



EPIPHANY E-NOTES

February 2024- ISSUE 30

We will embrace all we meet with words and deeds of:

Welcome and acceptance

Service

Growth in a life of prayer and faith

Healing and reconciliation

Celebration

Annual Meeting Adopts Budget, Holds Elections

At Epiphany's annual meeting on Sunday, January 28, following the morning's Holy Eucharist service, the main business transacted under the leadership of Warden Bill Stone was the adoption of a budget for 2024 and the election of members of the bishop's and audit committees and delegates and an alternate to the diocesan convention.

The adopted budget shows expenses of \$134,028 and income of \$115,543 for a deficit of \$18,485 to be covered by reserve funds. The budget includes a provision that it is to be reviewed by the bishop's committee in six months to see where it stands and then decide on what to do going forward.



The warden leads the annual meeting

In the elections, Lois Phillips and Helen Minchin were proposed for three-year terms on the bishop's committee to replace Annie Danielsen and Eileen Comstock, whose terms expired. Episcopal protocol requires that their names be forwarded by the vicar to the bishop for final approval. Robert Minchin and Eileen Comstock were elected to serve as delegates to the annual meeting of the diocese and Brewster Bird as the alternate. Taffeta Elliott, Mike Danielsen, and Christie Smith were chosen for the audit committee.

Prior to the meeting reports by the vicar and warden and others covering the various aspects of the church's life—music, children's ministry, Lenten and Advent series, silent prayer services, breakfast & Bible study, communications, website, livestreaming team, phone ministry, and Magdalena worship services—were sent piecemeal by email to the members. None of the reports were given at the meeting but now are again to be sent by email in a single document. Additionally, the reports by the vicar and warden are shared here as follows.

Father Steve's Report

Twenty twenty-three has been a very challenging year for the congregation and me at Epiphany. We continue to emerge from the dark times of Covid, and it is apparent that tensions and challenges have emerged. Despite these challenges, we have been able to continue to celebrate our life in Christ together. My hope and prayer are that as we seek to identify the way forward, we do so with loving hearts in honesty, openness, and willingness to grow in the life of Christ in the Holy Spirit.

One of the greatest challenges at the end of the year was a shortfall in pledges due to reductions by some members of the congregation. At one stage the shortfall exceeded \$36,000. However, with a late pledge this came down to \$20,000. With further work by Bill Stone and Jason Simmons, the treasurer, this was reduced to \$16,000. Unfortunately, because of a 16.6 percent increase in building insurance, this returned to \$20,000.

One of the more exciting events was the beginning in January of the new year of a visioning/discernment program. It was the direct result of our bishop's invitation at the diocesan convention in November to imagine what we believe the church, local and diocesan, should look like in 5 or 10 years. I was impressed with the number of members who participated in the start of the program on the feast of

Epiphany on the 6th. It was the first of however many it may take to help us identify our vision for the future and be able to offer our insights to the diocese to help guide the process of renewal going forward. The planning of a discernment event had been in the works with the bishop's committee since the previous January. Due to some hitches, we were unable to move things forward until after the diocesan convention.

A special thank-you goes to Pastor Linda for facilitating the first visioning session and for her willingness to participate more fully in the life of Epiphany. On a personal level, I appreciate being able to call on her knowledge and experience. Pastor Linda and Father Tommy have now provided support in a number of ways, not the least by their presiding at the Eucharist and reading the gospel. In Advent, Pastor Linda worked with Susan Stone and Eileen Comstock on a "Blue Christmas" service offering a gentler experience for those who for any reason did not wish to celebrate the feast in a more jovial manner.

My thanks to all those who took leadership roles and/or participated in ministries in any way. The church relies totally on those giving time, talent, and treasure in the service of God, our congregation, and the community at large. I am grateful for the generosity of our members and for their kindness and love.

Silent prayer is a new ministry added during the year. I am grateful to Micheal Jokinen and Bear Albrecht as liaisons for this service. At present it takes place for an hour on Sunday afternoons and was recently moved from the prayer room in the parish hall to the sanctuary. All people are welcome regardless of denomination, faith, or creed. It is a truly ecumenical event. My hope is that it will continue to grow. Prayer is the lifeblood of any church, the essential underpinning of all we seek to achieve.

I am pleased that we have two students in the postulancy stage of formation, Bill Stone and Jewels Wolf. Let us continue to hold them in our prayers. We have two members involved in the diocesan discernment process that will be completed this February, Eileen Comstock and Susan Stone. We have at least one and possibly two members considering entering the next process that begins in Lent. Deacon Athena Gassoumis has now been assigned to St. John's Cathedral in Albuquerque to work with the dean as she continues in her postulancy.

Despite the challenges Epiphany is facing, I believe there are many reasons to feel positive about the future. The challenge for any church is to grow in the love and knowledge of God, to give God the glory, and to grow in love for one another. In today's world we are called to renew our commitment to these foundational challenges and to embrace the way of love as exemplified in the life of Christ. The future offers uncertainties for both me and Epiphany. Let us look to the future with hope in the Lord.

