



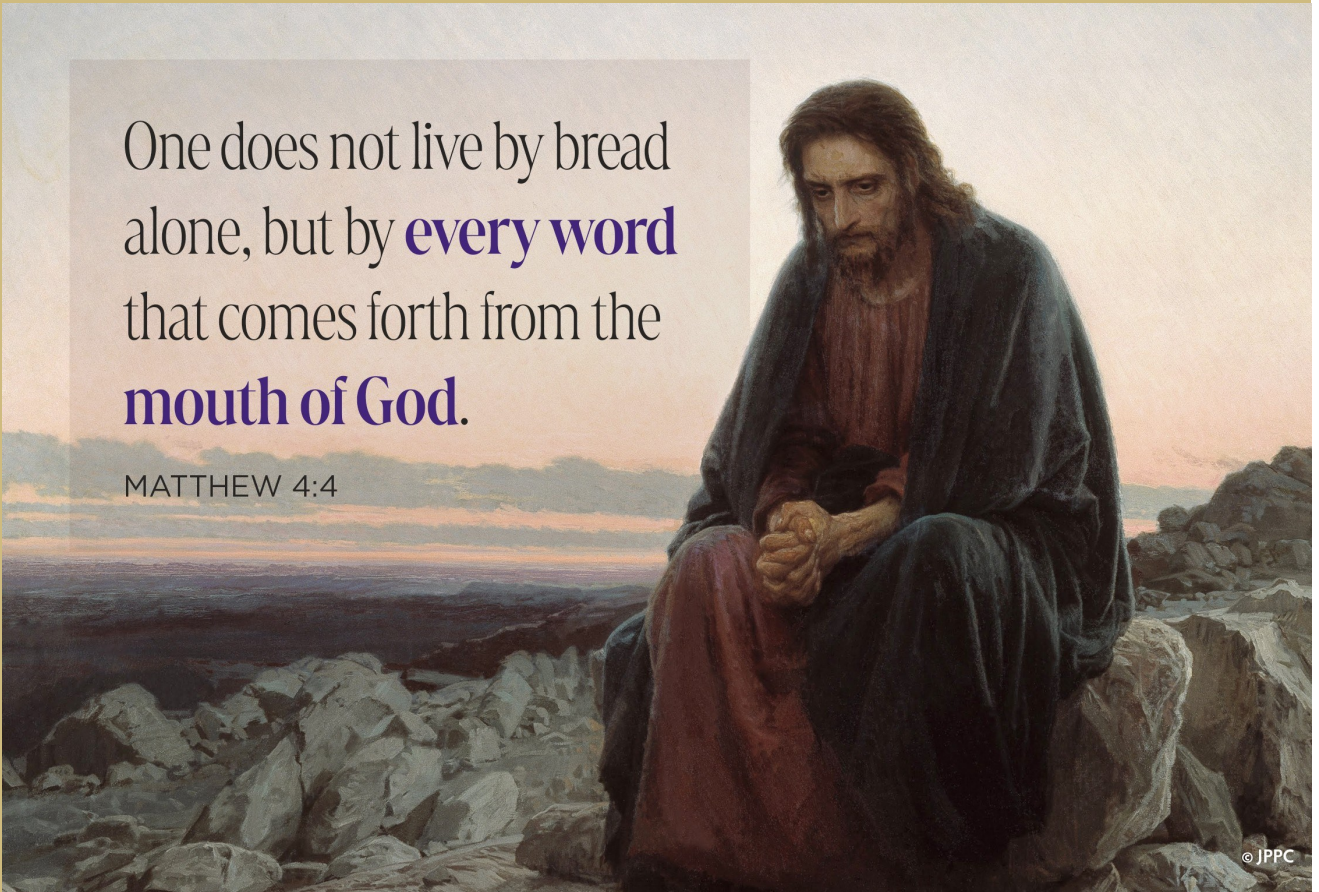
1ST SUNDAY OF LENT

FEBURARY 22, 2026



One does not live by bread alone, but by **every word** that comes forth from the **mouth of God.**

MATTHEW 4:4



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
gsirvington@comcast.net

FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK, FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT, FEB. 22 2026.

Today we begin our Lenten and desert journey. One of the oldest practices in the Catholic Church is the observance of Lent. Many of the details are lost in history. But some things can be said with certainty. The original idea comes from our Lord spending forty days and nights in the desert alone before He began His public ministry or preaching. That is why from time immemorial this event in the life of our Lord is always recounted at Mass on the First Sunday of Lent.

