



A Report of Activity for the Year July 2021-June 2022

Worshiping Sundays at 10:30 AM at the Chapel
4600 Winding Way; Sacramento, CA; 95841

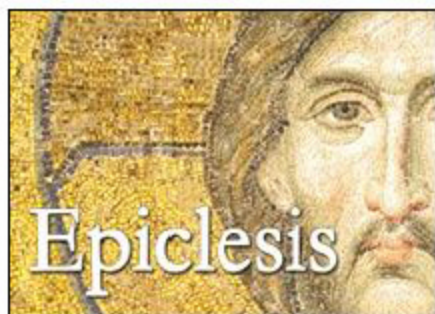
For more info, to give, or sign up for our eNewsletter:
www.Epiclesis.org

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Gold River, CA 95670-4484
(916) 572-9113

A Report for Members and Friends of Epiclesis: An Ancient-Future Faith Community in Sacramento, California.

Introduction

Each year, the Elders of the Church prepare a narrative report of the many activities and ministries that occurred at Epiclesis during the previous twelve months. But we can't get everything down onto paper. Why? Because some of the very best ministry is that which happens daily, quietly, and in a thousand ways by the people of Epiclesis as they walk out their baptisms in the world around us.



One of the most encouraging times in our worship services happens when the saints share how they saw God at work in their lives during the previous week. And by the way, we do this sharing at the offering time to reinforce the truth that giving God our time, talents, and testimony is as important as giving Him our treasure.

Our hope is that this report will be received in that same spirit—testimony to how Epiclesis is joining God in working out His purposes in the world. This report is an offering.

Something we should highlight: It's easy to focus on numbers—things that are easy to count. While we believe that facts and figures are important, we don't want to become a church whose primary lens for evaluation is "nickels and noses." Growth in discipleship, depth in worship, and an enriching spirituality are rarely, if ever, measured by numbers. God has surely blessed our Church in both nickels and noses, but our heart-felt desire is that our annual reports mostly focus on ministry, discipleship, covenant keeping, and Kingdom building.

One final note: The "end" of Covid came, but even as we have mostly been freed from associated restraints, successive "waves" and warnings have continued from time to time. The Epiclesis Elders have continued to address them, with God's help, and are ever-vigilant about the ministry of the church going forward in uncertain times. Meanwhile, the precious saints of Epiclesis press on with resolve and a beautiful desire to worship and serve the Lord. This report is part of their testimony.

Please find a report on the following areas:

- Mission and Kingdom Building Activity (p. 2).
- Ministry Activity: Worship, Discipleship, the Life of the Body (p. 8).
- Basic Financial Activity (p. 14).

Mission and Kingdom Building Activity

When Jesus gave His followers the Great Commission just before His ascension (Matt 28:16), we sometimes overlook that those instructions occur in the context of worship. The disciples came to the mountain to worship Jesus, and then He sent them forth into the world on mission.

We are on mission. One of the most encouraging qualities of the Epiclesis community is our being Christ to others, not only as a church body, but as individuals. There are as many missions as there are people in the congregation. Most are done quietly, without a great deal of attention. All have impacted the lives of those being ministered to as well as those doing the ministry.

Mission also means resources. At Epiclesis, we strive to have a healthy balance of sending both monetary resources and people when it comes to missions, for we don't want merely to be a church that sends money to a place or a cause and then believe our work is done.

**Boots on the
Ground**



Can you “do” the Great Commission during and just after a pandemic? Yes, Christian saints have been doing missions during crises since the disciples’ day on that mountain in the long ago. Covid altered our efforts, to some degree, and we’re looking forward to renewing our efforts to put hands and

feet to more missional efforts in the coming year. As Covid recedes, we are already seeing the return of “boots on the ground” ministry. And when and if the next pandemic comes around, we will have learned all kinds of lessons from this one on how to do ministry even better. Several significant financial gifts were made in support of minis-



tries that reach far beyond Epiclesis: Funds were given to purchase and distribute Scriptures (the **Gideons**, for example), and we supported individual ministries through connections made by faithful saints in our community of faith (recovery items for those affected by natural disaster, for example).



Another continued project has been the physical support of the local **Sunrise Christian Food Ministry**. In the recent past, Epiclesis gave monetary gifts and technical advice for the design, construction, and installation of a new industrial, walk-in refrigerator/freezer room. And along with regular food donations, several in our Church continue to be very active, ongoing volunteers for the ministry.

