

Clarion

DECEMBER 2022



HIGHLIGHTING 2022

The mission of the Church of the Epiphany is to offer a home to all those who are seeking God's unconditional love.

The Annual Report from the Vicar

(Presented at the Annual Meeting, December 11, 2022)

As I approach the final months of my second year as vicar of the Episcopal Church of the Epiphany in Crestview, Florida, I look back at some successes, some failures on my part. When our bishop first addressed my classmates and when we began our journey to ordination, he told us he was not looking for caretakers.

What he meant was that he expected each of us to not simply maintain the status quo at the churches where he placed us, but to grow them, to strengthen them. Not just increasing membership or improved finances, but to encourage spiritual growth with our preaching and teaching, as well as having a positive impact on the community.

What none of us knew at the time was that a pandemic would make these goals much more difficult to reach. The eight of us in the inaugural diocesan School for Ministry finished our third and final year remotely due to Covid 19. Many of the churches where we were first assigned were still trying to figure out how to worship services when in-person gatherings were still discouraged. Zoom meetings and services offered on Facebook became the norm.

However, we learned a lot about what being a church really meant. Or should I say, we remembered what church should be. Not brick-and-mortar but people. For a time, victories included maintaining the status quo. Despite the resurgence of Covid and other respiratory illnesses, it is time for us to move forward.

Not that we haven't grown in many ways these last 12 months. We have. Perhaps not that much in membership or Sunday attendance, but both of those areas have improved. We have welcomed several new families and individuals into our midst. The average Sunday attendance has also increased, although still way below pre-Covid numbers.

Epiphany has also increased its visibility in the community. This year, we became one of two churches in Crestview to partner with the Florida Department of Health in Okaloosa County, including being a part the Faith-Based Community Preparedness Survey and hosting representatives from the Health Department to learn what was available in the community.

As part of our Lenten Wednesday evening program, we had speakers from the County Board of Education, the Crestview Fire Department, and City Hall address issues that affect both us and the community.

Several members of the congregation participated in the ecumenical National Day of Prayer organized by the Mayor of Crestview and the "One City One Mission" project.

Representatives of the church attended an addiction awareness seminar sponsored by the Students Working Against Tobacco chapter at Crestview High School

Two important ministries of Epiphany have undergone changes this year.

We have renewed our commitment to the local Sharing and Caring organization by asking members to bring non-perishable food the first Sunday of the month (and other times as well), which is taken to the local center for distribution to those in need. In addition, donations of personal hygiene items are also collected. A list of items needed was included in the November Clarion newsletter and placed on the bulletin board in the parish hall.

The monthly rummage sale was suspended to allow the vestry time to decide what changes need to be made to make it more efficient. It was decided that only clothing and books would be included, and bookshelves and clothing racks were updated.

The vestry also decided that the clothing will be available for people in need. A date for reopening has not been set.

Several women of the church met with Elizabeth MacWhinnie, the diocesan coordinator for the Daughters of the King, to learn more about the organization and whether or not to revive the Epiphany chapter. The DOK is an organization of women in the Episcopal Church dedicated to prayer and service. A decision has not been made on reviving the chapter.

In terms of fellowship, the potluck luncheons on the first Sunday of the month were revived earlier this year. This has been a welcomed opportunity to renew relationships with one another following the isolation of the Covid pandemic. These lunches are open to all, regardless if someone brought a dish or not.

In keeping with the old English tradition of Shrove Tuesday, the church held a pancake supper the evening before Ash Wednesday. The event was well attended and included several members who had not been at the church for a while.

Most Friday mornings offer a time of fellowship as the altar guild prepares for the Sunday service and members of the choir gather with choir director Pat Shew to practice the hymns for the week.

There have been 51 Sunday morning services since the last annual meeting, with an average Sunday attendance of slightly more than 23 worshippers. Holy Eucharist was celebrated on all but three of these Sundays, with Morning Prayer offered on those three days. In addition, there were 11 healing services that followed the morning service.

There were also 12 services celebrated on other occasions. These included Christmas Eve, a Celebration of New Ministry on the Eve of Epiphany, Ash Wednesday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and the Blessing of the Animals the Sunday following the feast day of St. Francis of Assisi.

Holy Eucharist was celebrated at each of these services excepting those on Good Friday and the Blessing of the Animals. There were two services on Good Friday; a Noonday service, where Communion was offered from the Reserved Sacrament, and Stations of the Cross that evening.

