



Church OF THE
Epiphany

Annual Parish Meeting Agenda & Reports

February 1, 2026

Church of the Epiphany-Tempe 
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AGENDA

Opening Prayer

Comments by Rector

Appointment of Senior Warden

Elections: Jr. Warden & Vestry

Treasurer's Report

2026 Mission Plan

Awards/Recognitions

Other Business from the Floor

Closing Comments and Prayer

Staff & Clergy

The Rev. C. Hunter Ruffin – Rector
Christian Rodriguez-Ortiz –
Parish Administrator & Assistant to the Rector
Matt Flora – Choir Director
Dr. Miriam Hickman – Organist
Jeanne Trembeth – Sexton
Nellie Lichtenstein – Nursery Attendant
The Rev. Martha Seaman – Deacon
The Rev. Tamara Noel - Deacon
The Rev. Canon Stephen Schaitberger – Seasonal Assisting Priest
The Rev. Dr. Corey Meier – Assisting Priest

Vestry of 2025

Jan Wagner – Senior Warden
Curtis Wood – Junior Warden
Andrea Stewart – Clerk of the Vestry
Ann Neal – Treasurer

Terms Expire 2025

Aaron Van Briesen
Kim Stone
Jude Wickelgren - *in memoriam*

Terms Expire 2026

Heidi Thomas
Pat Blackman
Beth Hunt

Terms Expire 2027

Alex Mather-Charles
Floyce Chavez
Kathy Carney

Office Volunteers

Roland Morley - Recording Treasurer
Kathy Carney, Kim Stone, Barb Behrens,
Susan Laidlaw, Heidi Thomas - Recording Clerks
Lynn Adwell, Pat Blackman, Cece Wilhite,
Yvonne Breslin, Andrea Stewart, Jan Wagner,
Kim Stone, Lyn Jensen – Administrative Office Volunteers

2025 Annual Parish Meeting Minutes

January 26, 2025 – 11:48 a.m.

Fr. Hunter Ruffin opened the meeting with prayer.

Fr. Hunter delivered his Annual Report.

Appointment of Senior Warden

Fr. Hunter thanked Alex Davis for his service as Senior Warden in 2024. Fr. Hunter announced his appointment of Jan Wagner as Senior Warden for 2025.

Election of Junior Warden and Vestry Members

Cece Wilhite presented the 2025 nominating committee report.

Kathy Carney, Daniel Milowski, and Alex Mather-Charles were nominated to fill the three-year terms of 2025-2027. Beth Hunt was nominated to complete the three-year term to which the Vestry had appointed her in 2024. Kim Stone was nominated to complete the last year of the three-year term.

Curtis Wood was nominated as Junior Warden. Other nominations were invited; there were none. Peter Crane motioned to proceed with a vote on the candidates without a written ballot. Cynthia Wood seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Pat Blackman motioned to elect the nominated individuals by a voice vote. Diane Spillum seconded the motion. The motion carried. All nominees were elected.

2025 Mission Plan

Jack Harthun, as a member of the Finance Committee, presented the Treasurer's Report as Ann Neal, Treasurer, was unable to attend the meeting. Jack began by praising the work Ann had done to address the accounting needs of Epiphany and to ensure the accuracy and timeliness of reporting. He expressly asked that the meeting minutes include a huge "Thank You" to Ann.

A net loss of \$72,260 was budgeted for 2024, but it was only \$21,351. The planned deficit for 2025 is \$66,216.

Our building debt was paid down in 2024 by \$144,652. Our mortgage balance is now \$738,000. Income from facility use in 2024 was \$59,000, including \$20,000 from the Cooling Center.

The Clergy Compensation report to the Diocese includes housing, salary, pension, health care, continued education reimbursed, and travel expenses. Deacon Martha Seaman and the Rev. Dr. Corey Meier are also covered under the Church Pension Fund.