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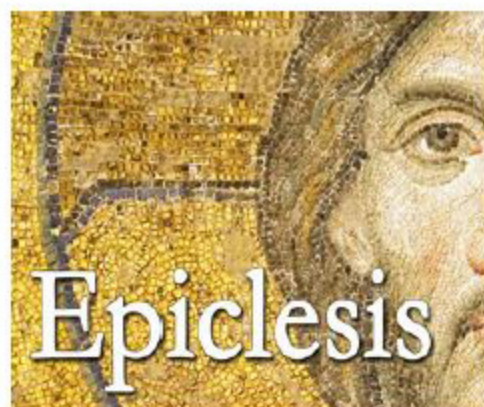
“Ancient-Future Faith” with Dr. Chris Alford, the radio program launched by Epiclesis in January 2014, continues to air Mondays on 710-AM and 105.7-FM “The Word,” as well as three additional times weekly.



Ancient-Future Faith Radio

The radio program provides not only an outreach opportunity; it's also intended as a gift to the community. Most people who visit and attend Epiclesis report that they first become acquainted with us through the radio broadcast, and we often hear from folks in the area who listen regularly.

Epiclesis often advertises on “The Word,” whether in short segments on the air or through their online listening portal. We are currently in such a phase where a 30-second advertisement about Epiclesis will appear to random KFIA visitors/listeners.



Epiclesis maintains a very robust **website** (www.Epiclesis.org) with thousands of excellent items of content, including liturgies and podcasts. Apart from keeping our own members informed of news and upcoming events, the website is visited by people from all over the world. A walk through the traffic statistics of our site is to take a “tour” of nations. It is encouraging!

This past year, the website has had hundreds, even thousands, of visits. The podcast portion of our ministry, which includes sermons, radio programming, and long-form interviews, is also available through a free Apple iTunes subscription. *One piece of trivia:* Typically, each of our sermons will have received dozens of “listens” within days of it being posted.

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One of the primary ways we keep in touch with both Church members and those interested in our ministry is through the **Constant Con-**



Constant Contact

tact email and social media tool. Epiclesis has been one of their award-winning “All Star” organizations most every year in the last decade. The award recognizes excellent communications and activity rates and statistics that surpass industry standards.



Additionally, Epiclesis uses the **Text In Church** communications tool not only to send messages

quickly to connected Church members, but we also use it to send follow up messages to visitors, guests, and other groups as needed.

For example, if visitors choose, we can add them to a special text list that will automatically put them in a rotation of encouraging messages and reminders about upcoming services.

We often use the Constant Contact and Text in Church tools to alert the congregation to prayer requests or other important updates.



Epiclesis also has a presence on **Facebook** and occasionally “Tweets” on the **Twitter** platform. Items that are sent out via our Constant Contact tool are automatically sent to the Epiclesis Facebook page and Twitter account.

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The **Epiclesis video team** continued the ministry first begun in 2018, providing a means to share meaningful content online. The specific goal at its inception was to capture the reading of the liturgy and music aspects of worship from the service, as well as the teaching, for those not able to attend a given service, or those who would like to revisit content. To protect privacy, Church service videos are edited to remove personal sharing.



Password-protected content is also posted on the Vimeo platform and always accessible on the Epiclesis Facebook page.

One especially important piece of news is the addition to our team of Susan Crosby. Susan serves alongside leader and staff member Greg Culler. Both work together to fulfill the AV and streaming needs for our worship gatherings.



The Church has continued its streaming presence since the Covid pandemic and has exponentially increased its “attendance” on the **Zoom** and **Facebook** platforms.

Even after our services and other teachings are posted on Facebook, numbers of engagements continue to rise.

Epiclesis has had a long, joyful relationship with **Christ the King Retreat Center** and often engages in projects there.



Attendees of Epiclesis retreats held there already know about the generous and kind ways their staff serves us.

Past projects at the Retreat Center included the construction and installation of an accessible ramp, the purchase of several chairs for one of their conference rooms, and a series of very rigorous work days where huge amounts of brush were cleared by teams from Epiclesis.

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With great pride, we continue to support our specially-chartered chapter of **Trail Life**.



In a way, our association with Trail Life began at an Epiclesis Men's Breakfast. One attendee had recently heard about Trail Life USA, a church-based, Christ-centered, boy-focused mentoring and discipleship journey that speaks to the hearts of boys.

Working from timeless biblical values in the context of outdoor adventure, boys K-12 are engaged in a troop setting by vetted male mentors who challenge them to grow in Christian faith and character, to understand their purpose, serve their community, and develop practical leadership skills to carry out the mission for which they were created.

Several leaders emerged and initiated the troop chartering process. Epiclesis Elders answered the call to be the sponsoring church, providing the chartering fees and legal covering. By late January, 2021, Troop 16:13 was launched, so-named for the troop verse, 1 Corinthians 16:13: "Be on your guard; stand firm in the faith; be courageous; be strong."



