



Good Shepherd Catholic Parish

2626 E 7th Avenue Parkway | Denver, CO 80206

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

From the first weekend I arrived at Good Shepherd, I felt something special here. The way you have welcomed me to your homes, greeted each other at the doors, the laughter of families after Mass, the care you show to newcomers — there's a warmth in this parish that makes people feel at home. Hospitality flows naturally here, and it reflects the heart of Christ, the Good Shepherd, who gathers his flock and welcomes every soul who comes seeking rest.

I love this parish. And because I love it, I've been praying, listening, and discerning how to help it flourish for years to come. I've sought counsel from parishioners, staff, the pastoral council, the Archbishop, and neighboring priests. This has been a slow and prayerful process — not easy, but necessary. And I believe now is the right time to take a hopeful step forward together.

Advent calls us to prepare the way for the Lord — to clear what is overgrown so that new life can take root. Jesus tells us, "I am the vine, you are the branches... and every branch that bears fruit my Father prunes, that it may bear more fruit." That image of pruning has been alive in my heart as I've prayed about the life of our parish. Pruning isn't about loss. It's about hope — the careful tending that creates space for grace, for new growth, and for deeper roots.

Good Shepherd is already rich with life. Every weekend, I see families arriving together, longtime parishioners welcoming newcomers, and the sound of children and song filling the church. But even a healthy vine needs pruning. Our recent six-week attendance study confirmed what we already sensed: the 7:00 a.m. and 12:00 p.m. Masses each averaged only about 20% of our church's capacity, while total weekend attendance has grown by nearly 200 people over the past year. That's a sign of health — and a call to draw closer. Pruning now gives us the strength to grow stronger together and the flexibility to grow again if a second priest is ever assigned.

Beginning the First Sunday of Advent (November 30–December 1, 2025), our new weekend Mass schedule will be:

- Saturday Vigil – 4:00 p.m.
- Sunday – 8:30 a.m., 10:30 a.m., and 5:00 p.m.

The 10:30 a.m. start time will ease transitions between Masses, improve parking and hospitality flow, and offer a natural midpoint for those who previously attended at noon. It also means you'll consistently see your pastor — at the altar, before and after Mass, in the parish hall, and outside the church. Our previous rhythm, though generous, often scattered our community and required visiting clergy nearly every weekend. The Church also urges priests not to celebrate more than three Sunday Masses, so that our worship remains reverent and the priest remains present to the people he serves.

I know this change will be especially difficult for those who have worshiped at 7:00 a.m. for many years. That early community has carried a legacy of devotion, reverence, and quiet love for the Eucharist. I'm deeply grateful. My hope is that you'll find a home at the 8:30 a.m. Mass, where reverence and joyful family life already meet. Some of us pray best in silence, others bring

the beautiful sounds of children. Both belong here — and together, we reflect the fullness of the Church.

This change isn't only about sustainability. It's about fruitfulness. I want Good Shepherd to be a place of full pews and full hearts. I want people to stay after Mass, share coffee, and reconnect with neighbors. I want young families and longtime parishioners praying side by side. And I hope to create regular opportunities — whether simple breakfasts or special celebrations — for us to linger together after Mass and truly grow in community.

I also want us to be a parish known not only for welcome, but for healing. Hospitality and mercy are two sides of the same coin. Both are how Christ gathers and restores his people. Beginning December 2, we will offer regular opportunities for Confession six days a week, along with a new Saturday daily Mass and weekly Eucharistic Adoration. These aren't just additions. They're the fruits of pruning — new life made possible because we've made room.

What's new this Advent:

- Saturday Daily Mass: 7:00 a.m.
- Confessions: Tuesday–Friday from 6:30–6:50 a.m.
- Saturday Confessions: 3:00–3:45 p.m.
- Sunday Confessions: 7:30 a.m.
- Wednesday Evening of Mercy (Adoration and Confessions): 6:30 p.m.

This rhythm of mercy will ground us. I want those who've been away from the Church, those carrying burdens, and those longing for peace to know: the doors of Good Shepherd are open. Jesus is here. He welcomes you. And so do we.

My dream is simple: that every Sunday at Good Shepherd feels like a homecoming — a day when we gather around the altar to meet Christ, and then stay to meet one another. That we become a parish where no one stands alone, where every person finds welcome, and every soul finds healing.

Advent is the perfect time to begin: a season of pruning, preparation, and fresh hope. Thank you for your faith, your patience, and your love for this parish. Let us entrust this new season to the Lord who tends every vine with wisdom and care. May he bring from this pruning an abundance of joy and life for years to come.

