

St. Michael and All Angel Episcopal Church

Listening Session Responses

Question 1

December responses are taken directly from the index cards. **January responses are in bold.** Responses are taken directly from the index cards and notes written by note takers during the two ZOOM sessions. The notes from the ZOOM sessions which were recorded and then transcribed by the note takers may be longer in length.

Question Number 1: Tell a story about a moment that was a high point, when you felt our church was doing God's work and fulfilling God's mission. What was happening?

- Meeting the buses from Mexico.
 - o Assistance at the airport to get to final destination
 - o Partnership with other faith communities
 - o Translation services provided by volunteers
 - o Provision of clothing, meals, transportation, a safe place
- Meeting the buses coming from the border and getting folks on their way. They were so appreciative. It was a "God's moment" for them and for us.
- **Accepting immigrants on the bus. Teams coming together.**
- **The buses – immigration.**
- **Meeting the buses of asylum seekers. Preparing and serving dinner, playing with the kids, providing shelter, clothes, food and helping the people go on to their new home – food for the journey. The ancients talked!**
- **Meeting buses of people coming by way of El Paso to the Bosque Center. Helping those in need, responding to their need. "What you have done to the least of those you have done unto me".**
- **Spinning up to take care of the immigrants arriving on short notice in Albuquerque – organizing food, providing clothing and bedding, helping make arrangements for next steps, taking them to the airport and navigating the airport.**
- **When we provided food, clothes, hospitality and medical care to busloads of immigrants. The whole church and neighbors came together.**
- **When the busload of migrants was welcomed to Diocesan Retreat Center. St. Michael's folks were there. But it also created a different community at the center – both challenging and creating a new ethos – grounded, serving, more humble, welcoming.**
- **Providing assistance to immigrants who had recently come from South American or Central America.**
- **The time the parish began to organize ways to assist migrants and non-U.S. citizens to help people seeking asylum in the U.S.**
- **The work to receive migrants.**
- **Immigration open to any.**
- Immigration/Asylum. Meeting the busloads of persons sent from the border to ABQ – providing assistance with clothing, food, transportation, etc.
- Several years ago St. Michaels was involved with hospitality for immigrants being bused from El Paso. I thought the community came together to provide a welcome from very tired and confused souls. The work involved a number of things and the people of St. Michaels stepped up in every regard to provide what was needed to make sure individuals were safe, cared for, and ensure their passage to final destination was a good one.

- In 2019, many of us met buses of immigrants. Meeting the people, hearing their stories – never had I imagined that “Welcome the stranger” would be a gift to me! In their presence, I felt the presence of Christ.
- **At a meeting on our involvement in migrant ministry. It was packed with people of many denominations and civic activities and our acceptance of all.**
- **2019 with the coordination of the immigrants and asylum seekers. St. Michael’s joined numerous other churches to provide support and services. We met the buses of people that were housed and fed at the Bosque Center.**
- **This was Pre-Covid. When we hosted asylum seekers at Bosque Center. I was with the hospitality part of welcoming the asylum seekers. Welcoming the Stranger. God was at work.**
- The deep involvement with immigrants – supporting people at the Bosque Retreat Center, feeding people, providing clothing – church services. I remember specifically when we were working with new immigrants at the Ramada Hotel (?) near the airport – making sure they had food. They had come in right before and I think loved being able to sleep that night. Also the people from SMAA they did so much transporting people to the airport.
- A few summers ago, our church was asked to help several buses of Central American refugees after they crossed the border seeking status as asylum seekers. Dozens of people sprang into action and we facilitated the asylum seekers to take the next step on their refugee trip, fed, clothed, clean and ready to travel. The fact that we were able to work with other parishes was very encouraging.
- Welcoming immigrants from buses. They arrived dirty, tired, confused, and once they’d registered, obtained food, clothes and a shower they BLOSSOMED and spirits uplifted. It was truly an act of grace for St. Michael’s to welcome immigrants off the buses.
- **Having not been here for too long (2-3 years). I think the high point was in understanding all the church does to help people trying to immigrate and provide support for the asylum seekers.**
- The reimagining of the space that was used as a long-term residence for an immigrant family into the development of The Landing.
- **I was phoned to spend the night at The Landing with an escaped slave from Mauritania who spoke only Pulaar. He and I went to dinner where he picked out his meal based on pictures. We shopped for shoes and clothes, and we went to breakfast the next morning without being able to talk. He had a room to go to for his prayers (Islam) while he was here. He seemed happy at the end of our visit.**
- **A high point was when St. Michael’s invited immigrants to The Landing. Accepting them which made a big difference to those individuals whether they stayed a short length of time or longer.**
- **The work and caring the Refugee Volunteers were providing to the Venezuelans.**
- **When I met Afghanistan family at The Landing that consisted of a husband who had been a translator, a wife and their 2 year old son. I felt that our church was helping the present and the future of that 2 year old. A very vivid impression that made me so proud to be part.**
- **Creating The Landing and welcoming asylum seekers/immigrants.**
- **The week The Landing opened, when we started to take refugees, making them comfortable, getting them ready to move one. Very important. Very positive thing that we did.**
- **The Landing ministry. Offering space, supplies, and assistance to those seeking asylum. Allowing an ease to those uprooting their lives to seek a better way of living.**
- **The Landing - where Fr. Joe gave up his large office space so The Landing could use that space.**
- **Turning the office space into a refuge – The Landing – a safe place for immigrants and welcome space for travelers, youth groups, etc.**
- **The moment that came to my mind was the Saturday gathering held to discuss the future of St. Michael’s with regard to immigrants. The Parish Hall had a significant number of people because this was kind of new. There was resounding consensus that we were in fact doing God’s work by**

