



Annual Report 2014

Church of the Incarnation

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A Jubilee Parish of the Episcopal Diocese of Northern California

Annual Report 2014

Table of Contents

Vestry

Rector's Warden	Pages 4-5
Long-Term Supply Priest	Pages 6-7

Committees of the Vestry

Buildings & Grounds	Pages 7-8
Columbarium & Memorial Garden	Page 9

Spiritual Formation Commission

Adult Spiritual Formation	Page 9
Children & Youth	Pages 9-11
Bookstore	Pages 11-12

Outreach Commission

Sunday Open Table	Page 12
Burbank School Program	Page 13
St. Andrew's Food Program	Page 13
Heavenly Treasures Gift & Thrift	Page 14

Community Formation Commission

Pastoral Care	Page 14
Guild of the Incarnation	Page 15

Worship

Altar Guild	Pages 15-16
Lay Worship Ministers	Page 16
Alleluia Choir	Page 17
St. Cecilia Choir	Page 17

<i>Commission on Gifts & Gratitude</i>	Page 18
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<i>Welcome Commission</i>	Pages 18-19
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Rector's Warden

Rebecca Gbasha

State of the Parish

This parish has weathered a tumultuous 2014 year in remarkable shape. The absence of Fr. Matt, now on administrative leave, Melissa, and many friends rests uncomfortably on all of us, while grief colors the outlook of some. Uncertainties frame all our options. Yet, we are still here, a faithful community of worship and song, caring for each other in good times and bad, proclaiming Christ's gospel in word and deed. We have not seen the financial downturn experienced by many churches facing similar crises; people have again and again stepped up to offer more, reflecting their faith in God and in this church.

While uncertainties keep our future clouded, we have continued to attend to those foundations of congregational health that will benefit us whatever our future direction. These support P2P, the Pastor-to-Program transition, but they are also just plain good things to do. Not all changes are yet visible, but will become more apparent over coming months. They include:

- improved financial transparency and accountability;
- incentives for giving and bequests;
- a commission organization better suited to our size;
- commission and ministry team involvement in planning and budgeting, enhancing initiative, creativity, and ownership;
- more open and democratic communications and governance;
- maintenance and beauty of our facilities and grounds;
- careful job descriptions supporting better staffing;
- recommended Vestry procedures to enhance Vestry service;
- greater focus of Vestry and Rector on mission and accountability.

Important as these improvements are, and worthy of celebration, they are only the bones, and not the life of this congregation. For that, let me tell you a story...

Sunday, January 4th, I stood in the Marian Chapel, waiting for Fernando to introduce the annual pledge appeal that hadn't happened in the fall. The stewardship team had been tired, dispirited, shocked by events, and without a captain willing and able to lead the effort. All we had was ourselves and our commitment to what this parish meant to us. The breakthrough came when we realized that what we did have was ourselves and our commitment, and that was enough. So I stood, self-consciously wearing my button "Ask me why I am committed", ready to carry the microphone from one brave participant to another. I was anxious, wondering whether we would emerge embarrassed by our risky venture and the parish ill-served by our efforts.

Continued on page 5...

What happened then still amazes me. Fernando began to speak into the quietness of the 8:00 service. Softly, slowly, he spoke of Fr. Matt's absence, of missing friends, of the uncertainties facing us. "Yet, we are still here. The Church of the Incarnation is still here because you are here. We, together, are the Church of the Incarnation." He reflected back to us all those activities and experiences that form the living heart of this parish. As he did so, I could see tears welling in the eyes of the people facing me, for he touched the deep longings of the human heart for meaning and purpose, for help and caring in time of need, for the blessing of being able to give, for all that turns us towards the love of God here at Incarnation. One by one, our participants then rose to tell what this parish means to them. Our admonition to hold to a 25-word script flew out the window. What emerged, from voices breaking with emotion, were heart-felt stories of healing and transformation, blessing and gift, each providing a glimpse of God in our midst. Tears of awe filled my eyes, as God's power touched me.

Underlying this experience, though, is another...the combined effect of events of summer and fall. It leaves a pervading sadness that remains close to me...for the pain, the grief, the losses, the anger and sense of responsibility....for the enormous costs paid by a few.

