



Sixth Sunday of Easter

Holy Eucharist B

14 May 2023

**The Episcopal Church of the
Good Shepherd in Athens, Ohio**

Seeking to know and serve Christ
in loving service to the campus, the
community, and the world.

Today's printed [Order of Worship](#)

Lessons

Lessons for Sixth Sunday of Easter

New Testament – Acts of the Apostles

17: 22-31

Psalm – 66: 7-18 (Sung)

Epistle – I Peter 3: 13-22

Gospel – John 14: 15-21



<https://www.lectionarypage.net>

The Collect

O GOD, you have prepared for those who love you such good things as surpass our understanding: Pour into our hearts such love towards you, that we, loving you in all things and above all things, may obtain your promises, which exceed all that we can desire; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives

and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

The Gospel



John 14:15-21

JESUS SAID, "If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, to be with you forever. This is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, because he abides with you, and he will be in you.

"I will not leave you orphaned; I am coming to you. In a little while the world will no longer see me, but you will see me; because I live, you also will live. On that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you. They who have my commandments and keep them are those who love me; and those who love me will be loved by my Father, and I will love them and reveal myself to them."

Gospel Engagement Question:

What do you think it means when Jesus says he will give whatever is asked for in his name?

The Sermon



What Is In Between

What does love look like? Does it have a shape? Does love have a

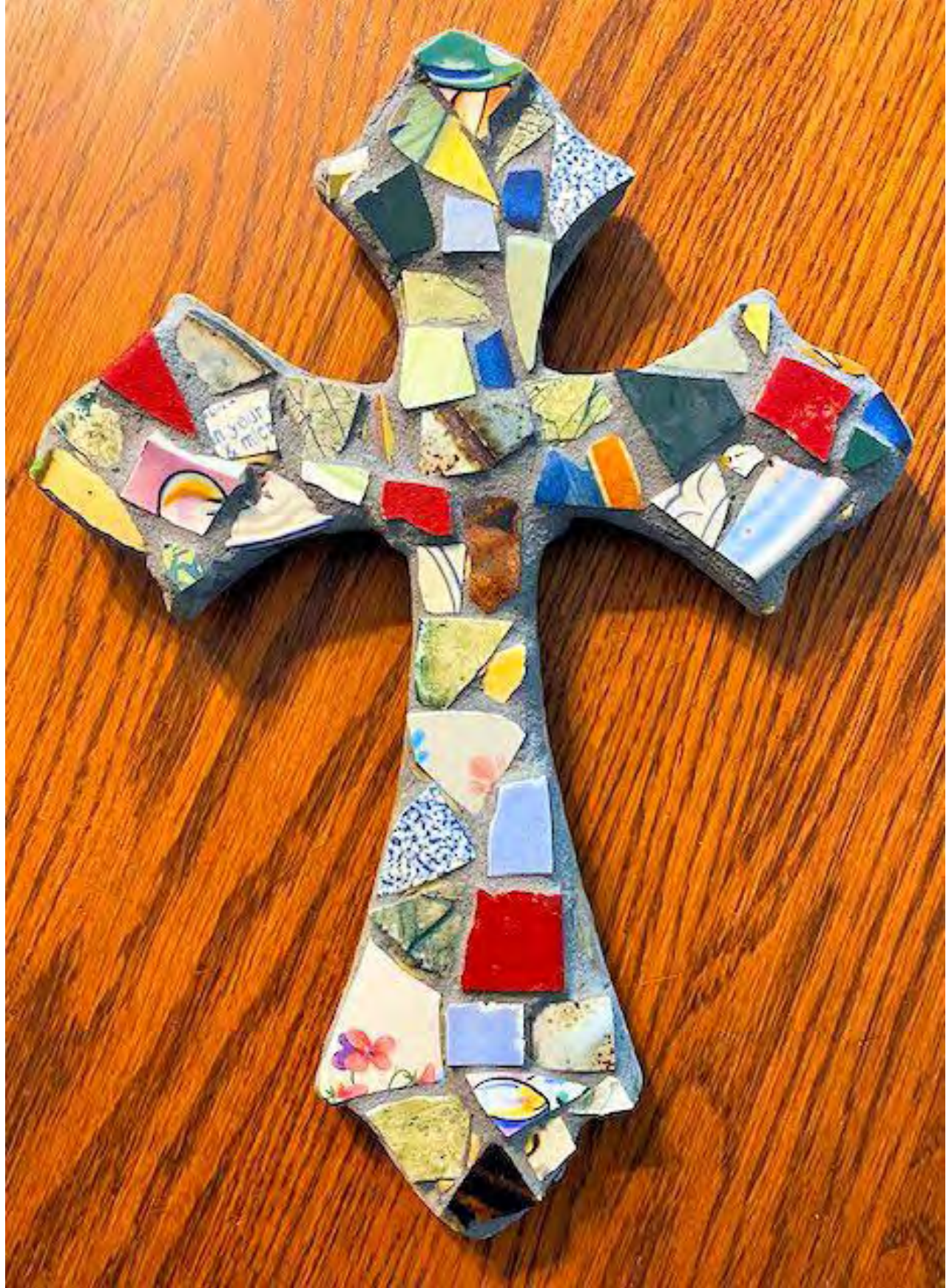
color a texture? Is love heavy or light? Does it have a smell? Is it possible to taste love? How can we know or recognize love when we encounter it in our lives, relationships, interactions with strangers, at work, school, in stores, or even in church?

