dawn... He is present in the silence that troubles us in the face of death and the end of all human grandeur. He is present in the longing for justice and love deep within our hearts. He is the holy mystery that responds to our yearning for the Totally Other; a yearning for perfect and consummate justice, reconciliation and peace” (C.M. MARTINI, *Incontri al Signore Risorto. Il cuore dello spirito cristiano*, Cinisello Balsamo, 2012, 66). That, then, is the first place where we can encounter the Lord: in restless questioning. Do not be afraid to enter into this restless questioning, for that is the path that leads us to Jesus.

The second place is in the risk of journeying. Questioning, including spiritual questioning, can lead to frustrations and desolations unless we embark upon a journey, unless we turn ourselves, in the depths of our being, to the face of God and the beauty of his word. Benedict XVI said of the Magi: “Their outward pilgrimage was the expression of their inward journey, the inner pilgrimage of their hearts” ([Homily for Epiphany](#), 6 January 2013). The Magi in fact did not simply study the heavens and contemplate the light of the star; they set out on a journey full of risks, without safe roads and clear maps. They wanted to discover this King of the Jews, to learn where he was born, where they could find him. And so, they asked Herod, who in turn summoned the leaders of the people and the scribes who pore over the Scriptures. The Magi were on a journey; most of the verbs used to describe them are verbs of movement.

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