St. Margaret’s’s Episcopal Church
Palm Desert, CA
Parish Profile

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Palm Desert, California CA 92260
(760) 346-2697
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Welcome to St. Margaret’s Episcopal Church!

We are pleased to announce our search for a new Rector, and we hope that within these pages, you may find a Call to join us. Our church history is not long, but it is full of spiritual growth and promise. Our love of Jesus, our inclusiveness and our many God-given gifts propel us to greater mission in the surrounding city and valley. We hope you will consider applying to be our empowering leader, mentor, messenger and model servant of God.

We are a place where tradition is honored and new ideas are explored. We are a place that celebrates diversity and blesses individuality while encouraging group involvement. We are a place that helps those beginning a faith journey and supports all in their ongoing journeys. We are Episcopalians: we celebrate the joys; we soothe the sorrows. We are a place where making a difference in the lives of people underpins our spiritual inclusiveness. We are a place where the Holy Eucharist is shared by everyone, no exceptions. We worship together to be attentive to God’s unfailing love for us.
Introduction

St. Margaret’s Episcopal Church is in the Diocese of San Diego, California. Our Bishop is the Right Reverend Susan Brown Snook. The diocese is made up of 44 churches, pastoral and mission, and covers an area from the southern Pacific Coast to Arizona, with Mexico our southern neighbor. Three Episcopal churches are in the Coachella Valley, approximately 120 miles northeast of San Diego; St. Margaret’s in Palm Desert, St. Paul in the Desert in Palm Springs, and St. John’s Episcopal Church in Indio.

The Coachella Valley in Southern California is also located approximately 100 miles east of Los Angeles. The valley is an area approximately 45 miles by 15 miles in size with a population of about 500,000. It encompasses the cities of Palm Springs, Desert Hot Springs, Cathedral City, Rancho Mirage, La Quinta, Indian Wells, Indio, Coachella, Palm Desert and three bands of sovereign Indian nations. The population is growing rapidly as families move into the area due to employment possibilities in health care, hospitality and retail. The retired population is also growing as more retirees take up residence, or second homes, in the valley. The agricultural population is centered in Indio, Coachella and Mecca to the east. Overall, the population is about 51% Hispanic and 48% Anglo, with an average age of 35. The area population swells by another 100,000 in the winter as more retired people spend 2-3 months here. There is significant economic inequality across the area, from wealthy gated communities to migrant shelters.

The valley’s services include three medical centers/hospitals, including one trauma center; Riverside County and local city law enforcement; local Fire Departments; Valley business partnerships; and Social Services. The area hosts several cultural institutions including The Living Desert (an animal preserve), the McCallum Theater, the Annenberg Estate, the Palm Springs Desert Art Museum, city libraries with cultural enrichment programs, the College of the Desert, and desert campuses of the University of California, Riverside and California State University, San Bernardino, located in Palm Desert.
Palm Desert is a city of approximately 53,000 residents. Between 2000 and 2018, the retired population grew 50%. Some retired persons reside in Palm Desert for the winter months only, maintaining a second home in our city. The population of young families has also grown; the K-12 school population is now over 6,200 students. Last year, 92% completed high school, and almost 36% of those completed a bachelor's degree or higher at post-secondary schools here. In 2018, 44% of households earned less than $50,000 annually; approximately 27% earned $100,000 or more. About 75% of jobs in the city are professional, leisure, education and retail. The remaining 25% are in finance, transportation, public service, information, manufacturing and wholesale. The average salary earned in Palm Desert is approximately $40,000.

St. Margaret's is located in the south end of Palm Desert, high on a hill overlooking the city and beyond. Our location is beautiful and, while we are located in Palm Desert, our church draws members from several valley cities, attracted by our tradition of beautiful worship and compelling music. Because our church can hold many people indoors and on the outdoor grounds, St. Margaret's is host to the annual Diocesan Convention every three-four years as well as community concerts put on by our Desert Friends of Music.
A Brief History

In 1063, a young sixteen-year-old girl lived at the Court of Edward, ‘The Confessor.’ Margaret was the daughter of Edward, ‘The Exile’, and had been born in Hungary. Later wife of the King of Scotland, Margaret constantly worked to aid the poor in Scotland. She encouraged people to live a devout life, grow in prayer, and grow in holiness. She was well-known for her deep life of prayer and piety. Margaret was canonized in 1250.

