



*St. Monica's  
Episcopal Church*

*2023*

*Where We Pray, Love, Give*



## *From the Desk of Our Rector*

*Dear Parish of St. Monica's and Friends,*

*The joys of being part of St. Monica's come as a result of your work and openness to the Spirit who nudges us forward! We thank you for being part of the movement at St. Monica's, as so many have contributed with their talents, passions, time, and treasure.*

*What follows in this report are some highlights of the life of our church as they reflect our values. This report is in no way comprehensive but demonstrates the vitality of our congregational life together.*

*We thank so many for their hard work, for their presence, and for offering who they are. So many comprise this beautiful tapestry of life at St. Monica's, where all are welcome.*

*Yours in Christ,*

*Fr. Jonathan Evans*






# *What Is St. Monica's About?*

As an Episcopal Church, we believe the mission of the Church is to restore all people to unity with God and each other in Christ. The Church pursues its mission as it prays and worships, proclaims the Gospel, and promotes justice, peace, and love. The church carries out its mission through the ministry of all its members. (*Book of Common Prayer*, p. 855)

**Within this framework, St. Monica's maintains a culture where ...**

- **We warmly welcome all.** We affirm the dignity of all humanity through a warm and friendly welcome.
- **We connect with the community.** We support ministries with our talents, finances, and passions.
- **We cultivate a culture that welcomes children and youth,** affirming them in their baptismal identity and that they are children of God with gifts to offer to the church.
- **Music plays a vital role in our worship and outreach to the community.**
- **Through prayer, friendship, and community, God's Spirit heals us.**
- **Fun is a high value** in our community and is woven throughout our congregational life.
- **We open ourselves to the Spirit.** We have a long history of trying new ventures and ministries. Within the framework of our Episcopal values, we are open to change.

*Vestry affirmed this statement in June 2022*



# *We affirm the dignity of all humanity through a warm and friendly welcome*

Time and time again, visitors come to St. Monica's and they feel warmly embraced by the community. Parishioners of St. Monica's greet you by name and love to be with one another and meet new people.



*Vestry Member, Margaret Holt  
preparing for the Valentine's Dinner  
Dance.*



*A gathering after the Saturday Eucharist.*



*The Heavenly Day Preschool Christmas recital.*



# *We connect with the community.*

*We support ministries with our talents, finances, and passions.*



Through their studies, the Men's Book Group felt compelled to hear the stories from people from different backgrounds. To do so, they went to Immokalee to listen to the farmworkers from the Coalition of Immokalee Workers, as the workers explained the history of abuse on the farms and their work for just working conditions. Following the visit, they visited Misión Peniel, in Immokalee, Florida. This ministry works with people of faith and compassion to act with farmworkers to achieve fundamental change in their living and working conditions while increasing public awareness of the need for bridge building. We hope that the outcome in 2024 will involve our participation in this ministry.



Fred Cable, Vice-Chair of Harvest Time Ministries, has led many of our Parishioners to this meaningful ministry among migrant workers in Bonita Springs.



## *Collections*

The Women of St. Monica's asked for the help of all to provide toothbrushes, toothpaste, and dental floss for the children of Manatee Elementary School. Your generosity is overwhelming. At least 120 children will benefit. They did similar collections for the Shelter for Abused Women and Children, Grace Place, and an elementary school in Immokalee, where one of our Vestry members, Jenny Wise, works.



## *We open ourselves to the Spirit.*

*We have a long history of trying new ventures and ministries. Within the framework of our Episcopal values, we are open to change.*



In the summer of 2023, Fr. Gerardo Logildes and his wife, Bishop Griselda (former Bishop of Cuba), began affiliating with us. In the Fall, we began to secure funding from the Diocese for a generous grant to begin in 2024, which would allow Fr. Gerardo to be employed at St. Monica's as an associate.

### **Bilingual Services**

As St. Monica's welcomes all, we on occasion have bilingual services with our Spanish speaking congregation. Pictured on the right, Fr. Gerardo assists with the bilingual baptism and Fr. Jonathan preached in two languages, alternating between them as he spoke.

Not done in many more than ten years at St. Monica's, our Fundraising Team executed a wonderful Rummage Sale last fall. It successfully raised funds for the needs of our building, which allow us to do ministry and connect with the community.

And we had a more baptisms! It is a privilege for us to make the promise of raising these children in the faith, teaching them that they are children of God!



*Tom Cote and Jeff Gault refurbished our Memorial Garden.*



*Marilynn Dessauer offered her talents of photography for a fundraising effort.*





# *We Cultivate A Culture that Welcomes Children and Youth*

*Affirming them in their baptismal identity and that they are children of God with gifts to offer to the church.*

## *Youth Development*


**EYE23** is a triennial gathering of Episcopal youth from around the country. One of our youth from the Latino congregation, Daniela Pedroza, went with several others from our Diocese. Part of her funding came from our Youth Fund. She describes her experience below.



