

# St. Michael and All Angel Episcopal Church

## Listening Session Responses

### Question 3

December responses are taken directly from the index cards. **January responses are in bold.** Responses are taken directly from the index cards and written notes from 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 3:** Think about the time when you most appreciated the ministry of a priest/pastor/cleric. What was happening? What did you appreciate most?

- Father Brian bringing my Eucharist in the hospital when I [was ill] (2006).
- **I was hospitalized at Lovelace and Father Brian took the time to come and visit me. I was surprised and felt very special to receive his prayers and blessing.**
- **My 2017 [surgery]. Prayers and visits by clergy. Most recent procedure – defibrillator. Susan Allison Hatch after my 2010 heart surgery.**
- **April of 2017 Father Joe came to our house to pray and bless [my husband] with his [medical condition]. Also, the whole congregation prayed. And again that year – October – when in a weeks' time, I had [surgery]. Father Joe came after surgery and that Sunday I was back in church. He prayed for us and me!**
- When my husband was in the hospital and Joe came to visit and pray with us. Bringing Communion to our home after the hospitalization.
- Ministry to the sick
- **Father Joe came to see me shortly after my cancer diagnosis. I was sick, laid low by chemo – and he just chatted and comforted me. Fast forward several years – he was at hospital to see me although I don't remember. "Oh my God" I said. It was not God, it was Joe.**
- **When my wife was in the last stages with Parkinson's disease and I was struggling to be her caregiver. The clergy were very kind to me and listened attentively. Also, the Caregiver's Support group was a life saver. Also received much solace from them after she died.**
- **Remembering the illness of my husband. Had serious illness and went into a coma. Two neurologists and various other doctors had pronounced him brain dead and we were waiting for him to die. Everybody had left and I was in the room with him. As he started to manifest different behaviors. Repeated tests the neurologist had made and he was coming out of the coma. I was so confused because I had adjusted to the fact that he was dying imminently. I got in the car and went to St. Michael's and Brian came back with me. My husband made a joke with Brian and so we knew he was coming out of coma and he lived another 3 months. Brian's companionship during that time was so helpful, just being pastoral, and companioning and being available to whatever my needs were.**
- **When my mother was on her death bed (she was Catholic) and her priest could not come till a day later – I called JP and he came within 2 hours.**
- **When we moved my mother into hospice and it was clear she wasn't going to last much longer. Father Joe came to the house and sat with my father and me. I don't remember what he said, but just the fact that he was there made a huge difference.**
- **My sister was ill, housebound and JP visited her – at our home.**
- **When my daughter was being prepped for surgery, early in the morning, our priest was there to pray with her and me.**

- I have a running litany of people who have served in our parish from Deacon Judith when [a parishioner] was in the hospital, she went and helped [the parishioner] with personal grooming every night;
- Father Christopher and Father Brian were at my mother's hospital bedside multiple times to pray over her and to sit with my father.
- After my accident – the hospital priest of St. Francis – a real mess of a man – probably drunk most of the time. He cried with me and my family – he didn't look away! He met us where we were and was my pathetic broken self.
- JP with my [family] has been on call all the times for the last seven years. I just think how lucky we have been to be surrounded by clergy that is so compassionate and so willing to go the extra mile, and do the nitty gritty work that in that moment be really human with us, and really help us grieve and struggle and heal and move forward. How did we get that lucky to have such a concentration of wonderful people serving St. Michael's for such a long time? This can't be normal! Statistically improbable!
  - o *Follow On: Thinking about you saying that we are lucky – I do think this church calls people - clergy as well as parishioners.*
  - o *I think of previous comment on us calling people from our church to the diaconate and to ordination as an example of that as well.*
  - o *This is good modeling- we model people that are amazing and people want to be like that. We want to continue that and go out into the world and make spaces like that.*
  - o *Recalling Paul Saunders – suspect he got things off to a good start.*
  - o *See that his beliefs, his core beliefs in action in all this discussion.*
- Baby/still birth
- Having lost a baby at birth many years ago. There came a time when I shared with the Rector (Brian) that there had never been any real closure or service. He asked me if I would like to have one. Then we wrote a short service; I invited a handful of friends and Brian led a service (a memorial for that baby!). So appreciative. Still have that service.
- Joe and JP when [my husband] was dying
- When I came to St. Michael's to arrange my husband's memorial service. He died unexpectedly and I was in a state of shock. Father worked with me with compassion and understanding as did the other parish staff. The kindness of the clergy during the service caused me to know that I have found my spiritual home.
- When my husband was dying. The time spent with him by Joe and his allowing our unconventional funeral. Acceptance of my husband by both Brian and Joe as a person on the fringe of parish life.
- Joe and Carolyn were very responsive and supportive when my friend was dying of pancreatic cancer. The choir and Joe came to visit her and sing. He officiated at both her burial and memorial. Carolyn ministered to her on an ongoing basis via phone. It was comforting and felt Christ's love surrounding her and those who were caregiving for her.
- Dear friend needed last rites. The friend had not been eating but after Father Joe visited she ate and passed away the next morning. Speaker was grateful to Father Joe for being by her side as she comforted and cared for her friend.
- Jan Bales when my partner was dying. Jan helped me negotiate that process which I would have had a very difficult time without her. That came to mind immediately – probably because it was a milestone event in my life.
- The response of the clergy to the death of [my wife]. One of the folks was at our home in minutes to help with comfort and prayer. Later, the liturgical planning and services were done with great kindness.