But together, we are stronger than this sadness. Our love is stronger, and the power of God to forgive and heal is larger and stronger than we can imagine. We must not let these memories and feelings drift into the past, unspoken and hidden within each of us, festering in places where we grow afraid to look. We must find opportunities to share our feelings of grief and loss, pain and anger, and to admit to our mutual responsibility. We must seek and welcome those lost to us. We must hold these gifts out to each other where light can acknowledge and honor, and where God's healing grace brings wisdom and maturity. Let all become a part of our history, transformed by our love and the power of God's love into our strength.

These last two years have been an incredible journey for me; a gift most difficult to receive at times, but a blessing to my life, nonetheless. I have treasured coming to know and work with the members and staff of this parish, to know their stories, to receive their kindness and wisdom, and to witness their faith and love. I have also been privileged to see in many tangible forms the bedrock strengths of this congregation. I am grateful for the many who have counseled and supported and been patient with me. Together, we have truly thrived in the face of adversity.



Long-Term Supply Priest

Fr. Rod McAulay

General Overview of Staff and Programs

It has been a privilege and gift for me to have served as your priest, both during this past summer from late May through early September and then again since November 7 to the present time. The circumstances of my time with you during the summer were positive as Fr. Matt, your Rector, was on sabbatical leave and the parish was busy continuing its work at developing a healthier process for conducting our many ministries. We called this “Pastor to Program” or P2P. It was a long-overdue move to decentralize control of and assure accountability for our work of worship, study, formation and outreach. It was, more importantly, the process for assuring that all of our efforts were tuned to the general mission of the parish and not hiving off into isolated silos.

My return in November was at the request of our Bishop when he placed Fr. Matt on Administrative Leave as the result of two individual complaints for misconduct filed under Title IV of our canons with the Diocesan Disciplinary Board. Also, at the same time, because of conflict within the parish the Vestry and Fr. Matt had requested an intervention by the Bishop under Title III of the canons. Under the Title III process the Bishop has conducted a review to determine how best to either reconcile all parties or dissolve the pastoral relationship. Both the Title III and Title IV procedures are now nearing the conclusion of an initial investigative/fact gathering stage.

As might be expected during this time there has been a high level of anxiety about the future of the parish. There is uncertainty about whether or not Fr. Matt will return. There is fear that our life together will change. A few of our members have withdrawn. My goal during this challenging time in our congregational life has been to sustain our ongoing ministries; to assure that our spiritual lives are nurtured, that the Sacrament is available to all, that our superb musical tradition is supported, that the opportunities for study and formation are available for all age groups, and that our work to reach out to those on the margins of society continues and grows.

So how has this gone? What is working and what is not working? I can say that I have been amazed at the resilience and energy of this congregation that speaks to our deep faith. Not everything is perfect. As is no surprise, when our lives are disrupted, there is a natural reaction of looking around to name who might be at fault. Who upset my routine? We have experienced this dark habit and I pray that we will turn away from such practice. If you feel a compelling need to discover the source of our current situation my counsel is to go look in a mirror and ask yourself, “how have I contributed to the difficulties in my parish and how might I work to restore health to our common life?” Do not be looking beyond the mirror: no good can come of it.

The over-riding reality in this period is the depth of our strength. Out of chaos has come order. The old is being transformed. The Alleluia Choir suffered two blows in the past six months, but has risen again and is making wonderful music.

Continued on page 7...

After much debate over the scope of duties, we have a new Parish Administrator who will begin the long task of restoring our communication infrastructure. And to my amazement, when the scheduled stewardship campaign was knocked off its pins in September and October, it virtually rose from the ashes this month. The energy and dedication of the participants has been fierce. The grace of God is running rampant through this church!

What might come as a surprise to many of us is that as we sort out how we do our work together and who will be doing what, we are rebuilding ourselves as a program-sized congregation. It is a death and resurrection scenario. When the pieces seem to have been scattered, it is the occasion to reassemble them so they work for us in the future. In these coming months, our ministries will thrive to the extent that we embrace this new way of being church. This was not our idea of how to do P2P, but it is happening already nonetheless. If we are anxious about change: it is already here and is yeasty and full of promise.

What hasn't changed and won't change is the bedrock of our faith, our life of prayer, our music, our love for one another, and our love for the wounded and hungry people in our community. We will always draw strength from both Word and Sacrament. Thanks be to God.

