

**Rector's Annual Report for the year 2010**  
**The Rev. James V. Stockton**  
**Annual Meeting January 23, 2011**

In the midst of last year's continuing uncertainty, ECR was blessed in several wonderful ways. God continues to watch over this community. And this bodes well for this new year ahead. If it is true that ECR is a hidden gem, then I expect this to be the year of ECR's coming out party. I expect this year to find ECR's presence in Austin as a Christian community on a mission becoming much more widely known and celebrated.

We were blessed to welcome sixteen persons into the fellowship Christian faith through the sacrament of Baptism. We also welcomed nine persons into the Church through the sacrament of Confirmation, or through Reception into the Episcopal Church. We also celebrated the sacrament of Holy Matrimony with three couples here at ECR.

Baptized: Rosalinda Briones; Alexis S. Briones; Christopher Burns II; Jacob D. Burns; Arianna M. Burns; Amanda Burns; Christopher Burns; Nicholas M. Chappelle; Michael Galvez, Jr.; Wyatt T. Hopkins; Anthony J. Maldonado; James A. Medrano; Colin C. Pattison; Adam R. Perez, Jr.; Isabella R. Peschka, and Addison Summers.

Confirmed: Nicholas M. Chappelle; Roy Cline; Cheri Cline; Sally Cooper; Morgan L. Davis; Shawn E. Ujezdsky; Katie W. Rogers; Melanie A. Stockton; Judy Watford; and Tammy L. Page (made Reaffirmation).

Wed: Nick and Tammy Chappelle; Sam Giancarlo and Betty Stinson; Aspen and Zane Dunaway.

The year was rich with celebration and joy.

ECR also lost eight of our family and friends. Those who died last year include: Joe Garrison, Toni Perrine, Hazel Raven, Matthew Galvez, Annette Nover-Ault, Annette Westbrook, Libby Bertinot, and Eleanor Ansberry. We again commend these persons to the love and mercy of God.

ECR continues a strong community. We continue our ministry of offering God's Love for all to one another, to guests and visitors, and to those whom we serve in the wider community. Our ministries bring glory to God, they support our faith collectively and individually, and they present a witness to the world that is uniquely our own. This ministry and mission comprise both our spiritual gift and our calling. We've heard this afternoon some examples of our ministry. These remind us that God clearly and powerfully is moving in this community. The Spirit of God is on us.

I want to recognize the leadership and service of ECR's vestry through this past year. They have helped our community to do important things: to meet the concerns of a troubled economy and to sustain ECR's commitment to our future. They have balanced a set of important responsibilities and done so with great humor, solid faith, and great wisdom. I thank them and I give God thanks for them. Especially I thank and wish well those who are concluding

their terms of service, Woody Ledenham, Ann Foxworth, Kenny Oyler, Mary Lou Carpenter, and Nadine Gordon. They have served well on the Vestry and I know that each will continue to serve well in their other respective ministries.

Nadine served last year as my Senior Warden. She anchored the Vestry with calm and steady leadership. As in all that she does here at ECR, so also with me and with the Vestry, Nadine was gracious, sensitive, and focused. Nadine, thank you for your ministry.

Jim Ryan served last year as the Vestry's Junior Warden. Jim was elected by the Vestry to complete the unfinished term of Larry Clifton, who was called away to a job in Louisiana. I'm grateful for Larry's ministry last year, and Jim, I'm grateful for your ministry in stepping in and serving reliably and well. Thank you.

I'm pleased to announce that Brian McElligott has accepted my invitation to serve this year as my Senior Warden. I look forward to his leadership this year. I'm also happy to note that Jim Ryan has agreed to be nominated for election by the Vestry to continue this year serving as Junior Warden.

The current vestry and I are pleased of course to welcome to the vestry's ministry this year, Lana Beyer, Noreen McMahan, Shawn Ujezdsky, Mary Lou Carpenter, and Pat Starkie. Thank you also to all of our nominees for election to the Vestry today. Congratulations go to each, of course. And congratulations also go rightly to this community. ECR has an excellent group of people serving as Vestry. I look forward to an exciting and challenging year ahead, and to the work we'll all do together.

ECR is blessed with many who serve in positions of responsibility and leadership here. Our Ministry Leaders and the many lay ministers who serve with them are doing wonderful work. The examples of ministry we heard earlier remind us of the commitment we share in this community to putting God's Love into action. Our Ministry Leaders and ministers inspire us all and bless us all. Our ministry leaders are working harder than ever this year to welcome us all, also, into sharing the ministries that they serve. Outreach to new members and friends of ECR is a new priority of each of our ministries, and we can expect to see this expressed more purposefully this year. Ministry Leaders of ECR, thank you for your leadership and service.

I want to recognize the work of ECR's Parish Administrator Evelyn Griffin. Evelyn continues to serve with utter dependability and with great self-sacrifice. She is working with a schedule of activities and events here at ECR that is busier than ever. At the same time, Evelyn is the first voice and face of ECR for many people, those who come to our community through the weekday visit to the Church Office, rather than to worship on Sunday. For all you do, thank you, Evelyn.

