

Dear siblings in Christ,

With a profound sense of joy, I am honored to introduce myself to you as the next rector of The Church of the Good Shepherd.

During my discernment, so many things resonated with me about Good Shepherd. One of them was the extraordinary lay leadership present in the parish. The multitude of ministries, and their breadth, which serve people within the parish walls and outside of them, spoke volumes to me. Here was a community that—through and through—loves Jesus and wants to share that love with the world. I believe the work of the Church is done by all its baptized members, and I am eager to begin working side by side with you.

I am a lifelong Episcopalian. As a young acolyte at Christ Church in Reading, Pennsylvania, my faith began to take root. It was from that vantage point that I first witnessed the deep power of our liturgy. Nowhere else in my life did I witness such a diverse group of people drawn together. The eucharist became something I looked forward to each week. The prayers were not just words, and the elements were not just bread and wine. I was glimpsing the Kingdom of God—however fleeting—in those moments.

My wife, Kim, is an Episcopal priest. She has extensive experience working with youth and young adults on parish and diocesan levels. She is excited to discover what God will call her to do next in the Diocese of New Jersey. Our eldest, Audrey, loves art, science, and climbing trees. To Audrey, there are no strangers, only friends she has not yet made. Our youngest, Owen, loves music, science fiction, and hockey. Owen is a bit more introverted but is always enthusiastic about making new friends.

I come in a unique time in the parish's history; indeed, a unique time in the history of our nation and world. COVID has been a dominant and disruptive force in all areas of our lives. It is clear to me that you have navigated these difficult waters with grace and composure. I hope to continue that.

During the pandemic, I have had a guiding principle regarding how decisions are made: We need to begin and end in love. We need to have our starting point founded in the love of Jesus Christ, and we need to have our destination grounded in that same love. This doesn't mean things won't sometimes be challenging or that we won't make missteps. But if God's love is present with us from beginning to end, we will be OK.

An invitation

I wish to extend an invitation to you all. Once I arrive—whether in person, over the phone, or on Zoom—I would love to meet you. I want to hear your story. How did you find your way to the Episcopal Church? How did you discover Good Shepherd? What has your Christian faith meant to you throughout your life and during this pandemic?

I am grateful to the search committee, whose work of discernment was genuine and heartfelt. I am excited to work with such a talented and dedicated vestry. Most of all, I am looking forward to being in Pitman, and discovering together what good works the Lord has in mind for us.



**In Christ,
The Rev. Andrew Charles Reinholz +**