



St. Benedict's Episcopal Church



2025 Annual Report

St. Benedict's Episcopal Church

Annual Meeting 2025

AGENDA

- Welcome/Opening Prayer
 - Potluck
- The Year 2024 in Photos
 - Call to Order
- Approval of Annual Meeting Minutes from 2024
- Elections of Vestry Members and Diocesan Delegates
 - 2025 Budget Discussion and Vote
 - Priest-in-charge Report
 - Presiding Warden Report
 - Committee Reports
 - Appreciations and Awards
 - Closing Prayer

VESTRY AND DELEGATE NOMINATIONS

Vestry Nominations:

- *Barbara Hirahara (3 Year Term)*
 - *Bob Pelfrey (3 Year Term)*
 - *Letty Cotta (3 Year Term)*
 - *Jane Wu (3 Year Term)*

Nominations for Deanery and Diocesan Delegates:

- *Sandy Fisher*
- *Lisa Gonzalez*
- *John Horsley*

MINUTES OF LAST ANNUAL MEETING

Sunday January 28th, 2024

Meeting called to order at 12:30 pm by Presiding Warden Maureen Titus and opened in prayer by Rev. Jen Crompton

Approval of Annual Meeting Minutes from 2023 by acclaim.

Election of Vestry and Parish Council and Deanery and Diocesan Delegates. Slate of candidates was elected by acclaim.

New Vestry and Parish Council members are

- Michael Lucas, Brian Spolarich

Deanery and Diocesan Delegates are

- Lisa Gonzalez, Diana Hammerlund. Alternate is Bryson McKelvey.

Financial Report presented by Treasurer Lisa Gonzalez.

Motion to approve the 2023 financial reports as presented by Maureen Titus second by Diana Hammerlund.

Motion passed.

Motion to approve the 2024 budget as presented as amended below by Don Maruska second by Sandy Fisher.

Motion passed.

Amend: Abundance Shop gift should be \$70k

Parish Profile presented by Brian Spolarich

Profile has been approved by the bishop and next step is to post the profile and position

The terms of call will be 3/4 time with housing assistance

The part-time position is for a priest-in-charge

Presiding Warden's Report presented by Maureen Titus

Committee Reports

Presentation of Congregational Cloister Groups by Pamela Bleisch

Appreciate and Awards

Thank you to retiring Vestry member

Helen Schnieders

Thank you to our staff

Hannah-Jaye Matthews

Above and Beyond Award

Michael and Ann Lucas

Alan Kiste

Vestry Cross

Brian Spolarich

Thank you to the Wardens

Maureen Titus

Sandy Fisher

2024 BALANCE SHEET

2:48 PM
01/21/25
Accrual Basis

St. Benedict's Episcopal Church Balance Sheet As of December 31, 2024

	Dec 31, 24	Dec 31, 23	\$ Change	% Change
ASSETS				
Current Assets				
Checking/Savings				
Bank of the Sierra - Savings				
Building Fund	16,192.24	6,031.77	10,160.47	168.45%
Blessing the Future	350.03	200.03	150.00	74.99%
Central Cst Readers' Theatre	1,377.22	1,307.22	70.00	5.36%
KCBX Fund	748.85	747.82	1.03	0.14%
Landscaping Fund	3,253.78	2,459.23	794.55	32.31%
Music	10,110.08	8,144.03	1,966.05	24.14%
Mcleod Fund	8,036.99	8,025.87	11.12	0.14%
Rector Search Fund	7,806.02	9,018.58	-1,212.56	-13.45%
Rev. Faye Hogan Fund	31,298.51	31,255.27	43.24	0.14%
Shuman Fund	32,402.74	0.00	32,402.74	100.0%
Stock Sale Proceeds	62,210.02	62,210.02	0.00	0.0%
Shields Bequest Fund-2021	11,650.00	50,000.00	-38,350.00	-76.7%
Operating Savings	63,252.18	48,674.48	14,577.70	29.95%
Total Bank of the Sierra - Savings	248,688.66	228,074.32	20,614.34	9.04%
Restricted Funds				
US Bank - Rector's Fund	3,360.03	2,897.11	462.92	15.98%
Bank/Sierra - Rector's Fund	0.00	50.00	-50.00	-100.0%
US Bank - Trailblazer's Account	0.00	1,560.35	-1,560.35	-100.0%
Mechanics - Laundry Love	9,404.37	0.00	9,404.37	100.0%
US Bank - Laundry Love	0.00	9,785.73	-9,785.73	-100.0%
Total Restricted Funds	12,764.40	14,293.19	-1,528.79	-10.7%
Unrestricted Funds				
Paypal Account	0.00	489.56	-489.56	-100.0%
Bank of the Sierra - Checking	48,367.87	40,972.89	7,394.98	18.05%
Total Unrestricted Funds	48,367.87	41,462.45	6,905.42	16.66%
Endowment-State Street Global A	42,377.51	37,908.63	4,468.88	11.79%
Total Checking/Savings	352,198.44	321,738.59	30,459.85	9.47%
Other Current Assets				
Due for Reimbursement	239.98	239.98	0.00	0.0%
Due from the Rector's Fund	243.95	148.57	95.38	64.2%
Due from the Abundance Shop	4,440.22	2,945.21	1,495.01	50.76%
TD Ameritrade Account				
Operating Fund	4,806.66	4,806.66	0.00	0.0%
Building Fund	495.82	495.82	0.00	0.0%
Total TD Ameritrade Account	5,302.48	5,302.48	0.00	0.0%