It was also my honor to preside at memorial services for Virginia Jones (a former member, whose family has a long history at Epiphany), Amy Benaquis (the niece of a member), and Yvonne Hudson (a member of the congregation). The services for Virginia Jones and Yvonne Hudson were held in the church, while the service for Amy Benaquis was at Lewis Funeral Home in Navarre. I also presided at the Committal of Ashes for Virginia Jones at Live Oak Cemetery and Yvonne Hudson in the Epiphany Columbarium.

I want to thank three people for leading Sunday morning services while I was away. Patricia Jackson, who is a licensed lay worship leader, led Morning Prayer on January 2 and September 11 while Cathy and I were spending the weekend with family; the Rev. De Freeman celebrated Holy Eucharist on June 19, while I was taking my first true vacation in more than three years; and David Bryant led Morning Prayer on September 25 after I had been exposed to Covid 19 the previous week. As many of you remember, Father De Freeman is one of my predecessors.

The Rt. Rev. J. Russell Kendrick, Bishop of the Diocese of the Central Gulf Coast, preached and co-celebrated Holy Eucharist on the Eve of Epiphany, while celebrating my ministry at the Church of the Epiphany. Normally, a Celebration of New Ministry is held shortly after a priest begins his or her ministry at a new church, but due to the Covid pandemic and a large number of clergy in new positions, several were delayed, including mine. This service was also the bishop's official visit for the year.

Not everything at Epiphany was a time to celebrate.

Many in the congregation suffered illness or injury during the year. At least a half-dozen members tested positive for Covid, some needing hospitalization. Several other congregants spent time in the hospital as well. Fire cost one family their home. Others experienced the death of loved ones. I hope all felt (and feel) the love and support of their church family.

There was some staff upheaval. Patricia Jackson resigned both her position as clerk of the vestry and as parish administrator during the year. Her dedication and willingness to help others was recognized at a luncheon in her honor following the Sunday service on September 11. She accepted another job that requires her to work on Sundays.

However, members of the congregation stepped up to feel the void. Jeff Evans volunteered to head the Flower Guild. Senior warden Ginny Bauer took over purchasing supplies for the church. Junior warden Phil Phillips met contractors at the property. Others set up the tables for potluck lunches and similar events.

So, we are beginning a new year. With it, I hope we can continue to grow stronger and spread the Good News to our community by both our words and action. We live in a world that is struggling. With God's help, I pray we will bring comfort to those struggling.

Respectfully submitted,

The Rev. David M. Clothier, Vicar

Senior Warden's Report to the Parish

It has been my honor and privilege to serve on the Epiphany vestry this year. I came in after being absent from church for several years, and also after the 2 year-long situation in which we weren't able to worship together. What a tragedy. My biggest gripe was the restriction on singing, as I believe "making a joyful noise" is a vital part of worship, and is actually as important as any prayer. I'm glad it's over (?)

Epiphany has faced a lot of ups and downs and still comes out swinging. We are small but mighty and this year has been a battle to catch up on old maintenance and repair issues and to look forward to develop new with projects and programs. Always evolving with the times, we've definitely rolled with the punches.

I fully expect 2023 to be a better year. We will have new vestry members, a clearer vision of our capabilities and hopefully work harder to attract new members to carry the Epiphany torch. We have lots of wonderful dreams but we definitely need more **able-bodied** members to help carry them out.

That's why I appeal to everyone to make use of our social media — the webpage and the Facebook page — by watching, liking and sharing the livestream service we record every Sunday (whenever possible). It's the best way to make ourselves known to new people searching for an Episcopal church.

Continue in love and service, to make a joyful noise to the Lord!

Ginny Bauer, Senior Warden 2022-2023

Junior Warden's Report

The following maintenance actions have been completed this year:

- Church grounds landscaped and trimmed
- 8 fogged windows replaced
- Florida Power & Light trimmed light poles
- Outside lights all repaired
- Bathrooms repaired
- Termite Control up to date
- Piano tuned
- Sanctuary front doors warrantied, new doors on order

Discrepancies requiring action:

- Sanctuary inside lights out
- St. Joseph Hall
- Fascia and soffit require replacement
- Door jams require sealing and painting
- Clean storeroom
- Clean kitchen
- Window screens need to be replaced
- Main hall lighting bad
- Church Office requires updating
- Exit lights out

The Sanctuary (Chapel) is over 20 years old, so major repairs can be expected. Roof has been repaired twice; no leaks at this time. We have two estimates to replace the roof: \$25,000 and \$27,000. Air Conditions are functional and ageing. Chapel has 3 A/C units; two original Lennox installed by Gordon AC in 2002. One Hour Air replaced one A/C in 2008; an Amana unit. St. Joseph Hall has one A/C; it's a Carrier replaced in 2008. Casey Electric repaired this year.