Fr. Steve Schaitberger asked permission to speak to the congregation. He complemented the clergy and congregation for the work done to relieve the parish of the building debt. Bill Chamberlain motioned to accept the 2024 Financial Report. Michelle Helm seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Awards/Recognition

Fr. Hunter thanked Alex Davis and Cece Wilhite for their service on the Vestry. They were presented with crystal crosses from Ireland. Pastor Carmen Valenzuela was thanked for her nine years of service and was presented the Epiphany cross for service in absentia.

New Business

No other business was raised. Michelle Helm motioned to adjourn the meeting. Karen Ford seconded the motion. The motion was carried, and the meeting was adjourned at 12:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, *Andrea Stewart, Clerk of the Vestry*

2025 PARISH MINISTRY REPORTS

SENIOR WARDEN REPORT

End-of-Year Reports are supposed to be just that: a summary of what's gone on in the past year. But as I look back over 2025—the Parish Retreat, the Day of Visioning, the Parish Rule of Life, the progress we've made on our mortgage, and the parish audit—I'm reminded that where we are now is very much shaped by where we've been.

Since the pandemic, Epiphany has been on a journey. We had to adjust to the realities of not being able to attend in-person worship, and when the lockdown ended, we had to adjust again to a changed environment. In many ways, we were starting over. It felt as though our community life had been scattered. Clearly, we had some rebuilding to do.

When all of this was unfolding, I was a new vestry member. Like many vestry members, I found myself paying close attention to the monthly treasurer's report. As you all know, Epiphany's mortgage at that time was significant. Because of that burden, we began to consider whether a capital campaign might be necessary. To explore that possibility, we held a series of Listening Sessions to gauge the parish's appetite for such an effort. The response was mixed: some parishioners were strongly in favor, others strongly opposed, and many were unsure. What stood out most, however, was not the division of opinion, but the underlying sense of searching. Some of it reflected exhaustion from what we had collectively endured; some of it was a longing for what parish life had been before; some of it was a desire for deeper connection.

As a vestry, we realized that perhaps we had been approaching things from the wrong angle. Financial matters are important, but they are not the whole picture. We also needed to pay attention to the spiritual and communal needs of the parish. That insight led us to shift our focus.

This shift led to our participation in Renewal Works, and then over the past year, to the Parish Retreat, the Day of Visioning, and the development of a Parish Rule of Life. Each of these opportunities invited us to engage our faith more intentionally and to strengthen our ties with one another. None of this would have been possible without your enthusiasm and willingness to participate.

Looking ahead, we'll build on this momentum, while keeping our financial responsibilities in mind. Progress on paying down the mortgage and managing our cash flow remains underway. But we'll also continue to balance those efforts with attention to our parish's spiritual life. Another Parish Retreat is already scheduled for later this year, and we remain committed to nurturing the kind of parish life that supports both our spiritual growth and our shared sense of community. With your ongoing engagement and the plans already underway, Epiphany is well-positioned to grow in stability, connection, and purpose in the coming year.

Jan Wagner
Senior Warden

JUNIOR WARDEN REPORT

No report submitted.

Curtis Wood
Junior Warden

ALTAR GUILD

What Is the Altar Guild?

The Altar Guild is a dedicated ministry of men and women who serve at the Altar of our Savior Jesus Christ. Their work supports the clergy as they prepare to celebrate the Eucharist, and it blesses the congregation by creating a space of beauty, reverence, and calm where all may come to receive the Body and Blood of our Lord. Members also support one another, offering encouragement, care, and a shared commitment to this sacred work.

Who We Are

As of January 2026, the Altar Guild consists of an Altar Guild Director and an Assistant Director, each serving a two-year term. While we did not add new members in 2025, we did lose four members for various reasons. Our ministry currently includes eleven faithful volunteers, and we are actively seeking additional men and women to join us.

How We Serve

- The Guild is organized into **five teams**, each with two to four members.
- Teams rotate monthly, covering **weeks 1 through 5**.
- One dedicated member, along with a backup, lovingly cares for all linens and cleaning cloths each week.
- Weekly teams meet on **Saturdays between 9–11 a.m.** to prepare for the **8 a.m. and 10 a.m. Sunday services**.
- After each service, teams clean and care for the altar ware.
- **Team One** also prepares for the Wednesday service.