St. Benedict's Episcopal Church
Balance Sheet
As of December 31, 2024

	Dec 31, 24	Dec 31, 23	\$ Change	% Change
Prepaid P & L Insurance	2,318.22	1,893.83	424.39	22.41%
Prepaid Umbrella Insurance	474.33	350.29	124.04	35.41%
Prepaid WC Insurance	4,648.09	1,977.55	2,670.54	135.04%
Total Other Current Assets	17,667.27	12,857.91	4,809.36	37.4%
Total Current Assets	369,865.71	334,596.50	35,269.21	10.54%
Fixed Assets				
Stations of the Cross	7,842.60	7,842.60	0.00	0.0%
Sprinkler System	205,986.55	205,986.55	0.00	0.0%
Long Room Build Out	129,339.49	129,339.49	0.00	0.0%
Church Building & Improvements	793,821.89	755,471.89	38,350.00	5.08%
Kitchen Build-Out	41,090.83	41,090.83	0.00	0.0%
Parking Lot Lights	10,126.00	10,126.00	0.00	0.0%
Sound System	20,368.76	20,368.76	0.00	0.0%
Furniture & Equipment	46,899.39	46,899.39	0.00	0.0%
Land	280,500.00	280,500.00	0.00	0.0%
Land Improvements	9,612.29	9,612.29	0.00	0.0%
Total Fixed Assets	1,545,587.80	1,507,237.80	38,350.00	2.54%
TOTAL ASSETS	1,915,453.51	1,841,834.30	73,619.21	4.0%
LIABILITIES & EQUITY				
Liabilities				
Current Liabilities				
Accounts Payable				
Accounts Payable	-1,708.77	4,884.32	-6,593.09	-134.99%
Total Accounts Payable	-1,708.77	4,884.32	-6,593.09	-134.99%
Credit Cards				
FIA Card Services - Credit Card	0.00	-9.79	9.79	100.0%
Total Credit Cards	0.00	-9.79	9.79	100.0%
Other Current Liabilities				
Restricted Fund Accounts				
Stefanie Shuman Fund	32,402.74	0.00	32,402.74	100.0%
Rector Search Fund	9,030.12	9,018.58	11.54	0.13%
Ukraine Fund	70.00	3,479.22	-3,409.22	-97.99%
Landscaping Support	3,253.78	2,459.23	794.55	32.31%
Shields Bequest Fund-2021	11,650.00	50,000.00	-38,350.00	-76.7%
Music Fund	10,110.08	8,144.03	1,966.05	24.14%
Organ Fund	500.00	500.00	0.00	0.0%
KCBX Fund	748.85	747.82	1.03	0.14%
CC Readers' Theatre	1,377.22	1,307.22	70.00	5.36%
Vacation Bible School	1,218.16	1,218.16	0.00	0.0%
Earthcare	656.00	646.00	10.00	1.55%

St. Benedict's Episcopal Church
Balance Sheet
As of December 31, 2024

	Dec 31, 24	Dec 31, 23	\$ Change	% Change
Community Dinners	1,167.33	0.00	1,167.33	100.0%
Total Restricted Fund Accounts	72,184.28	77,520.26	-5,335.98	-6.88%
Deferred Revenue Accounts				
Deferred Diocesan Gift - 2023	0.00	4,931.48	-4,931.48	-100.0%
Deferred Landscaping Pledges	1,065.00	0.00	1,065.00	100.0%
Deferred Building Pledge Income	3,500.00	1,000.00	2,500.00	250.0%
Deferred Pledge Income	7,600.00	0.00	7,600.00	100.0%
Carol Baker Fund	100.00	100.00	0.00	0.0%
Total Deferred Revenue Accounts	12,265.00	6,031.48	6,233.52	103.35%
Direct Deposit Liabilities	-4,239.91	230.87	-4,470.78	-1,936.49%
Clearing	0.00	-253.70	253.70	100.0%
Payroll Liabilities				
CA - ETT Payable	2.64	2.66	-0.02	-0.75%
CA SUTA Payable	89.45	89.99	-0.54	-0.6%
CA SDI Payable	51.94	24.16	27.78	114.98%
CA Taxes Withheld	55.39	20.33	35.06	172.46%
Fed WH Tax Payable	1,318.00	164.00	1,154.00	703.66%
Fed Medicare Payable	175.66	125.12	50.54	40.39%
Fed Social Security Payable	751.12	535.10	216.02	40.37%
Total Payroll Liabilities	2,444.20	961.36	1,482.84	154.24%
Total Other Current Liabilities	82,653.57	84,490.27	-1,836.70	-2.17%
Total Current Liabilities	80,944.80	89,364.80	-8,420.00	-9.42%
Long Term Liabilities				
Note Payable - Bank of Sierra	0.00	14,693.80	-14,693.80	-100.0%
Total Long Term Liabilities	0.00	14,693.80	-14,693.80	-100.0%
Total Liabilities	80,944.80	104,058.60	-23,113.80	-22.21%
Equity				
Endowment Fund	42,064.64	37,908.63	4,156.01	10.96%
Church Land & Building Fund	1,507,237.80	1,507,237.80	0.00	0.0%
Operating Fund Retained Earning	192,371.94	100,102.78	92,269.16	92.17%
Net Income	92,834.33	92,526.49	307.84	0.33%
Total Equity	1,834,508.71	1,737,775.70	96,733.01	5.57%
TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY	1,915,453.51	1,841,834.30	73,619.21	4.0%

2024 PROFIT AND LOSS

2:42 PM
01/21/25
Accrual Basis

St. Benedict's Episcopal Church Profit & Loss Prev Year Comparison January through December 2024

	Jan - Dec 24	Jan - Dec 23	\$ Change	% Change
Ordinary Income/Expense				
Income				
Abundance Shop	54,000.00	63,000.00	-9,000.00	-14.29%
Annual Pledge Income	103,660.00	124,875.00	-21,215.00	-16.99%
Loose Offering	19,133.58	20,674.00	-1,540.42	-7.45%
Flowers	430.00	630.00	-200.00	-31.75%
Fund Raising Activities	796.61	1,340.34	-543.73	-40.57%
Honoraria	100.00	120.00	-20.00	-16.67%
Interest Income	77.70	74.61	3.09	4.14%
Memorials & Legacies	1,300.00	1,175.00	125.00	10.64%
Total Income	179,497.89	211,888.95	-32,391.06	-15.29%
Direct Church Operating Expense				
Church Building Expense	25,765.60	33,707.64	-7,942.04	-23.56%
Church Land Support	12,198.16	17,939.95	-5,741.79	-32.01%
Church Program Expenses	1,891.50	1,228.12	663.38	54.02%
Education & Study	219.73	349.81	-130.08	-37.19%
Music Ministry	8,772.56	7,894.13	878.43	11.13%
Outreach Expense	20,504.00	24,303.55	-3,799.55	-15.63%
Priest-in- Charge Expenses	24,421.83	0.00	24,421.83	100.0%
Rector Compensation & Benefits	0.00	52,892.43	-52,892.43	-100.0%
Trailblazer Priest Expense	21,277.15	23,044.16	-1,767.01	-7.67%
Supply Clergy Expense	2,385.00	2,935.00	-550.00	-18.74%
Worship, Prayer & Spirituality	8,103.80	7,382.80	721.00	9.77%
Direct Church Operating Expense	125,539.33	171,677.59	-46,138.26	-26.88%
Net Revenue Before Administrative Expense	53,958.56	40,211.36	13,747.20	34.19%
Administrative Expense				
Administrative Expense	22,384.24	19,486.57	2,897.67	14.87%
Priest-in-Charge Search Expense	1,224.10	0.00	1,224.10	100.0%
Financing Expense	817.20	1,319.01	-501.81	-38.04%
Payroll Expenses	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.0%
Total Expense	24,425.54	20,805.58	3,619.96	17.4%
Net Operating Fund Income	29,533.02	19,405.78	10,127.24	52.19%

St. Benedict's Episcopal Church
Profit & Loss Prev Year Comparison
January through December 2024