Currently, Troop 16:13 has more than doubled and grown to 53 young Trailmen registered, 25 registered adult leaders, and is part of a national movement with 30,000 members in 830 troops in 50 states.

The Trail Life leaders made a wonderful presentation of their ministry in our worship service on May 15. It included testimony from two young Trailmen, words from four of the leaders, and plenty of pictures.

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MISSION PARTNERS

This last year, Epiclesis stepped out on faith— Pastor Chris encouraged the congregation to “stretch a little”— and expanded our missionary support from one to three. And, at the same time, we increased what we had been previously sending.

We are delighted to share these three amazing mission efforts with you. Each is a wonderfully worthy recipient, and we have already been so richly blessed because of our association with them.

The Church continued to extend financial support to **Dianne Collard's** arts ministry, which includes “Montage International” and “Meraki Connection.” Dianne (right) is the Europe Director for “Artists in Christian Testimony, International,” is the author of *I Choose to Forgive*, and is a veteran missionary and intercultural trainer.



Both Dianne and her husband Glenn were at the Chapter House on Tuesday, July 27, 2021 for an informal meet-and-greet, and Dianne spoke on a Sunday morning in worship.

We're delighted to announce that we are also now supporting the work of two additional missional efforts: **Susan McCrary**, with TeachBeyond, and an unnamed family, **Tim and Rebecca**, in Asia whom we cannot further identify for security purposes.



Susan (left) serves as the Europe Regional Member Care Coordinator with “TeachBeyond” and lives with her husband Larry in Madrid, Spain. She prepared a personal introductory video for Epiclesis that was shown in a morning worship service.

TeachBeyond is an organization which recruits and sends Christian educators, administrators, and workers to serve in many different schools and organizations across the globe.



The story of Tim and Rebecca's calling is breathtaking, and Epiclesis members will long remember the worship

service in November when the whole family came to share their passions and plans shortly before deployment.

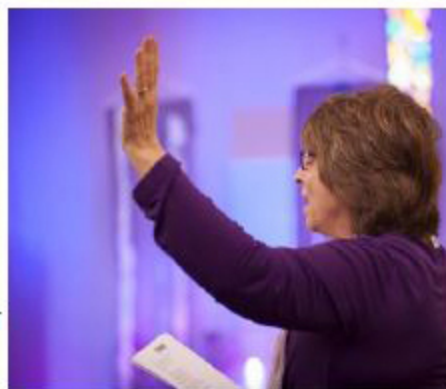
They are working under the auspices of "Launch Global," a missions organization that "exists to mobilize churches to develop laborers and leaders who multiply healthy churches among unreached people groups."

Tim and Sarah write this: "Our team is here to work with churches here to engage unreached people groups that are proximate. We live among the largest unreached people group in our country. There's a large population of Christians here that just aren't engaging the unreached people groups around them, mostly because of cultural and social divides. We want to see engagement here and see that replicated in other cities across the country."

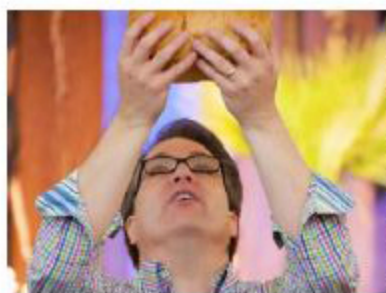
Ministry Activity: Worship, Discipleship, and Life of the Body

Worship

Ever thought about the purpose of the church? At Epiclesis we ponder that question a lot, and we're convinced that there is really only one purpose. We want to help people remember why they were born— to worship— and we really believe, with all our hearts, that the only measure of success of worship is whether God is lifted up and glorified.



At our Church, we have several tasks that include making disciples. And we have one single purpose that fuels it all: worship.



Therefore, for us the central and centering thing that we do is the weekly worship gathering, when the Body of Christ comes together to sing, tell, and enact God's story—to respond to God's invitation to come before Him, to hear His word, to renew the covenant in Christ at table, and to be sent forth into the world to love and serve the Lord.

Coming out of Covid

Early in the pandemic, our worship was virtual only. But as Covid restrictions eased, Epiclesis was able to bring back its signature special services of worship such as Advent and Ash Wednesday, not to mention the full return of “normal” Holy Week services.