On the sixth Sunday in the Season of Easter, we hear the word *love* three times in the collect for the day. For those who appreciate the reminder, a collect is a special prayer that collects the themes and messages of the readings of the day. And today's Gospel begins and ends with Jesus talking about love. Love seems to be the stuff binding all the bits of today's liturgy together.

Of course, the love I am talking about and the collect and Gospel refer to is not the same thing as romantic love, parental or familial love, the love of friends, or love we have for our pets; but all those kinds of love can be partial expressions of what Jesus and the collect were talking about. The love of God manifested in Jesus himself. A selfless love that gives of Godself, a love that gives life, even in the face of death and loss, a love that forgives even the most painful rejection or abuse, a love that is God.

There is an element of mystery to this love, which is why it can be helpful to have tools or symbols to help us visualize or recognize it.

One symbol I have is a gift given to me many years ago when I graduated from seminary and was ordained a priest. It is in the shape of a cross. But instead of being made of metal or wood or glass or crystal, this cross is made of many small pieces of broken porcelain and pottery. The pieces do not fit together. They are diverse shapes and colors, different types of pottery or porcelain that have different textures. Some pieces have lovely flowers painted on them; others have words that are so broken apart I don't know what their message was. Some pieces are large and chunky, others tiny, almost dainty, and delicate.



Although all the pieces are different, together they are beautiful, held together in the shape of the cross. If these same pieces of pottery or porcelain were lying loose on the ground or in a box, they could easily be mistaken as worthless trash, broken bits of dishware that have no use and are only fit to be thrown into the garbage. So, it seems the stuff that holds them together and gives them shape is what also makes them beautiful.

The stuff that literally holds the pieces of pottery together and gives them their shape is a type of cement. It is strong and durable without being too heavy. It is also gray, gritty, and rough to the touch. I don't know of many people who would call it attractive, but it is what holds all those pieces together, like the love of God holds all the different broken parts of our world and our lives together in love, giving us another chance, new life, and hope.

For me, the cement in between the pieces of pottery on the cross represents one way of visualizing what Jesus was talking about in today's Gospel: living the love of God. Today's Gospel is another smaller piece of what Biblical scholars call Jesus' farewell discourse, his speech to his disciples before his death and resurrection. The speech marked the ending of Jesus' earthly ministry and the transition into resurrection life here on earth. We are visiting this speech now because of where we are on the Church's calendar year. This coming Thursday will be the fortieth day after Easter Sunday, which is a significant holy day. It is the day we celebrate a mystery mentioned in the Nicene Creed: the ascension of Jesus. Ascension Day is described in the Bible as the day Jesus was lifted from earth in his incarnate and resurrected body to return to God.

