



FEBRUARY 2023



THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH
OF THE EPIPHANY

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

From the Vicar...

This month begins my third year as vicar for the Church of the Epiphany. It has not always been a smooth ride, but I feel that for most part my ministry here has been positive.

We all have suffered through more than our share of illnesses, grief and heartache. One could say that's just part of life, but that doesn't make it any easier.

I would like more people in the pews on Sunday mornings, but recognize that as an older congregation it's more difficult to make it as often as when we were younger. I am encouraged that attendance at our worship services is increasing, even though sometimes I feel that for every two steps forward, we take one back.

We are certainly not alone in this respect. Attendance at many, if not most, churches across the board are 50-60% of what it was pre-Covid.

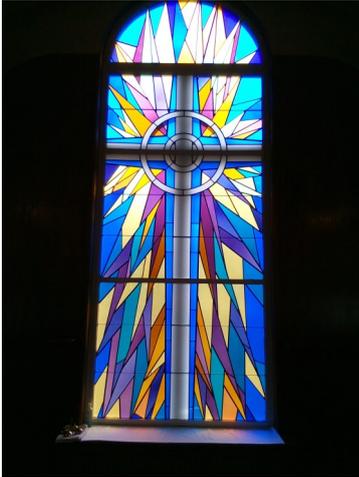
Another positive note is we have added more communicants than we've lost. (The Episcopal Church recognizes a "communicant in good standing" as a member of the congregation who receives Communion at least three times a year.)

For some, all this talk about membership distracts from the ministry of the Church. However, I believe that the more people who participate in Church, the stronger the ministries of the Church are.

I have heard people in other places justify not attending church by saying they can experience God in their homes, working in the garden, fishing, talking with friends or even on the golf course.

Of course they can, but being in communion with one another in church is something even stronger than experiencing God alone.

Reading the Bible alone is good, but how much better is it to hear the words spoken by a fellow parishioner and maybe experience a worthwhile sermon or other teaching once in awhile. (The odds of your hearing a good sermon from me increases the more often you hear me preach.)



I have some lofty goals for myself and this congregation in the coming months. Having measurable goals allows one to gauge whether one is doing things the right way.

When we began this trip together two years ago, I set a goal of having an average Sunday attendance of 50 parishioners before I moved on to another pulpit. We are roughly half way there.

Crestview is growing rapidly, just drive around and see all the new housing developments. When Cathy and I first came to Epiphany, we would occasionally drive around town to explore. Looking at all the subdivisions, she would say some of them must be Episcopalians. I would counter with “some of them don’t know they are Episcopalians yet.”

Epiphany and the Episcopal Church as a whole have a lot to offer people. And the more people we have, the more camaraderie we can share and the more ministry we can offer to the community. They just don’t know it yet.

— Father David+

Vestry News

The Vestry met three times in January -- once on January 1 to elect new officers; again on January 8 to visit with Bishop Kendrick during his annual visit to Epiphany; the third time for the regular monthly meeting on January 15. Tracy Kueczinski was chosen as Senior Warden, Phil Phillips will continue his ultra-exceptional work as Junior Warden and Ginny Bauer will be the clerk of the vestry. David Bryant joined the vestry and Jeff Evans and Dennis Jackson will continue to serve their terms. David relinquished his position on the vestry on February 1 in order to become our new parish administrator, leaving two vacancies on the vestry.

On Sunday January 8, topics discussed informally with Bishop Kendrick during his annual visit included the high cost of insurance on our buildings, which comes down to the immense damage caused by hurricane Michael. 61 of our churches in Florida —not all Episcopal — received \$16 million dollars worth of financial aid for repairs, driving insurance costs higher. He suggested making adjustments to our policy such as raising deductibles, etc. One church is installing solar panels to offset power costs, but Florida Power estimates it would take 20 years to break even, and our monthly bill isn't high enough to justify the cost. Phil, our junior warden and building maintenance custodian, foresees a lot of capital improvements in the near future including a new roof, which would require taking out a loan which may be available through the Episcopal Building Foundation.

Also a constant concern at Epiphany is How do we attract and KEEP new members to Epiphany? How do we make visitors feel welcome without swarming them at the door? Bishop Kendrick talked about changing social structures, congregations moving to more entertainment than liturgical services, and it's not just the Episcopal churches experiencing losses.

The pool of qualified priests is shrinking due to retirement and fewer people entering the ministry. One answer is to raise up more lay ministers and focus on the people who do show up, and let God do His work.