- **Bea Daniel's blessing and service with her family and Fr. Joe at her bedside. To be with Bea and her family online.**
- **Deacon Mandy during a family crisis. She kept us focused on how God was working through us in the midst of a difficult situation. She did not back down or flinch when I had challenging questions. She was faithful in the midst of a messy situation.**
- Judith Jenkins at my bedside when I woke up from cancer surgery (2010)
- The four years when my son had cancer, relapsed, and then relapsed again. I appreciated Father Brian's support of my entire family and my son in particular. It was very hard for Father Brian because my son was only 10 when he died.
- **A priest reached out to me when my son needed treatment for cancer in another city. The priest took us to the airport – walked us up to the plane and said to me "You're not in this alone. God is with you". He made arrangements for the clergy of the cathedral to meet our plane and take us to the hospital. I never forget that moment.**
- **The wisdom and experience priests have shared – presence and death (several come to mind) and baptisms.**
- 3 years ago – inspired response to my family in the time of loss.
- When my granddaughter died, I wanted a small service for her, though she hadn't attend any church (that I knew of) recently. I suggested maybe we could use the pavilion. Fr. Joe said a resounding NO. We would have the service in the Sanctuary. His valuing [my granddaughter] touched me deeply.
- **Our nephew was murdered. Priest was present to family – in many ways. Funeral service was personalized and included the nephew's preschool son, who was assured by priest he always had a home with the church and they would be with him in absence of his dad.**
- **At a funeral for a teen who had committed suicide. Brian said that God was welcoming that confused child into heaven and holding her on his lap. He didn't discuss or even approach the concept of suicide as sin. He taught acceptance and nonjudgement in his actions.**
- When my mother died in a nursing home – my sister asked a priest who was just walking by to please come in and lead our family in prayer. He did – so graciously. Had us circle round and added the Our Father prayer for us to do together. That moment – ground us gently
- My father's funeral. The minister handled it with real understanding and compassion.
- **Mother-In-Law passed away. Our priest from Colorado came to California for services.**
- The moment when I was hospitalized [ ]and Joe and Kristen came to visit me. Kristen left me a book of Psalms and Joe prayed with me. I knew I was not alone and God was with me.
- **No particular time (things have been good) but knowing that my concerns/fears/whatever would be met with acceptance, love, and reassurance.**
- **I was in crisis and emailed the Pastor asking for prayer. We he saw me, he listened and offered to meet and accompany me!!! I was not alone.**
- **She was being stalked on the telephone by the same person as in her previous state and was very frightened. The person called her adult child at her job AND the church because the stalker had seen on Facebook that she was a member of St. Michael's. Kathryn deflected the phone calls. Father Daniel provided advice and counsel. The church managed a difficult and scary situation competently and compassionately. She felt protected and a sense of control which let her feel safe.**
- **In the past 28 years, so many clergy have helped me. Most recently with the Renaming Rite. Mandy and JP researched this newly approved Rite and made plans for how it would be conducted at St. Michael's. There are no words to express the gratitude for being so flexible and understanding. It is so cool that a church would do this.**