	Jan - Dec 24	Jan - Dec 23	\$ Change	% Change
Other Income/Expense				
Other Income				
Laundry Love Income	453.64	2,634.69	-2,181.05	-82.78%
Rev. Faye Hogan Memorial	43.24	31,255.27	-31,212.03	-99.86%
Diocesan Gift	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.0%
Shields Bequest Income	38,350.00	5,000.00	33,350.00	667.0%
Blessing the Future	8,050.47	5,840.59	2,209.88	37.84%
Memorial Gifts	0.00	101.15	-101.15	-100.0%
Building Fund Pledge Income	9,320.00	8,270.00	1,050.00	12.7%
Building Fund Loose Offering	3,285.00	6,342.00	-3,057.00	-48.2%
Building Account Interest	14.95	26.83	-11.88	-44.28%
McLeod Fund Interest	11.12	12.30	-1.18	-9.59%
Endowment Income	4,218.88	14,128.42	-9,909.54	-70.14%
Clergy Funds Income	5,222.87	5,283.20	-60.33	-1.14%
Total Other Income	68,970.17	78,894.45	-9,924.28	-12.58%
Other Expense				
Clergy Funds Expenses	5,668.86	5,773.74	-104.88	-1.82%
Total Other Expense	5,668.86	5,773.74	-104.88	-1.82%
Net Other Income	63,301.31	73,120.71	-9,819.40	-13.43%
Net Income	92,834.33	92,526.49	307.84	0.33%

PRESIDING WARDEN ANNUAL REPORT

What a year it has been, again!!!! As I review the calendar, I am amazed what St. Benedict's has accomplished with so many diverse situations and events. Gratitude is still the word foremost in my thinking.

We hosted Bishop Lucinda on March 10 and throughout the year we were blessed with Rev. Jen., Rev. Karen, Sister Greta, Rev. Mike, Rev. Art, Chaplin Berkeley, and Canon Martha to keep our Sundays filled with thoughtful sermons that were special to everyone. Deacon Sharon during the summer to help with services as well. Not to leave out our lay ministers, Brian, Michael, Lisa and Sandy. They have been a fantastic resource for us and much gratitude from me.

Rev. Jen Crompton was an integral part of St. Benedict's in 2024 providing Sunday services twice a month and community outreach with the Trailblazer team (Sandy, Cathy, Barbara Hirahara) The Abundance Shop pop-up with coffee and cookies was very popular for many people who stop by. Rev. Jen helped me with many decision-making issues. I am grateful for their presence and counsel. We wish Rev. Jen well in the new church they have been called to in the Monterey area.

A year can't go by without some infrastructure problems. We had landscaping water leaks, septic tank pumping and a pressure tank issue for the church water supply. If you didn't know this, then we handled it well. Ron Thompson was the go-to person for these issues and I so appreciate his time and knowledge when I called for assistance.

The solar project has been completed, and we have new roofing under that long-awaited project. I have requested that Michael Lucas do a brief report for the Annual Report on this very program. Thank you, Michael for your expertise and time.

The Abundance Shop is continuing to go above and beyond expectations due to our Manager, Esta Kandarian, and all the dedicated volunteers and community of Los Osos.

Each committee continues to accomplish remarkable love and care for the community. Please read each committee report to learn what has been done this past year. Volunteers for Prado, Los Osos Community Dinners, Laundry Love and Earthcare programs exceed expectations every year. You may be inspired to join a committee or help with one of the programs, after you read the reports and understand how we are truly reaching out to our neighbors. We are following the concept of “caring for Jesus” by helping those in our community who are in need.

The Altar Guild, Sacristan Committee and the Liturgy Committee have been amazing again this past year. They have been an integral part of our services. We couldn't do the services without their time and knowledge every Sunday. We have a music director, Paul, who is extremely talented, and we appreciate his time with us. Read his report as well.

During Ingathering time in the Fall, we had several speakers address the importance of donations and pledges for the ongoing programs. They also expressed their thoughts on stewardship for St. Benedict's to continue our role in the community.

I cannot stress enough that the Vestry/Parish Council, had to make serious decisions for St. Benedict's over the past year. We had lengthy and multiple meetings to cover all the issues and concerns during this transition time. Lisa, our Treasurer, has been keeping us on track every month. She is a wealth of knowledge for the Vestry. I am forever grateful to everyone on this Council for their time, questions, and thoughtful discussions.

Of course, our major announcement was, we have a Priest-in Charge, which was long coming. Rev Linzi Stahlecker started on Sept.15 and we are so happy to have her with us now. This was a long and winding road for St. Ben's. Almost everyone was involved with the process over the past 15 months. The search committee, the transition committee, the interview team, the congregation contributed their time and input. If I have forgotten anyone, please let me know. St. Ben's is a phenomenal church full of people who do what it takes to make things happen.

We will have a photo journey to share during the Annual Meeting, the old saying, a picture speaks a thousand words is so true. Hope you enjoy our travel down memory lane for the past year.

Finally, I want to say a huge THANK YOU to everyone who has said yes when I asked for help, information, or advice. There is no way I could be in this position without each one of you. We are building a stronger congregation during this time with fresh ideas, new energy, new ways of doing God's work in Los Osos.

God bless everyone and I wish you Peace, Love and Joy for 2025.

Respectfully and gratefully submitted by Maureen Titus

“Be the Peace You Wish to see in the World.” - Martin L. King, Jr.

PRIEST-IN-CHARGE ANNUAL REPORT

I'm thrilled to be submitting my first report to you all!

I am especially grateful to Maureen, Cathy, Hannah, Sarah, Lisa, and Esta for the many hours they each have taken to orient me to process (and custom) at St. Ben's and The Abundance Shop.

Liturgy

Outside of Sunday morning worship, in October we celebrated The Blessing of the Animals at South Bay Community Center, in November we held a service for Transgender Day of Remembrance, and in December we had the weeknight liturgy for Blue Christmas.

To create a better online viewing experience, the area around the lectern and the altar have been simplified, and, in keeping with St. Ben's tradition of worship in-the-round, the altar party now sit with the congregation in the pews. At the end of the year, we bought a wonderful new singing bowl and candle bowl to support our additional, occasional services.

Working with Paul, our cantors Brian and Alan, and the choir, we have (re)introduced chant to our regular Sunday worship; and, thanks to Alan, we now have real, baked bread for Communion each Sunday!

Working with the Liturgy Committee, we have moved from weekly meetings to seasonal meetings as a more efficient use of everyone's time.

Community

I have re-designed the Benediction Weekly to hold some relevant content each week, and to be a starting point for a consistent look and feel to all the communications we put out, and all the ways we show up online. I have begun the process of revitalizing St. Ben's Instagram account, and have created a variety of graphics for us to use on our social media channels and in the newsletter. We have updated the sign at the bottom of Clark Valley Road to show our current service time.

In order to be visibly welcoming and inclusive of all, parishioners are now able to have their pronouns included on their name tags, most of which have been reprinted on fresh card stock with St. Ben's logo.