With affection in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Fr. Chris Marbury". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, stylized initial "F" and a long, sweeping underline.

Fr. Chris Marbury

Pastor

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Why are we changing the weekend Mass schedule?

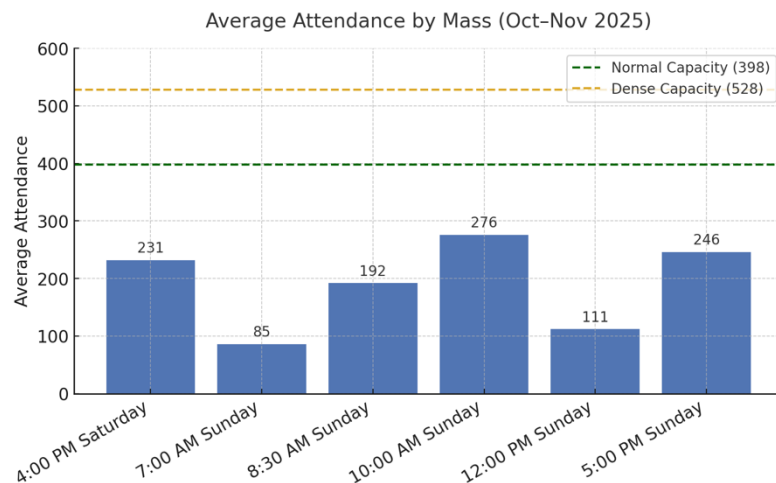
This change is a pruning — not a loss, but a hopeful step toward greater fruitfulness. The new schedule will allow every Mass to be fuller, more vibrant, and more prayerful. It strengthens our sense of community and hospitality, ensures the rhythm is sustainable for one priest, and follows the Church's guidance that a priest ordinarily celebrate no more than three Sunday Masses. Above all, it helps us gather more deeply as one flock — to encounter Christ and one another with greater presence.

3. How was this decision made?

This was the fruit of months of prayer, discernment, and consultation with parishioners, staff, the pastoral council, neighboring pastors, and the Archbishop. We also conducted a six-week attendance study and evaluated the sustainability of our current schedule. It was a careful, collective process aimed at strengthening the long-term vitality of our parish.

4. Why are we removing the 7:00 a.m. and 12:00 p.m. Sunday Masses?

The 7:00 a.m. and 12:00 p.m. Masses had the lowest average attendance — each filling only about 20% of our church. The noon Mass was added during COVID to provide spacing and flexibility, but was never intended as a permanent addition. Both Masses required bringing in visiting priests each weekend, adding roughly \$15,000 in annual stipends and reducing consistency in pastoral presence. By uniting into four strong Masses, we foster fuller pews, richer community, and a rhythm that's more sustainable for one priest.



Each bar shows average attendance per Mass (Oct-Nov 2025). Dashed lines indicate normal (398) and dense (528) seating capacity. Data reveal that the 7 AM and 12 PM Masses draw fewer attendees than any other single Mass.

5. How will this affect the 7:00 a.m. community?

The 7:00 a.m. Mass has long been a witness to quiet devotion and deep love for the Eucharist. I'm so grateful for that legacy. The 8:30 a.m. Mass offers a new spiritual home that still honors

reverence while welcoming the joyful sounds of family life. Our music ministry and ushers will work to preserve a prayerful, hospitable tone.

6. What about those who usually attended at 12:00 p.m.?

The new 10:30 a.m. Mass provides a natural transition and offers a midpoint between our other Sunday options. It also allows more space between liturgies — making room for parking, fellowship, and post-Mass hospitality.

7. Will there be enough room at each Mass?

Yes. Based on current attendance trends, each new Mass is projected to average around 70–75% of our church's capacity — full enough to feel alive, but not overcrowded. We'll continue to monitor attendance and adjust if needed.

8. Is this change permanent?

We plan to live into this rhythm for a full liturgical year, and then reassess. If our parish continues to grow, or if a second priest is assigned, we'll revisit the schedule. Like any healthy vine, pruning makes room for new growth — not permanent reduction.

9. What spiritual fruits can we hope for?

This new rhythm gives us space to worship with greater beauty, consistency, and reverence. It also opens the door for stronger community after Mass, more opportunities for Confession and Adoration, and a renewed sense that Good Shepherd is a home — a place where all are welcomed and where healing is possible.

10. What can I do to help?

- Pray for unity and fruitfulness as we begin this new chapter.
- Be ready to welcome familiar faces who may shift Mass times.
- Stay after Mass — share a cup of coffee or join a parish breakfast.
- Consider serving in a liturgical or hospitality ministry.
- Invite someone who's been away to come experience mercy.