



Church OF THE
Epiphany

Annual Parish Meeting Report

January 28, 2024

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AGENDA

Opening Prayer

Comments by Rector

Appointment of Senior Warden

Election of Junior Warden and

Election of New Vestry Members

2024 Mission Plan

Awards/Recognitions

Other Business from the Floor

Closing Comments and Prayer

Staff

The Rev. C. Hunter Ruffin – Rector
The Rev. Carmen Valenzuela – Pastor for Community Life & Administration
Christian Rodriguez – Assistant for Communications/AV
Matt Flora – Choir Director
Dr. Miriam Hickman – Organist
The Rev. Martha Seaman - Deacon
The Rev. Canon Stephen Schaitberger – Seasonal Assisting Priest
The Rev Dr Corey Meier – Assisting Priest

Vestry of 2023

Mary O'Grady – Senior Warden
Dylan Westbrook – Junior Warden

Terms Expire 2024

Alex Davis
Diane Spillum
Pamela Waterman

Terms Expire 2025

Jan Wagner
Cece Wilhite
vacancy

Terms Expire 2026

Aaron Van Briesen
Steve Geislinger
Jude Wickelgren

Andrea Stewart – Clerk of the Vestry 2023
Ann Neal – Treasurer

Karin Crane - Recording Treasurer
Barb Behrens, Kathy Carney, Sharli Schaitberger, Heidi Thomas, Susan Laidlaw -
Recording Clerks

IN MEMORIAM – LINDA SPENCER-WALTERS

This year we lost a vestry member and beloved parishioner. It was a shocking and distressing loss of a dear colleague and friend. We remember her smiling face and happiness, her enthusiasm and unbridled joy of life, her eagerness to help people, her wisdom and conscientious deliberations, her commitment to social justice. Her presence and her giftedness will be missed. Linda was a faithful woman of God whose practice of Christianity remains an example to us all.

Annual Parish Meeting Minutes January 29, 2023

Father Hunter Ruffin opened the meeting at 11:40 a.m. with prayer. A quorum was declared.

Father Hunter delivered his Annual Report verbally.

Appointment of Senior Warden

Mary O'Grady agreed to serve a third and final year as Senior Warden.

Election of Junior Warden

Dylan Westbrook had been nominated as Junior Warden. Other nominations were invited; there were none. Linda Spencer-Walters nominated Dylan, seconded by Pat Blackman; he was elected.

Vestry Elections

Three persons had been nominated for the three open positions on the Vestry: Steve Geislinger, Aaron Van Briesen, and Jude Wickelgren. Other nominations were invited; there were none. Kim Sunia moved these candidates be elected by acclamation, seconded by Amy Douglass. They were all elected.

Financial Report

Treasurer Ann Neal reported that Epiphany had a pretty decent 2022. We had budgeted a loss of over \$66,000 but ended with a deficit of only \$17,500. Thanks to a generous gift towards principal which lessened what we owe on our mortgage by a third, our payments are down more than \$3,000 a month! Ann Tebo moved that the Financial Report be accepted as presented, seconded by Cece Wilhite. The motion carried.

2023 Mission Plan

Ann Neal stated that the Vestry had cut as many items and amounts as possible. She explained the additional clergy amount, as well as the clergy retreat expenses. A 2% salary adjustment is all we can afford for staff.

Christian's hours have been increased from 23 to 30 per week, increasing communications. Father Hunter's health care is going up since he will no longer be single. The Diocese is requiring background checks (using their program) for some voluntary ministers.

Our operations have been pretty flat except for utilities (electricity and water). Our debt service is going down!

Father Hunter reported that there was hope that the Serve Council could be funded, but the money just isn't there.

Ann said the planned deficit for 2023 is \$78,777.

Jack Harthun of the Finance Committee mentioned the loss of the French School and the income from that. We have leased space to the Black Mothers' Forum Micro-School, as well as a lot of 12-Step meetings, Unity Church, recitals, and miscellaneous meetings.

