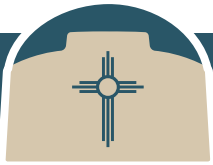




# St. Mary Magdalene Episcopal Church

BOULDER, COLORADO

*"A community celebrating and sharing God's Love."*



## Who We Are

### *We are a community celebrating and sharing God's Love.*

We are a welcoming and inclusive community. While we adhere to core liturgical practices, we're also progressive and open-minded. At St. Mary Magdalene (SMM), we encourage people to come as they are, to join us no matter where they are on their faith journey. As a community, we show up authentically, at every stage in life, vulnerable and human together. We are willing to try new things, fail, and adjust course while maintaining strong guiding values and compassionate connections with each other.



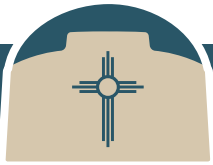
Our church is not “top-down,” nor is it a “high church.” We are simple and humble. Congregants bake communion bread, we landscape, create flower arrangements, wash altar linens. Our teamwork builds close-knit relationships and strengthens our bonds with common purpose—to take care of our “house” and each other. We define membership simply: You're a member if you say you're a member. St. Mary Magdalene encourages members to give in whatever manner they can, sharing time, talents, and treasure. Our patron saint Mary Magdalene, the apostle to the apostles, lends a divine feminine energy and inspires us to learn, love, and follow Jesus as she did.

While we are serious about our spirituality, we don't take ourselves too seriously. We enjoy a sense of humor in our sermons and with each other. Children are welcome as full members of the church as we pray together, share stories, play music, practice lay leadership, walk the labyrinth, and socialize. We celebrate with joy and creativity whether through music, gardening, art, breaking bread, or working together.

About 60% of our parishioners are 65+ and much of the remainder are ages 35-64. Nevertheless, we have high energy and satisfaction as we witness the Holy Spirit moving tangibly in our midst. We work well without micromanagement, although we recognize a need for strategic leadership.

In short, SMM has a high rate of “peaceful contentment,” embracing the ethos of warmth, humor, humility, acceptance, and inclusion. At this point in time, we are in a healthy place that lacks drama and centers on a shared, compelling sense of purpose built on trust, respect, and spiritual vitality. Although we scored high on education and hospitality levels on our Congregational Assessment Tool Score, we are aware of our challenges, and know there is always room for improvement.





## History

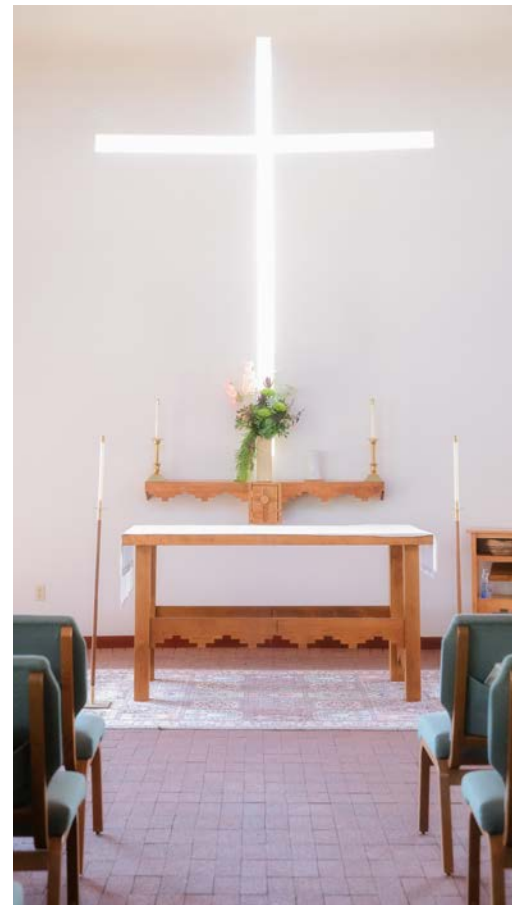


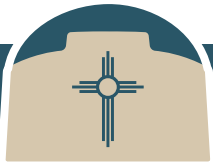
St. Mary Magdalene Episcopal Church began as a mission of the Colorado Diocese, planted by St. John's Church in Boulder in 1981, when a few individuals started a journey rooted in faith, work, and love. Mother Connie Delzell, the first woman to go through the ordination process in the Diocese of Colorado, was the church's first vicar from 1983 to 1990. Her love of northern New Mexico inspired the church's warm and inviting adobe architecture. The current building was built in three phases starting with a small and humble "box" dedicated on July 22, 1986, the feast day of St. Mary Magdalene. An education wing with a nursery, office space, and a library were completed in 1989, followed by a preschool wing and enlarged sanctuary in 2000. The congregation also grew, and it planted its own mission church, St. Brigit's Episcopal, in Frederick, Colorado, in 2008. Today, St. Mary Magdalene remains a growing, loving community that emphasizes the celebration of God's blessings in our lives and service to those around us.