In 1962, John Connell, Senior Warden at St. Paul’s in Palm Springs spoke to Fr. Barnhill about planting a new Episcopal church in the newly developed area of Palm Desert. The founding group chose to name the new church St. Margaret’s, inspired by her devotion to service and worship. The Bishop approved the new congregation in 1963. In 1964, the First Eucharist was celebrated at the Fairway Café in Palm Desert.

The first church building was consecrated in August 1965.

A sanctuary expansion was devised in 1971, and the outdoor bell tower was donated in 1974, including a C bell cast in 1908. President Gerald Ford and his wife, Betty, participated in the ground-breaking ceremony for the new church building in 1987. Our capacity was now 900 in a 14,000 sq. ft. sanctuary. On St. Margaret’s Day of 1998 a new 4,274 pipe, Quimby organ was dedicated.

St. Margaret’s honors its namesake each year with a Celebration complete with bagpipes on the second Sunday of November.

On the hill above the church is a tall cross, lighted by LED bulbs. Much of the west Coachella Valley can see the lit cross at night, a quiet reminder of the sacrifice of love. St. Margaret’s owns and maintains the cross on land owned by Stone Eagle Golf Club, under a perpetual easement purchased in 1993 from the previous landowner. The cross is accessible by mountain trails.

The cross is a popular resting and meditation point for hikers, and the church sponsors hikes to the cross to worship on Ash Wednesday and other occasions.
Our Mission

Our mission is three-fold: “Build the Body, Equip the Saints, Change the World”

By “Build the Body”, we mean we’re looking to grow, not only by expanding our numbers, but by deepening the spiritual lives of those here by establishing and deepening personal relationships.

“Equip the Saints” refers to our belief that God gives different gifts to different people. We support God’s work in the world by educating and developing our members with skills for leadership and ministry.

Our mission to “Change the World” is built on the Gospel’s message to transform lives, our own and others. We look to enhance and increase St. Margaret’s outreach efforts to offer further tangible and meaningful opportunities for us to share in God's transforming work and serve those who need it most.

Clergy, Staff and Volunteers

St. Margaret’s is blessed to have highly dedicated clergy, staff and volunteers. Our clergy include an Interim Rector since January 2019, an Associate Rector, a priest who leads the Pastoral Care Team, and Deacon. We are also blessed with many retired clergy who provide Eucharist services and sermons throughout the year.

Our staff is comprised of the Parish Secretary/Volunteer Coordinator; Controller; Outreach & Youth Ministry Director; Music Director; part-time Communications Staff member; and two Sextons. Office volunteers also cover necessary functions in financial transactions and serve as our public information officers.

Our church community also includes well over 200 volunteers in various ministries, many of whom serve in more than one on behalf of St. Margaret’s and the wider community.
Worship and Worship Ministries

St. Margaret’s offers several worship services, including Eucharist Services on Saturday and Sunday. They are:

Saturday at 5 p.m.        Simple spoken Eucharist in our Chapel;
Sunday at 8 a.m.          Eucharist with limited music in our Sanctuary;
Sunday at 10 a.m.         Rite II Eucharist with Choir and traditional liturgical music
Wednesday at 10 a.m.      Eucharist Service of Healing Prayer in our Chapel
First Sunday at 7 p.m.    Compline (Evensong) from October to May

Altar Guild
Serve God behind the scenes by preparing the Altar for all services and occasions.

Acolytes
Assist in worship services as processional candles/torch bearers and cross bearers.

Lay Eucharist Ministers/Readers
Assist with serving the Eucharist and reading the liturgy at services.

Vergers
Attend to all organizational details at services often coordinating a dozen or more lay ministers, thus freeing the clergy for pastoral attentiveness.

