



Church of the Epiphany, in Socorro, New Mexico, would like to welcome you! Epiphany is a church of about 100 members located in the picturesque Southwest. We are looking for a person to fill a half-time position, with services every Sunday in Socorro, and twice-monthly in the nearby town of Magdalena.

Epiphany is a family of believers that values faith, spirituality, music, humor and—according to the parish survey—“thinking”. We support one another through many ministries, and we find it important to reach out to the diverse surrounding community with our love and financial support. We serve during the weekly worship service through lay leadership and throughout the week through our participation in community organization boards or participation in community events. We are known for respecting and valuing people from a variety of faith backgrounds, and we bring a host of talents to contribute to the growth of our congregation. We also know how to have fun! Consider joining us in our journey in Christ.



## The Church of the Epiphany Today



The Church of the Epiphany is in Socorro New Mexico, a town of about 10,000 residents on the banks of the Rio Grande. The congregation has completely paid for its property consisting of a sanctuary, parish hall, kitchen and Sunday school/meeting rooms. For the past 30 years the congregation has been self-supporting and now pays a half-time vicar without assistance from the Diocese. We have approximately 100 members or 50 families that attend our services.

Many of the members are associated with New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology (NMT), a public science and engineering university located across the street from Epiphany. Because of our location, we hope to build on our ministry to NMT students, and we pay NMT students to accompany our services on organ and piano. We believe in supporting students as they pursue their education at this research-focused institution. The majority of the congregation is middle-to-late middle aged, many retirees attend, and we have some young families. We are also hoping to grow our small Sunday school program and participants have enjoyed our focus on "Godly play". We have weekly Sunday services at Epiphany in Socorro, and twice-monthly services

Sunday afternoons in Magdalena. Magdalena is a small town about thirty miles to the west. Parish members have said of our congregation "exceptional music talent and enthusiasm". In fact, we are a very responsive congregation and have been known to comment, laugh and even sing in response to the vicar's sermons.

The parish questionnaire asked why respondents chose this church, and many mentioned that it is a welcoming congregation and many mentioned the diversity of approaches welcome here. Many also feel a strong sense of community, like the way the liturgy is conducted and found the congregation and clergy open minded.

Members thought of the congregation as diverse and eclectic, but also intelligent and thoughtful. Words members used to describe the church were "caring", "sense of humor," "loving," "well-educated," "social" and "musical". These words capture the core of our community. We love and care for one another as Christ taught us, and we genuinely enjoy one another and our church family. We sing, play instruments and appreciate a "witty" comment, as one survey respondent mentioned. We are also "long-lived," "invested" and "accepting". We make sure to respect people and to actively participate in church and ministry activities.

Other members found it important to discuss our outreach, and called for “real world” service. We financially support the day homeless shelter, Puerto Seguro, and the food pantry known as the Storehouse. One member even suggested that the reason those local nonprofits have grown and succeeded in their missions is through partnerships with Epiphany members and other churches in town. We care for all God’s creatures, and have an annual Blessing of the Animals that is held in the community center of the Plaza. This is a good outreach opportunity and has brought at least one young family to the church.

In summary, the respondents seemed to be very happy with their experience at Epiphany. The qualities that kept reappearing in the responses were: welcoming, sense of community, mutual support, thoughtful-but-open-minded, accepting, and enquiring. The liturgy, musical ministry, and outreach to the community were all important and very positive aspects of the church to them. Few saw the need for significant changes, except some who thought that there should be greater participation in community outreach.

## **Hopes and Dreams**

Congregants come to Epiphany seeking spiritual growth and guidance in the various study groups, lectures, sermons, and spontaneous conversations that occur every time we gather. Our little parish provides a social support network, friendship and fellowship. Members enjoy “flexible family ministry” and hope to keep their children open to growth in the Spirit. The “warm people” of our congregation are lively in their conversations, especially at the beginning of worship, and several members have been interested in more times available for quiet meditation. People come to be with others who care about and nurture them and we are starting to try to balance the social with quiet time for reflection as we enter our worship times. We continue to strive to make Epiphany a safe place where people can worship God regardless of socioeconomic background, race or creed. Many congregants also value the weekly partaking of the Eucharist, and we have even extended our ministry to reach prisoners and the housebound.