As Catholics we claim to be followers of Christ. What does that mean? Or what should that mean? Briefly stated it should mean that we try to live as Christ would want us to live. But it is important that this not be just some vague abstract idea that has no meaning or bearing in our everyday living. Quite concretely or really, we are now observing Lent, a time of extra praying and penance because that is what Jesus did for forty days in the desert. Now whatever we do might seem to be very little and puny in comparison with what Jesus did, but at least we are doing something. At least hopefully we are doing something. I think it is important that we be very specific in what we are determined to do especially in our prayer, or in our extra time that we are willing to spend with God. I fear that if we leave it too general, often we never quite get around to doing anything.

LENT—THE ACCEPTABLE TIME: In one of the letters of St. Paul which we read on Ash Wednesday, speaks about *the acceptable time*. Lent is certainly an acceptable time, for us as Catholic to take stock of how we are doing spiritually. It is a time we have to raise up our heads, and look into the woods especially this time the trees are dry and without leaves and look beyond in our spiritual lives, how we are doing, progressing or not. The Mass formulae we celebrate for each day during this Lenten season certainly offer much material for that *lectio divina* so recommended by spiritual writers for the good of our souls and spirituality. Combined with prayers and fasting, it will help you to progress your spiritual life. That would be a very practical way of making your time of Lent a spiritual oasis for your soul.

The various temptations: Spiritual writers see a progression in the various temptations that the devil presented to our Lord. The first of changing stones into bread was on a material or sensual level. And probably that is where the devil is able to get or trap most people. The second one would refer more to vain glory or boasting. We can probably see how this is a worse kind of sin than merely sensual sins. I suspect that the devil really saved his best one for the last, somehow or other feeling that this Jesus could not resist this offer. We know that each time Jesus answered without any hesitation and that is how we should respond in the face of temptation.

Unfortunately, we almost have to say that the devil has won on two scores or fronts today. First of all, lots of people don't even believe in him anymore or take him seriously. That is probably the biggest victory he can win. Secondly, many people and sources are doing the devil's work for him. Just think of the availability now of pornography on the internet today, hatred of some or many people on other people who are not of their color or ethnicity, violence and killings, which have been there few ages and that's how the devil is wining his battle because we adhere to his temptations. And then the way the devil is able to get a hold on people's souls through the use of drugs and other substances so that they end up doing things that they never would do otherwise.

As the antiphon reads, "if today you hear his voice harden not your hearts. Ask yourself, is there in anyway, I can change my life and amend my ways and doing and not to fall into the trap of the devil during this Lenten season. This is the appointed time, this the day of salvation.

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 Feb 21,- 28, 2026

Saturday	5:30pm	For God's Guidance and Protection of Sandi Mosley
Feb 21		
Sunday	9:00am	God's Blessings on the People of Good Shepherd Parish
Feb 22	11:00am	For God's Blessings on Marie Saint Facil Garcon
Monday	7:00am	For God's Guidance and Protection of Joseph Piacenza
Feb 23		
Tuesday	7:00am	For Gods' Guidance and Protection of Jennifer Noesner
Feb 24		
Wednesday	7:00am	For God's Guidance and Protection of Chris Guaman
Feb 25		
Thursday	7:00am	For God's Guidance and Protection of Marie Saint Facil Garcon
Feb 26		
Friday	7:00am	For God's Guidance and Protection of Franklin Guaman
Feb 27		
Saturday	8:30am	For the Repose of the Soul of Debra Chapman
Feb 28	5:30pm	For God's Guidance and Protection of Nellie Bate

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

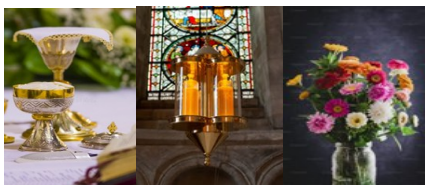
* Please advise if any names should be added or delete from the list

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.,

Ministries: If you're interested in ministries of service either as a Lector or Eucharistic Minister, please call the rectory at 975-375-8568 or fill out the Information below and place in the collection basket.
 Name : _____
 Telephone #: _____

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.