## What We Value:

### *Simplicity of our sacred space*

The light emanating from the window cross in the front of the church emits a welcoming warmth. The simple altar without elaborate adornment encourages contemplation and creates sacred space. Chairs instead of pews provide comfort and flexibility in our use of space. Clean lines, white walls, and rustic wooden beams enhance the serenity of our mountain views.





## What We Value

### *Children and Youth*

We're committed to making the service valuable for all ages, and especially the youngest congregants. Weekly children's sermons not only explain the Gospel in kid language but also give everyone an opportunity to hear the wisdom, love, and faith of our children. Godly



Play is offered for children from preschool to 5th grade, and there is an unstaffed nursery available to parents. Families rejoin each other for communion and the closing of the service.

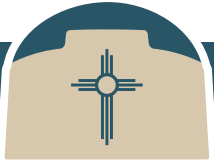
Young parishioners can be acolytes as soon as they are big enough to carry the cross. Our Associate Priest, Rev. Sasha, meets with middle and high school students throughout the year in a program that gives young people a chance to connect over service to others, meditate and socialize with each other.



### *Serving Others - Social Justice*

Rooted in the sense that “faith without works is dead,” (James 2:17) and the Sermon on the Mount, we are strongly committed to serving others and seeking justice, respecting the dignity of every human being. Small and large grants to nonprofits from our Outreach committee totaled more than \$158,000 in the past 7 years. Hands-on projects include preparing and serving Outreach United Resource (OUR) Center lunches, growing garden vegetables to donate to local food banks, and organizing monthly, neighborhood-wide, nonperishable food. For many years, SMM has also been involved with Locally Haiti, serving Petit Trou de Nippes, Haiti, through student scholarships and other vital programs.

Though disrupted by the pandemic, we look forward to resuming annual mission trips for all ages, within and beyond our borders.



# What We Value

## Music

Our love of music is evident when you attend a SMM Sunday service. We firmly believe in the saying, "Those who sing, pray twice" (St. Augustine). This is reflected in our choice of hymns, our songbook, music director, choir, and praise band.

In keeping with our atmosphere of humble simplicity, we have a piano rather than an organ, and parishioners with musical talents often join the celebration. Music is one of the reasons people say they chose SMM as their church.



## Mindfulness

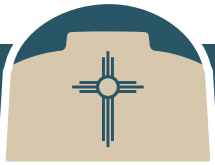
A weekly centering prayer group, based on Father Thomas Keating's practices, meets mid-week and fills the needs of some who wouldn't otherwise attend church. Walking the labyrinth and attending contemplative services also fill the need to "be still and know that I am God."

## Lay Ministry and In-Reach

At St. Mary Magdalene, our interests and values define who we are, and our church is reflected and wrapped around those values. You can feel that energy the moment you step inside.

*We have a high level of enthusiasm for many lay ministries at SMM.*





# What We Value | How We Worship

## Socializing

SMM members love to socialize and have parties! Outreach parties, potluck music nights/singalongs, KISS (Keep It Simple) supper groups, Friday Afternoon Open Mic under the tent—all of these venues help us to enjoy each other, find joy in gratitude, and have old-fashioned fun. Socializing strengthens intergenerational bonds and helps us get to know and support each other better.

## Financial Management

Careful stewardship of our finances has allowed us to retire debt early. Our latest capital campaign raised more than \$1 million and provided much-needed renovations to the aging building. We tithed 10% of funds raised to Locally Haiti, helping build an earthquake-resistant school building. Our Legacy Fund endowment is used to generate funds for Outreach, and 25% of the weekly loose offering goes directly to Outreach. Our fundraising tends to bring us together rather than separate us.