Parishioners of Epiphany not only want to be involved in our church community for personal sustenance, but also to serve one another. There is strong desire to nourish and encourage the spiritual journeys of others. We think it is important to make sure that newcomers are welcomed and appreciate each other for our unique contributions and talents such as cooking, baking, bell ringing, spirited scripture reading, and biblical knowledge. We have provided meals for students, other parish members and even for the vicar! We have many activities such as choir, Camp Stony and other activities for children, an annual rummage sale, pancake supper, Messiah sing along, bell ringing for the Salvation Army to support the homeless shelter, Friendsgiving (a Thanksgiving meal open to the public) and Thursday B and BS (Breakfast and Bible Study). One member said that he has really grown through this weekly study and through the good questions of the study members. We have even had a lecture series on the union of faith and science, which is particularly important to the local university community. One survey respondent commented about the Church of the Epiphany, “It is a congregation that has active participation from many people, and is always interested in new people regardless of the Christian tradition they come from.”

We are looking for a vicar who can become our brother or sister, engage with us in this close-knit family and love us as Christ’s example. We need a vicar who will join us in our community service, encourage us to participate as our gifts allow, and whose sermons are relevant to our lives today. We hope God calls to you to answer our need for an open-minded person who accepts all people.



## More on Church of the Epiphany Programs

One long-time program is the Breakfast and Bible Study, where we congregate each Thursday morning to enjoy breakfast made by one of the parishioners, and study the Scripture. It is not unusual to look forward to Jon's homemade bread, or Bill's breakfast burritos. Similarly, New Mexico Tech students have enjoyed dinner and fellowship through the Canterbury Club on Sunday evenings.



We feed more than just the congregants at the Pancake Supper. We have students and community members come to this dinner; even Bishop Vono has flipped a pancake or two. Everyone in town knows to come to Epiphany that day. Our annual rummage sale has raised over 1,000 for the church. The Blessing of the Animals in October is an outreach that simply honors our fur babies. The creatures are blessed in both Socorro and Magdalena. This occasion transcends denomination and brings in pet lovers from the entire community to have their animals blessed. Epiphany clergy are regular participants at the ecumenical Socorro Easter Sunrise Service on the NMT golf course. They also participate in Thanksgiving services. Our Friendsgiving meal includes anyone in the community who doesn't have a family to join on the holiday, and is very well attended. Students come, community members come, and people always contribute a lot of food to make the day special!



Music is an integral part of life at Epiphany. Epiphany Choir performances during the mass are accompanied by emptying of the majority of the pews; half of the congregation is in the choir! The church owns a nineteenth century tracker pipe organ and a vintage Steinway baby grand piano. Both have been recently refurbished and play grandly! The church pays NMT students to accompany services and the choir is self-directed.

## Crossroads

The Church of the Epiphany stands in a central location in New Mexico that has made it a good place for Diocese meetings and we have opened our doors to several other faith communities and community organizations. The quilts from the Fiber Arts Guild that meets in the parish hall on Tuesdays have drawn much appreciation and one was even donated to help raise money for the Storehouse food pantry. We have had AA, SCA and International Students Organization use our parish hall. We also share the space with the Unitarian congregation and the Hope Lutherans (Missouri Synod). Students have even been known to nap on our parish hall couches. Our goal is to embody the meaning of Socorro, and provide aid or succor in the desert.

## History:

Socorro was given its name by the explorer and colonist Don Juan de Onate in 1598 when the Spanish were first settling New Mexico. The Onate expedition had just traveled from present day Las Cruces on a route later named Jornada de Muerto (route of the dead man), a 90 mile trip through a barren and waterless wasteland. The colonists were in dire need by the time they regained the Rio Grande near Socorro, and the local Piro Indian Pueblo gave Onate water, corn and shelter. In return, Onate gave their pueblo the name Socorro, Spanish for aid or succor.

Two Franciscan priests traveling with Onate stayed behind with the Piro. A village of Piro Indians and Spanish settlers grew and a mission compound, with thick adobe walls, was completed by 1626. A revolt of Pueblo people ended this community in 1680 and Socorro was not resettled until 1816. The mission was rebuilt and became our modern San Miguel Catholic Church. Socorro was a small town of a few hundred. One civil war battle was fought just a few miles to the south in 1862.



New growth for the town did not come until the railroad arrived in 1880. Silver mines were opened in the mountains to the west (you can still visit Kelly mine south of Magdalena, but it is a ghost town). Within a few years Socorro had grown to a population of over 4,000. During this boom time, the New Mexico School of Mines was founded in 1889, and the Church of the

Epiphany four years later (see photo above.) In the early 1960s, the congregation moved to the current location on Leroy Place, across from the university. (Since there were no restrooms in the old church, the Sunday School teacher had to take the little girls across the street to the firehouse!) Our facility is the result of a series of construction and remodeling programs over the last 50 years. The sanctuary was built in 1990 (thanks to a miracle: a generous bequest from an unknown former parishioner!). We are constantly updating systems as needed such as the heating and cooling.