*“Attending the Episcopal Youth Event (EYE) was an incredibly fulfilling and joyful experience for me. I am grateful for the opportunity to connect with youth not only from my own diocese but also from other dioceses, forming lasting friendships.”*

*“Engaging with people from all over the country enriched my perspective and empowered me to address these pressing social issues.”*

*“The worship sessions during EYE were deeply impactful. These were centered around the book of Esther. The main idea—that we are born ‘for such a time as this’—is very powerful. The speakers used this idea as a metaphor and emphasized that as young people, we are not just the future of the church but also the present.”*



## *Youth Confirmation*

To the right, Daniele and Christina are helping Harvest Time Ministries, a farmworker ministry in Bonita Springs. We have four in our Youth Confirmation class that started in the Fall of 2023. The confirmands are learning about tradition, theology, worship, and practice of our faith this year.



## *Children in Worship*

We aim for all our children and youth to understand what we do as we gather for the Eucharist. Every second Sunday of the month, our children come with us for the entire eucharistic service, which offers instruction and messages for children. We also seek for children to participate in the life of the church, offering their unique God-given gifts.



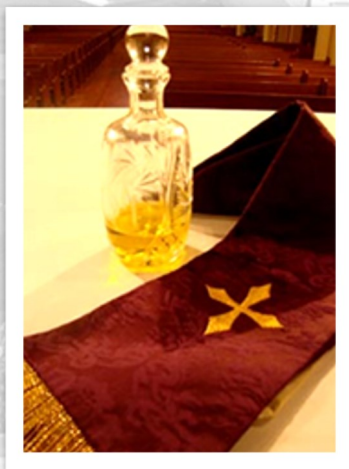
*And we love to have fun!*





# *Through Prayer, Friendship, and Community, God's Spirit Heals Us.*

Responding to a strong calling, Susan Docimo is now our Faith Community Nurse. She aims to keep our faith community healthy through education and support. She often visits parishioners to offer support, prayer, and referrals. You can also see her notes to the congregation in our Enews. I am available to parishioners for home visits or visits at St. Monica's for education, referrals, prayers, and presence.



We also started our healing ministry again, offering prayers and anointing on the third Saturdays and Sundays of every month. .

*Fun is a high value in our community and is woven throughout our congregational life.*



# *Music Plays A Vital Role in Our Worship and Outreach to the Community.*

## *Sewanee Music Conference*

### *Reflection from Alexis Lang*

I would like to extend my thanks to all who helped us reach our fundraising goal, thus allowing us to attend the 2023 Sewanee Music conference. Your wonderful donations made our experience possible! Having the opportunity to return to these holy grounds was truly a blessing from God. The people and collegial atmosphere at the conference made this year's event have a huge impact on all four of us. I was grateful to have made a few new friends while attending the conference, and I was able to help them when they struggled to learn the music. To this day, I can't get the amazing church music out of my head. Once again, I thank everyone who supported us and made this trip a reality. Thank you all so much!



### *A Special Thanks to Dr. Ron Dorion*

We give special thanks to Dr. Ron Dorion who served as our Director of Music for eight years. He left due to health reasons, and we pray for his healing. He provided us with virtuosic organ playing, student section leader ministry, outreach through the concert series, stunning music during Easter and other special services, a beautiful bell choir, music for the Latino service, and so much more. He has been a pillar of St. Monica's through many transitions and the pandemic. Without his steady presence throughout the years, St. Monica's would not be what it is today.



# St. Monica's by the Numbers


Treasurer's Report

G.T. Gibson

End of year financial Results, 2023: I am extremely pleased to announce that for an unprecedented two years in a row, St. Monica's has met its 2023 bottom line budget goals. Despite two of our most difficult years due to the continuing effects of the pandemic, St. Monica's has met its bottom-line Surplus/Deficit of Zero or better. Even more amazing is that on the Capital Expenditures side, we have needed to spend a huge amount of money, approximately \$176,000, on mandatory long-term projects, in only the last 18 months, some of which had been delayed for a long time due to the Pandemic strains. These projects included: total replacement of five air conditioning systems (\$88,000+), replacement of five sets of hurricane doors (\$31,000), replacing about 200 feet of leaking corroded water main piping (\$13,000), recoating the eastern parking lot (\$7,200), Memorial Garden improvements, built new storage space, installed a new sewage pump station, new security cameras and fire safety upgrades, and many smaller projects. Most of these additional monies were obtained through refinancing our mortgage on very favorable terms as well as a generous donation from the estate parishioner who remembered us in her will. We also maintained excellent expense controls even during inflationary times.

## *A Special Thanks for*

Our Audit Team helped us comply with the standards and ethics that the Episcopal Church requires. This involves much behind-the-scenes paperwork and calculation. I want to thank Paul Nick, Tom and Brenda Walsh. Additionally, our Administrator, Laura Stamper, was of tremendous service to them in their efforts.





# PRAY

Being One with God's Heart

# LOVE

Being the Hands

and

Feet of Christ

# GIVE

Giving of Self to God





## PARISH STAFF

RECTOR

The Rev. Jonathan W. Evans

ASSOCIATE PRIEST

The Rev. Gerardo Logildes

(LATINO MINISTRIES)

DIRECTOR OF MUSIC

Dr. David Gomez

DIRECTOR OF FINANCE

Joe Master

ADMINISTRATOR

Laura K. Stamper

SEXTON

Cesar Guzman

## VESTRY

SENIOR WARDEN

Scott McCurdy

JUNIOR WARDEN

Ryan Smith-Landwehr

Margaret Holt

Jenny Wise

Dick Rumpf

Kathy Connelly

Beth Moss

JoAnn Sarconi

TREASURER

G. Thomas Gibson