LEDGER	2022	2023
Revenue	\$469,381	\$442,190
Expenses	\$414,188	\$461,922
Average Sunday Attendance	112	124

## How We Worship:

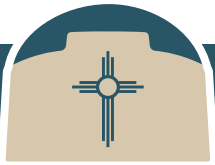


Our 10 am Sunday service is rooted in the Rite II Eucharist; however, we supplement with contemporary liturgy as needed. We are a relaxed, informal church filled with grace and compassion. We don't have expectations or judgment around how you choose to worship—sit, stand, kneel—whatever you are comfortable with and able to do. Our Eucharist welcomes everyone, baptized or not, to the table.

We have a longstanding practice of reading the Prayers of the People by turn, with different readers throughout the congregation each taking a different prayer. We strive to use gender-inclusive language in the liturgy, especially identifying the Holy Spirit as “she/her.” We have our own songbook that combines our favorite praise songs and traditional hymns. As part of our evolution during Covid-19, we now stream our Sunday services on YouTube for those who cannot attend in person, and we still remember how to do “Zoom church” when the weather or other conditions prevent us from gathering in person.

We hold a Saturday evening service at 5 pm each week. with a rotation of services: a contemplative Taizé service, Holden Evening Prayer (written by Marty Haugen), and a Sacred Sophia service centered on the divine feminine wisdom within each of us.

Thanks to the arrival of an associate priest who speaks Spanish, we began a monthly Spanish service on Sunday afternoons in 2023. Almost fifteen percent of Boulder County's population is Hispanic. Still in its early stages, we hope to involve more Spanish speakers at this SMM service in the future.



## Where We Live

Tucked away in a quiet neighborhood on the outskirts of Boulder, Colorado, St. Mary Magdalene attracts many by its simple, adobe Southwestern architecture. Our property includes an outdoor labyrinth, garden, and playground (openly accessible to all in the neighborhood), as well as a bilingual preschool (run independently). The love and care our parishioners devote to our building and grounds—inside and out— is obvious. Our hearth (yes, a real fireplace!) warms us during the cold winter months. In the warmer months, the windows open and the courtyard tent goes up, bringing the outside in and the inside out.



Colorado’s Front Range enjoys a moderate climate with around 300 days of sunshine each year. People come to St. Mary Magdalene from all parts of Boulder County. The county-wide population is about 330,000. It has fewer mid-income families than the national average, and an above-average cost of living.

A challenge for St. Mary Magdalene is to have more diversity in our congregation. Reflecting Boulder’s mostly upper-income, Anglo composition, we would like our parish to include more diversity, racially and economically, along with more representation of LGBT+ individuals/families and young adults. We wish to become a church where those who have never had a church or have left church find a sense of belonging and a vital spiritual connection at SMM.

SMM is a member of the NAACP Boulder County and we support a church Social and Racial Justice Ministry. We are also aware of a call from the Spanish congregation to be recognized, valued, and included in meaningful ways.

### *BOULDER COUNTY\**

*Population* 322,698

*Median Age* 36.5

#### *Racial/Ethnic Makeup*

*76.9% White, Non-Hispanic*

*14.1% Latinx (any race)*

*5% Asian*

*3% Two or more races*

*1.3% Black*

*0.9% Native American or Alaska Native*

*0.1% Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander*

*0.3% Native American and Alaska Native*

*0.3% Other*

*Percent of people who speak a language other than English at home: 16%*

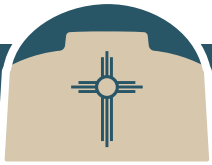
*Percent of population who completed educational degree:*

*96% High School*

*63% Bachelor’s*

*28% Graduate*

*\*Data from U.S. Census, 2023*



## Who Will Be Our New Leader?



As a clergy-focused church, we seek inspiration and connection to God’s word through sermons, educational offerings, and activities that go beyond the intellectual to help us understand the “why.”

We are seeking a Rector who has a heart for what we do and loves to serve others with justice and kindness. We seek someone who can enhance our pastoral care efforts through engagement with congregants in times of need. Concurrently, we are also committed to supporting the health and wellbeing of our clergy.

We would like to work with a rector who has a strong vision for the church along with a talent for strategic leadership and skilled management of people and finances. We hope to find someone who is confident yet humble, with a good sense of humor, to walk alongside us, observe our best practices, and encourage us on our journey together.

We seek a rector who can preach to us, laugh with us, grieve with us, and deepen our understanding of God’s call. Our new rector will cherish and protect our stories, nurture our spiritual vitality, guide us, and keep us company as we continue on our path forward.



Photos Courtesy of Judy Nieuwsma