We work both independently as teams and together as a full Guild. We gather quarterly for training—once before Easter and once before Christmas for special cleaning—and enjoy a year-end celebration of our ministry and fellowship.

An Invitation to Serve

If you can offer **one weekend a month**, we would be delighted to welcome you. Training is provided, and no prior experience is needed. Our ministry is aging, and we are especially hopeful for younger members who can help keep this important work vibrant and strong.

If you'd like to see what we do before committing, simply join a team after worship and observe. If you feel called to this ministry, please speak with any Altar Guild member or with Father Hunter.

Please come join us. Your presence would be a blessing.

✦ 2025 Altar Guild Members

- Nancy Keith
- Diane Spillum
- Feona Johnson
- David Dean
- Yvonne Breslin
- Barbara Behrens
- Debbie Duncan
- Beth Leicht
- Susan Laidlaw
- Pam Waterman — *Assistant Director*
- Pat Blackman — *Director*

Pat Blackman, Director 2025

GREETERS & USHERS

Another year has passed and I'm proud to report our ministry is doing well.

Our faithful Greeters and Ushers have adapted well to the established teams for this past year. We have four teams made up of 2 official Greeters and Ushers for the 10:00 AM 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 (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 to contact another team member to trade with them or contact one of our volunteer fill-ins to help out for that day. One of our members on Team 1 had to resign due to personal schedules conflicting with the dates. Most team members are available to assist on Team 1 at the 10:00 AM service helping with the duties that may be needed.

Note: We are also called upon to assist in 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. It is helpful to wear your name badge when Greeting, especially for those visiting for the first time.

Please feel free to contact myself or the church 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 on this committee, and I look forward to those interested in serving in the future.

Barbara Behrens, bbehrens7@gmail.com | 480-221-3312

BOOK CLUB

The Church of the Epiphany Chapter One Book Club meets on the third Saturday of each month via Zoom. One of the joys of a Book Club is that a person gets to read books which would normally not be on their radar.

Also, every second month, books are selected from a challenging/banned category which again leads to great conversation and debate.

We finished off the year with the Christmas lunch which as always is good fun and a chance to get together in person.

If you have interest in joining the book club, please contact Gillian Murphy:

Gillian Murphy, gillian@kirkyhomes.com or (480)907 4933

STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE

The stewardship effort this past year turned its attention to spiritual growth and renewal through the practice of theological reflection. The stewardship committee used its meeting time to learn and practice the art of theological reflection with the core values of the parish as the starting point for individual reflections. Though nervous at the beginning, the committee members grew in their relationship with God in Christ through a shared commitment to this practice.

In worship, and as yet another offering to God, members of the committee shared their reflections with the rest of the congregation at different moments of the liturgy, calling our attention to how each of our core values is embodied in our shared worship.

As of today, the stewardship campaign has resulted in 72 pledges for a total of \$304,000. We also received \$9,800 in pledges toward the capital projects fund and \$4,540 in support of the Serve Council. If you would still like to make a pledge, we invite you to do so today or on any Sunday, as an act of gratitude in response to God's grace at work among us.

Members: Jerry Adwell, Pat Blackman, Johnny Sullivan,
Kathy Carney, Beth Hunt, Alex Mather-Charles

Vestry Liaison: Jan Wagner

SERVE COUNCIL

CHILDREN & EDUCATION

- **Little Free Library**
 - Epiphany's Little Free Library is for all ages, with an emphasis on books for children and young adults. The contributions of the books for adults by parishioners and other users of the Little Free Library are self-sustaining. (Coordinator: Val Bauer)
- **Thew Elementary** (Coordinators: Carol Dalton, Pam Waterman, and Andrea Stewart)
 - Notes of appreciation and encouragement are written monthly to the entire faculty and staff. Treats accompany these notes. Twenty-one individuals from Unity and Epiphany currently participate in this ministry.
 - Serve Council coordinated a supply drive to provide items most needed in the classrooms in January 2025, such as Kleenex, disinfectant wipes, crayons, and copy paper.