housing the stranger. That was a significant moment in my memory. St. Michael's coming together in agreement.

- When we housed the family from Angola. We were verified as a congregation by welcoming strangers.
- We hosted the Panzu family, creating space and support. Fr. Joe gave up his office and plans were made to develop a more accommodating space. The Landing was developed.
- **The Panzu family.**
- English as a Second Language (ESL) concept was beginning at The Landing. Teaching ESL as part of the idea of serving immigrants at least in concept.
- I believe the church was fulfilling God's mission when the church community decided to take offices in the church building and convert them into an apartment for an immigrant family.
- **When we had our first asylum seeking family staying at the church. They eventually were reunited with the father and went on to Canada.**
- **Bella's wedding**
- **When the church arranged a wedding for Bella Panzu and her husband Armando and family. I felt so very connected to them and to our congregation in celebrating what was to be their new life in America.**
- Buses of immigrants: realizing that welcoming the stranger was actually a gift to me.
- Immigration/Asylum: meeting the busloads of persons sent from the border to ABQ and providing assistance with clothing, food and transportation.
- Immigration welcoming of the buses...St. Michael's REALLY stepped up on a much grander scale than anything we'd done before. Powerful experience, welcoming strangers.
- An ecumenical spirit and faith driven quick action. This was exemplified by the fast and efficient organization by various churches to help the many buses of immigrants arriving in Albuquerque in 2018.
- A respect for other faiths and working in collaboration with them. The Immigration effort brought various denominations and churches together to feed and clothe the many immigrants who were received at shelters in the Albuquerque area.
- **This person came to SMAA about 25 years ago; had kind of given up on Christianity before that. Invited to hear Brian Taylor – very impressed by latitude of spirituality that Brian seemed to encompass. A Habitat for Humanity project, done years ago in collaboration with other churches and with the family receiving the home. It was a joyous occasion, and reflected the "latitude of spirituality" that Brian Taylor encouraged at St. Michael's. This was a ministry at St. Michael's then. Value in commingling with other churches, the collaboration with people we are serving.**
- When we answered the call to assist with all the immigrants in 2018-2020 when the federal government was being absolutely horrible to them.
- I felt that our Parish was doing God's work when we took the youth on a pilgrimage to Juarez, Mexico to build a house for a young family. We continue to do this work as we help refugees by our comfort and shelter. But more important, dignity and respect. Homeless/food pantry/other outreach.
- When Journey to Adulthood (JTA) got a consistent core group and the bonds with the adult leaders began allowing the youth to get relationships outside their homes in which to experience mentorship.
- **When our adolescent daughter was involved in J2A. The group (and Parents) did fundraising so kids could go on pilgrimage trip. Felt real sense of community.**
- **When she taught J2A. On the days they did community service (example, once a month served at St. Martin's), she felt they were really part of the community and helped the youth understand what was happening outside their homes in a safe way. It gave kids a chance to open up, talk**

about things, work through things with one another as well as trusted adults to help guide them. Giving kids in the community for them to talk about what they need to talk about, explore different ideas with parents feeling good that their children are with mentors who have similar beliefs of service and Christian values.