It was asked if the pledge total was down, and it is. The only place to cut expenses would be with staffing, which is not practical. We need to increase income instead.

Other comments from Father Hunter and Mary O'Grady included: We were unable to increase the music budget; We had hoped to add Nursery workers and staff; We had hoped for four large Fellowship events; We wanted to fund the Serve Council (Outreach) budget;

Our personnel compensation cannot keep up with inflation. Mary said that they are hoping things will be better by the end of the year. Heidi Thomas moved that the 2023 Mission Plan be accepted as presented, seconded by Andrea Stewart. The motion carried.

Awards/Recognition

Father Hunter thanked Tamara Noel, Ann Tebo, and Dylan Westbrook for serving full three-year terms on the Vestry, through difficult times (the pandemic). They will be presented with Irish crystal crosses, which are currently caught in Customs in Tennessee. The Rector's Cross is being presented to John Slaughter (in absentia) for his work on the buildings and grounds.

Jerry Adwell is stepping aside as Property Manager and received a gift certificate. Jack Waterman will be stepping in and was given a very handy tool kit! Karen Ford was given a gift certificate for her three years as Clerk of the Vestry. The Rev. Carmen Valenzuela, Christian Rodriguez-Ortiz, Matt Flora, and Miriam Hickman were thanked for their work as staff. Also thanked were our assisting clergy: The Rev. Martha Seaman, The Rev. Corey Meier, and Father Steve Schaitberger.

No other business was raised so there was a motion to adjourn at 12:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Karen L. Ford".

Karen Ford, Clerk of the Vestry 2022

2023 PARISH MINISTRY REPORTS

SENIOR WARDEN REPORT

At the 2023 vestry retreat, we agreed on a big question to frame our work for the year: How do we sustain and nurture a vibrant Christian community in the context of the world today? I'm not sure we figured out the answer, but I think it is the right question.

Some of the highlights of the year for me were our listening sessions at which people shared their visions for Epiphany priorities, the work of our newly formed Welcome Committee which focuses on events for people new to Epiphany, the ongoing outreach to Thew Elementary School, our small dinner groups that gave us an opportunity to get to know each other better, our invigorated Adult Formation Committee, and our Fall Festival which was just a lot of fun. The core will always be Sunday morning, with our worship, music, fellowship, and formation, and it is a major community undertaking each week.

The vestry, necessarily, spends a lot of time focusing on church finances. The debt to the diocese has been eliminated. We also made significant progress toward reducing the debt on our property. We still have challenges ahead, but there were good financial developments last year.

Remaining a multi-generational church takes intentional effort. We have a strong young adults group (or so I hear from some young adults). We have a nursery for our youngest members; we have formation activities for children and youth. And our Easter egg hunt and brunch and Fall festival were fun family events. I've also heard wonderful things about the Christmas Eve service aimed at kids. We continue to look for ways to support our families with kids.

A low point was the untimely death of Linda Spencer-Walters, a vestry member, longtime leader at Epiphany, and wonderful person. She continues to inspire.

It's been an honor to serve as Senior Warden and be part of our effort to nurture and sustain our vibrant Christian community.

Mary O'Grady
Senior Warden

JUNIOR WARDEN REPORT

The year 2023 has been a busy year for the parish and campus life and many projects and situations have been started and completed to great success.

The highlight of the year as far as the property goes is the repaving and striping of the parking lot. This was long overdue (last done in 2013) and provides an inviting and clean space as people enter our campus.

Another of the main highlights was the post-COVID reforming of the Property Committee with regular meetings every month in order to discuss projects and plan for future events. One of the biggest property changes for 2023 was the addition of smart thermostats in every building to better regulate the building temperatures and reduce wasted power consumption.

As always, the SOD Squad continues to meet on Saturday morning to do light maintenance, change light bulbs, trim trees, etc. in order to achieve our goal of maintaining a friendly and aesthetically pleasing campus.