- Serve Council provided boxed lunches from Subway to the teachers during their evening parent-teacher conferences in March and September.
- Once again Snooze provided all the food and drinks for the "Back to School Breakfast" for teachers. Members from Epiphany picked up the food, set it up and returned to cleanup. Snack Day followed when all staff returned to campus. Parishioners helped provide the snacks and beverages.
- Several members of the Serve Council collated "Back-to-School" packets for parents that day as well.
- Serve Council and the Hospitality Committee bagged prizes and ran a corn hole booth at the Escalante Fall Festival in October.
- Serve Council members helped chaperone students being rewarded for good attendance.
- We also helped chaperone 5th graders on their Field Trip to the Musical Instrument Museum.
- Three parishioners judged holiday door decorations before winter break. Prizes were awarded for the best classroom door and best staff administration door.
- Serve Council's annual Adopt-a-Family program helped ten vetted Thew Elementary School families provide Christmas gifts for their children. Our goal was to give each family \$50 in gift cards to Target and Walmart for each child 5th grade and younger and \$25 for children 6th through 12th grade. We exceeded the minimum needed by quite a bit and were able to give each family a couple extra gift cards and help an additional family in crisis.
- Several Serve Council members wrapped games for a 4th grade teacher to give to her students. This is the third year this teacher has provided each of her students with a Christmas gift.

HUNGER & SHELTER

- **Annual Sock Drive (Epiphany)** -- During our annual season of Epiphany sock drive to benefit unsheltered men and women served by Paz de Cristo, parishioners donated a total of 351 pairs of new socks. Margaret and George Harris made three deliveries to Paz de Cristo: 142 pairs in mid-January; 185 pairs in early February; and an additional 24 pairs mid-February. (Coordinator: Mary Harthun)
- **Cereal Drive (Lent)** -- Our annual Lenten cereal drive brought in 677 boxes and bags of cereal that were shared between Matthews Crossing Food Bank and Paz de Cristo. (Coordinators: June Crane and Karen Ford)
- **Cooling Center** – The Serve Council with the help of Epiphany parishioners and Unity helped provide water and snacks for the daily visitors. Serve Council also provided some puzzles and playing cards.
- **Habitat for Humanity** -- We had only 2 official Epiphany build days for the Episcopal Habitat Coalition for 2025 due to a variety of setbacks and time restraints. A total of 4 people from Epiphany helped on those build days. Hoping to get more volunteers and build days for 2026. Epiphany as a whole raised and donated over \$4400 to the Episcopal Habitat Coalition which ended 2025 by building and completing one house, one remodel of another house, and started a brand-new house build in December 2025. (Coordinator: Aaron Van Briesen)
- **Matthew's Crossing Food Bank** -- Epiphany attendees joined by those from Unity, the

church that shares our campus, are invited to donate staple food, paper products, and personal care items every Sunday in the grocery cart that is outside the west Parish Hall doors. Donations are taken weekly to Matthews Crossing Food Bank for distribution to those in need of food assistance in our area. Donations increased during the fall government shut down and SNAP benefit halt. (Coordinators: June Crane and Karen Ford)

Andrea Stewart

HOSPITALITY COMMITTEE

We heavily felt the loss of Jude Wickelgren as we merged our Welcome Group with the Hospitality Committee. However, our group expanded to include additional wonderful church members, and we feel we had another year of church-based and wider-based events that reflected our hope for making Epiphany a welcoming community.

Events:

Coffee in the Courtyard – new outdoor coffee hour held after 10:00 service. Very popular – 50 attendees at first week, and continually 30 to 40. The 8:00ers make extra coffee for this (thanks to Margaret Harris and Jane Slaughter and set up the tables. Asked for people to sign up to donate food and put away tables/chairs. It got better every week and greatly improved once Jeanie was hired so we could use real china mugs! (A welcoming touch, saved costs of paper cups, and good for the environment.)

