

2023 Annual Report Highlights



Westminster Presbyterian Church

PASTOR'S REPORT

Querido Westminster,

Early last fall, we gathered in the mountains to celebrate our 130 year anniversary. The first members of La Segunda Iglesia Presbiteriana started this congregation as a new, joyful way forward, one that allowed them independence and dignity, with a strong focus on building up the community. While our current iteration of this church may not look like what they would have predicted, we continue on the path they set for us, finding joyful ways forward that build up community!

In my three-and-change years with you, we have weathered a pandemic and many losses. Yet in the face of all that, you have remained committed to one another, committed to this church, and committed to God. You have found great joy in moving into the future together; you have consistently said, "Let's try it" when faced with a new idea, and done so with joy. These gifts of joy and flexibility, paired with our vitality and vibrancy, will stand us in good stead as we head into 2024.

It is my great joy and honor to serve as your pastor, and I look forward to the work we will do together, with God's help, in the years to come.

MISSIO DEI COMMITTEE

We had the largest-ever year of giving in 2023, distributing more than \$56,000!

- **Matthew 25 Fund.** Our Matthew 25 initiative (aka, M25) helps people in our community pay rent, utilities, and other bills. Your M25 donations, totaling nearly \$27,000 in 2023, helped more than 60 individuals and families in financial distress. **We exceeded the \$100,000 mark in our M25 giving in the last 4 years!**

- **Poverty, Hunger, and Homelessness.** We are a PC(USA) Hunger Action Congregation. In addition to our Matthew 25 fund, we supported local shelters and non-profits on the front lines of helping those in need. Our hands-on efforts included: preparing and serving dinners at Pete's Place; making lunch bags for Chaplain Joe Dudziak's street ministry; and conducting food and Christmas gift drives for families in poverty.

- **Afghan Support.** We expanded our 4-church support to the Afghan Women's Center in Santa Fe and to other Afghan families. We have a new partnership with the Afghan Scout Relief Fund to relocate Afghan teenage girl scouts out of Afghanistan. We also continued our wire transfer of funds into Kabul to support families suffering from famine.

- **Disaster Relief.** We helped those in the US and abroad suffering from natural disasters, including the wildfires in Maui; the earthquake in Turkey and Syria; and the war in Gaza.

WORSHIP COMMITTEE

The mission of the Worship Committee, in close coordination with the pastor, is to plan, implement, and supervise activities conducive to meaningful worship for all. In addition to traditional Sunday worship services, WPC offered other worship formats during year that included:

- **Taizé** – An ecumenical service using Scripture, silence, and simple chants for reflection and meditation offered weekly or monthly depending on the season.
- **Quiet Space** (in-person) – An informal gathering with varying themes and formats offered on the second Saturday of each month.

Most Sunday services were live-streamed, even though the music quality left a lot to be desired. Thanks to an anonymous donor, research began on a new sound system for the Sanctuary. In December, a few pieces of equipment were set up; further tweaking and the addition of other components will continue into the new year.

WPC is very blessed to have extremely talented members and friends who share their musical talents regularly during worship. And in addition to "regular" musicians, we had guest musicians during the months with five Sundays, from a musician playing a recorder, violin, or trumpet to a vocalist, a Gospel group, and a 12-piece string orchestra!

Our Lent and Holy Week observances were ecumenical partnerships with Open Circle and Christ Lutheran Church congregations.

CREATION CARE COMMITTEE

In placing ourselves as part of God's Creation and becoming its Stewards, we take on the challenge of lessening the severity of Climate Change by moving towards renewable energy, recycling, composting, reducing waste, spreading the word and changing our lifestyles and way of living as a personal offering for our future and generations to come. We have already attained some of our goals but we know there is more to do.