- **She went to graduate school and entered very serious clinical depression. Years passed, and even as her condition improved, she felt guilty for having felt like God was angry at her/disappointed. She met with Father Christopher. He helped her talk about what had been “eating away at her soul”. It was exactly what she needed to feel safe and welcome again in church.**
- When I took part in Newcomers for the first time. I learned from the pastor where I would and how I would navigate a change from another denomination. Again it was a wise and welcoming interaction.
- Great ministry: Mandy leading the Newcomers group in 2021. A bonding experience for 15 of us.
- **When Fr. Joe and Mother Mandy led some of the sessions of Newcomer Orientation. He was patient to all our groups’ questions. Joe and Mandy made the history of the Anglican Communion very relatable. He/she knew their history and spoke so knowledgeable to our present beliefs /Book of Common Prayer.**
- I think on times of national difficulties – Covid, political upheavals, celebration of events, lives (Martin Luther King, Holocaust protestors) mourning of deaths, church holy days, morning and evening prayers. Newcomer’s class.
- Our interaction over a period of time with Caroline Metzler. Her continued interest in our progress through the process and her willingness to read the Gospel at [a] memorial service. JP and Mandy’s Newcomers class last year. Retreats.
- Retreats with Brian and with Joe.
- Lent and Advent Retreats
- I think about the time when Pr. Kristen Shultz was the “last clergy standing” and how she led the parish through the most difficult times of the previous transition. She grew in amazing ways and we rallied around her. The Holy Spirit brought us all together.
- High EQ score!!! Forming a warm relationship where any topic can be raised and respectfully discussed. Trust established.
- I don’t think it counts as ministry in a traditional sense, but it feels very special/important as a gay person to have JP.
- A priest (JP) actually greeted me by name and stopped to talk with me.
- **I appreciate the warmth and the one-on-one conversations with Father JP. He is always so jovial! He is a one and only!**
- JP always ready to listen
- **JP has been such a genuine help through many of the tough experiences I had at the end of 2022. It may not seem like much, but his simple questions and check-ins have been deeply appreciated and made me feel gracious to be a part.**
- **As I was considering being received into the church here, I struggled with leaving the Roman Catholic church, especially around having chosen confirmation as an adult and feeling like I was going to break that vow! Father JP was really helpful. I appreciated his listening, taking my concerns seriously.**
- **When I asked to have someone from the church check in with a parishioner who had been absent – and they did!**
- Enjoyed the skill of Joe Britton dealing with a variety of parishioners.
- **Joe’s sermon on immigration.**
- **When Father Joe was new here. I had multiple conversations with other parishioners who had shared with him something they felt passionate about, something they wanted to do, and Joe had said “yes”. He gave people permission to work hard.**
- **Joe during online sharing he noted that I had a problem and the next time he saw me in person, he dropped everything to sit with me and be supportive.**