Ushers
Offer greetings, hand out bulletins, receive the collection and assist people in receiving communion.
**Parish Ministries**

**Pastoral Care**
Comprised of lay and clergy members, our Pastoral Care team visits church members to provide companionship and prayer. The team includes Eucharistic Visitors who have received training by the diocese to provide Eucharist to those who are unable to attend worship services.

**Music Ministry**
St. Margaret’s Adult Choir is open to all who have a desire to sing and can make a regular commitment to rehearsals and services. An audition with the Choirmaster is required.

The Chamber Singers of St. Margaret’s is a select group from the auditioned St. Margaret’s Choir, dedicated to music in the Anglican tradition and unaccompanied choral music of all periods. This group sings once a month as well as for other special services and occasions.

Schola Cantorum is a group of about 20 singers who provide a service of Compline the first Sunday evening of every month October through April.

**Desert Friends of Music**
DFOM presents outstanding quality concerts by visiting artists from September to May each season for SMEC and the entire valley community at reasonable cost.

**Prayer Team Ministry**
Parish staff maintain a list of individuals who request healing and other prayers; members of this ministry receive the list each week as a prayer guide.

**Daughters of the King**
The Order of the Daughters of the King (DOK) is an international group of women practicing a life of Prayer, Service and Evangelism. Our chapter members support the work of St. Margaret’s as requested by the rector. Activities include sponsoring the Agape Meal on Holy Thursday and Stations of the Cross on Good Friday and providing weekly registration support at Neighbors for Neighbors. Members also pray with the church community and host an annual women's retreat.
**Hospitality**
The Hospitality Ministry focuses on ensuring that every visitor and new member of our church is welcomed and oriented to St. Margaret's, its worship, activities and volunteer opportunities. The Hospitality members greet everyone before worship each Sunday and staff the Welcome Table in the narthex of the sanctuary. With the help of church staff, they provide Newcomer Brunches several times during the season (Oct-Apr). The brunches include tables of information about church ministries and volunteers from those ministries to answer questions.

The Hospitality Team also assists when St. Margaret’s hosts the Diocesan Convention, during special events and holiday services and activities.

**Outreach/Community Ministries**

Our mission statement includes the promise to be a "telling presence in the community."

**Neighbors 4 Neighbors (N4N)**
Our center, located on church grounds, provides supplemental assistance to Coachella Valley residents in need in the form of food, gently used clothing, household items and referrals to other community resources every Tuesday all year. We serve between 400 and 450 households each week, distributing multiple bags of food per family and over 1000 items of clothing weekly.

**Ministry of Compassion and Justice Committee**
Compassion and Justice Ministry call us to do the work that embodies our baptismal promise to strive for justice and peace and respect for the dignity of every human being. We commit to being an instrument of peace, in God's name, joining others who similarly pledge to actively pursue justice. Activities of this ministry include volunteer and financial support for the Coachella Valley Rescue Mission and the Galilee Center in Mecca.

**Living Without Fear Ministry**
This ministry includes lay and retired clergy members who are passionate about the sanctity of every human being. Its mission includes educating our parish members and the community at large about the impact of all types of violence, including gun violence, collaborating with other faith institutions and community organizations to help decrease violence in the Coachella Valley. Activities
include educational film screenings and discussion groups, valley-wide community forum, professionals’ interdisciplinary focus group and advocacy.

**Angel Tree**

Angel Tree is an interfaith program for Prison Fellowship. Each Christmas parishioners provide gifts to over 100 children of prisoners who cannot purchase gifts or be with their children at this time of year.

**Read with me Program**

Along with other faith-based organizations, our volunteers assist with reading programs at schools in the Eastern Valley areas of Mecca and Thermal.

**Formation**

Our formation activities include a wide array of clergy and lay led offerings: book studies, meditation, interfaith studies, and opportunities for group formation by those new to Christianity or its expression in the Episcopal Church.

