

THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH OF THE EPIPHANY



Annual Parish Meeting January 24, 2021

Meeting Agenda

I. Opening Prayer

O God of unchangeable power and eternal light: Look favorably on your whole Church, that wonderful and sacred mystery; by the effectual working of your providence, carry out in tranquility the plan of salvation; let the whole world see and know that things which were cast down are being raised up, and things which had grown old are being made new, and that all things are being brought to their perfection by him through whom all things were made, your Son Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

II. Appointment of the Secretary

III. Election of Vestry Members

IV. Introductions of Vestry and Staff

V. Senior Warden's Report

VI. Financial Report

VII. Stewardship Report

VIII. Priest in Charge Report

IX. Benediction



The Episcopal Church of the Epiphany

MEMBERSHIP PROFILE

Year	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Active	673	620	641	638	620	608	611	635	618	628	597	553
Others Active	418	450	433	463	400	384	397	393	392	403	398	358
Total	1091	1070	1074	1101	1020	992	1008	1028	1010	1031	995	911
Households	478	446	463	469	425	434	425	439	425	432	441	400

Average Sunday Attendance from Parochial Reports:

1996 - 185	2001 - 242	2006 - 261	2011 - 282	2016 - 281	2020 (March) - 222
1997 - 212	2002 - 235	2007 - 271	2012 - 263	2017 - 264	2020 (Online) - 126
1998 - 217	2003 - 209	2008 - 317	2013 - 270	2018 - 246	
1999 - 223	2004 - 224	2009 - 295	2014 - 269	2019 - 232	
2000 - 240	2005 - 211	2010 - 293	2015 - 260		

Transfers Out: 16
Transfers In: 7

Gender:

Male	400
Female	511

Age:

17 and under	220
18-24	50
25-39	73
40-59	224
60-79	163
80+	35

Households - 400:

w/children	159	39.7%
w/out	241	60.3%

Marital Status

Divorced	37	3%
Married	446	49%
Minor	232	27%
Partnered	23	2%
Single	118	14%
Widowed	24	2%

Years in Church:

0-4	196	28%
5-9	181	26%
10-14	190	27%
15-19	48	7%
20-24	33	5%
25-29	18	3%
30-34	25	4%
35-39	5	1%
40-44	6	1%
45-49	4	1%
50+	2*	0%

NOTE: Above line is record creation date, so it accounts for all records. Below the line is date joined, so only accounts for Active members.

* Tom Mundy 1950, Dan Mundy 1953

Major Cities (Households):

Decatur	170	42.50%
Atlanta	126	31.50%
Avondale	19	4.75%
Stone Mt.	11	2.75%
Tucker	10	2.50%
Lilburn	9	2.25%
Clarkston	4	1.00%

THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH OF THE EPIPHANY

Annual Report

Priest in Charge

2020 will forever be defined by the COVID-19 pandemic that has upended our lives. It has highlighted the importance of our faith in God and our dependence on each other. It has brought us to a deeper awareness of the things that matter most. The mission statement of Epiphany ends with the words, “we strive to live out the Gospel’s radical values with gladness of heart.” Those words guide who we are and how we have navigated this last year together.

Worshipping together is one of the ways we live out that mission. Before this unusual year, we would have defined that as worshipping together in our beautiful nave, gathered in one place. We now have a deeper understanding of the reality that the church is not the building. The church is the people, the body of Christ, and the worship of God is not constrained by place. On March 8, we worshipped together in our church for the final time this year and because of the pandemic, we have been worshipping online since March 15.

We made the decision to use Zoom for online worship rather than a prerecorded service broadcast on YouTube or Facebook so that we could preserve the very important experience of worshipping in community, seeing the faces of others we love, making sure lay readers were still a vital part of worship, praying and uttering our prayer requests in each other’s presence, being together in small groups for virtual coffee hour. Authenticity and connection felt more important than a flawless prerecorded worship experience. And you have been gracious as we have navigated our way through the steep learning curve of blending technology and worship.

In late fall we were given permission by the diocese to add in-person outdoor worship and we added an outdoor Eucharist every Sunday at 11:30 a.m., weather permitting, while continuing to offer a

meaningful online worship experience. We even did baptisms outside on All Saints Day and welcomed four new members into the body of Christ.

Another way we have lived out that mission is through our many outreach partnerships. This pandemic has highlighted many of the injustices and inequities that have long existed in our society and made them more visible and you did not let the pandemic stop us from extending care to others in our city. We have given time and financial resources to support organizations in our community who are seeking to address those injustices. We have formed racial justice groups to learn more about how we can be allies in ending racial inequities. We have sought to make creation care an important element in how we care for our building and grounds. We have acknowledged that living out the gospel’s radical values can take many different forms for us as we each use our gifts in the places in which God has called us to act.

We live out our mission in the way we care for each other as well. We have continued caring for each other, checking in on each other in organized and informal ways each day. Our pastoral care committee has made phone calls, mailed notes, and sent beautiful postcards of our sacred spaces to remind us that we are a part of a loving community even when are physically apart.

We have grieved together as we have said goodbye to beloved church members, as we have buried family members without the ability to grieve together in the ways we find meaningful, as we have watched the death toll from COVID climb in our nation. The volume of heavy emotions that we are called to process each day has been at times immense in the last year. We have sought to create spaces so we don’t have to sit with all that in isolation and we have worked at staying connected even when we can’t be together physically.

We began on March 16 offering Morning Prayer online each weekday at 9 a.m. Ten months later, there continues to be a group of 15 or so people who start their day by gathering and praying together. The faithfulness of this group to prayer and community in the midst of this pandemic is inspiring and nurturing to all of us who participate. When you ask for prayer at Epiphany, you can be assured that prayer is being offered every day on your behalf. We have offered formation classes for all ages online, committees have gathered online, and pastoral care visits have happened on Zoom as we have adapted to our new reality. Even as singing together has been seen as a health risk, our choir has found a way to continue to practice together online and share their gifts with us to enhance our worship.

In the last year, we have welcomed a new part-time associate priest, the Rev. Nicole Lambelet, and two new part-time staff members, Matt Schramm as our Director of Youth Ministry and Christen Erskine as our Interim Director of Children's Ministry. They along with our other outstanding staff, Shea McNutt our Parish Administrator, and Julie Ryder our Organist & Choirmaster, have made sure that our worship and ministries remain strong and our community lives out its mission well.

Our incredible vestry has provided steady leadership through the many challenges of this year and I am deeply grateful to our Junior Warden, Richard Messner, and our Senior Warden, Ann Fowler. Ann's wise and capable and prayerful leadership has been a blessing to all of us, and to me most of all. Ann not only makes sure the work of the parish gets done, but she does it with the spirit of Christ and with compassion and sensitivity and love. I have heard that echoed by so many of you again and again.

While I am proud of the way we have come together in the midst of deeply trying times, I know that this past year has been frustrating for others who wish we could worship in our church building and who find online worship not at all meaningful. The bishop has given us clear and thoughtful guidelines that are intended to keep us safe so we can worship together

for the long term and I hope that later this year we will be able to do that again. In the meantime, your faithfulness, your commitment to your parish, and your financial generosity inspires me. I expect the year ahead to hold challenges and gifts, many of whom we can't begin to imagine at this early point in the year, and I expect us to greet them with the same spirit that has sustained this parish 122 ears. Our parish name, Epiphany, reminds us that we are people guided by the light and intended to shine God's light. May God's light shine in us and light our path as we walk together into this new year of ministry.