I have visited with many of you, but not as many as I had hoped.

I have spent dedicated time with all the clergy in the deanery and I attended all scheduled local and diocesan meetings. I have introduced myself to the folks at the Gala Pride and Diversity Center in SLO.

The Abundance Shop

In my first few months, I spent a few hours each week at the Abundance Shop and got to appreciate the incredible work that Esta has done there. I learned about (and even got the chance to practice doing) some of the necessary functional tasks from sorting to cashiering, and I met a lot of people as they came in to look around and shop.

I have created an Instagram account for the shop as an additional way for folks to find us.

I had hoped to form an Advisory Committee for the Abundance Shop, as I do not believe our current staffing model has long-term viability (ours is an aging volunteer staff and recruitment is hard). After a couple of meetings and lots of thought and conversation, it became clear there's no energy for this initiative at the moment, and so it's been shelved.

We are delighted that Paulette has temporarily joined the staff as a part-time Store Associate! The search for Esta's replacement is ongoing.

Finance

I collaborated with folks on the vestry and with Lisa to put together a "campaign" for our stewardship season.

With Lisa, we have reconvened a Finance Committee and we met monthly in the last two months of 2024.

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Working between St. Ben's and St. Luke's has been challenging, and I have not yet hit my stride. As a result of being only with you all $\frac{3}{4}$ time, there are many things which received no attention from me at all in 2024:

- Safeguarding status of key-holders, staff and folks who serve in the parish (which is VERY important, and a top priority for 2025)
- Formation/education offerings
- Trainings for Eucharistic Ministers and Worship Leaders
- Bible Study
- Weekly weeknight prayer/worship/gathering
- SLOMA (the San Luis County Ministers Association – an Ecumenical Ministers group)

The squeeze on my time has also impacted my presence for pastoral care and attention.

I believe there is much to celebrate about our first four months together, and also much to consider for the year ahead.

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It is SUCH a great source of life and joy to be a part of this community, and I thank God each and every day for being called to serve you! With love, and immense thanks,

Linzi+

PEOPLE'S WARDEN REPORT

I was honored to serve as your Warden during an important time of transition this past year. Certainly, we were very busy as members of the Vestry/Parish Council, in working with the Transition Team and Search Committee, and in ultimately calling Rev. Linzi to become our priest-in-charge at St. Ben's.

To be honest, I accepted the position of People's Warden unexpectedly, somewhat reluctantly, and only after it became apparent that no other members of the Vestry would be able to take on this ministry. One of the first questions I asked upon assuming this role was whether there was anything in our by-laws or a document somewhere that outlines the responsibilities, or what is expected, of the People's Warden. In short, there was not, so this might be something for us to consider creating going forward.

Certainly, the Vestry was generally aware that the People's Warden helps oversee the physical plant, the building and grounds, at St. Ben's. There were ongoing projects at the beginning of the year – the replacement of our roof, and installation of our new solar panels, being the major one – and thankfully Michael Lucas, who had been leading us in this project, agreed to continue in that role. Another ongoing project, concerning ground squirrels on the property, was being handled by 2023 People's Warden, Sandy Fisher, and Sandy agreed to continue managing that project. I extend my deep thanks and appreciation to both Sandy and Michael for their efforts.

The rest of it – repairing the ceiling in the upstairs office and issues with the water heater and pump come to mind – was primarily handled by our Presiding Warden, Maureen Titus. One important aspect of the People's Warden's role that should be mentioned here is that of supporting the Presiding Warden when issues arise that require collaboration. I was always happy and honored to assist in such deliberations affecting the life and welfare of our parish community. It should also be noted that I had conversations with Ron Thompson, and I know that he, and others, have given much of their time to maintaining and improving the premises. Please forgive me if I'm leaving anyone out.

All this is to say, while I willingly accepted the position of People's Warden and served in that role, I don't feel like I personally accomplished a whole lot. To be sure, I contributed to the life of the parish in other ways, and I am always happy and feel blessed to do so. Lastly, it was recognized that this is a difficult position for someone like me, who works full-time during the week, as that is when contractors and businesses are generally open and available to come out to do work. Also, I still have significant family obligations and responsibilities. So that may be something to consider going forward as well.

If anyone has any questions beyond what I have offered here, please let me know.

Faithfully yours,
Berkeley Johnson

ALTAR GUILD REPORT

It's such an honor being the Director of the Altar Guild. I've learned, and continue to learn, so much about the liturgical meaning of setting up the church for Eucharist. Thank you to Sarah Chesebro for helping and guiding me through this process.

I would love to thank Pat Stoneman, Letty Cotta, Sarah Chesebro, JW, Elaine Beckham, and Lisa Gonzalez for being a huge part of my "team". We also have a new member training to be on Altar Guild: Pam Holm. If anyone is interested in this amazing ministry, please reach out to me.

We are slowly transitioning to only using the common cup. But until then, we continue to use both the common cup and the small individual cups.

Most of you may have noticed that we only have one large cruet we are using for the wine, and the water is being put in the flagan. Our second large cruet ended up with a crack in it, so we are in the process of replacing it. We will also be transitioning to red wine as soon as our white wine is depleted.

We are also not using the wafers for communion anymore. Thank you to Alan Kiste for preparing our bread for the services. Rev. Linzi+ prefers to use the bread instead of the wafers. It's a really nice change for us.

The Tabernacle is no longer being locked when we aren't in church. As Rev. Linzi+ said, "Free Jesus!" No need to keep it locked up.

We have a new candle bowl that we used for Blue Christmas, as well as a new meditation bowl. Both are beautiful, and a great addition to the church.

Another change is the Gospel Book starting out on the altar and ending up on the retable behind the altar with a candle in front of it. This has become a nice welcoming touch in the "liturgical dance".

One last change is that the Altar Guild members fill the small cups while the first part of the congregation is being served. This is to keep "things" moving. So far this is working perfectly. Thank you to the Altar Guild for adding this "extra" ministry to the list.

This is a very rewarding ministry for me. Now that I'm retired, I am able to concentrate a little more on this than before. It's been an amazing two years, and hopefully many more years to come.

Blessings to you all,
Diana Hammerlund

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE REPORT

The Membership committee has included Sandy Fisher, Diana Hammerlund, Pat Henry, Ann Lucas, and Barbara Schippers. We have not formally met as a committee this year, and haven't been as proactive as we had anticipated. However, the greeters continued to extend a warm welcome to new comers and existing members as they entered our doors.

We know that postcards and phone calls have been productive in the past and Barbara Schippers has reinstituted the written correspondence with newcomers on a weekly basis the past few months. We have also continued to work with the Discovery team on taking our welcome outside our church walls.

If this ministry is to continue, we will need new members to step up and take a part as some of our members will no longer be participating in this committee. We will need direction from our priest as to what is needed in this ministry as we work together to build each other up in our congregation and future congregation.