Rick Carpenter is ECR's Sexton. He is an unsung servant of this community, keeping things working around the campus, making countless small repairs and arranging for larger ones. Most of what Rick does shows up in what we do not notice. He is busy, I see to this; and for all he does, diligently, with great loyalty to this community, I say, thank you, Rick.

We welcomed to the nursery this year Caitlyn Whitted and McKenzie Whitted as paid staff. Both are experienced and trained child-care givers. They are with us now every Sunday from 8:15 to 12:15 without fail. This has enabled members and guests to know that from Sunday to Sunday, ECR provides top-quality infant and toddler care. Some of us have noticed, I'm sure, that ECR now sees children and toddlers present with us nearly every Sunday. I expect this trend to continue and increase, now that Caitlyn and McKenzie are here.

I want to recognize and thank our Director of Music Sara Burden-McClure. In her first year as a part of the ECR community, we've all enjoyed the wonderful music that Sara brings to life on the organ and piano, and that she leads and inspires the choir to sing. Sara and I are working at hosting a series of various concerts here at ECR. We had the Cash Band here last year, a Johnny Cash musical tribute. Tomorrow we have the fantastic occasion of a concert by the renowned American Boy Choir. I look forward to a great year ahead, both through the wonderful work of the choir and Sara's work with special events such as these. Sara, thank you for your ministry.

I note also my great appreciation for the work and prayers of the Congregational Planning Process Committee. The Planning Committee is charged with important work that affects the life of the ECR community both now and for our future. This group is working quietly, in the background, covering tremendous ground in the effort to bring about the very important campus makeover. I predict that one day soon, these folks will emerge into greater recognition for their efforts and, in fact, I intend to see to it. Planning Committee, thank you very much.

I appreciate also the ministry of our seminarian Susan Burnham. Susan took a well-advised break from her Field Education here at ECR last year and returned in the summer. She will graduate this year, and in the meantime, we have been blessed to have her ministry here, and will continue to do until this spring.

This year I look forward to ECR's witness growing in this city and in the Diocese of Texas. It has been said that ECR is the best kept secret in Austin. I am determined to bring that secrecy to an end. I'm excited about the emergence of an interest among some of our members and friends, including people new to ECR, in bringing their expertise to help get the good news of ECR out into the world around us. Folks with particular skills working with various internet resources have already begun to do his work. ECR has a Facebook page; ECR's web site is being wonderfully refreshed and remodeled; a Christian social networking group is being initiated that identifies ECR as its sponsor, and for whom ECR will host occasional or periodic gatherings; the Thrift Shop's presence on various internet

auction sites is rising exponentially; and better use of print media and other advertising is also being planned. I'm personally excited about this, as there is much indeed that ECR does in ministry and in worship that people in the world around us are seeking. We have what many people want. They need to know that we have it, that we offer it to them, and that they can come here to this community and find a uniquely Christ-like welcome home.

As we continue this year to experience an increase in the presence of friends and members who are newer to ECR than some of us, we'll find ourselves excited, energized, and inspired. We may also find ourselves, sometimes, strangely disturbed with a sense that things are changing. Things will sometimes seem to be changing when you don't want them to change, or to be changing in ways that you don't want them to change. You will experience this, I will experience this, we all will experience this. It's a sign of spiritual growth and growth in our ministry and numerical membership. We are well equipped to acknowledge this to ourselves and to choose not to respond to it. We are more equipped to do this than are many communities of faith. It is an expression of ECR's spiritual gift of welcome and hospitality.

Toward this end, I want us all to know that this year I will turn special attention to helping ECR further identify and eliminate barriers of preference and prejudice that remain. ECR still has an unacceptable degree of barrier to people of racial or ethnic minority, to children and youth, and to people with disabilities. ECR is making progress in our ministry to and with children and youth. ECR is far better than most Episcopal parishes in accessibility to people with disabilities. And ECR celebrates better than most the diversity of all God's people. I am determined to see that we make progress in each of these areas.

Financial concerns are real. We must address them, and I'm confident that we will. Our commitment to do so will derive, blessedly, not from fear or from selfishness, so much as from dedication to perpetuating and growing the mission and ministry of ECR.

Ours is a witness of God's Love that is not found anywhere else. God has entrusted to us a wide variety of gifts, talents, treasures, and means. And God has entrusted to us a desire that we all share in common with one another to see God's Love touch lives around us and infiltrate the world. The ministry of God's Love for all is our mission.

In the midst of lingering uncertainty, I thank God that the spirit and character of ECR make us a community eager to do this work. We continue to trust ourselves to God. ECR is still that secret, that hidden gem. But we will see our witness grows and soon we will find that cannot contain the secret much longer of our commitment to putting God's Love into action, to welcoming all people here on their journey of faith just as they are. God has blessed us; God blesses us; God will bless us.

Thanks be to God.

The Rev. James V. Stockton - January 2011