Offerings also include Episcopal 101, an introduction to the Episcopal faith open to all parishioners each year; Adult and Youth Confirmation classes; “Hear What the Spirit is Saying”, a weekly informal lectionary discussion group each Sunday at 9 AM; Meditation Labs.

**Education for Ministry (EfM)**

Since its inception in 2012, our EfM Program has graduated 24, and another 11 are enrolled for the current year. This four-year program of study, spiritual exploration and growth is led by lay mentors. The mission of this ministry is to enhance each individual’s relationship with God and others and to be the foundation of the church described in the Book of Common Prayer. Graduates hold “Fifth Year” gatherings to continue their spiritual journey as a group.

**The Labyrinth**

The Labyrinth on the patio of St. Margaret's is open to all for "moving meditation" throughout the week. Public walks are held several times a year.
Counseling Center

A caring, safe and confidential place for support and guidance offered by a licensed mental health practitioner.

Fellowship Opportunities

Tai Chi, Artist Group, "Stitch & Chat", Ladies Monthly no-host luncheon, Supper Clubs, and several community support groups.

Vestry

The Vestry is responsible for the temporal business of the church. Comprised of 12-15 members, the Vestry meets monthly with the Rector. The Vestry is also responsible for leading the congregation in the mission and ministries of the church in collaboration with the Rector.

Facilities

St. Margaret’s Church consists of a large and beautiful sanctuary building that can seat up to 900 persons. Behind the sanctuary are the sacristy and altar guild room; leading to the sanctuary at the front is the narthex. Stairs and elevator from the narthex provide access to the balcony overlooking the sanctuary and to the floor below. On the lower level are the St. Margaret’s Chapel (seating up to 50), a replica of the St. Margaret Chapel in Scotland; Myers Hall and Classroom; Music Director’s office, Music Rehearsal Room; Conference Room; and Neighbors 4 Neighbors Rooms and Equipment. A Jewish congregation, Har-El, also has an office and leases space for worship and meetings on the lower level.

St. Margaret’s Columbarium is located on the grounds just south of the church building near the Labyrinth. It is a quiet area for reflection and loving memories.

The Pet Columbarium is next to our statue of St. Francis of Assisi, downstairs from the sanctuary, just outside St. Margaret’s Chapel. This secluded corner lends itself to prayer and fond memories.
Surrounding the church is environmentally friendly desert landscaping and a large parking area, a portion of which is covered by a roof with solar panels for the church building.

To the south of the church building is an open patio, including Labyrinth, Stations of the Cross walk and an olive tree garden. Karns Hall, our parish hall, is at the east edge of the patio and is the location for many church activities including the annual meeting, potlucks, discussion groups, special holiday services such as Maundy Thursday and other events. Our newly remodeled kitchen holds commercial grade cooking, refrigeration and dish cleaning appliances. At the south edge of the patio is the Lee Building, with four classrooms providing space for formation, other education and Youth activities. To the southeast of the patio from Lee is our newly remodeled nursery, then the vegetable garden space and playground.

Lastly, the Karns Parish Administration Building sits at the southern border of the church property. This building, formerly a rectory, now houses the offices of the church Rector, Associate Rector and other staff. Two conference rooms provide meeting space for the Vestry and ministries. One office is designated for Community Ministries. There is a kitchen, three bathrooms, workspace and storage. The building surrounds a small outdoor courtyard where smaller social parish functions are sometimes held.

Wearing red for Pentecost

Volunteers getting ready to distribute fresh produce at Neighbors4Neighbors
Who We Are

Because of the seasonal nature of the area, the size of our congregation varies depending on time of year. Our average weekend attendance is comprised of winter attendance at approximately 500 and summer at about 230.

Our parish consists of members of the straight and the LGBTQ communities and we are politically diverse.

Our church community is comprised of primarily retired members (85%) who are energetic followers of Jesus Christ. While primarily Anglo-Caucasian, we welcome “everyone without exception” to join us. Our younger families with children are also cherished, as evidenced by our newly remodeled nursery.
Listening Sessions

The Vestry and Profile Committee held 90-minute listening sessions in the summer of 2019. During these sessions, mentors guided groups of 6-8 members through a series of five question areas.