- **Our first service at St. Michael's. Father Joe's sermon was about the Slur (??) Room which [we] just seen a play about. I felt exceptionally connected to God and the humanitarian focus present in the church that day made me feel home.**
- Conversation with Fr. Lee about gender inclusive language during coffee time.
- I also appreciate the warm comfort of how each priest is able to connect with the congregation i.e. Fr. Lee trying to get the sound system to work.
- Appreciated Father Brian for his contemplative nature – also his compassion when listening to the trials faced by parishioners.
- When Fr. Brian supported a contemplative ministry
- Fr. Brian leading the church on a meditation experience – inner peace breaking with tradition of a church service
- Brian T – opening hearts to by mystic spirits in meditation experiences
- Fr. Brian
- **Every time Brian Taylor disagreed with Bishop Kelshaw. I thought it was important and it took guts. When Joe came on he expanded on Brian's theme and put his own stamp on it.**
- **Brian's sermons. I think many of us originally came to SMAA because of the way Brian was able to relate our humanness to God and God's message.**
- **Father Brian – I had returned to Albuquerque. Father Brian welcomed me into the congregation when I feared no one else would after 7 years in NOLA.**
- **Brian's pastoral care for a man facing major surgery. He led 40 parishioners in a laying on of hands, and he visited the man regularly after the surgery, bringing the Eucharist, people praying.**
  - o **Other person: That really sum up who St. Michael's is – there for each other and there for our community.**
- **I had been Christian but had lapsed in that and didn't really know what my own faith was. The way Brian Taylor "helped us find our personal faith" with this whole cadre of information. Offer enough broad things for us to think about. Everyone had something they could relate to. It caused my own faith to grow in leaps and bounds. Think it was true for a lot of other people too.**
- **The surprising invitation Brian extended to one couple to attend Burning Man, and create a tent that became a meditation center at the "kind of edgy" event. Later that night it was full of people.**
- **Brian Taylor who welcomed all the refugees from St. Marks.**
- Before SCOTUS approved marriages, Fr. Brian offered services of reconciliation for LGBYQ community. Despite diocese opposition, Brian and the church stood by the welcome and we thrived.
- **Brian Taylor. We did not really appreciate how wonderful he was until he was gone.**
- **Fr. Brian's blessing our new rings after the old ones became too small.**
- **Not to take anything from Father Joe, but Father Brian was Pastor here when I first arrived. He seemed exceptionally warm and friendly. After I'd been here 2 years, I ran into Fr. Brian at Ghost Ranch. I didn't think he knew me, but he greeted me warmly and we chatted about church and life while we strolled the dirt paths of Ghost ranch one morning. His sermon on speaking in tongues (that the bible story may indicate there are multiple paths/religions to God) was one experience that drew me to St. Michael's**
- **When Brian Taylor sent me off with a prayer and books during a time of personal crisis (and [hired me] after I lost my job.**
- We were interviewed in depth by Brian Taylor – to discern our path and how we can contribute to the parish.

- **I miss Father Christopher. He has a beautiful and spiritual chant style. I also miss Father Daniel.**
- **Father Ken Clark – we followed him from Cathedral. He was so children centered.**
- **Thomas Keating from Snowmass**
- **Carol McGowan – I became Episcopal through Canterbury in the mid-90s. The priest, parish were about going out and being church on campus. It was not about having folks in, it was about going out!! Critical for church today.**
- **Rhonda McIntyre**
- Spiritual direction – a sense of depth in a priest’s devotional life and theological exploration.
- Non-dual thinking is helpful in circumventing my own dichotomizing and theological questions and concerns.
- Appreciate Father Lee – his attendance to our ministries.
- Fr. Lee invited me to come into his office and talk. Just interested in me. It felt pastoral.
- Most appreciated ministry of priest, pastor, and cleric.
- I really appreciate the way that JP and Mandy minister to the children. I think this is going to lead to aiding in lives of faith.
- **Between Mandy and JP: discussion on baptizing child #3. They were quarreling over who would get the honor to bless our child into the church community. (All in good spirits, friendly, and showing strong working relationship)**
- **I appreciate the family ministry (Family Fun Service, etc.). That has been good for my children to experience, especially during COVID and times of isolation. I appreciate that, when we have been included.**
- **JP and Mandy’s commitment to worship with kids and ways to engage children. Children’s Chapel, Family Fun Church – ways to participate in big church service, parish retreat.**
- **A small child was creating a bit of a fuss and at a break in the sermon, when the child made a very loud noise the Pastor said, without skipping a beat, “I’m glad you agree”! The parents were not called out or made to feel embarrassed.**
- **JP and Mandy during Children’s Chapel. Their ability to interact with children on their level.**
- I have not used/experienced personal ministry, but observed situations.
- Bishop – teaching about process.
- Paul Saunders - bible study
- Pastor Haney – 1<sup>st</sup> (???) church PDX urban – mystery box (kids), youth groups, bible study groups/services
- At another church – kindness about my situation – nonjudgement
- Clergy/Rector – open to multi Christian
- When Mandy responded right away to my email letting her know I was ill and couldn’t attend centering prayer.
- Mandy teaching the knowledge of the church
- **I said to Mandy in New Members class that on the matter of theology, we don’t know. She admitted “Yes, we don’t know”. I found that remarkably refreshing, and honest.**
- **Mandy – Family Fun Church during COVID**
- **Mandy’s ministry with children and families. Reaching out and organizing events, include families and support us. Kids ZOOM prayer and stories; soccer games and baseball; Children’s Church, Family Fun Church**
- Mandy – Halloween event said she loves these events because church members can laugh and have fun. At times church can seem weary and judgmental with all the talk of sin. “Joy” is the sign of god’s love. Mandy captures that spirit.

