

ST ELIZABETH'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH



The Rt. Rev. Scott B. Hayashi, 11th Bishop of Utah

The Rev. Michael Carney, Vicar

SUNDAY WORSHIP, HOLY EUCHARIST 10:00 AM

The Hard Work of Sharing Hope

The idea of having a blanket drive this winter was pure inspiration, a gift from the Spirit. As soon as our Youth Leader Becca Gardner spoke the words, they seemed to take on a life of their own. The elders gave their blessing, and the project was on its way.

The members of her youth group were excited at the prospect of helping people in need, but they were reluctant to set a goal. Who could say how many blankets would be donated? So Becca challenged them with what seemed like an outrageous number: collecting 100 blankets in less than a month. That was clearly beyond what our church members could contribute, though they gave generously. The big question was, Would the reservation community get involved?

Despite Facebook posts and flyers, the first couple of weeks were slow. Then one day Becca got a call from the Plaza, the Ute Tribe's grocery store: "You'd better get down here. Your box of blankets is overflowing." The young people were "super-happy" at the donations and looked forward to taking the blankets to Salt Lake City, for kids and families in need and for people living on the street. Our church board president Forrest Cuch likened this giveaway to the traditional Native custom of honoring leaders by giving them Pendleton blankets.

A surge of giving in the last week brought the total to 130 blankets, which thrilled the young people and fulfilled one of Becca's intentions, that the youth would see that "they can do big things and dream big dreams, if they set their goals high." She and her niece Nehemiah haunted the laundromat, washing and drying all the used blankets so they'd be ready to give away. A storm delayed their trip to the city, but finally the big day came.

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Abundance in Action

In our last issue, we talked about an Outbreak of Generosity in our Bishop's Committee, which led Becca Gardner to express her dream of doing more to serve the community and attract new members to the church. After serving as our Youth Leader for two years, Becca was excited about the possibility of expanding her role as a ministry leader. We decided to try that out in November and December, as she organized and led our Holiday Meal and a Blanket Drive for people in need in Salt Lake City.

When the Bishop's Committee met in January, two things became clear. One is that Becca is a very effective leader, expressing a vision, drawing in volunteers and focusing on the details of making projects run smoothly. It has also become clear that the financial abundance we've been experiencing is



not temporary. Thanks to generous gifts to the church, even after making a substantial donation to Navajoland and paying for Becca's extra work hours, our bank account is larger than it was three months ago!

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Youth Group

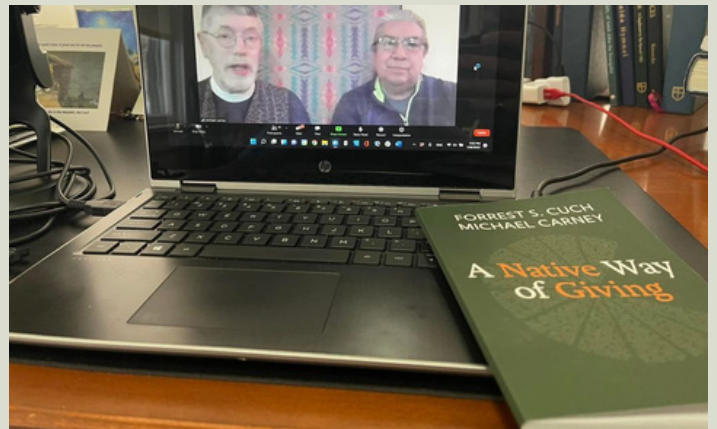
With it being the beginning the new year, the Youth Group has set some goals they would like to tackle in 2022. Just some examples: use our Prayer Journals more, outdoor activities, play more games, and have a few more new members. They are a great group of young people and are always wanting to help others. If you are looking to get your kids (ages 10-18) into a great and beneficial program, this is it. We have a balance of service projects and fun. This year we have some colleges we are going to visit and tour. It's never too early to get them to start thinking about college or what's next after high school.

— Becca Gardner

Photo Gallery



The Nominating Committee was all smiles after agreeing on the candidates to become our next Bishop



Forrest and Michael spoke about their book at the online Winter Talk Indigenous Ministries conference



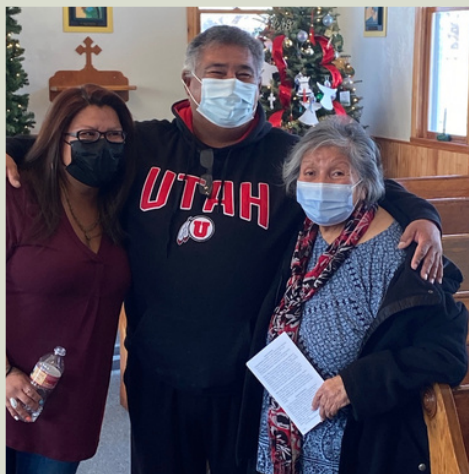
Our beloved elders are the heartbeat of the church



Decorating the church was a team effort



SueAnn spent a moment with the creche, reflecting on the birth of Jesus



Obi always manages to have fun with his friends!