- A recollection (in the days before the new sanctuary was built) of the thriving children's ministry, with leadership and support coming from the parents themselves. There was the impression of perhaps 50 children processing into the services (picture that – children pouring into the sanctuary (parish hall) from the school portion of the building!)
- When I first came 27 years ago – integrity, speaking to truth, Food Pantry, strong children's program, welcoming
- **After COVID, the first week, families came back from Saturday and ZOOM. The number of parents and kids made the church feel totally different – holistic.**
- **When we came here and the Church had a program for the kids – Children's Chapel.**
- **A high point for me is when my daughter would teach me the signs and the prayers, the Our Father. Similarly, Children's Chapel has renewed her interest in bible stories which we read often at bedtime.**
- **Every week we collect food for the Food Pantry and have the kids bring it up, shows we are engaging everyone, including our children who are presenting gifts during the service, to do the work of Christ in the community.**
- **The fact that ALL are welcome and that the little ones are welcome at the table.**
- **Way back when Karly Shepherd was leading Family ministry and there was a ton of great things/activities/groups and special services for kids. Sam Hall would regularly come to do a service for the kids. One time I did a special age groups and "weirdly" ended up with a whole group of adopted little girls – mine included. Total inclusion.**
- **When Children's Chapel was vibrant.**
- **Worship experience that was inclusive. I have friends attending church here who invited us and later the next year, we started attending here.**
- **A specific example is difficult to remember. However, I recall after attending services at several churches, this is the church where my family and I felt was most inclusive to people of all backgrounds.**
- **Sense of community**
- **Many years ago, I started coming to St. Michael's after a 38 year absence of being in a church. I was nervous because of my views of religious traditions.**
- The first day I came to St. Michaels, Pastor Kristen was preaching and her story was of a church that had closed and passed on its assets to a new church. When one door closes, another opens. I had left Aquinas Newman Center after the dismissal of the Dominicans and I thought -How did Kristen know I was here? The hymns were those I knew from Newman and I felt I had found my new spiritual home.
- **When my friend and I were considering joining the church and Kristin asked us our names and made an effort to remember them. We felt welcomed and like this is where we wanted to be.**
- It was my first Sunday at St. Michael's when I was church shopping, and I received a personal welcome from Alice who introduced herself. Then Fr. JP said "all are welcome at the altar", and (speaker expresses tears of gratitude) I felt like I was home.
- **Communion – All Are Welcome**
- **Newcomers class experience. I felt like it was a perfect fit of beliefs for me. I became a member quickly, but it took time to take on the Episcopalian identity that I came to have. Fr. Brian was just amazing in the classes. I've never agreed with anyone completely before! It was a very open welcoming.**