Buildings & Grounds (Parish Warden)

Jack Cramer

Below are listed the major building and grounds expenses for 2014. There were many items of work performed during the year that are not listed because of their more modest costs.

Paid from Operating Expenses:

1. Phone system repairs: \$1,187.21.
2. Irrigation Repairs: \$227.51 (parts).
3. Office/Welcome Center pass-through window: \$240.
4. Expansion Tank at Water Heater: \$307.50.
5. Kitchen Food Fan Repairs: \$1,935.
6. Refrigerator Repair: \$501.12.

Paid from Building Repair Fund:

7. New Plastic Covers for Stained Glass Windows: \$730.
8. Bee Removal: \$240.
9. Yellow Jacket Treatment: \$140.
10. Plumbing – City to Well Water: \$340.94, with labor donated by Lynn McLaughlin
11. Replace Safety Switch & Pump – Church Furnace: \$360.75.

Continued on page 8...

12. Fence Replacement (bid at over \$6,000) -only \$295. There were swarms of Incarnation volunteers making this project possible. These included Jim Furness, who worked untiringly and directed all constructions matters, Mike Hickey who organized scheduling and worked unceasingly, Jerry & Andrea Bandy (who donated the wood), David Saucer, and Jan Saucer and Patty Hickey who fed the multitudes. Our Open Table members Dave Utt, David Farrell, James Holdorf, and Chi. Two of these volunteers camped out all night on our stack of lumber to make sure it didn't disappear overnight. This security team was led by Twitch, David Utt's canine deputy (who proved her worth in the middle of the night by confronting a visitor who was "inspecting" the lumber). There were so many people involved in the effort, that I can't remember them all, and I apologize to anyone I left out. It was unintentional. Their help was wonderful!

13. Library Renovation: \$1,744.58.

14. Storeroom Renovation: \$1,253.73 (Living Room paid \$603.73).

15. Roof Repairs – SW Corner of Quad: \$4,010 (includes \$750 of labor by Jim Furness, for a net cost of \$3,260).

16. Repairs to North Wall of Farlander (Daphne's Office): \$2,930.

17. Shed for Eric's Tools: \$3,264 (paid by a donation from Tony Koepfle)

In addition to these improvements and repairs, we have been fortunate enough to receive very substantial donations of time, materials and labor from many parishioners and members of Open Table. It is impossible to put a monetary value on these.

The clean-up efforts, the planting of new shrubs and trees, and the repairs and maintenance of our Building and Grounds have improved our Church immeasurably. In particular, the work of Lynn McLaughlin and Keenan Sowell's deserves special mention. This recognition in no way diminishes what our other volunteers have accomplished, and we thank them gratefully.

There were also two major projects that we hoped to get done this past year. One was a major roof repair for the roof on the quadrangle and on Farlander Hall. We hoped to have done these in the early fall. However, scheduling issues and weather did not give time to get them accomplished before the early rains came.

Another important matter that sorely needs attention is the re-design and improvement of the ladies' restroom in Farlander Hall. Unfortunately, due to circumstances beyond anyone's control, this was not possible to accomplish. It will be on the agenda for the next Vestry and Parish Warden.



Columbarium & Memorial Garden

David Jasper

Columbarium

The Columbarium has 96 niches. All 96 of them are committed: 62 contain ashes, and 34 are reserved for future use. A third section of Columbarium will soon be installed to accommodate future needs. Parishioners wishing to arrange for niches in the Columbarium may contact David Jasper at his home, 538-7220.

Memorial Garden

The Memorial Garden contains the ashes of beloved parishioners within its soils. Ashes are placed, without urns, beneath the plants of the garden in unmarked locations. You are welcome to enter the garden on the stepping stones leading to and around the carved stone cross; and spend some time remembering the parishioners whose nameplates on the wall plaque memorialize them there.

Adult Spiritual Formation

Daphne Vernon

Your Spiritual Formation team consists of Daphne Vernon, Linelle Lane, Patrick Lancaster, Alice Macondray, Carolyn Rausch, and Sue Medway. In 2014 we worked on creating opportunities to connect deeper to God and our spiritual selves through classes, retreats, and book studies. We continue to encourage new members of our church community to attend our Inquirers and Seekers classes (held sporadically). EfM (Education for Ministry) is in its second year of renewal and going strong. Spiritual Formation was very happy to provide a new curriculum for confirmation; it was titled "Foundations Course" and was well attended. We offered two great day-long retreats. Fr. Matt led our Lenten series starting with a communal meal and book study. We look forward to hearing where the spirit is calling us next.

