

ST MARY'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH, PHOENIX, ARIZONA
Annual Parish Report, 2007

2007 Administration

The Reverend William C Rhodes, Priest
Gwen Pelton, Senior Warden
Phyllis Edeson, Junior Warden
Karen Dura, Treasurer
Betty Stively, Secretary/Clerk of Vestry

Church Growth Committee, 2007: Karen Dura

The Church Growth Committee met last on March 15, 2007, to discuss the need for parish-wide involvement in evangelistic efforts. Subsequent activities of the committee were suspended indefinitely.

Music Ministry

1. Members of the choir, friends of St. Mary's (Maggie Driscoll), and a few members of St. Anne's Guild, worked and hosted the annual Advent I Concert this year - featuring not only the McConnell Singers, but also Voices of Phoenix College and the Concert Choir. A great change with more variety! Our reception was given a Southwest spin this year, featuring chilies and chocolate - and good coffee! The Chicken Mole was a favorite and once again we indulged ourselves in our chocolate fountain's flowing gooey goodness! Many thanks to all who helped, contributed, and supported the event.

2. Special thanks to the women who make up our "Ensemble de Femmes" - Betty, Carol, Carolyn, Charon, and Elizabeth, and for their continuing dedication to this vital ministry, and also their willingness to always learn & try new things and constantly strive for improvement.

3. In our continuing efforts to promote St. Mary's as a place where we do more than burn incense on Sunday mornings, it should be noted that McConnell Singers (Dan Hooper, director) makes regular use of our space for rehearsals, recordings, and even luncheons. Dan also assisted us during Holy Week and at Easter Vigil. We have also hosted an open video recording session/recital for an aspiring, talented, young soprano - Chelsea Canales. It was attended by her instructor's voice class students from Phoenix College, personal friends, and members of St. Mary's. While the "Fine Arts" aren't explicitly part of our mission statement, we are gaining a reputation for being a very attractive environment for music-making because of our acoustic (really exceptional for a small space) and superb 1923 Steinway Model L grand piano. While our 100 year-old Whalley pipe organ is also unique, it is in current need of many significant repairs and my hope is to eventually restore it to "recital condition."

Technology and Media

1. Our Anglo-Catholic presence on the internet - www.StMarysInPhoenix.org - continues. It is regularly updated in regards to content, appearance, and ease of use. Two issues of the Angelus are made available online, along with a rather extensive archive of Fr. Bill's sermons.

2. Qwest recently made a significant, and free (but non-optional) upgrade to their business accounts which now, among other perks, gives us the ability to check website statistics such as numbers of visitors, how often certain pages are visited, what is downloaded, etc. Very interesting information! If you would like to know more about this, please contact me directly. This upgrade also required us to change our email addresses, though, to more logical and easier to remember addresses - thus, betty@stmarysinphoenix.org rather than the clumsier stmarysepiscophx@qwest.net. Karen Dura's email is now karen@stmarysinphoenix.org. Fr. Bill's remains the same as his email is provided by Cox.
3. Our office computers are regularly updated, checked for viruses, functionality, security, etc. We are now using a different combo of virus/security software on all three computers which works well, and has the added advantage of saving us some expense on yearly update costs.
4. Carol Beckett has volunteered to act as Associate Editor for the Angelus - a huge help to its Editor! Fr. Bill and Betty Stively also contribute far more than just content, often proofreading and editing also. This group effort results in a more finely polished newsletter than I could ever do on my own. It is submitted to the printshop digitally in PDF format. Martha Davis & Family at CopyWorks still contribute the Angelus, printing it in nearly record time. Ruth Voytek winds up the process, usually with Betty Stively's help, by making sure it gets picked up, sorted, stuffed, stamped, labeled, and hand-delivered or mailed to St. Mary's family.
5. The Sunday bulletin production has been streamlined by the use of new hardware and software. The bulletin is, still, a similar design concept as the Angelus, and utilizes classic sacred and catholic images culled from a variety of sources.
6. A brand new networked multifunction Xerox machine was acquired for the office. It's a lease agreement, as has been the case with our previous hardware, which is a great arrangement where technology is changing so quickly. This new Xerox has already provided us with higher quality, faster, more reliable, and easier production of bulletins, parish directories, scans, and faxes. (Our old stand-alone fax machine was thus retired and donated to a mission church in need of one.) The cost differential between this and the older copier-only unit was small, and the potential provided by using current multi-function technology - huge. There's still a bit of a learning curve involved, as it does everything but wash the windows, but it also allows for some grow-room along with our office print/scan/fax media needs.