Serving Together,
Sandy Fisher

LANDSCAPE COMMITTEE REPORT

It has been a quiet year for the landscape committee.

All of the trees we planted in 2022 and the new trees on the parking lot berm are growing well. EcoSlo has not been able to provide the other 11 trees they had intended for us since their grantors want them to focus on urban sites. We have been working on other projects instead.

Ron and I have been getting the valve and timer at the hose bibb to separate the water streams from the trees on the west berm and the Bushes and plants in the St Francis garden. They have very different water needs. Ron is installing the last pieces of the new system. Ron has been supporting this project financially.

Earlier in the year there was a rat living in the fan in the bulb garden area. Don and Liz paid to have the bushes trimmed back, which was a major expense.

All of the plants in front of the verandah were given aa extensive cut back to improve the view of the property. The baskets were replanted to make the verandah inviting.

The gardeners are now led by Suzanne Morrison at Earthscapes. The veranda gardens, the bulb garden and the St Francis Garden are being financially sponsored by Ron and Laura and Liz and Don. The hanging basket flower replacements and watering, weed whacking, the sprinkler system and any other repairs are usually paid for by the Church.

Thanks for your interest in the beauty of the gardens!

Submitted by: Liz Maruska

COMMUNITY DINNERS REPORT

It has been 6 years since St. Benedict's Church began providing once a week dinners to anyone needing/wanting a meal. It started with a desire to better care for and feed folks in our community. Over the years that followed St. Benedict's Church partnered with other like-minded organizations, and together, once a week, we have served over 6100 dinners at the Los Osos Community Center. What started in 2018 as serving meals to a small group of 20, has grown to now serving over 120 plus meals each week.

Those dinners were served to-go during the pandemic as we followed the distancing rules and closed our indoor dining. Now we have once again created a dining room space with tables and chairs at the Community Center, and encourage people to sit together while enjoying their meal. Meals are also served "to go" which seems to be preferred as of late. Many ask to take home more than one meal at a time either to enjoy the following day or to share with a friend or a neighbor.

The prepared food is provided by several of the service organizations and churches in Los Osos...each taking a weekly turn. Los Osos Cares helps with coordinating and provides ingredients from their pantry when needed.

St. Benedict's provides the menu, and prepares the food when it is our turn to serve. We ask for help from volunteers to help prepare the side dishes.

There are several people in our congregation who continually volunteer to provide generously when asked to help or to contribute. They are very much appreciated, both by the folks enjoying the meals, and also by the kitchen staff in charge of cooking and serving the meals.

From its early beginnings Maureen Titus and Barbara Schippers have cooked seasonal favorites...enchiladas, tacos, chili dogs, stews, pasta dishes and lasagnas. The side dishes, such as green beans or other vegetables, potato salad, cole-slaw, as well as sometimes fresh fruit cups, garlic bread, chips and chili beans are contributed by those in our congregation who raise their hands and volunteer to cook.

St. Benedict's hopes to continue providing meals to whomever needs/wants a free hot and tasty meal as part of our church's community wide outreach. By providing those meals **WE ARE MAKING A DIFFERENCE** in the lives of seniors, single moms, the un-housed and the hungry in Los Osos. We will provide dinners to any and all who would like a meal. We are hopeful to have the continued support of the community and the blessings of St. Ben's in this New Year of 2025

Best wishes and thanks to all who participate.

Barbara Schippers for St. Benedict's Community Dinners Outreach

"make a difference...change the world...feed somebody!"

LAUNDRY LOVE PROGRAM REPORT

Laundry Love (LL) is an outreach of St. Benedict's that started in July 2018. On the last Wednesday of every month LL welcomes all low-income community members to Osos Clean Laundry, where quarters, detergent and related supplies are provided. Most participants, both housed and unhoused, are from Los Osos. LL volunteers are both members of St. Benedict's and people from the wider community. LL offers two shifts, from 11:00 – 1:00 and 4:00 – 6:00. At the later shift members Roz and Jim Malone

generously provide pizza. On occasions when they are out of town, St. Benedict's buys the pizza. Water is also available (protein bars often are too). Clients enjoy the pizza enthusiastically – for some it is the only meal they have that day.

LL has gone plastic-free with respect to detergent by using Earth Breeze detergent sheets (they look like fabric sheets but are made of soap). The company donates them free to all Laundry Love programs in the U.S.

From January to December 2024 the total spent was \$4,658.00. The # of people served was 296 -- about \$15.74 per person. LL is funded by a \$4,000 grant through Los Osos Cares and by donations from other individuals.

There are many Laundry Love programs throughout the United States. St. Benedict's volunteer Maureen Titus participates in Zoom meetings with other programs to share best practices and support for this essential service. As co-founder of Laundry Love T-Bone (Eric) said: "If I had clean clothes people would treat me like a human being."

Recently the Supreme Court ruled that municipalities can bar homeless people from sleeping on public property even though there is nowhere, such as a shelter or transitional housing, for them to go. This draconian measure criminalizes poverty at a time when more and more people, especially elders and the disabled, are thrown on the streets and treated like trash. At Laundry Love people are welcomed for who they are – human beings and children of God. This acknowledgement of their true worth might be the greatest service Laundry Love provides.

Submitted by Alice Welchert

ABUNDANCE SHOP ANNUAL REPORT

Hello The Abundance Shop was once again blessed with generous support from the community through donations, purchases, and volunteer assistance. Sales in 2024 matched our record sales in 2023. The shop was able to transfer \$60,000 to the church after paying its expenses, which included 2 part-time paid positions in 2024. The church tithed \$6,000 to 12 local non-profits chosen by our volunteers. The shop's donation jar yielded \$1,900 for the Rector's Discretionary Fund.

We struggled somewhat with a volunteer shortage during 2024. Lorri Gill moved full-time to Iowa in April. Nellie Regalado passed on from cancer on Mother's Day. These

two women gave so generously of their time and energy, and we are so grateful for their service! We also thank Vivian Leinio, who moved to Sacramento, and Sue Halverson, who is traveling with her husband Gary following his recent retirement.

We are very blessed to have a strong core group of veteran volunteers assisting us weekly (and more!) to keep the shop running smoothly. Linda Crawford, Lori Gentile, Ricki Haddad, Wanda Lo, Iris Alexandra, Gretchen Burke, Steve Cake, and Mike Eggleston all perform a variety of tasks to process the mountain of donations we receive each and every week. Ann Lucas, Mary Stein-Webber, and Maureen Titus cashier. A huge thank you to these dedicated volunteers! We also were fortunate to have four exceptional individuals who completed community service hours with us. Thank you also to our neighbor, Botanica Nova, who has gifted us with landscaping services.