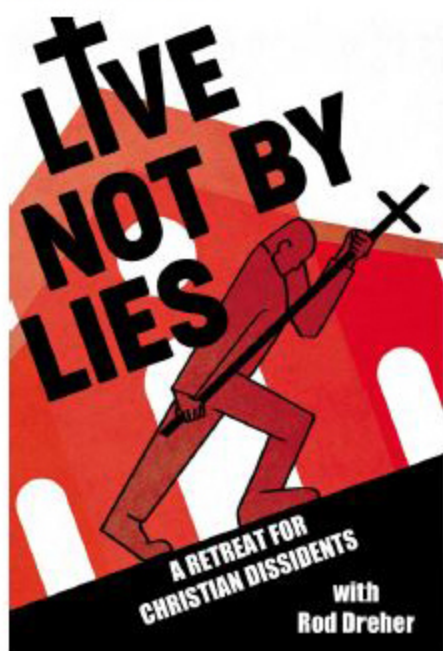
Epiclesis continued its weekly “Celtic Prayer and Communion” gatherings on Thursday mornings. The service, online since the beginning of Covid and continuing in that way until now, lasts about 30 minutes.



In August, 2021, Pastor Chris took on a topic that was heavy in the news, Critical Theory. The four-part, detailed series took a look at several prevailing philosophies and movements taking our society by storm.

He followed up that series with a close look at fear, another important topic on the minds of many especially in these days.

Both series can be found on the website's Podcast page.



Our ninth annual fall retreat in 2021 featured New York Times bestselling author Rod Dreher. The title was “Live Not By Lies: A Retreat for Christian Dissidents.”

Dreher, whose books include *The Benedict Option: A Strategy for Christians in a Post-Christian Nation*, and *Live Not by Lies: A Manual for Christian Dissidents*, was on hand for a special, and ultimately hopeful and encouraging, two-day mini-retreat where he gave insights on how Christians can live in a post-Christian nation.

Pastor Chris wrote about the event, “We were so very pleased to share this retreat with Sacramento. Dreher’s books

had a big impact on our ministry and I am ever more convinced that Rod’s prophetic works are important, if not essential, guides for how Christians can move forward in odd times like these.”

The retreat was attended by nearly 150 from not only California, but other states as well.

Epiclesis hosted a single pre-retreat session led by Pastors Chris, Ellen, and Rick on the Sunday before the event. They took a look at two essential works, Orwell’s *1984* and Huxley’s *Brave New World*, and teased out essential elements and themes that Dreher later drew upon at the retreat.

Unlike previous years, we did not do other pre- or post-retreat small groups, but rather encouraged people to discuss some recommended reading in their Cloisters.

The Journey to Jesus: When God leads people to Epiclesis, and they feel led to become members, we like for them to learn more about how the Lord has led us to "do church" in the postmodern world. Then we ask them to walk through an intentional, deliberate process of learning and discipleship, called Journey to Jesus (or "J2J" as we affectionately call it), that fully brings participants into our amazing community of faith.



This process is similar to how early Christians brought people into the life of the worshiping community—as a matter of fact, the basic design of "Journey to Jesus" is based on a method of evangelism and spiritual instruction in the ancient church.

Along the way and throughout the four steps of the Journey to Jesus, there are some rites of passage that we observe in our worship services including a Rite of Conversion/Welcome and a Rite of Covenant. In the past year, six individuals sign the Church Book of Enrollment, and others were recognized in the various stages of the journey with their mentors.

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The most recent discipleship element to be introduced at Epiclesis is the implementation of what we call "**Cloisters**." Like home-based small groups, but much more, we named these gatherings "Cloisters" after the sacred space found in convents, monasteries, colleges, or cathedrals: courtyards with an arcaded walkway around each side.



That's what came to mind when we sensed that God is encouraging us to build groups of Epiclesis folks, especially during these odd and challenging times. For us, our Cloisters are also sacred spaces—retreats—places to come for spiritual nourishment, soul friendship, and a time and place to be replenished.

Our Cloister groups meet at least once a month and a typical gathering will include a meal, social time, and an element or two of Benedictine spirituality, whether readings or prayer or blessings or other liturgy.

Three (and a fourth on the way) Cloisters were up and running during this year.

The Life of the Body



Epiclesis especially loves to bless our college students with “**Care Packages**” that we ship out about three times each school year.

The congregation brings appropriate items to church and one of our members makes up the packages and takes care of shipping them off to their appreciative recipients.

We also take special time in our worship gatherings to bless and pray over our college-bound kids. This past year, we had five university students.

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Epiclesis planned and implemented its **Sixth Annual Women’s Retreat** in the summer of 2022. The location, again, was the Jesuit Retreat Center in Applegate, CA.