Respectfully, David James

Outreach Program

St. Anne's Guild, Susan Bangs, Secretary

The women of St. Mary's are St. Anne's Guild. The meetings for the guild are on the first Sunday of each month following the Mass and a brief time at the coffee hour for refreshments.

Throughout the year guild members are involved in various social functions of St. Mary's. Some of these events are planned and executed and at other times only our assistance is requested.

In this past year, February held a Valentine's Day reception. Guild members assisted with the pancake supper. For the Easter reception the guild members did the set up and decorations. The guild members enjoyed a year-end potluck early in June.

Following a summer vacation from June through August, a welcome back to the Sunday School children was held and a later a church-wide potluck brunch welcomed fall. In October, a reception was held celebrating Fr. Bill's ordination anniversary.

November was a visit by Bishop Smith and a welcoming reception was held. The first Sunday of Advent a few of the guild members assisted with the set up for the reception which was held following the concert.

An annual event the guild members plan is the Christmas party for St. Mary's Manor residents. A gift is purchased and wrapped to be given to each resident at the party. Refreshments are furnished and the residents have a grand time. We are told they look forward to this each year. We all enjoy being there.

The last reception before Christmas was the celebration of the 50th anniversary of Fr. Long's ordination. The entire congregation participated in this happy event.

All women who are interested in being involved in these happenings are welcome. We always have an enjoyable time together.

St Martha's (Food) Guild

Donations of nonperishable food items were plentiful during 2007, to the hungry, homeless and the needy. Parishioners are very much aware that the need is year-long, not only at Thanksgiving and Christmastime; they are very caring to include personal-care items, baby-care items, and pet supplies. Tracy Taylor has been delivering our gifts to the Food Bank.

Volunteer Interfaith Care giver Program (VICaP): Vicki Larson, Coordinator

Vicki had a recruitment meeting at St Mary's this past year. Approximately a dozen attended from various parts of the community. Volunteers from St Mary's are not as plentiful as they have been in past years, but those who remain are very active. Thank you all for that. Business help and transportation are acts of kindness most needed.

Parish Life

Altar Guild: Phyllis Edeson, Coordinator

We are still six members. We work in pairs on most Saturdays, and as a whole group for special projects at Christmas and Easter. One member of each team is responsible for washing and ironing the small linens after each Mass. We care for larger linens and other vestments, as needed. Our primary duty is to set the altar for Mass and to clean up afterward. We welcome anyone who feels a call to this ministry.

Acolyte Guild:

Current Members are Karen Dura, Dalcie Jespersen, and Phyllis Edeson. During 2007 Matthew Smith joined this ministry for a while, until he was transferred to Yuma. Acolytes are trained to serve the priest at Mass and other services. We welcome new members to this ministry.

Hospitality: Susan Bangs, Coordinator

Susan enjoys decorating for festive events, and you'll enjoy working with Susan to make these events the best they can be. Susan is a natural in this ministry, and you could well be also. Check with Susan.

Prayer Chain: Margaret Brewer, Coordinator

If a family member or other loved one is in need of special prayers, Margaret will add this person to the prayer chain. You may call her, 602.938.2431, or e-mail her at M2726@aol.com. Margaret has been very faithful to this ministry for many years, and we thank her for all that she does so well.