Ninety (90) members participated in these sessions. The common themes that emerged mirrored in many respects the results of the CAT survey. In response to a question about when they felt close to God or spiritually enriched, members said they felt this way during worship services, in EfM, and in the “Hear What the Spirit is Saying” group. They attributed this feeling to the beauty and richness of the Eucharist, the sermons, the choir, music, and EfM and group mentors. We also asked members what they considered to be special attributes of St. Margaret’s; these answers focused on the willingness of members to participate in discernment, sense of family, emphasis on openness and inclusiveness. When asked what passions or values could be more fully expressed at St. Margaret’s, the responses centered on more broad-based, theological Adult Education, more outreach to the homeless and further emphasis on pastoral care.

Perhaps most importantly for this transition period, their aspirations for the future centered on growth of the community, greater sharing of our individual and church-wide gifts, further program development, and a permanent Rector who is pastoral, relatable and responsive.

CAT Survey

In our 2019 Church Assessment survey, 208 members responded. The survey was distributed during June when seasonal members were away, but the e-mail invitation urged their participation, and the return rate was considered excellent.

The congregation took a Church Assessment Tool (CAT) Survey in 2016 which placed us in the Low Energy/Low Satisfaction quadrant. It also identified ten topics as “important” or “urgent”, warranting attention soon. Work began on those immediately, and the first six months of our transition were guided by the survey. Consequently, our CAT Survey from June 2019 shows us moving into the High Energy sector and much closer to High Satisfaction. No topics were listed as needing immediate action. We are committed to being a healthy church that knows how to handle conflict and address issues of concern.

The survey results in 2019 showed that our top goals for the future are:

- Develop and implement a comprehensive strategy to reach new people and incorporate them into the life of the church.
- Make necessary changes to attract families with children and youth to our church.
- Develop the spiritual generosity of the people to financially support the ministry of the church.
- Provide more opportunities for Christian education and spiritual formation at every age and stage of life.
Results also showed that, in comparison to other churches, three goals were unusually strong for our church:

- Develop the spiritual generosity of the people to financially support the ministry of the church.
- Work as an advocate for social and institutional change so that society might better reflect the values of the kingdom of God.
- Strengthen the pastoral response of the church in serving people with special needs.

Timeline Session

In October a group of 50 people gathered for a day to honor the history of St. Margaret’s Church and acknowledge how that past has shaped who we are today. We reflected on significant events in the life of our parish and how these times of celebration and struggle were experienced by various groups in our church family. Through small and large group discussions, the traits and behaviors identified as those that we want to exemplify as we move into the next chapter of our church community are: Embodying our Faith with Joy and Playfulness, Generosity of Spirit, and Inclusivity.

Our Challenges

As a congregation including many highly educated people who bring much energy and life experience to their participation, we hold widely diverse opinions on a variety of issues. Some feel strongly that we need to maintain our worship service along traditional lines; others long for a more modern approach; still others want the option of both each week. As reflected in our CAT and listening sessions, many want to attract more families with children; others want to encourage our focus on becoming “Your Church for the Second Half of Life”. While there is broad agreement that peace and social justice are important ministry goals, there are differing views on how to reach those goals, such as whether advocacy against gun violence should be included.

Fifty (50) of our parishioners recently attended two workshops on Church Conflict, and feedback was excellent and enthusiastic. We are taking steps to express our opinions in increasingly positive ways, listen more to each other and work together toward positive solutions to challenges.

Increasingly, we see these traits as immensely useful to God in current times. Our shared devotion to the transformative love of God inspires us to model how diverse people can hold holy conversations, learning from one another rather than with confrontation. Our parish may have a special calling to show how our fractured society can be healed through the practices of our Christian faith. Hence, our greatest challenge may be a heavenly opportunity.
Who We Seek as Rector

We have sought to describe our church community in some detail rather than list numerous qualifications in a potential Rector. Who we seek is:

…an empowering leader, a priest who encourages lay members to take on leadership roles in the life of the church community and takes an active role in pursuing our mission…we seek an individual who practices the art of engagement and delegation, open to change while maintaining the traditions of the Episcopal Church and St. Margaret’s…an individual who includes lay members in sharing leadership through positive action…we seek an excellent communicator willing to address conflict while respecting diverse opinions.