Brenda Zamorano (left) was the speaker for the retreat titled “Does Hope Overcome Fear?” We had 17 in attendance with two women coming from out of state. Brenda brought two trusted friends who helped lead, especially in worship.

Brenda Zamorano, a Biblical Prayer Counselor for 25 years, is a co-founder of “Hope in Life Ministry.” A Folsom-based counselling center since 2013, “Hope in Life” has helped transform countless lives.

The event began on a Friday night, continued all day Saturday, and concluded on Sunday morning.

Some of the comments from our women: “God healed me of severe depression and anxiety!”; “So blessed by this weekend!”; “Saturday nights are the BEST – love the quiet, the fellowship.”

After three successful and happy years at the Epiclesis "**Chapter House**" in Old Fair Oaks Village, the Elders decided to continue our lease and signed a new agreement.

We are now in year two of a five-year lease.

The Chapter House is used for office needs and small meetings, Bible study, prayer, and as a launching pad for ministry. Why is it called a "Chapter House"? A chapter house is a building or room attached to a cathedral where meetings are held. In monastic communities, the monks gather there to read aloud from the Bible, discuss theology, or share the news of the day. In more modern times, the Church leadership uses the chapter house to conduct the business of the worshipping community. We love the idea of recovering and reinterpreting this practice in an ancient-future way.

As we began to push past Covid, the Chapter House was the location for a "**Movie Night**" event during the year, featuring the film "The Secret Life of Walter Mitty," discussion, and treats.



Movie Night
at the
Chapter House

Attendees report that they love the movies and the discussion at our events, but they especially love the treats (often theme-related according to the movie).



The Chapter House is also the location for the **Epiclesis women's monthly second-Saturday morning gathering**.

They get together with each of the meetings being "shepherded" by a different Epiclesis woman. Our ladies report that it is a special highlight of their month!

One other frequent use of the Chapter House: We're pleased to encourage one of our members, a gifted biblical counselor, to use the space once or twice during the week.

The address is: 7985 Park Drive; Fair Oaks; 95628, across the street from the Plaza Park, Village Park, and Fair Oaks Theater Festival.



Epiclesis Chapter House

Basic Financial Activity

Epiclesis income is derived from tithes, offerings, and donations. Expenses are classified as Fixed Expenses (infrastructure and administration) or Discretionary Expenses (all other expenses). Examples of fixed expenses include facility rental, pastors' compensation, and so on. The Elders of the Church prayerfully and carefully appropriate discretionary income as the Spirit leads across the many diverse ministries and needs both inside and outside of the Church.

Total income for the 12 months ending June 30, 2022, was \$249,864.57, an increase over the previous year, FY 2020-2021, by \$24,654.57.

Expenses for FY 2021-2022 exceeded income, due in part to overages in our fall retreat event and the pressing need to upgrade the cameras (for streaming purposes) at the Chapel. Our total expenses for the period were \$265,358.90, leading to a year-end negative cash flow of \$15,494.33.

The Elders watch very carefully the cash flow and basic financial health of the Church, and Epiclesis continues to have a healthy savings account, part of which has been set aside as a "rainy day" fund in case of extreme emergencies.

A Word from Pastor Chris



It never fails to amaze me, and it ought not to surprise after these 13 years. But every time I read our annual report, I'm stunned at the amazing growth and the work and, well, the sheer amount of ministry in this amazing part of the Body of Christ.

We're not an especially big church, but we have a big impact. Truly.

We said early on that we weren't looking for more church members for the sake of numbers. Rather, we're seeking people who want to join God's big story—the ancient-future story of the redemption of all creation through Christ—and to worship Him with abandon and passion in the power of the Holy Spirit.

And that's counter-cultural in many ways. Another thing that's a bit counter-cultural? We think of ourselves as a *pre-denominational* church, because one of the things that's important to us is reconnecting with the truth found in our ancient Christian heritage.

We are a Jesus-loving, Bible-believing church that's orthodox, evangelical, and charismatic in the very best sense of those terms.

Are you hungry for authentic worship that centers on Christ? Are you longing for a place to worship where the only measure of success of the service is whether Jesus is lifted up and glorified? Are you ready for deep, scriptural teaching and discipleship-making that's rooted in our rich Christian heritage?

Then Epiclesis is the place for you. Come join us! You'll be so very warmly welcomed.

And if you're not in the Sacramento area, please thoughtfully consider giving generously to the Kingdom of God through this part of the Body of Christ. You can see here that we're busy and effective in going about Kingdom tasks. We'd love to know that you're praying for us as we walk out our baptisms telling God's big story here in Sacramento. You have our pledge before God to use resources with integrity and care.

The Lord be with you!

Pastor Chris