St Fiacre's (Transportation) Ministry):

There is no Coordinator for this Ministry at this time. We welcome one, or two, who would be willing to provide transportation for church members who need assistance getting to and from church at times. Please call the office if you can serve in this way: 623.930.1140.

Spiritual Education, 2007

Sunday School Report: Lynn Boddy, Cynthia Rogers

Sunday School presently has about 30 active youth. We have one preschool teacher and an intermediate/upper level teacher. Both classes have assistants (teens) who do an excellent job. The intermediate and upper level classes use The Good News Curriculum which follows the weekly Gospel. The preschool uses a curriculum from Logos. Sunday school is in session from the Sunday after Labor Day until the Sunday before Memorial Day weekend. Activities include but are not limited to: Lent—planting the Alleluias; Easter—processing in to flower the cross; End-of-Year Recognition Ceremony in May; attend Chapel Rock for summer camp; beginning of the year picnic in September; trip to the Phoenix Zoo for Blessing of the Animal's weekend; bake sale in November to raise money for camper scholarships; and Christmas pageant for Christmas

Eve youth mass. We hope to add another class in the fall. It would be perfect to have a preschool/1st, intermediate—2nd grade to 5th, and 6th to 12th. Any one who would like to assist Sunday school, please see Lynn Boddy or Cynthia Rogers.

Youth Group Report: Lynn Boddy, Tracy Taylor

The Youth group currently has about 10 members. We meet approximately once a month to plan activities or to participate in activities. This past year's events have been: Phoenix Zoo trip in October; bake sale in November to raise money for camper scholarships; organize St. Nicholas Day party; Coyote hockey game; assisting with Christmas pageant; winter camp at Chapel Rock; pretzel making party; organize and conduct Easter egg hunt after mass; and end of the year celebration in May; We always are open to new ideas. Contact Lynn Boddy or Tracy Taylor.

Parish Library

The Library is now located in the Parish House and is available to all parishioners during normal office hours, Tuesday through Thursday, 8:30 am to 3:30 pm.

ST. MARY'S MANOR / Annual Report, 2007

The overall condition and operations of this Project remain sound and satisfying; there can be little doubt that as this facility for the elderly and handicapped sponsored by our Parish (the initial concept and application being in 1988) enters its 15th year of service, it has been truly a blessing for its many residents, and a significant ministry of our Parish family touching our wider community in a quite tangibly helpful and sustaining manner very much in accordance with our baptismal vows.

Nonetheless, we are beginning a period of not-unexpected challenge for St. Mary's Manor and this became more visibly apparent in 2007. The general practices of the construction industry here in Arizona were doubtlessly appropriate to our climate and environment and in accordance with the professional standards involved (to the extent that Federal cost-containment restrictions allowed during 1989-93): nevertheless, as time passes, repairs and maintenance naturally will rise with wear and tear as we all know. Project guidelines for example specifically require the accumulation of a reserve account for the major repair/replacement anticipated at about mid-life of the 40 years during which HUD subsidies are provided: that of course will be to address the roof. We are not there yet, but probably in about 2013 this step will be before us.

In the meantime, storms bring down trees, landscaping thins, appliances and carpeting wear out, heating/air repairs crop up, parking lot re-surfacing cycles in, etc. Early on, a significant re-design of venting (to reduce noise) also had to be undertaken, although thankfully that did not end up as a major expense. The reserve account is not currently where it ought to be, and to have it regain the levels required for the roof repair in time is a concern for the Project both at the Board level where our Parish exercises significant oversight and for Biltmore Properties, Inc. which has been our very capable

and faithful on-site management contractor ever since our first resident in 1993. Fortunately, when certain repairs qualify for reimbursement on an exceptional basis, the requests for such do in time get approved and provided.

