

**Guardian Angels Catholic Community** was founded in the summer of 2004, and despite some denominational instability, the parish itself has only grown and flourished.

**Bishop & Ecclesial Oversight:** Guardian Angels has only seen four bishops overseeing its direction, through its tenure. While this number of bishops is in no way exorbitant, the church has also changed denominations four times. Three of those denominational changes were moves made by the bishop with little congregational input or choice. The parish, itself, decided to study suitabilities of denominations and came to a fourth choice on their own. Desiring stability in denomination and bishop oversight, and desiring congregational and lay voice and leadership in the decision making process, Guardian Angels decided on a final home with the Ecumenical Catholic Communion, Bp Peter Hickman – current presiding bishop. The decision was difficult, tedious, and incredibly mature for such a “young” parish. The decision to join the ECC has fostered new growth internally and enhanced support from sister churches in the communion.

**Pastoral & Congregational Oversight:** Guardian Angels has seen the leadership of five pastors & three associate pastors & two music ministers (the current serving as both music minister and associate pastor). The current Pastor, Rev. Sue Ringler, has been the Pastor since June 2007. The congregation has always enjoyed a strong lay leadership, and so choices have never been “unidirectional” or “top-down.” The pastor has always served as one of the members of a lay dominated board that drives choice. The leadership style is somewhat parliamentary with the pastor serving as “prime minister.” However, in keeping with that pun, every other member of the congregation is expected to serve as a “minister” in their own right. And so, pastors are simply the people that lead the mass, not necessarily the church, itself.

**Current Ministries of the Church:** Masses are held each Sunday at 5pm at Tempe Community Christian Church. The congregation has grown from approximately 5 people to 150 people with 50 in attendance each Sunday. Ordained ministers (pastor, assoc pastor, and an area chaplain) make themselves readily available for baptisms, weddings, funerals, anointing of the sick, etc. The ministers have been blessed to officiate at 8 baptisms, 3 confirmations, 5 weddings, and 2 funerals. In addition, the laity of the church have been blessed to minister through: I-HELP (co-founders with the Tempe Interfaith Community), Project Homeless Connect (Pastor initiated the first Project Homeless Connect in AZ; it is now a state effort), Urban Outreach, Humane Borders, Furnishing Hope, iMagine (Pastor coordinated the launch of this young adult Interfaith effort) and been forerunners in the ecumenical and interfaith ministries in Tempe and the larger Phoenix area. We just celebrated Easter in an Ecumenical Service with St. Augustine’s and Community Christian DOC Church. Guardian Angels has also kept a missionary team who have represented Guardian Angels in parish development in Montserrat, Phoenix, and currently assist a sister church of the communion in parish development in Chicago. The team has also represented Guardian Angels in post-disaster Haiti, an orphanage in Antigua, an orphanage in Guyana, and care package delivery to US troops in Afghanistan.

**Future of the Church:** Guardian Angels is decidedly a social ministries/interfaith church. While outreach in social justice will always be our highest calling, we will also continue to foster the ministries we have listed above. Our laity will always be the true ministers of our church and the leaders of it. We will attempt to build stronger bonds within our church and our communion. We further plan to enhance the bonds and dissolve the walls between denominations and the many faiths represented in our community and those that our missionaries interact with. We pray that as we grow in our own faith others will see Christ's Light & God's Love through us.