While there is sadness in Jesus leaving, the words of today's Gospel speak to the transition of preparing those who follow him for the loss with the comforting assurance Jesus is not abandoning us to the wicked ways of the world. Through his resurrection something new has begun which his leaving doesn't negate. He will send the Holy Spirit who is both comfort and encourager so that we can continue to follow Jesus by recognizing God's life-giving Spirit when we encounter it and make our choices, words, and actions reflect that same love back into the world.

I find it interesting that a significant portion of the Easter Season is intentionally dedicated to transitions. The transition between Jesus' resurrection appearances to his followers and his ascension, and the transition between his ascension and the gift of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost. Perhaps the Church is attempting to share the wisdom that a significant portion of our lives as followers of Jesus is learning to traverse times of transition. Times when we can't be certain of what will happen; or when we are waiting for what has been broken or repaired to heal, like after a surgery; or the season this diocese is currently in as it transitions into the next phase of a search for a new bishop, or the season we are in as parish and priest as we transition into my leaving for a new parish and you will start your own discernment process. Although we know all these changes are going to happen, they haven't yet. It can be tempting to be impatient because the all the different pieces of these changes might not feel like they are fitting together yet, which can be uncomfortable. Yet, despite the feeling of discomfort, transition is a holy time.

Perhaps this time in our lives is when prayers like today's collect, Gospel and the cross of many pieces can all be the Holy Spirit reminding us that there is something stronger than uncertainty holding us all right now, something gritty that will not let us go. Something that can take difference and what seems discorporate and make it beautiful by binding it together, like cement. That something is the love that begins and ends the Gospel of Christ, the love that can be seen between the spaces felt during all transitions and changes, the love that holds us all in the shape and image of God's love in Christ. Alleluia!



Sermon Engagement Question:

What do have that symbolizes the love of God in Christ for you?

Sixth Sunday of Easter, 14 May 2023 – Sermon by Rev. Deborah Woolsey, Church of the Good Shepherd, Athens, Ohio

Please include in your prayers

IN OUR WORLD, we pray for Justin, Archbishop of Canterbury, and for Michael, our Presiding Bishop; we pray for peace with justice throughout the Middle East. We pray for all families and law enforcement affected by gun violence. We pray for the victims of the coronavirus. We pray for all people affected by natural and environmental disasters. We pray for the people who are suffering from war, especially the people of Ukraine, and we pray for all asylum seekers, immigrants and refugees. We pray for Joe our President, Kamala our Vice-President, Mike, our Governor, the Supreme Court and the members of Congress.

IN OUR DIOCESE, we pray for our Provisional Bishop Wayne, the search process for a new bishop, and for Kenneth, Nedi, and Wendell our assisting bishops.

IN OUR PARISH, we pray for Good Shepherd's continued growth, for our Rector Rev. Deborah Woolsey, for our Associate Priests, Rev. Leslie Flemming, and Rev. David McCoy, for our ministry to students, the university, and the community.

THOSE WHOM OUR PRAYERS ARE REQUESTED: Al S., Bud and Carol, Chris L., Jean R., Lia, Miriam, Sharon, R.C., Chuck Brient, Douglas and Gwynne Campbell, Zelma Coleman, Lee Kembell-Cook, Phyllis and Dick

Dean, Richard DeNune, Norm Fox, Honor Haddox, Debbie Hunsberger, John Jefferson, Peter Kachenko and family, Christine McGinn, Jeff Maiden, Rev. Ed Payne, Dan and Nancy Reedy, Virginia Richards, Jack Roach, Bonnie Savage, Katyana Sayrs, Annette Secoy, Michael Vaughn, Joanne Worstall and we pray for all who care for them. **

FOR THE DECEASED: David T. McCabe

** Full names are normally not published online. However for the Sunday 10:30 service we will publish full names unless requested otherwise. If you have a name to be added to the prayer list, Lynn Graham maintains this information. Lynn may be reached at 740-593-5098 or grahammowery@aol.com.

At-Home Worship

Christ Church Cathedral Cincinnati live streams its services Sundays at 10 a.m. These are saved and can be watched anytime later.

