

# ST. MARY'S MINISTRY REPORTS FOR 2021

✧ **Vicar Report**, *Reverend Susan Toone*

Dear people of St. Mary's

It is not an understatement that these past couple years have brought us many struggles. Living in this covid time has challenged us in many ways, brought losses we had not expected, and continues to offer us hope-filled opportunities to be creative and flexible in our moving forward.

I continue to be deeply grateful for your presence, your support of one another, the community of Provo and beyond. Thank you!

As we completed our spiritual autobiography for our participation in the "Thriving in Bi-vocational Congregation" grant, I have come to see and know the depth of the Holy Spirit working at St. Mary's. In spite of any struggle that comes our way, you as a community are strong, resilient, and dedicated to sharing the Good News, seeking Christ's presence in everyone you encounter, including yourselves.

While we have slowly re-opened our beloved St. Mary's for worship, prayer, and community gatherings, the story of 'the bricks' continues to be the message of who we are at St. Mary's. In spite of many challenges, St. Mary's is a Beloved Community, full of diversity, full of many voices, full of people coming together to be the Body of Christ.

As your pastor and priest, for the upcoming year, I will continue to focus us on being that spiritually centered safe haven for all who enter our doors. The Church exists to facilitate our movement toward God.

I believe the purpose of human life is the union and communion of God. The Bishop Committee can be commended for how individually and in their spirit filled time together they have taken on the maintenance and care of our building while their growing together into a healthy example of God's love and grace.

My hope for St. Mary's in this upcoming year is to continually focus on our ever deepening union with Christ, how the shape of St. Mary's will be the presence of God in all we do – not just at church but in our lives outside the walls of the church.... Our very Being, and Our faith at home.

We are all spiritual leaders and I invite you to join in the Holy Spirit to support the continued vitality and mutual spiritual support of one another. The growth of St. Mary's is a welcoming spiritual home where we can continue to reclaim and reform the ancient practices that feed our souls and are an inspiration to life transforming practices of healing, prayer, service, and hospitality. Together these practices 'are things Christian people do together in response to and in light of God's active presence in the life of the world.'

May we all continue to be inspired by the affirmation of God's graceful and creative presence in the ordinary details of life, 'spiritual practices that enable us to experience what we believe and live by what we experience by affirming the seamless fabric of God's presence in all things.'

I will continue to hold you and your loved ones in prayer.

With peace and many blessings,  
Rev. Susan Toone

✧ **Deacon's Report**, *Deacon Alison Desiderio Peterson*

By the time this annual meeting will be in session, I will be serving St. Mary's for a little over two months. Because of the brief time serving here, I do not have much to report from this past year. A few things were put in place, one was dubbed by a parishioner as the "Rockin Rota" this is a consolidated rota for all things St. Mary's. It includes lectors (readers) that have volunteered to step up on Sundays. The other is the sign-up board for Fellowship (coffee hour). As I last checked most of the Sundays have been filled. Thank you to all who have stepped up for this ministry! I'm honored to be serving you with Rev. Susan Toone+ here at St. Mary's.

Prayers, Peace & Joy,  
Deacon Alison Desiderio Peterson

✧ **Senior Warden Report**, *Shaunna Gage*

2021 was an incredible year for St. Mary's Church!! It has been a time of challenge, growth, and change. As we entered the second year of this global pandemic, we have learned to come together in new and innovative ways. Much like our pioneer forbearers, we have grown and thrived here in Utah County.

I have found a great joy in serving as your Senior Warden and want you all to know how much I love you and this fantastic community!! I have been delighted to see all that we have accomplished this year. We have continued to benefit from the ministry of our Priest in Charge, Reverend Susan Toone, and her diligence in serving as Officiant during our Sunday Services. We have also witnessed the development of several Lay Leaders who have learned to Officiate when Rev. Susan is not here. We have also gained a tremendous asset in welcoming our new Deacon, Reverend Alison Desiderio Petersen. We also have a new Parish Administrator, Arianne Gage, who has her hands full keeping all of us in line!! She has been so helpful in organizing the office and providing a smiling face for all those who drop in during the week.

We had two of our parish members graduate from the Tuttle School, Gidge Sundquist and Lon Young. We are all excited to see what they will do with this education as they discern how they will move forward with their respective ministries. We continued to serve the Food and Care Coalition, in new ways, through the efforts of the Common Ground program.

St. Mary's saw another Catechism Class graduate, and the Bishop confirm these new Disciples in the Episcopal Church. We had an enthusiastic group of people train to serve on the Alter Guild, setting up for our Services each week. Our Bishop's Committee has served so diligently, working hard to take care of the temporal and spiritual needs of the Church. We have raised astonishing amounts of money to be used for the care of our lovely old building. We have made many repairs this year, and in the Spring, we will begin the replacement of our parking lot and our roof. It is our privilege to honor those who came before us in maintaining this precious building they provided for us.