The Rev. Amy Dills-Moore, Priest in Charge

Senior Warden

Recently, I've been thinking about theologian Frederick Buechner's idea that the world is a manger. He suggests we live in this world, this manger, filled with messiness, pain, and helplessness. But also, in this world God is born again and again, if we would only notice. This manger contains both deep suffering and deep joy, and offers new life in light and love.

I feel like the past year has been a manger of sorts, not only in our personal lives, but also in our life at Epiphany. Pandemic restrictions prevented us from holding services and other gatherings inside our building, so we had to create new ways of worshipping, celebrating, and being in communion together. Sometimes giving birth to these new ways was messy and painful. And yet, precious life-giving moments existed, too. We were reminded that the church is not the building; it is the people of God. Each one of us is the church, wherever we are, whatever we do.

During the pandemic, your vestry looked for new ways to be the church and to help the parish community stay connected. You'll learn about activities in specific ministry reports, but some of the work involving the vestry as a whole included:

- Exploring methods of developing strong leadership skills by reading and discussing the book *Your Leadership Edge* and applying its principles to our vestry responsibilities.
- Issuing a racial justice statement pledging to speak out against racism and injustice, to take action to demand the dismantling of systemic racism in our country, to ensure that our Christian formation activities address racism, and to support the work of the newly formed Racial Justice Group.
- Conducting a church-wide survey offering members an opportunity to share their thoughts about the circumstances surrounding the departure of our priests in 2019 and gathering suggestions for moving forward as a parish. We shared the results, which were predominantly positive, although we recognized that as a community, we still have healing to do. Nearly half of respondents expressed an appreciation of Amy and what she brings to Epiphany.
- Extending our priest in charge's contract for two more years. Because of our positive experience with Amy, and in accordance with advice from the diocese, on October 4 the vestry voted unanimously to extend her contract to August 2023. This extension allows the parish to better discern our work together and to make meaningful and appropriate long-range plans. It also gives us time to continue healing as a community. Before the end of Amy's third year the parish will work with the bishop's office to determine next steps, which could include the options of calling Amy as our rector or beginning a search.

I've experienced deep joy in vestry service. I appreciate Nancy Chandler, Senior Warden Immediate Past, for her support and advice, and for being a model of strength when it was most needed. I'm grateful for Randy Shearin, Treasurer, Robin Hairston, Clerk, and members of the vestry: Richard

Messner, Dennis Edmiston, Brian Gross, Doug Runnion, Shelle Bryant, Sara Cushing, Linda Ryder-Wolf, Jason Wiles, Erin Braden, Paul Hinson, and John Wierwille. It was an honor to serve with these talented, intelligent, and caring people. I'm especially thankful for Richard, our wonderful Junior Warden. I often relied on him for his sound counsel, good humor, and experience dealing with diocesan matters.

Our amazing staff found new ways of providing meaningful formation and worship experiences. They consistently acted with creativity, flexibility, and compassion under challenging circumstances. In July, we were fortunate to have the Rev. Nicole Lambelet join us as our Associate Priest for Family Ministry & Outreach. Her dedicated attention to our families and her passion for social justice has brought new life to those ministries at Epiphany. Nicole shepherds us in crucial conversations, and her insights have stretched my soul.

I am profoundly grateful to Amy and her ministry at Epiphany. Since her arrival, she's faced unforeseen challenges with strength, grace, and love. Always love. I appreciate her steady leadership with the vestry and the parish, her thoughtful attention to the budget, her compassionate care for church members, and her faithful commitment to our spiritual well-being. Her sermons and reflections have sustained us during times of sadness, anxiety, and isolation. Her words give us hope, and like the wise men, the shepherds, and the Epiphany star, they point us to that life in the manger. Ultimately, it's where, as Buechner says, we will "find coming to birth within ourselves something stronger and braver, gladder and kinder and holier, than ever we knew before." Amy is an exceptional spiritual leader and a treasured gift to Epiphany.

Ann Fowler, Senior Warden

Associate Priest

At the end of January, I will finish my seventh month as the Assistant Priest for Family Ministry & Outreach at Epiphany. Becoming a part of the worshipping community at Epiphany and getting to

know many of you has been a source of deep joy, even within these challenging times. In the midst of all that we are walking through together as a church and a country, I find solace in knowing that we are working to find our way with God together. I can locate how this grace is revealed in so many aspects of our common life. Yet, it is often most evident to me during the Prayers of the People on Sundays and weekday mornings. When the chorus of voices gathered over Zoom pour out our petitions and laments unto God, I often also hear one voice murmur: “And, I thank you God for my many blessings.” This voice in concert with the many voices of the Epiphany community in prayer have helped to guide me in acknowledging the ongoing presence of God’s love and provision among us even as we mourn the pain and loss that continues to transpire around us. These two things: making space for the loss and calling attention to God’s ongoing work of love with us, in so many ways, have become two focal points of my ministry among you in this season.

In addition to getting to know your stories and worshipping God with you, one of the many blessings I experience at Epiphany is getting to work closely with our wonderful staff. In particular, collaborating with Matt Schramm and Christen Erskine to find creative ways to accompany families, youth, and children and adhere to COVID-19 guidelines remains a grace-filled work. Over the last six months our team has worked closely together to find ways to attend to both the spiritual and social needs of our families through Sunday formation opportunities, virtual small groups, surveys, devotional videos, take home materials, and socially distant activities. While some of these efforts have been successful, others need to be reworked. We continue to learn alongside you and our volunteers how best to leverage the limitations and gifts of this season. I give thanks to both Christen and Matt for being so willing to try new things, to take risks, and to try again; and for all those who have come alongside us during this time to do the same.

Another blessing I treasure at Epiphany is the opportunity to be a part of the Outreach Committee. Under the leadership of Lisa Daily and Beverley Lorenzo over the past year, the Outreach Committee continues to guide all of us to the multiple ways God is inviting us to love our neighbors. Most recently, the collective wisdom and energy of the committee has focused on sustaining our various ministry partnerships through the pandemic and collaborating with Adult Formation to provide a platform for our entire church to think about our collective vocation and ministry in the Decatur/Atlanta area during the season of Lent. Drawing from the Harvard Kennedy School’s organizer and theorist Marshall Ganz, we are excited to think together about the many ways our community might tell our stories, and about how discerning the interplay between “the story of self, the story of us, and the story of now” can give us direction in discerning our role in the contemporary moment. I look forward to the conversations we will have about what it means for us to be written into the story of Jesus in this place and time.

In closing, I also want to acknowledge that there are many of you I still have not had the opportunity to meet. Please know that my phone, my “Zoom room,” and my walking shoes are always at the ready should you like to reach out and make a connection. I know that all these avenues fall short when compared to gathering in-person. But I am convinced that even in the meantime, God is here—still present to our losses, still present in our communion, still bestowing blessing.

For this and for you I give thanks and I look forward to continuing the journey unfolding before us.

The Rev. Nicole Lambelet. Associate Priest for Family Ministry & Outreach

Acolytes

Unlike most of the groups here at Epiphany, the Acolytes are super multi-age (elementary, middle and high school; three adults) and Inter-Generational. We range in age from eight to fifty-eight. In addition to our sibling acolytes (Gabbie and Alexander

Deocampo, Richard and Sara Kertscher, Ellie and Tom Sterne), we also have the mother-daughter team of April Maa and Lily Brandon.