- Conduct an energy audit for the church by gathering and comparing energy bills, exploring our appliances and systems, and analyzing doors and windows and checking fixtures, lighting, etc.
- Continue offering educational activities from teaching about worm raising and composting to placing a library box in front of the church for congregation members and those living in our neighborhood.
- Cooperating with the Presbytery Earth Care Committee by joining and following up on initiatives to spread the good word.
- Setting up a table at three meetings of the Presbytery of Santa Fe and the El Paso Presbytery to provide give handouts and talk about the work and commitment needed for caring for the Earth.
- Coordinate and stay in communication with the Sierra Club, Master Gardeners, the National Presbyterian Earth Care Committee, Green Peace, etc.
- Advocate and gather signatures to present to the New Mexico Legislature in support of amending the state's constitution with the Green Amendment.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE

The Nominating Committee is elected by the congregation. This past year the committee nominated Fred Dennis to serve on the Board of Deacons and Michael Brinegar and Cindy Piatt to serve as elders. The congregation elected them in early December as well as individuals to serve on the 2024 Nominating Committee: Michael Brinegar, chair; Elizabeth Roghair; Sylvia Graft; and Gerzain Chavez.

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

The Personnel Committee completed annual performance reviews of our Office Assistant and our Pastor.

We recommended the following:

- Minor changes to the Sick Leave Policy to address questions about paying out leave upon termination and using sick leave when available rather than accruing it for future use.
- That Madeline's 2024 Terms of Call include the Presbytery of Santa Fe Policy for Health and Family Needs.
- That Madeline identify Monday and Tuesday as her days off so that she has a "weekend" to rest and rejuvenate.

BUILDING & GROUNDS COMMITTEE

The leaking roof in the sanctuary seems to have been solved by repairing the parapets. The trim around the outside of the building was painted and the tankless water heater was repaired. Our biggest and most notable project was the repair and resurfacing of the kitchen countertops. And last but not least, Brad has taken on the task of maintaining the grounds.

EVANGELISM & OUTREACH COMMITTEE

The Evangelism & Outreach Committee is only one year old but we have A LOT to celebrate! The origins of this committee can be traced back to the Revitalize Our Church (ROC) task force which began a couple years ago.

Our accomplishments for the year include:

- Creating and designing double-sided bilingual business cards for members.
- Setting up an *Instagram* account to complement our *Facebook* page.
- Embarking on a hunt for a professional logo on the 99designs website.
- Creating a new visitor brochure.
- Expanding our online visibility via the City of Santa Fe's Tourism website and the online forum known as Nextdoor.
- Running ads in the *Santa Fe Reporter* promoting the Pride Parade, our Welcome Sunday, and Christmas Eve.
- Organizing our 20-person strong participation in the Pride Parade.
- Creating and designing flyers, bulletin inserts, and even postcards to promote upcoming events, including our Sunday with Todd O'Neal, our Welcome Sunday, our Longest Night & Christmas Eve worship services, and the Corelli Christmas Concert.
- Becoming an official sponsorship of the New Mexico Gay Men's Chorus for their 2023-2024 concert season.
- Designing 2024 calendar magnets to for members and friends.
- Commissioning official photographers to record activities and events in the life of the church.

MONEY CARES COMMITTEE

2023 Financial Report: 2023 was a solid year from a cash point of view. Members and friends pledged \$125,743 and pledge receipts came in at \$125,834, almost exactly what we expected. But the giving picture was interesting. Eleven pledges were short, but twelve pledges were over. Fortunately, the overages exceeded the shortages, just like the year before.

Expenses were on or slightly lower than budget except for a few categories. The new Evangelism & Outreach committee more than doubled our Advertising budget; other categories, such as Music Licenses, Office Supplies and Janitorial Supplies also exceeded budget. Utilities came in at 11% under budget, due in large part to our rooftop solar and prudence in using the gas heat. We had budgeted a total budget shortfall of almost \$20,000 but the actual shortfall was just \$1,652, and we were able to transfer funds from fund balance to cover that difference.

2024 Stewardship Campaign: With *Joyful Hospitality* as our theme, we approached 2024 cautiously, recognizing that we had lost several great people to moving. Yet we confidently voted to increase our pastor's salary by 8%. Our confidence was rewarded when we received an anonymous gift of \$50,000 which we resolved to use to support the pastor's salary. By the end of the campaign we had secured 38 commitments (or pledges) and a 7% increase in total dollars pledged.