We are partnered in this earliest version of a “faith-based” private-public enterprise with our Federal Government, which is by no means a mere background player. The HUD subsidies make the fair market rent calculation almost academic for the residents, but the rent level does have a quite practical impact on the Project budget. Rent increases are almost routinely requested, and these generally are granted, but, well, at the pace at which Congress enacts our national budget. And, of course, if that budget is slender or fat (and where such profiles may occur) will flow down in impact veritably to our own most-next-door neighbors. The cumulative financial result so far is that, formally speaking, the Project budget is now running a deficit, and the reserve account is underweight.

The good news is that this does not directly affect the residents; nor does it seriously imperil the viability of St. Mary’s Manor. This is entirely due to the reality that Biltmore Properties, Inc. is not only our management firm but is also engaged with many other HUD housing projects both Section 202 (our type) and Section 8: and our deficit is part of a wider picture being juggled at a level beyond us. Specifically, our management firm is navigating the situation by delaying the invoices for its professional fees until HUD funding approvals materialize and they can be processed. The backlog has risen as high as \$25,000+ but is slowly diminishing.

I have provided above this relatively extensive explanation of our fiscal profile within an appropriately broader context, so that what might seem like seriously “bad news” can be properly understood. The situation certainly bears our continuing attention and could become worrisome: but so far, we have confidence that it will all work out in “good” time, which just happens to be on “government” time.

The other news regarding St. Mary’s Manor is very clearly quite good indeed. In fact, the vendors are always paid in a timely manner; the Project administration by Biltmore Properties has been assiduous and excellent; the 40 apartments essentially are always fully occupied (any given vacancy of course involves a short “time out” for cleaning, repair/replacement, qualifying a new resident, and finally a move-in can be scheduled); our waiting list occasionally slims down but remains adequate to assure that full occupancy level (important, again, for our budgetary health as a Project); general maintenance is not deferred so that the overall physical conditions interior and exterior are fully kept up; the Board regularly meets and reviews various aspects of Project and site management, working closely with Biltmore Properties; and, even HUD has now entered the Information Age more fully and all reporting (formerly by reams of paper) is now electronic; most importantly, resident concerns are taken into account and resident satisfaction is usually expressed quite positively when our Board meetings convene on-site there, approximately three times each year.

Major credit for that high level of resident felicity rightly goes to two of the Biltmore Properties professional staff: the resident manager Joyce Grimm handles

multitudinous day-to-day aspects, and service coordinator Julie Bresnahan focuses on a busy schedule of events and activities and support linking the residents to each other, and to the outside world not only for the vital medical/health aspects but also for fulfilling engagements with the adjacent school and community. Our own Parish efforts by St. Anne's Guild, Choir, etc. are a luscious icing on the cake, as the saying goes. As we all well know, the golden years are only truly so when woven integrally with others by threads of love and concern: I have no doubt that the residents of St. Mary's Manor flourish very much as Fr. Lewis Long and so many others in our Parish efforts to bring about this Project had foreseen and hoped and worked decades ago.

In 2007, the Board of Trustees met on January 16, on April 12, and on October 16; we all were saddened to have Vice Chairman Bob Richards relocate away after faithfully serving in that capacity for years. We welcomed George Deitrich into that post. The Vestry members serving a one-year term as Trustees during 2007 were Tracy Taylor and Helene Williams. Phyllis Edeson has been our Secretary-Treasurer since we commenced; Betty Wurth has also been invited annually to offer her expertise from her professional background.

At each Annual Parish Meeting, up to four sitting Vestry members can be elected to serve as Trustees on the Board of St. Mary's Manor. Both Wardens and our Priest are automatically ex officio Trustees. Incumbent Trustees can be re-elected if their Vestry terms have not ended.

Both Fr. Long and I by a resolution of the Parish are eligible to serve as Trustees as long as we may desire to do so. Although I myself must remain engaged in a work situation in Denver for perhaps as long as another two years, I do strive to be as fully available as possible for this Board and do plan to visit my family in Arizona and at St. Mary's as often as possible. It would be an honor and privilege for me to continue doing so.

Respectfully submitted,
Cheak Yee, Chairman