- Welcoming new members thru newcomers meeting. Sharing a meal while learning about the church and meeting other.
- **Many brief moments have been experienced but I would have to say that during my “New Members” time of volunteering. The work of the volunteers ministry and new members was so deeply a part of what I experience as God’s mission for us.**
- **Newcomer’s class**
- In the new member’s class and confirmation event were the highlights of my experience at SMAA (2007). The church was everything I had hoped for.
- I came here at first because this was my father’s church. I think it was the first church in many years that made him genuinely happy. A special moment was his funeral, which was handled with real love and respect.
- When I first came to the church I noticed that people sang with full voice, children were taking part and there was a place for people with families and small children to sit that offered them a view of the altar and a place to move around.
- Halloween Weekend – the outreach to the neighboring community. It was the “church without walls” in action. The love shared between church folks and the neighboring communities – not necessary – but was beautiful.
- The Halloween Trunk or Treat for the neighborhood, parish, and school children. All were having fun, being silly, new parishioners, long time parishioners, young and old. One Mom asked “what time are your Sunday services?’ Community!!!
- **First Trunk or Treat (2021) – people were sharing themselves, inviting community, including multigenerational activities.**
- The reaction and service provided quickly through online Sunday services during the pandemic. Fellowship was occurring.
- During COVID, many congregations went to online services or suspended services all together. St. Michael’s moved outdoors – in the heat and cold - and celebrated meaningful services with clergy and lay leaders shepherding and supporting.
- Outside services during COVID
- Easter Vigil: light after a long period of darkness....the whole transition from dark into light.
- Easter Vigil –awakening to a new year, a new you. From darkness into light (6AM).
- **Two things come to mind. First Easter, always Easter. But most importantly the Easter bunny and the candy and the kids and the pure chaos that comes with Easter is my favorite part. I love that the kids love to hunt eggs. I don’t know much hiding we do anymore but maybe it’s more just gathering eggs. I love the joy in everyone who watches – the people who just grab coffee and sit on the banco’s and watch the pure chaos as it reigns in the courtyard. I feel like it is very communal. I appreciate that it is festive.**
- Lenten and Advent retreats indicated this church takes spirituality seriously.
- **A high point for me was at the very first experience I had in a ‘foot washing” service for Maundy Thursday. There was such a profound sense that we were following Jesus’ command and follow pilgrims as we did.**
- The first Advent midweek service {added for clarity – this year}. The gathering in a circle, the many worship tasks offered to the gathered, the music was accessible – very inclusive and invitatory. Worship as the work of the people.
- **The music/choir really draw me in to the service.**
- **During congregational singing, I felt the swell of sound filling the sanctuary with worship and praise. It was apparent that a large part of the congregation had felt invited and enticed to join in song in a most apparent way.**
- Blue Christmas in 2021

- **A Christmas Eve services were Fr. Brian's sermon asked the question "Why would Jesus choose to be born in a town where there were so many people and no place to stay because the census was taking place?" The message of the sermon is – you don't need to have anything set up to begin a spiritual journey.**
- **Attending Christmas Eve services – Celebrating the birth of Christ amongst a spiritual community of diverse backgrounds and in an inclusive atmosphere.**
- **My yes, the prayer from the church**
- God's Work: Called to a parish ministry! Usher, Eucharistic minister, youth development, Education for Ministry, men's group, adult spiritual formation.
- Important to me: Dinner for Eight, Men's spirituality meetings on Saturday morning and men's ministry.
- Parish Picnic in park in 2012: just a chance to informally share each other's stories and to hear other persons concerns, triumphs, and stressors, without pressure.
- Parish Picnic in a local park. We shared stories, and got to know people in depth. It was very special.
- **Family Fun Church. Outside, fun fellowship, meeting people where they are. Diverse, engaged community members.**
- **At a Board meeting for the Day School, the Director said that they so not turn away difficult children. Instead they meet the child where he or she is and proceed to work with them from there. Meeting people who are having a hard time with acceptance rather than rejection is an important part of God's work.**
- **Also, we used to pilgrimage to Chimayo. When Father Daniel was with us, he would bless anybody! There were lines of people standing – people from our parish and people not from our parish – just standing around down by the water waiting to be blessed. I felt like there was a strong sense of community in that too where it felt like we were coming together and we were acknowledging everyone and everyone's needs and I think it was important. (Next person had also been planning to speak to this too)**
- **Pilgrimage to Chimayo**
- Within the context of acceptance, at mass, when the Baptist minister gave the sermon about racial equity because it was inclusive to have a minister from another faith community and it focused on equity. It prompted me to search for images of Jesus from other cultures – African, Korean, Native, and European – not just historical.
- When my church stood up to a white supremacist group and refused to allow them to follow through with their plan. (East Lansing Michigan)
- **Bishop Gene Robinson with preaching, with permission from the Diocese.**
- **St. Louis Education Center 1960' and 70's. Jungian based.**
- These happen all the time at the Food Pantry, welcoming LGBTQ, Preschool, etc. But a moment: The federal government tried to bully our state by releasing immigrants in waves. We showed up about 50 strong to welcome and support these newly released immigrants. Love in Action.
- In 2008 when Father Brian Taylor announced that we would be adding on to our campus. There was a building campaign during financially bad times. St. Michael's parishioners contributed very generously and not only made this possible but exceeded the amount hoped for.
- **When work on the Parish Hall was completed. Everyone worked together.**
- In the 90s, the issue of LGBTQ surfaced in the diocese with a lot of rancor and divided opinion, and the bishop wholly against the suggestion of welcoming the LGBTQ community.
- A long time ago (about 1997) the issue of gay members was at hand. Fr. Brain led a service "The Olive Branch" with other clergy and bishop. It was a momentous time and St. Michael's became first Episcopal Church actively welcoming pay parishioners. It was a very courageous act to take, but the consequences were costly. St. Michael's was in the midst of securing a loan for the construction of a