<https://cincinnati.cathedral.com/ccj/ccc/join-online/>

Washington D C -- there's much to explore at the the National Cathedral's online portal. <https://cathedral.org/worship/>

Coming up on the Calendar

Thursday, May 18, 7:00 p.m. - - Vestry Meeting

Sunday, May 21, 10:30 a.m. - - Holy Eucharist (Discretionary Sunday)

Tuesday, May 23, 9:30 a.m. - - Prayer Shawl Group (Nehls)

Wednesday, May 24, 11:00 a.m. - - Julie Nehl's Service

Sunday, May 28, 10:30 a.m. - - Holy Eucharist

LOOKING AHEAD:

Wednesday, May 24, 11:00 a.m. - - Julie Nehl's Service

Coffee Hour Schedule

May 21 Alex Buckley
May 28 Anne Walker

Dates Open for Altar Flowers

In June - 4th, 18, 25th.

[To Altar Flower Procedure](#)

Notes & Announcements (additional items in the Friday Bulletin)



The 10:30 service is now streamed live. The streaming stops before taking communion out of privacy concerns.

Find it on Facebook [HERE](#).

Celebration of the Life of Julia J. Nehls May 24, 11:00 a.m.

[Julia's obituary.](#)

NAMI Memorial Day on the Ridges 1:00 p.m., May 29

Mother Deborah will be giving the prayer at NAMI's Memorial Day service. This is a lovely service that remembers the names of people who have been forgotten by the institution that cared for them. Like all good observances of Memorial Day, it also inspires us to care for each other.

For Bishop Transition News and Updates

[-- Follow this link --](#)

If you want to help the folks who have been negatively impacted by climate disaster and war anywhere in the world (including Ukraine) please consider contributing to [Episcopal Relief and Development \(ERD\)](#) which is the official ministry of the Episcopal Church.