Celeste Pennington increased her paid hours in 2024, helping us process donations in response to our volunteer shortage. Celeste has decided to reduce her hours back to the custodial position she has held for several years. Thank you, Celeste, for stepping into the breach!

Praise God several new volunteers have come forward in 2025! James Mealy is doing a wonderful job assisting with testing and repairs. Marilyn Rodger, a long-time customer, has been diligently processing donations since mid-year. Judy Anderson, Pamela Beecher, and Marj Bryant have all just come aboard to help with sorting.

Paulette Penner, a volunteer cashier over the last two years, just became a paid cashier two days a week, allowing me to reduce the hours I spend in the shop. We will continue the search for a new manager in 2025.

In the fall we were happy to have Rev. Linzi visit the shop a number of times, getting to know all it's people and work! Our prayers for her as she takes on the big job of discerning our future and leading us forward!

Thank you to all of you who have supported us by shopping and donating! We look forward to seeing you all in 2025 as we continue to evolve and grow.

Respectfully submitted,
Esta Kandarian, Shop Manager

EARTHCARE ANNUAL REPORT

The mission of St. Benedict's Earthcare committee is threefold: 1) to support individual members of Earthcare in their personal approach to caring for Creation; 2) to raise awareness of Creation Care within the St. Benedict's congregation; and 3) to support other local and national organizations in their efforts – both political and educational – to deal with the related issues of Creation Care and climate change. Important activities in 2024 included:

- Earthcare's major effort in 2024 was hosting a public conference titled "Climate Solutions Community Forum" on Saturday, April 6th. Six climate-related organizations participated in the event, including several Cal Poly "Climate Fellows", viz., Poly students who receive a yearly stipend from the state of California for their efforts to increase public awareness of climate change issues;
- Earthcare members participated in St. Benedict's "Season of Creation" process (September 1, 8, 15, 22, 29, and October 1) by giving readings during each Sunday liturgy chosen by the Liturgy Committee.
- Earthcare supported the showing of the climate change film, "Common Ground" at Trinity Methodist on September 15th;
- Earthcare committee member Don Maruska preached on Creation Care at Trinity Methodist on September 8th and at St. Stephens on September 29th. As a result of Don's sermon and follow-up discussion, the Trinity Methodist congregation has formed a "Green Team" to bring relevant Creation Care issues to their congregation. It should be noted that Don's sermons were based on his recent trips to Antarctica and the Coral Triangle, viz., two areas in the world that show the ominous and growing potential in the climate change – and therefore the Creation Care – issue.

St. Benedict's Earthcare committee is looking forward to continuing its Creation Care mission for our congregation and for the wider public in 2025.

Submitted by: Bob Pelfrey

PRAYER AND PASTORAL CARE REPORT

Pastoral Care is a beautiful ministry here at St Benedict's Church, and from what I have observed, some, if not most, takes place in quiet. It seems to me that many people hear of a need, be it a meal, a word of encouragement, a ride, a wheelchair, or a prayer, and someone takes care of it. So, while there is a pastoral care committee that checks in, our small, but strong and loving congregation pays attention to the needs of one another. That said, we encourage everyone to reach out if there is something, or someone, that we have overlooked. This can be done via pastoral care card, email to Pastoral Care Committee, or leaving a message for Rev. Linzi. Our desire is to care for each other, and to the best of our ability, be the hands and feet of Jesus.

Thanks be to God!

Submitted by: Helen Schnieders

FLOWER GUILD REPORT

The pleasure and presence of the Flower Guild's ministry is obvious to church members throughout the year, and especially during the Easter and Christmas seasons. Lovely bouquets of white mums, snapdragons, and carnations were arranged and delivered by Christine at Marshall Gardens for each of these occasions. A variety of palms from Texas were ordered from Reilly's in Idaho. From Ralph's, six Easter Lilies were purchased to stand next to the altar. Ten poinsettias ordered from Trader Joe's were set next to the Holy Family.

Bundles of cut flowers and greenery were purchased by Guild members throughout the year from Ralph's and Von's, and more often from Trader Joe's. Many of the members prepare their weekly arrangements in their homes. The window and candle arrangements are prepared at church. Chosen flowers follow the colors of the Liturgical calendar year, and flower-less times of Lent and Advent are acknowledged.

There are currently five Guild members - we're always eager for more to join us - who rotate during each month to bring flowers for Sunday services. Elaine or Pamela and Sharon paired up to complete window displays for both seasons, plus Palm Sunday when we made three arrangements using palms and foxtail ferns. For Easter we crafted six window arrangements using pretty cut spring flowers. To complement the large bouquet, white flowers plus holly were used in five Christmas window displays. Our favorite foxtail fern and holly gatherer is Ron Thompson. Circular flower arrangements for Paschal and Advent candles were added for Easter and Christmas.

A couple of exciting floral enhancements to the lectern area of the church have happened since Rev. Linzi arrived at St. Ben's. Sarah Chesebro and I hunted for and located sansevieria snake plants to visually frame the lectern area. The other enhancement was to include two Christmas wreaths, each with a red ball ornament, and specially mounted by Michael Lucas. This "picture" will be nice to look forward to every year.

Guild members have the option of submitting financial reimbursement or requesting in-kind acknowledgment for their flower and floral supplies from the church. While mostly consider their purchases as donations, some reimbursement requests have been submitted.

Submitted by: Sharon Porter

MUSIC REPORT

Hello everyone. My name is Paul Burkle and I accepted the position of music director here at St. Benedict's in 2024. I have actually been singing for years at St. Benedict's in the Summers as a rehearsal space for the choir Resonance, so in a way this all feels very familiar and comfortable. I left my last music directing position in late 2023, and Brian Spolarich and Alan Kiste encouraged me to take a look at St. Benedict's when I started looking for a new church. I have found it a warm place filled with warm people who are passionate about music, and you all have made my wife, Joy Patterson, and I, feel very welcome.

I have been happy to find I am not the only pianist at St. Benedict's, and have had Ann Lucas help to show me the way the services flow on the keyboard. I have been able to reestablish a choir under the support of many singers from "choir's past," and hope to continue building the program in the new year. In addition to sung works, I expect we will see a lot more instrumental music, as well, this coming year. I am excited to see the music program continue to grow and evolve.

My overall perspective with music in church is to "Make A Joyful Noise," and to that end I would love to see more and more people jump into the music program. I hear many joyful and strong singers throughout the congregation each week and would love to have more voices sing with us in choir. The more of us there are, then the more of us there are to lean on each other and grow together in song. You don't have to know how to read music, and you don't have to be a "trained" singer; you just have to want to sing: easy as that.

If you want to sing (or perhaps play theremin or hurdy gurdy) and share a joyful noise on a Sunday (or more), feel free to reach out and contact me. I'd love to find a way to work you into the service so that you can share your offering of music with all of us.