In addition to Sundays, our Acolytes also serve at all three Christmas Eve services; the Easter Vigil (6 a.m.); and special services, such as the Pet Blessing, Advent Lessons & Carols, Feast of the Epiphany, weddings, and funerals.

When new Acolytes begin, Linda gives them one-on-one training by following each as they learn to be Gospel Bearers. Once they are comfortable with that role (usually after two or three services), they serve several times on their own. Then the one-on-one training begins again in the role of Crucifer. Sometimes this process is greatly accelerated especially during school holiday breaks. However, since none of our Acolytes has served since March 7, ALL of our Acolytes are going to need retraining!

Normally our next class of Acolytes would join us after Easter. However, at this point, I'm just praying we are back inside the church and with our current Acolytes. To all of those interested and that are currently in the third grade, I will bring you on as soon as possible.

Linda Ryder-Wolf, Acolyte Advisor

Adult Formation

In spite of the many challenges our community faced in 2020, Adult Formation at Epiphany has continued to thrive, remaining one of our most important spaces for experiencing community, friendship, and spiritual formation. In a year that has caused so much separation, distance, and isolation, our adult formation offerings have (virtually) remained bright lights in our community where people can learn about their faith, ask questions and explore new ideas, and benefit from the wisdom and experience of other parishioners. We can all be proud of how we have continued to maintain these spaces, even during such difficult circumstances.

The Adult Formation committee at Epiphany presently includes the following people: Evan Bassett

(Chair & Theologian-in-Residence), Paul Hinson (Vestry Liaison), Molly McAuliffe, and Patricia Price. In addition to the regular committee members, the Rev. Nicole Lambelet has become a constant and vital presence to the committee, and we have benefited hugely from her involvement. She continues to be actively involved in shaping Adult Formation at Epiphany. We are actively seeking to recruit new members to this committee this year, so all with interest in joining should reach out to one of its members.

During the last year, the main focus of Adult Formation at Epiphany has been our Sunday Formation Hour. We have continued to have two main offerings during this time each Sunday morning. Formation for families has been a continuous offering throughout the year. Our second offering has consistently been a more lecture-based offering, led by Evan Bassett, focused on a selected topic in Bible and/or Theology.

In the fall, the families class read and discussed *Searching for Sunday* by Rachel Held Evans. Since the summer, the Rev. Nicole Lambelet has provided guidance and leadership to this class. The class begins a new study this winter on the book *This Book is Anti-Racist* by Tiffany Jewell.

The Bible & Theology class led by Evan Bassett began the year with a class on the Lord's Prayer, which was unfortunately cut short due to the onset of COVID restrictions in March. Looking to the fall, this class was inspired by the events of summer 2020, which heightened awareness of conversations around racial justice and the Black experience in America. In the fall, Evan Bassett led a class titled *The Prophets: From Jerusalem to Selma*, which began with a study of the prophets of the Hebrew Bible, and then moved to a study of modern prophetic figures in the struggle for racial justice, such as Martin Luther King, Jr. and James Baldwin.

This winter, our Bible and Theology class begins a new topic, *Stories of God's Calling*, which will focus on the ways in which we experience God's call in our lives, and will foreground the stories of several of

Epiphany's own parishioners as a way of showcasing the great diversity of God's involvement in our lives and our vocations.

Such a challenging year has changed many of our normal modes of community, but our adult formation spaces have remained strong and healthy, and while we do eagerly anticipate the day when we can be together again in person, we will continue making the most of our virtual gatherings until that time.

Evan Bassett, Chair and Paul Hinson, Vestry Liaison

Altar Guild

The mission of the Altar Guild is to assist the clergy and to prepare Epiphany for all services. In addition to the regular weekly services, we are privileged to assist with the profound life changing events of funerals, baptisms and weddings.

In March our work ceased in response to the virus restrictions. This has been a great loss for our members, some of whom have served on the guild for decades and have formed caring bonds with their team members. In recent weeks, a few of us have been able to meet to set up for the outdoor services. We have welcomed this return to some normal activities and hope that all our members can resume their roles in this ministry as soon as it is safe to do so. We hope to welcome back: Ruth Olson, Diane Mundy, John Bayne, David Sample, Martha Rummel, Laura Keys, Joy Boyden, Ann Fowler, Evelyn Stewart, Kevin McGoldrick, Keith Poole, Katie Pedersen and daughter, Phoebe.

Absent from the above list is Anne Warner who has moved from the area. Anne was a decades-long guild member. In addition to her regular duties, Anne always volunteered to assist with funerals and weddings. She was a steady and caring presence. We will miss her.

Floyd Parker continued his generous support of our worship experience through his many gifts, including the Paschal, Christ and Advent Candles.

With very short notice, Bill Graves fashioned a wooden stand for the Paschal Candle so it could be used at the home of our priest in charge for Easter Sunday services and throughout the Easter season. Bill and Evan Vega made beautiful wooden boxes to hold the consecrated wafers for the outdoor services. We will add the stand and the boxes to the vessels and equipment we use throughout the year.

Finally, we always welcome new members to this ministry. When we return to regular services, we welcome you to come back to the sacristy after a Sunday service to see us in action and answer any questions you might have.

Annie Strahan & Kathleen Rinehart, Altar Guild Co-Chairs

Art Ministry

The Art Ministry is a quiet but profitable activity at Epiphany and a vital part of Parish Life. Artists create—and by their work—add a happy vitality and thoughtfulness to our parishioners' experience. Strolling through the gallery viewing the art reminds each of us of the myriad ways that beauty and meaning come in different packages with a reverent force to inspire—perhaps a higher measure of humanity, personal growth or creative thinking. It affects our perspective and interrupts predictability in the way we view our world. Art can delight, provoke or heal. Art sparks conversation and understanding.

An artist reaches into the depth of their soul to create on canvas, through the camera or at the potter's wheel that which cannot be written or expressed in any other way. Exhibiting art in our gallery is a vital part of what Epiphany is all about—spreading love, acceptance and reaching for a better way to live in community with all our gifts from God. Our parish makes a profit of 25% of sales and it is amazing how it adds up to fund a wide variety of our church's needs.

In early 2020 due to COVID-19, we enjoyed exhibits in January, February and March. Even though our church buildings were closed formally in March, the art was resurrected in September for parishioner

artists only. The hope was to resume some normalcy and return some sparkle to the space for our staff and lay leaders. Two very successful shows were our January potter, Candy Casarella, and in November/December, parishioner Cristina Montesinos with her colorful abstracts. This was Cristina's first show ever so she is well on her way! After meeting with our priest in charge, Amy, [proceeds from the Art Ministry's 2020 shows contributed \\$2000 to purchase the beautiful plantings](#) for the sloped bank on Eastlake Road that were installed by the Building & Grounds committee.

We would like to thank the Parish for the generous support in purchasing the wonderful art. Not only do your purchases support our parish programs but they also help launch emerging artists that have never had an exhibit as well as support established artists needing exhibition space.

If you would like to join our ministry or nominate an artist for an exhibit, please contact Liefy Smith at LiefySmithArt@comcast.net

Liefy Smith, Chair

Building & Grounds

Even though most Epiphanyites have been away from our campus, the dedicated members of the Buildings & Grounds (B&G) committee, along with numerous volunteers, have continued to work on maintaining and improving our campus space. They continue to oversee upgrades to our HVAC systems, convert our indoor lights to more energy efficient LED lights, remove invasive plants with the help of John Wierwille's sheep, and add native plants to add beauty and support habitats for birds and other wildlife. If you come to an outdoor worship service or drive by the church, you will notice in particular the beautiful plantings along the Eastlake bank that were added in the spring and have been tended to all year by John Yntema, among others. You may also notice changes to the playground, as a large tree was felled by a recent storm, damaging the play structure and the playground fence. Our B&G members were instrumental in arranging for the tree's removal and

working with the insurance company to repair the damage. Less noticeable from the outside, we ended our lease of the dishwasher, decommissioned a non-working freezer, and unplugged the ice machine in the kitchen, saving both money and energy during our prolonged absence from the building.