As we head into 2024, we have many things to look forward to as well, including addressing the possibility of hiring a sexton, re-evaluating the campus tree and plant life to again update the look and feel of the grounds, and unfortunately possible issues with the AC compressors and aging AC units.

However, I think 2024 will be a positive and productive year with many projects being completed.

Thank you for the privilege of serving Epiphany this past year.

Dylan J Westbrook
Junior Warden

ALTAR GUILD

What is the Altar Guild?

A group of people who minister to the Altar of our Savior Jesus Christ. They also minister to the clergy, supporting them as they go to the altar to celebrate the Eucharist. They minister to the congregation, setting up an island of calm and beauty where they come to receive the Body and Blood of our Lord. They minister to each other, setting an example of dedication and gentle encouragement.

The Altar Guild as of January 2024 includes: One Altar Guild Director and one Assistant Director. The term is two years – one year as Assistant Director then one year as Director. There are Five Teams consisting of three to four members each to cover weeks 1 through 5 of the months. One member has volunteered to clean all the linens and cleaning cloths weekly.

There were two additions to our membership in 2023. We are still looking for additional members to join our team of fifteen.

Altar Guild does light cleaning and setup on Saturday each week – 9 am to 11 am.

The Weekly Team cleans up the altar ware after each service and sets up for a new service for the 8am and 10am services on Sunday. Wednesday service is set up by Team One.

We presently have 14 women and one man. We would like to have additional men to come and join our Teams if possible!

There is a lot of Teamwork; and we have a couple of Team meetings, one before Easter and again before Christmas. We also get together as a Team to have lunch and lots of fun at the end of the year.

Basically, if you can give us one weekend a month, Saturday and Sunday, we can add to our

Teams. Training is provided. COME JOIN US!

Our busiest times are Easter Week and Christmas Eve/Day Services. All Teams come together to make these celebrations special for our congregation.

We have members who have served for a long time and are now ageing. We could certainly use some younger members to balance our Teams and keep this ministry vibrant. If you think that this is a way to live out your own faith, please see any of our members or Father Hunter to join this special group. WE WELCOME YOU!
May GOD Bless you.

Current Members:

Nancy Keith

Feona Johnson

Yvonne Breslin

Debbie Duncan

B. J. Reed

Priscilla DeMoss

Lynda Woodson

Susan Laidlaw

Jan Wagner

Diane Spillum

David Dean

Beth Leicht

Barbara Behrens

Pat Blackman * Assistant Director 2024

Pam Waterman * Director 2024

Beth Leicht
Director 2023

ADULT FORMATION

The Adult Formation Committee began meeting again in June of 2023, after a pause caused by the pandemic. Since then, we usually have met at least once a month.

In the fall of 2023, we offered Alpha, a sixteen-week discipleship curriculum developed by the Church of England. Each Alpha class included a meal, a video, and time for small group discussion. The class began in early October and concluded in mid-December.

We've also initiated "Coffee Talk," which is a plan for presenting brief videos at coffee hour on a monthly basis. So far, we've used videos from "The Work of the People," an organization that produces short videos on various topics that are suitable for Christian Adult Formation. We have held two "Coffee Talks" so far, one on December 10th and a second on January 14th. We have several more planned for the remainder of 2024.

These are in addition to the regular Wednesday adult formation classes and the occasional seasonal offerings on special topics.

Our next goal is to develop our Adult Formation offerings a year in advance, so that we can better integrate the activities into Epiphany's yearly schedule.

Jan Wagner

AUDIO VISUAL & COMMUNICATIONS MINISTRY

Communications: The main focus points of our communications efforts in 2023 were establishing a consistent presence online and on social media (Facebook, Instagram, Google, Nextdoor) with ad campaigns, and establishing a stronger neighborhood presence with postcard mailers. Ad campaigns were targeted to roughly a 15-mile radius, ran throughout the year, and changed to promote upcoming events, special services, and regular worship. Neighborhood mailers were sent out to promote Easter Sunday, Fall Kick-off Sunday and Fall events, and the Christmas schedule. Special flyers were also made for MoE to hand out around the neighborhood for the Fall Festival. Overall, we saw a large neighborhood presence at the Fall Festival, more families at the Easter Egg Hunt & Brunch, and more families at the Christmas Eve services. All indicative of success in our efforts.