Easter Egg Hunt & Brunch (including members of Unity Church) – popular as ever, though we need many more volunteers to hide the eggs early in the morning.

Spring Bagels & Beginnings Newcomers coffee-hour in the Memorial Garden – 3 newcomer attendees

2nd Annual Ladies Spring Afternoon Tea - expanded to 64 attendees; costs covered by \$15 ticket

Fall Bagels & Beginnings Newcomers coffee-hour in the Memorial Garden – only one attendee but there was an unforeseen scheduling conflict with another event in the Parish Hall that morning. The new attendee has since joined in several other parish activities.

Chuck Wagon Square Dance – first ever beginners dance with live caller; sign-up numbers were low but 25 people came, danced, brought potluck dishes and had a fantastic time, asking for this to be an annual (or monthly!!) event. Each committee member contributed some wonderful aspect of décor that really made the Parish Hall event extra enjoyable. We plan on doing it again in Fall 2026.

Cornhole Booth at Escalante (Tempe) Fall Festival (approximately 380 children/gift bags given out)

Narthex Christmas Tree – the committee donated a new tree and held two ornament-making workshops to create hand-crafted ornaments (themed with angels, music, snowflakes and bible verses). The tree was profusely decorated and received many compliments; it also served as a nice focal point for the 40 decorated food-boxes created by the Serve Committee.

Other items/accomplishments/notes:

- Epiphany purchased two re-usable easel sign-holders for the committee which we already put to good use for the Square Dance and will continue to use for all events.
- Beth Hunt and Pam Waterman inventoried half of the contents of the upstairs Storage Room. More needs to be done, and to compare notes with other committees to see who owns what, and what resources can be shared to save costs and avoid duplication.
- Committee submitted proposed dates for 2026-2027 events to coordinate with the full parish in the master planning calendar.

Committee Chair: Pam Waterman
Members: Jude Wickelgren, Cynthia Wood, Diane Spillum,
Beth Hunt, Andrea Stewart, Carol Dalton

MEN OF EPIPHANY

Men of Epiphany has been continuing their biweekly meetings to read and discuss books and Bible studies centered on building community with each other and spiritual growth. In 2025, the group read and discussed the book "The Sin of Certainty: Why God Desires our Trust More Than Our 'Correct' Beliefs" by Pete Enns. We then completed a video/study course to strengthen our spiritual muscles in one of the practices most important for building trust in God: prayer. We worked through "The Prayer Course" with 24-7 Prayer founder Pete Grieg. We have about 10 active members and regular attendance in the biweekly meetings is steady year-over-year at eight attendees. MoE cooked pancakes for Shrove Tuesday on March 4th, and fired up the grills for the Feast of the Pentecost on June 8th. Both events were well attended by the Parish. In the Fall, MoE held a weekend retreat at a cabin in Northern Arizona where good fellowship and food were enjoyed. Finally, in October MoE hosted the third annual revamped Fall Festival and Chili Dinner. This year, they welcomed approximately 70 members of the Epiphany community and surrounding neighborhood onto our campus for food, games, and candy.

Billy Walters

AUDIO/VISUAL MINISTRY

The Audio/Visual Ministry continues to engineer the sound and live stream for Sunday morning worship services. Live streaming has been smooth with our new service, Restream.io. Intermittent audio dropouts do occur but not at the rate that they used to with our old wireless systems, and they are not consistent enough to raise concerns. These things are known to happen when working with radio frequency. No major equipment malfunctions to report this year! The integration of UCCI's A/V needs went smoothly and they have been happily using our equipment for just over a month now.

The Audio/Visual Ministry also provides support for special services like funerals, weddings, and special feast days, should they require it. From time to time, the A/V Ministry coordinates with other ministry groups to facilitate music, slideshows, and set up outdoor sound systems for their special events. We could always use a few more dedicated individuals to get to know our equipment and join the Sunday A/V Minister rotation or stand by to assist with special ministry events! If you may be interested in assisting with A/V, contact Christian at: christian@epiphanytempe.org

Christian Rodriguez-Ortiz