…a visionary messenger, a preacher who provides a sound theological framework through sermons that inspire a closer connection to God…we seek a Rector to help us develop a unified vision for now and the future, while underscoring the basic values of being a Christian…we seek someone who embraces that “we are all in this together” with those of other faiths when we look to solve unique community problems.

…a transformational servant, a loving example of doing God’s work, both within the church community and the community at large…we seek a Rector committed to bringing Christ and his teachings to the congregation…a Rector who interprets the Gospels in the context of the current century and beyond, providing a foundation for adaptation and change….one who follows Jesus’ model of service to others.

…a faith-filled mentor…we seek a role model of the Baptismal Covenant to love all, while guiding the congregation toward further transformation in God…a person who can identify the need for healing hearts and souls and assist in that healing…we seek a Rector who will guide our community in a sense of hope and faith… a Rector who mentors us so we can reach our goals and put them into action in service to others…to help us to understand and live the words, “Here I am, Lord”.

While we understand that no one person can perfectly fulfill all these descriptors, we do seek to gradually transform our congregation from Rector-centered to a corporate and program church as befits our size, so we can focus on sharing more of our collective gifts with the communities around us.

Peace and blessings,
St. Margaret’s Episcopal Church
St. Margaret’s Finances

As of Summer 2019, St. Margaret’s is debt free. This was accomplished through various means over the past six years, most recently the sale of future cell tower payments to fully pay off the remaining church mortgage. Our financial history since 2015 is shown. In the current year of transition, both attendance and pledges have changed trajectories and are moving up.

Pledges Made and Received:

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<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of Pledges</th>
<th>Amount Pledged</th>
<th>Amount Paid</th>
<th>Total Received Pledges &amp; Plate</th>
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<td>2015</td>
<td>368</td>
<td>$1,059,926</td>
<td>$1,014,153</td>
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<td>2016</td>
<td>360</td>
<td>$981,165</td>
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<td>342</td>
<td>$988,620</td>
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<td>2018</td>
<td>311</td>
<td>$868,570</td>
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Revenue

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<td>Miscellaneous Income</td>
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<td>Total Revenue</td>
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### Expenses

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Burning of the debt is celebrated
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<td>$ 150,997</td>
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<td>$ 141,236</td>
<td>$ 138,253</td>
<td>$ 51,403</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Endowment Fund (c)</td>
<td>$ -</td>
<td>$ -</td>
<td>$ -</td>
<td>$ -</td>
<td>$ 37,509</td>
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</tbody>
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<thead>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ECF Endowment Fund (d)</td>
<td>$ 355</td>
<td>$ 388</td>
<td>$ 332</td>
<td>$ -</td>
<td>$ -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous Investments</td>
<td>$ -</td>
<td>$ -</td>
<td>$ -</td>
<td>$ -</td>
<td>$ 6,124</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total Investments</th>
<th>12/31/2018</th>
<th>12/31/2017</th>
<th>12/31/2016</th>
<th>12/31/2015</th>
<th>12/31/2014</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$ 826,815</td>
<td>$ 87,411</td>
<td>$ 726,993</td>
<td>$ 976,894</td>
<td>$ 1,202,728</td>
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<thead>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Land, Buildings, Organ, Furniture, Fixtures &amp; Equipment, net</td>
<td>$ 3,284,481</td>
<td>$ 3,418,480</td>
<td>$ 4,009,176</td>
<td>$ 4,245,219</td>
<td>$ 4,058,361</td>
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</tbody>
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<thead>
<tr>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$ 4,111,296</td>
<td>$ 4,405,891</td>
<td>$ 4,736,169</td>
<td>$ 5,222,113</td>
<td>$ 5,261,089</td>
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</tbody>
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