Audio/Visual: Early in 2023 we started using the hearing aid system again, thanks to Mike Schaitberger for bringing it back to life! It continues to be used consistently every Sunday and has been reliable for the most part. The same system is also used to feed audio to a speaker in the Narthex and a speaker in the Children's Chapel for greeters and parents to tune in while the glass doors are shut. The wireless beltpack systems used during worship continued to present connectivity issues with audio dropouts. The system has recently been upgraded to resolve these issues and meet our needs during worship.

If you may be interested in assisting with AV, contact christian@epiphanytempe.org

Christian Rodriguez

MUSIC

The music ministry at Epiphany exists to encourage and assist the congregation in praising God in our worship services. We are blessed to have many individuals in our congregation who give of their time and talent to make that happen.. We continue to be wonderfully blessed by our talented pianist and organist, Dr. Miriam Hickman.

In addition to the Sunday 10am service, the choir sang for all major feast day services, including Holy Week and Christmas as well as the annual Lessons and Carols service. If you are interested in joining these wonderful singers as part of the choir, please reach out to Matt via email at matt@epiphanytempe.org. The church choir rehearses on Wednesday evenings from 7:00 pm to 8:30 pm in the sanctuary.

Matthew Flora

GREETER/USHER REPORT 2023

Another year has passed and I'm proud to report our ministry is doing well. Our faithful Greeters and Ushers have adapted well to our new teams that have been established this past year. We have four teams made up of 2 official Greeters and Ushers for the 10:00AM service and sometimes only 1 for the 8:00AM service. Each team is assigned a week during the year and in the months that there are 5 Sundays (of which we

have 4), a team has been assigned for that 5th Sunday. On any given Sunday when a member of the team is unable to be present, they are responsible for contacting another team member to trade with them or contact one of our volunteer fill-ins to help for that day. We are also called upon to assist with Weddings and Funerals when needed.

Our Greeter/Welcome Table remains inside the Narthex with Service Bulletins, and other essential materials for our services. We also have masks available (for those needing them) **We serve as a friendly first face our visitors encounter and we strive to answer any questions they may ask.**

Please feel free to contact me or the office if you are interested in learning the process of becoming a Greeter and/or Usher. I know you will find it to be quite simple and most of all rewarding.

Thank you, to those that have continued to serve in this committee, and I look forward to those interested in serving in the future.

Barbara Behrens
bbehrens7@gmail.com
480-240-0777

HOSPITALITY & FELLOWSHIP

During the year there are many opportunities for Fellowship and shared potlucks. After the 8:00 and 10:00 Sunday services, coffee and fellowship is offered by volunteers. The 8 o'clock volunteers generously prepare the coffee for both Coffee Hours. The after-service fellowship time is a wonderful opportunity for parishioners to serve as Host/Hostess to prepare and share simple snacks. We invite you to consider hosting a coffee hour.

Here is a list of the many fellowship opportunities we enjoyed in 2023:

- 1/6) Feast of the Epiphany. Burning of the greens. Celebrated fellowship with a potluck dinner.
 - 1/29) Parish Annual meeting. Celebrated fellowship with a potluck lunch.
 - Spring dinner groups organized for February - May to share fun, friendships and a meal together.
 - 2/4) A potluck reception after a special service when The Rev. Dr. Corey Meier was received as an Episcopal Priest.
 - 2/12) "Heart & Soul" Valentine coffee hour from Courageous Ground Task Force celebrated Black history month and the Feast day of Absalom Jones.
 - 2/21) MOE (Men of Epiphany) brought back the Shrove Tuesday pancake supper.
 - Taize prayer service Wednesdays during Lent followed with a meatless potluck supper.
 - 4/9) Easter egg hunt. Parish potluck brunch.
 - 5/28) Pentecost Sunday...Parish picnic.
 - 7/2) American Pie Sunday with ice cream
- Summer months are difficult to staff coffee hours after the 10am Sunday services so there were many impromptu 'coffee and leftover snacks' fellowship times.
- Fall dinner groups were organized during September - December to share fun, friendships and a meal together.
- 10/1) Vestry and the parish enjoyed a potluck meal as the Listening Sessions results were reviewed.