As was noted in a recent *Epiphany Star* article, we mourn the loss of our B&G Chair, Tom Hairston, who passed away in November. Long-time parishioner and B&G stalwart Bill Graves has this to say about Tom: "in the short time he was with us he accomplished far more than anyone else had in the 40 plus years I have been at Epiphany. With his endless lists of things to do, his untiring efforts to recruit others to tackle the tasks involved, and more than anything his unflagging willingness to do the work himself despite his own persistent pain and discomfort, the building and grounds of Epiphany have never looked better or been in better condition." We are greatly in need of someone to take over the reins of B&G, and if you feel so called, please reach out to the Rev. Amy Dills-Moore.

Looking ahead to 2021, we are excited to announce a new partnership with Trees Atlanta to plant and maintain native trees on the campus; you will be hearing more about this initiative soon. We hope and trust that we will all be back in the building by the end of the year, and are grateful to the Buildings & Grounds committee for their dedication and hard work to maintain the campus in the meantime.

Sara Cushing, Vestry Liaison for Buildings & Grounds

Children's Ministries

Remember oh-so-many months ago in January 2020, when Epiphany held the Pageant on a bright Sunday morning? Our children (and grown-ups) showed out for the Pageant and we all went on about kicking off the year. Our Godly Play teachers and countless other helpers shared the story of our faith to our youngest parishioners during Children's Chapel and the Sunday School hour. These teachers willingly took on this calling by setting up lessons, teaching Bible

stories, and undoubtedly answering lots and lots of questions.

Since March, when we began sheltering in place and our Sunday mornings looked different, Epiphany has continued to hold a weekly Children's Chapel through the summer. Godly Play resumed virtually via Zoom this fall.

Virtual offerings for the Shadrach, Meshak and Abednego (SMA) Group were led by Christine Stern, Cristin Davis, and Laraine Fraijo-Paul March through May. This fall the SMA group met twice a month thanks to Christine and Cristin. Epiphany Family Advent Kits offered families ways to observe the season of Advent and prepare for the celebration of the Feast of St. Nicholas. The Virtual Feast of St. Nicholas gave families and children a chance to hear the story of St. Nicholas of Myra, reflect on the ministry of bishops, and share some sweet treats.

Epiphany gave a big "thank you" to our Director of Children's Ministries, Laraine Fraijo-Paul in September, as she stepped down while growing her own family, and said a big "welcome" to Christen Erskine as she came aboard as Interim Director in October.

There was no Vacation Bible School this year, as the building remained closed. Laraine offered ways for families to explore the *Fruits of the Spirit* and build their faith at home.

In this year of (mostly) social distancing, we are grateful to all those who share the light with our young ones, whether it is in the classroom, the hallway, Jones Hall, or in our communities.

We give special thanks to our Sunday morning volunteers: Kristin Phillips, Josh Becker, Anna Democko, April Freeman, Claire Chaffins, Sally Smith, Jennifer Yeager, Jessica Boatright, Dan Deocampo, Cody Chaffins, Amy Zeller, Chris Maurer, Joanne Deocampo, Amanda Styles, Kate Wierwille, Sybil McCullar, and Kelli Gantt

Submitted by Cristin Davis, (Committee Chair), Christen Erskine (Interim Director), Brian Gross (Vestry Liaison)

Daughters of the King

Our chapter of the Daughters of the King (DOK) is a small but devoted group of members whose mission is Prayer, Service and Evangelism. Each of the Daughters is committed to pray daily for the clergy of our Parish. We offer prayers upon request for healing. We pray for the church. We pray for specific people who have requested prayers for themselves and family members and friends. We pray for our country, especially at this time of turmoil. We pray for all the peoples of the world, and we pray for all chapters of DOK. We can be identified by the small silver modified Greek Fleury cross we wear as a pin near our heart or on a chain around our necks.

Prior to COVID, we met on fourth Sundays following the second service. We have not been meeting regularly due to the pandemic, but we have all paid our dues and are members in good standing and hope to resume meeting on Zoom soon.

You can find out more about the Order of the Daughters of the King at our national website at <https://www.doknational.org/>

Shirley Sugden, President

Earth Guild

For everything, there is a season, and 2020 was something of a dormant season for the Earth Guild. With the disruption of the pandemic, the Earth Guild did not conduct programming in 2020. Our parish's focus on recycling management and reusable serving ware for gatherings was arrested when we stopped gathering. But the work of caring for the buildings and grounds in an environmentally conscious manner did not stop. In January, Epiphany was awarded a grant from Georgia Interfaith Power and Light (GIPL), to retrofit the fluorescent light fixtures throughout Jones Hall, classrooms, and other areas, with energy-saving, LED fixtures and bulbs. The Buildings & Grounds committee installed 200 light fixtures throughout the year and has nearly completed the project. In the coming years, when the building is back in heavier use, Epiphany should see

savings in annual energy costs thanks to this project. Buildings & Grounds also nurtured the new native plantings on the grounds, and the plantings are now beautifully established. Please stay tuned for future announcements on Earth Guild meetings and activities as the ability to gather becomes more available.

Megan Swett, Chair

The Endowment Fund

The Endowment Board met on March 12, 2020 and March 29, 2020 to discuss 19 requests for grants that were received during the application period. The entire board was present for the meetings: Brian Gross, Pam Hall, Bonnie Kissler, Gretchen Maclachlan, Susan Moody, Eric Schulz, Doug Runnion (Vestry Liaison), and Amy Dills-Moore (Priest in charge)

For the readers' reference, the Endowment Fund may distribute grants for the following areas:

- A. Capital improvements, debt reduction, or the building program of the Church of the Epiphany, Inc.
- B. Scholarships or grants to members of the Church of the Epiphany, Inc. for the purpose of attending college, seminary, nursing or medical school; for church-related camping

Recommendations Overview

The Endowment Committee recommendations are shown below with \$ amounts by those categories.

Requester	Request	Amount	Category	Granted
A. Sherrill	sound system upgrade	\$3,236	capital improvement	\$1,125
J. Moody	scholarship	\$300	scholarship/grant	\$300
J. Ryder	organ maintenance	\$865	capital improvement	\$600
L. Fraijo-Paul	nursery supplies/vacuum	\$350	other	\$250
M. Swett	scholarship for seminary	\$2,000	scholarship/grant	\$1,500
P. McNeely	scholarship	\$1,000	scholarship/grant	\$1,000
S. Bryant	continuing ed. for Julie Ryder	\$1,581	other	\$1,000
T. Hairston	tree removal	\$3,300	capital improvement	\$2,500
			Amount granted	\$8,275
			Amount available	\$8,276

Bonnie Kissler, 2020 Chair

or leadership conferences; or such other training which enables members of this congregation to grow in Christian faith and service to God's people.

- C. Outreach into the community including, but not limited to, grants to Episcopal colleges and seminaries, social service agencies, institutions and agencies to which this parish relates, and to special programs designed for those persons in our area who are in spiritual and/or economic need.
- D. Projects of the Episcopal Church at home and overseas.