- Paul Burkle

ROOF/SOLAR REPORT

As one of her last acts as Rector, Caro+ was able to get us in under the wire to PG&E for a method of obtaining solar that works to our financial advantage and keeps us on time-of day metering, while helping meet our larger goals of decarbonizing our power and moving the campus toward net zero. A third party partner, Re-volv, was able to take care of the turnkey project, acting as owner/developer of the system. They were able to take advantage of tax credits not directly available to us, while offering us a zero up front cost and maintain the system while we pay a reduced rate from likely PG&E hikes anticipated over the next twenty years. We are hopeful for a minimum savings of 15% over projected PG&E costs.

PG&E was overwhelmed with the number of customers applying for the credit and took many months to sort through. The initial proposed system anticipated larger growth and

use, but the system was not able to be more than 15% of current use and was revised based on actual 2023-24 use. So, when our project came up, a redesign was needed. Re-volv took care of this and a new contractor/installer came forward in fall 2023, SunWork. Their field inspection noted our roof likely had less than 5 years left, and they suggested we re-roof before they did their install. While the original 1998 roof had a suggested longer shingle life than 25 years, given our location, wind, and abrasive grit 25 years was not bad. Vestry took this to heart and looked to re-roof first. Most roofers were booked well into 2024.

In Spring 2024 we obtained five bids, ranging from three between just under \$38,000 to just over \$40,000 and two around \$44,000. The low bid was Nieporte Roofing who had excellent references from work at Mission San Luis Obispo, and we went with them. They completed the work in August of this year without damage to the grounds and landscape and minimal internal clean-up from the re-roofing.

At that time SunWork did a reinspection of the roof and confirmed their scope and all the new documents went back to Re-volv. We had a hiatus while Re-volv got their schedules and internal financing together, submitted new permits from SLO County and PGE, and confirmed a start date. They installed on December 6-8 and we had inspections completed December 19. We still await final PGE approval, and anticipate going on our new payment schedule with Re-volv in January 2025. The system will hopefully save us at least \$1000 a year over PGE rates. This does not mean in the long term we pay less than we do now- we just won't absorb the kinds of rate hikes PGE has placed in the last ten years. With the electric heat pumps installed in 2023, the gas water heater replaced in 2023 remains the only gas-fired equipment we have.

The system is a twenty panel 7.3 kilowatt system [most homes would be 1/2 to 2/3 that capacity]. Microinverters convert the panel DC charge to AC at each panel, and that is state of the art today. Re-volv takes care of any system component failures throughout the contract. We have no battery at this time and no plans for one, largely due to battery costs, although it was considered by the Vestry. We can purchase the solar array at a prorated fee at any time, and it may be to our advantage to do so at later time.

We anticipate some kind of 'ribbon cutting' event in January, and Re-volv has staff that will work with us to develop outreach to the community for that event. You can see their work with other churches at: https://re-volv.org/projects/completed_projects

DISCOVERY TEAM REPORT

The Discovery Teams purpose is to build connections between the parish and the community in order for the congregation to turn outwards, and to explore what needs the community expresses so the congregation can serve in new ways. In short, to take church outside the walls.

The Discovery Team has primarily done this through “prayer pop ups” set up next to the Abundance Shop. They have been very successful in engaging the community in meaningful conversations, and praying individually for some of them. In addition, the team has organized hosting tables at the 3 Pride events. We also organized a table at the Oktoberfest in Los Osos. The congregational support has been well attended at the outreach events and the prayer pop ups.

However, in order to continue at the level we have, we will need additional members to be on the team. We have had 4 members including Reverend Jen since the team started. Reverend Jen has moved on and Cathy has resigned which leaves only 2 members.

We are asking the congregation to pray about whether this ministry needs to scale down or not continue at all at this time.

Respectfully Submitted,

The Discovery Team, (Rev. Jen Crompton, Sandy Fisher, Cathy Gildea, and Barbara Hirahara)

LITURGY COMMITTEE REPORT

The Liturgy Committee is responsible for planning the worship services and producing the Sunday Worship Bulletins and other special service bulletins in accordance with the Canons of the Episcopal Church.

The Committee presently consists of the following members:

- The Rev. Linzi Stahlecker – Priest-in-Charge
- Sarah Chesebro – Convener and Proofreader
- Cathy Gildea - Editor
- Jen Smith – Editor
- John Horsely - Hymnist
- Roz Malone – Hymnist
- Bryson McKelvey – Proofreader

Notes about Committee roles:

1. While the roles of each member are listed above, all are invited to participate in our meeting discussions.
2. A Hymnist is someone who writes the text, music, or both of hymns. However, in this context, a hymnist is one who selects hymns for the service.

A special thanks to The Rev. Jen Crompton, The Rev. Judy Stevens, and The Rev. Jerry Walton who participated on the Committee this last year.

Since the retirement of The Rev. Caroline Hall, the Committee has met weekly with a few exceptions. However, since Linzi+ has joined us, we have agreed to meet on a seasonal basis to develop the Liturgy for: Advent, Christmas, Epiphany, Lent, Holy Week, Easter and Pentecost. Meetings are noted on the church calendar.

Based on our meeting discussions since September:

- The services will be developed using the “Book of Common Prayer” and “Enriching our Worship”.
- Sources of music will be: The “1982 Hymnal”, “Lift Every Voice and Sing”, “Wonder Love and Praise”.
- Eucharistic Prayers will be scheduled by Liturgical Season.

We are blessed to have Linzi+ at our Sunday services for at least three Sunday's a month and equally as blessed to have the following Supply Priests and Lay Worship Leaders when Linzi+ is serving at St. Luke's or on scheduled leave:

- The Rev. Karen Siegfried
- Sister Greta Ronningen
- The Rev. Michael Eggleston
- Chaplain Berkeley Johnson
- Brian Spolarich
- Lisa Gonzalez
- Sandy Fisher
- Michael Lucas

This year we were also blessed to welcome Paul Burkle as our musician and his wife Joy and the re-formation of the St. Benedict's Choir. Alleluia!! Many thanks and gratitude to Ann Lucas who continues to grace us with her talents on the piano and organ.

And finally, thanks to Alan Kiste for baking Communion Bread! A welcome alternative to the wafer.

Please look forward to the following this year:

- Formation of a Worship Leader Group
- Discussion with the congregation regarding the use of the Iona Service from a theological perspective.
- Meeting with the Eucharistic Ministers and Altar Guild Members with Linzi+.
- Discussion about receiving the Common Cup during Communion.
- Changing from White Port to Ruby Port for Communion wine.
- New protocol for adding names to the Bidding Book.

"I look forward to learning about St. Ben's customs and practices and putting a plan together for this year." - Rev. Linzi Stahlecker

Sarah Chesebro – Convener

SACRISTAN MINISTRY REPORT

The Sacristan is responsible for the care and use of the vestments and other hangings and furnishings that are used during worship at St. Benedict's."