Children & Youth

Daphne Vernon

2014 has been a year of many blessings. We still have a Senior youth group and a Junior youth group. We have new members and have learned how to work together during pancake breakfast and at the coffee cart. It's great fun for the youth group to have a chance to greet you all on Sunday mornings. We have the Bertozzi's to thank for the donation as well as the opportunity to take the coffee cart on the road to the Cajun Festival where we had lots of fun and raised a nice amount of money. We continue to enjoy the benefits of Godly play. We see new children all the time and our community is really growing, we look forward to a prosperous new year.

Continued on page 10...

Child Care

This is such an important silent ministry. We have been so blessed to have so many incredible childcare workers for so many years. We are grateful for this opportunity to make them known in print: Nora, Maddison, Laurelin, Mira and Sonia. Each of our childcare workers has signed on with the sole ministry of showing our youngest members the love of God. Wholly and unconditionally. For years our little ones have grown up finding church a happy home, a place they want to be.

Godly Play

This year Godly Play has a renewed spirit thanks to the leadership of Peggy Zimmerman. We are blessed with a core team of teachers who have been really dedicated to their ministry. We want to thank our teachers Jen Keegan, Diane Elin, Gina Roghi, Lois Phillips, Carolyn Rausch, Barry May and Rose Frances. We have 2 classes' K-5th grade and 5th-8th grade (see junior youth group) with many happy kids participating.

Junior High Youth Group

Led by Julia Glanz with support from Daphne Vernon and John Nykamp. They meet every Sunday in the youth room. They have worked on teen issues, a bullying program, bake sale, and pancake breakfasts. They started a curriculum focusing on the church year.

High School Youth Group

We are a cozy group working hard to get to Mexico Summer 2015. You see them hard at work at our Monthly Pancake breakfast, and BBQs. We are still donating to BECAS for our sponsored child \$600.00 yearly from the coffee cart. We are still selling Taylor Maid coffee as a fund raiser. Hope to serve you on Sundays!

Halloween Party

We enjoyed our usual Halloween revelry at the party this year with pumpkin carving and carnival games. Thanks again to Julia Glanz and the youth group for building a great Haunted House. This year we had great fun with the chili cook off. Start working on your recipes for next year. Fun was had by all.

Advent/Christmas Party

We had our annual Advent party. We made advent wreaths, decorated gingerbread cookies. The winter spiral was a special treat having the junior youth group lead the assembly and the walk this year. Very moving evening.

Christmas Pageant

A familiar tradition we love at the 4 pm Christmas Eve service. Thank you to all the kids who took part in the pageant. It was great to see the older kids leading the younger. We enjoyed the lanterns that have become a tradition the kids look forward to.

Continued on page 11...

Pancake Breakfasts

Thank you to all who come and cook, clean and eat the pancakes every month. This is a great team building experience for our family of kids and adults. We are enjoying a new batch of helpers this year. All the proceeds go to our 2015 Mexico Mission trip.

Wednesday After School Program

We provide snack and assistance with homework and then move on to creating art and fellowship. We have big plans for the New Year. We have an improved group, and more games and activities for all age groups. We were bursting at the seams during the December drop and shop. The more the merrier!

Bookstore

Rebecca Gbasha

The Bookstore at Incarnation was founded by Rev. Pat Moore with managers Lila Kane and Terry Howell in 2001 as a ministry of this parish. Today, working there, one experiences those ministries Sunday after Sunday: A ministry of welcome to newcomers and outsiders. A ministry of pastoral care for those learning how to pray or seeking solace from grief. A ministry of spiritual formation for anybody perplexed by a Gospel reading, or for leaders and potential leaders scratching their heads over parish needs. These ministries are real and important in the lives of many parishioners.

The Bookstore is also a tiny retail operation that must make a profit, albeit small, if it is to continue to exist without subsidy. Like other small retail operations and independent bookstores, The Bookstore faces strong competition from growth in ebook popularity and online merchants selling with aggressive discounts. We do have advantages, such as immediacy, the ability to examine before purchase, and the guidance of careful stock selection. The fact remains, however, that estimating demand, managing cash-flow, and limiting stock build-up remain effortful and risky activities. Above all, maintaining the bookkeeping system that provides management information and financial accountability imposes a workload that few volunteers truly enjoy.