The following agencies work for the Church:

Kast Lawn Care LLC, Waste Pro and Myrick Cleaning Service
Maurice Phillips, Junior Warden

Choir Report 2022

The choir is a very dedicated group who meet as they are able on Fridays round 10:30 a.m. and Sundays at 9:30 am.

We welcome anyone who would like to join us in making a joyful noise unto the Lord and learn a little bit about hymns and choir music along the way.

Pat Shew, organist & choir director

2022 Altar Guild Report

There are three very faithful members on our altar guild. We have many duties to perform.

The baptismal fount water is changed monthly, then Father David will bless the water. We dispense the water in the prescribed manner because it is blessed.

The altar frontal is changed in accordance with the seasons of the Church.

We take care to refill the altar candles. The water and wine cruets are filled, the Communion wafers are refilled, and all are set on the shelf behind the altar table in the correct position.

Then the correct linens and cloths are placed on the altar table. Sometimes we help our choir leader place the numbers on the hymn board.

We have a cheerful, loyal, loving group of ladies and enjoy working for our church and our priest.

Respectfully submitted,
Michele Dennis, Chair

UPCOMING PARISH EVENTS

HOLIDAY SCHEDULE

December 18 — Third Sunday of Advent

10:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist

3:00 p.m. Advent Lessons and Carols

December 24 — Christmas Eve

4:30 p.m. Christmas Caroling in the church

5:00 p.m. Holy Eucharist

December 25 — Christmas Day

10:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist

January 1 — Second Sunday of Christmas

10:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist (No potluck lunch; see below)

BISHOP'S ANNUAL VISIT

The Rt. Rev. J. Russell Kendrick will make his annual visit to The Church of the Epiphany on Sunday, January 8, a most appropriate day as this is the first Sunday in the season of Epiphany. Anyone interested in being confirmed, received, or reaffirmed should contact Father David. Potluck lunch after service.

DIOCESAN CONVENTION DATES CHANGED

The 52nd Annual Convention for the Diocese of the Central Gulf Coast (originally scheduled for February 16-18, 2023) will now be held March 2-4, 2023, at the University of West Florida Commons Conference Center located at 11000 University Pkwy, Pensacola. Members of the Standing Committee approved the change at their August meeting pursuant to Canon 3, Section 2 of the diocesan canons.

Our lay delegates to the diocesan convention were elected at the Annual Meeting. They are David Bryant as delegate and Maurice (Phil) Phillips as alternate delegate. Father David will also represent the Church of the Epiphany as a clergy delegate.

EPIPHANY BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES

December 14 — Ginny and Randy Bauer's anniversary

UPCOMING COMMUNITY EVENTS

NWFLC Project Opioid - Overdose Summit

Crestview Community Center

Wednesday, January 18, 2023

Registration Opens - 9:00 a.m.

Presentations - 10:00 a.m.

Lunch - 12:00 p.m. to 1:00 (box lunch provided)

Presentations & Breakout Sessions - 1:00 p.m.

TOPICS TO BE DISCUSSED

- Learn how the overdose crisis is impacting our economy and our businesses
- How community leaders are taking charge and saving lives through innovative initiatives and partnerships
- Ways you can change and break down barriers that prevent those in need from seeking help
- How working with Project Opioid Central Florida and fellow community leaders on the overdose crisis can heal your community

Let's come together as a community to bring lasting change to the overdose crisis. All are invited to this Summit to learn how the overdose crisis is impacting our economy, our businesses, and our communities.

Please remember in your prayers:

Adley Hipwell, Amy & Anthony Lehatto, Ashley,
Brenda Montgomery, Debra Evans, Dennis Jackson,
Donna Andrews, Janice Tyler, Jeff Evans, Jeremy McDaniels,
Jill Potts, Julie Hill, Katie Furby, Mary Meehan, Nikole Webb,
Pam & Phil Phillips, Phyllis Alles, Raquel Briganti,
Scott Hudson, Steve & Buni O'Brien,
Susan Cole and Sybil King,

The Episcopal Church of the Epiphany

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