Preliminary Sorting and Screening

The total sum of money initially requested was \$29,611; the 2020 available funding for grants is \$8,276. The Board discussed each application on March 12, 2020 and narrowed from 19 to 12 based on funding guidelines. The Committee sorted the remaining applications as follows totaling \$17,851:

- Capital improvements, debt reduction or building programs: \$12,020
- Scholarships/educational grants: \$3,700
- Other: \$2,131

The Episcopal Churchwomen

As it has been for all of us, this year has been a challenging one for the Episcopal Church Women (ECW). For January, February, and March, we followed our normal pattern of sandwich making for Emmaus House, business meeting, and program. Additionally, in March we called for the congregation to help us with collecting bar soap and toilet paper to take to the Emmaus House food pantry. All of that changed on March 13. We have conducted the remainder of our business by email and phone with remarkable success. We have given the equivalent amount of money to Emmaus House to substitute for sandwich making, conducted a very productive drive to collect bar soap and toothpaste for the pantry in October, and approved grants from the Harvey Fund in the same remote manner. We plan to continue with our gifts to Emmaus House both monetary and goods. The next collection will be in March. We do miss getting together and are looking forward to the end of this isolation.

Laura Keys, President

Eucharistic Ministers

Obviously, this year has been unlike any other and no exception for the Eucharistic Ministers (EM) and Lay Reader. The EMs did their usual excellent job until March and have been on hiatus since then. Our wonderful readers have been champs at making the adjustment to virtual services. I am so impressed with their willingness and skill in taking on new and different responsibilities. Thanks so much to all of you. Thanks also to our wonderful staff and clergy for leading us in these difficult times. I look forward this year to getting back to regular in-person services. It will be great to have Eucharist again and the EMs will be overjoyed to serve once more.

Martha Rummel, Chair

Finance

The bottom line belongs up here at the top line this year. Epiphany had a surplus for 2020 of approximately \$55,000!

Although 2020 Revenue was down over that of 2019, Expenses were down even more. It's a mixed blessing. This past year followed a deficit of \$23,000 in 2019. Deficits are funded by drawing down on our cash on hand and also by drawing down other accounts. When 2020 began, our Cash Available for Operations was dangerously low, at \$1,839. We ended 2020 with Cash Available for Operations of \$59,007, a terrific improvement. Also, the deficits in several prior years had caused us to take funds from our Capital Reserve to free up funds to pay for Operations.

Approximately \$10,000 of our surplus is spoken for because we had received a temporary forbearance on part of our 2020 pledge to the Diocese. That amount must be repaid this year. The Finance Committee recommended that a prudent action going forward would be to put most of the rest of the surplus in our Capital Reserve Account. This account had dwindled to a low level because it had been used to help fund Operations and also due to several prior year deficits. This account will need to be better funded because there are significant anticipated expenses for our HVAC systems.

The Finance Committee's mission is to provide sound financial guidance, advice, counsel, and perspective to the Vestry and Clergy so the Parish can live out its mission with financial integrity. Its members for 2020 included Philip Anderson (Chair), Randy Shearin (Treasurer), Richard Messner (Junior Warden), the Rev. Amy Dills-Moore (Priest in Charge), Shelle Bryant (Vestry Liaison), Tom Hairston (Member-at-Large), and Susie Boyko (Bookkeeper). Sadly, we lost Tom Hairston in late 2020. What a great group, with Epiphany close to their hearts.

During the year, the Finance Committee, meeting monthly, advised the Vestry during the budgeting process, monitored income and spending throughout the year, and tracked over-budget items. We were assisted in this by the robust reports and active participation of our Bookkeeper, Susie Boyko.

For 2020, Richard, in concert with Randy and Amy, with input from Susie and budget stakeholders, generated our budget. This is a huge task, part art, part science, and part alchemy. A budget is simply a best estimate, based on prior revenues and expenses, pledge commitments, other expected income and known anticipated expenses. The events of 2019 introduced further uncertainty into the budgeting process as Epiphany was in uncharted territory. Then the pandemic arose in 2020 and we stopped gathering together. This impacted both income and expenses. We did not receive substantial expected non-pledge, plate, or rental income. On the other hand, our expenses were decreased, primarily due to not having a full-time Associate Priest as well as not incurring many expenses that relate to fully “inhabiting” our church space and our programs for much of the year. Special thanks go to Amy for her diligence, steady hand, and leadership in improving our financial position.

The Vestry passed an essentially balanced 2020 budget that projected total revenues of \$641,857 and expenses of \$641,934, yielding a projected deficit of \$77. Preliminary figures for 2020 reveal that we met our 2020 pledge income goal. However, our total Revenue fell about \$21,000 short of projections. Even so, final Expenses were approximately \$76,000 less than expected, leading to a tentative surplus of approximate \$55,000. Thank you.

Many thanks to the parish for helping meet our projected pledge revenue goal. Many of you went above and beyond by supplementing your pledge and also by making pledge payments early in the year. This was extremely helpful in keeping our cash position much more positive than in some prior years.

Any 2021 payments toward outstanding 2020 pledges will help further strengthen our cash position. By the time you read this, pledge statements for 2020 will have been sent out. Please prayerfully review your pledge commitments and payments for 2020.

If you have not yet renewed your pledge for 2021, wish to increase it, or wish to pledge for the first time, it is not too late to do so. As of this writing, 142 pledges have been received, totaling \$503,829.

Although we expect some income other than from pledges, the fact that our church is not currently a space where we can gather means that newcomers, visitors, and guests are nearly non-existent. We are not able to host revenue-generating events and we lose our source of rental income. Our monthly Expenses average \$45,000; yearly that amounts to \$540,000, so we have a way to go to fully cover our anticipated expenses for this new year.

Epiphany continues its yearly full financial audit, using Burge and Associates, in accordance with Diocesan requirements for a church at our income level. This process began in 2013. The draft 2020 audit results focusing on the year 2019 have been received and will soon be forwarded to the Diocese after Vestry review. The audit results found that we have a “clean” set of financial records and practices. Previous audits have identified no major issues, but have made recommendations concerning minor improvements in documentation and closer attention to controls. As in the past, we will seek to implement recommendations of the audit team.

During 2020, the Finance Committee generated a Financial Procedures Manual, which was approved by Vestry. It captures in one document what had been contained in a number of various procedural guidelines. It more clearly and comprehensively delineates procedures, guidelines, and responsibilities involving financial matters of Epiphany.

This is the first year that we have not had a substantial mortgage expense because thanks to the Capital Campaign, we were able to retire the \$350,000 plus BB&T mortgage, which dated back many

years. Not having this recurring significant monthly expense means that more money will be available for our programs and operations. Epiphany's only debt is a mortgage of approximately \$118,000 through the Diocese at a very favorable rate. It is now being funded by a \$1,381 monthly transfer from the Capital Campaign Fund.

The 2021 budget is still in preliminary form; it will likely be finalized during the upcoming Vestry Retreat. Randy Shearin, our Treasurer, will be speaking to you about our budget for 2021. A summary budget will be published in a future Parish Notices issuance.