As a result, The Bookstore stands at a crossroads. Do we want to continue this ministry? If so, how we can make it work for us? It is financially viable with enough volunteer labor, either a few working much or many doing a little. Bookstores, however, do not call volunteers in the same way that outreach ministries do. Hired staff and more expensive technologies could reduce the need for volunteers, but would be impossible without improved profit margins, which for all practical purposes means increasing book sales with smaller discounts. The approach that springs most directly from the mission of The Bookstore would be to increase integration between books & products on our shelves and the ministries of the congregation. This is not something that The Bookstore can do on its own, however. Leaders of ministries would need to incorporate learning and ministry development as regular practices within their ministries and collaborate with The Bookstore to help select and provide materials.

Continued on page 12...

The benefits could spread far beyond The Bookstore, however. A developmental component within ministry enhances personal growth and spiritual development for individuals and works to continually renew the ministries themselves.

Specialties usually needed:

Customer assistance and sales for Sunday coffee-hour shifts

Display and design

Inventory, from box to shelf.

Collection development: especially Children's books and Jewelry

Simple bookkeeping with QuickBooks

Sunday Open Table

Mike Hickey

Incarnation's street-side sign at our entrance best describes the sentiment behind our Sunday Open Table Ministry: "ALL ARE WELCOME."

This is a welcoming ministry that opens Incarnation's doors to individuals from the downtown street community, providing breakfast, a bag lunch, and safe respite from the elements every Sunday morning. Nearly 100 guests, on average, from the street community sit with us between 6:00am and 8:00am.

We don't just offer food. We drink coffee with our guests, we talk with them, we get to know them. Each meal begins with our chaplain's welcome and a brief prayer of thanksgiving. Sunday Open Table depends totally on donations of time, talent, and treasure to support its ministry to welcome and feed the needy. In the winter season we distribute jackets and clothing gathered by Warm4theHolidays, from collection bins in local grocers and retailers, and from other area groups concerned with unsheltered persons. We provide information on agency services available for our needy guests.



There are many ways you can participate in this ministry. We need volunteers during the week to bundle up forks and knives, to sort donated clothing, to prepare food, to shop for food, to write thank you notes. On Sundays we need volunteers to host and serve food, to help clean up the tables, to distribute lunch bags and vitamin C tablets, and to lead a group-sing. And at any time you can donate money to our ministry! Get more info about how you can help. Contact opentable@incarnationsantarosa.org, or Mike Hickey, tel. 707-568-6856.

Burbank School Program

Patty Hickey

2014 marked the eleventh year that Incarnation parishioners have volunteered to help students, teachers and parents at Luther Burbank Elementary School, located on South A Street in Santa Rosa. Volunteers assisted teachers in classrooms, the after school program, the library and music programs, and also provided support for special events including book fairs and seasonal concerts and festivals.

Incarnation volunteers also worked in the Farm To Family program helping to distribute healthy food, furnished by the Redwood Empire Food Bank, to needy school families every Thursday.

“Special” funds in 2014 from Heavenly Treasures Thrift Store sales, in the amount of \$2,500, helped make it possible for all sixth grade students to spend three days and two nights at the Westminster Woods Environmental Education Center for their Spring class trip. The funds also made it possible for Burbank students to enjoy field trips throughout the year that would not have been financially possible any other way.

All parishioners can help support our “adopted” Burbank School by collecting box tops from products marked “Box Tops for Education,” and collecting school supplies for children and teachers.

Please contact Patty Hickey to ask questions about opportunities to volunteer or to make contributions of any kind. (568-6856) or mnp4449@sbcglobal.net

St. Andrews Food Program

Daphne Vernon

The Food Program was founded in 2003 and has been in continuous operation since then. In 2014, the pantry distributed 5,777 bags of groceries and many tons of fresh fruit and vegetables, helping an average of 116 households every Tuesday. The Food Program



offers free hot dinners twice a month, and in 2014, served a total of 6,500 individual meals. Each week our guests have the opportunity to choose from a selection of free clothing, including warm jackets and coats. St. Andrew’s Food Program has a part-time Program Coordinator, and many volunteers from the community. In 2014, volunteers contributed a total of 3,724 hours to the Program. The Food Program is funded through the support of churches, grants, and individual

donors. We are grateful for the generous support that we received in 2014 from the Church of the Incarnation. We are proud to be a part of the Incarnation family and to extend its outreach into the Russian River area.