Warden Bill Stone's Report

Many people have worked hard this year for the good of Epiphany. First, I would like to thank Annie and Eileen, who have completed their three-year term on the bishop's committee. Your hours of work and ideas were much appreciated. Ben, Jason, Carolyn, Brewster, and Jon continue their service on the committee. Thank you all!

There are many other people to thank, and I'll probably miss some. Bill Harris did a lot for the buildings and grounds and with his wife Pam took care of the student suppers. Fred has led the Bible study, and he and Lois have done the scheduling of readers. Cindy Madrid has worked hard to provide the coffee hour. Eileen and Gaby do so much for music along with the choirs. Mike and Steve provide music for the folk masses. The crew that handles the streaming of the services, the members of the altar guild, the readers and greeters—everyone has a part to play and something to contribute to the good of the Kingdom!

We do have some problems. The budget proposed for 2024 has a \$20,000 deficit. We have the reserves to cover the deficit but clearly cannot continue with such large losses for long. There have been some tensions and hurt feelings that do not reflect well on us as the body of Christ. But we have had troubles before and made it through. With God's help, we will this time too.

I have been your bishop's warden now for more than five years. Last year I started on the path to ordination to the priesthood. As I enter the next stage of the training, the bishop wants me to step back from being warden. Whoever the new warden will be, I pray that he or she will be able to help heal the hurts and divisions and make Epiphany again the warm, welcoming community we all want it to be.



The Philadelphia Eleven

What's Happening in February

The Epiphany season in the church year continues for two more Sundays in February. On the 4th at the Morning Prayer service lead by Susan Stone, the choir sings an Epiphany anthem, "Far away, what splendour comes this way?" about "Kings, all three."

With a new semester underway at New Mexico Tech, the serving of suppers to students resumes on Wednesday, the 7th, from 6 to 7:30 in the parish hall. New leader of this ministry is Vicky Kelsey, who received a degree in atmospheric physics from Tech in 2020.

The 11 o'clock Holy Eucharist on the Last Sunday After the Epiphany on the 11th is to include a memorial service for Betty Caldwell, who died last October 21 at age 76, and the placement of her ashes in the columbarium.

Shrove Tuesday on the 13th, features a pancake supper from 5 to 7 in the parish hall for which the cost is \$8 for adults, \$4 for Tech students, and \$3 for children. Bishop Michael Hunn of our diocese is expected to attend.

On Ash Wednesday, the next day, the Lenten season begins. The imposition of ashes takes place in the church at 12:30 and a Holy Eucharist service including the imposition of ashes at 5:30.

The Forward Movement's 15th Lent Madness competition, described in a separate story, commences on Thursday, the 15th, and continues through Wednesday, March 17, in Holy Week.

The First Sunday in Lent, the 18th, is also Episcopal Relief & Development Sunday with the agency's being the subject of the "Chats" session following the Holy Eucharist service as detailed also in a separate story.

The first two sessions in a Lenten study of our baptismal promises are on Wednesdays, the 21st and 28th at 5:30, including a soup supper. The study is using the book from the Forward Movement, "Will You?" by Amanda Perkins McGriff of Nashville, Tenn., a chaplain at Le Bonheur Children's Hospital and curate at St. George's Episcopal Church in Nashville.

Diocesan events this month include:

+ A retreat for participants in the latest discernment process Thursday-Sunday, February 1-4, at St. John's Cathedral in Albuquerque.

+ Snow Slam for 12-to-18-year-olds at Camp Stoney in Santa Fe Friday-Sunday, the 16th to the 18th, which Aria Jacobs of Epiphany is attending.

+ The beginning of the vocations course on Wednesday, the 21st, that starts the next discernment process.

+ Showing of the documentary, "The Philadelphia Eleven," about the ordination on July 29, 1974, of the first 11 women priests in the Episcopal Church on Friday, the 23rd, at 4 p.m. at the cathedral in Albuquerque.



Time for Some 'Crazy Fun'

The "crazy fun" of this year's Lent Madness, as its founding Episcopal priests Tim Schenck and Scott Gunn like to say about the basketball-inspired, online Lenten devotion they launched in 2010, begins on Thursday, February 15. Unlike in past years, the poster showing the names in brackets of the 32 saints chosen for the holy competition is the only printed item available and not the usual "Saintly Scorecard: The Definitive Guide to Lent Madness" with biographies of the saints. The scorecard is offered instead in digital form for downloading at the website, lentmadness.org.

Longstanding Epiphany member and a former parish administrator, Lois Phillips, introduced Lent Madness to the church in its second year, 2011, and has promoted our involvement ever since. The voting through the weekdays of Lent except for one Saturday culminates on the Wednesday in Holy Week with the selection of the Golden Halo winner. Lois cites the winner of the 2011 competition, C.S. Lewis, 1898-1963, an Anglican theologian, novelist, and poet, and no doubt can recall the others. She has obtained a copy of the 2024 bracket poster that will be put up in the parish hall to keep track of who is on the path to the Golden Halo.

"While Lent Madness all seems rather frivolous," say the founders, "you'll learn about the saints along the way. By the time Holy Week comes along, you'll see how God works in the lives of ordinary people to shine the light of Christ's love in a world in need of hope."