Debbie Evans told of a recent experience she had with a visitor who came to Epiphany one time, but no one got her contact information. Later on, Debbie had a very strong feeling she needed to find the woman somehow, so she prayed to God to help her get in touch with the visitor so she could invite her back to Epiphany. Then one day she was in the UPS store mailing a package when she looked up and saw a familiar face. It was the woman, and they both said "I remember you!" She invited the woman to come to church, and they exchanged contact information. Bishop Kendrick said "We call that Evangelism!"

We all need to welcome and connect with our visitors intentionally, honoring the wishes of those who don't want a follow-up call or visit, which amounts to about 90% of people nowadays. It's hard to know the best way, but we can practice a system of "Invite-Welcome-Connect" and see what happens. Bishop Kendrick commended Fr. David for holding Christmas Day Eucharist services at Epiphany, which wasn't expected to draw a large attendance but we welcomed 13 people. Bishop Kendrick had celebrated Christmas Day Eucharist at St. Simon's in Ft. Walton where they were not expecting a large crowd but 75 people showed up, some of whom were just in town for the holiday and wanted to attend church, so you never know.

Fr. David ended the visit with Bishop Kendrick by thanking him for all he does for us as a congregation, a lot of which is "behind the scenes." He is our shepherd and not just a CEO who shows up once a year.

We are very fortunate to have Bishop Kendrick and look forward to his next visit.

— Ginny Bauer, Clerk of the Vestry

January Property Maintenance Report

Subject: St Joseph Hall and Chapel Maintenance

We're doing many updates and repair work on our Church buildings and property improvements.

St. Joseph Hall was built in 1990 and requires some major maintenance. We have started to update the facility. Casey Electric has repaired our Carrier Air Conditioner (installed in 2008) and the unit is functioning good. Hub City Glass has replaced 8 windows, operational checked and lubricated all balances. Casey Electric has replaced the exit signs and started on the inside lighting.

The worship space in the church has also had work this month. Two new blinds have been installed in the church. The front doors have been a problem for a long time, but we are working on it. The women's handicap toilet has been a problem; a new cartridge has been installed and adjusted.

Planned projects:

- Replacing light bulbs in the office, hall, and kitchen.
- The St. Joseph's Hall fascia requires replacing. Wade Family Contractor and Mr. Mac Donald have a proposal for this work.
- Front jams require sealant and painting.
- Entrances require sealant and paint.
- Church Office requires updating.
- Storage area requires a clean out.
- Kitchen area requires a complete clean up.
- Doorsteps require pressure washing.

Projects completed during this period:

- Trimmed the trees at the back of the property.
- Repaired the double grates at the back of the property.
- Some cleaning on storage areas.

- Repaired the ladies handicap toilet again.
- Installed a pole and replaced handicap sign.
- Met with Wade Family Contractor; front doors being ordered.
- Repaired wiring and lights in the church.
- 8 new windows blinds installed.

We have learned the property behind the church is being developed as a new community of townhomes. They have been taking soil samples and getting ready to build.

— Phil Phillips, Junior Warden

Parish Ministries

A parish prayer group began meeting at the church on February 3 at 10 a.m. Prayers will be offered for those on the parish prayer list and others. All are invited.

Plans are underway to reopen **the rummage sale**. Details on the opening date, what days it will be open and hours are to be determined. The fund-raising project will also be renamed to better reflect its purpose. Ginny Bauer is heading this project and is asking for help in getting the building ready for the reopening.

Epiphany is continuing its support for **Sharing & Caring** of Okaloosa County by collecting can goods and other items for those in need served by this United Way agency. A box is located near the kitchen in the Parish Hall where donated items can be placed. A list of needed items can be found on the bulletin board.

Diocesan Convention

The 52nd Annual Convention for the Diocese of the Central Gulf Coast will be held March 2-4, at the University of West Florida in Pensacola. Epiphany will be represented by David Bryant as a delegate, Maurice (Phil) Phillips as alternate delegate, and Father David as a clergy delegate. Anyone can attend the convention, view the various displays from the many ministries in the diocese, listen to speakers and worship during the daily services. If you have any questions, let Father David know.