new sanctuary from the diocese. The loan was rescinded by the bishop. When word got out of the diocese's action against St. Michael's, donations from across the country flooded in. In the end, the more costly bank loan that was secured, was paid off in a year.

- **1997 after I joined St. Michael's, Fr. Brian extended an invitation to the LGBTQ community – an olive branch. The Diocese didn't like this. At the same time, St. Michael's had applied to the Diocese for a loan for expansion of the church. Brian went ahead with the services which was very courageous. The Diocese pulled the loan application. But that didn't stop us. Money started flooding in from all over the country.**
- **Priest gave a sermon about the harm that had been done for the LGBTQ community. There were plans for additional building on the campus. The Diocese didn't agree with the stand the church was taking in welcoming the LGBTQ community. The Diocese did not give the church the loan we needed. That didn't matter to this parish. We followed through on the new building.**
- **Many years ago: The Parish Hall was our sanctuary. We were growing and needed a complete campus. The Bishop pledged \$600,000.00 to help with the building fund. St. Michael's took a strong, theological stand for LGBTQ Inclusion. The Bishop said "no" to the pledge. St. Michael's rose to the occasion.**
- **Raising the money, as a congregation, to build a new Sanctuary after the Bishop blocked a mortgage loan. Bishop blocked the loan because we were openly accepting of homosexuals at the time. We pulled together and raised the money for the loan. That was a significant moment of unity in the parish. It helped us expand and take on new ministries.**
- **When St. Michael's held firm against the policies and just plain meanness of Bishop (What's his name?). Father Brian Taylor never spoke ill of the Bishop, but persevered in pursuing the mission of St. Michael's to be an inclusive, loving community.**
- **St. Michael's has supported LGBTQ+ for years. LGBTQ+ can be out, real, authentic and know they are loved and valued. Seeing Rachel as Sexton makes me proud to belong.**
- **St. Michael's was the only church in the diocese to "speak truth to power" with courage and integrity.**
- **Renaming Rite a few weeks ago. Felt like church was really loving the person being renamed, accepting the person for who they are. This feels like God's work.**
- **I feel the church is very much welcoming of all people which I feel is very much god's mission! What jumps out for me is the renaming ceremony and the sermon regarding names.**
- **It was more than a moment: it was an era. Under Brian Taylor, the parish welcomed LGBTQ congregants at a time when many churches in the diocese did not, and when the bishop was openly opposed to opening the church in that way. It was a stance of uncommon courage, but also common decency and simple justice. And ultimately, it was a position that prevailed throughout the diocese.**
- **Accepting of risk, challenge to new vision.**
- **Going back to pre-gay marriage – and I don't remember the incident that caused the church to come together, but in 24 hours we got a service together, that I believe Christopher did, that had a young man speaker who spoke about his attempted suicide. And that struck a chord in me – and in the LGBTQ community – of St. Michael's strength and inclusion.**
- **The wedding of Emerson and Checky even before same sex rite was approved. Bend the rules if it helps people.**
- **Linda and Michelle's wedding – looking at the congregation, the inclusiveness. I saw children smiling and I said "that is the world I want to be in".**
- **When we had a blessing ceremony during the Liturgy with our family and friends (Even though the marriage happened beforehand). It was back before many churches even had a blessing ceremony (June 2015).**