## About Socorro, New Mexico

The Church of the Epiphany is located in Socorro, New Mexico, about 75 miles south of Albuquerque. Our church is directly across the street from New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology, also known as NMT or New Mexico Tech. NMT has been consistently ranked in the top ten of national surveys of science and engineering universities. There are several government operations affiliated with NMT including the Energetic Materials Research and Training Center (EMTRC), the National Radio Astronomy Observatory (NRAO) and the Very Large Array (VLA).



Located on the Rio Grande in Socorro County, Socorro is high desert at an elevation of 4579 feet. It covers a small area of about 14.4 miles. Socorro is the shopping hub for folks from surrounding rural communities, and one of the major employers is Walmart. Socorro is primarily tri-cultural (Native American, Hispanic and Anglo) but international students and professors diversify our cultural blend.

Socorro has a lively local arts and music scene. Steve Simpson, a NMT faculty member, plays both in the folk mass band and has his own band—Mine Country Drifters—that involves one of the student pianists who is hired by Epiphany. Local bands play at the Plaza, Garcia Opera House and at restaurants. The Macy Center at NMT features 15 shows a season, ranging from Chinese acrobats to chamber music to bluegrass. The Socorro County fair and rodeo grounds are a major attraction. In October, Socorrofest features local artists, food, and brews. Several good restaurants serve a variety of cuisine, including New Mexican.

Albuquerque urban center is only an hour's drive away, and Santa Fe is just about 2 hours with many opportunities for entertainment, healthcare, and fellowship with other clergy.

Socorro is something of a mecca for outdoor enthusiasts. It is surrounded in all directions by open space, desert, grassy plains, and forested mountains rising to over 10,000 feet. Much of this land is owned by the Forest Service or the Bureau of Land Management and is open to the public. A large part



of this land can be reached only on dirt roads or by foot. Mountain biking and rock climbing are popular. Bird watching also draws many people from around the nation, particularly at the Bosque Del Apache. We have quail and roadrunners who visit our yards in town, and in the wild areas there are deer, turkey, antelope, elk, bear, and mountain lion. One of our parishioners even encountered a pack of javelina (wild pigs) at the Bosque Del Apache. Fishing also draws many enthusiasts, for trout, bass, catfish and striped bass. There are towering sandstone cliffs of San Lorenzo canyon.





The NMT golf course is open year-round, as is the swimming pool. We also have a local gym for fitness.

The community has a grocery store and food department at the Super Walmart, 3 hardware stores, autoparts stores, a coffee shop, and a year round farmers' market.

Socorro area High School and Middle School are supported in the community, as well as two elementary schools and a public charter school. We also have a regional hospital, a nursing

home, dentists, a mental health clinic and two veterinary offices. Farming, ranching, higher education, medicine, scientific and engineering research, tourist business, government and retirees are all important components of the local economy.

Online references

NMT: [www.nmt.edu](http://www.nmt.edu)

NRAO: [www.aoc.nrao.edu](http://www.aoc.nrao.edu)

VLA: [www.vla.nrao.edu](http://www.vla.nrao.edu)

EMRTC: [www.emrtc.nmt.edu](http://www.emrtc.nmt.edu)

Chamber of Commerce: [www.socorro-nm.com](http://www.socorro-nm.com)

City of Socorro: [www.socorronm.gov](http://www.socorronm.gov)

Local music scene: [www.socorromusic.com](http://www.socorromusic.com)





## About Magdalena, New Mexico

The Church of the Epiphany also serves about 6-15 people twice a month in the village of Magdalena. We meet at the Community Church at 4 or 5 on Sundays, usually on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Sundays of the month.

Magdalena is a rural community. It is not unusual to see authentic cowboys come into the restaurants from the surrounding ranches. It is 25 miles west of Socorro at elevation of 6570 with a population of 960. There is a small Navajo reservation nearby, and there are several traditional ranching families. Many people move to this community for retirement, and there is an emphasis on local history at the library and Boxcar Museum. Magdalena used to be a hub for cattle shipping and is a great example of the "Old West." A gas station and several restaurants accompany the small antique shop, local dollar store and art galleries. On line references

Magdalena Chamber of Commerce: [www.magdalena-nm.com](http://www.magdalena-nm.com)

Magdalena Public Library: [www.magdalenapubliclibrary.org](http://www.magdalenapubliclibrary.org)