Another exciting development at St. Mary's is our participation in the Thriving Bi-vocational Congregations Program. We were chosen to be one of only a handful of congregations nationwide to work with the Thriving Program, and have been learning to work together, Clergy and Lay Leaders, in strengthening our community. It is a three year program, so we will continue to benefit from this tutelage for quite some time.

But, most importantly, we have been working to develop and grow spiritually, using our talents and gifts to bless one another and all those who seek peace within the shadow of these pioneer bricks we love so much. We are seekers, who are doing our best to answer God's call in our lives and to share the "Good News" with all those we encounter. We are Disciples called to serve in this unique time and place. And, I am blessed to serve with each one of you.

Thank you!!  
Shaunna Gage

✧ **Junior Warden Report**, *(please refer to Senior Warden's Report above)*

✧ **Altar Guild Report**, *Shaunna Gage*

The Alter Guild of St. Mary's Church has had a banner year in 2021. We started the year with our services mostly on Zoom, and really no need to have an Alter Guild. But, as we were finally able to come back together and meet in person, it was time to reorganize. We held a special training session, which was well-attended, and our Alter Guild grew!! We have enthusiastic new members, and we have paired the "newbies" with the "veterans" to make sure everyone feels comfortable as they learn and serve.

Alter Guild is a wonderful ministry and is open to anyone who wishes to serve. We are grateful to our members who come in early and set up for our Sunday Services. Having the candles lit, the linens pressed and elements of the Eucharist ready gives us all a chance to breathe deep and center ourselves before the Service starts.

I am grateful for opportunity to serve on the Alter Guild, and delight in the chance to prepare the sanctuary in the quiet of the morning. There is something soothing and reverent in the routine which calms my heart. If you would like to join us in this ministry, please let us know!!

Thank you!!  
Shaunna Gage

✧ **Tuttle School**, *Gidge Sundquist and Lon Young*

I graduated from Tuttle School in December of 2021. I was so sorry to see it come to an end. I love learning and especially learning about the People of God and our marvelous and sometimes bumpy journey toward understanding our relationship with God and how we live that out. Since time as recorded as we know it and explore it, we have been trying to figure God out. We will always be doing so. Throughout history we come close to God and then move away following our own will and then coming back again to the arms of God, the Everlasting arms. I continue to add to my Tuttle School education, at this time, by reading, studying and working alongside the people of God. I would like to thank St. Mary's for your financial and spiritual support as I walked and talked this two year journey. You are helping to form me. I have not yet discovered the exact path I will take, whether to devote my love and energies to St. Mary's parish or to pursue the deacon path. I am on the path and I will ever serve. I would like to offer my support in any way I can to anyone who would consider this school in the future.

Blessings and Joy,  
Gidge Sundquist

I have recently completed a two year training course offered by the Tuttle School for Ministry and Discipleship. The curriculum was both rigorous and transformative. In contributing a portion of my tuition, St. Mary's invested in my Christian formation and supported my growth as a parishioner committed to helping all God's children be nourished and strengthened in Christ. The curriculum provided a rigorous education in Scripture, Theology and Ethics, Early Christian History, Pastoral Care, and Homiletics and Liturgy. While the program offers the academic training required for diaconal ministry, I am enthusiastic about the ways the training also prepares us to more fully engage in lay ministries, too. I finish the program with a more solid grounding in the three-fold foundation of Scripture, Tradition, and Reason and look forward to continuing to learn from and grow with our St. Mary's family.

With Peace,  
Lon Young

### ✧ **Common Ground**, *Gidge Sundquist*

Common Ground began at St. Mary's on September 23rd, 2021. We decided to meet on the 2nd Thursday of each month from 11:00 AM – 1:00 PM to make 30 lunches. Coffee and snacks are offered to those who volunteer. Volunteers stay after making lunches to chat in community and share a cup of coffee (hence: Common Ground.) All in the community are invited to participate.

To date we have had a total of 35 volunteers, 34 parishioners and one member of the community at large who has attended St. Mary's recently and in the past. We have provided 150 sack lunches over 5 months to the Food and Care Coalition.

In January, Common Ground was able to provide the monthly 30 sack lunches from Volunteer donations. Beginning in February we will be making 50 lunches per month. We hope to increase the sack lunches even more, hoping for total donations and more parishioners and folks from our surrounding community.

Goals: We are waiting for Covid to lessen enough where we can serve volunteers soup and sandwiches etc. as we grow. The possibilities for this ministry to grow are exciting.