Heavenly Treasures Gift & Thrift

Mary Helen Hall

We had another great year here at HT. We served more Living Room Participants than ever before. Donations have remained steady from many generous sources.

Our total sales for the year: \$19,637.25

Total amount transferred to Outreach: \$2,758.38

Clothing and other items donated to TLR Participants: \$38,447.78

Total # of vouchers served: 2,184

As you can see we all stayed busy this year. Please keep the donations coming! Thank you to my incredible volunteers and all of you that keep our racks full of beautiful things!

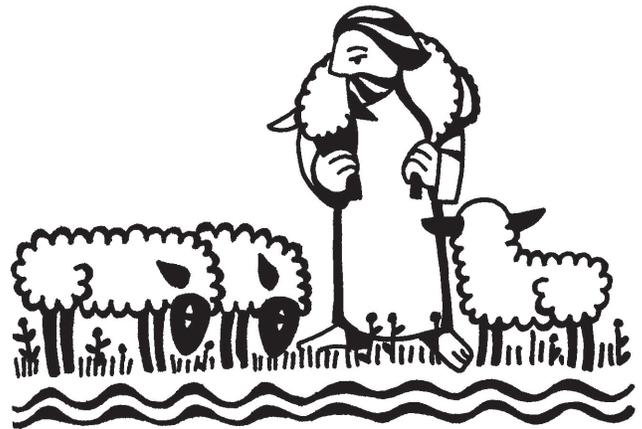
Pastoral Care

Alice Macondray

What is it, exactly—pastoral care? Exactly, it means caring for sheep. In a church? Well, we do transcend that word “sheep,” as in “all we like sheep, have gone astray” because pastoral caring, in church terms, means caring for one another. Our rector pastors us and we pastor him and each other. And of course many of us pastor each other without appearing on any “official” record.

Incarnation has specifically carved out “pastoral care” to mean taking communion to the homebound (Eucharistic Visitors), providing food to those with temporary needs (Casserole Brigade), and providing rides to those who don’t drive. We also met a special request this year: reading to someone with macular degeneration. A team of callers also reached out to everyone in the current parish directory in see how and if Incarnation is meeting their needs and expectations. We had an awesome year in the first category—communion to the homebound. Our team of licensed eucharistic visitors took communion to the home- or hospital-bound over 100 times in 2014!

In late October, we held a meeting with Fr. Rod open to all those who had expressed an interest in pastoral care. Two outcomes: We will encourage more “friendly visits” to the home or hospital bound—i.e., not restricted to licensed eucharistic visitors. And we hope to revive the practice of gifting the homebound with bouquets of the altar flowers after Sunday services.



Guild of the Incarnation

Lynn Cassil

The Guild of the Incarnation is over 100 years old. We are a “Branch” of the “Episcopal Church Women”.

We have met every month except July and August during those 100+ years. We have had programs, some fun, some informative, some musical, etc.

At the beginning the ladies met in each other’s homes for tea visits etc. We held Rummage Sales on the lawns of the Church. After WWI the women decided to build a Parish Hall on the South Side of the Church, again paying for it with donations, tea parties, rummage sales, etc. The building matched the Church – redwood shingles. There was a large Hall, fire place and a stage and a kitchen. They didn’t have enough money for the fireplace, until one woman gave the money in memory of her son, who was killed in WWI.

Sunday School for the pre-school, kindergarten and first grade was held in the Hall. The other grades had classes in the Overton House, the original building where we now have the Parking lot and the Sunday School rooms, nursery, playroom, office and Parish Hall. The Guild was very active in earning money to help pay for all this. But then we had a fire in the Church which caused an addition to the Mortgage. So the Guild also added catering wedding receptions, the money to go to the Mortgage. We also earned over \$100,000 for other needs of the Parish such remodeling the kitchen, the organ, etc.