Frivolity in the coming competition is that all of the brackets are thematic as indicated in the first pairing on February 15. It is between the Thomases— Thomas the Apostle, who died a martyr in India in A.D. 72, and Thomas Cranmer, 1489-1556, shown to the left and right above.

Cranmer was a leader of the English Reformation and Archbishop of Canterbury. He wrote and compiled the first two editions of the Book of Common Prayer. When Mary I became queen in 1553 and attempted to restore Roman Catholicism to England, Cranmer was tried for treason and burned at the stake. Commonly known as "doubting Thomas" because he initially doubted the resurrection of Jesus and also referred to as "the twin," Thomas is mentioned only eight times in the New Testament. Tradition has him serving as a missionary in modern-day Iran and India.



'Chats' to Focus on Life-Saving Agency

The First Sunday in Lent, February 18, is also Episcopal Relief & Development Sunday. Begun in 1940 as the Presiding Bishop's Fund for World Relief, this agency will be the subject of the "Chats" session that day following the morning's Holy Eucharist service. The session will include the showing of two videos about the agency and its life-saving work in facilitating humanitarian responses to disasters such as earthquakes and hurricanes, nurturing the potential of women and children, and strengthening the resilience of communities to climate change.

Episcopal Relief & Development carries out its work by leveraging the expertise of Anglican and other partners in more than 20 countries primarily in Africa and South America. One of the partners is the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem whose ministries include the oldest healthcare institution in Gaza, the Al Ahli Arab Hospital, shown above. It manages to persevere in the midst of the terrifying Israel-Hamas war. Each day a team of seven doctors and the staff try to treat as many patients as possible in extraordinarily difficult circumstances. The hospital has also served as a shelter for displaced persons in northern Gaza.

The "journey of Lent" and the work of Episcopal Relief & Development are tied together by Bishop Jennifer Baskerville-Burrows of the Episcopal Diocese of Indianapolis in one of the videos to be shown in the "Chats" session. The other video shown gives a helpful overview of the agency and serves as a call for our support "not only as an obligation but still more as a Christian privilege."



Notes From the Bishop's Committee

The last two meetings of the bishop's committee were held on Tuesday, December 19, and Wednesday, January 17. Nearly all members were present except for Jason Simmons in December and Brewster Bird and Carolyn Jokinen in January.

The meetings approved the minutes of those for the months before and the treasurer's reports. The one for January through December showed income of \$131,526.89, above the budgeted amount of \$129,264.21, and expenses of \$130,568.05, nearly matching the budgeted \$129,356.00.

The January meeting also dealt with a budget for 2024 to be presented to the church's annual meeting on the last Sunday of the month, the 28th. Approved by the committee was a budget having income of \$113,743 and expenses of \$133,771 for a deficit of \$20,000. It was passed with the provision that it be reviewed in six months for making necessary adjustments. As reported in the lead article in this issue, the figures in the budget adopted by the annual meeting were slightly adjusted.

The only other actions taken by the committee at the meetings was to raise the vicar's housing allowance to \$2,000 a month for a total of \$24,000 and to contribute \$220 to the American Friends of the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem to go toward its Al Ahli Arab Hospital in Gaza.

In his "vicar's report" submitted in writing to the December meeting, Father Steve called the committee's attention to what the church canons say about missions, of which Epiphany is one; the vicar; and the governance of the committee. In summary, he wrote, "Primarily, all these functions should serve the spreading of the gospel and building a community that seeks to grow in love and truth."

Otherwise, the meetings noted coming activities such as the envisioning sessions on January 6 and March 16 and a visit by the diocesan bishop sometime in May.



...and Pray!

For our grounding in love, so that we may with God's help contribute toward the building up of a more loving, righteous, and compassionate world and that we who gather to hear the Lord's teaching may fully respond to all that God asks of us.

For God's protection of those caught up in the ravages of war especially in Gaza and Ukraine and those held as hostages and prisoners, that they may be restored to their loved ones.

For the healing of our divided nation and a deeper commitment by our leaders to finding common ground, honor the dignity of each person, and promote the greatest good for all.

For our church family, that we may be all things to all people, be on fire with zeal to share the good news of God's love, and give as we are able of our time, talent, and treasure.

For those among us commended to our prayers: Skeeter Leard, Gaby Benalil, Christopher Bechtol, David Davis, Cindy Madrid and her sister Celeste Taylor, Randolph Elliott, Bill Giebitz, Joyce Bankson, Laurie Gregg, Malik Osman, Jewels Wolf, Laurin and Phil Threatt, Kevin Adams, Chris Kurtnaker, and June Christy.

EPIPHANY E-NOTES is a monthly email newsletter about the programs and people of Epiphany Episcopal Church, 908 Leroy Place, Socorro.

Mailing address: PO Box 692, Socorro NM 87801

You can also reach us on our facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/EpiphanySocorro>

or our website at: <https://www.epiphany-net.org/>

If you have something you would like included in a future newsletter, please send it via email to the church epiphany.socorro@gmail.com . We would also appreciate your feedback.

*Copyright © *|2024|* *|Epiphany Episcopal Church|* . All rights reserved.*