10/8 Hispanic Heritage coffee hour with special treats.

10/29) Fall Festival, Halloween games, Trick or Treating and Chili supper was hosted by MOE.

11/19) Stewardship Celebration brunch coffee hour with bagels & fruit. Celebration of Fellowship, Stewardship and being Rooted in Abundance.

12/10) Coffee Talk potluck lunch as we considered how to prepare our hearts for Christmas during the Advent season.

12/17) Holiday celebration for kids and families. We made Christmas ornaments to decorate the Christmas tree.

12/17) Lessons and Carols. Favorite Holiday Carols led by our choir and interspersed with Biblical readings. Following the service the Epiphany Young Adults hosted a festive potluck reception.

Cece Wilhite

CARE CONNECT

The Care Connect ministry, which began in 2016, continues to telephone all members listed in our church directory on a regular basis. The seven callers connect with parishioners, ask how they are, and receive their prayer requests. We share with the church office the names of those who have asked to be put on the church prayer list, or who have requested pastoral visits. We also share any changes of address and phone numbers we have learned through our calls.

At the end of the evening, we pray for each individual who has requested prayer, and end with this prayer. "Almighty God we entrust all those we have called this evening to your never-failing care and love, knowing that you are doing for them better things than we can desire or pray for, through Christ our Lord. Amen. "

Current callers are: Sharli Schaitberger, Mary Harthun, Rita Liddy, Priscilla DeMoss, Tamara Noel, Cece Wilhite, Nancy Keith

Deacon Lynn Adwell

COMMUNITY OF HOPE

The four current Community of Hope ministers supported the pastoral care ministry of Epiphany by making phone calls and home and hospital visits to parishioners. A key part of this ministry is to provide Holy communion that travels directly from our Sunday Holy Eucharist table to a parishioner, bringing them into our gathered faith community. This makes each Eucharistic visit an expression of the reality of 'the Communion of the Saints'.

In November we began a class of four new candidates for this ministry. The Community of Hope training includes 12 modules of lessons, two clergy supervised practice visits, and the Diocesan Safeguarding training. This all serves to equip lay people to serve in all forms of pastoral care – being present in a listening, compassionate manner.

Through ongoing spiritual formation and practical lessons on care giving, the CoH members learn to match spiritual insights and practices with their experiences of ministering to others. The Community of Hope ministers are a vital part of the pastoral care team of Epiphany.

Pastor Carmen Valenzuela

YOUNG ADULTS GROUP

The Young Adults group at Epiphany had a great year in 2023. The 20s, 30s, and 40s group continued to have casual monthly meetups throughout the year, meeting either in the church courtyard or at local restaurants. In March, the group had another fun camping trip near Roosevelt Lake for a weekend. The group loved this campsite - the views of the surrounding mountains and lakes were absolutely stunning. We enjoyed a chill hike, lots of campfires and plenty of delicious s'mores! The group also celebrated baby showers for three different couples this year. It is wonderful to see the group grow! And finally, the Young Adults had festive celebrations during November and December with a Friendsgiving potluck and the annual wine and appetizer Christmas party. It was a great year and the group has about 12-14 active participants. We're looking forward to continuing to grow and create fellowship in 2024!

Michelle Davis

MEN OF EPIPHANY

Men of Epiphany has been meeting biweekly to read and discuss the Path, a bible study program from Forward Movement. In February, MoE hosted the first Shrove Tuesday pancake supper since the COVID pandemic. In October, MoE hosted the Fall Festival and Chili Dinner as a way to welcome the community onto our campus and fellowship for the parish. Ty McMurphy completed his term as chair of MoE and Alex Mather-Charles stepped up as chair.