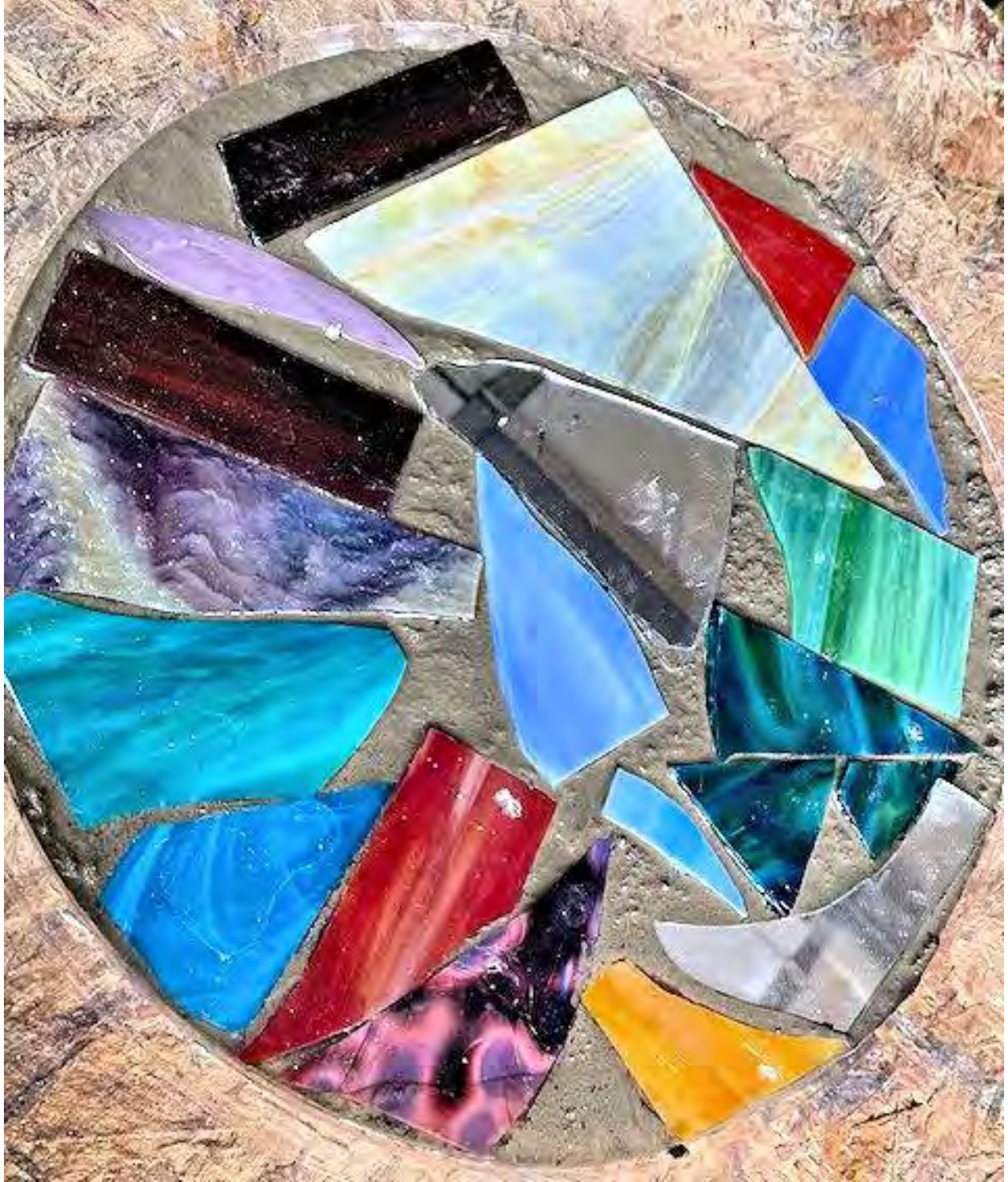


Stepping Up and Creating Beauty

We had a good time making steppingstones after the church service today. Once the cement dries, they will become part of the updated Covid Memorial. Thank you to everyone who helped make beautiful art together!







Contacts, Information

Quick Links

Pandemic Notes:

[Link to the DSO guidelines](#)

[Parish website](#)

[Sermons](#)

[Parish calendar](#)

[Staff](#)

[Campus Interest](#)

[E-News Guidelines
and Back Issues](#)

[Diocese Southern Ohio](#)

[Bishop Transition](#)

[\[E\]Connections](#)

[Episcopal News Service](#)

[Episcopal Journal & Café](#)

[for in-person worship](#)

In light of local conditions, we still recommend wearing masks inside the church building **regardless** of vaccination status.

Office Hours: 10:00 a.m.–2:00 p.m., Monday through Thursday. Masks recommended.

The **Church Building** is not open for public meetings and gatherings but during office hours the thrift shop and chapel are available for individuals. Masks recommended.

CrossRoads Café is temporarily closed.

Contact Information

For pastoral needs, please contact The Rev. Deborah Woolsey at 937-689-8895 (cell) or 740-593-6877 (church), or by e-mail at revdebwoolsey@gmail.com.

To find out more about Good Shepherd and other matters, please contact Alex Buckley, Senior Warden, at 740-593-5513 or by e-mail at macbuck@yahoo.com.

For maintenance matters, please leave a note at the office or contact Dana Carlson, Junior Warden, at 740-664-2022 or by e-mail at carlsondana@hotmail.com.

[DONATE to Good Shepherd](#)

The above takes you to the Parish page where you can find instructions or donate on-line via PayPal, If you have a preference, please indicate on the the "Add special instructions to the seller" section the purpose of the donation
-- e.g. organ fund, plate collection, etc.

For emergencies, please call
The Rev. Deborah Woolsey at
937-689-8895.

NON-emergency messages
can be left on the church's
answering machine (740-593-
6877).

**The parish office
administrator** is Barbara
Martin (740-593-6877) or
barbara@chogs.org.

**The Episcopal Church of the
Good Shepherd**, 64 University
Terrace, Athens OH 45701

740-593-6877
chogs@chogs.org
www.chogs.org

Check out the
Church's
[YouTube
Channel.](#)

LIKE us on Facebook
[Episcopal Church of
the Good Shepherd
45701](#)

Office Hours:
Masks recommended.

10:00 am - 2:00 pm
Monday - Thursday
740-593-6877
chogs@chogs.org

Blessings !

Church of the Good Shepherd | 64 University Terrace, Athens, OH 45701

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