A big thank you to all who have volunteered time and donations. We have a kitchen full of ingredients for healthy lunches and we have had financial donations for this to be possible as well. Way to Go St. Mary's!

Blessings and With Gratefulness,  
Gidge Sundquist

### ✧ **Christmas project**, *Taran Bhagat*

We missed registration for Angel Tree this year, but that opened up a door for us to help another wonderful charity for those in need. Christmas 4 Families mostly focuses on single parent households who are struggling to get anything for their kids during the holiday season.

As a congregation, we gathered many gifts for every kid in three families (side note: one child was actually part of the slave trade, right here in America). All gifts were assigned, returned, and delivered as planned; and they were all greatly appreciated. It was fun to see the children being surprised by Santa, his elves, and all of those presents. The presents were also well received (a few kids couldn't even wait until Christmas day, and opened them right there, on the spot).

Thank you, to those who participated (and those who wanted to), for being part of what makes Christmas so special each and every year!

Taran Bhagat (parish coordinator)

Additionally, here are a few more messages for you to enjoy...

- "Thank you so so so much!!! My kids can't stop glowing and smiling. I'm sorry, I (just) started to cry...you have no idea how much this means." - one of the mothers
- "I just wanted to thank you again...she loved her fairy catcher and was so grateful for long sleeves she could wear in this winter...they (her family) were so grateful for everything." - friend of one family
- "Christmas 4 Families would like to say THANK YOU to everyone who suggested or recommended the families we helped, all of you who donated, braved the stores to buy gifts (and wrap them) and a very special THANKS to the people who came out with us on deliveries to show these families that they matter. We are so GRATEFUL to our Santa, Wayne Ashton, for taking the time to visit with each of the kids, the impact you have made on their lives will always be remembered! Last but certainly not least, THANK YOU St. Mary's Episcopal Church for going above and beyond for three very special families!" - Daniel Thompson (founder)

✧ **Adult Formation and Bible Study**, *Robert Redd*

The Adult Faith Formation group meets at 09:30 on Sunday mornings in the library at St. Mary's and on ZOOM. This group has met regularly for over 12 years. Most often we select a book as a course of study. Occasionally we have focused on a specific aspect of religious life, for example: group members presented histories of their Favorite Hymns.

Our group has just finished *The Third Jesus*, by Deepak Chopra. Next Sunday we are excited to begin a new book: *We Make the Road by Walking*, by Brian D. McLaren.

For the year 2022, we are beginning with a wonderful biography of *Martin Luther*, by Martin Marty.

St Mary's Adult discussion group continues to be a very rewarding way to explore, live and share our Christian faith. Everyone is invited to join us Sundays at 09:30 A.M.

**PARTIAL READING LIST FROM PREVIOUS YEARS:**

- **A Faith Worth Believing** by Tom Stella
- **The Great Divorce** by C.S. Lewis
- **Bible in a Year**, a program of the Episcopal Church
- **Thomas Cranmer** by Dairmaid McCulloch
- **Building the Goodly Fellowship of Faith: A History of the Episcopal Church in Utah 1867-1996** by Frederick Quinn
- **To Be A Pilgrim: The Anglican Ethos In History** by Frederick Quinn
- **Alter in the World** by Barbara Brown Taylor
- **Holy Envy** by Barbara Brown Taylor
- **The Third Jesus** by Deepak Chopra
- **The Road is Made by Walking** by Brian McLaren
- **Always A Guest** by Barbara Brown Taylor

✧ **Parish Administrator Report**, *Arianne Gage*

It has been my terrific honor to serve the St. Mary's community as your parish administrator for the last few months. Having started in September 2021, I feel like I'm just starting to get the hang of things here at the church's office, and appreciate the patience and love that I've received from our wonderful parishioners.

Before my time here, I never knew just how much goes into being the administrator of a church! I am glad to be learning so much, and hope to continue to grow my skills as I strive to be the admin that St. Mary's deserves. So far, I have worked on a handful of updates behind-the-scenes here to help ensure that things run smoothly. These include things like: moving many of our monthly and annual bills to auto-pay; updating various directories and forms to better maintain organized information, files and processes; setting goals for completion and mailing of quarterly and year-end donation statements; updating various companies of our accurate physical and mailing address (did you know that St. Mary's once had a PO Box at the Provo post office, but it hasn't been in use for many years? Now our contractors know too!); assisting with Bishop's Committee functions and needs; and much, much more!

Thank you to all those who have helped me learn the ropes here, and to those who will undoubtedly assist me in the future. It is with great honor that I serve you here, and I look forward to many more years in this position, if you'll have me.

With much love,  
Arianne Gage