We have continued to meet all these years in Farlander Hall with programs both informative or fun. We cater funeral receptions for the families of our Church members. We earn money for out-reach needs with Rummage Sales and the Holiday Bazaar.

But of course, the meetings, programs and visiting with each other is the most important.

The last few years our membership has diminished and we often have less than 10 members at our meetings, which makes it difficult to get programs. So we feel we must let go of these meetings and events and fund raisers. It is a hard decision to make, but we can still meet and visit at the coffee hours after Church and when the Church has a program here.

It has been fun, full-filling and satisfying to be a part of the life of this Church for over 100 years.

Altar Guild

Diana Ardley

The Altar Guild prepares the church for all services that are held in our church. We are ready when we are asked by the Rector or his representative to set up the Altar, prepare for Communion, etc. when it is required. The Altar Guild is made up of four teams, one for each week of the month. The team is responsible for the services for their week. They are also willing to step in for members of other teams when necessary.

Continued on page 16..

We dust the church, arrange the flowers for the reredos, Marian Chapel, Narthex, and wash and iron the Altar linens as needed. We polish the brass and silver and fill the candles for each week's services. Then we clean the Chalice, paten, polish Alms Basins, etc. and prepare for the next service. This is a very rewarding ministry, which we all are willing to do. Advent, Christmas, Lent and Easter are particularly busy, but they are joyous for us as they are for all of you. In the middle of 2014, Lynn Cassil, who had been the leader of the Altar Guild for many, many years, retired from her leading role but remained on Team 2 of the Altar Guild, and Diana Ardley (who has also served on the Altar Guild for many years) became the Leader. We offer our deepest thanks to Lynn for her many years of dedicated service.

Lay Worship Ministers

Diana Ardley

It is the duty of the Lay Ministry Coordinator to schedule Lectors, Lay Ministers, and Acolytes for their respective assignments for each Sunday - and for special worship services throughout the year. Thank you to Lay Ministers, each and every one of you, for your participation this year!

Lectors

Lectors read the Lessons and the Prayers of the People in the worship service. Several new lectors have joined the roster for a total of 40 lectors between all 3 services.

Eucharist Ministers

It has been a joy to train and add three new Eucharistic Ministers to the group. All Eucharistic ministers have served faithfully at all 3 services and several special services during the year. EMs are volunteers who express interest in this unique ministry, trained through the Deanery Workshops for Lay Ministers, and approved by the Rector and by the Parish Commission on Ministry. Licenses for EMs are given at the request and upon the recommendation of the Rector to the Bishop. Licenses are good for three years and thereupon may be renewed. Four of our Eucharistic Ministers are further trained to serve as Master/Mistress of Ceremony at the 9:15 am and 11:15 am services. This role is to assist the Celebrant in making sure liturgy is offered in the best way possible.

Acolytes

The number of children and youth interested in serving as Acolytes has dropped over the last year. The Acolytes serve on certain Sundays and special services during the year as requested. They carry the torches and the crucifix in the procession at the beginning and end of the service, take part in the Gospel procession, and they help with the birthday box and other duties as assigned.

Alleluia Choir

Fr. Rod McAulay

The Alleluia Choir has had a tumultuous year, but by all accounts has come out of it stronger than ever.

In May, we lost our Choir Accompanist Carol-Jean Boevers due to a personnel conflict. Conflicts continued as we then lost our longtime choir director Melissa Craig-Morse. We wished both of them the best in their pursuits, musical and otherwise.

Then came Steven Angelucci, director of the choir and organist at St. Eugene's Cathedral in Santa Rosa, as interim Choir Director. He has brought new music and new energy to the choir, and we thank him for stepping in during this difficult time.

Although we lost some members, we gained some too, and some who had previously left came back to join us. We say farewell to 2014 and look forward to what 2015 has in store.

St. Cecilia Choir

Carol Menke

The St. Cecilia Choir has established a tradition of offering a yearly Good Friday Concert—a large choral work with orchestra—and we have been singing to a capacity crowd for several years running. This year we joined with the choral ensemble Cantiamo Sonoma to perform G. F. Händel's Chandos Anthem #3 and Faure's Requiem with a small chamber orchestra. Carol Menke directed the St. Cecilia Choir, Cantiamo Sonoma, and the Incarnation Chamber Orchestra, comprised of instrumentalists from throughout the Bay Area (including several players from the Santa Rosa Symphony). Soloists were Carol Menke, soprano, Kevin Baum, tenor, and Tom Hart, bass-baritone. Our organist, Joey Prather, who joined our musical staff at the end of 2013, played the organ for the performance.