ANNIVERSARY LITURGY FOR COUPLES:
Sunday, May 3, 2026 at 3 p.m. at the Cathedral Basilica of the Sacred Heart in Newark.
 Cardinal Tobin, will be celebrating one mass for all married couples.
 Please use the QR Code to register.



Collection Report		Feb 15, 2026
Weekly Target		\$6,500.00
Collection (Offering+ Fuel & Energy)		\$ 2,275.00
Surplus (Deficit)		\$ 4,225.00
Fiscal Year to Date		
Budget:		\$379,864.00
Actual:		\$ 63,641.00
Surplus (Deficit)		\$316,223.00
Rolling 4 Week Averages		
Average Collection:		\$1,881.00
Average Surplus (Deficit)		\$4,619.00

Minister Assignments Feb 28—Mar 1, 2026

Saturday Sunday	Lectors	Eucharistic Ministers	Presiding
2/28 5:30pm	Denise Perry	Denise Perry Avenelle Samaroo Barbara Banks	Fr. Val
3/01 9:00AM	Marlyn Amah	Augustine Boakye Stanislaus Egeolu- Obimezie Denise Perry	Fr. Val
3/01 11: 00am	Sylvia Edozie	Jerome Hule Victoria Asoluka Bernadine Osuji	Fr. Val

GSP EVENT CALENDER

Sunday Feb 22
Monday Feb 23
Saint Polycarp
Tuesday Feb 24
Wednesday Feb 25
Thursday Feb 26
Friday Feb 27
Saint Gregory of Narek
Saturday Feb 28

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.

FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT HOMILY BY POPE FRANCIS 2014.

Dear Brothers and Sisters, Good morning!

Each year, the Gospel of the First Sunday of **Lent** sets before us the narrative of the **temptation** of Jesus, when the Holy Spirit, having descended upon him after his Baptism in the Jordan, prompts him to confront Satan openly in the desert for 40 days, before beginning his public ministry.

The tempter seeks to divert Jesus from the Father's plan, that is, from the way of sacrifice, of the love that offers itself in expiation, to make him take an easier path, one of success and power. The duel between Jesus and **Satan** takes place through strong quotations from Sacred Scripture. **The devil**, in fact, to divert Jesus from the way of the cross, sets before him false messianic hopes: economic well-being, indicated by the ability to turn stones into bread; a dramatic and miraculous style, with the idea of throwing himself down from the highest point of the Temple in Jerusalem and being saved by angels; and lastly, a shortcut to power and dominion, in exchange for an act of adoration to Satan. These are the three groups of temptations: and we, too, know them well!

Jesus decisively rejects all these temptations and reiterates his firm resolve to follow the path set by the Father, without any kind of compromise with sin or worldly logic. Note well how Jesus responds. He does not dialogue with Satan, as Eve had done in the earthly paradise. Jesus is well aware that there can be no dialogue with Satan, for he is cunning. That is why Jesus, instead of engaging in dialogue as Eve had, chooses to take refuge in the Word of God and responds with the power of this Word.

Let us remember this: at the moment of temptation, of our temptations, there is no arguing with Satan, our defense must always be the Word of God! And this will save us. In his replies to Satan, the Lord, using the Word of God, reminds us above all that "man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God" (Mt 4:4; cf. Dt 8:3); and this gives us the strength, sustains us in the struggle against a worldly mind-set that would lower man to the level of his primitive needs, causing him to lose hunger for what is true, good and beautiful, the hunger for God and for his love.

Furthermore, he recalls that "it is written, 'You shall not tempt the Lord your God'" (v. 7), for the way of faith passes also through darkness and doubt, and is nourished by patience and persevering expectation. Lastly, Jesus recalls that "it is written, 'You shall worship the Lord your God and him only you shall serve'" (v. 10); i.e., we must rid ourselves of idols, of vain things, and build our lives on what is essential.

Jesus' words will then be borne out in his actions. His absolute fidelity to the Father's plan of love will lead him after about three years to the final reckoning with the "prince of this world" (Jn 16:11), at the hour of his Passion and Cross, and Jesus will have his final victory, the victory of love!

Dear brothers and sisters, the time of Lent is a propitious occasion for us all to make a journey of conversion, by sincerely allowing ourselves to be confronted with this passage of the Gospel. Let us renew the promises of our Baptism: let us renounce Satan and all his works and seductions — for he is a seducer — in order to follow the path of God and arrive at Easter in the joy of the Spirit (cf. Collect for the Fourth Sunday of Lent, Anno a).