Phil Anderson, Chair

**Episcopal Church of the Epiphany Operating Budget
Revenues & Expenses Final Summary - January through December 2020**

	2020	2020	Favorable	2019
	Actual	Budget	(Unfav)	Prior Year
			To Budget	Actual
Revenues				
Contributions – Pledge	\$556,276	\$516,325	\$39,951	\$529,845
Contributions – Non-Pledge	\$36,769	\$80,000	(\$43,231)	\$78,355
Other Income	\$6,263	\$29,000	(\$22,737)	\$26,627
Restricted Funds Released	\$6,732	\$0	\$6,732	\$8,774
Capital Campaign Funds Released	\$16,571	\$16,532	\$39	\$0
Total Revenues	\$622,611	\$641,857	(\$19,246)	\$643,600
Expenses				
Staff & General				
Clergy Salary & Benefits	\$146,201	\$179,820	\$33,619	\$175,677
Clergy Discretionary	\$2,337	\$7,800	\$5,463	\$5,497
Lay Staff Salary & Benefits	\$198,293	\$211,886	\$13,593	\$216,578
Lay Staff Other	\$41	\$1,200	\$1,159	\$4,397
Office & Administration	\$34,134	\$33,540	(\$594)	\$35,688
Total Staff & General	\$381,007	\$434,246	\$53,239	\$437,838
Diocesan Pledge	\$63,183	\$63,259	\$76	\$64,975
Mortgage Payments	\$16,574	\$16,532	(\$42)	\$18,786
Buildings & Grounds	\$71,754	\$77,932	\$6,178	\$82,242
Adult Education	\$601	\$800	\$199	\$6,569
Children & Youth	\$9,022	\$14,715	\$5,693	\$15,672
Music & Liturgy	\$2,569	\$6,700	\$4,131	\$9,211
Outreach	\$18,981	\$20,000	\$1,019	\$22,927
Parish Life	\$3,336	\$7,000	\$3,664	\$7,611
Stewardship	\$0	\$750	\$750	\$744
Total Expenses	\$567,026	\$641,934	\$74,907	\$666,605
Surplus/Deficit	\$55,584	(\$77)	\$55,661	(\$23,004)

Flower Guild

This year was a different one for us all in so many ways. The Flower Guild was transitioning from the dedicated leadership of co-chairs, Leah Felcher and Nadine Howarth with a bit of trepidation, though not realizing what lay just ahead. The Guild learned to be very flexible in our approach to glorifying our sacred spaces. We are grateful to all who supported us during this year of challenges. Our guild is funded by personal donations made in honor of loved one and special events. We are most appreciative to those who continued to support our ministry during what was a tricky period. We were determined to highlight the Zoom services with arrangements at the homes and office spaces of the serving priests. Finding flowers and arrangements that met these new requirements was a learning curve.

The joy of having worship led in our nave is a wondrous thing. We have missed the space and the ability to work together. We are so very grateful to our beloved Priest-in Charge for all her flexibility and encouragement as we learned to navigate our flower delivery service and the transition to highlighting our Zoom services in the nave. It has been a journey. We are also grateful to Julie Ryder for her lovely photos of the arrangements to highlight them not only for the service and also for the designated donation.

We are hoping to add new members to share in the glory of adorning our holy church. Please know your interest in serving is the main element to joining the guild. There are flower classes available and new recruits are teamed with other members to learn the skills necessary, which builds confidence to handle arrangements solo. We definitely support one another. And the creative spirit that is generated is a blessing.

The guild is fortunate to have many talented and inspired members. Thank you for your devoted service especially during the early days of the pandemic; Wallace Bryan-McGrath, Cathy McKinney, Lisa Daily, Leah Felcher, Anna Democko, Lauren Davis and Margaret Ciccarelli. The guild is a

joyous fellowship and we look forward to the ways in which we are called to serve Epiphany.

Sybil McCullar and Polly Nodine, Co-Chairs

The Harvey Fund

Meeting by Zoom and exchanging emails and phone calls, the Catherine D. Harvey Legacy Fund was able to make seven grants in 2020 for a total of \$19,000 on the recommendation of the Advisory Board and with the approval of the ECW. The recipients and grants made were: Emmaus House-\$5,000; Our House-\$5,000; Amani Women Center-\$2,000; Clarkston Community Center-\$2,000; the Epiphany Outreach Committee's refugee project-\$2,000; Project Transformation North Georgia-\$2,000; and the Global Village Project-\$1,000. Because we were in the middle of formalizing the process, there were two grant cycles in 2019. We have now amended the documents to reflect one grant cycle going forward, to be administered in October of each year following the payout from the Fund received in September.

Linda Ryder-Wolf has been the Vestry Outreach representative on the Board. That will change after the newly constituted Vestry meets and the representative of the Outreach Committee is named. Thank you, Linda, for your help in getting the Harvey Fund Advisory Board inaugurated and this process off the ground.

Submitted by the Harvey Fund Advisory Board: Laura Keys, Erin Braden, Linda Ryder-Wolf, Sabra Hanson, and Evelyn Stewart and the ECW

Laura Keys, ECW President

Music & Liturgy

The year began in a normal way (I wonder how many of our reports are starting with these words?) . . .

We celebrated our feast day on Sunday, January 5, complete with a stellar Epiphany pageant and a Bishop visitation. Choir rehearsals resumed for all ages, and along with the weekly singing by the Epiphany Choir at our liturgies, the combined

Beginning and Intermediate Choristers joined the Junior Choir to sing on the last Sunday before Lent, February 23. On February 25, we proclaimed our last “Alleluias” before burying the banner and burning the palms from 2019. The Epiphany Choir and the Junior Choir sang again for our Ash Wednesday liturgies on February 26, we managed to observe the first two Sundays of Lent in person as a parish, and our choirs and ensembles continued rehearsing until March 11. The last in-person liturgy in Epiphany’s nave took place on March 12, the funeral for Oz Adams.

Our first Zoom liturgy took place on Sunday, March 15, and we “live-streamed” for the last two Sundays of Lent; before we knew how dangerous singing was and is, we were able to record hymns and anthems for Palm Sunday, all of Holy Week, and Easter, including members of the Hildegard Ensemble recording *The Exsultet* for the Easter Vigil. Our Holy Week and Easter observances were enhanced even more by Ann Fowler’s recordings of the Stations of the Cross and the Gospel reading on Easter; the work of the Altar Guild and the Flower Guild to enhance our home worship spaces; and the turning of a new shorter stand for the Paschal Candle by Bill Graves.

Our Sunday online worship continued during Eastertide, highlighted by a Youth Sunday that was nearly entirely led by Epiphany’s youth; we celebrated Pentecost and stayed connected through our common worship, even if we couldn’t be together in the nave. Since March 16, daily Morning Prayer has been offered via Zoom and will likely continue even after the pandemic subsides. The Wednesday Noonday Prayer and Eucharist liturgy returned online in May as Noonday Prayer and a Service of Healing and also continues in that form until we come back. After a wonderful morning online Blessing of the Animals on St. Francis Day, many members brought their pets to a drive-through blessing during the afternoon.

In these past four months, members of the Epiphany Choir and Epiphany Ringers prepared music for our Christmas celebrations: the Epiphany Ringers

gathered for two days in November to learn and then record an arrangement of “Joy to the World” that was seen on Christmas Eve and heard on Christmas Day; the Epiphany Choir learned four (!) new anthems through online rehearsals and home practice that were heard throughout the Christmas season. Each choir member made individual recordings of these anthems that I then assembled to make the finished pieces, complete with organ accompaniment in some cases.

Beginning on All Saints’ Day—when we were able to celebrate the Sacrament of Holy Baptism—we have held distanced and masked outdoor Sunday liturgies in the paved parking lot (thanks to Patrick Bryant, we can actually hear out there); our online services returned to streaming from Epiphany, although now clergy and staff are in separate offices and the nave.