Our Cabaret production was in November and we performed, once again, to a full house. All of the proceeds from the Cabaret go toward funding the orchestra for our annual Good Friday Concert.

The St. Cecilia Choir is dedicated to providing quality music to enhance the 11:15 a.m. worship service, and we have a wonderful time doing it! We continue the time-honored Anglican tradition of having sherry hour after Thursday night choir practice, which adds to our enjoyment of singing together. The St. Cecilia Choir roster is listed here: Connie Vocature, Heather Anderson, Laura Downing, Barbara Avery, Ellen Meuse, Lisa Jang, Suzanna Rozga, Laura McLellan, Susan Little, Diane Schoenrock, Alix Shreffler, Don Baier, Bob Matteucci, Derreck Podlewski, Jacob Hughes, Stephen Little, Jeffrey Myers, Tom Kibbe, Armand Russell, and Bob Speights. We welcome all singers with choral experience who wish to worship God through music.

Commission on Gifts & Gratitude

Fernando Dizon

The Commission on Gifts and Gratitude is one of a number of commissions recommended by the Governance Study Group as part of a transition from a pastor-centered parish to one that is program-centered. It was one of four commissions established by a Vestry Resolution on August 26, 2014, and is comprised of four teams: Stewardship, Planned Giving, Shared Ministry, and the Congregational Commission on Ministry (CCOM). Currently there is no chairperson for the Commission on Gifts and Gratitude.

The members of the Stewardship team are David Jasper, Linelle Lane, Sue Medway, Amy Nykamp, Rebecca Gbasha, and Jack Cramer. There is no team leader at this time. The members of the Planned Giving team are Bev Clarke and David Jasper. The team for Shared Ministry has not yet been formed. The CCOM team is in the process of being reconstituted. Parishioners who have recently served include Patrick Lancaster, Rebecca Gbasha, Marti Shaughnessy, Katharyn Crabbe, Mike Guilford, and Justin Weil.

Two meetings were held for the full Commission, the inaugural one in August and the second one in September. A Commission budget proposal for fiscal year 2015 was discussed and submitted at the second meeting. Proposals addressed initiatives for training events for Stewardship and Planned Giving and expenses for the Pledge Campaign.

A combined meeting of the Stewardship and Planned Giving teams was held in December. The Vestry resolution describing and defining Congregation funds was discussed, clarified, and submitted to the Vestry for adoption on January 20, 2015.

The primary endeavor of this Commission was the recent Pledge Campaign that started on January 4, 2015 and is still continuing. The Stewardship Team put together the campaign that emphasized the heartfelt expressions of commitment to Incarnation from many of members of our parish. Because of their commitment, many parishioners renewed and increased their pledges of financial support to maintain the sanctuary, sustain numerous outreach and pastoral ministries, and provide for the future growth of our spiritual community.

Welcome Committee

Stephanie Blair

The Welcome Committee has had another fun year working together to make newcomers feel welcome. We had a very successful newcomer party in the Spring, which featured line dancing led by a professional line dancer! People were begging us for more parties just like it! Unfortunately we had to cancel our Fall potluck for a variety of reasons, but the biggest one being a lack of interest. Hopefully more people will sign up the next time we throw a party. Please be willing to commit!

Continued on page 19...

We updated the brochures in the welcome bag which gets handed to all newcomers, we have kept up the name tags (please wear yours!), and we recently started having a Welcome Table in Farlander Hall after the 9:15am service.

Our new idea which we will begin implementing in February is Welcome Sunday, which will be every second Sunday of the month. We ask that everyone take a few minutes to talk to someone new to them, meaning someone whom you have never spoken to before. We will also have out the Welcome Table, and each month we'll feature a special guest for everyone to drop by and get to know.

The Welcome Committee enjoys working together as a group. If you would like to join us, please email welcome@incarnationsantarosa.org. We are looking for MEN in particular because we now have none, and males bring a different perspective on welcoming which we need. We also need people who attend the 8am and 11:15am services.

Feel free to also email us any ideas you have on welcoming.