Alex Davis

BOOK CLUB

The Chapter One Book Club which was started in 2020, is still going strong. We currently have 12 members that meet on the third Saturday of the month at noon via Zoom. We have a wonderful group of members who gather, discuss the books, and have great fellowship. Our selection of books is varied and provides us all a chance to read books which may not be within our normal scope of choice.

Some of our choices this year have covered female ambition, a woman wanting to become a surgeon during the American Civil War in Robin Oliveira's wonderful novel *My Name is Mary Sutter*. Another one delving into the origin of one of Leonardo da Vinci's famous paintings in *The Night Porter* by Laura Morelli and PBS style sleuthing with a wonderful novel set in the English countryside in *Major Pettigrew's Last Stand* by Helen Simonson.

We finished off 2023 with a special gathering, followed by our annual Christmas lunch which went on for several hours - a good time had by all.

If you would like to join the book group, please contact Gillian Murphy:

gillian@kirkyhomes.com or 480 907 4933.

Gillian Murphy

STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE

The theme of Epiphany's 2023 stewardship program was *Rooted In Abundance*, based on the following verse: "Blessed are those who trust in the Lord, whose trust is the Lord. They shall be like a tree planted by water, sending out its roots by the stream. It shall not fear when heat comes, and its leaves shall stay green; in the year of drought it is not anxious, and it does not cease to bear fruit." Jeremiah 17:7-8

The committee met several times to integrate this theme into their planning for the overall campaign. This included significant work to plan and host a wonderful Stewardship Dinner on November 4th as well as the Celebration Sunday on November 19th.

The committee also worked to shift the traditional stewardship season to support a new Advent/Christmas matching gift campaign. The Epiphany community was challenged to match a \$20,000 and a \$5,000 in special gifts to help pay down the mortgage debt. We are grateful for the parish's tremendous response, which culminated in a combined \$69,884.42 raised to pay down Epiphany's debt.

While we remain about 5% shy of our goal of \$403,000 in total pledges, an increase in the average pledge shows a clear trend of faithful generosity among our parish.

Members: Roland Morley, Tamara Noel, Jan Wagner, Alex Mather-Charles, Mary O'Grady, Gillian Kirkpatrick, Susan Laidlaw, Greg McAlpin

Alex Davis, Vestry Liaison

SERVE COUNCIL

The Serve Council has been supported financially by parishioners and some small fund raisers. Due to COVID we have not held our major fundraiser for the last three years, the Annual Spaghetti Dinner and Auction, which has curtailed our outreach to national and global causes. The generosity of parishioners has supported programs such as Matthew's Crossing Food Bank, Thew Elementary, and Adopt-a-Family. Snooze has provided the majority of the Thew Elementary Welcome Back Breakfast for the last 3 years.

Financial Support

Provided \$750 to the Rector's Discretionary Fund, \$1,144.77 for Thew Classroom Supplies

Serve started the year with \$4,152.97.

Candy sales: \$51.60

Grapes of Summer: honored 2019 purchases, raised \$850

Bingo Night: \$459

Evergreens: \$318.07

Christmas wrapping: \$226.

Epiphany Mug Half-Price Sale: TBD

Children and Education

- Twenty-one volunteers provided notes and treats monthly to Thew teachers.

- Back to School Welcome Back Breakfast and Snacks
- 400 treat packets for Escalante Fall Festival for the Corn Hole game players.
- Adopt-a-Family for 10 families: \$50 for young children, \$25 for children above fifth grade and Basha's grocery cards for each family. Made possible by parishioner donations.
- Andrea Stewart volunteers once a week at Thew
- Little Free Library: Val Bauer and Andrea Stewart spend no less than \$500-\$600 for books each year.