- **Panzu family was finally reunited and we all joined together to re-marry them under U.S. law. Beautiful wedding! Clergy and parishioners came together!**
- A deep connection between St. Michael's clergy and the membership, which was reflected in the generosity of members in 2008 when Father Brian requested contributions to the ministry complex building campaign. There exists a mutual nurturing between Church leaders and parishioners. The result was successful at a time when many churches might not have stepped out in faith.
- After expansion of the new sanctuary in the late 90s, parish was full of newcomers all waiting to be welcomed. Then thru creative thinking outside of rigidity and tradition, we turned to being welcoming, inclusive by embracing all. All was new language, music, art, LGBTQ. We became of a dynamic, growing, engaged community of faith. Resilient!
- Many examples of having a need and of asking for help and someone comes to help or provide answers – synchronicity.
- Strong participation in outreach ministries. Social justice has always been an important objective of St. Michael's. Immigration ministry, including The Landing, which has housed immigrants and others needing shelter for varying amounts of time; Casa San Miguel Food Pantry; supports of Faithworks and Las Familias are examples.
- **Multiple of Ministries**
- **When I first came to St. Michael's in early 2010 after leaving another Episcopal church in Albuquerque. I felt part of God's mission because of the outreach in the church.**
- **The Angel Tree was for Christmas 2019 in support of Good Shepherd Mission in Arizona. Despite the busy holiday schedule parishioners took time to learn about this new fundraiser and to participate by helping a community with members they will never meet, making lives better.**
- There was a meeting about 2011 to talk about ideas for new ministries and who was willing to be a lay leader. A collection of new ideas were enthusiastically discussed, each with multiple lay leaders. A number started and filled the needs at the time. Clearly the Holy Spirit was moving in our midst. Legislative engagement related to immigration and early childhood education, Phoenix Project, Divorce care.
- 2010 – Congregational uttactty (sic) initiative that consisted of 1-on-1 intentional conversations that aligned people's passions and strengths with existing and new ministries.
- **The church decided to acquire the house immediately west of the worship complex to house the food pantry.**
- **Food Pantry**
- **I truly feel as if any time I have been able to work with a team in helping others it has been a perfect experience of doing God's work. Food Pantry, clean-up around the property, re-building the pantry storage area, etc. Love leading through action and working together to achieve and accomplish.**
- **I don't have a moment, when clients walk through the line at the Food Pantry. For me the work we used to be able to do at the Food Pantry (pre-Covid). We built relationships between each other with our clients, with the school children. It was about the relationships in our community.**
- **Volunteered several years in the Food Pantry. There is such a need for that service, both housed and unhoused. She knew when they left that folks had enough food for a meal or 2 or more. Relationship building with consistent weekly contact.**
- Welcoming strangers at the Food Pantry, registering them, loading them up with food, and them driving away with smiles.
- High point moment – San Miguel interact with clients. Interacting with San Miguel clients before pandemic.
- We help with the Food Pantry where we serve people with food insecurity. Feeding the hungry, sharing our resources, is surely God's work.