As for all of us, these months have been one of change and adaptation with the retirement of The Rev Caroline Hall in May of 2023, the ordination of The Rev Jen Crompton in June of 2023, the hosting of visiting priests and, Bishop Lucinda's visits in the interim and finally and joyously the welcoming of our priest -in - charge, The Rev Linzi Stahlecker, on September 17, 2024 with her sermon "Start Again Together".

During this interim period without a rector, I have relied on eight years of experience under the direction of Caro+ to carry out my duties as Sacristan. My love and gratitude goes out to The Rev Jen Crompton for council and guidance and my sisters and brothers of the National Altar Guild Association during this interregnum.

In preparation for the arrival of our new priest-in-charge, there was a flurry of activity to update and refresh our space. Some of the activity included: Maureen Titus, Celeste Pennington and I cleaned out the loft; Barbara Schippers and I hung art in the Sacristy, office and back hallway; Cathy Gildea and Hannah installed a new computer; and Maureen hired someone to fix the Garage Door in the Chapel. Hazzah!

The Altar Guild and Sacristan create a welcoming space for all those who enter our Sanctuary. It is with great joy and gratitude that Rev Linzi has her own vision for how those entering into our worship space should be welcomed and enjoy the Liturgy, Celebration of the Eucharist and Love of God. I had been struggling with how the Service of the Word looked as it is quite bare in comparison to the Service of the Table. This was the first thing Linzi+ wanted to address and we did so by placing the Gospel Candles next to the lectern. Wow! Just a simple act can make a big impact. Just as we do as Christians: Simple acts of love and kindness can have a big impact on someone's life.

In 2025 we look forward to:

- Working with Linzi+ on improving our space to make it even more welcoming.
- The development of a list of items to be purchased in “Thanksgiving” or “Memory”.
- A request to the congregation for an assistant Sacristan. The “shadow sacristan” (my husband David) is mumbling about retirement as he says he is getting too old to climb ladders to change the curtains.

It brings me great purpose and joy to transform our sanctuary throughout the seasonal changes.

Peace and Love,
Sarah Chesebro
Sacristan

INTERCESSOR PRAYER MINISTRY REPORT

Intercessory Prayer Ministry is a group offering private prayers after the 10:30 a.m. church service on the first four Sundays of each month. The weekly contact person’s phone number is printed in the Sunday Bulletin.

We are in need of people to fill in on Sundays when the assigned person is unavailable; especially during vacation times. For more information about this ministry, please call Louisa Beeler (805)543-2898. Leave your name and phone number and I’ll return your call. Otherwise see me after Sunday church and I’ll be delighted to chat with you about our ministry.

Submitted by: Louisa Beeler

SEARCH COMMITTEE REPORT

Background

When Rev. Caro Hall notified the Vestry of her intention to retire in May 2023, the Vestry faced a threefold task: to prepare for her departure, to prepare a new parish profile, and to search for and hire a new priest. Given the general health of the congregation, the lack of available clergy in the diocese who could serve as an interim, and the presence of Rev. Jen Crompton in the parish as part of the diocesan “Trailblazer” program, the diocese recommended—and the Vestry chose—to pursue a “search in place” model. This meant that we could begin transition-related activities prior to Rev. Caro’s retirement, and the Vestry chose to break the work into two separate phases, with two separate and successive committees to carry out the work.

The work of the Transition team concluded in May 2023—after several months of data collection—with the retirement of Rev. Caro. The data collection occurred through interviews, group meetings, and parish-wide activities facilitated by Rev. Martha Koreniek, Canon to the Ordinary and Transition Consultant for the parish. The Vestry appointed a Search Committee after soliciting nominations and interest from members of the parish. The Search Committee consisted of:

- Letty Cotta
- Diana Hammerlund
- Barbara Hirahara
- Michael Lucas
- Bob Pelfrey
- Brian Spolarich, Chair
- Jane Wu

The was given two charges: to 1) create the church profile based on the information gathered by the Transition Team, and 2) to identify a slate of at least two candidates to the Vestry for their consideration. The Vestry would then conduct a final set of interviews with those candidates with the goal of calling a new priest.

Parish Profile and Advertisement

The search committee developed the parish profile primarily over the summer and fall of 2023, condensing an initial 30 pages of material down to a polished and attractive 11-page document that accurately represented the unique charisms and essential facts of the parish. Michael drafted much of the initial text, with feedback from Bob and Jane, and Brian acted as publisher, laying out the text through many revisions. After a lengthy feedback and review process, the profile was approved by Bishop Lucinda Ashby in January 2024, at which point it was published on the parish website. The diocese praised St. Benedict's parish profile, indicating that it was a model that other parishes should follow.

Advertising for our ¾-time priest-in-charge position on the Episcopal News Service web site and diocesan newsletter began in February and applications were accepted until after Easter.

Interview Process

Despite diocesan concerns that we might not receive any interest in our ¾-time position given the large number of vacancies both in the diocese and nationally, as well as the overall lack of clergy to fill them, we received application materials from five candidates, which included resumes, standardized profile information, and written and recorded samples of sermons. All the applicants were well-qualified, and several had also applied to the ¼-time position at St. Luke's Atascadero.

The committee invited all five to participate in a two-round interview process conducted via Zoom. The interviews included a set of common questions, as well as individual questions tailored for each candidate, and opportunity for less structured dialogue. Confidentiality around the interview process was understood to be paramount, including any details about who had applied.

At the end of the interview process, the committee identified two candidates that we felt were well-qualified and likely good fits for the particular culture, mission, and values of St. Benedict's. The application information for both candidates were provided to the Vestry in June, along with a summary of the committee's impressions and assessment of each. The diocese received also this summary, which was praised as a good model for other parishes.

Conclusion

With the presentation and acceptance of the slate of candidates, the committee had completed its charge. After the vestry completed its interview and discernment process, and with the approval of Bishop Lucinda, a Letter of Agreement was signed with the Rev. Linzi Stahlecker in August 2024 to begin work in September.

The committee's work is now complete. The committee was instructed to destroy all application materials collected during the process and will continue to treat all information gathered about all applicants as confidential.

Respectfully submitted,
Brian Spolarich, Chair

PRADO REPORT

For many years, St. Benedicts has provided meals and served at the People's Kitchen six times a year. We serve meals on the first Saturday of every other month from February through December. In 2024 we served 611 guests, with an average of 101 people each month. Even though we are considerably smaller than the many other organizations who provide food, we are a successful ministry. We have received many compliments regarding the generous spread that we provide. I certainly understand how challenging it can be to provide one more meal for all our food ministries.

In the past year, we have had a few new people step up to offer food or serve at Prado. It has been so helpful to be able to give those who regularly serve to have a month off from food donations. It is my hope and prayer that we will continue to have more folks who can join us a couple times a year at the People's Kitchen.

Submitted by: Connie Weldon