Hunger and Shelter

Matthew's Crossing Food Bank: Unity Church joins our parishioners for weekly donations of food. Note: Matthew's provides food for about 1,500 school children at a cost or around \$8 each or \$12,000 a week for Meals to Grow

- Lenten Cereal Drive brought in 680 boxes,
- Water in the Desert brought in 77 flats (around 3,000 bottles) of water for Guadalupe Community Center and Native American Program
- Summer Diaper Drive garnered 10 large boxes, 26 small packs, 53 packets of wipes for over 1,500 diapers.
- August tuna and ramen drive saw donations of 171 cans of tuna and 293 packets of ramen.
- June Crane volunteers once a week at Matthew's Crossing

Paz de Cristo: Sock Drive netted 496 pairs of socks, 4 T-shirts, and 6 briefs.

Luggage Drive: Every second Sunday Andrea collects luggage for unhoused people to carry their belongings.

Habitat for Humanity

4 build days for 6026 W Gardenia Ave, Glendale with dedication in August

4 build dates for home on Don Carlos in Tempe

Social Justice/Advocacy

Valley Interfaith Project

Worked to contact candidates to advocate for agenda.

- Worked with Chandler Unified School District leaders to implement new suicide prevention measures.
- Organized 200+ volunteers to support affordable housing in Mesa and Chandler.
- Helped secure \$5 million appropriations for civil legal services for legal aid.
- Supported purchase and rezoning of the Mesa Grand Hotel for emergency housing.
- Trained 350+ leaders in tools of democracy.

Vitalant Blood Drives

Andrea Stewart organized four blood drives at Epiphany with an average of 20 donors each, helping up to 60 patients this year.

Barbara Acker, Val Bauer – Cochairs

WELCOME COMMITTEE

In 2023, building upon and expanding many wonderful previous efforts, Epiphany formalized the creation of a Welcome Committee. The intent is to always have intentional steps whereby people in the greater community can feel invited, welcomed, and acknowledged by current Epiphany members. We planned and held events particularly for newcomers, following up with personal thank-you notes and reaching out on a regular basis for a span of 18 months. We also planned and participated in activities that were open not only to the parish but to other invited guests.

Highlights included:

- Hosted Spring and Fall Newcomer "Bagels & Beginnings" coffee hours, held in the Memorial Garden, to which we personally invited people who had shared their contact information. These took place soon after Easter and soon after Labor Day, as those two seasons often attract new interest in our church.
- Used the personal touch in all communications with Newcomers: hand-written/artistically crafted stamped/mailed invitations and thank-you notes, as well as email reminders.
- Hosted off-campus Brunch at Cynthia's home, for both Newcomers and a broader group of seasoned, involved church members.
- Created database of Newcomer information, so our group can continue to invite members to all events through their first eighteen months of coming to Epiphany.
- Created a new "business card" which greeters can hand out to visitors, to offer simple contact information including the Epiphany website.
- Assisted with the EpiphanyTempe.org website-revisions to simplify the path for newcomers to find basic information about our community and its activities.
- Gave our collective opinion on the redesigned/improved Prayer Request card as requested by the Greeters group.
- Assisted with Epiphany corn-hole game-booth at Escalante Fall Festival.
- Hosted a Welcome Committee Booth at Epiphany's Trunk or Treat event.
- Met in person or by Zoom approximately every six weeks.
- Hosted December Welcome Committee Tea Luncheon for committee members and guests, as a practice for a planned parish-wide event in 2024.

By the numbers:

- B&B #1 (after Easter): 7 newcomers attended (out of 30 invitations)
- B&B #2 (September): 3 newcomers attended (out of almost 40 invitations)
- Off-campus Brunch (November): 2 attended, out of 6 replies (out of about 45 invitations)

Plans for 2024 include continuing the twice-yearly Bagel & Beginnings, participation in the Trunk or Treat event and Escalante Fall Festival, hosting a High Tea, hosting a family picnic in a park and a Suns game viewing party.

Members: Jude Wickelgren, Diane Spillum, Cynthia Wood, Cece Wilhite, Barbara Behrens, with help from Rita Liddy, Andrea Stewart, and Kim Stone.

Pam Waterman, Committee head