Over 275 PowerPoint presentations and countless photographs later, we continue together each week to live out our Baptismal Covenant through music and liturgy.

Julie Ryder, Organist & Choirmaster

Outreach

In 2020, Epiphany continued its tradition of providing monthly financial support to Church of the Holy Comforter; Decatur Cooperative Ministry (DCM); Decatur-area Emergency Assistance Ministry (DEAM); Emmaus House Ministries; and Holy Comforter. Meals were provided by our Feeding Ministry to men at the Gateway Shelter in January and February. In March, the Gateway Shelter no longer accepted meals from volunteer organizations and the Feeding Ministry suspended activities for the remainder of 2020. Epiphany was able to provide meals to DCM’s Hagar’s House, a transitional shelter for homeless women and children in Decatur, by paying a caterer. Thank you to all who contributed!

Our refugee ministry continued in spite of the pandemic. Zelalem Desta, Epiphany’s recipient of its refugee scholarship, continued his studies in the Aviation and Aeronautics program at Jacksonville

University. Three refugee families received financial support for utilities and rent thanks to the Harvey fund and DEAM. We also provided diapers, clothes furniture, and cribs to many needy families. Three refugee mothers received tutoring in English before the pandemic

Our Haiti ministry has undergone change in 2020. The Standing Committee of the Episcopal Diocese of Haiti appointed a new Executive Director of BTI, replacing our partner of over 10 years Kesner Ajax. As a result, Epiphany's Haiti Committee is currently reevaluating its relationship with BTI and discerning when and how to move forward. A visit by the Haiti Committee to BTI will be undertaken when possible.

For the first time, Epiphany provided financial support to Threshold Ministry, a program supporting economically disadvantaged men, women and children in Decatur.

For the Feast of St. Nicholas, we had a successful shoe drive for homeless men and women who attend Church of the Common Ground, a church community on the streets of Atlanta. Epiphany also collected gift cards, stuffed animals and balls as part of Christmas at Emmaus House.

In 2020, we lost several members of the Outreach Committee through moves, retirement and fatigue (members have been active for many years).

Our hope and prayers for 2021 are to see where and how Epiphany is being called to seek and serve Christ. During the first part of 2021, the entire Epiphany community will be engaged in this discernment.

We extend a heartfelt thank you to all of you!

Bev Lorenzo and Lisa Daily, Outreach Co-Chairs

Parish Life

What a year. To write this report it became necessary to do some sleuthing to even remember our events last year. Talk about a time warp. If you can remember, we did host the Epiphany Feast, which was a potluck. We have come to appreciate how

much more intimate a potluck is versus having this event catered. There is certainly more effort involved not only for our committee but for the parish too, of course. We did have some logistical challenges that we noted and will remedy in the future.

Our last event of the year was to help host the Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper with the Youth. They really did all the work; we just did the fluffing, setting up tables and maybe some of the clean-up. Again, who can remember?

We were touched by the number of people who expressed their disappointment that we were not able to hold other events. One especially noted was our newest event, Oktoberfest, which does say something about this Parish, and that is meant in a good way.

The committee is in a hopeful mood and is thinking of ways to hold some social distancing events in the near future. One idea is to book the Refuge Coffee Truck for the parking lot, maybe when the weather warms a bit and the COVID numbers are down.

The committee members who served this past year were; Charlie Slater, Holly Slater, Judy Jarady, Sabra Hanson, Sally Walker, Patricia Price, Mary McCall Cash, Sybil McCullar, Joel Fowler, Stephanie Everett, Pam Tipton, David Thierry and Bob Ballou. We have a wonderful committee and the dedication they show to Parish Life is truly outstanding. Our Vestry Liaison was Linda Ryder-Wolfe. And although, our year was a short one, Linda's active support was much appreciated.

As always, we welcome suggestions and comments on the work we are called on to do. Please share any ideas you may have for events that can be held observing social distancing guidelines.

Please know we are deeply missing hosting our beloved events and seeing the parish gather together in joy, support of one another and to the glory of God.

Polly Nodine, Chair

Pastoral Care

The Pastoral Care Committee was reorganized in early 2020 under the leadership of Alex Sherrill before his ordination and departure to begin his ministry as priest. David Draper succeeded him as chair. Two challenges faced the committee early on. Our first task was both to define and to update the roles we would assume as we work with and support the pastoral ministry of the clergy in reaching out to parishioners. Our second task was to adjust to the reality of social and physical separation in the face of the pandemic.

The fundamental work, however, is unchanged; the Pastoral Care committee's mission is to support those facing illness, loss, or life transitions as well as to share in moments of celebration and joy. Some traditional aspects of pastoral care like Eucharistic visitations and healing prayers during church services have been temporarily suspended due to COVID. Other ministries continue such as the Grief Pastoral Care Group, which now meets via Zoom. We have adapted in other ways, also. This year we redoubled our contacts to those who are age 75 and older to include regular cards and notes. Throughout the year, we continued to include those requesting our prayers in our individual devotions.

We also adopted a suggestion by our Associate Priest Nicole Lambelet and ordered postcards featuring scenes of sacred places on our campus. The cards, designed by our Parish Administrator Shea McNutt, were divided among various members of the committee, along with several volunteers, who added handwritten messages on the postcards and then mailed them to over 400 active households during the twelve days of Christmas.

Other members of the 2020 Pastoral Care Committee include Vestry Liaisons Erin Braden and Dennis Edmiston, Cecilia Democko, Tom Democko, the Rev. Ruth Healy (retired), Jarrod Moody, Susan Moody, Nancy Thompson, Pam Tipton, Sherry Wallace, and Larry Wilcox. There were many other parishioners who contributed both directly to the

committee's work and indirectly through their own support to those with needs.

More information about the Pastoral Care at Epiphany is available at epiphany.org under the "Ministries" menu. The direct address is <https://www.epiphany.org/pastoral-care>. The page also includes links to community resources.

David Draper, Chair

Racial Justice Group

The Racial Justice Group formed last summer guided by our baptismal call to seek and serve Christ in all persons, love our neighbor as ourselves, strive for justice and peace among all people, and respect the dignity of every human being.

How is our faith calling us to act for racial justice? This ongoing question was brought into sharp relief during 2020 as our nation once again grappled with continued horrifying acts of racial violence and systemic inequity. Our desire is to seek out how we as Christians are to live fully into our values as followers of Jesus in a racist society. Our mission is to work for racial equity and to bring an end to white supremacy, with our faith being the foundation of all our efforts. We welcome all, and we are grateful for your challenging questions and conversations about this work.

The group initially organized around several efforts:

1. Creation of an informational resource page for the Epiphany community, which includes suggested books for all ages, videos, advocacy and educational organizations, and podcasts, to name a few. The resource information is available on the [Racial Justice page](#) of our Epiphany website. We consider this page a continuously evolving toolbox for parishioners to utilize. We welcome and appreciate your suggestions for additional resources.
2. Members of the group contributed articles in the Epiphany newsletter on topics including voting

and elections information, criminal justice challenges, and personal reflections.

3. We virtually conducted our first educational series, selecting the “Faith and Racial Equity” program created by *JustFaith Ministries*. During August, eight members of the group trained as facilitators and worked to adapt the series to a virtual format. In September, we held a virtual opening retreat with 32 parishioners (including one in Oregon!), which launched the series for the next 8-9 weeks.