UPCOMING PARISH EVENTS

WORSHIP SCHEDULE

February 5 — Fifth Sunday after Epiphany

10:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist followed by potluck lunch

February 12 — Sixth Sunday after Epiphany

10:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist followed by vestry meeting

February 19 — Last Sunday after Epiphany

10:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist followed by Healing Service

February 21 — Shrove Tuesday (Mardi Gras)

5 p.m. Pancake supper

February 22 — Ash Wednesday

6:00 p.m. Holy Eucharist and Imposition of Ashes

SHROVE TUESDAY PANCAKE SUPPER

The tradition of having pancakes on the day before Lent begins dates back to 16th century England. Since it was the custom to have simple meals during Lent as an observance of penance for sins committed, people would empty their pantries of fatty foods that might spoil during the 40 days of Lent. This included dairy products and eggs. Rather than simply tossing them, someone decided to make pancakes for their neighbors.

This observation is also related to the observation of Mardi Gras (which is French for “Fat Tuesday”) and other carnivals around the Christian world, such as the popular Rio Carnivale and similar celebrations in Venice and Austria.

LENTEN WEDNESDAY EVENING SUPPERS

Beginning Wednesday, March 1, Epiphany will host a weekly speakers series during Lent like we did last year. The theme this year will be Creation Care. We hope to have representatives from various agencies in and around Crestview who will discuss how we can be better stewards of God’s creation. As we did last year, the speakers will be preceded by a hearty soup dinner. More information will be forthcoming.

UPCOMING COMMUNITY EVENTS

COFFEE AND CRAFT

Robert Sikes Public Library

February 11 9 a.m.-12 noon

1445 Commerce Drive

For more information, contact the
Crestview Library at 850-682-4432



CHAMBER OF COMMERCE VALENTINE'S DAY GALA

February 11 6 p.m.

For more information, visit the Crestview Chamber of
Commerce website (crestviewchamber.com).

MARDI GRAS AT BUSH HOUSE

February 11 10 a.m.-2 p.m.

It's time to Laissez les bons temps rouler at the historic Bush House, home of the Crestview History Museum! Live jazz music, king cakes, non-alcoholic hurricane punch and beads for everyone. Volunteers have been hard at work decorating the Bush House in its Carnival best, adding to the festive atmosphere.

CRESTVIEW FARMERS MARKET

Saturdays, year round

7:00 am - 1:00 pm

Old Spanish Trail Park

Corner of Industrial Blvd. and Stillwell





The Puzzle is finished!

After almost two years of work, the jigsaw puzzle in the Parish Hall was finished in mid-January (or at least as finished as it can be)! If you look closely, there are two pieces missing. After a thorough search, it was deemed they were gone forever, must likely swept away at some point by the crew that cleans the building. Father David's comment was this was appropriate, "...since we all have a couple of pieces missing." Congratulations to the dozens of parishioners and visitors who worked on the puzzle over the years, especially the core group of about four or five who did the bulk of the work. It was a tough grind, but we succeeded! (except, of course, for the two wayward pieces). A new puzzle has been promised to keep us busy!

EPIPHANY BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES

Birthdays

February 4 — Jeff Evans

February 8 — Pat Shew

February 12 — Dennis Jackson

February 21 — Sheila Fahie



Anniversaries

February 15 — Chris Atkins

EPIPHANY'S FAVORITE RECIPES

CORN CASSEROLE *by Mary Meehan*

Ingredients:

1 can corn (drained)

1 can creamed corn

2 eggs

1 stick of butter, melted

4 heaping tablespoons of flour

2 tablespoons of sugar

1 cup whole milk

1/4 cup green peppers, diced

1/2 cup cheddar cheese, shredded

1/4 teaspoon salt

1/4 teaspoon pepper

Combine all ingredients and pour into greased casserole dish

Bake at 350° for 1 hour and 20 minutes.



Please remember in your prayers:

Adley Hipwell, Amy & Anthony Lehatto, the Rev. Anthony MacWhinnie, Ashley, Bill Gilliam, Brenda Montgomery, the Rev. David Knight, David Wasiluski, Dawn Stilling, Debra Evans, Dennis Jackson, Donna Andrews, Florie Angelini, Herselie Hendrix, Janice Tyler, Jeff Evans, Jeremy McDaniels, Jill Potts, Jimmy Wasiluski, Julie Hill, Katie Furby, Kei'Mari Martin, Layla, Mark Ulman, Mary Meehan, Nikole Webb, Pam & Phil Phillips, Phyllis Alles, Raquel Briganti, Scott Hudson, Steve & Buni O'Brien, Susan Cole and Sybil King.

For the departed

Virginia Kemp, Pat Gillis, Lonnie Brown

The Episcopal Church of the Epiphany

424 Garden Street

Crestview, Florida 32536