The baptisms of Danielle Young and her kids made it a very joyful day of church!

Sharing Hope, continued from page 1

It was cold, and despite recent trends, not many people could be seen hanging out on the streets. They picked up Nehemiah's older sisters, students at the University, and went to a women's shelter, where they dropped off blankets and were given a tour. The women they met were touched by what the young people were doing and asked if they could pray together. They all stood in a circle as one of the residents offered "an awesome prayer," after which Becca said, "It felt like we already knew them, that we were family, sisters in Christ."

They needed that encouragement, however, because their day grew more difficult. It was hard to locate groups of people on the street, and the other shelters and agencies they called required reservations to make donations. After collecting all those blankets and driving three hours to the city, Becca said "we weren't just going to go home." They stopped for lunch and considered their options.

Maria, one of the college students, remembered seeing a group of tents "like a village" under the freeway a couple of months before. They had to drive back and forth to locate it, finally pulling up near two men cooking over a campfire, with a large group of tents clustered nearby. Becca used her street sense to check out the situation, said a prayer and got out of her truck. Cautious, a little scared, she told herself, "This is all happening because it needs to. The young people are watching, and they need my leadership."

As she approached the two men, they waved and said, "Ma'am—can we help you?" When she said she had blankets to give away, the men jumped up and unloaded the bags in the back of the truck. When they began to open the bags, they gave her a thumbs-up and said, "Thanks, we really need them!" Becca got back in the front seat as the men yelled, "Blankets!" and dozens of people came running. Becca said it was "an awesome feeling" to watch people picking out blankets and taking them back to their tents. Many paused to wave and say thanks.

After all that preparation, the giveaway was finished in just a few minutes. As they drove back to the reservation, the young people felt really good, knowing that they'd followed through on their plans and helped people who were in need. "We can do anything," they said, and the group started to talk about coming back with canned food and firewood. Once the connection was made, it was hard to walk away.

In addition to the spirit and hopefulness of the youth, Becca was touched by the response of the Ute community. "It was an amazing feeling to know that they have our back." Her post on the tribal Facebook group's page thanking everyone who donated drew a hundred responses and a number of appreciative comments: "That's some good stuff there!!" "True caring is sharing." "Good job young people!! May ur blessings be many." "Your group of loyal friends are doing an extra good job." "That's awesome!" "So proud of you..." "Love this..."

It was moving to watch the reaction of the elders when Becca told this story during Sunday worship. Those older women and men are stalwarts of the church and the community, and they often wonder what will happen when they can't keep things going. Becca and the youth group are witnesses to the work of the Spirit, the vitality of the church, and the presence of Jesus in a world of hurt. Jane Goodall wrote that "Hope is what enables us to keep going in the face of adversity. It is what we desire to happen, but we must be prepared to work hard to make it so." (The Book of Hope, p. 8) Deepest gratitude to Becca and our youth group for leading us along the pathway of hope.

-Michael

Abundance, continued from page 2...

For those reasons, the Bishop's Committee decided unanimously to pay Becca for twenty hours a week (up from five previously) as our Youth/Outreach Project Coordinator. We've committed to supporting this through 2022, and we have every intention of her continuing this work next year. Becca has set goals for these ministries, which she and I will review regularly.

In Youth Ministry, she plans to continue building our church Youth Group, address the goals the young people have set, take them on college visits and to next summer's Native Youth Event, and continue developing our Art Empowers program. For Outreach, her goals are to adopt one or more elders (helping them with basic needs), gather donations of practical items for people in need in Salt Lake City, and create

a food pantry and clothing closet in our parish hall. Everyone agrees that's a lot for a half-time position, and we think it will do a lot of good in the community!

Thank you to everyone who's supported Becca's growth as a leader, made donations and volunteered to help out. The best is yet to come, as she settles into her new, expanded role. And thanks for the encouraging words from newsletter readers: "You should be a bit proud of yourselves. You are what a church should be." (Mary Coe, whose late husband visited Whiterocks as a kid) "Your newsletter is filled with welcome bits and pieces, full of Joy!" (Lucy Allen, widow of Pastor Allen, our former Vicar) "You are truly the light of Christ in our tired old world." (Rev. Jean Rogers, a friend of St. Elizabeth's)

- Michael

Like other Indigenous people of the Western Hemisphere, we believe that all things are related—people, animals, plants, rocks, mountains, clouds, and the stars and planets of the Universe. Everything is connected to one another inextricably. We also believe that the objective of all that exists is relational harmony and balance, living together and supporting one another to exist. The trees support me, the animals support me, the rocks support me, the mountains support me, the stars support me. And my role is to support them back, through courtesy, kindness, cooperation, understanding, and love. Love in the sense of agape, unconditional love shown not necessarily through emotion but action; acting in the best interests of one another. – Rev. Dr. Brad Hauff



painting by Marsha Heron

ST. ELIZABETH'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH OCCUPIES AND OPERATES UPON
THE ANCESTRAL AND TRADITIONAL LANDS OF THE UTE INDIAN TRIBE.