Through the fall, four small groups of eight met weekly to learn about and discuss the economic systems, public policies, cultural norms, and hidden biases that empower some and oppress others. As part of the curriculum, participants read and discussed the challenging content in *White Fragility*, by Robin DiAngelo, *I’m Still Here: Black Dignity in a World Made for Whiteness*, by Austin Channing Brown, *40 Days of Prayer: For the Liberation of American Descendants of Slavery*, presented by the Angela Project, plus other materials.

The small size of these groups along with specific community of trust guidelines provided a safe space for honest conversations, dialogue, and a deeper understanding of how systemic racism, racial biases, and disparities play out in our lives. Participants spoke for themselves, and fellow participants listened collaboratively, without judgement or partisanship. It was a valuable opportunity to grow in our faith.

Each session ended with conversation about possible individual and church community action steps, both big and small, that could be included in our baptismal work. The series culminated in a final meeting reuniting the participants, where we discussed these action steps.

Moving forward, the racial justice group will organize around the action steps we identified during the *JustFaith* series, which include education, advocacy and how we create a more welcoming church.

We are acutely aware that the subject matter of white supremacy and systemic racism is uncomfortable and difficult, but believe this work is integral to our life as Christians. Paradoxically, we find there is great joy, hope, and love in this work. We welcome your participation, input, challenges, and questions.

The 2020 formation group members included Cassie Grimsley Ackerley, Ben Ackerley, Evan Bassett, Lisa Daily, Peter Dodge, Kaylie & Evan Gibbs, Kristin Mann, Amanda Kay Seals, Annie Strahan, and the Rev. Nicole Lambelet. As we discern how to live out our baptismal covenant, we are grateful for Nicole and Amy’s guidance and support. Please feel free to reach out to any one of us with your comments, questions, or concerns.

Erin Braden and Kay Lee, Co-Chairs

Stewardship Report 2021 – For Such a Time as This

As I sit down to write this report for our upcoming Annual Meeting, I am overwhelmed by images and memories of this campaign, and simultaneously at a loss for words to describe it. We thoughtfully chose our stewardship campaign theme when all our hearts were heavy with the impact of this pandemic. “For Such a Time as This” spoke to each of us and we knew it was the message we wanted to bring to the parish during our efforts. If we ever wondered if the Stewardship message needs to be an all-year message, this year certainly convinced us how true that is. We saw our job as encouraging each of you to stand in the gap and help Epiphany come out on the other side of this extraordinary time. And you did!

We had to learn how to communicate the stewardship message in an entirely new way! How do I thank all the people, staff, committee members and parishioners alike, who helped us create a successful stewardship campaign? How do I describe the efforts it took to create new, digital ways to make giving and pledging to Epiphany possible? What could we do to be heard in this Zoom, Hollywood Square environment that was now our Epiphany gathering

place? And what a wonderful experience to have young and longtime parishioners and committee members alike come together in this amazing digital age! We have learned how to tell the Epiphany story in so many more ways. That knowledge isn't going anywhere. Thanks to the Stewardship Committee: Lisa Daily, Annie Strahan, Edie Brush, Richard Messner, Katie Pedersen, and Melinda Kelleher.

As of this report, we have a commitment in pledges of \$507,220 with 143 pledging households. This level of pledging will enable Epiphany to go forward with our present staff and allow us to build forward and come out on the other side of these times. It is only because of all the support and love from the entire Epiphany family that this is possible.

As an example of that commitment, we have our last video of the 2021 Stewardship Campaign that we would like to share with you during this meeting.

Peggy Palmiter, Vestry Liaison

Ushers

Epiphany's ushers certainly miss being the smiling faces everyone meets as they enter the church. We started out the year doing what we do best—handing out bulletins, assisting our parishioners find empty pew space, collecting the offering and directing parishioners to the communion table. Then due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we were halted from all of our duties—we miss hugging our friends and neighbors, we missed comforting families during these terrible times when even they could not gather to celebrate the lives of loved ones they had lost. And we could not welcome the newly baptized into the arms of Epiphany.

I know times will get better and we will return to those crazy feast days like Easter and Christmas, and we will even welcome having more people than we know what to do with—what a pleasant change that will be!

We had several new ushers this year who never had time to get comfortable in their duties, so hopefully sometime later this year they will get their chance.

During the pandemic, one of our most faithful team leaders at 8:45 a.m.—Anne Warner—moved out of state to be closer to her family in Virginia. She will definitely be missed! So if you have any interest in joining us as an usher at either service, please contact John Keys (jhkeys@gmail.com) or Margo (mtimberl@bellsouth.net); and when we can again gather together in prayer and thanksgiving, we would love to have you with us.

Margo Timberlake (8:45) & John Keys (11:15), Co-Chairs

Vergers

A verger is a person, usually a layperson, who assists in the ordering of religious services, particularly in Anglican churches. The office's title comes from the ceremonial rod which a carries, a virge (from the Latin virga, "branch, staff, rod").

During the service itself, a verger's main duty is ceremonially to precede the religious participants as they move about the church; he or she does not typically take any speaking part in the service itself. Vergers often play a very prominent role "behind the scenes"—discreetly shepherding participants through the service and assisting the clergy.

The vergers were on hiatus due to COVID, but resumed their role in a modified way when outdoor services were introduced in the fall.

Diane Mundy, Head Verger

Youth Ministry

When I arrived at Epiphany last year, I was glad to find a community that was working hard to maintain a vibrant and committed youth group, and I was excited to do my part to aid and coordinate that effort. Obviously, the pandemic has presented unique and unforeseeable challenges. Nevertheless, I'm pleased to say that our volunteers and youth have weathered these challenges and maintained a consistent and reliable program. Prior to the pandemic, we were averaging 12 youth at our regular Sunday gatherings, with up to 30 attending special events like the super bowl party and the Shrove

Tuesday pancake dinner. One week after the pandemic lockdowns went into effect, we transitioned into a completely virtual youth program. Though initial attendance did drop, we were able to continue weekly youth events throughout the spring and summer and, by fall, we were back up to a consistent 8-10 youth in attendance each week, with 15+ attending periodic special events. During the early stages of the pandemic, we also were able to maintain the Epiphany tradition of Youth Sunday, with five youth serving in liturgical roles, and three youth offering sermons.

This past fall presented us with numerous opportunities to adapt and try new things. With continuing COVID restrictions, in-person formation was off the table. So, the Youth Committee and I worked together to reimagine the Sunday School curriculum. We re-centered it around a weekly devotional email that included text from the *Journey 2 Adulthood* curriculum and a brief video reflection from different members of our staff and community. These video devotionals have opened the door to wider congregational participation in our youth offerings—something I would like to expand upon in the coming semester.

In addition to the weekly emails, this fall also saw the addition of three virtual formation small groups and a biweekly youth Evening Prayer service, held outdoors at Epiphany. While Zoom fatigue has decreased the viability of the virtual small groups, the youth Evening Prayer services continue to be well attended and will be the focus of our formation program this semester.

I cannot overstate the incredible dedication of our youth, parents, and volunteers this year. The effects of COVID on our ministry have been unprecedented. Virtual youth group is new for everyone, and it has not always been an easy transition. Parishes across the diocese have struggled with regular attendance, and some have chosen to wait the pandemic out before resuming regular youth events. Thanks to the youth of Epiphany's commitment to each other and to the church, we have not had to make that choice, and we have continued to provide a space for the youth of our community to gather and deepen their faith.

Matt Schramm, Director of Youth Ministries