- Casa San Miguel: Interviewing prospective clients....they sometimes cry with relief upon hearing that they qualify to receive food.
- At Food Pantry – One woman said she was now caring for 3 grandchildren and didn't have the income to feed them. Being God's hand and feet in the world.
- Smiles and happy faces before pandemic at Food Pantry. The clients were shopping the food on the tables and enjoying our hospitality and services provided in the pavilion.
- While volunteering with Casa San Miguel enrolling new clients who are so grateful for our help. The support this parish providers to programs.
- **SMAA Involvement with Casa San Miguel food pantry.**
- **The delivery of food to those in great need in this community. Parishioners giving donations, volunteers creating food baskets and neighbors coming to receive the gifts. Seeing the joy and love of God in a full circle.**
- **Feeding those in need and the Food Pantry especially those who walk to us to get food. Seeing God's work as we help them gather as much as they can carry.**
- **When I found out about San Miguel's Food Pantry, and I began to volunteer every Tuesday. I have been doing that about 6 years.**
- **The work of the food pantry.**
- When feeding the food insecure (Casa San Miguel Food Pantry) and helping refugees, ministering to asylum seekers (The Landing) has to be "doing God's work".
- Years ago with other church volunteers I helped at St. Martins feeding breakfast to the homeless. Prior to serving and eating we shared a communion with parishioners intermixed with homeless. That represents to me the spirit of St. Michael's – as opposed to many other churches I've attended.
- **Sunday morning breakfasts – taking food to St. Martin's and serving the homeless. So much love and understanding and comradeship.**
- **Hard to focus on one area – we do God's work in so many areas. The exciting time, 30 years ago, when Brian Taylor was leading a congregation-wide exploration of Zen meditation with classes, retreats, and finally a Contemplative Center at St. Michael's. We received a grant from the national church to do that. In the process this person learned about spirituality this way. "We learned a new way of living in the world" which laid the foundation for the church's strong stance for social justice. The other part of contemplation is action – wonder if pursuing broader-based spirituality and meditation was something that laid the groundwork for us to become a better congregation.**
- When St. Michael's had a Contemplative Center...the intersection of Buddhism and Christianity in an introspective practice. Involvement in the Discernment Ministry to walk alongside someone spiritually and witness breakthrough moments on their faith journey. It had the quality of being open and exploring.
- **The Contemplative Center had just begun. We brought Cynthia Bourgeault to lead a contemplative weekend retreat on Centering Prayer. People came from many churches to participate. Very enriching – true sharing God's grace.**
- Brian was exploring the connection between Buddhism and Christianity and created the Contemplative Center which conveyed a "flavor" to our worship and prayer as a whole
- When Brian Taylor started the contemplative initiative and openness to multiple threads of spirituality...different traditions and different ways of approaching the Divine.
- When we honored the Spirit through silence and contemplation. Seems we rush through our services in service to the clock.
- Fulfilling mission in the sacraments of baptism, funerals, weddings are sacred, special, and important work in the church. These are pivotal moments for individuals and families/friends, and represent transformative events that support one's solidifying their identity in Christ.

- When there is a reverence, ceremony, priests in robes, acolytes looking like they are part of the flow.
- **Welcoming of new members allowed me as a wedding officiant to marry a couple who were not in the faith community. Everyone was helpful and welcoming.**
- **Every once in a while, the church service just comes together and everything fits – it's like the Holy Spirit is present.**
- When my ex-wife died [in 2014], I had been a member here for six months. I was concerned about arranging [my wife's] funeral service. Our priest Kristen and deacon David made such a difference for my whole family in a very hard time. Her ashes now rest in the columbaries here.
- The moment was the burial of my wife, not in Albuquerque, but elsewhere. The rector was in attendance and gave support to me and a small but disparate group of individuals – some believers, some not, but all of whom had something to say after the rector's comforting words. This was a time in which the words of comfort and leadership from the rector, far from homemade an important difference to a disparate group.
- **In 1985 my son had cancer and was in the hospital. Fr. Brian visited us and our family at the hospital. He just showed up! He provided incredible support.**
- **A personal memory. When my husband died, there was a closet full of clothes that I thought St. Michael's Sanctuary program could use. Jane McGuire came tight over and got them.**
- I have felt that St. Michael's and All Angels Church has done its job and fulfilled its mission through offering baptisms and confirmation and wedding services to the public and parish. These have been important community events.
- **When [my husband] and I were reconfirmed in SMAA 2011. We felt so loved by God and came back to his love.**
- Being a member of the Kirtan group and incorporating chant into the worship.
- The meeting I and my wife had with Carolyn Metzler when Diana was ill with Alzheimer's disease.
- Raising up lots of clergy from St. Michael's. There was a very mature process of discernment that raised up Daniel Gutierrez, Susan Allison-Hatch, Judith Jenkins, and JP Arrossa. And a grace came upon the parish as a result.
- **When Daniel Gutierrez was ordained here.**
- **We as a parish raise up members to the diaconate and to the priesthood. I have been fortunate to attend three ordinations of people. I guess Mandy may not have been technically put forward by our church. It is still a neat thing to see. Fr. Daniel, Fr. JP. That is an interesting process and it is fun to see people from our church be called to that and to support them.**
- **Mandy's ordination.**
- The raising up of multiple individuals to clergy ministry through the process of small group discernment.
- **In 2011, we had a program called VOCES. It was an exchange program between Spanish speakers and English speakers. It was a high point for me because my vocational and spiritual paths intersected for that period of time. We have since found other ways to address the needs of recent immigrants, but have we done something that also meets our need for challenge, like learning a new language?**