- **When Mandy started the new Trunk or Treat Halloween event – which appealed to people of all ages but more importantly reached out to the “youth” of the parish and surrounding neighborhoods.**
- **Organizing Trunk sales – 2019 for The Landing/ 2022 for the GSM Christmas. Father Joe listened and quickly said that’s a great idea – why don’t we do it. Support/valued/respect/and autonomy**
- One occasion when a priest was giving counsel on a personal family matter, he spoke of a place he felt as in spirit with of a family member he would offer support. I had known the priest for some time as he had been active with a young adult’s ministry I was involved with in NY and he had grown to be friends with many of the group members of the parish. I appreciated his thoughtfulness.
- **When I heard Doug Travis speak at church and he willingly connected with me and has guided me spiritually since he left.**
- **When Doug Travis joined us last time we were in search for a rector. He gave me and the congregation a “new hope”. He spoke to me in his sermons. He ate meals with a few of us and made a personal connection for me with a member of clergy.**
- **Clergy assistance with spiritual growth and advice.**
- **I have several examples. Clergy hearing the story of my spiritual journey and helping me make sense of it.**
- **During the counseling sessions with our priest before my marriage to [my husband]. The wisdom of the priest as he posed the questions.**
- **We really appreciate when Kristin (clergy) took the time to plan our union ceremony.**
- **I was attending St. Michael’s w/o my spouse. I found my soulmate in someone else at the church. The clergy was nonjudgmental in my distress and guided us through the transition of our lives.**
- Fr. Brian’s knowledge/interpretation of scripture as it pertained to how we live (sic). I’d never heard anything like that before! And when we were contemplating being received into the Episcopal Church and what it meant spiritually and culturally.
- 12 years ago, personal, very deep struggle. I was hesitant to take the pastor’s time, but he sat with me for 1 ½ hours, quiet together and then shared a simple reflection of God’s companionship with me.
- Recent events in my life made me more of a hermit than COVID and one of the clergy spoke to me directly giving me support and said things that made me know they understood and supported me.
- I brought my mother to curbside communion. Father Joe offered her communion - not knowing her, her background – took the time to enter into a lovely conversation with her, making her instantly feel important, welcome, and appreciated.
- I asked Father Joe to baptize my mother because she did not remember being baptized as a child. He did not hesitate and arranged a private time. Years later when my mother died he convinced me to have the funeral here even though most people did not know my mother.
- [During a time of personal family crisis involving my child]! JP helped me through a process of forgiveness that I will remember him forever!
- Brian Taylor helped me discern my path as a lay person that allowed me to apply the experience and gifts to the church. And interested and intentional and nurturing approach. Saw the value of lay discernment
- **This is a small thing but during Vacation Bible School, there was some water in a bowl. Joe took the bowl and rather than throw the water on the pavement, he threw it in a bush. He showed how we are to take care of creation.**

- **During the buses at Bosque Center. Their ministry to the asylum seekers and constant encouragement to the congregation.**
- Mother Sandra's pastoral care – no specific instance – but an acknowledgement that sometimes things happen that no one has control over – I paraphrase it as “shit happens”.
- Informal office meeting with Joe Britton about St. M's finances when he asked how can we inspire greater giving? Then I had to point to myself and say that yes, I for one could also do more.
- When Fr Joe became interested and supported the Navajo ministry through both his presence and monetary support
- Seeing need of Navajos needing to have clergy in partnership
- Pastoral care – healing services, preparing for baptisms and a wedding.
- **When I first started coming to St. Michael's, I was baptized here. Walking through the Parish Hall one day, I saw Brian and said “God Loves Me”!**
- **My marriage. We spoke to Father Joe and said we would like to the “Do” amongst our community. He said: Why not?**
- **My wedding officiated by Father Joe at the Sunday 9AM service was creating for our wedding.**
- **Bishop in southern Colorado – Baptized, communion, confirmation.**
- Fr. Brian married my daughter 20 years ago!
- **Recognition of our 60<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary. The fact that 60 years as Episcopalians was recognized.**
- **The Panzu family wedding. They were accepted into this congregation. Their wedding was so moving. All put together by the parish.**
- **The Welsh congregational minister was officiant at our wedding – as he prepared us for our wedding, he told lovely stories in a Welsh tone of voice and pointed to ways that to this day carried us through. He had a lovely sense of humor that has shaped me as a priest.**
- Traditions and ways to worship
- **Opportunities with clergy to have blessings during services. When it happens on a random Sunday, planned or not. Can think of times where it was a blessing to have that opportunity. Example – having a hard week. There would be an opportunity for blessing and prayer.**
- I remember a sermon given about my mother, my heart flowered open.
- The interim priest before Father Joe gave the most awakening sermons. Never forgot his sermon on the Beatitudes. To hear someone talk as he did, from the heart, not on script was the reason for my coming to St. Michael's.
- **I think about generally how we have been blessed by so many great sermons by so many great individuals. Hard pressed to think of a specific one. But impressed with the depth of sermons we receive on a regular basis.**
- Challenging homily of JP. Judgement to seeing the truth. The truth of our blindness, prejudices, inaction in face of injustice. Very heartfelt and leads to soul searching. Hearing voice of God.
- Sermons – each Sunday I appreciate the work and craft of the sermon.
- Sermons are thought provoking and challenging
- **Great, thought provoking sermons**
- **A sermon that showed personal vulnerability that indicated a personal and honest relationship with God. This compels me to look at my own relationship and desire to go deeper in my faith and practice.**
- **I appreciate how sermons are typically delivered with a combination of thoughtfulness, humor and relatability to daily experiences. This helps the congregation connect to each other and the key aspect of the gospel message.**



- **We also appreciate the sermons and the word being shared so that we can go out and live that message each week.**
- **I really appreciated and do appreciate when the priests/clergy present/talk about subjects they may not understand or even agree with.**
- When I am challenged by the sermon – my need to grow. (I don't need a "rehash" of the lesson, what does it mean to me?)
- Adult Formation – Eastern Orthodox thoughts on Crucifixion of Christ and Christ's experience
- Joe B opening the Prayer Book to a new way of thinking about what we say in liturgy without changing the sequence but being true to the spirit – New Zealand - Navajo
- During COVID when the church was "closed" except for ministers and lay servers. I was in the church when Mandy gave an advent sermon about waiting. She acknowledged the communal and individual pain of COVID and being separate. Her voice broke as she said, if we only knew how long....Her personal anguish came through and touched me deeply.
- Nothing personal at this point but I appreciated how the clergy quickly transitioned to online services when the pandemic started. So important to have that continuity – also curbside communion, mailings, - special COVID prayers.
- **Communion – drive-by and warmth in connecting**
- **I also appreciated when Joe and JP found a way to do the Eucharist during the pandemic as well (drive thru). Another way to try to keep up community and spiritual growth.**
- **Through COVID the leadership figured out how to continue many programs, not just the Sunday services. Having multiple priests was a huge benefit.**
- **All Clergy – Speed and efficient set up of online services.**
- **During the pandemic, when there were no vaccines and social distancing was required, the church spent money to quickly set up the technology to continue to offer services online. This was forward thinking. These actions contributed to the resiliency of the church.**
- Concern for the quality of worship during the pandemic when it was only online. Moving to new technology
- **All Clergy and Assistants – Daily Morning Prayer**
- **We don't do lay Eucharistic Ministry like we used to?**
- **Appreciated Father Brian when he said OK for me to do the parking lot. Got it done.**
- The folks who do hospitality year after year. Coffee is another way to draw our parishioners together in fellowship.
- Most ministries are led by groups of parishioners under the guidance of a clergy person. Members are invited to participate in new ministries – as part of the formation.
- **When priests have shared their experience in developing cohesive working groups and ministries.**
- **Ministry of a Priest/Pastor when dealing with conflict in the church and coming together over tragedies.**
- **Chimayo trip with Fr. Christopher and Fr. Daniel and being on this pilgrimage with family and friends – spiritual and remembrance of the past.**